



Kanenna'ke:ne



Fall 2023



# KAWENNÍ:IOS

Ska'tne ionkwaio'te ón:wa wenhniserá:te ne sén:ha aioianerénhake ne enióhrhen'ne - Working Together Today to Build a Better Tomorrow



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# Good Words of Welcome

## With Chief Beverly Cook



*She:kon Sewakwe:kon Akwesasro:non!*

During September, as we neared Every Child Matters Day, our thoughts lingered on our relatives who experienced the Indian boarding schools and survived as well as those who didn't. It's my belief that the children lost during the residential school era did not surface by accident. I believe our mother earth birthed them...pushing the "great loss" into our collective consciousness. Their emergence from their graves is a raw and harrowing way to get us to acknowledge the children's fearsome experience and to look at it in the context of our shared historical and personal traumatic experiences.

Though there should be outrage...we cannot only rage.....we need to stop what we are doing, and face the aftermath. We should wonder, how is it that we survived? How are we still here? It isn't only because we are tough and it isn't because we are rigid and inflexible.

The reason is because we're able to find the purpose and meaning in our suffering through our spiritual and ceremonial practices, however and where ever we find it. Our connectedness and our refusal to abandon each other has saved us and made us resilient.

In a recent report published by the Department of the Interior called the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, it concludes that the boarding school system was part of a broader plan to dispossess us of our lands. Certainly, this validates what we already knew, but we also shouldn't sit and wait for reparation that may never come.

We must continue to foster resilience by supporting Mohawk language immersion programs locally, making conscious efforts to mentor our youth and teach what we know about our origins, even if it is only a little. We need to continue supporting efforts to heal and promote practices that will, most importantly, help our children cope with stress, anxiety and adversity. The healing of individuals, will, in turn, heal the collective.

We have to peel back the fingers of the past that clutch at our hearts so we can spend our energy appreciating the present and move forward with renewed strength and focus. The opportunity for us to focus on our future generation's ability to thrive on their own land is at hand.

I want to remind everyone that re-acquiring the portions of Akwesasne that were lost to land speculators in the 1800s, is now within our reach. Leadership from MCA, MNCC and the SRMT initiated this land claim 41 years ago and our ancestors before them protested the loss of our lands as well.

It's imperative that we stay connected to each other and to the little bit of land we currently occupy. In the face of a growing population, housing shortages and foreclosures on some homes that our people currently occupy, it only makes sense to choose the settlement that will return Mohawk owned land to the reservation and give us the opportunity to double the size of Akwesasne.

In the coming weeks the SRMT Council will provide additional information about the claim and how we arrived here today. I believe regaining possession of these small pieces of unceded land that our ancestors once stood upon, and prayed for its return to our people, will be when our healing truly begins.

Niawen,  
Chief Beverly Cook

# Mental Health

## How to Avoid Workplace Burnout

**S**tress is not only a fact of personal life, but also with professional life. If you experience exhaustion, changes at the job, team and organization level here are strategies to combat burnout. This requires taking time to rest, renew yourself, set work boundaries, increase your sense of control within the team, receiving recognition for achievements, and listening to others when they share what they require in order to succeed.

**You recognize workplace burn out, so what's next?**

### **Work with Purpose:**

Do you feel that your career has a deeper purpose, other than just earning a paycheck? Most of the time, rediscovering your purpose can go a long way towards helping you avoid burnout and keeping stress at bay.

### **Perform a Job Analysis:**

When you experience work overload day in and day out, you can start to feel as if you're on a treadmill and that you'll never catch up. This is demoralizing, stressful, and often leads to burnout. Perform a job analysis so you can clarify what's expected of you, and what isn't.

### **"Give" to Others:**

One quick and easy way to add meaning to your career is to give to others, or to help them in small ways. When you do this, it makes you feel good. Even the smallest act of kindness can re-energize you and help you find meaning in your work.

### **Take Control:**

You can avoid or overcome burnout by finding ways to create more autonomy in your role. Try talking with your boss to see if they're willing to let you have more control over your tasks, projects, or deadlines.



### **Exercise Regularly:**

Exercise can help alleviate stress and create a sense of well-being. You will also experience increased energy and productivity when you exercise regularly.

### **Learn to Manage Stress:**

When not managed well, short-term stress can contribute to burnout. This is why you should learn how to manage stress effectively.

For more information or to speak with the SRMT Mental Health Services, please call (518) 358-3141.

For emergencies please call SRMT Tribal Police Department at (518) 358-9200.

*Submitted by Terrianne Yanulavich*

YOUR STRUGGLES DO NOT DEFINE YOU  
**SUICIDE HOTLINE: Text 988**

# Education Division: Youth Services

## WHAT IS YOUTH SERVICES?

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Education Division - Youth Services Program, more commonly known as JOM, provides a variety of unique programs to our Native American students within Akwesasne.

## HOW DO I QUALIFY?

A student from head start to grade 12 can apply with the Intake Coordinator. The applicant must complete a TLAP application, an Akwesasne resident or living within the area, be a Tribally Enrolled Member, or be eligible to be enrolled or a direct descendent of a Tribally enrolled member of any of the following: Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Mohawks of Akwesasne, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, and any federally recognized Tribe, other requirements may depend on the service you request.

## OUTREACH IN SCHOOLS

The Youth Services currently has education specialists who work at Salmon River Central Middle School room 117 and High School room 270, as well as Massena Central High School in room 906. Students are welcome to visit our classrooms during their study hall periods and after school period. Education specialists are available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year.

## JOIN OUR TEAM!

We are hiring an Training and Events Coordinator who will handle all logistics of the events/activities and act as a main point of contact for all issues related to the events/activities for the TLAP.

## WHAT SERVICES DO YOU OFFER?

Students who participate in our program are able to receive support in academics, educational enrichment activities and trips, cultural activities and events, college trips and a summer youth program for ages 6-11 in collaboration with the Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club.



[education.srmt-nsn.gov](http://education.srmt-nsn.gov)



TLAP Services  
Childcare Services  
College & Career Services  
Employment & Training  
**Youth Services**



Contact the Education Division for more information or upcoming trips and events:

(518) 358-9721 or  
email [education@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:education@srmt-nsn.gov)

*Submitted by Becky Smoke, Youth Services Manager*

Kaweni:ios Kanenna'ke:ne/Fall 2023

## INTRODUCING

# The College and Career Specialists!

College & Career Services (CCS) offers financial aid assistance to enrolled members of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe attending College / University in the United States. In addition to the Tribe's funding, the Service provides guidance with applying to college, FAFSA, HESC (TAP), and other scholarships.

**How to get in touch:** visit the website [education.srmt-nsn.gov/services/tlap-services/college-career-services](http://education.srmt-nsn.gov/services/tlap-services/college-career-services), call (518) 358-2272 or by email at [education@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:education@srmt-nsn.gov).

### Charlan Thompson



#### College and Career Specialist

She:kon, my name is Charlan Thompson. I am a College and Career Specialist for SRMT education Department, assisting students whose last names begin with G-N. I received my AS degree in Human Services from NCCC, and then graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Applies Psychology from SUNY Canton. My goal as a CCS is to Assist with scholarships and guide students through their college education

### Joni Waukey-Cole



#### Program Manager

She:kon, my name is Joni Waukey (Cole) and I am the College and Career Services Manager. I have been with the Education Department for 7 years but have worked and served the Akwesasne Community for 37 years through various programs and organizations in education, counseling, and social work. It brings me much joy to help others on their college & career journey to grow, learn, and realize their purpose and potential.

### Luis D Jacobs



#### College and Career Specialist

She:kon, my name is Louis Jacobs but you can call me Doug. I am a College and Career Specialist for SRMT Education Department, assisting students whose last names begin with A-F. Raised in Akwesasne, I graduated from MCHS and received my Bachelor of Arts from SUNY Oswego. I am happy to help students navigate the scholarship process and help them along on their college and career journey!

### Mia McDonald



#### College and Career Specialist

She:kon, my name is Mia McDonald. I am a College and Career Specialist for the SRMT Education Department, assisting students whose last names begin with O-Z. I graduated from Neumann University with a Bachelor Degree in Psychology and minor in Criminal Justice. I've worked in various roles in education for the past 0 years and am eager to assist students in navigating their college and career journey!

*Submitted by Mia McDonald, College and Career Specialist*





## Akwesasne Travel "Champions of Change"

**Please join us as we celebrate the Akwesasne Travel Team for their contributions to the NYS Tourism Industry!**

Akwesasne Travel was among the honorees at the 2023 NYS Tourism Excellence Awards, held September 14 at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York as part of the New York State Tourism Industry Associations' annual meeting.

The Akwesasne Travel team and staff of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Office of Economic Development were on hand to accept the Excellence in Sustainable Stewardship: Champions of Change award. The category, new in 2023, highlights the growing significance of sustainability initiatives in New York State tourism.

Nominees included individuals, communities, and organizations working toward more sustainable practices, encouraging more conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior, promoting the appreciation of local cultures, supporting local conservation efforts, reducing carbon emissions, implementing sustainable benefits, or participating in local decision-making efforts that support greener communities.

The overall pool of awards nominations was extraordinarily competitive, surpassing 2022's total by 40 percent.

*"We are honored to be recognized by NYSTIA as Champions of Change,"*

said Manager Penny Peters when the recipients were announced in July. "Cultural and environmental stewardship are pillars of Akwesasne Travel's tourism program. As Onkwehon:we

(original people), we are guided by traditional teachings of community living, seventh generation planning and the interconnection of all things. We work with our tour suppliers to design itineraries that encourage, educate, and share these practices with our visitors. To be recognized for these efforts is very meaningful as we continue to develop and market Akwesasne's tourism industry."

*"Any time that we, as Onkwehon:we people see our efforts to be recognized by such a prestigious organization such as the New York State Tourism Industry Association that our practices and culture is acknowledged by the outside world is a tremendous honor,"*

said Tribal Chief Ronald Lafrance.

During the ceremony, the presenter offered this comment from the selection committee: "Destinations across the globe could benefit from implementing Akwesasne Travel's initiatives to support, empower, and promote Indigenous cultural heritage."

Akwesasne Travel is the destination management and marketing organization (DMMO), operating within the SRMT Office of Economic Development. It offers specially designed tours featuring hands-on experiences with experts in the arts of traditional wooden lacrosse stick making, splint basketry, loom beadwork, and herbal remedies. Akwesasne Travel's guided museum and cultural center

tours explore the past, present, and future of the Mohawk and Haudenosaunee through storytelling, art, and artifacts.

The awards ceremony was emceed by Ross Levi, Vice President/Executive Director of Tourism for Empire State Development/NYS Division of Tourism, and Kelly Curtin, 2023 NYSTIA Board Chair and Executive Vice President of New York City Tourism + Conventions. Nearly two dozen organizations, initiatives and individuals were recognized.

The New York State Tourism Excellence Awards are open to all New York State tourism marketers and are juried by an impartial panel of industry experts under the auspices of the New York State Tourism Industry Association. Nominees spanned every corner of New York State and judges were challenged by the diversity and quality of the entries.



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

## Enrichment Award Winners



### Ashley Brown

Ashley is an upbeat and dedicated employee of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe. She knows how to make work fun and is willing to help anyone who may need it. She maintains professionalism in the workplace very well and is very kind and efficient at her job. She received the enrichment award due to her extra efforts toward making the food distribution event run smoothly. Her dedication and determination make her such a wonderful employee and coworker. We thank and recognize Ashley for making the Tribe a wonderful place to work.

### Charlene White, Parent Advocate

Char is compassionate, reliable and goes beyond what is needed for her clients and the IPP program. She is a mentor for youth advocates, a positive role model for her peers, and has shown excellence in her job duties. Char is reliable and a trusted parent advocate to her clients and has been known to extend generosity to everyone around her. Char cares a lot about her coworkers and never hesitates to help staff in need. She often shares her knowledge of traditional teachings with others and encourages and enriches the workplace. Her work ethic is admirable, as she is always punctual and excels in communicating with staff. She is well respected and sets a good example for the IPP team.



### Albert Tenasco, Security Department

Albert is a long-time employee of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe. He continues to excel at every duty he is tasked with. He contributes to staff meetings and is always making everyone laugh with his straightforward views on life. Albert's most noticeable trait is his "never give up" attitude, accepting his duties with a smile and always finding a way to succeed. Albert is an amazing team member and has shown leadership qualities throughout the years. He has proven to be an invaluable member of the security team.

### Jenifer Brown and Sara Gorrow, TVR

These two individuals deserve recognition for the many ways that they enrich the entire program and division. They have a combined 25 years of administrative experience. Jen and Sara promote a positive image as front-line employees of CFS/TVR by always being friendly, courteous and professional. They get to know each person in the division and learn their preferences and areas they may need aid in. They truly show they care about the people they work with and handle many difficult situations with integrity and confidentiality.



### Ella Fuller, Program Manager

Ella is the foundation of the Preventative Foster Care Program. She cares deeply for her community, her clients, and her coworkers. She leads her team with professionalism, guidance, and compassion, and remains a pillar of strength and support for everyone she meets. She promotes services that are available and refuses to give up on cases until they are successful. She consistently puts the needs of others before her own. Her positivity is contagious and never-ending. She sees the bright side of situations and walks through the office with a smile, brightening every room she enters.



SRMT Planning & Infrastructure

## IGA Building Update



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council had the pleasure of taking a site tour of the former-IGA Building construction site on Friday, August 11, 2023. Along with the Executive Director's Office, they viewed the incredible progress to further consolidate and make accessing tribal programs more convenient for community members. The group was led through the future Tribal Building by SRMT Clerk of the Works Chris Thomas and SRMT Capital Project Manager Dewey Thompson. Thomas and Thompson were able to point out the walls for the office spaces that will house programs such as the Food Distribution, Social Services Division, Environment Division, Akwesasne TV, Economic Development, and Education, to name a few.

"The opportunity to envision the much-needed future work spaces being built to allow Tribal programs to work side-by-side for a more efficient experience for Community members who utilize tribal services was incredible." stated Tribal Council.





# Á:se Tsi Tewá:ton Recieves ANA Award



The Á:se Tsi Tewá:ton Kanien'keha Language Program is pleased to announce that it has been awarded the Esther Martinez Native American Language Preservation and Maintenance Grant from the Administration of Children and Families/ANA. The purpose of the Native American Language Preservation and Maintenance - EMI program is to provide financial assistance to community-driven projects designed to preserve Native American languages. The funding provides for \$300,000.00 per year for a period of three years beginning on 7/21/23.

The Kanien'keha Language Program, formerly the Akwesasne Cultural Restoration Program (ACR), is an adult learner educational program that provides instruction in Kanien'keha for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Akwesasne community, developing adult learner instructional materials for language restoration and working toward the goal of increasing fluency and proficiency in the language.

The Á:se Tsi Tewá:ton Project will use the grant to build on the previous work of the Kanien'keha Language Program in creating adult learner learning materials while implementing those materials into the classroom environment. This project will help ensure the survival and vitality of the Mohawk language and achieve the long-term community goal of creating fluent speakers.

We are very pleased with the award of the grant as it supports the continuation of the valuable services provided by the program. The grant will allow the program to continue to flesh out the curriculum and refine it to reflect the community dialect and usage by enhancing the accompanying materials in the form of lesson plans and activities, such as language

exercises and drills.

Although we are fortunate that we have a comparatively large number of first language speakers than other mohawk communities, it is incumbent upon us to continue to actively strive to create speakers to ensure our language survives and thrives. The program strives to utilize first language speakers in the form of mentors, presenters and when possible, employees, to inform the curriculum and assist the students to better reflect Akwesasne dialect and usage to preserve the language.

This grant supports the continuing efforts of the program to produce materials that teach and produce speakers proficient in our language and for this we are grateful and pleased that we have been awarded the grant.

*Written by: Eric Thompson*





# TRIBAL HOUSING GROUND BREAKING

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ground Breaking Oct. 16, 2023
- Occuring on reacquired land claim area as part of the 1796 Seven Nations of Canada Treaty
- The Treaty ceded all Mohawk land claims in NYS except for the a six square mile tract at Akwesasne, a square mile on the Salmon River, a square mile on the Grass River, and a meadow along the Grass River.
- Clearing work began in the Summer of 2022 and allowed the community to utilize bulk materials from the clearing process.
- In 2023, Perras installed water and sewer lines,
- Iroquois Contruction completed subcontractor work.
- 6-8 homes are going to be built along the cul de sac on Wahta Street a part of this phase of the housing development.
- 48 homes in total are envisioned for this project.
- Two, three and four bedroom homes will be included.
- Lazore's Construction will be completing foundation work.
- Home shells are set to be completed by Dec. 31st.
- Project will help Akwesasronon realize their dream of being homeowners.



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is proud to announce that construction has started on the first tribal housing units on reacquired treaty lands. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Monday, Kenténha/October 16, 2023 at 760 State Route 37 and represents a major step forward in providing affordable housing for Mohawk families.

“It has been our community’s longstanding desire and Tribal Council’s ongoing goal to reacquire lands within Akwesasne’s land claim area for family housing,” shared Tribal Chief Michael Conners. During the groundbreaking event, Chief Conners added, “I am filled with an immense sense of pride in what our team has accomplished today -- to provide homes for our families.”

The Tribe’s effort to provide homes was bolstered in 2018 with the purchase of 240 acres of land set aside for the Akwesasne community in the 1796 Seven Nations of Canada Treaty. Located in an area commonly known as the Hogansburg Triangle, the land is centrally positioned within Akwesasne and provided an ideal location for community housing to be developed. “I am proud that we have been able to reacquire

our lands to provide homes under our own jurisdiction for community members,” said Tribal Chief Beverly Cook. Chief Cook noted, “I am appreciative and grateful for all the effort that individuals have put into making this opportunity available for our families. It is a great achievement by everyone who has been involved.”

Beginning in the Summer of 2022, the Tribe’s Planning and Infrastructure Department began the initial work of clearing and constructing the main roadway leading into the site. Named Kahrhaká:ion Road (Old Forest), additional clearing and grubbing was performed in September 2022 by Iroquois Construction, LLC; with both phases providing an opportunity for community members to access free bulk materials; such as trees, wood chippings, fill, and rocks.

Work was accompanied in early-2023 with placement of the Tribe’s water and sewer lines by Perras Excavating Inc., which included their extension from the main roadway along the first cul-de-sac known as Wáhta Street (Maple). Some of the installation work was sub-contracted to Iroquois Construction and was successfully completed in August 2023.

It is along Wahta Street that two (2) homes are being initially built, with a total of six (6) to eight (8) to be constructed along each cul-de-sac that are planned for the housing development. As many as 48 family homes are envisioned for the entire site when it is fully completed, with each cul-de-sac containing





# COVER STORY

a combination of 2, 3, and 4-bedroom homes for Mohawk families.

“Our efforts to reclaim and use our lands for the benefit of community members and families have never stopped,” shared Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. Chief LaFrance noted, “What today represents is not the end of a process, but a beginning. It is a start for two families who do not have a home right now, and as we reacquire more land we will be able to provide more homes.”

At the groundbreaking held on Monday, October 16th; Tribal Council, tribal division leaders and contractors involved in the housing division project turned over soil to start foundation work for the first two (2) homes. The foundation work will be undertaken by Lazore’s Construction for a 3-bedroom (Lot #5) and a 4-bedroom (Lot #2) home; which Mohawk families will be able to own along with the parcel of land.

Following the foundation work, another contractor will be utilized to complete the exterior shells for each of the homes. The home shells are scheduled to be completed by December 31st and will be followed by interior work over the winter months by the Tribe’s Home Improvement Program. The initial two (2) homes are projected to be ready for the Summer of 2024.

Over the winter and into Spring of 2024, an educational phase on home financing will be developed and shared with interested community members. The Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will be used to help Mohawk families realize their dream of being a homeowner.

Serving on the Tribal Council during the 2018 land purchase, former-Tribal Chief Eric Thompson joined in the groundbreaking and added, “This endeavor began as a thought to restore some of our lost lands to the Akwesasne community. In doing so, we wanted to provide homes at a reasonable price that Mohawk families can finance and purchase, along with the land.”

Next summer, the field crew for the Tribe’s Home Improvement Division will begin construction for another four (4) family homes along Wáhta Street. The cost for their construction, and for future homes along other cul-de-sacs planned for the housing subdivision, will be supported by revenue generated as homes are purchased by Mohawk families.



# Matt Rourke, NNLEA Police Chief of the Year

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe takes immense pride in congratulating Matthew Rourke on being named 2023 Chief of Police of the Year by the National Native American Law Enforcement Association (NNLEA). Rourke's well-deserved distinction was announced at NNLEA's 30th Annual National Training Conference hosted by the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe on Seskéha/August 30, 2023.

*"I'm extremely humbled and honored to receive this recognition from my peers in the Native American law enforcement community,"*

said Rourke, who serves as Chief of Police for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department. He added, *"I'm fortunate to work with a great team of professional and community-minded police officers, and a police commission and tribal council that are very supportive and forward-thinking in regard to the community's safety."*

The National Native American Law Enforcement Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993 to promote and foster mutual cooperation between American Indian law enforcement agencies, tribes, private industry and the public. To support this effort; their annual gathering brings together law enforcement personnel,

emergency management, emergency services, natural resources, and environmental protection professionals for three days of joint training on major issues facing Indian country.

During this year's Annual Conference, an awards ceremony was held that provided an opportunity for partnering agencies to recognize law enforcement leaders and agencies for "Making Tribal Communities the Safest Communities in America." Rourke was recognized for helping instill a cooperative approach for the 35-member tribal police department in crime prevention and community safety programs in the Mohawk community of Akwesasne.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Commission joined in congratulating Rourke as the 2023 Chief of Police of the Year, stating "Chief of Police Matthew Rourke has shown devotion to the Akwesasne community for the past 25 years. Since being selected as Chief of Police; he has continued that commitment for community policing, serves as an advocate for those in need, and shows tremendous pride for the community that he serves. The Tribal Police Commission is extremely proud of the recognition he received from his fellow law

enforcement peers throughout Indian Country and the United States."

Rourke joined the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department in 1998 as a Tribal Patrol Officer. His devotion and commitment to serving and protecting his own tribal community saw him quickly rise through the ranks. In 2004, he earned the rank of Corporal and was promoted in 2007 to Detective/Sergeant, which was the first in the tribal police department's history. On May 23, 2014; Rourke was appointed Acting-Chief of Police by the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Commission. After conducting a national search, announcement of his formal appointment as Chief of Police was made the following year at the March 2015 Monthly Tribal Meeting. At that time, Rourke shared his commitment to ensuring public safety and strengthening the police department's relationship with the community by having an increased presence at events and providing more

communication.

Rourke's leadership has made the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department a respected partner to a multitude of U.S. and Canadian law enforcement agencies. He has earned a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Investigations (Title 19) Special Cross Customs Designation, Bureau of Indian Affairs International Law Enforcement Credentials



(SLEC); and is a member of the International Border Enforcement Team (IBET) and both Franklin County and St. Lawrence County Task Forces.

In 2020, Rourke provided testimony to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the

Administration of Justice on Rural and Tribal Justice. His testimony focused on the criminal justice system in Indian Country and the need for more law enforcement partnerships, more law enforcement officers on the ground, and, if the officers or agents are non-tribal, the need for law enforcement to have an awareness and appreciation for tribal culture.

Along with Tribal Police Lieutenant Decota Thompson and Lieutenant Ted Cook, Rourke has attended several law enforcement gatherings at the White House, including a July 2016 briefing convened by The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

More recently, Rourke was named in July 2023 to the North Country Regional Council for the New York State Hate and Bias Prevention Unit. Located within the State's Division of Human Rights, the unit's work is aimed at promoting diversity and empowering communities to prevent and heal from the trauma of violence attributed to discrimination.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council offered Chief of Police Matthew Rourke their congratulations and deepest gratitude for the recognition he received from the National Native American Law Enforcement Association, saying

*"Your unwavering dedication, devotion, and commitment to safeguarding our community's security through cooperative relationships is greatly appreciated and is a testament to the strength of community policing."*



# Roswell Park Cancer Program Graduates

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council was pleased to learn about the ongoing success of the Tribe's partnership with the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and its Center for Indigenous Cancer Research (CICR).

Having reached the halfway point of its four-year grant from the National Institutes of Health, the partnership continues to provide pathways for Akwesasne youth into the field of cancer research and community health.

Joining representatives of Roswell Park in providing an update to the Tribal Council was SRMT Health Services Director Michael Cook, who shared, "This continues to be a great partnership and an amazing opportunity for our youth to explore and pursue their interests in health. To see many of our students put their hearts into their work with Roswell is very encouraging for our community's future."

Utilizing the NIH grant, the partnership established the Akwesasne Research Centers for Health (ARCH) in 2021 to honor the value of Indigenous knowledge in addressing health issues. It has allowed Akwesasne youth in high school and college to conduct medical research aimed at reducing the impact of cancer on Indigenous communities, including Akwesasne. The student's research was conducted in collaboration with CICR's team of renowned research scientists.

The Akwesasne Research Centers for Health offers three separate components in coordination with the Tribe's Health Services and Education Division: Mohawk Youth Health Ambassador Afterschool Program, a twenty-week session offered at the Ronthahiohsthà:ke Clubhouse for high school juniors enrolled at Salmon River or Massena Central Schools; ARCH High School Summer Research Internship, a three-week program at Roswell Park for high school juniors to explore the field of medical research; and ARCH College Summer Research Internship, a ten-week session for college students to work in a specialty area of cancer research.

Since 2021; the Afterschool Program has engaged 31 high school juniors interested in pursuing a medical career, with 25 students continuing their pursuit during the summer internships. At the same time, four post-secondary students

participated in the College Summer Research Internship. All students that participated in the summer programs received stipends and stayed in dormitories in downtown Buffalo, NY at Canisius College.

This past summer, high school students were also mentored by three Mohawk college students who were hired as Residence Advisors. These young people offered mentorship and guidance during their three-week internship experience. "A significant part of this program was the building of interpersonal relationships with not just their peers, but also the team at Roswell that included their mentors and the CICR team. Being away from their home community can be challenging and this experience helped them all gain more confidence," shared Stephanie Cook, SRMT Education Division Director.

Participation in ARCH is helping to solidify a student's desire to keep studying medicine, with nearly 36% identifying as a "scientist" by the conclusion of the summer internship. It helped validate the decision of St. Joseph's University graduate Jake Maresca ('23) to become a nurse, stating "I'm going to apply for the nursing PhD program. I'm hoping to get a job at Roswell Park as a nurse and I'll be able to continue my research I've been working on this summer. When all these opportunities kind of lay right in front of you, I think it's a good idea to take them."

For St. Lawrence University student Dakota Lazore-Swan ('24) it has provided an opportunity to co-author a medical research paper for a peer-reviewed publication. Working with Rodney Haring, PhD, Director of the CICR and William Maybee, CICR Outreach Coordinator, on a project called ROOTS; the research paper looks at Indigenizing colorectal cancer screening. Lazore-Swan notes that, "Native American men in particular are more likely to get diagnosed in later stages of cancer, so we're trying to encourage more people to get screened. Having my name on a paper will go a long way for sure. I'll continue to prepare for medical school. I think I'd like to be a doctor in radiology."

Students who participated in ARCH's Mohawk Youth Health Ambassador Afterschool Program have been invited to share their experience at the Monthly Tribal Meeting scheduled for Saturday,

October 14, 2023. Joined by CIRC representatives, their presentation will help launch the next round of applications for interested Mohawk high school juniors who reside on either the U.S. or Canadian-side of the Akwesasne Territory.

For more information about any component of the Akwesasne Research Centers for Health (ARCH), please contact SRMT Education Division Director Stephanie Cook by calling (518) 358-2272 or email [Stephaniei.Cook@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:Stephaniei.Cook@srmt-nsn.gov).







# Advertising Assessment Survey Results

**S**RMT Communications Director Brendan White Presented the results of the Akwesasne Community Advertisement Assessment Survey. The informal opinion poll requested community input on current advertisements around Akwesasne across all mediums. The survey was launched in response to an action item stemming from the June 2023 Tribal Monthly Meeting. A request was made by community members to review the “Adult Use Cannabis Ordinance” regarding signage and advertisements.

Director of Compliance, Elliott Lazore, presented “Public Advertising in Akwesasne” at the July 2023 Tribal Monthly Meeting. Compliance observed over 84 total advertisement signs in Akwesasne. Six (6) containing advertisements for tobacco, two (2) for alcohol, seven (7) for petroleum, thirty-six (36) for cannabis, eight (8) for government and community groups, and twenty-five (25) were other businesses not included in the aforementioned.

The Communications Department launched an informal opinion poll following the presentation, titled “Akwesasne Community Advertisement Assessment Survey”. A total of 337 completed surveys were collected from July 21, 2023 – August 25, 2023. The survey was available online and in person, with 303 completed online and 34 in person. White provided an overview of the survey

and provided analytics that detailed the number of responses for each question. The conclusion of the survey will signal the start of the next steps.

Next steps are as follows:

- Council to obtain youth input through the survey, closing October 31st.
- Council to review the results and discuss the next steps with Compliance in regards to a new advertising and signage ordinance. Consultations with community members once ordinance is drafted
- Tribal Council Review Period
- 30-day public comment period with addition public meetings
- Tribal Council will review comments and final draft amendments will be developed
- Notice of final action to be taken

All presentations, meeting recordings, and the “Akwesasne Community Advertisement Assessment Survey” results are available on the Tribal Members portal. For more information on how to access the portal or issues with logging in, contact the Communications Department at [communications@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:communications@srmt-nsn.gov)





# It's Up In The Air

By Angela Benedict, SRMT Air Quality Program Manager

Since the last time an article was written a lot has happened within the Air Quality Program. We have expanded our team, updated equipment, added a permit portal, and want to remind you of important safety measures when dealing with poor air quality.

The program now has four full-time staff dedicated to detecting radon and lead, monitoring indoor air quality, acid rain, fluoride in vegetation, criteria pollutant monitoring, issuing burn permits and everything else that has to do with air.

The wildfire smoke from Canada has kept our department busy with updating the community on air quality and educating on ways to keep yourself and others safe. We have added a new and improved particulate matter instrument that will allow us to give the community real time data on air quality and are looking at new ways to communicate that to you.

The Environment Division has a newly added permit portal where you can access the following:

- Burn Permits (no cost for residential burn permits)
- Hauler Permits
- Pesticide Applicator Permits
- Solid Waste Construction Permits.

The portal link can be found on the Tribes website under "Environment"- "Air Quality" or you can go to: <https://envpermits.srmt-nsn.gov/> and register with an email address.

When the air quality gets worse, don't forget about your furry friends! Animals, like dogs, cats and birds, are affected as well. If you have a pet that stays outside most or all of the time think about giving them a clean environment like a garage or indoor space and keep the windows and doors closed as much as possible. Consider purchasing an air purifier and stay away from ionizers and electrostatic precipitators that produce Ozone, a lung irritant. Protect vulnerable populations like children and the elderly from the worsening air quality by staying indoors and wearing a mask when they have to go out.

If you have questions on whether the air quality in your home is safe, or to speak with the certified lead inspector, please give us a call (518) 358-5937.

**There's nothing more important than keeping everyone safe and healthy for the next seven generations.**

# Medicine Gathering Symposium

That's a wrap for the Medicine Gathering Symposium! Community members were invited to attend this two day event aimed at revitalizing traditional practices and spread knowledge of kanienkeha medicine teachings, through stories, presentations and workshops.

The event kicked off at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday September 23rd and continued through Sunday until 4:00 p.m.. Four young akwesasronon did the honor of opening the weekend with a recitation of Ohen:ton Kariwatehkwen including Yakele Jimerson, Shayes Jimerson, Wa'tiokehon:ti Shenandoah, and Rawenniserahawi Back. (see top left photo)

The event was provided by community nonprofit organization Onkwe in partnership with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe.

The lineup of events included workshops and presentations by traditional healers, and knowledge carriers. Activities throughout the weekend included: clay pipe-making with Katsitionni Fox, smudge bundle making with Lotus + Sage Holistics, Story-telling with Darrel Thompson, pouch making with Akwesasne Child and Family Wellness, medicine harvesting protocols with Nihahsenna'a Peters, Ohenton Kariwatekhwa and medicine making speech teachings with Teyutkwa Jimmerson, flowers as medicine with Alicia Cook, throat making spray with Lisa Jock, ointment making with Pat Banker, Kanien'keha medicine vocabulary with Mitchell Brant, and a cornhusk doll activity with Skanaien:'a Deer.



“Onkwe would like to say niawen to everyone who participated in the Akwesasne Medicine Gathering Symposium this past weekend!!! To the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, who made it possible through the BIA Tribal Resiliency Grant. This grant was awarded to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe in 2018 for the purpose of funding community workshops that help build resiliency to climate change. The workshops focused on traditional activities related to hunting, fishing, trapping, medicines, healing, and agriculture.” Onkwe would also like to thank Mohawk Council of Akwesasne’s Traditional Medicines as well as their Akwesasne Child and Family Services Program for the

presentations and childrens craft table. Niawen to all the presenters who came out to talk and teach, to the food and craft vendors, to the singers who shared your beautiful songs, to Tsiakwawennatohe’s Language Initiative for doing the closing, Generations Park for being so helpful with your space. To Amberdawn Lafrance with all your assistance in the planning of this event. And to the community, niawen for attending and learning! These important teachings will live on longer with your help and enthusiasm for learning about medicines. We have an amazing strong community and it couldn’t happen without your support.”







## In Other News...

In case you missed events around Akwesasne, here is a snapshot! For more information on events, activities, and workshops head to the Tribe's Facebook Page!

## IAC Eastern Regional Summit

An immersive look at traditional food practices and networking local agricultural efforts to USDA opportunities.



## Wellness Walk & Lunch

Take a lap for Suicide Awareness Month. The Suicide Prevention Committee teamed up to provide the Wellness Walk & Lunch at walking trails throughout Akweasne! Walkers participated in wellness trivia and were treated to a FREE lunch. Those who completed the trivia were entered for an awesome prize. Keep an eye out for more events and exciting updates!

**Submit your news to [communications@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:communications@srmt-nsn.gov) to be featured in the Kawenn:iios Newsletter!**

# TRIBAL MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA

Chairperson: Chief Michael Conners.

**1. Call meeting to order**

**2. Review previous agenda items**

- a) Update of the Adult Use Cannabis Ordinance regarding advertising and signage. Awaiting the results of the youth survey responses and next steps.
- b) Request to present results from justice survey regarding youth perspective on advertising. This initiative is currently in progress.

**3. Formal Tribal Recognition of 2023 Chief of Police of the Year Award from NNALEA**

**4. Introduction of Tewáthahón:ni Corporation Board of Directors**

**5. Fall Heating Assistance Update by Compliance**

**6. Tribal Procedures Act Working Group Presentation**

**7. Tribal Council Update**

**8. New Business**

**9. Announcements/Reminders:**

- a) Tribal Council's Radio Talk Show on Tuesday, October 17th at 10:15am on CKON 97.3fm.
- b) Tribal Council Work Session at 9:00am on Wednesday, October 18th in hybrid format via Zoom and in the Council Chamber.
- c) 2022 Tewáthahón:ni Audit Presentation on Wednesday, October 18th and Tribe's Audit Presentation on Thursday, October 19th in hybrid meeting format on Zoom and in the Tribal Administration Building lobby at 5:00pm.
- d) Reminder: The Office of the Aging held its annual Public Hearing on October 11th; Accepting comments on the hearing until October 25th.
- e) Reminder: November 8th is the last day for members to drop off hazardous materials at the Transfer Station.

**10. Next Monthly Meeting: Kentenhkó:wa | November 4, 2023 with Chief Cook as Chairperson.**

**11. Review of Action Items**

**12. Adjournment**

**For more information, or to watch the Tribal Monthly Meeting recording, please log in to the Tribal Members Portal.**

## UPCOMING TRIBAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**November 1st - Tribal Council Work Session**

**November 4th - Monthly tribal Meeting**

**November 6th - Comment Period Deadline - Used oil Regulations**

**November 7th - Tribal Council Radio Talk Show**

**November 8th - Tribal Procedures Act Consultation Meeting @ 5:00 pm**

**November 14th - Tribal Council Work Session**

**November 16th - Police Commission Meeting**

## TRIBAL COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

**TCR 2023-46** To Approve the Akwesasne Housing Authority 2024 Indian Housing

**TCR 2023-45** To Amend Terms of Tribal Council Director and Alternate to the Tewathahonni Corporation

**TCR 2023-44** To Appoint Kristopher Johnson to the Akwesasne Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

**TCR 2023-43** To Appoint Board Members to the Tewathahonni Corporation

**TCR 2023-42** To Amend the SRMT Non-Member Fishing Regulations and Law

## TRIBAL MEMBERS PORTAL - VIDEO RECORDINGS

**October 24th - SRMT Used Oil Regulations Meeting**

**October 19th - SRMT Audit Presentation**

**October 18th - Tewathahon:ni Corporation Audit Presentation**

**October 18th - Tribal Council Work Session**

**October 14th - Tribal Monthly Meeting**

**October 4th - Tribal Council Work Session**

**September 13, 27th - Tribal Council Work Session**

**September 9th - Tribal Monthly Meeting**



# Employee Years of Service Awards

Join us as we celebrate our employees on their years of dedication to providing excellent services to the community of Akwesasne.



## 5 Years

Christopher Adams Linda Benedict, Jonathan Clark, Frank David, Dane Gorrow, Tasha Guatney, Shannon King-Oakes, Marcy McDonald, Larry Roundpoint, Shenae Tarbell, Caralee Thompson, Tameka Thompson, Tewasherake Barnes, Kristen Bleau, Clint Cole, Leland Farnsworth, Helen Gray, Jehnsen Jacobs-Dumas, Haylee Lauzon, Justin Oakes, Chastity Stehlin, Destin Thomas, Ida Thompson, Veronica Thompson, Brittany Benedict, Stephen Buddenhagen, Jayson Cook, Rachel Gar-

row, Jared Gray, Christopher King, Louis Martin, Meghan Peters-Schuler, Misty Swamp, Lawrence Thomas, Janelle Thompson.

## 10 Years

Tyson Back, Dale Cole, Paul Jackson, Kristin Jock, Erica Legrow, Tyler Rourke, Chastity Shova, Lee Thomas, Tsiorasa Barreiro, Justine George, Jocelyn Jacobs, Amy Lazore, Michael Markham, Kim Russell, Julie Smoke, Katsitsonkwass Thompson, Margaret Chaussi, Owen

Green, Paige Jacobs, Everett Lazore, Vincent Phillips, Leah Shenandoah, Melissa St Mary, Dale White.

## 15 Years

Henry Arquette, Faron Cole, Dana Gibson, Danielle Papineau, Robert Sunday, Aimee Vida, Peter Barnes, Julius Cook, Frank Hill, Patricia Pierce, Rosemary Thompson, Bettina Whitebean, Wesley Benedict, Kristine Cook, Racine Johnson, Gwendolyn Staves, Tracy Thompson.



## 20 Years

Shari Adams, Anthony David, Katrina Jacobs, Robert Paquin, Jill Benedict, Dana Henhawk, Jessica Jock, Sarah Swamp, Melissa Connors, Robert Henhawk, Nancy Oakes, Cassidi Thompson.

## 25 Years

Roderick Cook, Matthew Rourke, Roderick Cook, Matthew Rourke, Alexander Jock.

## 30 Years

Marie Benedict, Agatha Thompson, Heather Durant-Benedict, Barbara Kelly.

## 35 Years

Gloria Herne and April Jacobs.



***The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe  
Health Services app is your community  
connection at home and on the go.***







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