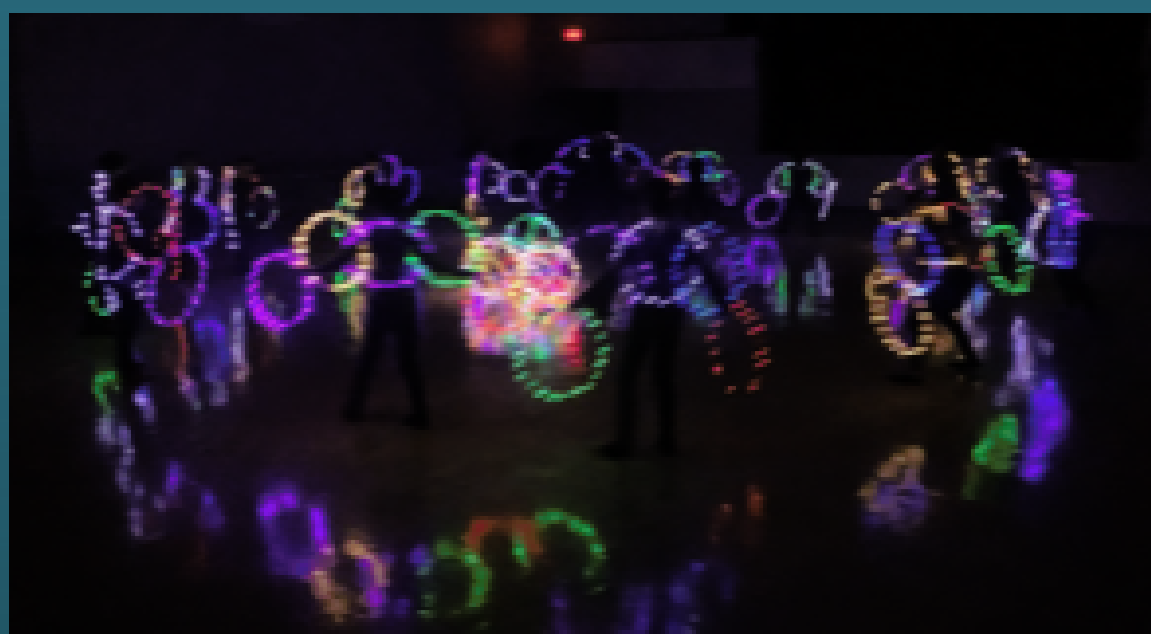




NORTHERN ARTS & CULTURE LEADER JUNE 2022

Kelleen goes by the name of Granny Willow because Kelleen is a granny, and the first hoop was made from a Willow. The willow has healing properties as a medicine and the hoop dance is known as a healing dance.

The name Nemihitowok Hoop Troupe was given to us by an elder years ago; the name means dancer in Cree. Kelleen has been involved with the hoop troop for 20+ years. The dancers learn about the circle of life which includes many teachings. The Hoop Troupe focusses on enhancing culture through a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity through the dance. The children come into the Troupe thinking they will learn to dance, and they will leave with so much more, physical ability, mental, spiritual, and emotional growth; every formation in the hoop dance has a meaning.



Kelleen encourages youth through the hoop dance by reminding youth that every day is a new day- there is always an opportunity to start over. The world formation represents our world, our future, and even if our world falls apart, we pick up the pieces and start over.



Kelleen teaches the Seven Sacred teachings with puppets, music, storytelling, drumming, and a hoop dance. The character of the dancers is strengthened with the virtues of honesty, courage, love, wisdom, truth, humility, and respect.

Granny Willow and her puppet Everest has travelled to the Yukon to teach families the hoop dance and share cultural teachings. Granny Willow has taught adults in Care Home's, children in schools and Friendship Centers the hoop dance. Granny Willow has shared some stories on YouTube as Granny Willow.



KELLEEN BLOUIN