

October 2020



# MATAWA MESSENGER

The Power of Unity, The Dignity of Difference

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"Living with Us"... page 20

## Matawa Waka Tere Language Revitalization Project Celebrates First Ever Graduating Class Amid Global COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

On September 15, a celebration took place honouring the first graduating class of the Matawa Waka Tere Language Revitalization Project. Nine (9) participants of the project's first pilot received their Anishinaabe Miicanak Gagiigadodaa Ishigiishiwewin (Certificate in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language). Graduates were: Mary Ann Nawagesic, Shane Ostamus, Danielle Gibson, Katherine Hughdie, Morris Douglas, Monica Budiselic, Syndyn Baxter, Vivian Ann Martin and Nick Shaver. Matawa CEO David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa Education Manager Sharon Nate and Matawa Communications Manager Carol Audet joined in the online graduation.



They started in October 2019 with 20 staff members of Matawa and it evolved as an online course in April 2020 due to COVID-19. The language instructors (who were supported by Aroha Watene and Mike Graham - mentors in curriculum development) were Nancy Ritch (Marten Falls First Nation) and Lawrence Therriault (Aroland First Nation). They were responsible for developing the curriculum and teaching it.

During the graduation, Nancy Ritch said, "I would like to say Gichi Miigwech to all the participants who took part in our Anishinaabe language program at Matawa, this past year. It was a tough task due to all the things that happened. It took longer than expected. It didn't run smoothly as we had anticipated. But we did it! The participants all worked hard to complete the course. You all did very well. You hopped on board that big Chiimaan not knowing what you were getting into, but you survived the ride. You all know how to say some Ojibwe words and even form sentences now, that you will carry on forever. You were all perfect participants and I am glad I had a chance to work with all of you. Again, Gichi-miigwech to all of you!"

In his language, Lawrence Therriault said: "Booshoo gakinaaweya gitchii nendagoon aga gishtoowoj Matawa waka tere anishnabemowin iishgiishawewin. Meadash gaa ni chiikendum ag wiidookaziyan anishnawbemowin. Minoshin gakiinaweyag apchi go akchi nendagoon agii giish too yung ahow miinwa gawaabaminin. Chii miigwetch gidnin nim ack chii nookiiyang akendasowin anishnawbemowin geweh shkamagong." In English it is translated as: "Hello everybody. It is amazing we completed the Matawa Waka Tere Anishnabemowin language program. I am also happy to help teach language. It is very good that we all show pride and are happy to complete the Matawa Waka Tere Anishnabemowin. We will see each other again. Thank you all of Matawa participants working to learn Ojibwe, Cree and Oji-Cree for the language to recover and be healthy."

See more of this story on pages 2 and 3 >>>

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- \* Chief Celia Echum Memoriam & Ginoogaming FN Healing Lodge
- \* Matawa 32nd Annual General Meeting and the Matawa Garden

Welcome New Staff and more....





At the graduation, Katie Hughdie, Year One Student Representative said, "The learning journey is certainly not over for any of us. To my fellow students, it has been a pleasure and honour to learn beside you and see our confidence grow a little with each class. Regarding the class format, the focus of the class was fun, but still allowed me to be a typical student, with writing words down and lots of repetition. This type of learning appealed to a variety of people and allowed us to all learn in our own ways."

Throughout the pilot, students were expected to commit to attend language instruction 2 times per week (although there was a 6 week disruption due to the pandemic). Language instruction included a combination of learning tools and techniques that help those teaching the language understand and cater to their learners' needs. For example, the model uses relaxation techniques to support silent speakers to overcome anxieties they may face in learning or re-learning their language.

The Matawa Waka Tere Project is staffed as follows: Nick Shaver - PASS Program Administrator; Aroha Watene and Mike Graham - Maori Indigenous Language Specialists; Lawrence Therriault and Nancy Ritch - Ojibwe Indigenous Language Specialists; Suzan Sandau - Cree Indigenous Language Specialist and; Lois Whitehead and Tracy Spence - Oji-Cree Indigenous Language Specialists. Identified as a priority by the Matawa leadership, it will continue into the 2020/2021 year and hopefully beyond with future goals of community language instruction and accreditation, amongst other goals. 2



## Background/Future Plans for Preserving and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages in Matawa

With 2019 being the International Year of Indigenous Languages and with the passing of the Bill C-91, an Act respecting Indigenous Languages in May 2019, the issue of our language has been at the forefront of all of our minds. On March 8, 2019, Matawa submitted a brief to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage when this bill was being brought through parliament saying, "Fluency and retention rates vary but all languages within Matawa are either in the process of being lost, or in danger of becoming extinct. It was recently determined that many current language speakers will be lost within the next 5 to 10 years if action is not taken now." We know that our languages do a lot for our communities, including the following:

- Continues our status as a unique Nation in this country now known as 'Canada'
- It is a healthy response to our experiences in Residential and Day School (preserving our language says that the Residential/Day school system didn't win)
- It re-connects the generations and re-connects us to our identity (sense of knowing who we are - this is what immigrants do even though English and French are the official languages of Canada)
- It's a process of healing and de-colonization
- It validates our ways of knowing (our value system and understanding of the world)

With days like Orange Shirt Day passing recently on September 30, the issue of preserving and revitalizing our Indigenous languages becomes all the more important. For the Matawa leadership, the issue of language has been a matter of priority since 2012 when former Chief Johnny Yellowhead of Nibinamik First Nation visited New Zealand and saw their efforts in bringing their Maori language back. Overall, the Matawa Chiefs have done the following:

- Passed 'Language as a Nation Building Tool' resolution in 2015
- Approved Matawa Education Department funding submissions through New Paths for Education to allow work to proceed with Dr. Rongo Wetere and his team of Indigenous Language Specialists
- Passed 'Matawa Learning Institute' resolution in January 2020 to start the process of accreditation of the Matawa Wake Tere Language Project as follows: 1 year certificate, 2 year diploma and a 3 year bachelor's degree
- Passed 'Support for the Matawa Waka Tere Language Program' resolution at the Annual General Meeting in September 2020 which mandates Matawa Education to continue to work with the two current Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialists from New Zealand in the development and implementation of the Matawa Waka Tere program, including accreditation

As reported in the 2019/2020 Annual Report for the Matawa 32nd Annual General Meeting, much progress has been made in the last year in building a program, establishing capacity, developing curricula and an accreditation process. To date, the Year 1 Ojibwe Curriculum Document has been completed while curriculum documents for both face-to-face and online delivery in Cree and Oji-Cree continue to be completed. Curricula will reflect community dialects through the usage of Language Specialists and/or Community Instructor translations.

The program was significantly impacted by the pandemic in March 2020 wherein review of funding proposals Matawa submitted were put 'on-hold' while the federal government and Accreditation Council shut-down. Fortunately, Matawa Education has been able to maintain staffing levels through this time but as this funding starts to become unavailable, additional funding will be needed for the development of Year 2 of the program in 2020-2021 which will include community-based program delivery. Due to the success of this pilot, it is hoped that Matawa will be a benefactor of the \$33.7 million invested into Indigenous languages in budget 2019.

Boozhoo, Sydyn Baxter Ndzihinakaz,  
Thunder Bay Ndzihita, Eabametoong  
Ndoonji.

I was asked to share a few things with you about my experience being an Indigenous First Nation student learning the language.

My grandparents are fluent speakers, my parents understand and are familiar with the language, myself, I have little to no understanding, a few words here and there, my kids may or may not know just as much as I do as they develop.

As a child, it did not bother me until I was 15 years old that I did not know my language. I won't go into specifics of what it was like to grow up not knowing the language but it caused a lot of disconnection.

Disconnection in the sense of listening to other people speaking the language and suddenly burst into laughter and you feel left out because you don't understand. I know First Nation (Indigenous) people are hilarious when they speak in English, so I could only imagine what they were saying in their language.

As a teenager, I've dealt with a lot of hurt, anger, and frustration not knowing my language. As an adult, I started to realize and understand what went down in our history. I understood now that it's nobody's fault; it's just the product of years of systemic trauma and colonization our people endured.

I look around at our communities, our country, and neighbors down south and see that I am not alone in my experience with lost language. But I also see great language initiatives blossoming all over. Which is why when I first heard about the Indigenous Revitalization Project coming to Matawa, I was beyond excited, Ni-chiikendam.

I was fortunate to have a very supportive manager to allow me to attend and be a participating student, I am forever grateful to Angie Britt.

Summing up in one word being a participant in the Matawa Waka Tere pilot program would be connection. I still have a lot to learn but I feel more connected to my culture, my grandparents, and being that connection for my kids.

Two things I've learned in life is it's never too late to learn and anything is possible. I firmly believe that the Indigenous Revitalization project is that connection for our communities to reclaim their language.

Mligwetch to Matawa Education Department, language specialist, instructors and classmates. I am forever grateful to have been a part of this class.

**OUR  
LANGUAGE  
NEEDS US**

And we need our  
language

## CONGRATULATIONS Matawa 2020 Post-Secondary Graduates

	STUDENT	PROGRAM	
1	Aaron Bruder Meshake	Bachelor of Commerce: Economics and Mgt Science Co-op / Finance	Ryerson University 2020
2	Amanda Misnakoshkang	Bachelor of Environmental Studies – 4 year: Geography	Lakehead University 2020
3	Breanne Anderson	Bachelor of Arts: Indigenous Learning	Lakehead University 2020
4	Chrystal Waboose	Addictions with Community Services Worker	Willis College 2020
5	Clarissa Shewaybick	College Access	Confederation College 2020
6	Dayna Favretto	Social Service Worker: Community Studies Program	Georgian College 2020
7	Denise Magiskan	Motive Power Techniques - Automotive	Confederation College 2020
8	Ethan Villeneuve	Electrical Engineering Technology	Cambrian College 2020
9	Jada Sofea	Native Access Program	Lakehead University 2020
10	Jarah Holman	Honours Bachelor of Arts and Sciences - Criminology	Lakehead University 2020
11	Karen Bouchard	Early Childhood Education Program	Oshki-Wenjack 2020
12	Katherine Hardy	Medical Esthetics Diploma	Marca College of Hair and Esthetics 2019
13	Kayla McCraw	Aboriginal Community Advocacy	Confederation College 2020
14	Keri-Lynn Cheechoo	Doctorate in Philosophy – Education	University of Ottawa 2020
15	Kirkland Matasawagan	Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training Program	Confederation College 2020
16	Lance Lachapelle	Computer Support Technician	Robertson College 2020
17	Laurie DePerry	Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention Program	Oshki-Wenjack / Canadore College 2020
18	Lexus Therriault	Carpentry and Renovation Techniques	Confederation College 2020
19	Marcia Jacob	Indigenous Classroom Assistant Diploma	Nipissing University 2020
20	Mario Gionet	Adventure Recreation and Parks Technician	Sault College 2020
21	Rhianna Moonias	Early Childhood Education	Canadore College 2020
22	Robyn MacDonald	Paramedic Program	Confederation College 2020
23	Sterling Finlayson	Business Administration – Marketing: Advanced Diploma	Confederation College 2020
24	Tanis Faulconer	Social Service Worker – Native Specialization Program (Honours)	Oshki-Wenjack/Sault College 2020
25	Terri-Lyn Towegishig	Native Child and Family Services Program	Confederation College 2020
26	Tiffany Audette	Business Administration - Accounting	Cambrian College 2020
27	Veronica Mekanak	Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention Program	Oshki-Wenjack / Canadore College 2020



**CONGRATULATIONS**

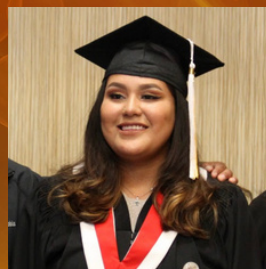




Aaron Bruder Meshake



Katherine Hardy



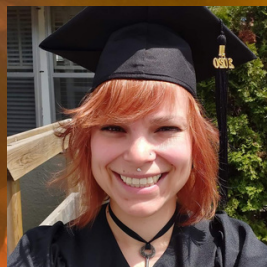
Jada Sofea



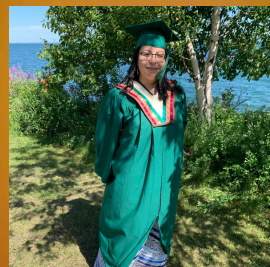
Laurie Deperry



Keri-Lynn Cheechoo



Amanda Misnakoshkang



Tanis Faulconer



Veronica Mekanak



# Matawa Radio

*Engaging First Nations over the airwaves*

**TUNE IN EVERY 2ND TUESDAY FROM 4:00 - 4:30 EST (3:00 - 3:30 CST)**

[www.wawataynews.ca/radio](http://www.wawataynews.ca/radio) | 89.9 FM in Sioux Lookout  
106.7 FM in Timmins

**Upcoming Shows:**

October 6  
October 20  
November 10  
November 24  
December 8  
December 22 (Matawa Christmas Show)



## Benefits of Walking

### Walking

Walking can offer numerous health benefits to people of all ages and fitness levels. It may also help prevent certain diseases and even prolong your life. Walking is free to do and easy to fit into your daily routine. *All you need to start walking is a sturdy pair of walking shoes.*

### Benefits

- 1. Burn calories** Walking can help you burn calories. Burning calories can help you maintain or lose weight. Your actual calorie burn will depend on several factors, including: walking speed, distance covered, terrain (you'll burn more calories walking uphill than you'll burn on a flat surface), your weight.
- 2. Strengthen the heart** Walking at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week can reduce your risk for coronary heart disease by about 19 percent. And your risk may reduce even more when you increase the duration or distance you walk per day.
- 3. Can help lower your blood sugar** Taking a short walk after eating may help lower your blood sugar. Consider making a post-meal walk a regular part of your routine. It can also help you fit exercise in throughout the day.
- 4. Eases joint pain** Walking can help protect the joints, including your knees and hips. That's because it helps lubricate and strengthen the muscles that support the joints. Walking may also provide benefits for people living with arthritis, such as reducing pain.
- 5. Boosts immune function** Walking may reduce your risk for developing a cold or the flu. Try to get in a daily walk to experience these benefits. If you live in a cold climate, you can try to walk on a treadmill or around an indoor mall.
- 6. Boost your energy** Going for a walk when you're tired may be a more effective energy boost than grabbing a cup of coffee. Walking increases oxygen flow through the body. It can also increase levels of cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine. Those are the hormones that help elevate energy levels.
- 7. Improve your mood** Walking can help your mental health. Studies show it can help reduce anxiety, depression, and a negative mood. It can also boost self-esteem and reduce symptoms of social withdrawal. To experience these benefits, aim for 30 minutes of brisk walking or other moderate intensity exercise three days a week. You can also break it up into three 10-minute walks.
- 8. Extend your life** Walking at a faster pace could extend your life. Researchers found that walking at an average pace compared to a slow pace resulted in a 20 percent reduced risk of overall death. But walking at a brisk or fast pace (at least 4 miles per hour) reduced the risk by 24 percent. The study looked at the association of walking at a faster pace with factors like overall causes of death, cardiovascular disease, and death from cancer.
- 9. Tone your legs** Walking can strengthen the muscles in your legs. To build up more strength, walk in a hilly area or on a treadmill with an incline. Or find routes with stairs. Also trade off walking with other cross-training activities like cycling or jogging. You can also perform resistance exercises like squats, lunges, and leg curls to further tone and strengthen your leg muscles.
- 10. Creative thinking** Walking may help clear your head and help you think creatively. Walking opens up a free flow of ideas and is a simple way to increase creativity and get physical activity at the same time.



**\*\*If you require more support or information, please contact the Matawa Health Co-operative at 1-833-625-3611\*\***

## Rapid Lynx Construction Update

The Broadband Project construction is moving along well despite being in a global pandemic. As of September 15th, 2020, the construction crew has installed 202 kms of fibre optic cable. The construction season is expected to continue until November 2020.



## Other Rapid Lynx Updates

### Marker Posts

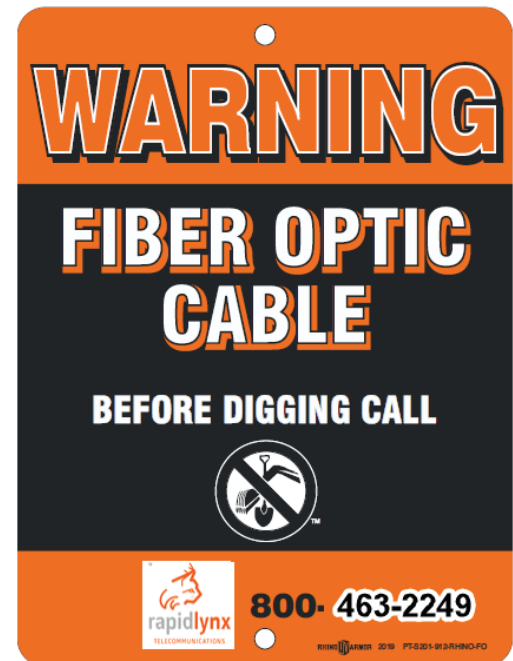
The crew is also installing marker posts every 300 meters (3 KMS) throughout the route. The marker posts help identify where the fibre optic cable has been installed.

### COVID-19

Our project team and construction crews have been following COVID-19 restrictions and protocols that have been provided by ROHL Global. As well as following guidelines of what is expected by our First Nation Leaders, Health Officials, and Government of Ontario. Our crews also have taken extra precautionary measures to ensure that our communities and their members are safe.

### Contact

For more information or concerns regarding the Broadband Project contact Wayne Slipperjack, General Manager in Training at [wslipperjack@matawa.on.ca](mailto:wslipperjack@matawa.on.ca) | 1-807-344-4575 | 1-800-463-2249.





## Matawa Chiefs Reject Bill 197

On August 28, 2020, the Matawa Chiefs issued a media release rejecting Ontario's Bill 197, making it clear that they reject the Bill, and the tactics used by the Crown to attempt to "take up the land" and access the resources and wealth of the Matawa territory.

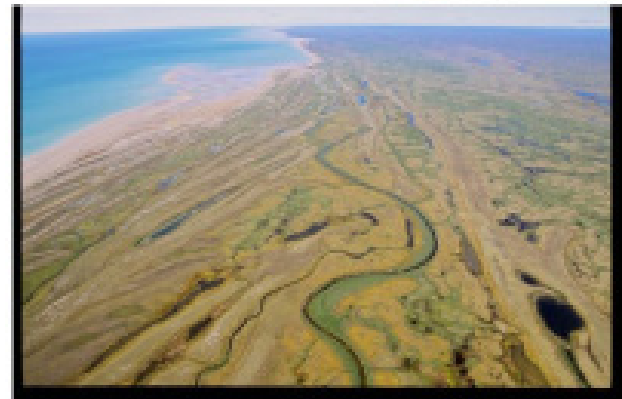
At the start of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Ontario government declared a black-out on environmental reporting requirements, but are moving to strip away all 'red-tape' for the mining, forestry and energy industries who are eyeing the resources of the North. The Ontario government has used the cover of COVID-19 to make legislative, regulatory and policy changes that attempt to diminish the obligations of Ontario to honour the constitutionally-protected Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of First Nations across Ontario.

The Matawa Member First Nation people are leaders in asserting their Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. The Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction (RP&J) department continues to monitor and provide analysis on the ever-changing political landscape across Canada, including all levels of government, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

### Matawa chiefs accuse Queen's Park of Far North land grab

New environmental assessment legislation opens door for resource development without regional consent, say First Nation leaders

Aug 29, 2020 5:00 PM By: Northern Ontario Business Staff



## Assistance During the Pandemic

Throughout the Covid19 pandemic, the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction department has assisted with the procurement of a variety of personal protective equipment (PPE), secured additional funding for community needs, and assisted with stockpiling supplies for a potential second wave. This work will continue as long as it is needed.

To date, donations have included 600 pairs of gloves, 4200 face shields, 61,050 masks and over 1100 litres of hand sanitizer.



## New Partnerships: Planting the Seeds of Development

In 2011, Matawa members and leadership came together to decide what Matawa people wanted for their future and agreed that we wanted to be:

*"self-sufficient, self-governing peoples within a healthy, thriving culture, living in our homelands that shall sustain us for all time." Mamow-Wecheekapawetahteewiin (Unity Declaration), July 13, 2011.*

Again in 2017, the Matawa Chiefs' Council direction in resolution #01 02-11-17 was to: "incubate a project to assist our First Nations to build capacity for new capital for community development... and explore infrastructure bonds that can be structured to raise money"

Working toward this direction, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed with PCL, EPCOR, OPG & Enterprise and the announcement was made in March 2020 at the Prospectors & Developers Association Conference in Toronto.

These MOUs allow Matawa to explore potential ways to move ahead with building community infrastructure... and ensure it meets the needs of the communities and region in a manner consistent with Matawa's vision. These partnerships are solid and they are intended to last 25-30 years.

PCL Construction, OPG (Ontario Power Generation) and EPCOR:

- Are the biggest and most established companies in their fields in Canada
- Have thousands of staff
- Have all the necessary equipment and know-how
- Have the capacity to train community members in their expertise
- Assist with creating certainty

This new business relationship brings short and long-term opportunities to address our community infrastructure needs on a large scale.

- Water & Sewer
- Housing & Buildings
- Hydro & Electricity
- Capacity building
- Financing
- Business Ownership



On September 11, 2020, the Matawa Chiefs passed resolution #05-11-09-2020: Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department 2019-2020 Report and Next Steps. As directed by the Chiefs, future work will include:

- Continuing with the activities presented
- Preparing materials for the Matawa Chiefs Council review and direction
- Conducting further research and collaboration required with other Matawa departments (including Financial Advisory Services, Education, Health, Social Services, and Matawa organizations such as Four Rivers and KKETS)
- Specific consideration given to an economic-financial strategy and a youth strategy - as identified by the communities





## Skin and Nail Health

### Our Skin

Skin is our bodies biggest organ and often shows the first sign that something may be wrong with us. It is important to keep our skin intact and healthy as it is our primary defense against infections. There are many illnesses that can affect the skin, so if you see a change in your skin, it is best to have it checked by your health care provider.

### Hair and Finger Nails

Our hair and nails are similar to our skin in that the same nutrients in our bodies make them grow and stay healthy. Keep fingernails trimmed short to avoid injuries. If you notice any change or discolouration to your nails or sudden hair loss, speak with your health care provider.

### Our Feet

Feet are often a problem area for people due to skin issues such as calluses, corns, fungal problems, edema (swelling) or warts. People with diabetes are prone to dry skin and pressure related problems. It is important to keep feet protected with shoes/hard soled slippers at all times and inspect daily for issues. Dry well between the toes after washing, keep nails filed short and straight across, moisturize dry areas like the heels daily. If you have an issue with the skin or nails on your feet- it is best to consult your health care provider, do not try and treat it yourself.

### Keeping Your Skin Healthy Tips

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of water- dehydrated skin is prone to cracking/infections</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid soaps and creams with perfumes or alcohol-use natural based products</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear sunscreen to exposed skin when outside during every season</li> </ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect your skin daily for changes- especially moles/dark spots</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olive oil, coconut oil, honey and aloe make a great moisturizer-avoid parabens ingredient in lotions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use any over the counter skin treatments unless advised by a health professional</li> </ul> |

### Personal Protective Device related skin issues

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masks can make pressure marks/sores/acne on face</li> <li>• Ensure it is proper size/fit</li> <li>• Recommended to remove masks after wearing every two to four hours for a period of 15 minutes to allow skin to recover</li> <li>• Ensure good skin health: wash and moisturize skin on face ½ hour before wearing masks</li> <li>• Do not rub any areas where marks are left- this can cause more skin damage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizer dries out your hands</li> <li>• Use warm water to wash- hot will dry skin out quicker</li> <li>• Pat your skin dry- rubbing dries it out more</li> <li>• Moisturize hands twice daily- once in morning and evening- allow ½ hour to soak in before washing</li> <li>• Avoid wearing rings, jewellery or watches if frequently hand washing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always wear gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids</li> <li>• Always wear gloves when coming into contact with cleaning disinfectants or chemicals</li> <li>• Do not wash or reuse gloves- they break down too quickly</li> <li>• Some gloves have powder to help with putting on and sweating- can use corn starch if needed</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|



***\*\*If you require more support with your skin or feet please contact the Matawa Health Co-operative Footcare Nurse Allison Palmer at 1-833-625-3611\*\****



## Purchase of Former Dawson Court Home for the Aged for Re-Developing as a Matawa Training and Wellness Centre

On June 24, 2020, Matawa was pleased to announce the finalization of the purchase of the former Dawson Court in Thunder Bay for re-development as the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre (the "Centre"). Matawa had began looking at the feasibility of ownership and viability in June of last year and concluded the purchase of the property on June 12, 2020.

On the purchase, David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa CEO said, "We have been examining the feasibility of purchasing this property for over a year and are pleased to have purchased it and be in the position to make use of unused city infrastructure in the Current River Ward to re-develop into something that will add value, not only for our Matawa members—but the neighbourhood and city of Thunder Bay itself."

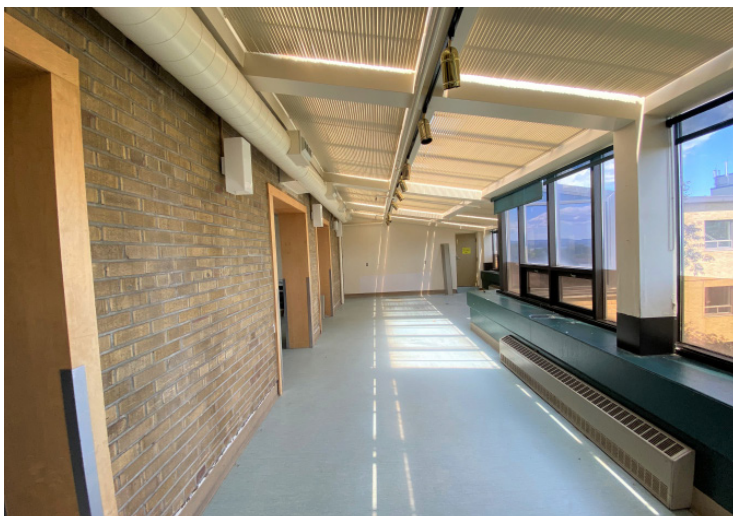
Matawa is working with senior levels of government to obtain funding for the capital renovations to convert the property to an appropriate 'like new' facility. It is estimated that capital costs have been reduced \$8 million compared to constructing new. Matawa has held compliance with ISO certification since 2012 and is one of the few Indigenous organizations to be certified in Canada. For government, industry and business—this offers the confidence that Matawa is efficient, accountable and transparent in the development and implementation of business models.

The Centre is being strategically designed to bring 3 of Matawa's expanding services together under one roof: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS), Matawa Health Co-operative and Awashishishewiigihiwaywiin (Matawa's Social Services Framework Department). The move to this facility will allow for the expansion of training and wellness services; improvement to existing training, programming and clinical spaces; increased traditional healing and cultural spaces; improved partnership opportunities; and greater access to park land/greenspace. The project provides 'win-win' situations for both Matawa and the city

of Thunder Bay while we work on building a trained workforce and healthy families/communities.

The facility will accommodate much needed trades training classrooms, safe and appropriate accommodations for adult students who come to the city for short-term training through KKETS, transitional housing units for families who are at risk of homelessness and a health services clinic to improve the delivery of primary care services to Matawa members in the region and locally. The Centre will add more value to the community rather than leaving a building vacant and is in line with an environmentally friendly approach by not taking away more green space.

As of October 2020, capital renovations have begun including hazardous materials abatement, and the replacement and/or repair of the building electrical, plumbing, heating and fire sprinkler systems. The temporary space for both Social Services and KKETS, including a 30-seat smart classroom, is expected to be ready to be occupied in February 2021 with the remaining renovations scheduled to commence in the early spring of 2021 and expected to be completed by early spring of 2022. The project schedule is continually being revisited and updated and is contingent on capital project funding.





It was with tremendous sadness that the Matawa Chiefs Council, Board of Directors and staff learned of our colleague and friend's passing on May 9 at the age of 67 years. Known, as a 'People's Chief,' Celia was known to sacrifice her life for the betterment of the people and the community she served. She was an intelligent, strategic, and powerful leader, not only for Ginoogaming First Nation but Matawa First Nations Management. Often being able to provide an effective perspective around the table, Celia was skilled in being able to help in understanding complex issues. She did it with 100% compassion for not only her people of Ginoogaming First Nation, but all Indigenous people in Matawa.

Just a few of her extraordinary contributions include her leadership and guidance on: the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Women's Council, the Anishnawbek Police Services, Dilico Ojibway Child & Family Services, and the Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Board of Directors. She served as the KKETS (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services) co-founder (she also helped to come up with the name of that corporation which was launched in 2011). Celia worked tirelessly in her advocacy, as many can attest to across the northern hemisphere of Turtle Island (Canada).

Born in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (a.k.a. 'Big Trout Lake'), she attended the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora in the 1950's where she joined other children in witnessing and experiencing horrendous abuse. In the 1960's, at around 14-15, she arrived at Geraldton High School, 33 km west of Longlac. It was here that she began her roots to the Ginoogaming First Nation homelands having met and later marrying, in 1970, the love of her life, Gabriel Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation (who himself was Chief of the community for many years beginning in 1973). This commenced their family's political life of dedication to the Ginoogaming First Nation people, which would continue on, unwavering, for the following five decades. They had five sons together.

Celia had a vested interest in utilizing economic development to advance the needs of her people. The recent Greenstone Gold Mine (GGM) Long Term Relationship Agreement Negotiations (which concluded with the LTRA signing in November 2019), and the 1993 Long Lake Forest Products Partnership Agreement Negotiation Team are two areas where her advisory capacity was instrumental. She was committed to economic, social, human, and community development for her people throughout her lifetime. Celia was a Minodahmun Development Corporation co-founder (a regional corporation to pursue business opportunities for the Greenstone Gold Mines LTRA, that she developed along with Chief Dorothy Towedo of Aroland First Nation, and Chief Theresa Nelson of Animbiigoo Zaagi'igaan Anishinaabek), a Ginoogam Development Corporation co-founder (a forest industry agreement to supply wood fibre to the Longlac Lumber Inc facility, signed in 2015 worked on in the following years with Chief Veronica Waboose of Long Lake #58 First Nation and Chief Dorothy Towedo of Aroland First Nation), and a Nee-daa-kii-Me-Naan Inc co-founder (a forest management corporation established in 2012 with six other area Chiefs). Celia was relentless in her desire to advance her peoples' interests.

Her burial took place on May 13 with COVID-19 restrictions in place. Her community held a funeral procession on the way to her burial at the Longlac Cemetery, it was broadcasted in real-time on social media. She was honoured with a travelling song as she took her last journey on Earth to her final resting place. *Gaa-waab-min min-waa* (until we see each other again).



## Ginoogaming First Nation's Ginoozhe Zahgaagi'igan Healing Lodge



During the summer of 2020, the people of Ginoogaming First Nation took advantage of an opportunity to add needed infrastructure to historically utilized land. Located on their immediate Traditional Territory, the Ginoozhe Zahgaagi'igan Healing Lodge is located in an area that has always been historically known by local land users as "Wiisnewii Zahgaagin." Members of Ginoogaming First Nation, as well as members from other First Nations in this region, have always utilized this area for cultural and spiritual purposes. This stretches back to before the times when Europeans first arrived during the fur trade area in the 1700's - 1800's and to settle in this area in the Town of Longlac in the late 19th - early 20th century.

Sacred ceremonies have always taken place on the cultural sites located in the Wiisnewii Zahgaagin area. As a result, some people have witnessed how over the past generations, many Elders, chiefs, councillors, and other Ginoogaming community leaders have stepped forward to stand up and protect the Wiisnewii Zahgaagin area from industrial development.

Spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical land-based healing have traditionally taken place there. Younger generations gain cultural knowledge, experience, and skills from the older generations there. It is a place of peace, where spiritual enlightenment may be attained, where our ancestors and Elders always went for self-awareness, ceremonies, and closeness with spirit. Burial sites are located in this area which is respected by all, therefore it is a fitting place for the Ginoozhe Zahgaagi'igan Healing Lodge which was funded by: Ginoogaming Choose Life Program, Ginoogaming Ontario Works Program, the Rocky Shore Development Corporation and Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS).





## Matawa 32nd Annual General Meeting

Like many organizations throughout the world in the middle of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) global pandemic, Matawa needed to be creative this year on hosting our 32nd Annual General Meeting (AGM). Instead of in one of our communities, it needed to be held in Thunder Bay (in a location with a large room that can accommodate a small amount of people and practicing all recommended physical precautions). The AGM took place from Sept 9 – 11 with seven (7) out of nine (9) Matawa Chiefs present due to travel restrictions. One (1) of these First Nations were able to join the AGM with their Council on Zoom. Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, Elder/Women/Youth delegations from the 9 Matawa First Nations were not able to come together like they usually do at AGM time. To accommodate our members, Matawa webcasted the meeting publicly. The webcast had approximately 1,200 views in total.

On Sept 9, they met to make decisions on corporate business holding a Board of Directors (BOD) meeting. Some highlights included:

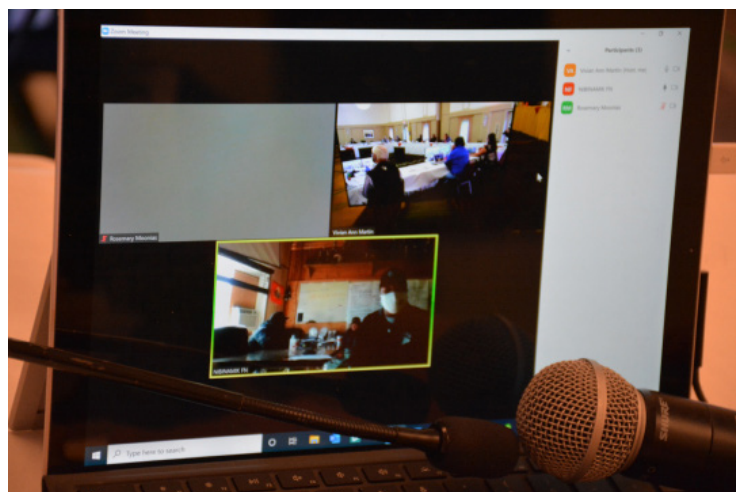
- Acceptance of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services and Matawa audits
- Acceptance of Matawa First Nations Management Department Reports, including the Matawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Matawa First Nations Property Inc., Matawa Project Management Group and Gathering of Rivers for Community Care
- Appointment of auditors

They also held a Chiefs Council meeting on September 10 and 11. Some highlights included:

- Lighting of a candle to remember families and loved ones lost on September 10th for World Suicide Prevention Day
- Presentation by Kathy Brady, Matawa Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction (RP&J) Manager and Alanna McKenzie, RP&J Policy Coordinator
- Presentation from KKETS Board of Directors (some members) and David Neegan, KKETS Executive Director on the Wahkai-kun Mamo Anokiwin (Discovery House) Project
- Presentation from Sharon Nate, Matawa Education Manager on the Matawa Wake Tere Language program
- Presentation from Paul Capon, Matawa Chiefs Council Political Advisor on a homelessness strategy and Matawa board appointments

Like the atypical year it was, only nine (9) Matawa Chiefs Council resolutions were passed on different issues including: exploring the option of creating a tribal council led Child and Family Services agency, developing a wholistic mental health & addictions strategy, developing a renal dialysis strategy & program, developing a homelessness strategy, call for the extension of Matawa Hub (Nibi Services) to include water and wastewater, amongst others.

All resolutions and annual reports are available on the Matawa website at: [matawa.on.ca](http://matawa.on.ca) - for resolutions go to: About Us -> Chiefs Council and for financial and annual reports go to: Reports (in the footer). Hard copies of these reports are also available at First Nation band offices.



**WE MISSED GOING OUT TO BE IN ONE OF OUR COMMUNITIES THIS YEAR. PENDING THE RESOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC, WE LOOK FORWARD TO BEING IN WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION IN JULY 2021 TO HOST OUR 33RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**



## Grown For You in the Matawa Garden

The summer of 2020 has had many challenges, however the production of fresh vegetables in the Matawa garden wasn't one of them! In the Spring of 2020, Four Rivers started planning a special garden project that would test different theories and practices of gardening, with the hopes of translating lessons learned into future successful gardening projects in the Matawa communities.

Four Rivers was thankful to borrow a sizable in-kind plot of land, in the fields of beautiful Slate River Valley, a farming community just outside of Thunder Bay. The weather was chilly when Four Rivers staff began sowing seeds in pots on their home windowsills. With a fairly short growing season in the Thunder Bay area, some seeds require a head start before planting. Staff used seed starting trays and old containers to sprout various vegetables, nurturing them indoors and in homemade greenhouse shelters until they were large enough to be transferred outdoors once the weather warmed up. Sprouted veggies included cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, zucchini, and tomatoes. Vegetables that were happy to go straight into the ground in the garden included carrots, potatoes, green beans, snap peas, and onions.

Four Rivers staff and many generous volunteers prepared the ground and garden for planting the started plants and packaged seeds. Significant efforts maintaining the gardening continued all summer long, through unexpected June frosts and extreme heat waves in July and August. Garden maintenance include staking up beans, tomatoes, and peas, watering the started plants through the early summer heat, and weeding as often as possible in the huge space! It wasn't long into the summer months when the first round of vegetables was ready for harvest, which required picking many snap peas and zucchinis. Next up were the cucumbers, green beans, onions, and tomatoes. Then the September frost rolled in and ended the harvest on everything aboveground.

Potatoes and carrots grow under the soil and can stay there longer than the veggies grown above. Carrots even tend to get a bit sweeter tasting if you leave them in the ground for the first frost! Potatoes are deep in the ground too, and Four Rivers Staff were lucky to borrow a tractor to help loosen the soil around them for easier harvesting. Over 3,500 kilograms (7,800 pounds) of produce was harvested from the garden! Four Rivers staff were able to regularly distribute fresh vegetables to Matawa members through Matawa Food Hamper projects, tailgate giveaways, and a special distribution at this year's Matawa Annual General Meeting. Four Rivers attached special information cards, titled "Grown for you in the Matawa garden", to every produce package to share ideas and recipes on various ways to prepare and enjoy the vegetables. Everything was grown, harvested, packaged and delivered with love! This was such an exciting educational project and Four Rivers is extremely thankful for all the help received from the countless volunteers along the way. Gardening has not only proven to be physically hard work, but more importantly it is so very rewarding to taste and share home grown food!

This project is even more important today as changes in weather due to climate change are adding stress to the delicate food situation felt in communities across the Matawa member First Nation homelands. With successful garden projects like this, local food

production can help alleviate the dependency on the unpredictable state of winter roads and ultimately reduce the cost and time associated with transporting food. Climate change experts are also projecting warmer temperatures, which could result in the ability to grow an increased variety of crops further north. Another bonus from community garden projects is the pride and joy that comes with growing your own food. Gardens can be a place to gather, share knowledge and to be active, all of which can create special summer memories!

Check out Four River's Facebook (add us! "FourRivers Matawa") to see photos of the Matawa Garden experience.



## Matawa Safe Sobering Site Harm Reduction Teachings - Low Risk Drinking

### Stephanie Ritch, HBSW, RSW, RHN

The Matawa Safe Sobering Site is going into our second year of operation this 2020-2021 school year. Our vision is to ensure that Matawa students under the influence of alcohol or substances have access to a safe, non-judgemental environment where they are able to sleep it off and access help. Our service reduces the number of alcohol and substance related incidents in Thunder Bay, by providing Matawa students with an alternative to the police drunk tank or hospital hallways. We are located inside the Matawa Education and Care Centre on Lille St in Thunder Bay and our staff are trained to access and monitor intoxication levels and provide culturally appropriate care in our home-like environment.

The Matawa Safe Sobering Site was born out of a jury recommendation from the Seven Youth Inquest which directs Matawa to “to develop of an alternative facility for intoxicated youth, including remote First Nation students who cannot return home until their intoxication level has subsided”. Funding is provided by both Ontario and Canada. Last school year, from September 2019 to March 2020, we helped Matawa students safely stabilize from alcohol or substances 65 times before schools and our site was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. What we noticed is that most of the Matawa students we helped were there to sober up from alcohol. A very concerning trend staff noticed among the youth we serviced was binge drinking – an incredibly high risk behaviour. There is no single definition for “binge drinking” and what it looks like actually varies across cultures. As for our Matawa culture, we can associate binge drinking with heavy consumption of alcohol over a short period of time, several days, or in the event of extended abuse, even weeks.

A lot can be learned from Dr. Gabor Mate, a leading expert on mental health and addiction, whom I had the pleasure of attending a seminar of his and reading all of his books, who has a popular mantra which asks: **“The question is - not why the addiction, but why the pain?”** As a Matawa First Nation member from Long Lake #58 with roots in Aroland, Marten Falls and Webequie, I can attest to the pain we have suffered as a Nation. Our pain stems from the wave of colonization which has been imposed upon us in the form of Treaties, Residential and Day Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other atrocious impositions which has resulted in language and cultural loss, poverty, systemic racism, boil water advisories, Missing and Murdered Women, a Seven Youth Inquest in which I and Matawa’s partners are working tirelessly to implement, and so much more hardships we bear as a people. Alcohol is one of those impositions that came from colonization so we as a people have to recognize that alcohol abuse comes from pain and we have to learn how to manage that pain in a healthy good way.

What does that management look like in terms of alcohol or drugs? It starts with understanding the important concept of Harm Reduction - which is a set of strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with alcohol or drug use. It also recognizes that people coping with addiction and alcohol abuse often cannot just abstain. One such harm reducing strategy is called Canada’s Low Risk Drinking Guidelines which teaches that women should have no more than 10 drinks a week with no more than 2 drinks a day and men should have no more than 15 drinks a week with no more than 3 drinks a day. What is a drink? A drink is a 341ml beer, cooler, or cider, a 5 oz glass of wine, or 1.5 oz distilled alcohol like rye, gin, rum, etc. It’s worth noting that Canada’s Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines is about 10 years old and a recent study published in the Journal of Alcohol and Drugs stated that it was time to update the guidelines because the limits are still too high and it advocated for just 1 drink a day max! If you choose to drink be sure to practice low-risk drinking and setting limits for yourself, drinking slowly and having no more than 2 drinks in any 3 hour period, staying hydrated and eating food before and while your drinking, and to never ever drink while driving or pregnant. Lastly, if there are children or youth around, show them low-risk drinking because if all you show them is binge drinking they are going to think that is normal and will most likely follow suit. We know it’s important to practice low-risk drinking so we can stop the tragedies that come out of blackouts and alcohol poisoning. But did you know that alcohol actually has a much more insidious nature beyond the dreaded hangover? Insidious is something that proceeds in a gradual, subtle way, but with harmful effects. Alcohol is all too often forgotten harmful effects are the real reasons I don’t drink all that much anymore or if ever again.

Did you know that alcohol abuse can actually shrink your brain? Or that alcohol abuse is the leading cause of cardiovascular disease and pancreatitis? Or that woman who abuse alcohol increase their odds of getting breast cancer by a ton and men who abuse alcohol are more likely to experience erectile dysfunction? Last but not least, did you also know that if you drink frequently, you’re more likely to get lung infections like pneumonia which is very important to be aware of currently - as we’re in the midst of a global pandemic in which COVID-19 is literally targeting our lungs.

At the Matawa Safe Sobering Site, we teach the youth we help harm reduction teachings like Canada’s Low Risk Drinking Guidelines and the harmful effects of alcohol abuse so they can make an informed decision about drinking alcohol. We also thought it was important to share these harm reductions teachings with you too.

Starting on September 3, 2020 at 8:30 am, we will be available for the 2020/2021 school year for intoxicated Matawa youth aged 13-21 needing a safe, supportive place to “sleep it off.” Our number is: 807-632-0639 and we are located in the Matawa Education and Care Centre at 200 Lillie Street North in Thunder Bay. Transportation is available from Matawa On-Call Service in Thunder Bay from 8:00 pm- 6:00 am. Their number is 807-629-2900 or 807-629-4092.



### shrinking brain

Long-term exposure to alcohol can shrink the frontal lobes of your brain.

### blackouts

Alcohol can interfere with how your brain makes memories. It's possible to wake up with no recollection of what you did while you were drinking, or even before.

### dependence

Alcohol dependence varies from person to person so it's hard to define. You may become physically dependent on alcohol if drinking alcohol starts to affect your ability to perform well in school or work and affects your relationships.

### heart damage

Chronic heavy drinking is one of the leading causes of cardiovascular disease.

### liver damage

Chronic alcohol use can damage the liver and prevent it from properly removing harmful substances from your body.

### pancreatitis

Excessive alcohol consumption or abuse is a leading cause of chronic pancreatitis.

### frequent diarrhea

Alcohol consumption can damage your intestines, which may lead to bouts of diarrhea or stomach pain.

### infertility

Over a longer period of time, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol may cause infertility.

### sexual dysfunction

Men who have alcohol use disorder are more likely to experience erectile dysfunction.

### behavior changes

Alcohol can change your typical behavior and leave you without the mental clarity to make smart decisions.

### hallucinations

For people with alcohol dependence, a sudden withdrawal may cause serious complications, including hallucinations.

### slurred speech

Slurred speech is one of the first symptoms of excessive alcohol consumption.

### cancer

Chronic drinkers of alcohol are more likely to develop throat, mouth, or esophagus cancers. Breast cancer is also more common in women who drink excessively.

### lung infections

People who drink frequently have a hard time fighting off bacteria and viruses, and are more susceptible to illnesses like tuberculosis and pneumonia.

### fatigue

Fatigue or feeling tired may be a sign of anemia, which is a possible complication of alcoholism.

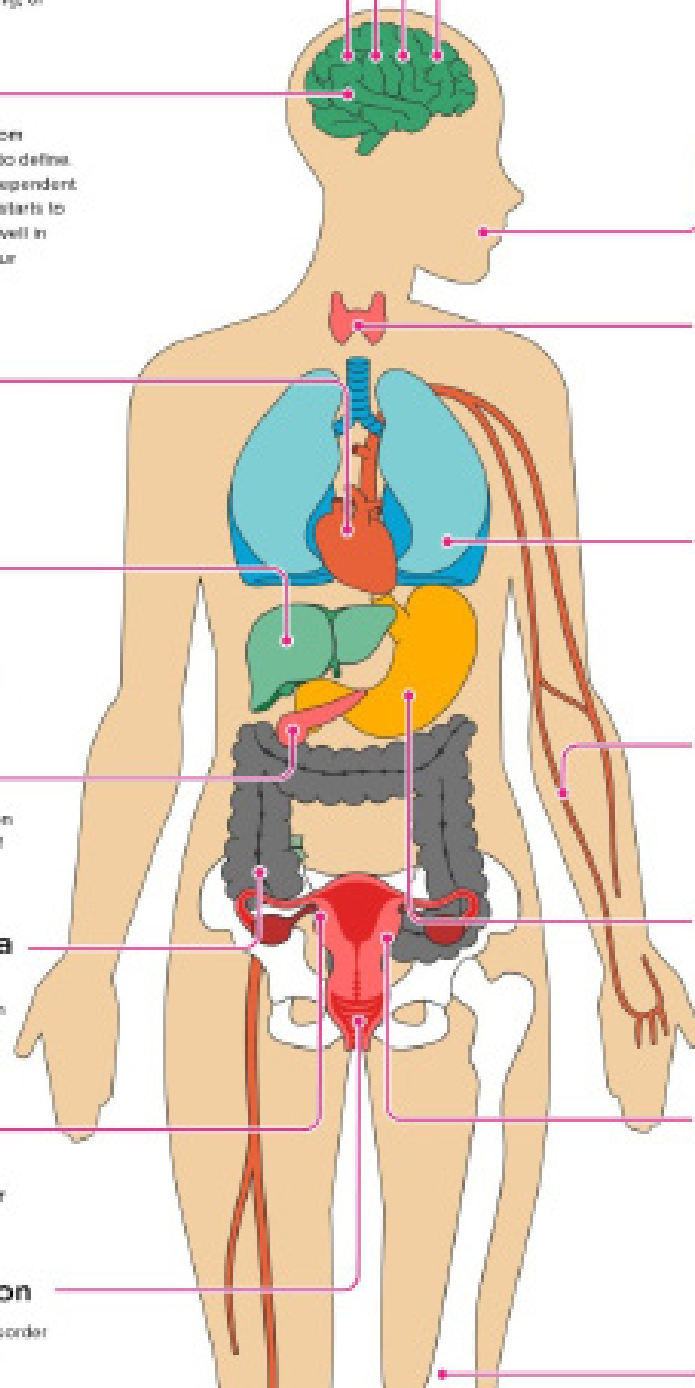
### stomach distress

Drinking too much can lead to bloating, gas, and painful ulcers.

### birth defects

A pregnant woman's heavy drinking can increase a baby's risk for several conditions, including fetal alcohol syndrome and issues with mental development.

### thinning bones



## Matawa First Nations Management Welcomes New Staff

### Awashishewiigihiwaywiin (Social Services Framework)

#### Family Support Worker, Paul Magiskan



Hello, My name is Paul Magiskan. I reside in Thunder Bay and am an Aroland Band member. I have recently joined Awashishewiigihiwaywiin program as a Family Support Worker. I have spent the last few years working in child welfare. I have also spent the last decade working with youth in custody. I am incredibly honored to be given the opportunity to support our families and hope to reflect that in my work.

### KKETS

#### Aboriginal Employment and Wellness Counsellor, Roxann Shapwaykeesic



Hello, my name is Roxann Shapwaykeesic, KKETS Aboriginal Employment and Wellness Counsellor, and I'm excited to start my journey with KKETS and Matawa. It is an honour to learn and grow with our community members. After 3 years abroad I am happy to return to my hometown of Thunder Bay in a support capacity for post-secondary and most recently skilled trade learners.

### Matawa Health Co-operative

#### Community Health Nurse, Amy Iserhoff



My name is Amy Iserhoff and I am from Ginoogaming First Nation. I am a Registered Nurse and graduate from Lakehead University. I currently work as a Community Health Nurse with the Matawa Health Co-operative. I enjoy working in the community environment and I'm very passionate about providing services and community health support to all Matawa communities. Developing strong relationships is the foundation of what I love to do, both professionally and personally. In addition to working in the community, I also have experience working in home care and long-term care. When I am not nursing in the community, I am spending time with family and friends. I enjoy sports, the outdoors, travelling and reading. I look forward to my career as a community health nurse and working with providing good health and well-being to Matawa members and communities. My nursing experience has afforded me the ability to always lend a helping hand to others who cannot help themselves. Miigwetch!

### Education

#### Database Helpdesk, Rafal Zgolak



Hello, my name is Rafal Zgolak and I am the new Database Helpdesk at Matawa Education. I was born and raised in Poland. From kindergarten to the end of high school, I practiced competitive swimming. During university, I found a new passion – travelling. At that time, I met a lot of people around the world that helped me learn and understand different cultures and traditions. But, Canada felt more like home to me, so I decided to settle down and start my new life/family. Now, I am a proud Canadian Citizen, husband and father. My work experience is all over the map (literally): lifeguard, car mechanic, housekeeper, counselor, CNC machine operator, computer service technician, and graphic, piping and mechanical designer. I enjoy spending time with my family, fishing, watching and playing sports, cooking, and home DIY projects. In other words, I like to stay busy!

### Matawa Education

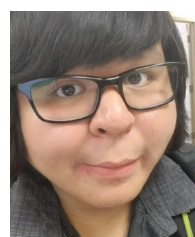
#### Indigenous Language Specialist, Tracy Spence



Booshoo everyone, my name is Tracy Spence. I am a member of Webequie First Nation and I live here in Thunder Bay with my family. I'm a graduate of Confederation College and Sault College. I am happy to be joining the Matawa Education Department as an Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialist. I'm excited to be part of the program called Matawa Waka Tere, meaning 'the meeting of the rivers on a fast moving-canoe' that is committed to revitalizing our first languages. Miigwech, I am looking forward to meeting and working with everyone.

### KKETS

#### Discovery House Project Assistant, Wayland Moonias

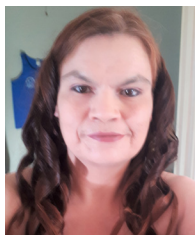


Greetings, my name is Wayland Moonias, Project Assistant, and I am from Neskantaga First Nation. I'm filled with joy to start my new position with Wah Ka Ih Kun (Discovery House) and the many things I will get to experience. I worked as the KKETS Receptionist for almost two years and I am going to miss it a lot but also excited to continue to work with our Matawa members.



### **Matawa (Court Street Office)**

#### **Full-Time Receptionist, Laureen Kahgee**



Boozhoo! My name is Laureen Kahgee and I am from Ginoogaming First Nation. I have recently been hired as Matawa FN Management's full time Receptionist. I grew up in GFN, moving here to complete my grade 12 and post secondary education at Con College and L.U. I returned home with my husband, Harlan Sr to raise our family. We moved back to the city about 5 years ago for access to higher quality health care and education opportunities. I worked for my First Nation as a Finance Manager, Housing Manager, Employment Counsellor, Executive Assistant, Community Resource Supervisor as well as a Business Information Officer for the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund. I was also a School Board Member for 7 yrs, 5 of those I served as Chairperson. It has always been a long-term goal of mine to work for Matawa and I am excited to be here! I look forward to meeting everyone and working with our community members.

### **Education**

#### **Receptionist, Rebecca Sutherland**



Wachiya, my name is Rebecca Sutherland. I am a member of Constance Lake First Nation. I am the Education Receptionist at Matawa Education. I was a part time receptionist at Matawa First Nation Management. I started working at education in August of 2020. I just graduated from Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention Program at Oshki-Wenjack in August of 2020. I have 4 daughters and have been living in Thunder Bay for 23 years. I am happy and excited to be a on the Matawa team and I look forward to working and meeting everyone. Meegwetch!

### **KKETS**

#### **File and Data Clerk, Kara Pearson**



Hello, my name is Kara Pearson, KKETS File, and Data Clerk. It has been such a great opportunity to be able to work with KKETS and Matawa so far. After teaching up north for two years, I am excited to be able to continue working and serving my community along with all the other

Matawa communities.

### **Matawa Education and Care Centre**

#### **Foot/Wound Care Specialist, Allison Palmer, R.N.**



Bozhoo, my name is Allison Palmer and I am a member of the Red Rock First Nation currently residing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, with my husband and two beautiful children. I am a Registered Nurse with certifications in footcare and wound care. My experience spans over 16 years working in homes and community footcare clinics

across Northwestern Ontario. I had the chance to travel to some of the Matawa communities and I am elated to meet such wonderful people! Some of my goals with the Matawa Health Co-operative include developing in-community footcare training programs for adult care givers, improving wound care resources for nurses in Matawa communities, and facilitating in-school footcare education for children. Most times I can be found at the hockey arenas or baseball fields around town, as my children love sports. Owners of the three Pet Valu store locations across Thunder Bay, my husband and I like to spend time at our camp with friends and family with a very spoiled dog. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve the Matawa people and I am very excited to grow and learn together. Miigwetch.

### **KKETS**

#### **Discovery House Project Officer, Tracey Willoughby**



My name is Tracey Willoughby and I have just started employment with KKETS as Project Officer. I bring a wealth of experience in education, training, leadership and engagement of which I am inspired to share with staff and communities. I look forward to the exciting new challenges

and am excited to have been given the opportunity to have become a part of the KKETS team.

### **Health Co-operative**

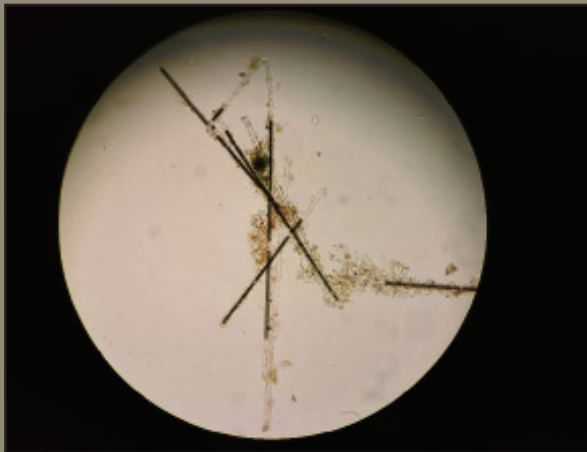
#### **Administrative Support Worker, Norma Achneepineskum**



Booshoo/Wachiye My name is Norma Achneepineskum. I have just recently joined the Matawa Health Co-operative Team as their Administration Support Worker. I am a Marten Falls First Nation member. I look forward to meeting new people and the new adventures ahead.

Miigwetch

## Living with Us... Blue-Green Algae



**Pictured above:** Individuals of *Lyngbya* species, a type of cyanobacteria. Viewed at 200x magnification. **Pictured on front page:** Group of multiple individuals of *Gliotrichia* species, a type of cyanobacteria. Viewed at 100x magnification.

Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria (“sigh-ano-bacteria”), are a type of plant-like bacteria that are very small and under normal conditions, can only be seen under a microscope. These bacteria are naturally present in our freshwater lakes and streams in low numbers, but can rapidly increase in population in warm, shallow, undisturbed surface water that gets a lot of sun. This is called a “bloom”.

Other factors that contribute to blue-green algal blooms are an increase of nutrients (eutrophication). Eutrophication leads to a bloom by providing the algae with unlimited nitrogen and phosphorous, which are nutrients essential for their growth.

Blooms most commonly occur in late summer and early fall and are usually identified by a floating mass or scum on the surface of the water that is blue green in colour. When the

blooms start to die off, their cells produce a toxin, known as a cyanotoxin or liver toxin, that is harmful, and even lethal to humans and animals if ingested.

Not only are they a threat to living beings, they can cause a reduction in water quality. This is done by the algae limiting the amount of sunlight in the water, resulting in the death of underwater plants. For fish, the toxins produced by blue-green algae can affect the development of fish eggs and can also accumulate in the organs of fish.

**Did You Know...** A fresh algae bloom often smells like newly mowed grass, while older blooms may smell like rotting garbage. Also, not all algae are toxic algae. There are “true” algae (or green algae) which are a source of food for aquatic organisms, where cyanobacteria are not. Despite there being safe algae and toxic algae, when a bloom is present one should always use caution and assume that toxins are present and avoid using the water where the bloom was found. **If you would like more information on this and other Four Rivers initiatives, please contact [info@fourrivers.group](mailto:info@fourrivers.group)**



Matawa First Nations | 233 S. Court Street | Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2X9 | Tel: 807.344.4575 | Fax: 807.344.2977 | Toll Free: 1.800.463.2249

