



KAWENNI: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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Home Health Aide Appreciation

Photo Credit: Alethea Lazore, Senior Accountant

Good Words of Welcome

With Chief Michael Conners



She:kon Sewakwe:kon Akwesasro:non!

Ohsera:se/Happy New Year wishes to everyone from my family and Tribal Council. The Tribe worked throughout 2023 to make Akwesasne a better place for all, from our newborn babies to our elders. As we work for everyone in Akwesasne daily, balancing the needs of all.

One of the main initiatives that we continue to work on, as has every former Council member for the past 40 plus years, is our land claims settlement. It finally feels that we are at the finish line for a negotiated settlement. This settlement would bring an end to over forty years of litigation and internal negotiations. It would bring our community to a new era of increased land base, expanded jurisdiction, and title to foreclosed properties that so many members have been patiently waiting for.

Our community members in the Land Claim areas will be able to have clear title to their property. With that they can then sell it, will it, or mortgage it. Those options are currently not there for some properties in the settlement areas. Our community would have access to a larger area for our children, grandchildren, and future generations. That is the main focus for us, and past Councils, and will be a great benefit for Akwesasne Mohawks. This is something that we can all be proud of.

Niawen’ko:wa to all the community leaders who have come together to get us to the finish line for the common good of Akwesasne. This includes our leaders from the Tribe, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs. We all see the path to a better tomorrow for our community.

There are many exciting things to look forward to in 2024, in cooperation with Tribal Council and Administration, such as:

- Generations Park Phase II Project Completion: Akwesasne devotes a great amount of time and attention to sports and other priorities, we are now also devoting the resources into the Arts, with the new Amphitheater funded by Community Development (TCR 2022-39). The concept was presented at a monthly meeting in early 2020, and is now in construction. We look forward to many performances happening, which will bring our community together in a common place in late summer/early fall 2024. In addition, the Phase II project includes additional parking, restrooms, two shaded structures, illuminated walking paths, and two basketball and two volleyball courts!

- Completion of the newly renovated Teionkwarihwaenawà:kon/Community Services Building, formerly known as the “IGA”. Council committed to this renovation with ARPA funding, which preserved Tribal General Fund dollars. We remain dedicated to this renovation for the benefit of our community members who access much needed services regularly, our valued employees who deserve a modern and safe work environment. Nia:wen to not only Planning and Infrastructure, but everyone who worked on this. Special thank you to our ironworkers and local trades work force for their time and hard work on a major project in Akwesasne. For all of them, I am proud to have supported moving this project forward. The community will be able to see the results all of the hard work in Spring 2024.

- Again, since the inception of the Elders Benefit in 2018, the vital program will disburse full payments for our valued elders. We are proud to be able to commit resources to our valued elder population in 2024.

- Once again, we are proud to support the Haudenosaunee Nationals Development Group in 2024. This support will help to develop some of our youth into Olympians in 2028, helping them to compete on a world stage.

These are just some of the advancements and improvements in our community. It is not easy to balance the needs of everyone in Akwesasne every day. We have to balance limited resources for the betterment of all. That is our challenge, and one we are all proud to advance with.

Tribal Council wishes you a prosperous 2024. We look forward to progress—advancing our community to better the lives of all Akwesasro:non and for our future generations.

EXTREME WEATHER AND WINTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready for the next big storm?

Winter is here and we are all getting ready for some skiing, sledding, children making snow angels and snowmen and just loving the outdoors. Before we enjoy and explore our winter wonderland of freshly fallen snow, please remember to take precautions and prepare the best ways to keep ourselves and our families safe during these colder months.

As most of us are familiar with how conditions are in the North Country, winter storms have brought extreme cold temperatures, freezing rain, snow, high winds, and widespread power outages. In some circumstances many community members were left unprepared and needing help through the storm. This would serve as a reminder that home preparedness is a must and should include all of your family members, neighbors and four-legged friends. This quick guide is designed to help you jump start your preparedness efforts

Preparing for Extreme Weather Travel:

- Keep your gas tank full to avoid freezing water in fuel lines
- Check tires and spare tires for proper inflation
- Check vehicle fluids; oil, antifreeze, windshield washing fluid
- Supplies to have on hand: jumper cables, ice scraper, small shovel, extra blankets, water, flashlight, batteries, sand or non-clumping kitty litter and reflective warning signs

• **Remember safety first, not only for you, but for our local first responders. Stay safe out there everybody!**

What you need to Be Prepared for Extreme Weather Conditions:

- Water: have at least a 3-day supply; one gallon per person per day
- Food: at least a 3-day supply that is easy-to-prepare supply and non-perishable
- Flashlights: battery-powered or hand crank radios, extra batteries, and a cell phone with charger
- First Aid Kit
- Medications: at least a 7-day supply as well as medical items (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes)
- Personal hygiene and sanitation items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list, pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Extra cash
- Baby supplies: bottles, formula, baby food, diapers
- Pet supplies: collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Sand, rock salt or non-clumping kitty litter to make walkways and steps less slippery
- Warm coats, gloves or mittens, hats, boots and extra blankets and warm clothing for all household members
- Ample alternate heating methods such as fireplaces or wood - or coal-burning stoves

Submitted by Katrina Jacobs, Office of Emergency Management & Safety

Education Division: Youth Services

WHAT DOES YOUTH SERVICES OFFER?

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Youth Services Program Education Specialists provide academic support to the following schools:

Salmon River Central School

Elementary School, Middle School, High School

Massena Central School

Jefferson Elementary, Massena Central High School

The Education Specialists offer a safe place to study and work on studying and note taking skills. They offer tutoring in core subjects. Snacks are also provided!



On Kentenhkó:wa/November 7, 2023 the Youth Services and Career Services programs took 18 High School students from both Salmon and Massena Central School Districts to Syracuse University's Native Outreach Day to learn about their programs, services and available scholarships. *Stay tuned for upcoming College tours in Spring 2024!*

Beginning in January 2024, the SRMT Youth Services will be implementing an Attendance Initiative for students in Grades 6-12 that attend Salmon River and Massena Central School Districts. Participants will be eligible to win monthly prizes! This initiative will conclude at the end of the school year in June of 2024. Students must be in the Youth Services Program to be eligible for the drawings that will take place each month.



Submitted by Becky Smoke, Youth Services Manager

Kawenní:ios Akohsera'ke/Winter 2024



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council would like to take this opportunity to update Akwesasron:non about our Tribal Land Claim Case and Settlement. Tribal Leaders have been pursuing our land claims for over 41 years. We were very close to a settlement in 2005 however, that negotiated settlement fell through because of a negative Supreme Court case. Since that time, the Tribe has managed to resurrect a settlement 18 years later, much on the same terms as the 2005 settlement. In fact, in some ways it is better than the previous settlement and now we are very close to a final agreement.

Scan the QR code to view the full FAQ



or visit the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's website
www.srmt-nsn.gov

Kawenní:ios Akohsera'ke/Winter 2024

2005 SETTLEMENT TERMS	2023 SETTLEMENT TERMS
Land Back to Indian Country Status: Current Mohawk Parcels immediate and other parcels over time with purchase	Land Back to Indian Country Status: Current Mohawk Parcels immediate and other parcels over time with purchase
Total Land: 8,122 Acres Area A - Hogansburg Triangle: 2,022 acres Area B - Fort Covington: 1,300 acres Area C - Brasher: 3,400 acres Area D - Massena: 1,400 acres	Total Land: 8,122 Acres Area A - Hogansburg Triangle: 2,022 acres Area B - Fort Covington: 7,260 acres Area C - Brasher: 3,400 acres Area D - Massena: 1,400 acres
Area A (Hogansburg) 2,022 acres	Same
Area B (Town of Fort Covington) 1,300 acres (plus additional lands upon County and Town consent, which could not be unreasonably withheld)	The entire Area B (7,260 acres) is considered a land acquisition area. All of Zone 1 (3,779 acres) is available for immediate conversion of title to restricted fee status. Parcels already owned by tribal members in Zone 2 (261 acres) are available for immediate conversion
Area C (Brasher) 3,400 acres	Same
Area D (Town of Massena) 1,400 acres	Same
Money from NYPA (\$70M)	Same
Free Tuition	Included, but enhanced to include all mandatory fees
Power Allocation	Included, but enhanced
Islands: Long Sault and Croil conveyed 215 acres (Massena Point) conveyed	No specific conveyance, but Plaintiffs have the right of first refusal to purchase. Access provided
Payments of \$30M to Plaintiffs	Not included

Economic Development

Committed to Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency

TOURS

Akwesasne Travel has enhanced its cultural tourism program with the addition of three new experiences, and has welcomed a new host to the mix. Existing offerings include Mohawk basketry, lacrosse stick making, and cultural centers tours. Visitors can now book tours with these Akwesasne entrepreneurs:

THE PLANT MEDICINES: GIFTS FROM THE LAND

Walk a natural medicines garden with traditional ecological knowledge holder Sateiokwen Bucktooth, founder of Snipe Clan Botanicals. She offers visitors a glimpse into Indigenous land-based practices, and widens their perspective on the important relationship between people and plants.



FIRE LOOM: THE ART & BEAUTY OF BEADED BELTS

Visitors will discover the beading technique be hind wampum belts with Kelly Back, co-founder of Fire Loom Creations. Her tour includes a close-up look at belts she's created for customers, as well as a



hands-on loom beading session as visitors make their own Two Row-inspired bracelet.

FROM LOG TO LACROSSE STICK

In anticipation of the increasing interest in Haudenosaunee lacrosse and traditional wood sticks, Akwesasne Travel has added Lewis Mitchell as a host for this tour. The Hall of Famer hosts visitors in his Tsi Sniahne factory, where he demonstrates the fascinating art of wooden lacrosse stick making.



BACKYARD REMEDIES

Currently in development, this interactive tour is all about hands-on learning and experiencing the natural remedies in your own backyard. Host Angie Barnes, founder of Ore'onta Herbal Wellness, shares her knowledge with visitors as they make a beneficial salve using four plants commonly found growing wild.



Save the Date

AKWESASNE ART MARKET & JURIED SHOW
JULY 6, 2024 GENERATIONS PARK

Mark your calendars! The 2024 Akwesasne Art Market & Juried Show has been scheduled for Saturday, July 6 at Generations Park. Last summer's celebration drew some 1500 visitors to the art show, which featured 79 outstanding submissions by more than 50 Akwesasne artists. More than 80 vendors participated in the market. The impact of the 2023 Art Market on Akwesasne's local economy was over \$289,000.

AKWESASNE SHOP SMALL WEEK '23

Shop Small Week has garnered significant community support, establishing it as an annual celebration supporting local businesses. The event has flourished, fostering increased community participation and economic activity. Participation in 2023 surged to 38 businesses with a robust response of over 1500 entries recording over \$54,000 in sales.

Nia:wen/Thank you, to all who supported our local economy with their holiday shopping



SRMT OFFICE FOR THE AGING



Take a look at some of the services the Office for the Aging (OFA) has to offer!

The office for the aging receives funding and support from the NYS Office for the Aging, Title VI Native American Programs, Saint Regis Mohawk Seniors Club and the Tribal General Fund to provide services to the elders of Akwesasne.

Here are just a few services that OFA has to offer:

NUTRITION SERVICES



Home Delivered Meals are available for elders for long and short-terms.

Short-term meals are available for elders 55-years and up.

Long-term meals are available for elders 60-years and up.

Grab-n-Go Meals are also available by calling each day by 9:30 a.m. to reserve your spot. Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

ACTIVITIES



Some of the activities provided by OFA include: exercise and craft classes, informational presentations and day trips to local fun hot-spots.

A Calendar of events can be found in the OFA monthly Newsletter at www.srmt-nsn.gov, the SRMT Office for the Aging Saint Regis Mohawk Senior Center Facebook page and in-person at the Senior Center.

COUNSELLING AND BENEFITS (HIICAP & NY CONNECTS)

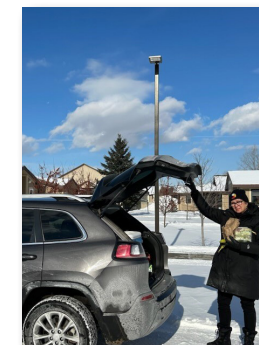


OFA provides assistance with Medicare, Medicaid and other health insurance applications.

Assistance is also provided in applying for other benefit programs such as SNAP, HEAP, LIHEAP and Social Security.

In-person meetings are available. Please note - clients must complete a health screening the day of their appointments.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



Transportation arranged in advance for our elders is available based on availability for:

- Shopping trips to Massena
- Limited Medical transportation to local providers, or to Massena and Malone
- Assisted Shopping for individuals with mobility or other reasons requiring assistance to shop.

CHORE PROGRAM



Akwesasne elders can apply each year for plowing and snow removal. Our dedicated plow drivers map out the homes of qualified elders, and make their way through the community on those snowy winter days.

Elders are also able to request home repairs by calling the Senior Center at (518) 358-2963.

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT



Counseling and Support is also available for Caregivers caring for an older individual or individual with dementia. Caregiver counseling is available to provide one-to-one counseling, education and assistance to family caregivers. OFA also partners with the Alzheimer's Association and SUNY Plattsburgh Caregiver Support Program to provide education and assistance.

LAND BACK

Akwesasne Mohawk Plaintiffs Convene Land Claim Information Session

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council hosted its third Land Claim Information Session of 2023 for general membership, on Kentenhkó:wa/November 16, 2023 at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort. Open discussions were held by community members of Akwesasne regarding the 41-year-old Akwesasne Mohawks Land Claim lawsuit with New York State and the federal government.

The “Akwesasne Mohawks Land Claim Information” was distributed by Tribal Council to members of Akwesasne, which included a chronology of Land Claim activity since 1982, along with over 30 frequently asked questions, and the Land Claim Maps of Areas A, B (Zones 1 and 2), C, D and total acreage to be reclaimed through a final settlement.

Chief Beverly Cook opened the meeting, welcoming everyone, followed by round table introductions of members from the Tri-Council, with participating representatives from the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, and a member of its legal counsel.

The Tribe presented an overview of the Claim, including the remaining actions or steps to be completed, and pertinent aspects of the settlement agreements. A copy of the presentation may be requested by visiting the Tribal Clerk’s Office.

Questions from the floor ranged from payments by the Tribe to the tuition benefit, County deeds v. Tribal use and occupancy, foreclosure and back taxes, consequences of not settling and being ordered back to court to resume litigation, FERC relicensing, power-megawatts, settling of the 1796 Treaty lands, right of first refusal for property not within the settlement, and impact of previous cases (City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York) and other Haudenosaunee Land Claim outcomes, etc.

Chief Cook explained that “[the Tribe is] still in court...[the Plaintiffs] can’t get out of the lawsuit in court...It is better to settle to get the opportunity to get as much land back as we can. We and the Magistrate are still waiting for [other parties] to respond.” It was relayed to attendees that the next status reports from the parties was to be due on Friday, November 17th.

“Many of our community members have worked hard over the years to reclaim this land, some of them are no longer with us. This has been a long journey and we are at a critical point now,” remarked Chief LaFrance. “It is not about [the money], it’s about reacquiring land, to expand the reservation,” stated Chief Michael Conners, adding “The money is irrelevant, compared to getting our land back, which was always the goal since the beginning.”

“This is the best it is ever going to get. We are actually winning, we’re getting back the land that we sued for... we didn’t sue for the Adirondacks, or the Mohawk Valley, or Ganienkeh. We sued for the 1796 Treaty lands and we are getting most of it back. I support you and please move ahead with this finally,” stated a community member at the close of the meeting.

The Tribal Council encourages members to review the information provided on the Claim at www.srmt-nsn.gov and attend future information sessions, in addition to Tribal Monthly Meetings where regular updates are provided to membership.

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Overcoming the Winter Blues

Written by: Marli Conners, A/CDP Clubhouse Worker

The “Winter Blues” is a common term referring to feeling down during the winter or around the holidays. It can also be used to describe Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a clinical diagnosis and is more severe than just feeling down.

SAD is caused by the shortening of days in the winter. The lack of sunlight can disrupt the body’s internal clock and lead to SAD.

Some signs include:

- Being withdrawn from loved ones
- Feeling worthless, irritable or hopeless
- Losing interest in hobbies and other activities
- Having low energy and oversleeping
- Unplanned weight changes
- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood most of the day, nearly every day, for at least 2 weeks

Seasonal Affective Disorder will usually go away on its own once the days become longer however, this can take several weeks or several months and that is a long time to go through a mental health struggle. Don’t fret, there is help! You can reach out to your health care provider to create a treatment plan. There are also many self-care activities you can do in addition to a treatment plan. Here are some helpful tips for taking care of your mental health and overall well-being during the winter season:

- Go outside and get sunlight, especially early in the day. Sunlight will help increase vitamin D levels.
- Spend quality time with loved ones and friends. Try a fun activity together such as ice skating, snowshoeing, or begin a new hobby.
- Eat nutritious foods and avoid overindulging in sweets. Winter is a great time to try cooking new recipes.
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling, whether it is a friend, loved one, or a mental health professional.

Remember to be patient with yourself! It’s okay to feel like you’re in a slump and remember that there is help out there.



If you are experiencing a mental health struggle or having thoughts of suicide, please reach out to one of these resources:

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Mental Health Services:

(518) 358-3145

SRMT Mental Health Services After-Hour Crisis Center:

(518) 651-4475

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1(800) 273-8255

Crisis Text Line- 24 Hour Text-line: Text “GOT5” to 741741

OUR TRIBE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT



Our Tribal government continuously evolves and changes to meet the needs of our families. Whether through annual elections, new investments in areas of need, or Tribal Ordinance updates, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) remains a dynamic vehicle for positive change in Akwesasne.

The overall purpose of the work of the SRMT, as expressed through its Strategic Plan is to develop ‘A healthy and prosperous Mohawk environment where every member has the opportunity to succeed at home and in the global community.’ Every Tribal employee, no matter their daily function, is working to support and fulfill this vision statement.

2023 has been another year of positive change and improvements made possible by the good work of our government staff.

The community saw completion of a new Health Clinic parking lot which is larger and safer than ever before. It will help the 35,000 + visits per year to our Health Services. Significant progress in the Tribal Housing project across Cook Rd was detailed in the last newsletter. The renovation of the former IGA building is nearing completion, and the new Community Services Building will bring together many community programs and services to a centralized location by May 2024.

A new Amphitheater to support community artistic

and cultural expression is underway and scheduled for completion late summer 2024. Two sand volleyball courts, two new basketball courts, a new washroom facility and additional parking space are part of this expansion at Generations Park.

Three new Transitional housing units opened just this month on Tribal Trust lands near the Transfer Station. These units will temporarily support families and individuals in crisis situations. The Transfer Station itself saw major renovations completed to improve solid waste disposal access and practices for Akwesasne.

Any one of these projects would be a major development. Our dedicated Tribal team under the leadership of many talented Division Directors have turned these ideas into reality. Implementation is the real work. The SRMT employs over 540 Mohawk members within Tribal government alone, and another 280 among Tribal enterprises. Akwesasne is fortunate that we have so many educated and hard-working Mohawk leaders, at all levels of the Tribe, serving the people, achieving real, tangible results.

They all deserve acknowledgment and a huge thank you. Niawenko:wa to all of you.

Through the referendum process, our community has made many self-determined changes to our



Tribal Government over the years. Whether it be the official name of our Tribe, terms of office for Tribal Council members, establishing a Tribal Court, gaming questions, Tribal project questions, Residency Ordinance, Cannabis legalization or the Procedures Act, our Tribe advances and develops based on the will of our membership and the work of our staff and Leadership.

This is proper, and will continue into the future as issues and opportunities come before the community.

Significant work has begun to receive community feedback regarding the 2013 Tribal Procedures Act. This Act outlines many important aspects of community governance and the responsibilities of our elected officials. The Procedures Act codified methods for increased member participation in Tribal Government in areas of Open Records, Referendums, Work Sessions and Financial Accountability. Tribal members will vote in a future referendum to approve eventual proposed changes to this important ordinance.

Our members have the agency and opportunity to make the changes now and into the future that are needed to meet the challenges that come our way.

As a secular government, the SRMT represents and supports all Tribal Members regardless of religious, personal or political beliefs. We define our

Akwesasne community in an inclusive way.

Everyone has a voice and every adult member has a vote in Tribal referendums. The unique needs of all age groups within the community are considered and balanced.

We do the best we can, with what we have; As our ancestors always have.

What we have is a dedicated team to think about the real, daily needs of our people. Ours is a Tribal Government that seeks to strengthen our Mohawk culture and identity, advocates for our rights, sustains opportunities for our people and embraces the diversity of our people and our workforce.

We will continue to evolve and grow by the dedicated work of Tribal staff and through the participation and voice of our community members.

It's up to us to craft our future. The answers we seek will be found in our own community. We move together ever more towards meaningful self-determination and full expression of our collective Tribal Sovereignty.

I'm very proud of the work of our team and grateful for the opportunity we all have to make lasting and positive differences in the lives of our people.

Wishing everyone peace, health and prosperity in 2024.



SRMT Health Services Home Health Aide staff pictured from left to right: Carrie Lazore, Erika Russ, Laura Benedict and Orenda Herne.

From meal prepping to changing the channel their TV, Home Health Aides like Orenda Herne and Laura Benedict provide essential services for community members who are homebound, whether they have disabilities that prevent them from easily taking care of basic chores, or elders who need an extra set of hands navigating their paperwork and affairs.

“Every house is different, but once you get in there you know everyone’s routine... To me it’s not just a job, it’s making sure you get in there and make sure they’re okay for the week, for the day, however long.”
- Laura Benedict

Home Health Aides are a part of SRMT’s Outreach Chronic Care Nursing program. The program’s mission statement is “to provide quality professional healthcare with dignity and privacy within the scope of our work.”

Their visits take place once or twice a week depending on the patients daily living needs. The aides are scheduled and supervised by a licensed nurse who creates personalized care plans for each patient. Some of the tasks include meal preparation, cleaning, bathing, helping with bills and electronics, or even organizing transportation to and from their appointments.

While also helping with these tasks, the relationship that

each aide builds with their client proves to be invaluable.

With many of their clients being elders, they take on a consistent role of simply providing company. Their relationships are personalized, and the friendships that are built are essential to many clients in the late stages of their lives.



“I have so many new aunts and uncles and so many totas, it feels like home everywhere.” - Orenda Herne
Home Health Aides have a demanding, essential job to the wellbeing of our disabled and elderly population here in the community, and without them there would be a large need in the health services field to bridge that gap between those individuals who have the ability to function on their own with little to no difficulty, and those who require round the clock care.

Home Health Aide Appreciation Week is celebrated during the second week of November. Taking time to show gratitude for all the essential services and support they provide is a way to recognize those whose work impacts a portion of our community in a deeply personal way.

“I love all my clients, I love the Totas. A lot of them became more like family.” - Laura Benedict



Tribe Announces New Assistant Executive Director

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) is proud to announce the hiring of James Lazore as Assistant Executive Director effective January 29, 2024.

The Assistant Executive Director is responsible to help lead operations, provide oversight and ensure sound fiscal management within Tribal Government. The Assistant Executive Director provides leadership to several direct-report Division Directors and supports the strategic self-governance goals and objectives of the Executive Director’s Office.

Born and raised in Tsi:snaihne, Akwesasne, James is the son of Ron and Pauline Lazore. James and his wife Elaine are proud parents to daughters Allison and Reannon. After earning his MBA from Clarkson University in 2005, James embarked on a career in Economic Development. He spent nearly a decade as General Manager of the Eskin Company in the Cree community of Mistissini, QC before returning home in 2017.

Joining the Tribe initially as Grants & Contract Manager, James transitioned to Director of Economic Development in 2018. In this role, he championed Akwesasne’s interests to regional Boards and Committees including collaborating with Chambers of Commerce to showcase the community’s diverse offerings. James continues to share his time for Iohahi:io, the Akwesasne Education & Training Institute,

as an instructor within the Marketing Essentials and Performance Management class and as a coach for youth volleyball.

James took a moment to acknowledge the significant contributions of his predecessor Gloria Herne, who passed away in August of 2023, “Gloria was a community leader whose passion and dedication to the Tribe was inspiring. Not only was she a respected colleague but also a dear friend and her impact will be remembered. The Tribe plays a pivotal role in our community and our staff works hard to bring the Tribe’s vision to life. We are charting a course that reflects the evolving needs of the Tribe and I’m eager to support that work in this new capacity.”



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and NYS Health Commissioner Strengthen Relationship



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council and New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald were delighted to make introductions and take part in a guided tour of the Akwesasne community on Thursday, September 14, 2023. It was the first visit to Akwesasne for Dr. McDonald, who was joined by First Nations Health and Wellness and NYS American Indian Health Program Director Michèle Hamel.

Dr. James McDonald was confirmed as NYS Health Commissioner by the State Senate on June 10, 2023. Since that time, Dr. McDonald has been working to empower New Yorkers to live healthier lives and increase their access to quality health care, including within underserved areas of the State.

“It was truly an honor to meet with the leaders and spend the day with the people of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe,” New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said. “It is so important that we continue to build and strengthen our partnership, and expand our understanding, as we work to promote public health. We discussed some of the challenges facing Akwesasne, and I look forward to working together to address these challenges and to finding new opportunities to expand our relationship.”

Commissioner McDonald also spent the morning visiting the Ronthahiihsthà:ke Clubhouse that is situated within the Diabetes Center for Excellence at 66 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way. Overseen by the Tribe’s Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency Prevention Program (A/CDP) and funded by the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), A/CDP Clubhouse Supervisor Anastasia Benedict shared resources and services that are being made available to assist youth as “they are making their minds good.”

Following a short visit and discussion on services supported by the NYS Office for the Aging at the Tribe’s Seniors Center (Tsi Tetewatatkens), Commissioner McDonald and Director Hamel visited the health services complex. SRMT Health Director

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Michael Cook and Assistant Health Director Kim McElwain were on hand to discuss the clinic’s recently completed expansion and renovation project and efforts to provide tribal members with access to quality healthcare.

The Tribe’s health administration team shared difficulties attracting and retaining healthcare professionals, such as doctors and nurses, as well as the reduction of health services at nearby medical facilities that clients had been accustomed to accessing. The reduction in surgical procedures and obstetric services at surrounding hospitals has required tribal members to travel further distances, placing an added burden on the tribal clinic’s budget.

Saint Regis Mohawk Health Director Michael Cook noted, “Recruitment of service providers and workforce challenges, as well as hospital consolidations in the region, have presented obstacles to our ability to provide continuum of care for our clients. We are also experiencing an increase in demand for mental and behavioral-health services that we look forward to addressing through a collaborative approach with the NYS Department of Health.”

Commissioner McDonald and Director Hamel next visited the Partridge House with A/CDP Clinical Director Connie Thompson and Program Coordinator Chrystal Cree to learn about the Health Service’s In-Patient Addiction Treatment Program. The visit touched upon obstacles faced with external funding agencies in considering preventive and rehabilitation services that are often uniquely tailored and incorporate culturally appropriate treatments.

Commissioner McDonald and Director Hamel toured the St. Regis Mohawk School and the proposed location for a new elementary school. They spoke about the \$17.8 million slated to construct a new Mohawk School in the 2022-2023 State Budget, away from a flood prone area on land to be provided by the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe through negotiations with the State.



Iakwa’shatste Youth Fitness Outdoor Program

Program update with Director of Outdoor Programming Annie Cree

Over the last 7 years our outdoor program has expanded beyond our expectations. Throughout the year we try to put out different outdoor programs to target all ages and all fitness levels. Our Enrichment Hiking Series is one of our programs that are formatted around the pillars of wellness. Enrichment Hiking runs in the Winter, Spring and Fall. We partner with MCA Holistic Health & Wellness and Holistic Life Foundation Akwesasne to bring the best of what we offer in the field of movement and healing. This particular hiking series is a slower paced take it all in kind of hiking. Each hike in the series is combined with a different component like meditation, yoga, mindfulness, painting, journaling and medicines. The healing and bonding we get to experience is what makes this such a need for our community. It is not every day you hike out to a waterfall to paint and visit in nature. Our partnerships truly help so we are able to continue this program.

We also offer specialty hikes, group hikes, one on one heal hikes and moon hikes. Our specialty hikes mostly revolve around changing of the seasons like Summer Solstice, Spring Equinox, National hiking day, New Day Hike, Every Child Matters and so many more. Our recent Winter Solstice Hike we celebrated the longest night and what winter means to us and taking a hint from nature and slowing down a bit, resting, recovering and renewing to prepare for spring. Full moons are our favorite outings or catching a sunset or sunrise. There is

something so powerful, energizing and healing about sitting on top of a mountain to the sunrise or sunset.

This past year because of the rise in numbers we have had to close registration on a lot of different outdoor programs. We are working on ways to help get our community out there in nature or on a trail. We recently launched our Kids 4 Season Wilderness Patch Program Winter Edition Activity Book that can be picked up at the Akwesasne Cultural Center Library. We are excited to launch for so many reasons. This program will help families get outdoors and explore! On their own at their own pace. This is a hybrid program which means we do offer programs that tie into the activities in the book if families need help or have questions. The program gives kids or adults (It is open to all ages) a chance to earn badges by completing outdoor activities like tracking, birding, snowshoeing, a scavenger hunt to local nature areas and challenges that offer chances to win prizes too. This program helps open the door to reach a bigger group in our community. If we had ran this program as an in-person program, we would have to cap our groups at less then a quarter of what we are able to accommodate as a hybrid and that makes a huge difference.

This is just a small part of what we offer in our outdoor program. All our programming can be found on our Facebook page Iakwa’shatste Youth Fitness. If you have any questions or want to book any outdoor programs, just send an email to Acree@iakwashatste.com and we will get back to you. Happy Hiking!

Kawenni:ios Akohsera’ke/Winter 2024

Q&A

During the winter months, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Let's Get Healthy Program sees an influx of participants within their program, and encourages other community members to join in on their activities. Located at the Diabetes Center for Excellence, they offer a variety of activities for community members to help maintain and prevent diabetes and other health concerns.

Megan Bushey and Aaron Jock are the Health Promotional Specialists with the Let's Get Healthy Program, helping community members in starting and maintaining their fitness journey.

Let's get to know your trainers!



Q: How did you get started with the Let's Get Healthy program?

Megan: "I started off with health services working with A/CDP. I was with their program for seventeen years. I was always interested in health and fitness, and working out. Throughout covid it was a lot of online training, and I

With Megan and Aaron Let's Get Healthy Program

Written by: Montana Adams, Multimedia Journalist

wanted to learn more about the body and fitness for myself, but also for others. To motivate and help others keep in shape, to move and to eat healthy. Just what I learned in my personal years of working out myself, but once I started here I did an online training to get certified as a personal trainer through ISSA (International Sports and Sciences Association). I just took class after class. I also learned a lot through watching, and Aaron's helped me out and taught me many things. We really work as a team, run ideas by each other, and develop a fitness plan for somebody. He'll look at it and give feedback. Same with fitness classes, we'll both come up with a plan, and talk about it, you know, how to make it better. So all of that has helped me learn a lot more."

Q: How do you connect with your clients?

Megan: "The fitness center here is similar to an open gym, they can come in anytime from Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or Fridays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They sign in, sign out, do exercises they need to or if they have questions or need help learning how to use the machines, or if they're looking to target a certain muscle or area, we'll give them some ideas. We also offer various classes throughout the week, which can be found on our Facebook page.

Fitness assessments are also available

for those who aren't sure of what to do or where to begin. We'll begin with a fitness assessment of their body composition. It's a scale that we have that measures their weight, and BMI. This tells how much muscle vs fat percentage is in your body, as well as how much water is in your body. The assessment also involves fitness tests including push-ups, squats and sit-ups. There is also a flexibility test. Participants also walk on the treadmill for 6 minutes to get their active heart rate. Some may choose only a small part of the assessment, or they may want the full thing. Sometimes Community members like to use the assessment as a baseline of measurements to see where they started from. 'This is how many push ups you did when you first started'. Then, six months to a year down the road, let's do it again and 'Look, you can do a lot more push ups' 'You've gotten stronger', 'You're flexibility has increased'."

Q: What are the benefits of having a program like this for the community?

Megan: "The fitness center is open to anybody who lives and works in the Akwesasne Community. This is a wonderful and free resource here! We wish more Community members would stop by and learn more about what we have to offer."

Cont. on page 17



Q: Tell us about yourself and your position at Let's Get Healthy:

Aaron: "I am a Health Promotion Specialist here. I received a Master's Degree in Sports Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. I am also certified with the National Academy of Sport Medicine specializing in golf fitness, group fitness and personal training with 15-years experience."

Q: In your opinion, what is the importance of the programs benefits for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe?

Aaron: "In my opinion, the importance of our programs benefits the community members and SRMT employees is strong. I believe that exercise with balanced nutrition is essential in improving your quality of life. Employees and members will be more productive in completing their daily tasks. Lastly, we are here to help you meet your health and fitness goals."

Q: What is your favorite part about your position as a Health Promotion Specialist?

Aaron: "My favorite thing about my position as a Health Promotion Specialist is witnessing Community members and employees progress with growing confidence by attaining

their health and fitness goals. It can be weeks, months or years. It is rewarding to see them being happy with their progress."

Q: What does being healthy mean to you?

Aaron: "With 15-years experience within the fitness industry, I believe



being healthy is all about your overall health and vitality. To be healthy, you must take care of your body and your mind. My advice to the community in terms of helping with their fitness journey is to start slow and work gradually. As you begin your fitness program, keep these tips in mind:

Give yourself plenty of time to warm up and cool down with light cardio and stretching along with some resistance training – focusing on

different muscle groups. The most important advice I can give is 'LISTEN TO YOUR BODY'. These tips will make a big difference in your fitness journey."


Q: In your opinion, what's a simple step the community can take to help with their fitness journey?

Aaron: "The Let's Get Healthy Program is a recipient of the Indian Health Service Special Diabetes for Indians Community-Directed Grant (SDPI). The program focuses on effective evidence-based intervention strategies using the SDPI Best Practices. They use a broad, community-based public health approach to diabetes treatment and prevention for American Indian and Alaska Native people. The program works to identify and develop services and activities that address local concerns and needs. If you're looking to improve or start your fitness journey, consider stopping into the gym, located at the Diabetes Center for Excellence.



Top trending Google searches in 2023

Shekon - in my role at Akwesasne TV, I'm always looking at our social media analytics and diving into the digital world. In this issue, I've cooked up something fun – a peek into the 'Top Trending Google Searches of 2023.' From great shows to what had everyone buzzing, it's a sneak peek into what kept us all scrolling and clicking!

 Brittany Bonaparte
Producer, Akwesasne TV



United States

News

- 1. War in Israel and Gaza
- 2. Titanic submarine
- 3. Hurricane Hilary
- 4. Hurricane Idalia
- 5. Hurricane Lee

Actors

- 1. Jeremy Renner
- 2. Jamie Foxx
- 3. Danny Masterson
- 4. Matt Rife
- 5. Pedro Pascal

People

- 1. Damar Hamlin
- 2. Jeremy Renner
- 3. Travis Kelce
- 4. Tucker Carlson
- 5. Lil Tay

Athletes

- 1. Damar Hamlin
- 2. Travis Kelce
- 3. Brock Purdy
- 4. Lamar Jackson
- 5. Jalen Hurts

Passings

- 1. Matthew Perry
- 2. Tina Turner
- 3. Jerry Springer
- 4. Jimmy Buffett
- 5. Sinéad O'Connor

Movies

- 1. Barbie
- 2. Oppenheimer
- 3. Sound of Freedom
- 4. Everything Everywhere All at Once
- 5. Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3

Akwesasne

Top 5 trending “near me” searches

- 1. Air quality near me
- 2. Podiatrist near me
- 3. Rage room near me
- 4. Dispensary near me
- 5. Pilates near me

Top 5 trending “versus” searches

- 1. Heat vs Nuggets
- 2. Tyson Fury vs Francis Ngan-nou
- 3. Logan Paul vs Dillon Danis
- 4. Rangers vs Astros
- 5. Jon Jones vs CiryI Gane

Top 5 trending “tv show” searches

- 1. The Last of Us
- 2. Daisy Jones & the Six
- 3. The Night Agent
- 4. Shrinking
- 5. The Golden Bachelor

April Lauzon Elected President of the National Association of Tribal Child Support Directors



The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) takes immense pride in congratulating April Lauzon on being elected as the President of the National Association of Tribal Child Support Directors (NATCSD). Lauzon’s well-deserved appointment was announced by the NATCSD on January 22, 2024.

“I am humbled and honored to have been elected by my peers in the Native American child support community to represent the needs of the organization and advocate for tribal children and families across Indian country,” said Lauzon, who serves as the IV-D Program Manager for the SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU). She added, “I am fortunate to work with a great group of community-minded individuals at SRMT and it is with their support and hard work I am possible to expand our reach and provide visibility to our community and it’s unique landscape.”

The NATCSD was established in 2006 as an association with the purpose of assisting directors of tribal child support programs with the everyday problems and questions that arise from operating a tribal child support program so that they may do a better job in providing the needed services to tribal children and their families. The NATCSD serves to work together to educate and communicate with federal and other agencies or entities regarding tribal child support programs. It is an excellent network resource for all Tribal Child Support Directors.

Lauzon has been working with the CSEU for the last three years and during this time she has focused on increasing engagement with participants and streamlining processes. With a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and experience in both the non-profit and private sector she brings a unique look at Child Support. As the IV-D Program Manager for SRMT, she leads her team in their mission to improve the well-being of children and families by promoting the emotional and financial responsibility between parents and children

Lauzon has welcomed the opportunity to bring attention to

SRMT on a National level and share our unique experiences and community. She has presented at the National Tribal Child Support Association Training Conference and served as a workshop moderator for the Region 1 & 2 State and Tribal Directors meeting. She looks forward to increasing program recognition within the community and implementing change on a national level.

SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit became the first comprehensive Tribal IV-D program in New York State and all of Region II in April 2014. The SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit can assist with location of persons responsible for child support, establishment of paternity, establishment of court orders for support, enforcement of court orders and modification of child support orders. Services are available to all parents or children who are eligible for tribal membership regardless of residency. SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit cannot provide legal advice nor assist with custody or divorce action.

What makes the SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit different?

- SRMT does not charge interest on arrears accrued prior to case transfer are still owed
- SRMT does not charge an annual receipt and disbursement fee.
- SRMT case managers have smaller caseloads than state case managers.
- SRMT reviews child support cases every two years and not every three years as the states.
- SRMT can offer families the option of child support including non-cash payments or in-kind support (if agreed upon by both parties)

SRMT encourages parents to participate in mediation in effort to eliminate court appearances when appropriate

“Congratulations and deepest gratitude, to April Lauzon on the much deserved national recognition received from the NATCSD” stated Tribal Council.

Kawennì:ios “Good Words”

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