

A group of children and adults are pulling a large fishing net on a dark, pebbly beach. Several large fish are visible inside the net in the foreground. The background shows a grassy area and a cloudy sky.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe

2014 Annual Report



Our Mission

To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever

Our Vision

By 2025, the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people and tribe by:

- Working toward united effort with Native organizations and other governments that impact our people
- Developing and implementing a tribal education system
- Living our traditional values and practices
- Empowering our sovereignty
- Continuing to demonstrate resiliency
- Striving for excellence in all of our programs
- Elevating the wellness of our people
- Using our talents and resources to ensure we are able to take care of ourselves and share with others

Our Values

- Family – honoring and sustaining health and happiness of family as a “first responsibility.”
- Stewardship – respectful use of land, resources and all creations.
- Spiritual Beliefs – acknowledging the existence of a higher power and respecting spiritual beliefs.
- Education – passing down cultural knowledge and traditions and supporting formal education.



About the Kenaitze Indian Tribe

Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina people have lived on the Kenai Peninsula since time immemorial.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is federally recognized under the Indian Reorganization Act as a sovereign independent nation with almost 1,500 members.

During its annual meeting, the tribe elects the members of its Executive Council to serve two-year terms and govern the tribe in accordance with the tribe's constitution, bylaws, ordinances and resolutions.

The Council appoints a Chief Tribal Judge who oversees the Tribal Court

and upholds tribal law.

The Council also appoints the Executive Director, who implements Council policies and procedures and is responsible for the day-to-day operations that enhance and support the continued growth and success of the tribe.

Programs and services ensure that tribal members have access to health care, social services, justice, education, and employment services and opportunities.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe strives to both grow and improve the level of support it offers members so that each may achieve the tribe's mission: To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

The tribal organization is comprised of three divisions and four functions, which are each overseen by a director.

The directors manage health systems, community programs, housing services and administrative functions such as finance, information technology, human resources and tribal government.

The tribe places special emphasis

Recognizing the abundance of the Kenai Peninsula land they called Yaghanen, "the good land," they settled along the banks of Cook Inlet and its rivers.

Ts'itsatna, the Kenaitze ancestors, traveled throughout Yaghanen, fishing



ABOVE, Louis Forstner V, Doug Gates and other members of the Jabila'ina Dancers perform at the opening of the net celebration on May 1. **AT LEFT,** Kaleb Franke hangs red salmon to smoke in the smokehouse at the tribe's Cook Inlet waterfront fishery site.

on the hiring and training of Kenaitze Indian Tribe members, and on increasing the awareness of Dena'ina language and culture both in the workplace and within the community.

The Kenaitze are Dena'ina people, a branch of the people who are Athabaskan Native Americans. Linguists have shown that Athabascans migrated throughout North America from Alaska's Interior to Mexico.

The Kenaitze dialect of the Dena'ina language is one of the most complex and diverse of all Athabaskan languages. It contains both coastal and marine terminology, in addition to more than 400 Russian loan words.

Many centuries ago, Athabaskan people, nomadic hunters of the boreal forest, traveled from west of the Alaska Range to the shore of Cook Inlet.

from the banks of rivers and Cook Inlet.

Salmon were harvested with dipnets, weirs, dams or traps. Men, women, children and Elders all worked together to harvest and preserve this most important food.

After the fish harvest, the ancestors traveled inland to hunt bear, caribou, mountain goat, sheep and moose.

Women and children gathered berries and snared small mammals.

Winter was a time for trapping and for traveling from one village to another to share stories and to trade.

Today, Yaghanen is still "the good land" and the Kenaitze continue to prosper. By honoring family, respecting the land, respecting spiritual beliefs and through education, the Kenaitze will thrive forever.

Meet the Executive Council

Seven council members, elected at the Annual General Council Meeting each October, govern the tribe in accordance with the tribe's constitution, bylaws, ordinances and resolutions.

Meeting dates and times are posted to the tribe's website on a regular basis.



Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Chairperson



Rosalie Tepp
Vice Chairperson



Liisia Blizzard
Secretary

Committees and Members

Art and Interior Committee

Purpose: To procure art and displays for the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chair
Liisia Blizzard
Mary Lou Bottorff
Jon Ross

Finance Committee

Purpose: To provide advice and recommendations regarding financial matters of the tribe.

Audre Gifford, Chair
Rosalie Tepp
Mary Ann Mills

Court Code Committee

Purpose: To review and consider revisions to the Tribal Court Code.

Susan Wells, Chair
Mary Ann Mills
Rusty Swan
Kimberly Sweet
Analisa Selden
Liisia Blizzard
Kalyn Simpson

Constitution Review Committee

Purpose: To review and consider revisions to the constitution and to make recommendations to the tribal membership for adoption.

Liisia Blizzard, Chair
Mary Ann Mills
Jon Ross
Rita Smagge
James Segura
Allan Baldwin

Early Childhood Center Policy Committee

Purpose: To work in partnership with management staff, governing bodies, parents, and volunteers to facilitate compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards, to assist in accomplishing the program mission and to service as an advocate between the program and the community.

Bianca Chase, Chair
Amber Douglas, Chair
Chris Seaton
Caitlin Sparks
Aurora Hawkins
Kim Novak
Ashley Poulin
Michelle Teates
Sharee Jones
Liisia Blizzard – Council Rep.
Susan Wells – Council Alternate

Education Committee

Purpose: To provide oversight for the vision, objective and strategic plan for the education program.

Susan Wells, Chair
Connie Kirby
Sondra Stuart
Alan Boraas
Wanda Reams
Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Sandy Wilson
Rita Smagge
Michael Bernard
Charmaine Lundy
Julianne Wilson
Raven Williams
Ashley Segura

Elders Commission

Purpose: To provide oversight for the Tyotkas Elders Program.

Phyllis Bookey, Chair
James Showalter
Rita Smagge
Betty Porter
Marie Anderson
Fiocla Wilson, Lifetime Member
Robert Fulton, Lifetime Member
James Segura, Council Rep.



Audre Gifford
Treasurer



James Segura
Council Member



Mary Ann Mills
Council Member



Susan Wells
Council Member

Election Board

Purpose: To regulate the conduct of all tribal elections, including those initiated by petition, and the resolution of election disputes.

Phyllis Bookey, Chair
Katheryn Rodgers
Bernice Crandall
Kynde Bishop, Alternate

Enrollment Committee

Purpose: To provide oversight for the tribe's enrollment procedures as defined in the tribe's constitution and Enrollment Ordinance No. 98-01.

Katheryn Rodgers, Chair
Bernice Crandall
Linda Ross
Liisia Blizzard
Rene Edelman-Azzara

Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Committee

Purpose: To provide oversight for the tribe's traditional hunting, fishing and gathering activities.

James Segura, Chair
Clare Swan, Lifetime Member
Mary Ann Mills
Liisia Blizzard
Elsie Maillelle
James Showalter
Kaarlo Wik

Health Committee

Purpose: To review and make recommendations regarding primary care, behavioral health, and dental programs. The Health Committee meets the statute requirements for the State of Alaska Community Mental Health Center grant.

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chair
Clare Swan, Lifetime Member
Allan Baldwin
Diana Zirul
Patsy Marston
Manuel Linderman
Rita Smagge

Land Committee

Purpose: To research all lands presently owned by the tribe and recommend policies that will assist the tribe in meeting its vision, objectives and strategic plan.

James Segura, Chair
Mary Ann Mills
Liisia Blizzard
James Showalter
Kaarlo Wik
Jennifer Showalter Yeoman

Traditional Healing Planning Team

Purpose: To provide oversight and planning for traditional healing in the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Audre Gifford, Chair
Winnie Wong
Jon Ross
Mary Lou Bottorff
Nancy Knapp
Linda Ross
Bobbie Oskolkoff
Sarah Smith

Kenaitze/Salamatof

Tribally Designated Housing Entity

Purpose: To promote the development of affordable housing opportunities by providing new construction, rental assistance, home modernization and weatherization services, and various other affordable housing activities to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native beneficiaries.

James Segura, Chair
Rita Smagge, Vice Chair
Nick Sacaloff, Secretary Treasurer
Mary Ann Mills
Rosalie Tepp
Clinton Lageson
Kaarlo Wik

From the Executive Director

Yaghali du?

I am happy to say, “Aa’ yagali!” It is good.

This has been a monumental year for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, with many accomplishments and significant growth as is reflected here in our annual report.

Decades of planning and years of hard work came to a joyous conclusion as more than 1,000 people joined us in a three-day celebration to mark the Dena’ina Wellness Center’s grand opening in June.

I want to again thank our Elders for their vision, sacrifice and hard work that laid the foundation for a successful project.

Many thanks to our funding partners who helped us build the center. Our gratitude goes out to the State of Alaska, the Rasmuson Foundation, the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and Cook Inlet Region Inc.



Jaylene Peterson-Nyren

We are also grateful to our staff and many volunteers. *The doors opened because you cared.*

We were surprised and humbled this year as the Kenai Chamber of Commerce recognized the tribe

in its efforts to further the wellness of our community by awarding the tribe its *Business/Organization of the Year Award*, presented to us in June.

In a commitment to provide more affordable housing opportunities to the people we serve, the tribe invested in the purchase of Toyon Villa Apartments from Beluga Point LLC in August. They are located conveniently across the street from the Dena’ina Wellness Center in Old Town Kenai. The tribe now owns the building and

the Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE) will manage the apartments.

In May, our Tyotkas Elders Program moved out of the facility we had been operating out of for more than a decade, due to structural issues with the building. After careful consideration, it was decided that it will be more economical to replace the building than to repair it. We will keep you informed as we move forward.

Please keep in touch; let us know how we are doing as we continue our efforts to keep you informed. Continued improvements are planned for our newsletters, our website and our Facebook page. We are committed to ensuring that Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

Chiqinik!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jaylene".

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director

From the Chairperson

Yaghali du?

This sure has been an exciting year.

I would like to start out by saying *chiqinik*, thank you, to the members of the Tribal Council and those who serve the tribe on our committees.

You have done a lot of very hard work this year. We have come far because of your efforts.

I also want the tribe to remember the hard work of our Elders, because they are the ones who set us on the path we follow.

In the coming year, the Tribal Council is even more committed to transparency in government. We are also making plans to hold quarterly tribal membership meetings in the coming



Jennifer Showalter Yeoman

year.

We are also making plans to publish minutes and agendas for Council and committees on our website.

I hope to see you at some of the meetings and I also hope you are able to attend

some of the tribe’s many activities.

We want to see you, to hear from you and to know how we are doing throughout the rest of the year.

We have changed the way that we respond to customer concerns. We have a new system that allows us to track information. The feedback that you

give us helps us improve our system of healthcare. Please ask any staff member to listen to your concerns.

We also enjoy hearing your compliments. Please fill out a *chiqinik* thank-you card if a staff member has been especially helpful.

Your Council is working on a written code of conduct which clearly defines the relationship and conduct between the Tribal Council, the Executive Director and staff. The code will also help us serve you better.

Again, thank you for everyone’s hard work. I look forward to having another year of progress toward our 2025 Vision.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jennifer".

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Council Chairperson

Tribal Government Affairs

In last year's annual report the Tribal Council and tribal staff committed to providing greater transparency in tribal operations and in engaging tribal membership to the fullest extent possible.

This commitment helped to focus our efforts.

The tribe's website was continuously updated to reflect upcoming Council and committee meetings.

In addition to newsletters, tribal information and items of interest have been shared this past year on the tribe's Facebook page.

The current and proposed revised constitutions are posted on the website. We are committed to posting Council and committee meeting agendas and minutes to the website soon.

The Constitution Committee is working diligently to draft a revised tribal constitution that reflects our heritage and shared traditional values, strengthens and sustains our rights, and guides our efforts to assure that Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

Last year's annual meeting marked



Past Council member Robert Fulton speaks to the tribe with Council Secretary Liisia Blizzard during a tribal member only opening for the Dena'ina Wellness Center. "I just look at this and it overwhelms me," Fulton said of the center.

the first time tribal members were able to vote for Council members by absentee ballot.

This year, the Election Ordinance was revised to state only official Tribal Absentee Ballots mailed to the voter by the tribe shall be counted.

The tribe is responsive to requests for tribal consultation and continues to work with Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Forest Service in the Russian River – Kenai River

confluence area.

In the coming years we will be consulting and working with federal and state agencies and other consulting parties as planning for the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline begins. Tribal Council and staff are committed to responding to employment and training opportunities that may arise for the tribe and its members as this project develops.

Applications for tribal membership continue to increase. This year the Enrollment Committee reviewed more than 90 applications. Applications that have been received throughout

the year are not approved until they are presented to the tribal membership at the annual meeting.

Past Council members were honored in March in a tribal member only event to open the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

A volunteer committee of tribal members, staff, and community friends worked tirelessly for months to make our Grand Opening for the Dena'ina Wellness Center a success in June. The three day celebration met and exceeded everyone's expectation.

Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity

2013-07 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to enter into a Grant Agreement with State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Community Initiative Matching Grant Program for State FY 2014

2013-11 – Tribal Resolution Authorizing the Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity for Title and Settlement Agreement with First American Title Insurance Company

2013-13 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to enter into Grant Agreement – Alaska Mental

Health Trust for Dena'ina Wellness Center construction project for State FY 2014

2013-15 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Community Initiative Matching Grant Program for FY 2014

2013-16 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Comprehensive Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery for FY 2014

2013-17 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Time Limited Family Reunification Service Grant Program for FY 2014

2014-23 – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to Stewart Title of the Kenai Peninsula, Inc.. for claims which may arise from the agreement to obtain title and escrow services related to the closing on Beluga Point Apartment building purchase.

Tribal Court

Dena'ina people have historically resolved dispute and conflict, maintained community peace and delivered justice with traditional laws, customs and practices.

Written tribal codes give authority and jurisdiction to hear and adjudicate matters concerning child protection, voluntary relinquishment and involuntary termination of parent rights, tribal adoption, child custody, domestic violence, marriage, divorce and annulments, protection for Elders and vulnerable adults, and conservatorship and guardianship.

Today, the Nitghu k't'uch' qenashen Tribal Court (meaning "One Who Talks for Equity") aims to acknowledge and honor our traditional customs for the purpose of preserving, strengthening and ensuring justice on behalf of our families.

The Court's Tribal Youth Justice Program serves Alaska Native and American Indian people dealing with issues that have led to delinquency, or that threaten to do so.

The program provides Talking Circles to allow youth, their family and community members to address core issues in an environment of respect, honesty, responsibility and honor.

2014 Highlights

- Kenaitze Tribal Court judges represent Alaska on the board of direc-



Chief Judge Kim Sweet



Judge Mary Ann Mills



Judge Susan Wells



Judge Rusty Swan



Judge Paul Lorenzo



Judge Evelyn Huf

- tors for the National American Indian Court Judges Association.
- Kenaitze Tribal Court was singled out with honorable mention during Alaska Chief Justice Dana Fabe's State of the Judiciary Address to the state legislature in February, as well as during her speech at the 31st annual Alaska Tribal Court Development Conference in Fairbanks.
- Kenaitze Tribal Court continues to promote cooperation and collaboration between tribal courts and state courts through judiciary meetings and joint trainings.
- Kenaitze Tribal Court



Kenaitze Tribal Court judges meet with judges and magistrates from Kenai Superior Court during a luncheon hosted by the tribal court in the tribe's administration building conference room in March. Kenaitze's court has been hailed as a model of success by both tribal and state court officials.

judges continue to act on sovereignty by promoting restorative justice practices through sharing and collabo-

rating with tribes and community partners. It continues to be available for training events and conferences.

Court Appointed Special Advocates

The Court Appointed Special Advocates program (CASA) recruits and trains volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children in court. They speak to the best interest of the child. Advocates are empowered and educated to speak for children with strength and understanding of tribal values and traditions.

The tribe's CASA is a leader among CASA programs. Currently it is the only active tribal CASA program in Alaska. It is also the first program in Alaska to dually train volunteers in both tribal and state court proceedings.

Through a partnership with the Office of Public Advocacy, the CASA program has the potential to serve any child in the community who has been removed from their home due to abuse and/or neglect.

2014 Highlights

- A Memorandum of Agreement between the tribe and the Office of Public Advocacy was renewed, allowing CASA to continue to serve children in both tribal and state court.
- In May, four new volunteers were sworn in for service.
- Twelve CASA volunteers served 32 children this year (15 in tribal court and 17 in state court).
- CASA hosted its 2nd annual Superhero 5-kilometer run/walk; 98 people registered. Generous individuals and businesses helped raise \$3,500 to help children in foster care and to fund the tribe's first foster care Christmas party, which is being organized by CASA staff.
- CASA received a \$5,000 gift from Norwex, an environmentally friendly cleaning company. Funds will be used to grow CASA and to meet the special needs of children and youth in foster care.



ABOVE, Runners take off from the start of the CASA Superhero 5-kilometer run/walk in August. The event raised support for the tribe's Court Appointed Special Advocates program.



AT LEFT, Tuckerman Babcock, Melinda Cox, Sharon Tyone and Shelli Elliott are sworn in as Court Appointed Special Advocates during a joint ceremony involving judges from the Kenaitze Tribal Court and the Kenai Superior Court in May. Kenaitze CASA volunteers advocate on behalf of children in both tribal and state courts. Volunteers received 40 hours of training prior to the ceremony.

How to volunteer

The first step to becoming a CASA volunteer is to attend an informational meeting. Monthly informational meetings are scheduled for the last Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the administration building conference room.

After attending the informational meeting, those interested complete an application and go through an interview and intense background check.

Once accepted into the program, all volunteers go through 40 hours of training and are sworn in to serve by a tribal and state court judge.

To learn more, please contact Joy Petrie at 335-7219 or jpetrie@kenaitze.org.

Tribal Fishery

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe's fishery helps preserve the cultural and traditional way of life established by the early Dena'ina by teaching the way of life to current generations.

The fishery brings people together, ensuring that traditional values thrive forever.

The tribe typically sets two, six-fathom nets at fishing sites along the Kahtnu (Kenai), Ggasilahtnu (Kasilof) and Yaghehtnu (Swanson) rivers.

The tribe's fishing permit allows for 8,000 salmon each year.

This year, the tribe was restricted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to one net for the months of May and June, as part of the department's efforts to protect king salmon.

The second net returned to the water in July.

On July 26th, the tribe was restricted

again to one net for the rest of the season.

The tribal fishery is administered by the Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission, which recognizes that many families depend on the net for fish.

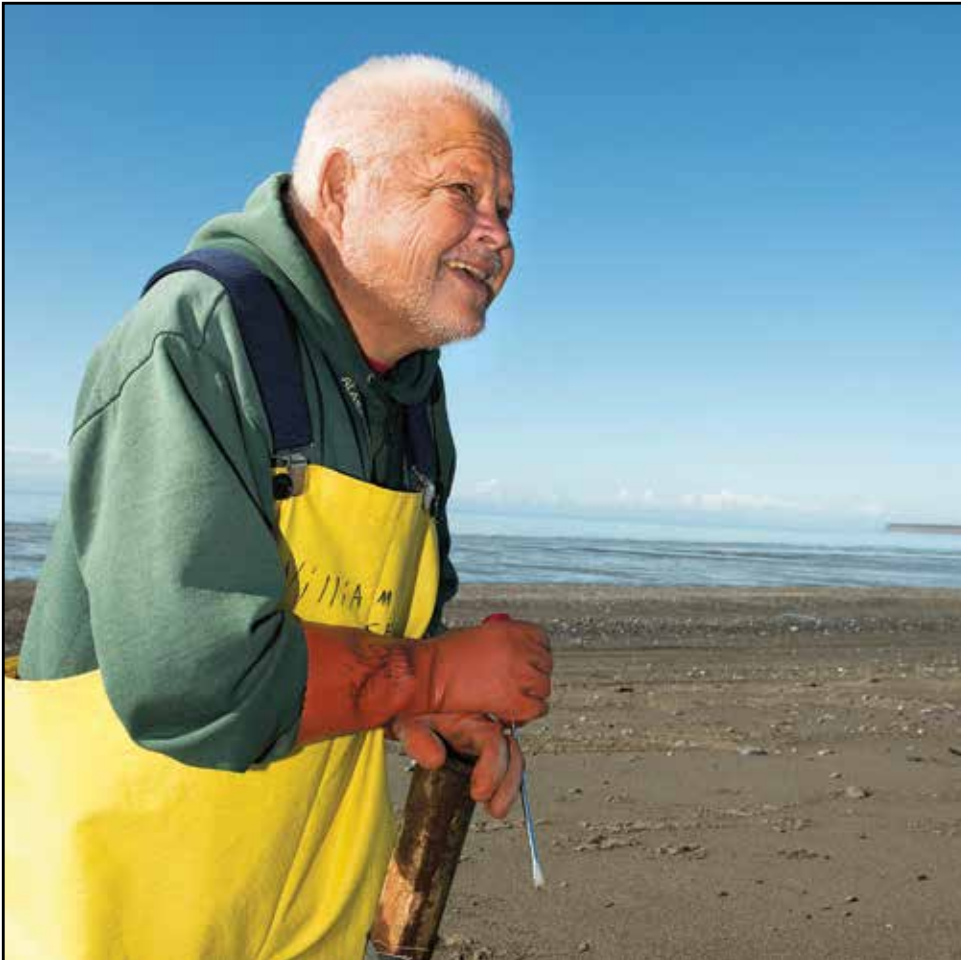
This year, with one net for the

majority of the season, families were asked to share the net, as two families were assigned one tide for most of the fishing days.

Comparing Tribal Fishery Numbers

	2014	2013	2012	2011
Kings	2	19	14	47
Reds	6109	4837	3445	6873
Pinks	352	24	553	5
Silvers	261	566	140	439
Totals	6724	5446	4152	7364

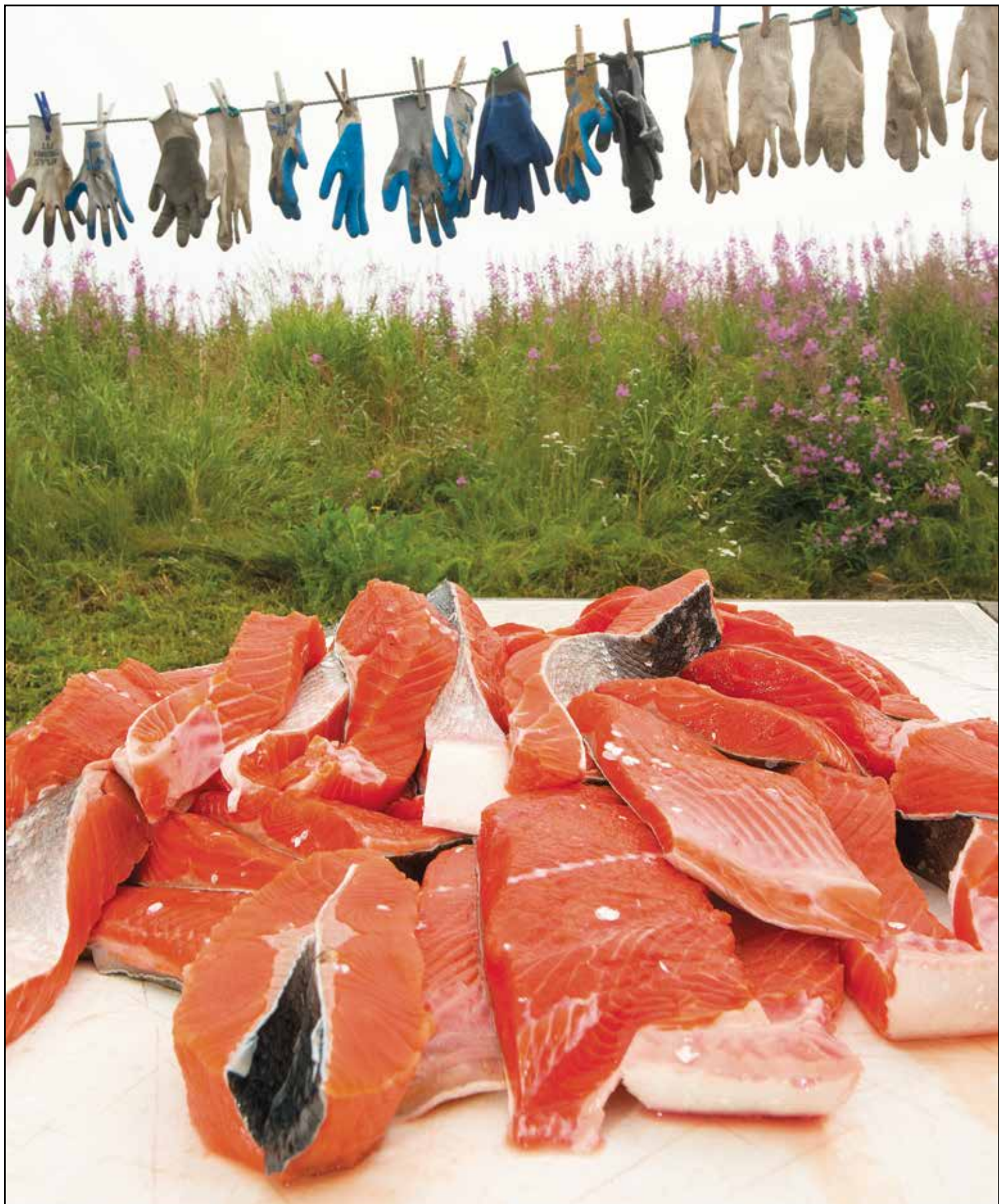
In their words



WILLIAM SEGURA, 69, and his family fish the tribal net. He has also worked at the net for "at least 15 or 16 seasons, maybe 17 now."

"The net feeds a lot of people. If it wasn't for this net, a lot of our Elders wouldn't be able to get fish. It's a real good thing. ... It's not a hard job, it's a good job. Still, it's a lot of work. It keeps me busy."

— William Segura



Housing Assistance Programs

Kenaitze Indian Tribe helps qualified Alaska Native and American Indian households with safe, sanitary, and affordable housing.

The safe home program is designed to renovate and repair the homes of qualified Kenaitze and Salamatof tribal members, Alaska Native, and American Indian people who live in Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally Designated Housing Entity's (TDHE) jurisdiction.

The program helps with weatherization, health and safety issues, and accessibility.

In the past year, the safe home

program helped 12 families.

The emergency housing program provides financial assistance with rental deposits, rental payments, delinquent mortgage and delinquent property taxes.

The emergency housing program served 22 families this year.

The sanding and snow plowing program is available to eligible Elders and disabled people. This program provides sanding and snow plowing services at no charge, helping make winters safer and a bit easier.

Last winter, 12 families received help with snow and ice.

The housing program also operates Ninash Q'a, a tribal transitional home. Ninash Q'a offers a safe haven for families who need temporary housing during a crisis.

Families using this facility are expected to work in conjunction with other tribal programs that promote self-sufficiency and healthy relationships.

Ninash Q'a transitional home helped seven families in crisis this past year.

The rental housing program offers affordable housing for qualified families. In the past year, five families were served.

Shortly before this report went to press in September 2014, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe purchased the 32-unit Toyon Villa Apartments from Beluga Point LLC.

The tribe now owns the building and TDHE will manage the apartments, with a mix of subsidized and market rate units. Existing leases will be honored and the on-site manager will remain in place.

The student housing voucher program offers qualified, full-time students who are enrolled in an accredited college, university, or trade school with financial assistance in the form of a monthly voucher or lump sum payment directly to a landlord or dormitory.

Seven students were served by the student housing voucher program this past year.

The housing program also offers counseling for families who are interested in taking back control of their financial situation. The participants are taught the ins and outs of financial basics such as interest rates, credit reports, credit scores, various debts, budgeting tools and more.

In the last year, 10 families improved their knowledge through financial counseling.

In their words



FRANK and JACKIE TRIGG received help from the Safe Homes Program to finish the exterior of their self-built home on the edge of Kenai.

“We were paying \$300 a month for gas. It was just awful. To have that gas bill cut by more than half, that was such a blessing. The house is beautiful now. When they were first done with it we’d just sit in the car out on the street and look at it: It’s so pretty! We didn’t think we’d ever get it done by ourselves. The Kenaitze workers were fantastic.” – Jackie Trigg

Tyotkas Elder Services

Tyotkas Elder Services worked with more than 145 Elders in the past year with the goals of providing healthy, nutritious meals; fun activities; traditional foods, and preventing social isolation.

Respect for Elders is a traditional Dena'ina value, one that is taken very seriously by the staff who serve Elders at Tyotkas.

This year, Tyotkas returned to its former home two blocks away at Fort Kenay after structural problems were found in the existing building.

Plans are underway to replace the old building. Staff will seek input from Elders. They will also keep Elders informed of progress during the construction process.

During the transition back to Fort Kenay, the Saturday health clinic was moved into the Dena'ina Wellness Center. Elders are also participating in traditional food gatherings at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Elders hosted 11 fish days at the tribal net this year to savor the beach, visit, barbecue, and enjoy each other and their families while fishing.

2014 Highlights

- The Kenai Fjords field trip sold out with the Elders program collaborating with the wellness program from Dena'ina Wellness Center.
- The steak dinner fund-raiser raised \$ 2,275 this year. Money was placed in a fund for future activities.
- Saturday health clinics continued uninterrupted after the move from the Tyotkas Elder Service to Fort Kenay, thanks to the efforts of the staff and the Dena'ina Wellness Center providers.
- Activities included: bingo, horseshoes, beach day with Yaghanen Youth Program, yoga, arts and crafts, game days, walking, crochet and no-host dinners.

In their words



ED EDELMAN is a lifelong commercial fisherman. He and his wife **RUTH** are “snowbirds” now, wintering in Washington, but they maintain strong connections to the area and to the tribe by having lunch at Tyotkas Elder Services and through other tribal programs.

“We come here just about every day. ... It’s been a really wonderful program. ... What I like here is it’s a close feeling and they’re all my cousins. ... If we lived here (in the winter) we’d take advantage of the snow plowing.” – Ed Edelman

“We even bring our guests here. They’re so impressed. The kindness, having the plates removed. ... They thought it was wonderful. We’ve used the shuttle when we’ve gone on out of town trips. ... It meant a lot to me that we’ve been well taken care of. Everybody needs to know about the Native way of taking care of Elders.” – Ruth Edelman

Yaghanen Youth Programs

Yaghanen means “A Safe Place” and is an excellent description of the Tribe’s youth programs.

As a prevention and early intervention program, Yaghanen helps the tribe’s greatest resource, its youth, to understand its culture and develop life skills through activities and camps. Yaghanen teaches children how to be leaders and strong advocates for themselves and each other.

Yaghanen programs include Jabila’ina Dance Group, the Del Dumí Intertribal Drum Group and Ggugguyni Native Youth Olympics Team.

With honor given to the traditions of the Kenaize Indian Tribe, the Murujuga Group from Australia were welcomed by Kenaitze Elders for a summer visit. The Murujuga Ranger team discussed their local practices and customs including a complex un-

derstanding of their kinship system.

The Murujuga Ranger team has invited Michael Bernard, the Yaghanen Youth Services manager, and some of the youth to participate in a project through the Murujuga Land and Sea Management Unit in the Burrup Peninsula in northwestern Australia next year.

This team works closely with their Elders and they enjoyed the time they spent here learning about the Dena’ina.



Mekhai Rich competes in the one-foot high kick event for the tribe’s Ggugguyni Native Youth Olympics Team during an invitational hosted by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe in January. The event was a highlight of the Peninsula Winter Games.

2014 Highlights

- Yaghanen staff held cultural presentations at Kalifornsky Beach Elementary school for approximately 50 students in April.
- Yaghanen staff hosted cultural orientations for 30 new tribal employees.
- The Ggugguyni Senior NYO team went to the state competition in Anchorage. Several youth achieved personal bests, some tried events they’ve never competed in before and one youth placed 3rd in one of her events.
- The Jabila’ina Dancers and Del Dumí Drummers performed at the opening of the tribal net, the grand opening celebrations for the Dena’ina Wellness Center and Soldotna library, and the opening for the Dena’ina exhibit at the Anchorage Museum.
- Yaghanen raised \$350 to put towards NYO uniforms by raffling off autographed baseball memorabilia.
- Yaghanen staff presented to approximately 700 local school children about traditional fishing practices at the annual Salmon Celebration at Johnson Lake.
- Yaghanen staff gave a presentation to 11 of our youth on bullying.
- Yaghanen staff have planned six summer activities for youth. Topics include lake fishing, hiking, disc golf, in house movies, among others.

Early Childhood Center

“We believe ... the earlier children become competent in social/emotional skills the sooner they will thrive. It is during these first years that children build the foundation for how and what they will learn for the rest of their academic careers and beyond. Given a strong foundation, respect for culture, and the confidence to recognize their own abilities all our children are capable of distinction.” – Kuya Qyut’anen Early Childhood Center staff

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Kuya Qyut’anen (“Little Children of the Kenai River”) Early Childhood Center offers a Head Start Preschool program, an Alaska Native Education preschool, an after school program, and a summer program for kindergarten through 3rd grade.

The programs use The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood philosophy, which incorporates the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Programs also incorporate the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s traditional Dena’ina language and values, along with Project ACHIEVE “Stop and Think” social skills/problem solving curriculum.

The curriculum is also aligned with the State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

2014 Highlights

- The Early Childhood Center provided services to 117 families this year.
- The center provided an 8-week summer camp attended by 47 children.
- The students visited the tribal net in May and were able to spend time learning about traditional ways of life.
- Summer camp featured three classrooms, with themes of Mother Earth, energy, insects, beach week, under the sea, bike safety, fitness and gold mining.
- Thirty-four children transitioned from preschool to kindergarten.
- This year the Early Childhood Center added parenting classes to the list of other family events, trainings and activities.



Teachers Aide Ann Strongheart helps Eliza Massey brush her teeth after lunch in the Otter preschool classroom.

Na'ini Social Services

Na'ini Social Services provides help for individuals and families who have immediate needs, along with individual planning to help people meet longer term goals of self-sufficiency.

Social services include child care assistance, energy, general, burial and funeral assistance.

Na'ini has a wild game harvest and a food bank.

It offers services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

Help is available for career planning, job placement, vocational rehabilitation and education services.

2014 Highlights

- Scholarships were granted to 36 Kenaitze Indian Tribe students to attend college or an accredited vocational training program.
- 127 people received help finding a job.
- Six youth were hired and mentored under the Workforce Investment Act. Additional mentoring opportunities are in development.
- The wild game harvest and food bank programs helped 1,081 families avoid hunger.
- Indian Child Welfare Act workers and case managers helped with the needs of the 39 children who were in protective custody of the tribe as a result of tribal court orders.
- More than 200 reports of harm were investigated in collaboration with the state's Office of Children's Services.
- 133 children were served by the child care assistance program, and the Early Childhood Center was licensed in conjunction with Child Care Assistance in order to continue the summer and after school programs.
- Staff offered advocacy, case management, and conservatorship services to six vulnerable adults.

In their words



KRISTI ISAAK is a Criminal Justice Technician in the Wildwood Transitional Program at Wildwood Correctional Complex in Kenai. She describes herself as a lifelong learner and credits the scholarships she received from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe for helping her with her growing career.

“Without Kenaitze, I would not have been able to fully fund my school. ... I went hardcore. I did 18 or 19 credits per semester. I was working full time. I had a part time job. So I lived, ate, breathed school and work. But I’m glad I did it. It was hard, it took a lot of dedication, but it helped me get to where I’m at now. So I am thankful. ... I was able to do all of it, and now I don’t have a bunch of student loans because I was able to stay in state and I was able to utilize the scholarships. So it helped a lot. I don’t think you’re never too young or old to start learning or to continue learning.”

– Kristi Isaak

Dena'ina Wellness Center



The Dena'ina Wellness Center sits on four acres of Kenaitze land in the heart of Old Town Kenai. A figure from Kenaitze artist Joel Isaak's hammered bronze sculpture installation titled, "Luq'a Nagh Ghilhuzht (Fish Camp)" stands at left.

Decades of planning and years of hard work came together in April when the Dena'ina Wellness Center opened its doors for service.

The tribe hosted a special celebration for tribal members shortly before the center opened.

In June, the public was invited to three days of celebration during a grand opening weekend that featured dancing, drumming and songs from tribal groups from across the state.

The Dena'ina Wellness Center combines under one roof services that before were housed in three different locations.

The tribe owns the building. Previously, health care was delivered in several rented spaces.

Services include primary medical care, dental, behavioral health, chemical dependency, wellness, physical therapy, pharmacy support and traditional healing.

The tribe values an approach to healthcare that places the customer at the center. Its Dene' Model of Care focuses on physical, spiritual, emotional and social health.

Primary medical care services are delivered by care teams consisting

of physicians, advanced nurse practitioners, certified physician assistants, registered nurse case managers and medical assistants.

An in-house laboratory and digital radiology equipment provide essential diagnostic resources to providers.

When it is needed, care is coordinated with specialty services offered through Alaska Native Medical Center and Central Peninsula Hospital.

The care team also features a wellness department that offers diabetes prevention, lifestyle coaching, nutritional assessment, tobacco cessation, fitness evaluation, digital storytelling and activity programs.

Behavioral health services, available to any member of the surrounding

community, are another important part of the care team.

Services include individual and family therapy, interactive play therapy for children, crisis intervention and a variety of other therapeutic groups.

The chemical dependency recovery program works with individuals and families whose lives have been affected by substance abuse.

Customers receive comprehensive assessments and treatment recommendations that are tailored to their needs.

Care is provided in a culturally relevant environment and incorporates traditional activities such as arts and crafts, fishing, drumming and Talking Circles.

Early intervention, outpatient, and continuing care services are available in the building, and help is offered with transitions to residential treatment facilities when needed.

The Dena'ina Wellness Center has licensed social workers and professional counselors who are comfortable working with adults, adolescents and children from a variety of lifestyles and cultural backgrounds.

Behavioral health treatment sometimes includes referrals to additional

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Dena'ina Wellness Center



AT TOP, Tribal Council member Susan Wells leads one end of the cloth during a Dena'ina Cloth Ceremony conducted by Clare Swan during the Dena'ina Wellness Center's public grand opening in June. **ABOVE LEFT**, A performer from the Kingikmiut Dancers performs during the opening. **AT LEFT**, Josie and Ali Jones perform "The Star-Spangled Banner" from a landing on the grand staircase. **ABOVE**, Dancers blur in a circle around the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Intertribal Drum Group. The grand opening spanned three days.

CONTINUED, from p. 17

tribal programs or other local agencies.

Dental professionals provide primary dental services. They offer a wide range of general dentistry needs, including exams, X-rays, cleanings, fillings, emergency treatment and some specialty treatment.

Emphasis is placed on prevention and education to reduce the amount of dental decay and dental emergencies.

The dental team also partners with the tribe's Early Childhood Center to provide annual dental exams and biannual fluoride treatments to the program's preschool children.

2014 Highlights

- Many new staff positions, including:
 - Dr. John Molina, Director of Health Systems
 - Dr. Meredith W. Mayfield, Clinical Pharmacist and Infection Control Officer
 - Joe Cannava, Behavioral Health Clinician
 - Paul Carlson, Physical Therapist
 - Michael Cruz, Quality System Manager
 - Dr. Heather Callum, Pediatrician
- Additional dental staff has helped improved access to care.
- Training and tools are allowing staff to better record and respond to customer concerns.
- Behavioral health, wellness and medical staff are working more closely together to treat all of a person's health needs.
- Hours have expanded to better serve people earlier and later in the day, including 12-hour per day access to the activity area.
- Electronic health records have been implemented for behavioral health.
- Loving Foods cooking events and demonstrations are being held in the new demonstration kitchen.

Chiqíník! *Thank you!*

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe gives special thanks to our major sponsors and our many community supporters of our new Dena'ina Wellness Center.



Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
Division of Community and Regional Affairs



Rasmuson Foundation



M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust



The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority



Cook Inlet Region, Inc.



Another very special
Chiqíník!
to the
Kenai Chamber of Commerce
for honoring the tribe with its
Business/Organization
of the Year Award.

Environmental Program

Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina values include stewardship: the respectful use of land, resources and all creations. The tribe's Environmental Program lives those values.

This year, under the program agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Indian General Assistance Program, the Environmental Program held activities designed to improve health, decrease the abundance of household hazardous waste, and increase the understanding of traditional ecological knowledge.

Activities were focused on tribal members, and Alaska Native and Native American families.

The program worked with other tribal departments to let people of all ages know about environmental education events and the dangers of household hazardous waste.

Environmental assistants also worked on interviewing kids for a book project, "Kenaitze Youth Speak," with Dr. Alan Boraas, concerning the importance of salmon and the resilience of children to a changing environment.

2014 Highlights

- The tribe's core values for stewardship and education were supported by grants awarded this year. The grants focus on environmental education, with a goal to increase the number of Native youth interested in pursuing college for careers in science, technology, engineering and math. Activities included hiring high school and college students as assistants for science camp activities.
- Nineteen elementary age students, sixteen chaperons and Tribal



ABOVE, Children pose for a photo during a marine science field trip to Seward. They toured Resurrection Bay by boat with a stop at Fox Island. **BELOW,** Children work on a poster illustrating their ideas for the Kenai River in the year 2025.



Youth Council members attended an overnight science camp at Spirit Lake.

- Kids also went on a marine science field trip to Seward, where they took a Kenai Fjords boat tour

of Resurrection Bay, with a stop at Fox Island. Four Elders accompanied the group.

- The summer program included week-long day camps with the Kenai Watershed Forum for Small Fry camp and the Adopt-a-Stream camp.
- Some youngsters attended an engineering and robotics camp.
- The Environmental Program worked with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Solid Waste Department to update information for the hazardous waste program schedule for handouts and calendars.
- Other accomplishments include successful grant awards to continue the EPA Indian General Assistance Program, submitting a cooperative EPA-Kenaitze Tribal Environmental Plan for the fiscal years 2015 – 2017, and working with the Executive Council to address environmental issues through Council resolutions and actions.

K'Beq' Interpretive Site



Jonathan Wilson, Raven Willoya-Williams and Julianne Wilson worked last summer to educate visitors to K'beq'.

Kenaitze ancestors, recognizing the abundance of the place they called Yaghanen, “the good land,” settled in areas along the banks of its rivers and Tikahtnu (Cook Inlet).

One of these areas is Sqilantnu, which is located in the area now called Cooper Landing.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe partners with the Chugach National Forest to preserve, protect and provide interpretation for this location at the K'Beq' “footprints” interpretive site.

At K'Beq', tribal members share traditions and culture with visitors through interpretive walks that feature an archaeological site and interpretive signs. They also teach traditional plant use from June through September.



2014 Highlights

- K'beq' was open four days a week from June 1 to August 31, with hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- K'beq' was open for a total of 53 days and saw a total of 1,147 visitors this past summer.
- Jonathan Wilson, Julianne Wilson and Raven Willoya-Williams (all

Kenaitze tribal members and former and current Yaghanen youth) worked at the site this summer giving tours and answering questions for summer visitors.

Human Resources

The human resources department oversees recruitment and hiring, employee benefits, compensation, employee relations, workplace safety, and staff training.

2014 highlights:

- Increased the number of staff from 214 in October of 2013 to 265. (Current numbers as of late August 2014.)
- Increased the number of tribal members employed from 40 to 50. The number of Salamatof staff members have remained unchanged at five.
- Increased the number of Alaska Native/American Indian people employed from 58 to 61.
- Received close to 2,000 employment applications for positions across the tribe. Vacant positions on the employment information page on the website were viewed more than 20,000 times.
- Launched two new web-based learning management systems for staff training and development.
- Hosted for the first time a wellness event for staff to participate in a health screening and assessment to help improve health and to lower tribal insurance costs.
- Recognized 39 staff members who have been employed at the tribe for 2, 5, 10 and 15 years.
- Worker Compensation Claims decreased from 25 claims in 2010 to 10 this past year.
- Supported a second annual all employee customer service training event. The guest speaker again this year was Petra Marquart, author of, “The Power of Service: Keeping Customers for Life.”
- Participated in the Kenai Peninsula Job Fair and the Cook Inlet Region Inc. annual meeting .



Christa Huf and Lana Perry listen, at right, as Kris Smith talks about her 15 years of employment with the tribe's dental program during an employee recognition luncheon in January.

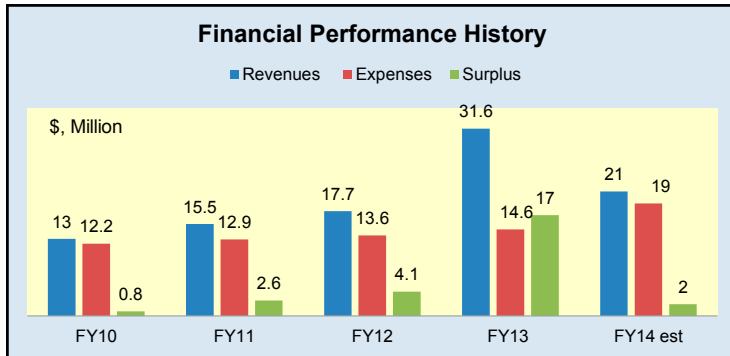


Petra Marquart, author of, “The Power of Service: Keeping Customers for Life” and Director of Tribal Government Affairs Alexandra “Sasha” Lindgren laugh as Maggie Jones reads from a script while learning customer service skills at a training seminar in March.

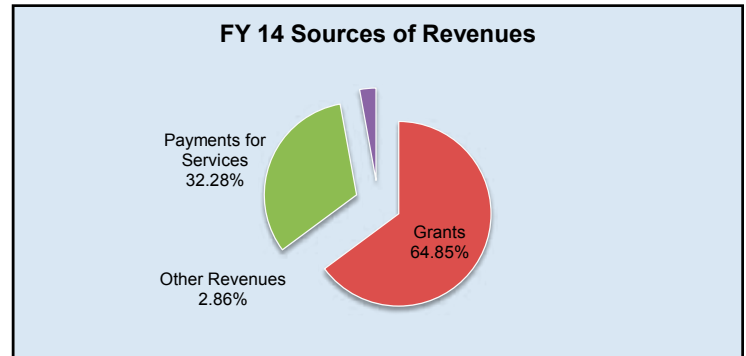
“We believe ... our human resource is our greatest resource.”
– Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, Executive Director

Financial Information

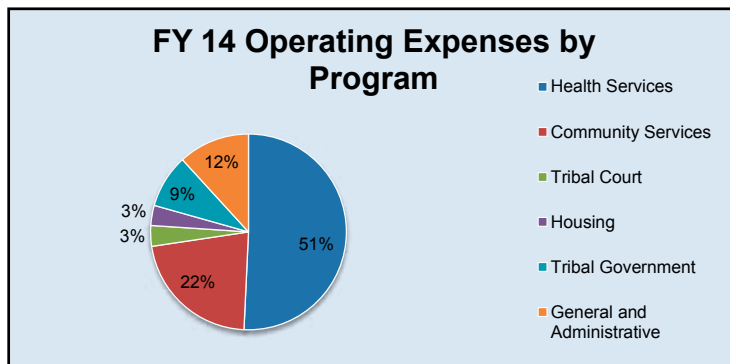
“We believe ... in building a strong foundation of financial stability and strength by operating on a balanced budget and growing our savings each year. This objective will provide opportunities for the tribe to grow, develop and improve services to ‘assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.’” – Vadette (DeeDee) Fowler, Director of Financial Services



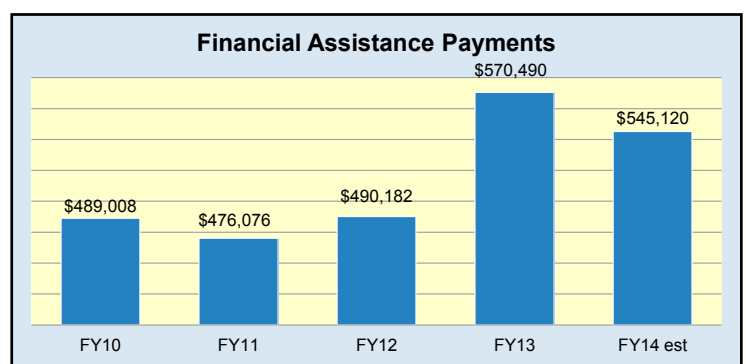
In FY14, the tribe earned \$21M in revenues, spent \$19M to provide programs and services, and saved \$2M that will be invested in future capital projects and tribal development activities.



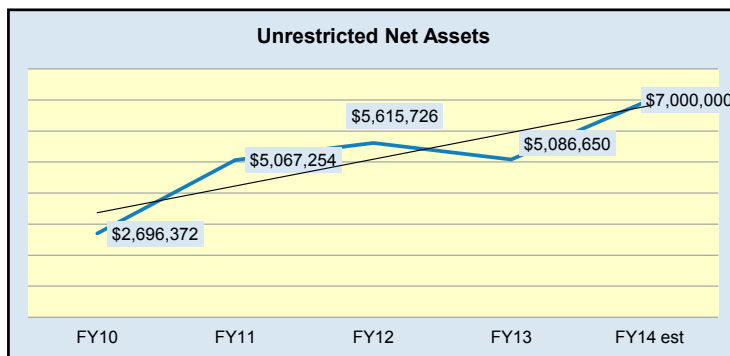
In FY14, about \$13.6M of total operating revenues were from federal, state and private grants. Reimbursements for health services paid by Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance generated about \$6.8M. The balance came from program user fees, donations and interest income.



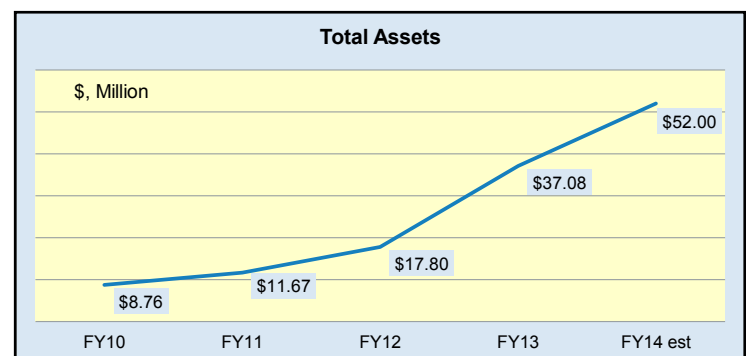
In FY14, about \$15M (79%) of total operating expenses were spent on direct programs and services. The balance was spent on tribal government activities (\$1.7M) and administrative support of programs (\$2.3M).



In FY14, the tribe spent about \$545k on direct payments to customers or their designees to assist with housing, education, training, transportation and emergency needs.



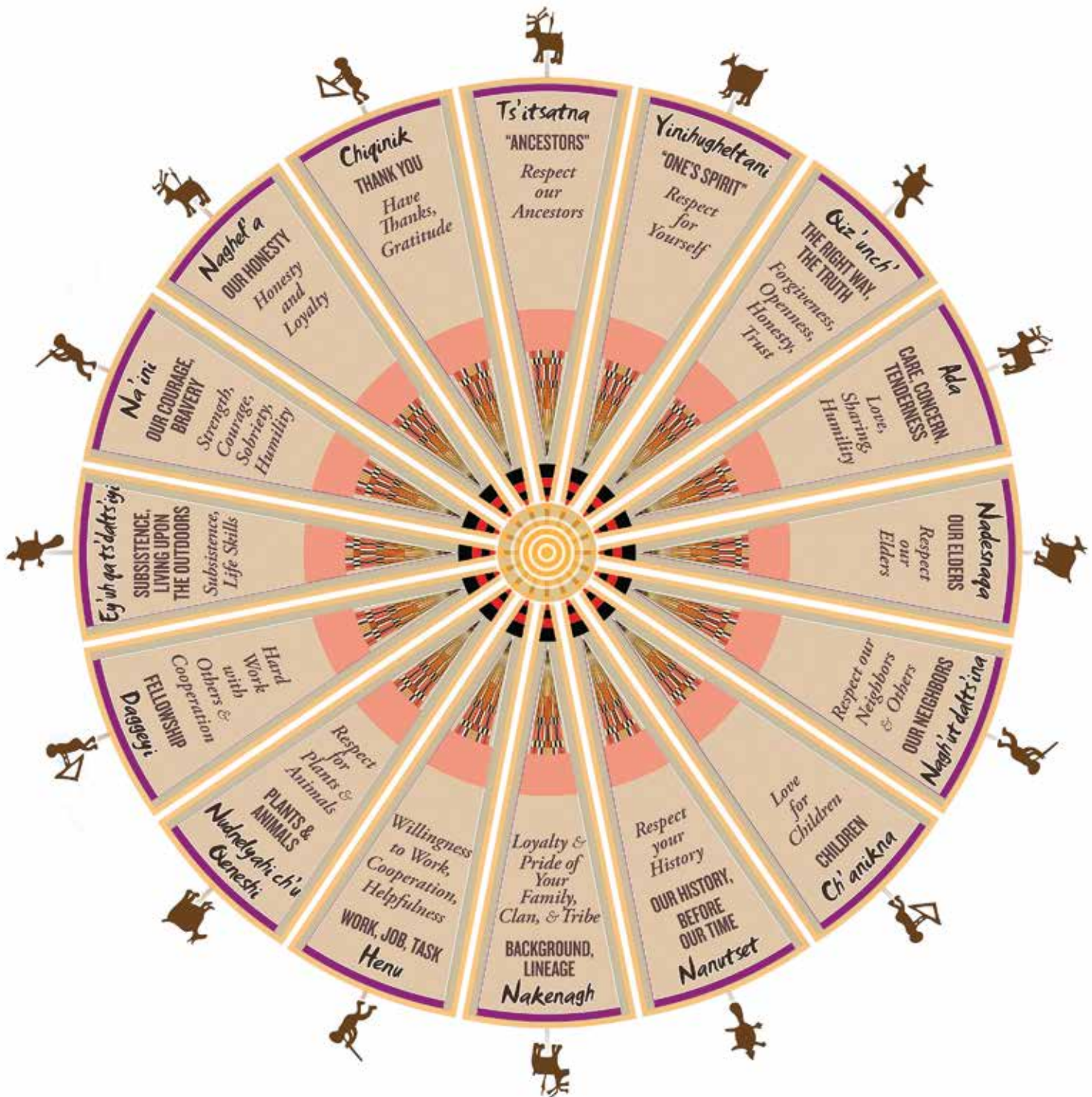
As of the end of FY14, the tribe has accumulated \$7M in unrestricted net assets (savings), which provides a reserve for working capital, equipment replacements, facility improvements and future investments.



Over the past five years, the tribe's assets (cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, and capital assets) have increased substantially. Investments in capital assets (the new Dena'ina Wellness Center and Toyon Villa Apartments) are largely responsible for the overall asset growth.



Kenaitze Indian Tribe Traditional Values



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