

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE STORY AS IT'S TOLD

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PHOTO BY BRETT LARSON

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and District III Rep. Wally St. John did the honors at the grand opening of Meshakwad Community Center in Hinckley on December 21. They were joined by (left to right) front desk coordinator B.J. Livingston, Skip Churchill, Steve Premo, Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd, and site manager Ryan O'Brien.

Curtain Rises on Meshakwad Center

It was appropriate that Skip Churchill gave the invocation at the ribbon-cutting for the Meshakwad Community Center in Hinckley on December 21. Skip is the son of the late Meshakwad, Albert Churchill, for whom the center is named.

Meshakwad was instrumental in obtaining the land on which Grand Casino Hinckley stands today, but more importantly he was a Drumkeeper and community leader who helped the Band preserve its culture, language, and spirituality.

When District III members were considering names for the center, Skip suggested naming it for his father. He pointed out that it is uncommon to name buildings for people in Ojibwe communities, but he believes his father would be proud of the honor, especially given the beauty of the center and its community-oriented purpose.

After a song by Red Willow drum group, site manager Ryan O'Brien brought out the giant scissors, and District III Representative Wally St. John and Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin cut the ribbon, officially opening the center for business.

Breakfast was served to guests, and the facility was open to the public throughout the day. WCMP radio was on hand to interview Melanie, Skip, and others.

Although the center has been open for several months, it is now fully functional with daily hours, a membership program, co-ed volleyball on Tuesdays, co-ed basketball on Wednesdays, and a variety of community meetings and events.



Artist Steve Premo, above, is in the process of painting a mural featuring the late Meshakwad, Albert Churchill, surrounded by the animals representing Anishinaabe clans.



Judges Seek Input on Court System

"If you're going to be tried by a jury of your peers, and you have no peers on the jury, that's a problem."

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

Seventh District Judge Gail Kulick, a former Commissioner of Corporate Affairs for the Band, came to the reservation December 14 to hear from Band members about their experience in the Minnesota court system.

Her goals are to compile facts about disparate treatment of minority members and to encourage Band members to serve on juries. "If you're going to be tried by a jury of your peers, and you have no peers on the jury, that's a problem," said Kulick.

Several Band members and employees shared their experiences on juries, at court, and in professional relationships with county court staff.

They talked about transportation being a barrier to jury duty and how the close-knit nature of the reservation means "everybody knows everybody," which can result in Band members being removed from juries.

Plans for a drug court and restorative justice initiatives were also discussed.

Band member Pete Nayquonabe said he had been called to jury duty twice but had never served on a jury. He was the only tribal member in the pool each time.

Chief Legislative Counsel Christine Jordan suggested that the court reach out to Band members by hosting courthouse tours or other events to foster positive interactions.

Commissioner Bradley Harrington said the probation system discourages groups like Sober Squad by not allowing felons on probation to associate with other convicted felons.

Kulick serves on the Tribal Court State Court Forum, which is composed of tribal court judges from Minnesota's 11 federally recognized tribes and state court judges from Minnesota's 87 district courts.

Kulick was joined by Judge Matt Quinn and Mille Lacs Band Special Advisor Tadd Johnson, who gave an introductory presentation on Indian law and history.



Judge Gail Kulick wants to hear about Band members' experiences in court and on juries.

For more photos see page 4

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELANIE
BENJAMIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Dear Band Member,

Season's Greetings to all Band Members. I hope this finds your families safe, well, and warm. December was a busy month. I attended meetings of Governor-elect Walz's One Minnesota Transition Team, which I was appointed to after the election. We spent a great deal of time talking about how input from all Minnesotans from all demographics will be incorporated into policy-making in Minnesota, to ensure all voices are heard and no group is left out.

On a very exciting note, former Mille Lacs Band Education Commissioner Dennis Olson was just appointed by Governor Walz to the position of Minnesota Commissioner of Higher Education. Dennis is enrolled with Fond du Lac and has been serving as the executive director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. He will be outstanding in this new role, and his appointment also shows that Governor Walz intends to make good on his promise to represent all Minnesotans, including Native Americans.

Other meetings in December included many meetings with Band members and staff, an executive board meeting of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, and a meeting of the Tribal Executive Committee of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe held at Grand Casino Hinckley. You will hear more about MCT issues in coming weeks.

I also attended an intensive financial training held by the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA), along with Arlyn Sam, our new deputy assistant, and Health and Human Services staff Ginger Weyaus and Nicole LaGuard.

Finally, the Executive Branch and the Band Assembly continue to work very well together in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and we continue to meet to discuss important matters facing the Band.

Please mark your calendars for January 8, 2019, which is our annual State of the Band Address. This event will take place at 10 a.m. at the Grand Casino Convention Center, and I hope to see many of you there. Each year, Band Members from across the state gather at this event to hear about the current state of our government and community, our challenges and opportunities, as well as our hope for the new year. For those who cannot attend, the State of the Band Address will be reprinted in next month's issue of Ojibwe Inaajimowin.

I wish every family a safe and happy holiday season, and hope to see you at the State of the Band Address! Miigwech!

Melanie Benjamin



Melanie visited with friends at the District III holiday dinner on December 21 at Grand Casino Hinckley.



THE MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE

Chief Executive
Melanie Benjamin

Cordially Invites You to Attend
2019
State of the Band Address
10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Grand Casino Mille Lacs
Events & Convention Center



Dignitaries and Non-Band Member Guests are
Warmly Welcome & Encouraged to R.S.V.P. to
(320) 532-7486

Band Members need not R.S.V.P.



Matt Roberson gave Band Assembly members and their staff an update on the activities and budget of the Department of Athletic Regulation.

Director of Department of Athletic Regulation Provides Update to Assembly

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

The Mille Lacs Band Assembly met at the District II Assisted Living Unit in Minisinaakwaang (East Lake) on December 13. Executive Director Matt Roberson provided an update on the Department of Athletic Regulation.

The Department of Athletic Regulation licenses combatants, trainers, managers, matchmakers, ringside physicians, and officials, and also regulates combative sports on the Mille Lacs Reservation according to the rules and regulations of the Department. It is a member of the National Association of Boxing Commissions and International Association of Combative Sports Commissions.

Matt introduced himself to the new members and talked about the Department's involvement in bringing 90 Minnesota youth to Toronto last year for the North American Indigenous Games. He also shared his plan to work with Jim Ingle of the District I fitness center to create a Team Minnesota organization for Elders and youth.

Matt said the department is regulating shows for the Leech Lake Band and is also working with White Earth and Jackpot Junction. The department is also looking into hosting an amateur kickboxing show at Meshakwad Community Center in Hinckley.

Matt is a member of the Wichita tribe who serves on the tribal council. He was also named to the 2017 40 under 40 list for influential young Native Americans and is a recipient of the American Express Next Gen leadership fellowship.

"I'm thankful to the Mille Lacs Band for the opportunities that have come my way," he said.

Scholarship policy reconsidered

The Assembly also heard from Commissioner of Education Rick St. Germaine and Executive Director Joyce Shingobe about the Band's scholarship policy.

A Secretarial Order from August of 2017 signed by the previous Secretary-Treasurer, Carolyn Beaulieu, limited scholarships to Mille Lacs Band members, reversing a longstanding policy that allowed direct descendants to apply for scholarships. Secretary-Treasurer Beaulieu explained the decision by pointing out declines in business revenue and increases in Band membership.

Secretary-Treasurer and Speaker of the Band Assembly Sheldon Boyd asked if the Representatives would like to request that he rescind the order. Representative Marvin

Bruneau said, "I would like to see it go away. There's a benefit to all Band members. Even if they aren't enrolled members, they are part of the family."

Sheldon agreed. "If there's anything we should be spending money on it's education," he said. "I'd like to replace the words 'descendants' and 'enrolled' with the words 'our children'."

Mille Lacs Band scholarships are not intended to replace other forms of financial aid but to cover needs that are unmet by other forms of aid.

Other business

Executive Director Becky Houle of the Gaming Regulatory Authority presented her department's year-end budget review. Commissioner of Finance Adam Valdez complimented Becky for coming in nearly \$500,000 under budget last year.

Michael Davis made a request for a donation to McGregor Public Schools. The Band previously made donations to the school to help students with expenses like school supplies and extracurricular fees. The district has over 100 Native students, about 25 percent of the student body.

Michaa Aubid gave an update on attempts to hold the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education accountable for closing the school at Libby near Sandy Lake and destroying the school at Rice Lake when the Rice Lake community was forcibly removed to make room for a national wildlife refuge. "The U.S. has a treaty obligation to build us a federal Indian school," he said.

Chief Legislative Counsel Christine Jordan provided an update about ongoing revisions of statutes and policies. She said there are updates in the works to the child support and child protection statutes, the criminal code, the ethics code, personnel policies, and Title 21, Real and Personal Property.

Representative Marvin Bruneau said he would like more time to consider Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin's nomination of Percy Benjamin to serve as Commissioner of Administration. Percy is currently the Commissioner of Community Development. Representative Wally St. John said he would like Percy to remain in his current role, praising him for his knowledge of housing and community development issues. "The needs of the many await the needs of the few," he said. "I like him right where he is for the sake of all Band members."

The Assembly approved unanimously the nominations of Bonnie Dorr and Mitch Matrious to serve on the TERO (Tribal Employment Rights Office) Commission.

Legislative Briefs

At the November 28 Band Assembly meeting at All Nations Church in Minneapolis, the following topics were discussed:

Housing needs for urban Band members. District I Representative Sandi Blake said she had received requests for rent subsidies for urban members. Representative Marvin Bruneau requested a needs assessment to determine how many of approximately 400 urban households are in need of housing or housing subsidies.

An update to the Revenue Allocation Plan. The RAP, which defines how tribal governments spend gaming revenues, is required under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act if tribes intend to allocate per capita payments to individual members from revenue derived from tribal gaming activities. The Mille Lacs Band's current RAP allocates 35 percent of revenue for per capita distributions, but increasing enrollment has resulted in shortfalls covered by using other resources to fund per capita payments.

Donation request. Band Assembly members considered a request for funding for a movie version of Anton Treuer's book *The Assassination of Hole-in-the-Day*. The donation would come from the Band's charitable fund administered by the Minnesota Community Foundation. Band Assembly did not make a decision on the request.

New Assistant Commissioner of Administration. Band Assembly ratified the nomination of Baabiitaw Melissa Boyd to serve as Assistant Commissioner of Administration. Baabiitaw was sworn in December 3.



Baabiitaw Boyd, third from left, was sworn in by Justice Ramona Applegate December 3.

Community Development Hosts Public Meetings in January

Commissioner of Community Development Percy Benjamin will hold meetings in all three districts in January to hear Band members' ideas and concerns about roads, public works, housing, and any other topic within the department's authority.

The meetings will take place at 9 a.m. on January 7 at Meshakwad Community Center in Hinckley, January 14 at East Lake ALU in District II, and January 28 in the upstairs media room at the District I Government Center. Community Development staff will also be present to answer questions and share plans.

Percy also reminds Band members that Housing Board meetings are open to the public. The Housing Board meets twice in January, at the Aazhoomog Community Center January 10 and the District II ALU in East Lake on January 24.

State and Local News Briefs

Tribal flags installed at Juvenile Justice Center:

Representatives from the White Earth and Leech Lake bands presented their flags for installation at the Hennepin County Juvenile Justice Center, which will be used for most Indian Child Welfare Act cases. Supreme Court Justice Anne McKeig, a White Earth descendant and the first Native American to serve on the court, presided over the ceremony with Hennepin County District Court Judge David Piper. The court intends to install the flags of all Minnesota tribes at the center. *Source: minnlawyer.com.*

Red Lake Nation plans bison farm: Thirty bison — “mashkode bizhiki” in Ojibwemowin — will be introduced to an 80-acre paddock as a “seed herd” for what will become a 560-acre pasture that will double as an economic and cultural hub. Among the possibilities are an interpretive center, cultural tours, and sales of meat and jerky. One inspiration is a similar farm run by the Turtle Mountain Ojibwe in North Dakota, a 1,300-acre park with camping, educational events, and fishing. *Source: bemidjipioneer.com.*

St. Paul debates racist murals: Murals in the St. Paul City Council chamber show black men loading cargo onto a riverboat, American Indians looking up at a white priest holding a crucifix, and other larger-than-life white people looking down on people of color. The Council and Ramsey County Board are considering commissioning a new set of murals to temporarily cover the old ones, which were painted in the 1930s by Chicago artist John Norton, whose work is displayed across the country and has become a source of controversy. City Council President Amy Brendmoen said, “There is something that’s sort of contradictory about the feeling we want people to have when they’re in the chamber, and what the murals portray.” *Source: startribune.com*

Cass County, Leech Lake Council celebrate cooperation: The Leech Lake Tribal Council and Cass County Board have been partaking in annual joint meetings to work on projects to benefit residents of the overlapping jurisdictions. According to Tribal Chairman Faron Jackson Sr., the open dialogue has led to trust. Tribal police work well with the county sheriff, the probation department meets with clients in Cass Lake (instead of Walker, the county seat), and the two governments have worked together to assign street addresses to improve 911 response times. They are also working on highway issues, land management, health, and human services. *Source: brainerddispatch.com.*

Court weighs climate defense: Three men arrested for chaining themselves to a Wells Fargo security gate in Duluth are claiming that their actions were justified in the name of environmental defense, arguing that the illegal actions are less harmful than following the law. Scot Bol, 67, used a U-shaped bike lock to secure himself to the gate at the customer entrance of the downtown Wells Fargo. He was joined by Michael Niemi of Duluth and Ernesto Burbank of the Navajo tribe. Referring to themselves as “water protectors,” they kept the bank from opening on schedule on January 12, 2018, calling for Wells Fargo to divest itself from fossil fuels in general and Line 3 pipeline owner Enbridge Energy in particular. *Source: Duluth News Tribune.*

Band Members Attend Chamber Dinner

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe played a significant role at the annual dinner of the Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce (MAICC) at Mystic Lake Casino on November 29. The master of ceremonies was Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Joe Nayquonabe, the drum group was Red Willow, and the color guard included Band members Tony Pike, Allen Weyaus, Quintin Sam, and Jamie Short.

Shena Matrious, who is the interim chair of the MAICC board, gave a warm welcome to the hundreds of guests.

In addition, the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Corporate Commission, and Department of Athletic Regulation sponsored tables populated primarily by Band members and employees.

The event included a live painting performance by Bunky Echo-Hawk and a presentation by artists Louie Gong and Sara Agaton Howes. The event concluded with an auction for Eighth Generation blankets and the painting created by Echo-Hawk.

Louie Gong (Nooksack) is an artist, entrepreneur, and educator who founded the Seattle-based company Eighth Generation in 2008 as a way to sell the shoes he was customizing with cultural art on his living room floor. The company is now the first Native-owned company to produce wool blankets — with a flagship retail store in Seattle’s iconic Pike Place Market.

Through the Inspired Natives Project, which Louie launched in 2014, Eighth Generation creates opportunities for cultural artists who struggle to meet demand for their handmade cultural art.

Sarah, one of the Inspired Natives artists, is an Anishinaabe artist, teacher, and community organizer from the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota. Widely known for her handmade regalia and moccasins featuring Ojibwe floral designs, Sarah owns and operates her own business, House of Howes. She shares her knowledge by teaching beadwork in her community and beyond through classes and video tutorials. Sarah has been an Inspired Natives collaborator since 2015.

Top: Bunky Echo-Hawk’s performance painting was auctioned off for \$5,000 with proceeds going to MAICC. Middle: Joe Nayquonabe and Shena Matrious. Bottom: Jamie Edwards was one of the models for the Eighth Generation wool blankets.



Open house at Meshakwad

Meshakwad Community Center features a boxing ring, a commercial kitchen, saunas, an elevated running track, and a friendly staff, including B.J. Livingston, Ryan O’Brien, Shannon Garbow, and Ruby Benjamin. WCMP interviewed Skip Churchill, and Red Willow drum group kicked off the festivities at the open house and ribbon-cutting December 21.

Band Hosts Multijurisdictional Training

The Band joined forces with the National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC) at Grand Casino Hinckley December 12 and 13 to offer training in multijurisdictional and collaborative law enforcement partnerships as a way of combating alcohol and substance abuse.

Lee Obizaan Staples gave an invocation to start the conference, and Timber Trails played a welcome song.

Obizaan said he was happy that the training was taking place. "A lot of the funerals we're doing are related to overdoses," he said. "It's time that we get together and address what needs to be done to help our people."

He said every Anishinaabe person has a unique spirit that needs to be nurtured. "A lot of us were told over the years to abandon our teachings, our language, our ceremonies, and the more we have lost, the more dysfunctional behaviors like drug use have happened," he said. "When we grow away from our teachings as Anishinaabe people, it's like we're missing something. You have that pain within, and you attempt to address it any way you can, like with drugs and alcohol."

Band member Carla Big Bear participated in a panel discussion about local successes in youth-based initiatives, sharing successes of Project RISE (see below).

Carla traveled to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in 2017 for training with other members of the Pine County Juvenile Justice Reform Team, including County Attorney Reese Frederickson and East Central Schools Superintendent Andrew Almos, who joined Carla on the panel.

Andrew said the initial results of the program show a dramatic improvement, with a decline in truancy and better relationships between the school and families.



Carla Big Bear joined East Central Schools Superintendent Andrew Almos and Pine County Attorney Reese Frederickson on December 12 on a panel titled "Local Successes in Youth-Based Initiatives."

Reese talked about the C5 restorative justice program, which led to RISE. Out of 43 graduates of the program, only one has re-offended.

Carla praised the improvement in the school's understanding of Native American issues — both in curriculum and in dealing with behavioral problems.

Echoing Obizaan's introductory remarks, Carla said Mille Lacs Band Elders emphasize the need for families and individuals to get back to their culture and traditions. "That's how we're going to heal," she said.

The NCJTC, located at Fox Valley Technical College in Wisconsin, is responsible for carrying out training programs funded through the Department of Justice. Current initiatives include AMBER Alert, Internet Crimes Against Children, Missing and Exploited Children, and Sex Offender Re-entry training and technical assistance programs.

Band, Pine County, East Central Public Schools Recognized for Cooperation

Pine County, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and East Central Schools received Resource Training and Solutions' Bridge Award for their collaborative work on Project RISE (Restorative Investment for Student Empowerment). East Central Schools received the award on Monday, November 19, presented by Mark Schmitz, Executive Director, Resource Training and Solutions, at the East Central school board meeting.

Pine County and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe received their awards on Wednesday, December 5, presented by Martha Roth, Member Care Coordinator, Resource Training and Solutions, at the Pine County Commissioners meeting.

Those honored at the East Central School Board Meeting and Pine County Commissioners Meeting for work with Project RISE: Carla Big Bear, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Education Mentor and Office Manager; Katie Draper, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Director of Government Affairs; Andy Almos, East Central Schools Superintendent; Stef Youngberg, East Central High School Principal; Deputy Zak Vork, East Central Schools Resource Officer/Pine County Sheriff's Office; Dave Minke, Pine County Administrator; Reese Frederickson, Pine County Attorney; Becky Foss, Pine County Health and Human Services Director; Terry Fawcett, Director of Pine County Probation; and Jeff Nelson, Pine County Sheriff.

Project RISE is a partnership put in place to serve kids and families in a way that provides hope by helping students become successful, thriving adults within the community. The project addresses many of the issues that may lead individuals to engage with the criminal justice system. Project RISE is a collaborative, restorative approach in working with these community members that seeks to align services and systems in a better way so that all stakeholders have a better sense of ownership and responsibility for youth within the community. The ultimate goal of Project RISE is to build a healthier, stronger community.



Carla Big Bear received an award from Martha Roth of Resource Training and Solutions for her work on Project RISE, Restorative Investment for Student Empowerment.

The Resource Training and Solutions' Bridge Award celebrates those who advance innovative solutions, demonstrate meaningful progress in their community, and advocate for positive change. Criteria for the award includes collaboration with others in an effort to build a "bridge" between member organizations and other groups that innovate a new process, access, or solution to a problem. The organization must go above-and-beyond normal operations for consideration.

Resource Training and Solutions, a nonprofit, public corporation, is one of nine Minnesota Service Cooperatives that provides support services, training, and resources that contribute to member success. Resource has served central Minnesota for 42 years and is composed of 93 school, city, county, and nonprofit agency members.

National News Briefs

North Dakota Native representative takes oath in traditional dress: Ruth Buffalo, the first Native woman Democrat to serve in North Dakota's Statehouse, was sworn into office December 3 wearing a Native American dress and holding an eagle feather fan given to her by a clan brother hours before. A member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Buffalo said, "It's part of my identity and who I am. It was to honor my ancestors, those that have gone before me, and the future generation." Buffalo won in the 27th District, which includes Fargo, in a shocking upset, unseating Republican Rep. Randy Boehning, who sponsored a voter ID law that was believed to suppress the Native vote. *Source: huffingtonpost.com*

U.S. to defend Indian Child Welfare Act: The United States will join four tribes in defending the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) against a Texas district court ruling. The Department of Justice, Department of Interior, and Department of Health and Human Services filed a notice of appeal November 30 after an October decision by Texas Judge Reed O'Connor deemed ICWA unconstitutional. ICWA was created to keep Native families together by giving priority in adoptions to the Native child's biological family, members of the child's tribe, or other Native families. *Source: Indian Country Today.*

U.S. Attorney for Minnesota bolsters law enforcement on Tribal lands: Erica MacDonald, the U.S. Attorney for Minnesota who took office in June, has tripled the number of prosecutors working crimes in Indian Country while taking on more cases from Tribal jurisdictions. MacDonald has agreed to prosecute 28 of 32 cases referred from four tribes over which the U.S. has jurisdiction. Her predecessor declined to prosecute two-thirds of such cases. The Justice Department has faced criticism over poor data collection and unsolved disappearances of Native women. *Source: startribune.com.*

Farm bill provides benefits for Indian Country: The 2018 Farm Bill approved by the Senate by a vote of 87-13 on December 10 includes several provisions that Senator Tom Udall (D-New Mexico) considers wins for Indian Country, including expanding tribal self-determination, a tribal advisory committee on agriculture, tribal "promise zones," international trade missions, research at tribal colleges and universities, a technical assistance program, and a study of the farm credit system to consider improvements to unique needs of Indians. *Source: nativenewsonline.net.*

Wisconsin tribes sue state, local governments over taxes: Red Cliff, Bad River, Lac du Flambeau, and Lac Courte Oreilles bands of northern Wisconsin are suing the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and 11 towns for taxing fee simple lands in violation of the Treaty of 1854. "The 1854 Treaty does not authorize the imposition of state taxes of any kind on the property of the tribes located within the reservations created therein," the complaint reads. "None of the historical documents relating to the negotiation of the 1854 Treaty indicate that the Indians were told that the lands reserved for them by the 1854 Treaty would be subject to state property taxes." *Source: Duluth News Tribune.*

Do you have a story idea?

Send your suggestions to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. The February issue deadline is January 15.

Winter Legends Start with Snowfall

By Lee 'Obizaan' Staples

This article was first published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted here to help preserve Obizaan's teachings for the next generation.

I remember when I was a child, I could hardly wait until the first snow fell because that meant the telling of legends could start. Our legends are traditionally told only during the winter. I think this is because a lot of our people were busy in the summer. When I was young, we were told that if the legends were told in the summer — out of season — we'd end up with a frog in our bed.

I was raised by my uncle and aunt, who I refer to as my mom and dad. I was four months old when they took me in as their child. When it started snowing, right away I would ask my mom to tell me these legends. They would be told after dark. She would always tell me, "Please try to stay awake because these characters that I'm talking about are powerful Manidoog (spirits)." She said by listening to the legends, you could acquire some power or gift from the spirits she was talking about. So she would get upset with me if I fell asleep.

There was a lot of respect shown toward those legends. She would start telling them maybe in November, about the first or second weekend when we'd usually have our first snowfall. And she'd tell them practically every night during November and December. A lot of the legends relate to our belief system and our relationship with the animals. They taught that we should respect the animals and other creatures in this world. Then in January or so, she'd say, "Out of respect for these legends, now I'm going to send them back." She needed to send the characters in the legends back where they came from. So she'd say, "I'm going to repeat these legends I told you earlier." And she'd retell them in January, February, and March.

Our Anishinaabe songs were also taught to me as a child. In the winter, my dad would bring out a small drum. He loved to sing in the evenings, and he had a wide variety of songs that he would sing each night. I learned to recognize a lot of those songs. He would sing some of the songs that we use in our ceremonial dances. He would sing love songs or what they called "sweetheart songs." He would sing moccasin game songs.

Above all, what these people gave me is the knowledge of the language. Along with that, they showed the importance that they placed on our teachings — the gifts to us as a people from the Creator.

This is what some of our Anishinaabe children are missing today. A lot of the parents today choose to believe the lies that we were told: that the teachings we were given had no value. When you are in attendance at a ceremonial dance, take a moment and feel what is there when the drum is sounded. The sound of that drum embraces your Anishinaabe spirit. The very same thing happens when you are able to speak and understand the language. Hearing and understanding these legends in the language nurtures your Anishinaabe spirit. The songs do that, also. All of what we have been given soothes our Anishinaabe spirit. If each and every one of us chooses to bring those ways back, we can only bring peace and harmony to ourselves individually, as families, and as communities.

A Time Gone By

This article was submitted by an anonymous Mille Lacs Band Elder who wants to share his memories with the hope that he will encourage Band members today.

We'd sit on the floor of our community center gym from 7 to 10 p.m. It was 1973. We had a basketball, a volleyball, and a lot of room. Maybe 10 of us would be there, or 15 on a really busy night. There was a jukebox with all the latest tunes. Bubba Smith was our rec supervisor. He was a cool guy — nice, peaceful. There was never any fighting. That was not our way.

Then one day, a guy we all knew started coming by on Saturdays in the RBC (Reservation Business Committee) van that he would rent. He would say, "Jump into the van if you want to do something different this winter." We asked, "What will we do?" He said, "Ya'll want to learn how to ski?" and we yelled "Yes!" He opened the doors and said, "Get in!" We did, and off we went.

There was lots of snow — up to our hips. Sometimes the drifts were up to our noses. Well, maybe not that deep, but at least four feet deep. The roads were plowed to Brainerd and then further on to a place called Gull Mountain. The ski rental package was \$5 for the day, and the ski lift tickets were free. And up the hill the rope would pull us.

We never asked where the money came from, but there was a way of collecting money for fun activities. It is from a long time ago and from an old way. It may sound silly, but it was called a "basket social."

Just picture our Elders who were so young back then. Maybe your grandparents or your great grandparents. People like Art Gahbow, Henry James, George Pendagayosh, Lorraine Weous, Dan Bugg, Shirley Boyd, and David Smith, to name a few.

This is how it would go. Every family had someone who could cook something real good that tasted delicious. Georgianna Day was the best cook! She had been the cook at our old school. Shirley Boyd's wild rice hotdish. Panji Gahbow's spare ribs. Lucy Bugg's mac and tomato dish. Someone would fry chicken. They would pack lots of good food into boxes or baskets. Then picture all of the community coming together for a "basket social" to raise money for the kids who wanted to get out of that gym and try something new.

Back then we all came together. We acted like one big family. Sometimes today we hardly know our next-door neighbors. But getting back to the way we would raise money, the event would begin. Someone would say, "What do we have in this

basket? It sure looks like Harriet Nayquonabe's bean soup. And it looks like her fry bread too." The crowd would laugh. That was our way. We were always a happy community. We all got along and worked together.

Someone would say, "I'll give you three dollars." Then someone else would say, "I'll give you five dollars." And the amount would go up. Back then, \$10 was like \$100 now. You could fill your gas tank for \$4 and a pack of smokes was 60¢.

Every basket would be sold by the end of the night. We had fun and lots of laughs. And in the end, all the kids could go to the mountain and learn to ski. Some of the parents even drove to the mountain and joined in the fun.

The one thing to remember is that no one got hurt. This guy took us camping. He was trusted by everyone. He didn't do this for recognition or to be treated as special. He took care of us kids. He drove the RBC van, paid for the gas, and fed anyone who was hungry. He never hurt anyone.

Can anyone tell me who he was? I know he was very young. He would protect us and teach us to stand up to anyone who tried to look down at us as "rez kids." He told us to be proud of who we were, and to fight to be equal to everyone else. He taught us how to stand up to anyone who tried to keep us down.

I want to tell you something else about this man. He saw a time when this reservation was always having fun. A time when our people would gather together to do fun things like chase a greased pig or climb a greased pole trying to grab the dollar bill hanging at the top. He watched our community come together to play softball. We were a community that never hurt each other.

Think of the young man who was hurt on Ojibwe Drive, his buddy's son who was gunned down for some stupid reason, and all the other people in our community who are gone or changed forever. It is hard to understand why people are so willing to hurt each other.

The man I'm talking about remembers how kids would respect their parents and the Elders. He is still willing to help anyone who needs help and never hurts anyone. He's proud of his people. But he feels bad about the people who are so willing to hurt each other.

So if you can figure out who he is, tell someone else, "Hey, he loves his people even if they don't understand him."

Thank you.

— Someone who never hurt any of his fellow Mille Lacs Band tribal members



Craft fair and bake sale

Donna Iverson and Bonita White shared a laugh at the Elder craft fair and bake sale at District I ALU on December 7.

A Christmas Wish and a Letter from Heaven

Toya Steward Downey Mille Lacs Band Member

When Arianna Sam sat down to write her letter to Santa this year, she didn't ask for books, Barbies, or a bicycle.

Instead, the 9-year-old had just one important request. She asked Santa to make a special trip to heaven to see her dad, Herb Sam. She wanted St. Nick to give her dad the letter she wrote — along with the message that she loves and misses him.

Herb, who was a Band Elder and spiritual advisor, passed away in September from liver cancer.

What happened next was the kind of thing that movies are made of and can make even the die-hard skeptics believe in the magic of the holidays.

"I went shopping in Pine City and saw Santa at the store. I knew that Arianna wanted to visit with him," said her mom, Patty Sam. "I was going to pick her up, but Santa was about to leave. So, I asked if I could take a picture of him for her."

Patty also had a chance to tell him about her daughter's letters. Santa listened to Patty talk about her husband and her daughter's letters. He then wrote down her name, asked her to describe her daughter and asked Patty to bring Arianna to see him in Mora. He said he might have a surprise for her if she came to see him.

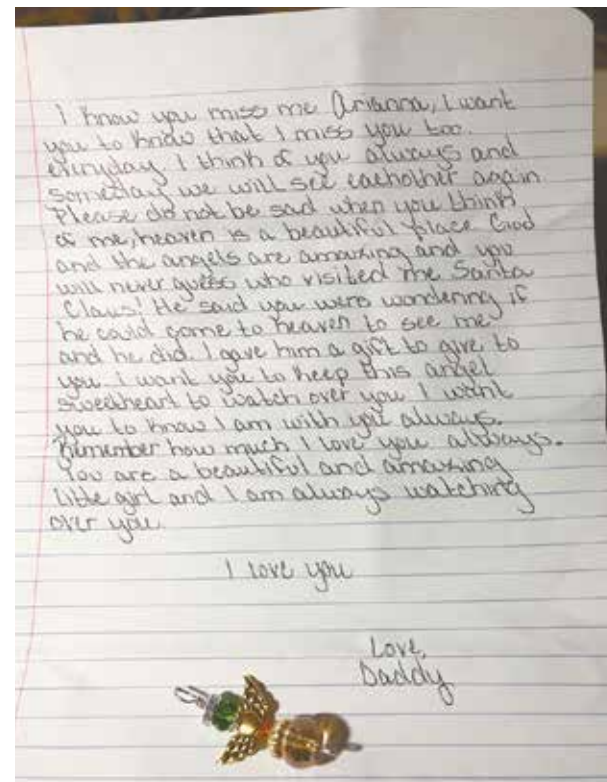
The following weekend the pair made a trip to Mora and joined the other families who stood in the long line to meet Santa. When it was Arianna's turn to greet him Santa told her, "I have something for you. I went to Heaven and saw your daddy." He then gave her a letter and candy.

The little girl was both stunned and happy. She quickly kissed Santa's cheek before she left. Later, in the car, as she read the letter she cried.

"Please don't be sad when you think of me. Heaven is a



Arianna Sam, left, developed a special relationship with Santa this year.



beautiful place..." read part of the letter. "I want you to know I am with you always... Remember how much I love you... I am always watching over you."

Included in the letter was a small gift of an "angel sweetheart" that her dad sent down from heaven.

For Patty the kindness of a stranger was both unexpected and appreciated.

"It's not every day you meet someone who will go out of his

way to make a little girl happy or do something so thoughtful for a stranger," said Patty. "I felt good because it helped her.

"We both miss him so much, and our lives aren't the same without him. And all Arianna wanted to know is that her dad is OK, and she was really happy with the letter."

Since then, the pair have celebrated Herb's December 16th birthday, and Arianna has written another letter to him addressed to "Herb Sam in Heaven."

Welcome Babies!

"They will become our medicine people. They will carry our traditions and our history."

Babies, moms, dads, and even bystanders felt the love December 13 at the Celebrating Baby event at the District II ceremonial building in Minisinaakwaang.

Guests went home with prizes, supplies, and a wealth of useful information provided by representatives of programs and services.

Elder Brenda Moose gave the invocation and also shared her cultural wisdom with young families. "Children are gifted to us," said Brenda. "We are chosen by the Manidoog."

She talked about the traditional four-day feast and the importance of naming ceremonies. She encouraged parents to set a dish at their baby's first drum ceremony and to go to their mothers and grandmothers with questions.

"I was taught that our children don't belong to us but to all Anishinaabe," she said. "They will become our medicine people. They will carry our traditions and our history."

Dr. Lacey Running Hawk and Public Health Nurse Claudia Muntiferung with the Family Spirit Program also spoke. Dr. Running Hawk recommend that new moms check out some of the helpful apps available on their smartphones, and she announced that a nurse practitioner has been hired to work four days per week at the District II clinic.

Claudia said she is available for prenatal, infant, and postpartum visits. Call 320-532-7776 ext. 2407 for more information on the Family Spirit program.



Clockwise from top left: Sarah Oswaldson and Kenny Mitchell Jr. with Isaiah Weyaus. Makayla Lightfeather with Riley and Candice Estey with Aurora Nickaboine. Pauline and Brenda Moose shared their wisdom with young families. Event organizers Renee Bayerle and Kathy Nelson enjoyed the opportunity to cuddle with some little ones!

Anishinaabe Ice Fishing!

Anaamikwam nimbagida'waamin — We net under the ice!

Photos by Elaine Rea and Noah Johnson

Traditionally, fishing was a year-round activity for the Anishinaabe, and it still is for a few hardy students who are learning the old ways.

Nay Ah Shing four seasons worker Curt Kalk has been sharing his experience with students this fall, including netting under the ice and smoking tullibee.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS NAYQUONABE, DISTRICT I COMMUNITY MEMBER

Sonny Clitso is in the process of painting a mural in the Indian Education room at Onamia High School.



Using Art to Celebrate Diversity

Story by Amikogaabawiikwe (Adrienne Benjamin) Mille Lacs Band Member

The Onamia Indian Education Department has taken on an initiative to celebrate traditional culture in the school. In an effort to create an overwhelming sense of cultural pride in students, Indian Education Director Chris Nayquonabe is taking a unique approach.

A full wall mural has been started in the Indian Education Room at Onamia High School. The wall will feature likenesses of current Onamia students in regalia, sports uniforms, and scholarly attire. It was started in early 2017 with a projected finish date of June 2019. The room is currently the main hub of the Indian Education staff in the high school, and a place students frequent every single day, many times a day.

"When I first came to Onamia I was shocked when I found out how many Native students attend Onamia Public School," said Chris. "Native students make up 56 percent of the total student population, and part of my job is ensuring that the Native students can see themselves reflected in the school in all ways. The Indian Education Department wanted to give the youth a colorful place to learn that is reflective of things that are important to them as Anishinaabe people, and we know that culture is." Chris said.

The featured artist of the mural is Sonny Clitso. Sonny is originally from Kayenta, Arizona, and grew up on the Navajo Reservation. He is currently an early education lead teacher at Wewinabi Early Education and makes a point to use art every day with his students. Sonny wants the mural to be reflective of the kids that would enjoy the art for years to come, so he and Chris made the decision to create the faces in likeness of students.

Sonny reflected, "My most vivid memories from childhood are full of my copper-skinned cousins running around in the hot Arizona sun, riding horses, and my grandparents/parents speaking Navajo. Navajo teachings filled my day even at

school because my teachers were also Navajo. I was fortunate enough to experience a childhood where my Indigenous roots were celebrated all around me. By painting this mural I hope to give the children at Onamia a sense of Indigenous community and kinship."

Onamia students have expressed their own excitement about the mural project as well. After scheduling conflicts stalled recent progress on the mural, the student representative members brought up their eagerness for the project to be completed at a recent LIEPC meeting and reminded the adults that they really want to see the mural finished before they graduate. "I knew at that point, that we needed to get moving on it, and that it was something that the kids really were looking forward to more than I had originally thought," Chris shared. "I knew we were doing something that mattered to them."

"By painting this mural I hope to give the children at Onamia a sense of Indigenous community and kinship."

— Sonny Clitso

The 300-plus Native American students at Onamia will soon be reflected in a positive light. "When students look around the school, there isn't much that reflects who they are as Anishinaabe youth," Chris concluded. "This mural is an opportunity to see traditional regalia celebrated through art and something that they can look up to and feel proud about."

Look for a follow up story and photos when the mural is completed in June 2019!

Lifelong Learner Is Ready to Help Others

Story and photo by Amikogaabawiikwe (Adrienne Benjamin) Mille Lacs Band Member

Band member Michele Berger is a 46-year-old mother and full-time student. She also works at the Mille Lacs Tribal college handling all things scholarships. She recently received her associates degree in sociology from Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College and quickly realized a passion for helping others in their own educational journeys.

"My spirituality and the constant support that I have from my friends and family have shown me that I, too, need to be and can be a source of support for others who may be facing similar hardships that I have faced myself," Michele shared.

The Mille Lacs Band scholarship program was a game-changer for Michele on her educational journey. "It truly made all the difference," she said. "I had serious doubts in my personal ability to reenter into school this late in life, but having classroom offerings locally bridged the gap between work and school." This led Michele to seek out a vacant position in the scholarship program where she could not only support herself but also give back to the program that gave so much to her.

Michele is in charge of program applications, tuition payments, and book fees. In addition to federal financial aid, she also provides various other resource opportunities for students. She ensures that students who ask are aware of Minnesota Indian, American Indian, and other minority scholarships for which they may be eligible. The program also celebrates each achieved academic milestone of each tribal member.

"My spirituality and the constant support that I have from my friends and family have shown me that I, too, need to be and can be a source of support for others who may be facing similar hardships that I have faced myself."

— Michele Berger

"Being a student myself, I understand the challenges of navigating the financial aid aspect of college registration," she added. "As I grow in this role, I can assist students so they can focus on their studies without having to worry about how their courses are being paid."

Utilizing her own experiences, Michele willingly shares her stories about own her ups and downs. She mentions the things



Michele Berger works at the scholarship office at the District I Community Center.

that new and old students can expect from the college experience with prospective students that she works with.

"I was amazed at the cultural aspect that was offered at the Tribal school and the completely non-Indigenous viewpoint of the public school," she said. "I gained knowledge from the circular thought processes of my own traditional studies, as well as the linear thinking of academia in non-native classrooms. It was refreshing and eye-opening!"

Michele's story of educational triumph goes far deeper than college, however. When asked, Michele claims her own personal recovery as her proudest moment. She survived a self-proclaimed "serious period of addiction and alcoholism" and has now been in solid recovery for almost eight years.

"Having lost a child through an accident, and being separated from my remaining ones due to that, gave me drive and determination to turn my life around and provide a caring, nurturing parent for them when I returned to them," said Michele. "Everything I do now is with their best interest in mind."

Michele is now working diligently toward her Bachelor of Science in Psychology degree at Bemidji State University with a Criminal Justice minor at Central Lakes College and intends to bring those teachings, gifts, and understanding back home to Mille Lacs as a tribal social worker or youth advocate.

If you have questions about the Scholarship Program, email MLB.scholarships@millelacsband.com.

Miigwech Michele for your service to education and to your fellow students!

Snowplow policy

Public Works and Housing departments are responsible for snow plowing in all districts of the Mille Lacs Reservation.

After any snowfall event, Public Works crews will first open roadways, and when those are completed, they will move on to private residences of Elders and disabled Band members.

Vehicles parked on the roads will be towed.

Non-Elder private residences can be plowed for a \$25 fee, paid in advance.

The Housing Department plows Elder rental units.

If you have questions about plow service, contact Public Works at 320-532-7448.

Native American Agriculture Fund to begin grantmaking

The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) launched its website last month and is soliciting public feedback to inform NAAF's priorities and future funding activities. NAAF plans to begin its first round of grantmaking in 2019. To view the survey and find additional information about NAAF, please visit NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org.

NAAF was created by the settlement of the landmark *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class-action lawsuit. The charitable trust provides grants to eligible organizations for business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, and advocacy services to support Native American farmers and ranchers. With approximately \$266 million in funding, NAAF is the single largest philanthropic organization devoted solely to serving the Native American farming and ranching community. In accordance with the terms of the settlement agreement, it must distribute its funds within a period of 20 years.

The launch of NAAF's website and feedback survey is the first step in its public communications efforts. Those interested in receiving the latest news from NAAF may sign up for the organization's e-newsletter, or follow NAAF on Twitter and Facebook. NAAF will also conduct a series of listening sessions beginning in 2019 within Native communities around the United States, and is committed to transparent and regular communication about its grants process, financial reports, and distribution of funds.



Happy Urban Holidays!

Urban area Band members enjoyed holiday food, friendship, and Santa Claus at the Minneapolis American Indian Center on Saturday, December 15. Photos by Toya Stewart Downey.



Spirit of the Season on Display at District Holiday Parties

Photos by **Bill Jones** Mille Lacs Band Member and **Brett Larson** Inaajimowin Staff Writer



District I

The District I holiday party at Grand Casino Mille Lacs on December 12 was hosted by Representative Sandi Blake and featured flute music from Sandi's son Max and comedy by Don Burnstick and Clayton T. Stewart — in addition to the usual delicious food and a variety of door prizes. Gail Tyson, top right, was one of many who were colorfully dressed for the occasion.



District Ila

Chiminising Band members celebrated the season at the community center on December 19 with fabulous food and visits with St. Nick, sponsored by Rep. Marvin Bruneau. Families posed for photographs from Duane's Photography of Aitkin.



District II

It was "sitting room only" at East Lake Community Center on December 20 for the annual District II holiday party. Along with Santa, portraits by Duane's of Aitkin, and a tasty ham dinner provided by Tom Benjamin, the highlights included Cheyanne's cookie decorating, Bradley's popcorn, Husky's sweatshirt, and Mick's sweater.

District III

The chance to see old friends and celebrate the season — not to mention a luxurious dinner — lured District III Band members to Grand Casino Hinckley on December 21 for the annual holiday party, sponsored by Rep. Wally St. John. Williams and Ree's act may be 50 years old, but they still had Band members laughing.

Personal and Professional Growth Go Hand-in-Hand

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

Briana Michels doesn't always keep her personal and professional lives separate. While that may be a problem for some, it has led to growth for Briana, as well as for the employees of Grand Casino Hinckley and the members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Briana is now a Learning Specialist at Grand Casino Hinckley, but in her previous role as Risk and Safety Specialist, she dealt with some serious mental health situations with employees and guests that led her to question her knowledge of the topic.

"After I dealt with those situations, I questioned whether we handled those situations right — if I said the right things, did the right things, or had the knowledge I needed," said Briana. "I knew that I didn't, and it turned out nobody else did either."

Briana called the incident a "huge eye-opener."

"You see all these things in the news about mental health issues, and our veterans, and the need to do more, and I saw it first hand. So I made some contacts and developed a training program for our associates on mental health awareness."

Several initiatives were undertaken:

- Formation of the Bridge Group, with the slogan "Linking associates to resources they need and providing support and understanding";
- Training in QPR (question, persuade, refer), Safe Talk (how to talk about suicide honestly), and "Post-Vention"; and
- A mental health resource area with information on chemical dependency, homelessness, problem gambling, counseling services, and other programs. "I know it's getting utilized because I have to stock it," Briana said.

The team's efforts resulted in the Employer of the Year award given to Grand Casino Hinckley by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The award was presented on Saturday, November 3, during the luncheon at NAMI's annual conference at the St. Paul RiverCentre.

Sue Abderholden, the Executive Director of NAMI Minnesota, said, "This award recognizes an employer that has demonstrated support for hiring and retaining people with mental illness; has taken extraordinary measures to educate its employees about mental illness; or has created a supportive workplace for families who have a loved one with mental illness."

Briana is humble about the success of the program and grateful to those who supported the initiative, including Waretta Thompson, Robin Roatch, and Deborah Ruff. "I didn't do it for the notoriety," she said. "We had an issue that needed to be fixed."

The experience has also brought Briana's attention to issues in her own life and community.

"I've been on my own healing journey, so I've come to see the importance of mental health," she said. "When you get your mind right, everything else falls into place."

Seeking a sign

While Briana was working to improve her workplace, she was also going through a hard time personally — grieving the deaths of her uncle, Dave Matrous, and her grandmother, who died two weeks later.

The deaths of her loved ones caused her to question her spirituality, culture, and the meaning of life. "For a couple years after their death, I wanted a vision, a sign from them telling me which way to go, and it just wasn't happening," she said.

As she was struggling to make sense of it all, she planned a trip with a friend who was also at a crossroads. In the whirlwind of activity leading up to her time off, a co-worker invited her to a conference.

Briana knew she didn't have time to attend, but she was



PHOTO BY TRACI LEBRUN, PINE COUNTY COURIER

Briana Michels presented on intergenerational trauma at the Pine County Board meeting in November.

committed, and the night before the conference she broke down in her kitchen, crying and praying, calling out to her uncle for a sign.

The next morning, Briana read the agenda and became dismayed. "We shouldn't be here," she thought. "This conference isn't for us. It's on how to better serve American Indian clients, but we're not therapists, we're risk specialists."

But when a drum group from Bois Forte began to play, something happened.

"This is what I've been searching for — to be able to get this class out there and help provide the healing we've needed. It's not a cure-all, but it will definitely awaken people."

— Briana Michels

"I'm a believer that things are put in your path for a reason," Briana said. "As they started to play, I felt the presence of my uncle. When you get a sign like that, it just hits your gut. It's not just a coincidence; it's real, and you have to figure out what it means."

The focus of the conference was historical trauma and was put on by Rosemary White Shield and the TXT4 Life Program. Historical trauma is defined by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart as "the accumulative emotional and psychological pain over an individual's lifespan and across generations as the result of massive group trauma."

And the message that came through to Briana was clear: "You need to heal your own people."

"It wasn't like 'You're going to be a medicine woman,'" Briana clarified, "but more like 'You've got some gifts and tools that can help your community.'"

Mending Broken Hearts

After the conference, Briana began searching for ways to learn more about historical trauma and to share what she learned with her people.

She came across the Mending Broken Hearts curriculum offered by White Bison. The program provides culturally-based healing from grief, loss, and intergenerational trauma.

Briana jumped at the chance to receive training, which she attended in Colorado Springs last December. Not one to waste

time, Briana started planning to implement the program as soon as she got home.

She received help from Kate Kalk, Kala Roberts, and Kristian Theisz of the Family Violence Prevention Program. They had been discussing how to bring historical trauma training to Band communities when Briana walked in the door.

Monica Haglund, District III's chemical dependency counselor, had also trained in Mending Broken Hearts and offered to teach the class with Briana. Her wisdom and experience helped immensely, Briana said.

They offered the program in District III, and it was life-changing for those involved. "Responses we've gotten from DIII are so powerful," said Briana. "This is exactly what we need in our community."

After the intense eight-week program, the group of 12 has continued to meet monthly, and in December, Mending Broken Hearts training came to Chiminising (Isle) in District IIa.

Mending Broken Hearts will be offered in other communities in the future.

In November, Briana gave a presentation on Mending Broken Hearts and historical trauma to the Pine County Board, sharing the stories of the Sandy Lake Tragedy and the Nelson Act.

"This is what I've been searching for — to be able to get this class out there and help provide the healing we've needed," said Briana. "It's not a cure-all, but it will definitely awaken people."

Our personal lives often benefit from what we learn on the job, and the workplace is always in need of the wisdom and the heart we develop when we're off the clock.

Briana's story shows that personal growth can lead to improvements at Tribal workplaces and in Native communities.

Mending Broken Hearts

The Mending Broken Hearts programs provide culturally-based healing from grief, loss, and Intergenerational Trauma, especially for native peoples from the United States and Canada.

Unresolved grief is demonstrated in the many social issues that Native people experience, as represented in the "sick" forest illustration. Traditional healthy cultures have been made "sick" by the anger, guilt, shame and fear, passed on from generation to generation. This creates a "culture" that is shame-based. This sense of shame and unresolved grief contributes to the behavioral, emotional, physical, and spiritual issues that challenge wellness.

Source: whitebison.org.

Thomas X Entertains, Enlightens, Inspires in District I

“If we turn to our culture, we can rise above drug addiction.”

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

Rapper and filmmaker Thomas X (aka Thomas Barrett) gave an inspiring and thought-provoking presentation of his new short film December 6 at Grand Casino Mille Lacs, sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).

Thomas, a Red Lake Band member, was contacted by the DHS after staff saw a video of his song “The Crow,” which tells the story about addiction in Native communities.

They were seeking a filmmaker to produce a video on how culture can assist in recovery.

Thomas and his team, including producer/videographer Alex Aman (who joined Thomas at Mille Lacs) went to work, finished the project, and have been showing and discussing the film around the state.

Thomas talked about growing up at Red Lake, experiencing the school shooting there in 2005, and using poetry to express his feelings. As time went on, he transformed from poet to rapper.

Thomas also told about the origin of his “rap name.” He said he often debated with a conservative high school teacher, who said Thomas was “like the Native Malcolm X.”

Thomas first appeared on a CD by another rapper, Baby Shel, who gave him the name T. Bizzle.

“That’s the worst rap name in the history of rap names,” Thomas told him. “Bro, my rap name can’t be T. Bizzle” — and Thomas X was born.

Thomas showed three videos to the crowd of DNR employees, District I residents, and Four Winds Lodge treatment center clients.

The first was “Rezolution” featuring Brendan Strong, the lead singer of the Little Bear drum group, who plays hand drum and sings on the video. The video includes a passage in the Ojibwe language, Anishinaabemowin, spoken by Dr. Anton Treuer, along with images of powwow dancers on the frozen ice and snow of Red Lake, as well as Band members holding placards with strong messages like “Abolish Columbus Day,” “Love Water Not Oil,” “Sobriety is Tradition,” “No More Drugs,”



Left: Thomas X visited with Nay Ah Shing student Shakoka Smith after his presentation in District I on December 6. Above: An image from the video of “The Crow,” a rap song about the role of culture in overcoming addiction.

and “Not Your Mascot.”

Thomas’s first experiment with rapping over a hand drum led him to produce another video based loosely on his favorite movie, “The Crow,” and set to a crow hop beat. Like “Rezolution,” the video includes a passage in Anishinaabemowin and images of dancers, but it also shows the harsh reality of drug addiction. Thomas also raps in Ojibwe about the Seven Values.

After showing “The Crow,” Thomas introduced the new film, Hopioid, which is not a rap video but more like a short story told through images rather than words.

The video tells the story of a Native woman who experiences an overdose, using flashbacks to show the influences that led to her addiction.

Thomas said he wanted to use the film to challenge the stigma that those who suffer from addiction are bad people. “As a former addict and someone who works in the chemical dependency field, I know that’s just not true,” said Thomas. “It’s something that happens because of your environment, your surroundings, but you’ve still got that Manidoo inside you, that good spirit.”

Most of all, he said, the film intends to show that there is always hope.

Thomas followed the video with a story about learning the Seven Values from the late Gichi Ma’iingan, Larry Stillday. The experience was an epiphany for Thomas, who quoted Larry’s observation that “the medicine is inside you.”

“What Gichi Ma’iingan meant is that we are already equipped with everything we need to overcome any obstacle in life,” Thomas said.

Thomas concluded by reciting a poem/rap about the Seven Values. Audience members, clearly moved by the presentation, were eager to pose for photos with Thomas and buy his CDs.

The new film can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8UyL8gpqW8&feature=youtu.be>. The full director’s cut can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEB-cZacpsGI&t=645s>.

You can find other videos, including “Rezolution” and “The Crow,” by searching for Thomas X or Rez Rap Records on YouTube.

Elders Celebrate at Grand Casino

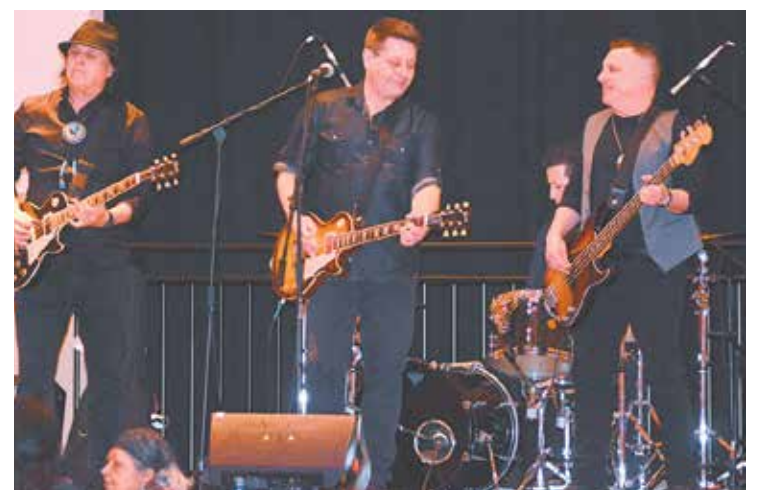
Photos by Bill Jones Mille Lacs Band Member

An enthusiastic crowd of Mille Lacs Band Elders enjoyed comedy, music, friendship, and prizes at the annual holiday party at Grand Casino Mille Lacs on Saturday, December 8.

Comedian Tito Ybarra, right, not only had the audience in stitches, but did double-duty by singing the Honor Song.

Dinner included two huge buffets of delicious food, and the band Eagle & Hawk had the crowd dancing and singing along.

Reine Garbow, below, lit up the room with her festive attire!



Gikendandaa i'iw Ojibwemowin — Learn the Ojibwe Language

This story by the late Naawigiizis (Jim Clark) is reprinted from Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales & Oral Histories: A Bilingual Anthology. Edited by Anton Treuer. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001.

Inday

Gaawiin niin ingezikwenimaasiin a'aw nimishoomisinaaban, iniw indedeyiban gaa-oosijin. Mii eta go a'aw nimaamaanaaban ginwenzh gii-pimaadizi. Mii iniw indedeyiban omaamaayan. Miish a'aw benaadiziwobanen a'aw nimishoomisinaaban, a'aw indedeyiban odedeyan. Nibogobanen a'aw akiwenzii. Inashke gaawiin ingezikwenimaasiin gemaa gaye gaa-niizhobiboonagiziwaanen benaadizid. Ginwenzh idash gii-pizhishigozi a'aw nimaamaanaaban, nookomisiban. Mii go i'iw apane gaa-izhinikaanangid "maamaanaan." Miinawaa, mii ezhinikaanangidwaa niinawind ingiw ganoonangidwaa ingiw nookomisinaanig. Mii azhigwa ginwenzh gii-pizhishigozid.

Mii ingoding gaa-izhi-mikawaad, mii iniw ge-bami'igojin a'aw akiwenziiyan. Ayi'iin, ganabaj imaa akeyaa agaming gii-onjibaa a'aw akiwenzii. Gii-panaadiziwagan gaye wiin iniw gaa-wiiwijin. Agaawaa go ingezikwenimaa a'aw. Gii-izhaayaang imaa gii-ani-inind a'aw mindimooyenh, mii iniw a'aw dibaajimag akiwenzii. Gaye, mii gaye wiin gii-pizhishigozid. Ingoding-sh iidog azhigwa gii-wiijiwaad iniw nookomisinaan, mii iniw akiwenziiyan. Miish iw ingoding iizon gaa-izhi-wiidigendiwaad, gaa-izhi-wiijiwaawendiwaad.

Geget iidog o'ow gegoo ogii-ayaan a'aw akiwenzii. Ingezikwenimaa wiin igo. Gii-wenda-onizhishiwan iniw gaa-odayijin bebezhiigooganzhiin. Miinawaa gichi-gwanaajiwaganig gaye iniw odapikanan iniw. Wenda-gwanaajiwag ingiw bebezhiigooganzhiig. Miinawaash igo gegoo gaye ingii-shawenimigonaa sa go a'aw akiwenzii i'iw. Mii i'iw nookomisiban azhigwa waa-kichi-aya'aawiwaad. Mii eta go gii-wiidookawaad gaye gii-pami'iyangidwaa gaye wiin. Mii go imaa gaye wiin gaa-tanizid a'aw akiwenzii. Ingoding-sh igo, mii azhigwa gaa-wiidigemaad nimaamaanaaban, nookomisiban gaa-wiidigemaad onow akiwenziiyan. Mii gomaa gaye ininiwan besho gaa-tayaang. Anooj igo gomaa apii ingoding ingii-taamin miinawaa da-dagoshinowaad mawidisiwaad igaye.

Ingoding igo ogii-pizagaabiiginaan bebezhiigooganzhiin. Agaashiinyi a'aw bebezhiigooganzhiins. Wiikaa wawaabijiizi. Gagidagishin igo waawiyeyaag imaa gagidagishing. Miish i'iw

,apii ininamawid niin i'iw biiminakwaan bezagaabiiginaan iniw bebezhiigooganzhiin. Miish i'iw gaa-izhid, "Mii a'aw giday," indig. Wayaa gichi-minwendamaan niin odayiyaan. Aaniish-nange indedeyiban nawaj gii-nanaa'itood i'iw bebezhiigooganzhiiwigaan. Igaye imaa ogii-ayaawaan odayan indedeyiban. Mii imaa gaye niin gii-asag a'aw. A'aw-sh, mii gii-igooyaan, "Giinish o'ow giga-ashamaa gaye gidoominaa gaye," indigoo. "Giin giga-ganawenimaa giday," indigoo. Miish i'iw, "Aaniish waa-izhinikaanad," indigoo. Miish i'iw ganawaabamag indagonaa, "Giwaabandaanaawaadog iko awiia zhishigagowed. Mii sa go gaa-izhinawag i'iw inaanod a'aw bebezhiigooganzhiin. Aaniish, mii sa iidog i'iw Zhishigagowaan inga-izhinikaanaa." Miish i'iw gaa-izhinikaanag a'aw inday — Zhishigagowaan.

Aan, aabiding ganabaj eta ingii-pimoomig. Gaawiin ingii-ayaanziimin gegoo i'iw bimoomigoo-apabiwinang. Mii go mitaawigan gaa-izhi-bimoomigoooyaan azhigwa. Aaniish, ingii-agaashinyi i'iw apii imaa gegaa gaa-naano-biboonagiziwaanen apii gii- odayiyaan. Mii i'iw inday Zhishigagowaan gaa-izhinikaanag. Gaawiish igo, inashke gaawiin nimaamaa odinendanziidog gaa-inikaagobanen a'aw inday. Gemaa go gaye azhigwa gii-taawag indedeyiban odayan gaye wiin gaa-tago-adaawaageyaang. Inashke gaawiin ingii-ayaanziimin endaayaang. Mii gaye ginwenzh opime-ayi'ii gii-paa-anokiidog indedeyiban gii-naganangidwaa ingiw bebezhiigooganzhiig. Mii imaa gaye, gemaa gaye gaa-adaawaagegwen indedeyiban iniw odayan miinawaa go gaye niin a'aw inday. Gaawiin naganag aapiji ingezikwendanzhiin i'iw.

My Horse

I don't vividly remember my grandfather, my dad's father. It was only my grandmother that lived a long time. That was my father's mother. My grandfather passed away then, my dad's dad. The old man has since died. You see I don't have a clear memory of him, as I must have been about two years old when he passed away. And my grandmother had been single for a long time, my grandma. That's what we always called her — "maamaanaan." And that is what we call our grandmothers when we talk to them. She had now been widowed for quite some time.

So one time she found someone [new], that old man who would take care of her. That old man was probably from over by the shore. And she was spoiled when he made her his wife. I do have somewhat hazy memories of him. We went there

Word Find and Matching

Find the words in the left column in the Ojibwemowin text. Use the English translation or the Ojibwe People's Dictionary (<https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu>) to match the Ojibwe words on the left to the English translations on the right.

indedeyiban	my late grandmother
zhishigagowaan	really
geget	also, and, again
gichi-minwendamaan	my late father
aaniish	horse
akiwenzii	no, not
miinawaa	puke, vomit
ingoding	maybe, perhaps
imaa	old man
gaawiin	married
ganabaj	we lived there
bebezhiigooganzhiin	how? in what way?
ingii-taamin	very happy
a'aw	at one time
onizhishiwan	that
nookomisiban	beautiful, pretty
gaa-wiidigemaad	there

when that old lady was proposed to, that was by that old man I've been speaking about. He was single himself. And one time now my grandmother went with him, that old man. And they married one another, and thus became partners.

That old man really had [many] possessions. I remember him. He had ponies and those horses were just beautiful. And his [horse] tackle was magnificent. Those ponies were just beautiful. And that old man loved us too. He and my grandmother were elders now. He just helped her, too, and they took care of us. That old man stayed there himself. And one time, now my grandmother married him, my grandmother married this old man. And so we lived pretty close together. We lived for some time like this and one time they arrived and visited one another.

One time he was leading a horse with a rope. That pony was small. He had a dapple-colored coat. He was speckled with round dots on his spotted coat there. Then at that time he handed me that rope myself as he led that horse around. Then he told me this, "That's your pony," he tells me. Boy was I ever elated to be a horse owner. My dad made more repairs to that horse stable. My dad kept horses there too. So I put mine in there too. And in regards to him, I was told, "You are going to feed him and furnish his oats too," I'm told. "You are going to take care of your horse," I'm told. And then this, "What do you want to call him," I'm told. Then as I took a fresh look at him, "Do you all see how it [looks] like someone's just puked?" This is what that horse looked like to me in his coloration. "Well, I am going to name him Puke." That's what I named that pony of mine — Puke.

Oh, I probably only rode on him one time. We didn't have anything for that saddle. So I just rode bareback then. Well, I was small at that time there, as I must have been almost five years old when [I] became a horse owner. That was my horse Puke as I called him. But no, you see, my mother didn't think much of what that pony of mine was named. Maybe then my dad's horses were there too when we sold them at that place. You see we weren't at our house. My father would have to go off working for long periods of time so we left those horses behind. So my dad must have sold those horses there including my own pony. I don't recall if I left him alone very much.

Office of Special Trustee Seeks Contact Information for Band Members

The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians is looking for those individuals listed below because they have money, land, or both on deposit in an Individual Indian Monies (IIM) account.

If your name is on this list or you know the whereabouts of anyone on the list, please call the Office of the Special Trustee in Bemidji at 218-751-4338 or the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC) at 1-888-678-6836 or send a letter to the following address:

*Office of the Special Trustee
Minnesota Agency
Federal Building Room 304
522 Minnesota Avenue NW
Bemidji, MN 56601-3062*

Allen, Michael G; Anderson, Roland L; Ballinger, Floyd James; Beachamp, Gerald Marvin; Beaulieu, Tristan; Beaupre, Travis C; Benjamin, Amelia M; Benjamin, Billy J.; Benjamin, Bruce; Benjamin, Christina M; Benjamin, Jordan J; Benjamin, Rebecca L; Benjamin, Timothy Adam; Boyd-Shingobe, Jamie

Marcella; Bradley, Darron M; Bugg, John J; Bugg, Joshua W; Butcher, Ryan Allen; Christopherson, Sharon A; Crazy Thunder, Alexander G C; Dakota, Ellen M; Dakota, Richard T; Daly, Raymond C; Dehyle, Joni L; Dorr, Glenda M; Frank Hurd Et Ux; Garbow, Dorinda; Garbow, Sammi J; Garcia, Celastina R; Griswold, Nancy Ann; Hill White, Sarita Inez; Hoffer, Mary L; Houle, Charles Allen; Huff, Marcus C; Jones, Jennifer L; Lind, Wayne L; Matrious, Roberta L; McKenzie, Daniel; Merrill, John Michael; Monroe, Jessica M; Moose Jr, Robert B; Morrow, John G; Nayquonabe, Elmer Dean; Nayquonabe, Jorel Jorge; Nickaboine, Judith M; O'Brien, Owen V; Peet, Jo Lynn; Peet, Mason Fred; Roache, Jennifer L; Sam, Irwin James; Sam, Laural James; Sam, Robbin L; Sayers, Michelle Lynn; Shalin, David J; Skinaway, Edward Jr; Skinaway, Merle; Smith Jr, David; Stanislawski, Orretta F; Stanley Jr, Marland D; Staples, Danielle L; Sutton Beach, Shirley A; Swadner Fairbanks, Renaye A; White, Barbara Jean; Wind, Jason Arlen; Zhuckkahosee, Beatrice A.

Foster Care Families Recognized for Service to Children

Story by Shannon Porter Mille Lacs Band Member

With the holiday season in full swing, we all get wrapped up in the spirit of giving and joy. For some, however, the season means opening their hearts to others who need it more. This is true for the foster care and relative placement homes that work with our Mille Lacs Band children.

These families open up their homes and lives to children who need a place to live while their families work towards reunification within the child protection department of the Mille Lacs Band. These families go above and beyond by providing a safe, stable, and loving home for those children who are experiencing separation from their parents or guardians.

With that in mind, the Mille Lacs Band Family Services Department and its Foster Care branch wanted to express a thank you to these remarkable families. On Wednesday, December 19, the department hosted a Foster Care Appreciation Luncheon at Grand Casino Mille Lacs. The planning team consisted of Connie Moose, Foster Care Supervisor; Ashlee Lovaas, Foster Care Licensure/Recruiter; Suzanne Tibbetts Young, Interim Director of Family Services; and Kristy Gahbow, Administrative Assistant for Family Services. This team organized a buffet-style meal and a gift of appreciation. The department was able to get custom embroidered jackets from Noble Wear out of Onamia.

As the families and staff rolled in to celebrate these families, the department was able to offer asemaa to Baabitaw (Melissa) Boyd, Assistant Commissioner of Administration, to do an invocation starting the event off in a good way. Baabitaw spoke of the deep appreciation the Band has for these families because it is a big commitment to live the life of a foster family. She also encouraged them to practice self-care so that they can continue being in a good place, which in turn helps them to continue giving in a healthy way to these children.

After Baabitaw's beautiful words, everyone began enjoying their meal. There were laughs, reconnections, and networking, as the foster care staff showered the families with appreciation. Once the plates started to clear and the food was done, Connie and Ashlee handed out the jackets to individually thank each family.

There are not enough words that the Band can say to express its gratitude to these families, and this small token of appreciation represents so much more. Without these families stepping up in times of hardship, our children could very well

be placed further and further from their homes and potentially their culture. The Mille Lacs Band continues to send its consistent appreciation to those who step into the role of caregivers when it is needed the most. Miigwech to you all.



The Baker family, top, and Corwin Graikowski and Ruth Sam, bottom left, were among the foster families honored December 19. Bottom right: Baabitaw Melissa Boyd, Suzanne Tibbetts Young, Connie Moose, and Ashlee Lovaas.

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Summary of Expenditures and Financing Uses:	Approved Budget for FY 2019	Expenditures through 11/30/19	% of Budget Expended
Administration (1)	19,174,480	2,350,681	12%
Department of Labor	20,732,411	626,236	3%
Judicial	2,392,725	150,586	6%
Department of Justice	7,143,474	773,178	11%
Education	16,112,913	2,096,734	13%
Health and Human Services	32,167,698	3,838,275	12%
Circle of Health Insurance	5,720,000	524,807	9%
Natural Resources	8,609,551	1,919,987	22%
Community Development	23,630,820	3,454,832	15%
Gaming Authority	5,332,641	673,926	13%
Bonus Distribution	16,156,163	5,616,208	35%
Economic Stimulus Distribution	3,299,000	-	0%
Total	195,321,439	72,575,988	37.2%

- (1) Administration includes chief executive, administration, finance, legislative, government affairs, and district operations.
- (2) Casino operations are not reported above; however, they do include government operations funded by casino operations.
- (3) The financial statements of the Band are audited every year by an independent public accounting firm. Audit reports from previous years are available for review at the government center upon written request.
- (4) Economic Development appropriations have been excluded as of October 31, 1997.



Safety first!

An ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) drill was conducted by the Tribal Police Department at Nay Ah Shing schools last month.

Generations Basketball Camp Brings Healthy Fun to District I

Story and photo by **Amikogaabawiikwe (Adrienne Benjamin)** Mille Lacs Band Member

Mikayla Schaaf has been working on different projects as the Community Health Coordinator for the Mille Lacs Band Public Health Department. Her recent efforts have included the “Native Thrive” Youth Basketball event at Onamia High School and the recent 1st Annual “Generations” Basketball Tournament held November 3-4 at Nay Ah Shing High School.

“We noticed that there is a high number of kids participating in basketball,” said Mikayla. “This is the most interest that we have seen in youth basketball in a long time in this community. It’s been great to have people in positions like Byron Ninham at Niigaan and Chris Nayquonabe at Onamia for collaborations on events.”

These efforts stem from grant funding provided through two main grants: Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) and Tobacco Free Communities (Minnesota Department of Health). The Minnesota Department of Health specifically supports cultural activities as landmark activities for Native American communities. They recently shifted their work to focus on culture and tradition as a means to the prevention of various health risks.

“With that freedom, I can tie in so many more activities that are meaningful to our community specifically while maintaining traditional cultural teachings,” Mikayla added. “If we want change, it starts with kids and families. I hope to find innovative ways to promote healthy and active lifestyles within the community. We can show youth through our own participation, holding spaces for them to know what it feels like to compete. This is especially true as women in the sport; young girls need role models out there running alongside the men, showing them that they can play at that level too.”

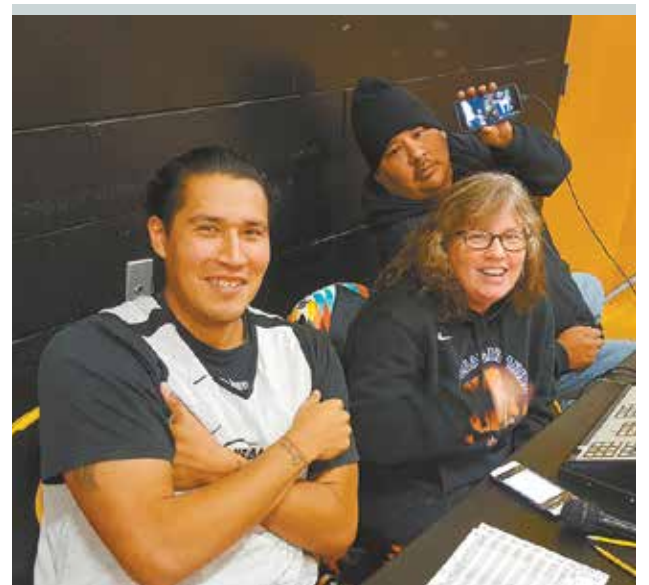
With the Generations Tournament, Mikayla wanted to show community youth that adults could take part in activities and be healthy and active role models. The youngest player in the tournament was 7 years old and the oldest was Mikayla’s own father Bill Schaaf, who is 78. “It was so wonderful to see such a range of ages coming together and playing a game that I deeply love,” Mikayla said. “Sometimes you lose, and having those older folks there to model sportsmanship was so valuable and appreciated.”

There are more plans and collaborations in the works for Mikayla in the coming months and into the new year. She loves using basketball as a connector to health for youth because it was so important to her growing up. “The game teaches you respect, teamwork, sportsmanship, and how to build relationships with people. Kids that have basketball in common usually hang together and keep each other accountable to positive influences,” Mikayla explained.

Mikayla also wants to eventually expand the program to include a wider array of offerings and innovative ways for the community to look at health. The future looks bright and healthy in Mille Lacs thanks to Mikayla and the initiatives that are investing in the health and futures of Native people.

“The game teaches you respect, teamwork, sportsmanship, and how to build relationships with people. Kids that have basketball in common usually hang together and keep each other accountable to positive influences.”

— Mikayla Schaaf



Mikayla Schaaf, above, loves working with youth — especially when there’s dancing or basketball involved. Right: Byron Ninham, Patty Wiersgalla, and Waabishkigaabaw helped out at the Generations tournament.



Upward Bound Helps Students Thrive in College and Beyond

By Makadegwanebiikwe Mikayla Schaaf Mille Lacs Band Descendant

Mille Lacs area students are thriving through the TRIO Upward Bound program hosted by Central Lakes College in Brainerd. Upward Bound has made a positive impact on the lives of many students by working to transform high school students into successful college graduates.

What sets Upward Bound apart from other programs is that it supports students to overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education. The program also provides educational services to high school students who are from families that meet federal income guidelines and students who potentially would be the first generation to graduate from college.

Mary Sam, Dean of Students at Central Lakes College, speaks about great things happening with the program. "CLC hosts the Upward Bound Program in many high schools in the region, including Isle, Onamia, and Nay Ah Shing. Staff facilitates amazing work with 9th through 12th graders in terms of high school success strategies, creating a pathway to college and exposing them beyond the shores of Mille Lacs Lake."

Several Mille Lacs Band Upward Bound students have moved on to earn master's degrees in the recent years. One recently taught English Composition at St. Cloud State, and the other is a city administrator outside of St. Cloud.

CLC also hosts a six-week summer leadership program where students earn college credit, with Mille Lacs participants each year. After the completion of last summer's program, CLC staff led a trip to Colorado, the Black Hills, and other places to explore college opportunities and participate in outdoor recreation activities like white water rafting.

Mille Lacs Band member Naomi Weyaus is an Upward Bound graduate who has gone on to achieve tremendous success. Naomi obtained her bachelor's degree in an intensive English program from Marquette University and her master's degree in English studies from St. Cloud State University.

Naomi is very passionate in the work she does and has recently accepted a position working in the grant writing department for the Mille Lacs Band. Naomi is grateful for the support she received from the Upward Bound program.

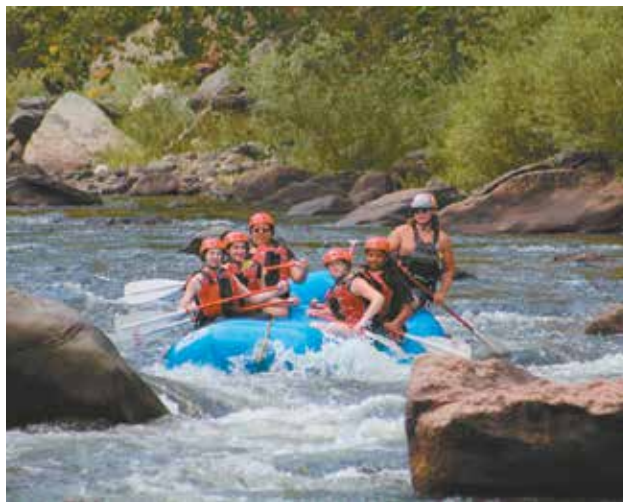
"People often asked me how I 'got out,'" said Naomi. "On the surface, they are asking how I became successful in the face of adversity. I can never find an answer that truly satisfies them; however, I do know that Upward Bound was instrumental in shaping the person I have become."

Calling Upward Bound an academic program doesn't capture the impact it had on her life, Naomi added. "Yes, Upward Bound helped me apply for schools, tour colleges, and guide me through applying for scholarships. However, those things, as important and as helpful as they are, were only a small part of what made Upward Bound an auspicious experience. The largest part was the community and support that comes when surrounded by like-minded peers — peers who, like me, were not rich, whose families were battling the same demons of poverty and addiction as mine were, and who still found it within themselves to move forward with life instead of becoming trapped in the cycles of poverty and addiction that our parents and siblings fell victim to.

"So when people ask me how I did it, the answer is simple: I had Upward Bound. No doubt, without it, I probably would have been fine, but because of Upward Bound I am thriving. I found a support system that continues to encourage and support me today. Having that network has made all the difference."

Another Naomi — Naomi Sam — has seen the value of Upward Bound through the eyes of a parent. Her daughters — senior Ronni Jourdain (Bagwajikwe) and sophomore Mia Sam (Chi-ikwe) — have participated in the program since ninth grade. Their sister Chase (Bagwajikwezenz) looks forward to attending next summer's program.

"This program has really helped with preparing the girls for college life, and although the events take place over the



Band members (and sisters) Ronni Jourdain and Mia Sam are two Upward Bound participants who have found the program not just helpful educationally, but also fun.

What is Upward Bound?

Since 1965, families have looked towards the Upward Bound program to successfully assist students academically in school. Funded by the US Department of Education under the Higher Education Act, Title IV and TRIO programs, Upward Bound has been able to serve several high schools including Isle, Nay Ah Shing and Onamia.

If you are interested in the TRIO Upward Bound Program please call Charles Black Lance, Director of TRIO Programs 218-855-8119.

"No doubt, without it, I probably would have been fine, but because of Upward Bound I am thriving. I found a support system that continues to encourage and support me today."

— Naomi Weyaus



summer or on the weekend, the girls, and us as parents, have remained committed to being in attendance and showing up for events," said Naomi. "They've benefited academically and personally. Teenage years are full of awkwardness, but Upward Bound really brings a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all who attend. They really give children a great start on reaching their goals, and puts into perspective that you can achieve anything you put your mind to!"

Ronni said she has enjoyed making new friends and traveling with them through the program. "On our travels we got to experience new things together, and making memories with them was something great as well," Ronni said. They volunteered at Camp Confidence in Brainerd and went whitewater rafting in Colorado. "Upward Bound provided Summer classes, and on-site student housing that made learning in the sum-

mer time pretty fun while being informative at the same time! Stipends for attendance were nice, because we got to treat ourselves for our hard work. This will be my last year with Upward Bound, as I am a senior, but I would recommend it to other kids my age!"

Ronni's sister Mia also appreciates the friendships and travel opportunities. "My most positive memory would be traveling to the State Capitol, to have a special guided tour of the building," said Mia. "We learned the history of the Capitol, and what the officials do in office, as part of the decision-making process. The Saturday Academy is also a good time. It helped me with preparing for college life, and my sister Ronni and I have sparked interest for our younger sister Chase, who will also be attending Upward Bound soon."

Counselor Knows Both Sides of Treatment Experience

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

Like many addicts and alcoholics, Lindsay Misquadace-Berg started drinking at a young age. She had four older brothers and used to sneak their beers when they were drinking.

When Lindsay was 5, she moved from Minneapolis to Big Sandy Lake in District II. She and her brothers and two sisters lived with their grandma, Agnes Chief.

Lindsay drank and got in trouble throughout her school years, but things got worse when she watched her brother take his own life. Lindsay was 20 and her brother had just turned 22, so the two were close.

"That pushed me over the edge," said Lindsay. "Alcohol was always my drug of choice, but after that it led to other things — anything to numb the pain."

For several years, she was an active addict, and her drinking led to other problems. "I went to jail at least once a year, and every one of my charges I was using," she said. "I look back at my record, and if I wasn't drinking or high, I never would've been arrested."

Finally she went to treatment at Mash-ka-wisen on the Fond du Lac Reservation. She was finally starting to deal with the pain and trauma of her past when tragedy struck again.

Her oldest brother, Wes, took his own life.

"It rained for three days straight when it happened, and I was having a really hard time," Lindsay said. "I wanted to leave, wanted to use, but my boyfriend talked me into staying. One night I felt somebody sit at the foot of my bed. It was my brother Wes. He said, 'Lindsay, everything's going to be okay.' He was like an angel. I would go out to the lake and talk to him, and it helped my spirituality come back. It helped me to believe."

As with so many in recovery, though, that wasn't the end of it. "I'd like to say I got out of treatment and never used again, but I did relapse a few times," said Lindsay.

Getting help

Lindsay is grateful to her kids for helping her find a reason to finally stay clean. One night when the kids were in foster care, her 10-year-old son tucked Lindsay into bed when she was drunk and walked his sister home. The next time they were together, Lindsay's daughter said, "Mom, don't you miss us? Don't you want us to live with you?"

"Of course," she said.

"Well, why can't we?"

Looking back, it seems so easy. "All I had to do was be sober. I never knew how easy it was. But when you're in active addiction, maintaining sobriety for a year is a very hard thing to do."



PHOTO BY DUANE'S PHOTOGRAPHY

Lindsay Misquadace-Berg's kids and husband have helped her overcome addiction and maintain sobriety.

Lindsay is also grateful to her husband for encouraging her during the dark times. The two used together for years — and ended up getting sober together.

More help came from an unexpected source: the justice system. "I was in an intense 18-month sobriety court program," said Lindsay. "It took me two years to get through it."

During the program she had a "dirty UA" (a urine sample that showed she'd been using). They told her she'd have to sit in jail for the weekend but would be let out on Monday.

"I never believed they'd let me out," Lindsay said. "I didn't like courts or police. I thought they were always out to get me. So to have them do that, it helped me see that they do want to help. There was so much support in that courtroom, and

"I wanted to leave, wanted to use, but my boyfriend talked me into staying. One night I felt somebody sit at the foot of my bed. It was my brother Wes. He said, 'Lindsay, everything's going to be okay.' He was like an angel."

to have others tell me they were there for me, it was a great feeling."

Finally, Lindsay learned another lesson that she passes on to her clients: the importance of meetings. "Early on in recovery, I thought I could do this all on my own," she said. The first meeting she was court-ordered to attend was composed of a bunch of old men. As a teenage girl, there wasn't much appeal.

Lindsay tells her clients to keep looking until they find the right meeting. Lindsay and her husband started an NA meeting in Aitkin when they couldn't find something that worked for them, and it was just what they needed at the time.

"Meetings were a big thing for me — to be able to go in and share with others and get feedback and know it's a safe place to discuss wanting to use. Knowing I had that meeting twice a week that I could go to, that helped me."

"Relapse is a part of recovery, but you need to know how to come back from it," she said. "You need to go to a meeting, reach out, call somebody."

Dream job

When Lindsay first decided to pursue higher education, she got an online business degree from Argosy. "I wanted to be like those people in suits I saw at the casino," she said.

But after her husband told her he wanted to be a counselor, Lindsay felt a pull to help others suffering from addiction. She went back to school at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, where she earned an associate's degree in human services and a certificate in counseling.

Lindsay interned at Four Winds Lodge treatment center in Brainerd, which is owned by the Band, and when she finished she was offered a full-time job.

For now she's working under a UMICAD (Upper Midwest Indian Council on Addictive Disorders) license but she intends to complete her bachelor's degree and become a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Lindsay likes the Four Winds team and philosophy. "We meet people where they're at," she said. "When I do a treatment plan, the first thing I ask is what their needs are."

She has heard from clients who went through the Four Winds program in the past, when it was run by the state. "They say it's more spiritually based now, more culturally based," she said.

Lindsay's experience so far has convinced her she made the right decision. "I love it," she said. "I'm very excited to help others who are in active addiction, after all the ways my life has changed to bring me to this role."



Training, smoke alarms, car seats available from Emergency Management

The Emergency Management program of the Tribal Police Department held a CPR/AED and Basic First Aid class at Wewinabi Early Education in District I. Emergency Management also provides free smoke alarm installation, child safety seats, and fire extinguisher training. If you are interested in these services, contact Monte Fronk at the Tribal Police Department at 320-532-3430 or Monte.Fronk@millelacsband.com.



Dazzling dancers!

Nay Ah Shing High School students had a blast at the Holiday dance on December 19.

TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

Happy January Birthdays to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Mark Raymond Anderson
Debra Lou Bellamy
Mary Anne Bellonger
Gladys Marie Benjamin
Art Benjamin
Karen Marie Boyd
Rodney Dean Boyd
Edith Ruth Bush
Patricia Jean Clark
Ronald James Crown
Lorna Jean Day
Bonnie Jean Dorr
Gary Lee Dorr
John Charles Dowell
Dora Ann Duran
Brian Allen Eagle
Isabel Eubanks
Denise Le Rae Fahrlander
Michael Gerard Gagne
Janet Lee Gahbow
Ella Reine Garbow
Evelyn M. Granger
Rose Marie Holmquist
Katherine Ann Jackson
Grover Joseph Johnson
Patty Jo Johnson
Charles Ted Johnson
James Ernest Kalk
Richard Duane Kegg
Marty Kegg

David Henry Kost
Carmen Marie Lone
William Joseph Losh
Priscilla Joann Lowman
Gloria Jean Lowrie
Curtis Lee Martin
Thomas Tecumseh McKenney
Temperance Yvonne McLain
Michael Samuel Merrill
Cora Lucille Nelson
Diane Lynn Nickaboine
Rosalie Ann Noonday
Dorothy Marie Olson
Donna Jean Pardun
Steven Lee Pewaush
Karen Lynne Pike
Shelley Ann Pindegayosh
Patricia Marie Potter
Janice Marie Sam
Elaine Bernadette Sam
Dora Ann Sam
Henry Sam
Ruth Ann Shaugobay
Joycelyn Marie Shingobe
Bonnie Shingobe
Jewell Fay Skinaway
Steven Ralph St. John
Joseph Alex Staples
Kathleen Marie Vanheel
Lori Ann Vinz
James Edwin Wind
Nancy Lee Wood

Happy Birthday:

Happy birthday **Harvey** 1/7 from Deb, Morningstar, Chinoodin, Ronnie, Evelyn, Claudia, Destan, Lil Harv and Vivian • Happy birthday to my daughter in-law **Chantel** 1/10, love Mom.
• Happy birthday to my son **Brandon Wiedewitsch** 1/15, love Mom • Happy first birthday **Giorgio Armani LaFave** on 1/16 from your mama Breanna, sister Italia, Papa, Grandma, Grandpa, and Uncle Brandon. We love you so much! • Happy birthday **Anthony Passarelli** on 1/18 from Mom, Kim, Steve, Chris, Karen and the rest of your family • Happy birthday to my twins **Joe and Johanna** 1/23 from Dad, Maddie, and Brooklyn Rose

Happy Anniversary

Happy 50th Anniversary to **Don and Alice Olson** 1/15 from daughters Melissa and Ronda, grandchildren, and the rest of the family.

Memorial Tribute:

Russell Shabaiash, Waabishgaabow, Makwa Clan, passed away September 17, 2018, in Brainerd, and was interred at the Fond du Lac Burial Grounds in Sawyer. Waabishgaabow was born on March 23, 1950, in Knife Falls, to Jesse (Houle) and George Shabaiash. He enjoyed dancing, spending time with his grandchildren, holding sweat lodges, and representing the Mille Lacs Band as Elder warrior (kiiwenz). Waabishgaabow is survived by his wife, Debra; daughter, Morningstar (Shabaiash) Goodsky, and her husband, Harvey; 9 grandchildren; sister, Donna Gilmore; brother, Jay Star. He was preceded in death by his mother and father and brother Ronnie.



Russell's smile was a familiar sight at Mille Lacs Band powwows.

Noteboard guidelines: birthdays, congratulations, memorial tributes

The Tribal Noteboard welcomes Band member submissions, including birthdays, congratulatory messages, and memorial tributes. For birthday messages, send name, birthday and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS**. To congratulate a friend or family member on a milestone or accomplishment, send a message that is **50 WORDS OR LESS**. For a memorial tribute to a Band member who has passed on, send a message that is **100 WORDS OR LESS** to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or 320-237-6851. The deadline for the February issue is January 15. Photos may be included if space allows.

Mille Lacs Band Recovery Groups

District I Mille Lacs

Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition

Mondays, 5:30–7 p.m., 17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia (Next to the Halfway House — Brown Building)
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-4768

Wellbriety Migizi Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel
700 Grand Avenue, Onamia, Minnesota

Wellbriety Celebrating Families

Tuesdays, 6–8 p.m., Mille Lacs Band Halfway House Group
17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia, Minnesota
Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

NA/AA Welcome

Hosted by Mille Lacs Band Halfway House
Wednesdays, 7 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia (Red Brick Building) Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

Wellbriety Sons of Tradition

Sundays, 1–3 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-4768

District II East Lake

AA Group

Mondays, 5–6 p.m., East Lake Community Center
Contact Rob Nelson at 218-768-2431

District III Hinckley & Aazhoomog

Wellbriety Talking Circle

Mondays, 6 p.m., Aazhoomog Community Center

Wellbriety 12 Step Group

Tuesdays, 12 p.m., Aazhoomog Clinic Conference Room
Contact Monica Haglund at 320-384-0149

Wellbriety 12 Step Group

Thursdays, 6 p.m., Meshakwad Community Center

Please send changes and additions to brett.larson@millelacsband.com.

Share your ideas!

In an effort to gather Band members' ideas about the paper, website, and social media, the Inaajimowin/Government Affairs team will be meeting in Mille Lacs Band communities in 2019. Join us at 11 a.m. on January 2 at the District II ALU in East Lake to share your thoughts about improving communication with Band members. If you have an interest in writing or taking photos for the paper, website, or Facebook, please come and introduce yourself!

Anonymous Drug Tip Hotline

The Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department's anonymous drug tip line is 320-630-2458. Feel free to leave voicemails and/or text messages. If you would like a call back, be sure to leave your name and phone number. In case of emergency, dial 911.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Chiefs Day: February 18. Government Offices Closed.

20th Anniversary of 1837 Treaty case victory: March 22.

One Hundred Years of Healing: The Ojibwe Jingle Dress Dance Tradition opens April 2019 at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post, Onamia.

To add your event to the calendar, email brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851.

G I C H I - M A N I D O O - G I I Z I S GREAT SPIRIT MOON JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Band Assembly meetings Band Assembly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at rotating locations throughout the districts. Meeting dates, times, and locations are subject to change. For additional information, call the Legislative office or visit millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com.</p>		<p>1 New Year's Day Government Offices Closed.</p>	<p>2 Inaajimowin Meeting 11 a.m.– 1 p.m. District II ALU <i>See page 14</i></p> <p>NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>3 Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i></p>		
<p>6 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I. <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>7 Community Development Meeting 9 a.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 3</i></p> <p>Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>8 State of the Band X a.m.– X p.m. Location <i>See page X</i></p> <p>Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly Government Center District I</p>	<p>9 District I Community Meeting DI Community Center</p> <p>District II Powwow Committee Meeting Noon, East Lake Community Center</p> <p>NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>10 Housing Board 1 p.m. Aazhoomog Community Center <i>See page 3</i></p> <p>Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly Government Center District I</p>		
<p>13 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I. <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>MN sure enrollment deadline <i>See below</i></p>	<p>14 Community Development Meeting 9 a.m. East Lake ALU <i>See page 3</i></p> <p>Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>15 Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly District IIa Chiminising</p>	<p>16 NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>DIIa Community Meeting Chiminising Community Center</p>	<p>17 Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly District II Minisinaakwaang</p> <p>DII Community Meeting East Lake Community Center</p>	<p>18 Constitutional Convention Grand Casino Hinckley</p>	
<p>20 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I. <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>21 Civil Rights Day Government Offices Closed.</p> <p>Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>22 Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly District I Government Center</p>	<p>23 NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>24 Housing Board 1 p.m. East Lake ALU <i>See page 3</i></p> <p>Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly District III Aazhoomog</p>		
<p>27 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I. <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>28 Community Development Meeting 9 a.m. <i>See page 3</i></p> <p>DIII Wellbriety Feast Aazhoomog CC</p> <p>DII Sobriety Feast 6 p.m. East Lake CC</p> <p>Band Assembly Meshakwad</p>	<p>29 District I Sobriety feast 5:30 D1 community center</p> <p>Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly Meshakwad District III</p>	<p>30 NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly 10 a.m. Location TBA</p>	<p>31 District IIa Sobriety feast 5:30 Chiminising</p> <p>Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i></p> <p>Band Assembly District I Government Center</p>	<p>Want your event here? Email brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. Visit millelacsband.com/calendar for additional Mille Lacs Band events.</p>	

Circle of Health Deadline

The Mille Lacs Band's Circle of Health program reminds Band members that **January 13** is the deadline to apply for insurance through MNsure, Minnesota's health insurance exchange.

Circle of Health is not insurance; it is a tribal benefit for Band members. Before Circle of Health can pay any fees on your behalf, you must have health insurance — either Medicare, Medical Assistance, an employer plan, or a privately purchased plan.

Circle of Health is a certified navigator for MNsure and can help Band members and others with insurance questions and applications. Call 800-491-6106 for assistance or stop by the Circle of Health office at Ne-la-Shing Clinic. In District II and III, you may call 320-336-0224 to set up an appointment during their weekly office hours there or you can stop into the lodge office in Hinckley for assistance.

More events: See page 18 for Recurring Events, Upcoming Events, and Recovery Groups.



**MILLE LACS BAND
OF OJIBWE**
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

millelacsband.com

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Update Your Address

If your address on file with the Enrollments Office is incorrect, you may not be receiving important mail from the Band. Each time you move, you need to fill out a Change of Address form from Enrollments at 320-532-7730. You can download a Change of Address form at millelacsband.com/services/tribal-enrollments.

About Us

Ojibwe Inaajimowin is produced monthly by the Government Affairs Department of the Mille Lacs Band's Executive Branch. Please send questions, comments, corrections, or submissions to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. The February issue deadline is January 15.

Need Help?

If you or someone you know is injured or in immediate danger, call 911 first.

Tribal Police Department dispatch:
888-609-5006; 320-532-3430.

Emergency Management Services:
24-hour fire, disaster, and emergency management response: Monte Fronk, Emergency Management Coordinator: 320-362-0435.

Addiction/Behavioral Health: 800-709-6445, ext. 7776.

Community Support Services: For emergencies related to food and nutrition, Elder services, Elder abuse, sexual assault, or emergency loans, call 320-532-7539 or 320-630-2687.

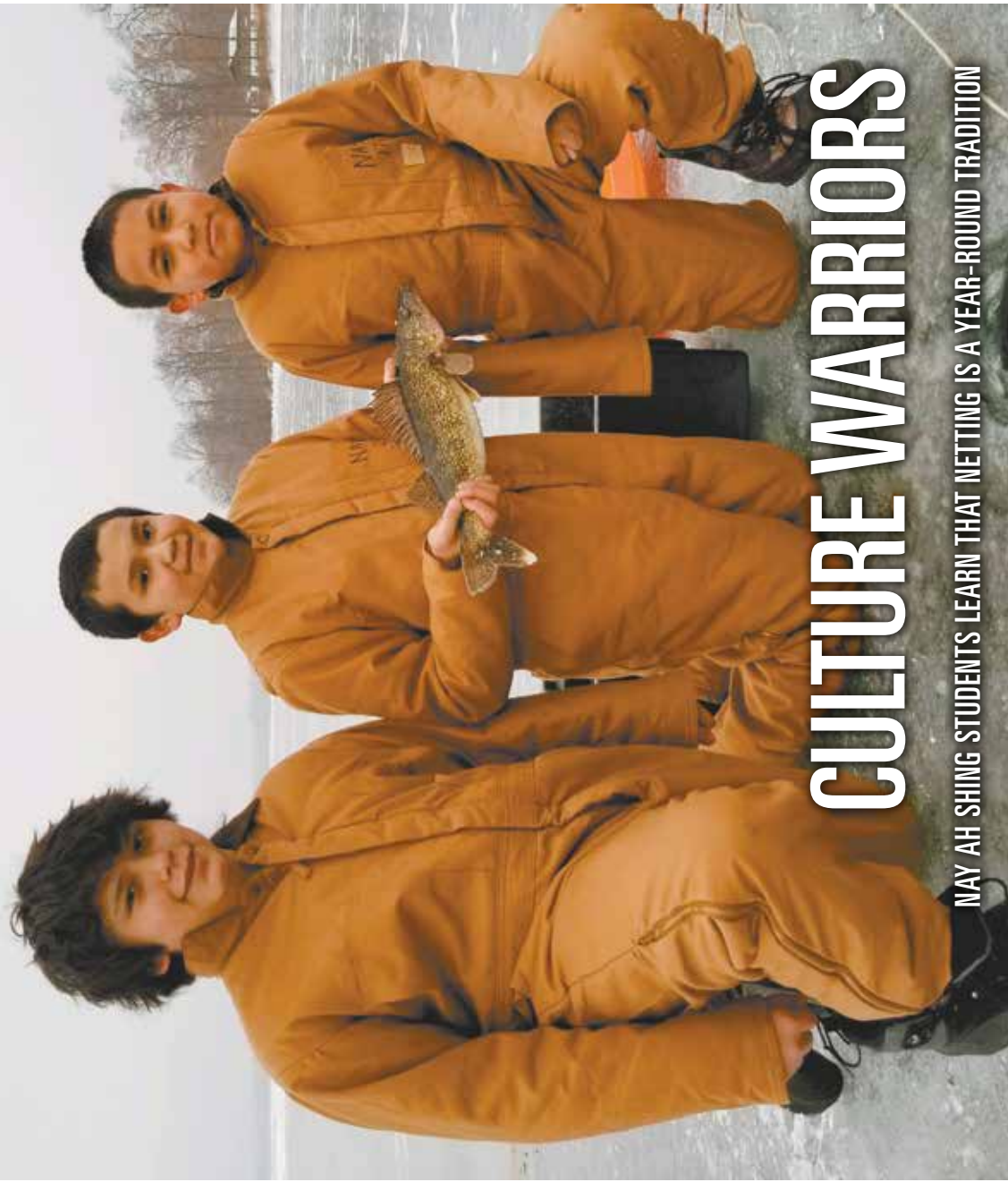
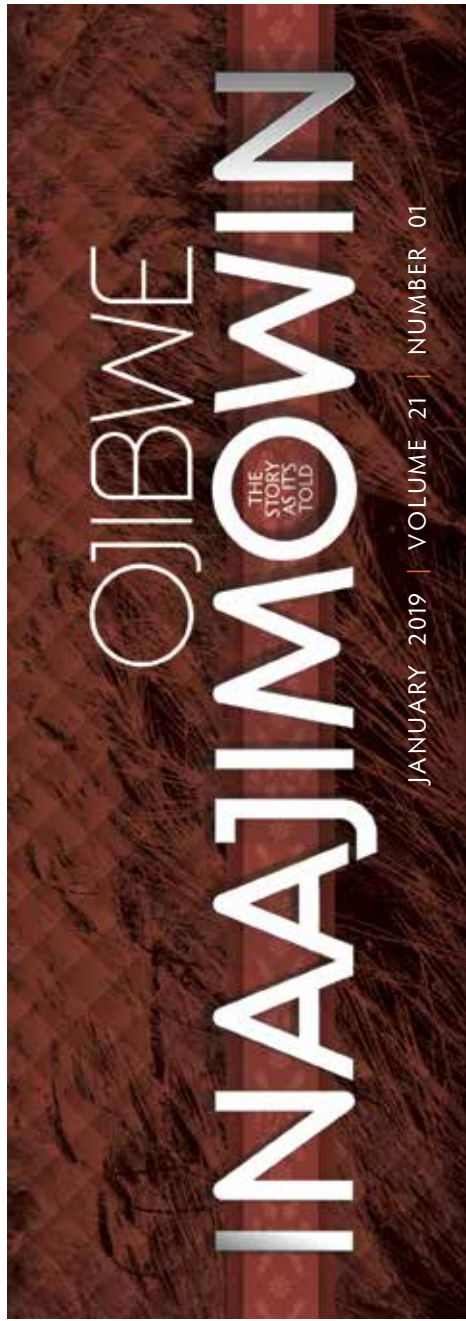
Domestic violence: (c) 320-630-2499.

Women's Shelter: 866-867-4006.

Batterers' Intervention: 320-532-8909.

Heating, water, or other home-related maintenance problems: If you live in a Mille Lacs Band Housing-maintained home, call our Customer Service Representative during regular business hours at 800-709-6445, ext. 7799. If you live in a home not maintained by the Mille Lacs Band and need assistance after hours with utilities or heating, please contact: 866-822-8538 (Press 1, 2, or 3 for respective districts).

Mille Lacs Band Family Services: Foster Care: 320-630-2663; Social Worker: 320-630-2444; 800-709-6445, ext. 7588. Family Violence Prevention: District I 320-532-4780; East Lake 218-768-4412; Aazhoomog 320-384-0149; Hinckley 320-384-4613; Toll-free 24-hour crisis line 866-867-4006.



CULTURE WARRIORS

MAY AH SHING STUDENTS LEARN THAT NETTING IS A YEAR-ROUND TRADITION

MESHAKWAD
CELEBRATES
GRAND OPENING

JUDGES SEEK
INPUT FROM
BAND MEMBERS

DISTRICT II
WELCOMES NEW
BABIES

LIFELONG
LEARNER IS
READY TO SERVE

