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**IN THIS ISSUE**

Matawa Youth at  
United Nations

Healthy eating



Livingstone's  
Labrador Tea

Living with Us:  
Labrador Tea pg. 28



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# CONTENTS

ANIMAL SERVICES' FIRST WELLNESS CLINIC IN WEBEQUIE **4**

211 DIRECTORY SUPPORTS FORMERLY INCARCERATED **7**

WEBEQUIE AND NIBINAMIK WATER CROSSING UPGRADES **8**

PREPARING MATAWA STUDENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL **12**

ACHIEVING THE DREAM THROUGH EDUCATION AWARD SEASON **13**

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR POST-SECONDARY **14**

FROM THE LENS OF OUR STUDENTS: MECC'S HOCKEY PROGRAM **15**

EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS **17**

CELEBRATING BOWMANVILLE ROTARY CLUB'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY **18**

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT NOW RECRUITING **21**

HENRY COASTER MEMORIAL SCHOOL'S NEW LOGO **22**

INAUGURAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT **23**

'WE FEED OFF OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN': POEM BY MATAWA STUDENT **23**

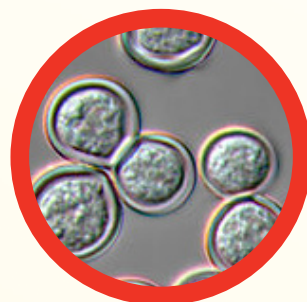
MATAWA HEALTH CO-OPERATIVE NEWS **24-25**

WELCOME NEW MATAWA STAFF **27**



HEALTHY EATING  
FOR DIABETICS:  
A Q&A WITH  
DIETITICAN  
DAYNA LALOND

**26**



A BREAKTHROUGH IN  
BLASTOMYCES RESEARCH  
IN CONSTANCE LAKE

**9**

MATAWA YOUTH  
AT THE UNITED  
NATIONS

**6**



FOUR RIVERS'  
WINTER FIELDWORK  
UPDATES

**11**





A veterinary team from the international organization Global Alliance for Animals and People travelled to Webequie First Nation for an animal wellness clinic this spring.

## Matawa Animal Services holds first wellness clinic in Webequie

Submitted by: Judi Cannon, Animals Services Lead

In May, Matawa First Nation Management's Animal Services pilot project held the first Animal Wellness Clinic in Webequie First Nation in almost a decade.

From May 1 to 4, the team—including veterinarians from Global Alliance for Animals and People Canada, Webequie's Animal Guardian Bertha Ashpanaquestcum, and several volunteers—conducted wellness exams, vaccinations, and dozens of spay and neuter surgeries.

The last time a veterinary team went to Webequie was in 2015. The lack of regular animal services has led to challenges related to dog overpopulation, and a deadly parvovirus outbreak last January, according to Judi Cannon,

Matawa's new Animal Services Lead.

During the clinic, the team conducted a total of 59 spay and neuter surgeries, 97 animal wellness exams and 188 vaccinations. Pets were vaccinated against distemper, parvovirus, and rabies, which can be deadly for



The vet team conducted wellness exams on 97 animals, including one guinea pig.

dogs. There are no confirmed cases of rabies in the area, said Cannon, but it's important to vaccinate against rabies in particular because it's a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be transmitted to humans.

The Animal Services team also offered education to youth, including tours of the clinic and on-site teaching, and information on dog safety and careers in the animal services field. They also distributed 1500lbs of dog and cat food to pet owners in the community.

"The positive impact of the clinic will be seen in the form of humane dog population management, a healthier animal population, fewer people getting bitten by dogs, and a reduction in dog fights," said Cannon.



Students in Webequie were invited for a tour of the clinic and on-site teaching.

“The spay and neuter surgeries prevented up to 320 puppies from being born this year alone.”

Moving forward, Webequie’s Animal Guardian, Bertha Ashpanaquestcum, will continue to gather information on the animal service needs of community members, and gather data on the number of animals in Webequie. This information, combined with Chief and Council’s consultation, will shape Webequie’s Animal Management Plan for long-term, sustain-



Webequie Animal Guardian Bertha Ashpanaquestcum and her pup(s).

For more information on Matawa’s pilot project contact **Judi Cannon**, Animal Services Lead Coordinator, at [jcannon@matawa.on.ca](mailto:jcannon@matawa.on.ca)

able animal services.

“By following traditional teachings about the interconnectedness of animal health, human health, and the environment, Webequie First Nation is on its journey to creating a healthier animal population, which in turn supports a safer, happier, and healthier community for all,” said Cannon.

The next Animal Wellness Clinic will be held in Ginoogaming First Nation on June 22-26, 2024. ●



The vet team from Global Alliance for People and Animals with Webequie Animal Guardian Bertha Ashpanaquestcum and Animal Services Lead Coordinator Judi Cannon in Webequie.





Leila Mendowegan, Alyssa Lentz, Mallory Solomon, Laurenn Coaster and Jordynn Mendowegan attended the 23rd United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City in April.

## Matabwa youth make statement at the United Nations in New York City

By: Carol Audet, Communications Manager

**L**ed by Chief Sheri Taylor of Ginoogaming First Nation, a delegation of five Matabwa First Nations youth returned from the 23rd Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York City, the traditional territories of the Lenape People. They attended the forum's second week from April 22–25, 2024. It was the first time Matabwa First Nations Management (MFNM) participated in international activities. The youth delegation included: Leila Mendowegan (Aroland), Alyssa Lentz (Eabametoong), Mallory Solomon (Constance Lake), Laurenn Coaster (Marten Falls) and Jordynn Mendowegan (Ginoogaming). Participation was supported by both the MFNM Board of Directors and Matabwa Chiefs Council.

On April 23, the youth met

with Bob Rae, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. Discussed was Ambassador Rae's experience working with the Matabwa Chiefs Council from 2014-2018 and his current role. At the UNPFII, the youth also attended a side-event organized by the Global Indigenous Youth Forum: "Calls to Action for Safeguarding Seven Generations in Times of Food, Social and Ecological Crises."

On April 25, the youth made a statement at the interactive dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and member states, under the guiding theme: Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and emphasizing the voices of Indigenous

youth. Some of the issues raised in the statement included: the Ogoki and Long Lake Water Diversions, signed through an agreement between Canada and the US in the 1940's; the incentivization of extractive industries and online mining staking; the encroachment on our lands by the Métis in Ontario; an First Nation communities experiencing 3rd world conditions while having to deal with a state (and extractive industry) that does not want to address these conditions first.

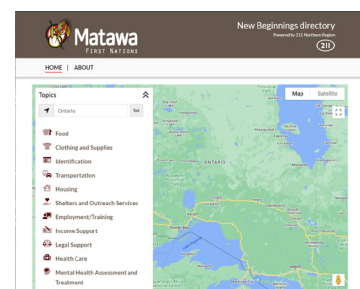
The youth made two calls to Canada and the UNPFII: to secure a meaningful place for Indigenous youth who will be affected by proposed development in the mineral-loaded area called the 'Ring of Fire,' and for Canada and the UNPFII to mandate extractive industries and Ontario to ensure that thirdworld conditions are addressed (in a measurable way) in tandem, or before development takes place.

The delegation also had an opportunity to follow human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (with respect to annual review of progress of the implementation of general recommendation No. 39), and the future work of the UNPFII, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council, the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and emerging issues.

MFNM is currently registered with the UN as an Indigenous Peoples Organization (IPO) and is working towards consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council. ●



From left to right: Paul Magiskan, Kristin Tomcko, Marie Klassen, Lisa Owens, and Matawa CEO David Paul Achneepineksun during the launch of the New Beginnings directory in March.



Screenshots of the New Beginnings 211 directory, which anyone can use to find food, housing, health care and other services.



## Matawa launches online directory to support formerly incarcerated

By: Charnel Anderson, Communications Generalist

In March, Matawa First Nations Management launched New Beginnings, an online directory designed to help people leaving custody access the supports and services needed for successful reintegration.

“Too often people released from correctional facilities lack access to the support they need to ensure they proceed on the right path. We created this directory to make it easier for recently incarcerated people to find what they need at a time when it can make a difference,” said Matawa CEO David Paul Achneepineskun.

The online directory was developed in response to the need for up-to-date information about where recently incarcerated people can access food, shelter, and services like mental health and addictions treatment in

northwestern Ontario.

New Beginnings directory was developed by Matawa in collaboration with 211 North, a program of the Lakehead Social Planning Council, the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (IPHCC), and Birchwood Consulting.

“The IPHCC is excited about the launch of New Beginnings directory because we understand the challenges individuals face when being released from correctional facilities. Their journeys are challenging, and they face so many barriers to a new path, and so we hope this resource will help simplify the process and help them find the services they need when they need them,” said Curtis Hildebrant, Senior Advisor, Health System Strategy with the IPHCC.

Over 14 months starting in October 2022, the team held three focus groups with formerly incarcerated people and dozens of meetings with regional service providers to inform the design of the directory. This work led to the identification of 12 categories noted as crucial supports for people leaving incarceration. The directory provides the latest information about resources and service providers across the region and can be updated easily based on feedback from users. ●

**Try the New Beginnings directory for yourself at**  
**[www.matawa.211north.ca](http://www.matawa.211north.ca)**



This winter, contractor Sigfusson Northern installed two bridges on the Webequie winter road.

## Webequie and Nibinamik water crossing upgrades

Submitted by: Lindsay Jupp, Environmental Technologist

**T**his spring, with funding from Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Northern Development, Matawa Technical Services worked on upgrades to the water crossings on the Nibinamik and Webequie winter roads. “Matawa Technical Services hopes that by upgrading problem crossings, winter road crews will have more time for operation and maintenance,” says Environmental Technologist Lindsay Jupp.

In February and March, contractor Sigfusson Northern installed two bridges on the Webequie winter road, just after the turn-off from the Nibinamik section.

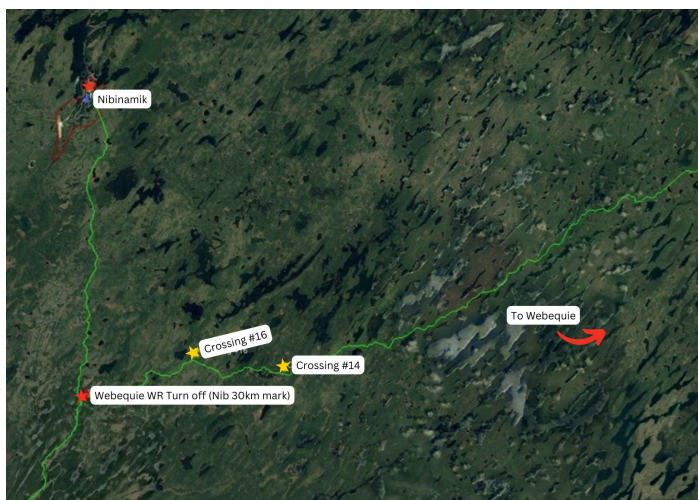
Technical Services hired EXP, an engineering consulting company, to oversee on-site geotechnical drilling—a technique used to understand the physical properties of soil and rock surrounding a construction site—which was necessary in order to get work permits approved by the

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Moving forward, the plan is to install another two bridges in the 2024/2025 winter road season: one on the Nibinamik section, and another on the Webequie section. ●



Geotechnical drilling was overseen by EXP.



Left: A map showing the site of water crossings #14 and #16, which were upgraded this winter. Next winter, Matawa Technical Services hopes to install two more bridges: one on the Nibinamik section, and another on the Webequie section. Bottom: The upgraded crossings.



# A breakthrough in *Blastomyces* research in Constance Lake First Nation

By: Charnel Anderson, Communications Generalist



A 2021 outbreak of blastomycosis led Constance Lake First Nation and researchers on a search to find the source of the disease-causing fungus.

Earlier this year, Four Rivers Environmental Services Group used a novel testing method to confirm the source of *Blastomyces dermatitis*—a notoriously difficult to detect fungus that causes a rare, pneumonia-like infection called blastomycosis—in Constance Lake First Nation.



Chief Rick Allen.

Lake died from blastomycosis, while at least 50 more people were infected. “We were told it was like finding a needle in a haystack,” said Constance Lake First Nation Chief Rick Allen. “We couldn’t accept that. We persisted.”

Following the outbreak, Constance Lake partnered with Four Rivers, Matawa’s environmental services group, and Laurentian University to search for the source of the fungus. In 2023, Laurentian University’s Up

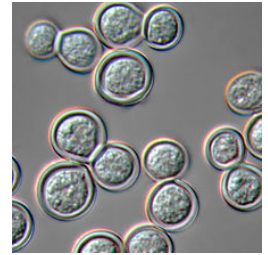
North on Climate team completed a literature review which found a novel method of testing for *Blastomyces* using a PCR test, initially performed at the University of Minnesota.

This testing method, combined with a community-led search, led to the detection of *Blastomyces* in Constance Lake—only the second time a confirmed sample was found in Ontario, and the first time an Ontario-based sample was confirmed using this novel method. (The first confirmed *Blastomyces* sample was found in Ontario in the 1980’s.)

While *Blastomyces* is not well understood, it’s known to be a naturally occurring fungus that’s been found in the environment, including in soil, wood, and organic matter. It’s thought “to be rare, and short-lived,” and impossible to eliminate from the environment, according to a [press release from Four Rivers](#). Like all fungi, *Blastomyces* reproduces through microscopic spores, which are inhaled by

people and mammals.

Roughly 50 per cent of people who inhale *Blastomyces* spores don’t develop any symptoms, while the other half may experience symptoms of a lung infection, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, [according to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Dogs have also been known to get blastomycosis infections. Blastomycosis cannot be transmitted between people, and it’s treatable with an anti-fungal medication, though early diagnosis is important.



*Blastomyces* in yeast form.

The latest laboratory-confirmed discovery in Constance Lake will allow researchers to gain a better understanding of the elusive fungus, said Sarah Cockerton, Managing Director of Four Rivers. “Being able to find *Blastomyces* in the environment allows us to see the environmental conditions it lives in. In seeing where and how it lives, hopefully we can begin to understand it better. This will allow us to understand how people can adapt to its presences,” said Cockerton.

The community hopes to secure more funding to continue its research, as “lives depend on it,” said Chief Allen. “We will continue to work to find the resources to ensure *Blastomyces* research is a priority and that our people have the supports they need.” ●

## Four Rivers News

Submitted by: Laura Prior, Communications Specialist



### Regional Assessment information sessions

On March 19, Four Rivers held an Regional Assessment information session in Webequie, featuring discussions on what regional assessments are, what they mean for communities, and how community members can participate in the process. Four Rivers will continue to hold Regional Assessment information sessions in Matawa communities over the coming months, and community members are encouraged to keep an eye out for updates on Four Rivers' Facebook page.



### Marten Falls First Nation community visit

In April, Four Rivers staff travelled to Marten Falls First Nation to meet with Chief and Council to discuss environmental programming and other important updates. The trip also included a helicopter ride over the muskeg to view Rapid Lynx's fibre optic line. While up in the sky, staff were treated to a view of the ice break-up on the Albany River.



### Identifying Fish at Royal Ontario Museum Workshop

Four Rivers' Environmental Technician Erin Kelly attended a five-day Fish Identification and Species at Risk workshop at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, where she was immersed in her favourite aquatic studies. Erin is excited to utilize this new knowledge on minnow identification when she's out on the land.

### 12th annual Thunder Bay Science Carnival

In February, Four Rivers staffed a booth at the 12th annual Thunder Bay Science Carnival at Intercity Shopping Centre hosted by Science North. At the carnival, Four Rivers' own 'Jasmoose' taught young scientists all about animal tracks. The turnout was excellent, and Four Rivers staff had a great time, too. They look forward to this annual event and hope to see you next year!



Four Rivers' Community Guardians have set up trail cams within Matawa homelands, which captured a caribou (left) in May 2023, and a wolf (right) in April 2023.

## Water monitoring and trail cams: Four Rivers winter fieldwork

Submitted by: Laura Prior, Communications Specialist

**T**hough there wasn't much snow this winter, the Four Rivers team remained busy, working with Matawa communities to do important baseline environmental monitoring, including monitoring of water quality and caribou populations.

Over the winter, Four Rivers worked closely with Community Guardians in Constance Lake (CLFN), Ginoogaming (GFN), Long Lake #58 (LLFN) and Webequie First Nations (WFN), providing in-field training

and deploying stationary monitors to collect baseline data on waters within the Matawa homelands.

In January, Four Rivers spent a week working with CLFN, GFN, and LL58, measuring ice thickness and collecting surface water samples to produce water quality profiles on several lakes. Using a new tool called ArcGIS Workforce, a mobile app, the Community Guardians were able to establish permanent monitoring locations, allowing them to monitor

these locations consistently. The data gathered will be used to establish trends and identify changes in the water over time.

In February and March, Four Rivers worked with WFN and CLFN, respectively, to retrieve and redeploy trail cameras in an effort to capture images of caribou, which are considered an at-risk species. Based on local knowledge and data gathered from the previous years' trail camera deployment, the team was able to capture some pretty neat images of a variety of animals, including caribou and wolves.

Consistency is key in obtaining baseline data to help answer questions and aid in decision making processes regarding the environment. The team at Four Rivers will be busy again this summer helping with more baseline data collection. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kim at [kjorgenson@fourrivers.group](mailto:kjorgenson@fourrivers.group). ●

**NOTICE OF DRONE FLY-OVER**

Four Rivers Environmental Services Group, Matawa First Nations Management, will be doing drone fly-overs throughout **Summer 2024** so that they can capture the high-quality imagery needed for things like upgraded community maps and supporting various community initiatives.

Watch our Facebook page, Four Rivers Group, for more detailed updates as plans roll out!



The PASS team has held Transition Workshops in three Matawa communities, and plan to visit two more by the end of the year.

## Preparing Matawa students for the transition to high school

Submitted by: Shelby Ch'ng, Education Partnerships Program Liaison

The Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS) team has been holding Transition Workshops—designed to measure the sentiment of Grade 7 and 8 students about their transition to high school—in Matawa communities. PASS team members Shelby, Katie, Olivia, Mary Ann, Marlee, and Trey have travelled to Neskantaga, Aroland and Nibinamik so far, and plan to go to Marten Falls and Fort Hope by the end of the school year. Students have enjoyed the action-packed workshops, allowing the PASS team to make fast friends. The team has also gifted students with items they'll need for travelling, including a suitcase, towels, toiletries, smudge kits, and of course, a teddy bear! ●



## MATAWA WAKA TERE

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT



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**YEAR TWO**  
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 LANGUAGE

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- ✓ ABILITY TO ATTEND IN-PERSON



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Matawa Education and Care Centre's Class of 2023, featuring last year's Achieving the Dream Through Education award winners Trish Kakegamic, Tamara Moonias, Nathan Oskineegish, Clayton Quisses, Lashaunda Waswa and Precious Thompson.

## Achieving the Dream Through Education award season

By: Emily Shandruk, Special Projects Officer

As April showers usher in the promise of spring, so too does the opportunity for Matawa youth to achieve their dreams through education with the support of the Achieving the Dream Through Education charity. Applications for this year's awards, scholarships and bursaries closed on April 30, and we are looking forward to honouring the winners at the Post-Secondary Recognition event on June 6, 2024. This event serves as a testament to the dedication and achievements of all recipients—honouring their resilience, determination, and commitment to

realizing their potential. At Achieving the Dream Through Education, success isn't solely measured by academic prowess but by the profound journey of personal growth and development. This ethos drives the charity's mission to empower Matawa children and youth, offering them avenues to realize their aspirations through education. The scholarships, bursaries, and

awards form the cornerstone of this endeavor, as they're designed to support Indigenous youth navigating their educational journey from elementary school through to post-secondary education, and beyond.

Together, let's pave the way for a brighter future, one where education becomes the key to unlocking limitless opportunities for Matawa youth. ●



To learn more and to support  
**Achieving the Dream Through Education**,  
please visit [www.achievingthedream.ca](http://www.achievingthedream.ca)



Fifteen students from six Matawa communities participated in the hands-on Life After Graduation Transition Experience. (Credit: Morningstar Derosier)

## Preparing students for post-secondary life

Submitted by: Courtney Strutt, Post-Secondary Transition Coach

This spring, a group of Matawa youth participated in the Matawa Post-Secondary Pilot Program called Life After Graduation Transition Experience, a three-day immersive program aimed at helping high school graduates connect, learn, and prepare for their post-secondary journey.

Over the course of three days in late March, fifteen youth from six Matawa communities participated in the pilot program, where they met with past and current Matawa post-secondary students to hear about their experiences, toured post-secondary campuses including Lakehead University and Confederation College, and discussed and reflected on building support networks and taking care of their mental health.

The youth, who were between the ages of 17 and 20, also learned about budgeting, money management, and funding for post-secondary education, and other practical skills

like taking public transportation and cooking easy and affordable meals. They also met with organizations like that offer supports and services to Indigenous youth, and spent evenings together doing recreational activities like watching movies or rock climbing.



In preparation for post-secondary life, students learned how to cook easy and affordable meals. (Credit: Morningstar Derosier)

The program's focus is to provide resources and targeted support to Matawa members of all ages who are making transitions into and out of post-secondary education, as well as to offer a support person to those who have been out of school for a while and

are looking to go back, or make changes in their career. This experiential learning program aims to build a sense of community and belonging to support relationship building amongst the youth, while engaging in hands-on and relevant learning and discussion.

Through the end of program survey, all the youth reported feeling more prepared to make the transition to life after high school, including 90% of them who said this was a beneficial learning experience that they would recommend to others. The youth reported seeing the greatest increase in confidence in skills related to finding supports, making new friends, managing money, finding post-secondary funding sources, and navigating on-campus services.

This experience, which is part of Matawa Post-Secondary's new transition program that began in August 2023, will be happening again in early 2025, thanks to funding by the Ontario government's Ministry of Colleges and Universities. ●



Roughly per cent of students who participated in the program said it was beneficial. (Credit: Morningstar Derosier)

For more information, or to get connected to supports, reach out to Post-Secondary Transition Coach **Courtney Strutt** at [cstrutt@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:cstrutt@matawaeducation.ca) or **807-630-3509**



Matawa Education and Care Centre student and Hockey Program participant Jade Wabano (left) with teacher James Cole (right).

## From the lens of our students: Matawa Education and Care Centre's hockey program

By: Jade Wabano, Matawa Education and Care Centre Student

**T**he Matawa Education and Care Centre has a unique program called the Hockey Program. Students receive a high school credit while improving their hockey-playing skills and getting physical activity. I was enrolled in the Hockey Program this winter, and I think that all schools should consider having something like

this. During the program, students learn how to skate and how to find their balance. Once they learn the basics, they move onto drills, stick handling, edge work, and shooting. When students are not on the ice, they are in the gym playing different games that help them communicate efficiently. Games, such as handball,

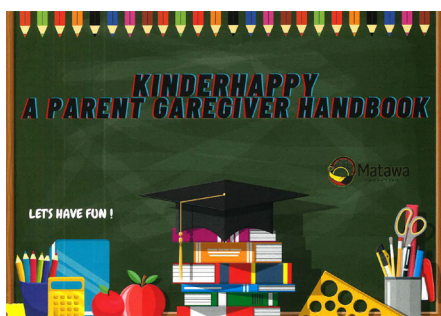
encourage players to be aware of where their teammates are and to make call-outs. Participants also do exercises that increase their speed and help develop their core. These exercises are great for hockey, but they also help to increase our ability to perform in any sport. Once a week, students were in the classroom for health, learning about topics such as the development of muscles, the importance of sleep, and the dangers of concussions.

*"More schools should offer a program like Matawa's Hockey Program."*

I signed up because I like playing hockey and skating. I looked forward to my afternoons in the Hockey Program, because I feel better when I get to move my body throughout the day, as opposed to sitting at a desk all day. More schools should offer a program like Matawa's Hockey Program. ●



Students participating in MECC's Hockey Program learn the basics of the sport, plus other fitness and communication skills.



## Kinderhappy: A guidebook for parents

Submitted by: Rita Manella, Student Academic Lead

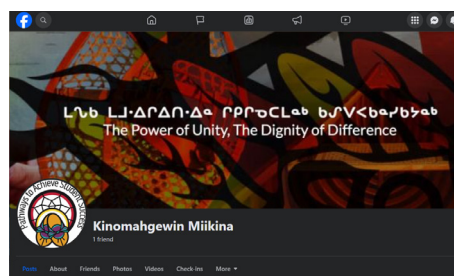
☺ Spring is a time for renewal, and as Student Academic Lead, I'm always looking for ways to re-energize and support staff at Matawa's six First Nation schools, which helped inspire two projects I've recently worked on.

The first is the Teacher Wish List initiative, where we asked teachers to submit a wish list that the PASS team fulfills and ships to their community. It's one way to show appreciation for our teachers and to help with their classroom needs. The second project involved the PASS team filling backpacks with age-appropriate items, like colouring books and puzzles, and shipped them to schools to handout at their Welcome to Kindergarten event, which is designed to help parents and caregivers prepare their child for the first day of Kindergarten.

This year, I've written *Kinderhappy: A parent-caregiver handbook* to help parents and caregivers get their child ready for the first day of school. It features helpful ideas and useful information, like how to use the summer months as a transitional period to get their child ready for school, what to expect on their first day, and more. I'll be sending copies of my handbook to each

of our schools, and it will be available online, too. Please email me at [rmanella@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:rmanella@matawaeducation.ca) if you have any questions, or would like to access the handbook. ☺

For more updates on Matawa Education's **PASS team**, follow **Kinomahgewin Miikina**, their new Facebook account.



The PASS team has also created a new Facebook account called "Kinomahgewin Miikina" which translates to "Education Pathway," and hopes to develop more social media engagement tools with parents and students over the next few months. ●

# MATAWA WAKA TERE

## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT



RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE!

## YEAR ONE

CERTIFICATE III IN  
INDIGENOUS PATHWAYS  
TO SPEAKING THE  
LANGUAGE

FREE BEGINNERS LANGUAGE  
COURSES AVAILABLE IN  
OJI-CREE, OJIBWAY/OJIBWE, CREE.

USE THE QR CODE TO REQUEST/SUBMIT YOUR STUDENT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ **LITTLE TO NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE**
- ✓ **16 YEARS +**
- ✓ **ABILITY TO ATTEND IN-PERSON**



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Disclaimer: This certificate is a non accredited program at the time of rollout, however, it is currently seeking accreditation through a World Indigenous Institution.











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This year's keynote speakers were Ellen Gabriel (left) and Adrianna Douglas-Bear (right).

## Matawa Education Conference 2024 highlights

By: Katie Hughdie, Conference Lead, on behalf of the PASS Conference Planning Team

**T**he Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS) team is thrilled to announce another fantastic Education Conference is in the books. Attendees filled the Valhalla Hotel on March 5 to 7, 2024, enjoying a wide variety of speakers and keynotes who presented new and interesting ideas. This year, the PASS team facilitated professional development sessions for educators on topics like language revitalization, technology, and mental health and wellness, which encouraged building a community of collaboration.

On March 6, keynote speaker Adrianna Douglas-Bear from Six Nations of the Grand River shared her personal experiences about the impact of bullying in Indigenous communities. The following day, keynote speaker Ellen Gabriel from Kaneshatà:ke—known for her role as official spokesperson during the 1990 Oka Cri-

sis—shared her wisdom as an advocate for gender equity, justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the revitalization of Indigenous languages, culture, traditions, the Indigenous People's rights to self-determination, and climate change. The entertainment, led by Master of Ceremonies

Janine Desmoulin—who stepped in at the last minute to provide laughter and comedy—also featured Mackinley the Magician, who amazed and astounded with his unique brand of magic.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this another a fantastic conference—and a big thank you to the PASS Team who work tirelessly every year to put on one of the biggest education conferences in our region! A special thank you to our leaders, David Paul Achneepineskum and Sharon Nate, along with the Matawa First Nations Education Authority Board of Directors, for their long-standing support and guidance throughout the planning process. ●



The annual Matawa Education Conference is one of the largest in the region.



The Matawa Education dream team.

## Matawa Education celebrates Bowmanville Rotary Club's 100th anniversary

Submitted by: Olivia Merko, Student Nutrition Program Co-ordinator



Matawa Education has worked with the Bowmanville Rotary Club since 2017.

The Matawa Education department representatives including Executive Director Sharon Nate, Pathways to Student Success team member Olivia Merko, and Matawa Student Care Centre Youth Care Lead Supervisor Kelly Soulias, had the pleasure of attending the Bowmanville Rotary Club 100th Anniversary Gala on April 27 in Oshawa.

The Matawa Education department has a longstanding partnership with the Bowmanville Rotary Club, dating back to 2007. The rotary club generously provides financial assistance for awards and bursaries to encourage and support Matawa First Nations students in their educational endeavours.

“Matawa Education was very grateful to be present in the celebration the club’s large milestone, and looks forward to the future with the generous support of the Bowmanville Rotary Club,” says Olivia Merko. ●

## PASS unveil their new logo

The PASS team’s new logo, created in partnership with Generator, is based on images from their moccasin curriculum and features a pair of traditional split toe moccasins. The PASS team is excited to put the logo on teddy bears, which they give out to students as they travel to Matawa communities.



Are you a **fluent language speaker** interested in teaching?

Fill out the **Instructor Tutor or Assistant Expression of Interest** form on page 19 and select the class you’re interested in teaching.

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# MATAWA WAKA TERE

## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT

### SUMMER 2024

### PRE-SELECT TRAINING

USE THE QR CODE TO REQUEST/SUBMIT YOUR INSTRUCTOR TUTOR/ASSISTANT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

**NO QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED!!**

**MATAWA WAKA TERE SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROVIDED!**

**WORK AS A MATAWA WAKA TERE LANGUAGE TUTOR (FULL-TIME) OR ASSISTANT (PART-TIME) IN YOUR COMMUNITY!**

**YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

IF YOU SPEAK:

**OJI-CREE**

**OJIBWAY / OJIBWE**

**CREE**

ARE YOU THE ONE?

Please forward expression of interest to **Matawa Waka Tere Administration**

**[mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca)**

Disclaimer: This certificate is a non accredited program at the time of rollout, however, it is currently seeking accreditation through a World Indigenous Institution.

## MWT-INSTRUCTOR TUTOR or ASSISTANT (OJIBWE/OJI-CREE/CREE) EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

*Please read the instructions below carefully before you complete this MWT-Tutor or Assistant Expression of Interest form*

### Section 1: Programme Information

Which MWT position are you interested in teaching (please check box)

- ☐ **MWT – Instructor Tutor (Full-Time)**  
☐ **MWT – Assistant (Part-Time)**

Which Language programme are you interested in teaching (please check box and underline language group):

- ☐ **Certificate III in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree/Cree (Year 1)**  
☐ **Diploma I in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree (Year 2)**

1. Which of the following language groups are you fluent in?

Check relevant boxes ☐ Ojibwe ☐ Oji Cree ☐ Cree

2. Are you a qualified Indigenous Language Teacher ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Have you taught an Adult Language program before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Section 2: PERSONAL DETAILS (ALL BOXES MUST BE FILLED IN)

<b>LAST NAME(S):</b>	
<b>FIRST NAME(S):</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY:</b>	

#### CONTACT DETAILS:

<b>HOME PHONE:</b>	
<b>MOBILE:</b>	
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	

Gichi Miigwech – Please use QR Code to send completed form to

[mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca)

A Matawa Waka Tere Staff Administrator will contact you



## MWT-STUDENT (OJIBWE/OJI-CREE/CREE) EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

*Please read the instructions below carefully before you complete this Expression of Interest form. Please note that this is not the Registration Form that is required to be registered on one of the language programmes. A Registration Form will be sent out to you when recruitment begins.*

### Section 1: Programme Information

Which programme are you interested in registering for (please check box):

- ☐ **Certificate III in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree/Cree (Year 1)**
- ☐ **Diploma I in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree (Year 2)**

1. Have you previously registered into an Adult Ojibwe, Oji Cree or Cree Language Programme?

☐ **YES**    ☐ **NO (go to Section 2)**

If **Yes** what grade / level did you achieve?    Certificate ☐    Diploma ☐    Degree ☐

### Section 2: PERSONAL DETAILS (ALL BOXES MUST BE FILLED IN)

<b>LAST NAME(S):</b>	
<b>FIRST NAME(S):</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY OF STUDY:</b>	
<b>LANGUAGE CHOICE:</b>	

#### CONTACT DETAILS:

<b>HOME PHONE:</b>	
<b>MOBILE:</b>	
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	

Gichi Miigwech - Please use QR Code to send completed form to  
[mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca)

A Matawa Waka Tere Staff Administrator will contact you





## Matawa Waka Tere Indigenous Language Revitalization Project recruiting students and teachers

Submitted by: Syndyn Baxter, Matawa Waka Tere Project Officer

**T**his summer, the Matawa Waka Tere Indigenous Language Revitalization Project is celebrating students' success, while recruiting students and teachers for classes beginning this fall.

The project has had a busy 2023-24 rollout: students enrolled in the program's one-year Certificate III in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language (Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway and Ojibwe) will complete their program in June—with plans to celebrate their

achievements in July—while students enrolled in the two-year Diploma I in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language (Oji-Cree and Ojibwe) began their summer break in May.

The Matawa Waka Tere Indigenous Language Revitalization Project is currently recruiting students and teachers in Matawa communities and Thunder Bay. Students who are interested in enrolling in classes are encouraged to fill out a "Student Expression of Interest form" on page 20. Interested students can submit their completed form to [mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca) using the QR code on the form. Student Pre-enrollment Sessions will be taking place throughout the summer in Matawa communities and Thunder Bay, with classes beginning in the fall.

The Indigenous language project currently has vacant

Are you a **beginner** interested in learning Ojibway, Cree or Oji-Cree?

Fill out the **Student Expression of Interest** form on page 20 and select **Certificate III in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree/Cree (Year 1)**.

Are you an **advanced learner** interested in brushing up on your Ojibwe/Oji Cree?

Fill out the **Student Expression of Interest** form on page 20 and select **Diploma I in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Ojibwe/Oji Cree (Year 2)**.

teaching positions in Aroland, Constance Lake, Marten Falls, Neskantaga, Nibinamik, and Thunder Bay. Language Carriers who are interested in teaching either language are encouraged to fill out the "Instructor Tutor or Assistant Expression of Interest form" on page 19, and submit their completed form to [mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtadmin@matawaeducation.ca) using the QR code. Pre-selection Training for language teachers is scheduled for the week of June 24, 2024. ●



## Henry Coaster Memorial School's new logo

Submitted by: Douglas Gagnon, Cultural Education Co-ordinator

In September, Matawa's Pathways to Student Success (PASS) team and staff from Henry Coaster Memorial School in Marten Falls First Nation began discussing the creation of a logo to represent the community's elementary school.

The team commissioned a logo from Generator, a graphic design company in Thunder Bay. After a few rounds of edits, the logo was approved.



Chief Bruce Achneepineskum initially designed the logo in 1993, when Henry Coaster Memorial School was under construction in Marten Falls. The logo is based on Achneepineskum's design for a ceramic mosaic, that was completed by another artist, which sits in the centre of the school's atrium.

The atrium is a large, circular space with four doorways featuring huge cedar entrances, explains Achneepineskum. "The logo

comprises the four directions and four spiritual grandfathers who come from those directions. The eagle in yellow represents the eastern door, the little boy with pipe representing the southern door, the bison in black representing the western door, and the bear in white representing the northern door," said Achneepineskum.

Matawa's PASS team is now in the early stages of planning a community-based event to celebrate the new logo. •



The ceramic mosaic in Henry Coaster Memorial School's atrium that inspired the school's new logo.

## MATAWA WAKA TERE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT



RECEIVE A DIPLOMA!

**YEAR TWO**  
DIPLOMA I IN  
INDIGENOUS PATHWAYS  
TO SPEAKING THE  
LANGUAGE

**FREE ADVANCED LANGUAGE  
COURSES AVAILABLE IN  
OJI-CREE AND OJIBWAY/OJIBWE.**

USE THE QR CODE TO REQUEST/SUBMIT YOUR STUDENT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

### ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE
- ✓ 16 YEARS +
- ✓ ABILITY TO ATTEND IN-PERSON



**DISCLAIMER: MATAWA MEMBERS WILL BE FIRST PRIORITY**

**ENQUIRE TODAY!**

Student Support Services  
[mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca](mailto:mwtsss@matawaeducation.ca)



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## Achieving the Dream Through Education's inaugural golf tournament

Submitted by: Emily Shandruk, Special Projects Officer

**A**chieving the Dream Through Education is thrilled to announce our inaugural annual golf tournament, where we'll unite players and supporters in our shared vision of empowerment through education. As golfers navigate the course, they'll also navigate a path toward progress and opportunity. Their unwavering support will translate into tangible resources and opportunities for Indigenous youth, bridging the gap between aspiration and achievement.

Beyond the greens, this event symbolizes our commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. Founded in 2018, Achieving the Dream Through Education charity has provided scholarships, awards, bursaries, and community-based opportunities for Matawa First Nation youth. The charity's commitment to preserving cultural traditions, providing mental health support, and fostering holistic well-being has been unwavering. At the heart of our mission lies a dedication to breaking barriers and unlocking the potential of Indigenous youth through education. Join us in making a difference. Scan the QR code on the poster to sign up to participate or support this important cause. ●

## We feed off of what could have been

A poem by Keira R Mendowegan, Matawa Education and Care Centre student

we isolate in fear  
fear born out of confusion, loss into grief of the life that  
was never ours.

People are full of hate, they build off their guilt of every-  
thing to sedate us from feeling anything at all.  
staying in the past with the mindset that their hearts  
could remain as it was

We fear our minds for the fear of what we will become  
We fear the homeless because of appearance  
We fear drug-addicts because we envy their freedom.

We call each other 'unfixable' because we don't know how  
to help.  
Accountability is not taught, its to be sought  
Everything is something in their lifetime

A circle forced to be square  
A fisher forced to hunt  
A bird forced to swim  
A child forced to be an adult

The monster that they created was a mountain.  
The mountain was to become a volcano

We see everything and think of our lives as 'what could  
have been.'



Keira R Mendowegan  
is a Grade 12 student  
at the Matawa  
Education and Care  
Centre from Aro-  
land First Nation.



## Matawa Health Co-operative News

Over the last few months, the Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) has held many workshops and community events for Matawa members:

- » Our **Youth Recreation Workers** have been busy planning and supporting activities for Matawa youth like volleyball, crafts, swimming and tubing.
- » Our **Health Transformation team** continues to engage with communities and host workshops and events, including making bannock and Chinese dumplings, and creating vision boards and valentine gnomes. They've also recently held traditional sewing classes where attendees made moccasins, ladies beaver-fur hats, quill and birch tassel earrings, medicine mats, and other beading projects. Plus, we've hosted teachings with George Price, who talked about cedar and cedar rope teachings, and Audrey DeRoy, who gave medicine bundle teachings.



### Health Transformation Programming

The Matawa Health Co-op (MHC) team routinely offers a variety of fun and educational programming, including (clockwise from top left) medicine bundle teachings with Audrey DeRoy, quill tassel earring workshop, baby moccasin workshop, and ladies beaver fur hat workshop.



#### MATAWA HEALTH CO-OP Walk-in Clinic Hours:

**Tuesdays: 1PM to 4PM**

**Fridays: 9AM to 12PM**

Find the clinic on the 5th floor of the  
Chapples building at  
**101 Syndicate Ave. N Suite 510**  
(near Victoriaville Mall in Thunder Bay)

#### MATAWA HEALTH CO-OP offers

- Physicians
- Nurses (in Thunder Bay, Aroland, Eabametoong and Ginoogaming)
- Dietitians
- Diabetes team
- Mental Health team
- Youth workers
- Health Transformation team
- Electronic Medical Records (EMR) Privacy
- Health Promotion

Find **MATAWA HEALTH CO-OPERATIVE** at  
Clinic: 101 Syndicate Ave N Suite 510A • Main office:  
233 Court St S Satellite office: 523 Algoma St N

#### MATAWA HEALTH CO-OP Contact Us:

Phone: 807-346-2370

Toll-free: 1-833-625-3611

Confidential Fax: 807-346-2371

E-mail: [mhc-reception@matawa.on.ca](mailto:mhc-reception@matawa.on.ca)

Find us on  
Facebook



Search "Matawa  
Health Co-op"

## Matawa Health Co-operative News

- » Our **physicians, nurses, and dieticians** have been providing education through community presentations (both in-person and virtual) on a variety of subjects, giving immunizations—particularly measles vaccines—and providing footcare.
- » Our **Mental Health team** has been travelling to Matawa communities to provide wellness support, counselling, and interactive activities and have received training and education to enhance their skills. ●



### Tournament of Hope

MHC team members volunteered to support the Tournament of Hope in April (left), offering mental health support and organizing a youth pow wow. They also organized a youth movie night (top left) and bowling night (top right).



### Elders Evenings

Elders evenings bring together Matawa Elders for a night of socializing, supper, and education on topics like fall prevention, Alzheimer's, hypertension, and oral health.



Interested in participating in MHC's workshops?  
Follow "**Matawa Health Co-operative**" on **Facebook** to see  
(and sign up for) upcoming events.



### Aroland Men's Health Fair

In March, the MHC held a Men's Health Fair in Aroland First Nation with a urologist, a counsellor from North of Superior Counselling Programs, and other team members.



Dayna Lalonde is a Registered Dietitian at Matawa Health Co-operative.

## Healthy eating for diabetics: A Q&A with dietitian Dayna Lalonde

**T**o learn more about the role food plays in managing diabetes, the Matawa Messenger reached out to Dayna Lalonde, a Registered Dietitian at the Matawa Health Co-operative.

### What is the relationship between diabetes and the food we eat?

When people eat foods containing carbohydrates —such as rice, bread, bannock, pasta, potatoes, pop, etc.—the digestive system breaks them down into sugar. The sugar enters the bloodstream, causing blood sugar levels to rise. In response, the pancreas produces a hormone called insulin, which prompts cells to absorb blood sugar for energy or storage. As cells absorb blood sugar, levels in the bloodstream begin to fall. When this happens, the pancreas starts making glucagon, a hormone that signals the liver to start



Carbs like bread, pasta, and pop cause blood sugar to rise.

releasing stored sugar. This ensures that cells throughout the body, especially in the brain, have a steady supply of blood sugar. Carbohydrate metabolism is important in the development of type 2 diabetes, which occurs when the body can't make enough insulin, or can't properly use the insulin it makes.

### Why is it important for diabetics to eat healthy?

It is important for everyone to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet to maintain

optimal health, but for those with diabetes, eating healthy will better manage your blood glucose levels. Not only does eating healthy and managing blood sugars help to reduce the risk of developing pre-diabetes and diabetes, it also reduces the risk of long-term complications such as chronic kidney disease, stroke, heart attack, amputation, nerve damage, vision loss, and more.



Dayna recommends eating a balanced meal, by dividing your plate in quarters: fill half the plate with vegetables and fruits, one-quarter with whole grains, and one-quarter with lean protein.

### What tips do you have for diabetics who are trying to eat better to support their health?

- » Focus on making  $\frac{1}{2}$  your plate vegetables and fruits,  $\frac{1}{4}$  whole grain carbohydrates (like whole grain bread or pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, sweet potato, etc.), and  $\frac{1}{4}$  lean protein foods.
- » Drinking 2.5L of water a day for women and 3.5L for men. Water is the best choice. It's important to reduce intake of pop, juice, as these have a lot of added sugar.
- » Incorporate traditional foods.
- » Have regular meals and snacks at consistent times to support blood sugar control.
- » Follow-up regularly with your

diabetes educator or family doctor.

» Take prescribed medications.

**Food in remote communities is expensive. Do you have any tips for eating healthy on a budget?**

Choose seasonal foods—they're often more abundant and cheaper during peak seasons, and keep an eye out for promotional or sale items. Some grocery stores will have sections with reduced pricing. Also, include traditional foods into your diet. Wild game is an excellent lean protein option! My last tip is a fun way to have affordable fruits, vegetables, and herbs: start a windowsill garden. Growing your own fruits, vegetables, or herbs can help reduce your grocery bills and allow you to savour fresher, more nutritious food, without added costs.



A windowsill garden is a great way to have access to fresh, affordable herbs and veggies.

**Where can people find more information about healthy eating?**

The Matawa Health Co-operative has monthly wellness programs targeting overall wellbeing. Follow our Facebook page by searching "Matawa Health Co-operative" to stay up-to-date with our programming and events. ●

## Welcome new Matawa staff

**Patrick Cheechoo, Quality Assurance Project Officer**

**Matawa First Nations Management**



Waciiye/Greetings:

It is wonderful to once again be a part of the Matawa team. I join as the

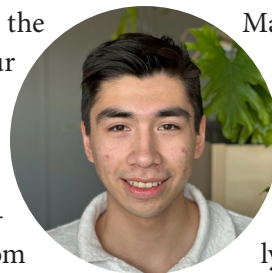
Quality Assurance Project Officer

where I will be focusing on digitizing Matawa First Nation Management's quality management system and assisting with ISO 9001:2015 registration audit, which is tentatively scheduled for February 2025. I'll be in contact with all departments regarding preparation for a round of internal audits, management review and final prep for the Registration Audit. If you have any questions please contact me at pcheechoo@matawa.on.ca or 807-252-8090.

**Trey Duncan, Recruitment Officer**  
**Matawa Education & Care Centre**

I'm excited to join the Matawa team at our Education & Care Centre as the new Recruitment Officer. I recently graduated in 2023 from Confederation College,

where I completed a three-year program in Human Resources and Business Administration. Before stepping into this role, I gained valuable experience working for an Indigenous transmission line company. Outside of work, I have a passion for sports, both



as a player, and a fan, and I'm currently learning the piano. I cherish the time spent with family and friends, and a proud owner of two dogs, Bailey and Charlie, who bring joy into my everyday life. I look forward to contributing to our centre and getting to know you all!

**Leonard Wavy, Hub Operator**  
**Matawa Technical Services**

Boozhoo, my name is Leonard Wavy, I'm a Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation member but live in the

Township of Pickle Lake. I'm fluent in Ojibway and English. I started working with Water/Wastewater Systems in 2005, with a majority of those years in my home community as their Operator-in-Charge/Overall Responsible Operator (ORO). Eventually, I moved on to be Pickle Lake's ORO/Operations Manager for a several years, which gave me the opportunity to operate under federal and provincial regulations. With my free time, I enjoy being out in my trapline with family hunting, fishing and occasionally trapping and teaching the younger generation on survival on the land. I'm honoured and excited to have been given the opportunity to work with Matawa First Nations and I look forward to being a part of the team. ●



# Living with us

## Kahkiigahbug/Kakekaybegoon - Labrador Tea

**L**abrador Tea is a low-growing evergreen shrub that can be found in bogs and coniferous forests. The plant can reach between 0.5 to 1.5 metres tall, with leaves around 6 centimetres in length, which alternate around the stem.



The plant's leaves have a fuzzy white to rusty-brown coloured underside and a leathery green top, which can be used to make "bush tea," a favourite drink on a cool night.

The Labrador Tea plant blooms from June to August, producing fragrant white flowers in umbrella-like clusters at the tips of its branches.



### Did you know...

Labrador tea is a medicinal plant that can be used on bug bites and as a bug repellent, and is often made into a yummy, healthy herbal tea!



Four Rivers has been sharing fun facts on our Facebook page at Four Rivers Group. We encourage you to follow us to learn more about special days, events, facts and more! Sip a cup of tea while you browse our information and think about all the fun you can have exploring out on the land this summer.

