

# The Counting Cord

## Nitnuqeyishi



April–May 2016

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE NEWSLETTER

## Browsing the web once more



Above, George Showalter, Aazaiah Barbaza and Ryan Williams carry the tribal net back up the beach with Aazaiah's dad, Art Barbaza, at the conclusion of the opening of the tribal net on May 1.

At right, the Del Dumí Intertribal Drum Group performs during the gathering.



### Educational fishery returns with ceremony and celebration

They danced. They ate. They laughed.

And for the first time this season, they put the net in the water.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe celebrated the official opening of the 2016 Educational Fishery during a gathering May 1 under cloudy skies at the tribal fishery site in Kenai. This is the 28th year the tribe has operated the fishery.

Although no fish came to the net – the fishery crew set and pulled it once – there were plenty of highlights throughout the afternoon.

The Jabila'ina Dance Group and Del Dumí Drum Group both performed. Tribal leaders offered updates about the fishery and emphasized why it's important to the history and future of the tribe. Tyotkas Elder Center staff served up hot dogs and hamburgers for lunch.

"It's been a wonderful gathering," tribal member Doug Boling said. "This is a great thing."

Boling had never attended a celebration of the opening the net. For years, he lived in California and worked on the North Slope, keeping him away.

Recently retired, he now lives in Anchorage and plans to fish the net in June. Boling remembers coming down to the fishery site many years ago and said he's impressed with

See **NET**, p. 3

## Kenaitze helps children spread their creative wings

Some of the area's youngest artists have taken their work to new heights.

The tribe's Environmental Protection Program recently hosted an art workshop at the Kenai Visitors and Cultural Center, offering instruction and encouragement to more than 25 children as they prepared paintings and drawings for the 2016 PEEPS Kids Art and Photo Exhibit. The exhibit, themed

"Birds of the Kenai Peninsula," was part of the 2016 Kenai Peninsula Birding Festival.

"We try to get kids involved in environmental education from different perspectives," said Brenda Trefon, Environmental Protection Program coordinator. "So using art to learn about birds is a great way to gets kids interested and learning."

The children's artwork was

See **BIRDS**, p. 2



Lilac Ann Roehl, 6, works on a painting of a bird during a children's art workshop hosted by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

# NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yaghali du?  
I hope your summer season is off to a great start!  
It was good to see so many of you on the first of May for the annual Opening of the Net. The gathering is an important one for the tribe for so many reasons. It is always good to have the net in the water again.  
Operating the net is one of the most important duties our Tribal Government staff carries out each year. Our 1,634 tribal members have a special relationship with the tribe as Kenaitze citizens. Tribal Government employees work together to support our members. They are tasked with maintaining the work necessary to carry out governmental services to our tribal members.  
Earlier this year, we expanded the Tribal Government staff, all of whom are tribal members, to better meet the needs of tribal members and families.  
I'd like to introduce to you the staff and share with you a little more about what they do to support tribal member needs that span from enrollment, quarterly tribal member meetings, support for Council and Committee meetings, managing the operations of the net and preparing for the Annual Tribal Membership Meeting.  
Kristi Isaak joined us recently as the Tribal Self-Governance Coordinator. She oversees the work of the Tribal Government staff. She also works with my office to plan self-governance strategies and manages associated projects.  
Kami Wright serves as our Tribal Government Specialist. She provides staff support to the Executive Council, and works with me to ensure that the documents and presenters Council members need to make informed decisions are prepared in advance. Kami also coordinates the Gganilchit Dena'ina ("Stand Up Dena'ina") Youth Council.  
Sasha Jackson serves as our Tribal Operations Assistant. She provides administrative support to the Executive Council, as well as staff support to more than a dozen committees that act as advisory groups to Council. Sasha is the tribal enrollment officer. She prepares tribal member applications for review and recommendation by the enrollment committee, and issues certificates of tribal enrollment once they are approved. She also is the point of contact for the tribal fishery calendar.  
Karissa Oder serves as our Enrollment and Records Clerk. She maintains information regarding tribal membership and is the person to contact with member address changes and other updates to member records.  
George Showalter is our Tribal Fishery Coordinator. He oversees the operations and improvements needed to run the Educational Fishery, and coordinates the schedules of Tribal Fishery staff to support tribal members using the net. He is also responsible for maintaining equipment used at the fishery.  
With a special emphasis on tribal governance and tribal member needs, this team works hard to deliver services unique to the membership while partnering with other staff to help us all achieve our Mission — To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.  
I hope you will join me in thanking them for all they do. Chiqinik!



— Jaylene Peterson-Nyren  
Executive Director



Claudia Martinez, 12, titled her watercolor painting "Sleepy Falcon."

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displayed for a week at the visitor's center followed by an awards ceremony where prizes were awarded and participants received certificates for their involvement. The competition, and workshop, were open to children between the ages of 2 and 17.  
At the workshop, 10-year-old tribal member Morgan Lemm painted a black, white and orange puffin. She titled the painting, "Atlantic Puffin" and submitted it in the "watercolor" category for the exhibit.  
Lemm also won a sketchbook in a random drawing at the workshop.  
"I really enjoyed it and I'm glad that I



Morgan Lemm created this Atlantic puffin during the art workshop.

went," Lemm said.  
Additional art produced at the workshop included paintings and drawings of cranes, falcons, eagles, swallows and geese.  
Trefon said the workshop not only was educational but also encouraged children to work together – and teach each other – across different age ranges.  
"It's really great to see the older kids work on their project and inspire the younger kids," she said. "They will take time to help the younger kids at the table and help them sketch something out or teach them how to blend colors."  
And by all accounts, Lemm agreed. "I had a lot of fun," she said.

### Moving soon?

### Please keep in touch

Please keep your contact information current so you don't miss important mailings from the tribe.  
Send updates to:

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### From the editor's desk

The Counting Cord is a publication for members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the tribe's customers.  
Find more information on the tribe's website at [kenaitze.org](http://kenaitze.org) and like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/kenaitze](https://facebook.com/kenaitze).  
For story suggestions or questions about content, contact editor M. Scott Moon at 907-335-7237 or by email at [smoon@kenaitze.org](mailto:smoon@kenaitze.org).

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# NOTE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Hello,

Recently, I have been asked why the Tribal Council has to travel so often and what work gets done on those trips.

The answer to the question is that decisions that directly affect our members and customers are made in meetings that occur all over the country. The best chance we have to influence those decisions is to be present, in the room. When we are there, we are speaking for you and your interests.

The opportunities for us to be heard are increasing. President Obama, by Executive Order, has told all federal agencies that they must engage in self-governance consultations with tribes. With seven months left in the president’s final term, there is a sense of urgency like we have never seen to work with our Alaska Native and American Indian people. We need to show up.

These meetings are where we influence laws and policies that affect our tribe and where we work to secure resources we use to run our programs. We have come far, even in just the last few years. Hard work from your Council and staff have delivered to you new and much needed services like Traditional Healing, Physical Therapy and Pharmacy. While we are happy to offer these services, we are also working to meet the immediate and growing demand. In just the last year, we’ve built a new center for our Elders, purchased space to house



social services close to our other services, and expanded our ability to offer camps and scholarships to tribal families. Our Tribal Court is bringing our people justice. Others are looking to us to learn how we are using values in our court.

Some of you have also questioned why the Council is going to New Zealand this summer to look at the very successful Maori education system. To help keep you informed, the Council sent members a letter in April.

The goals of the visit are to learn how the Maori have developed their own education system and to see how we can use some of their ideas to accomplish our mission to build a tribal education system. Having our own system is the only way we can make sure our language is preserved and that our children learn tribal values.

On the trip, we will see first-hand how the Maori have reestablished themselves. We will also form the relationships we need to accomplish all that we have to do to assure our Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

I will share with you what we learn. Please continue to support your Council as we work on your behalf.

*Rosalie A. Tepp*

— Rosalie A. Tepp  
Tribal Chairperson



Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, right, holds artwork gifted from Tanana Chiefs Conference President/Chairman Victor Joseph, fourth from right, with Council members Audre Gifford, Liisia Blizzard, Wayne Wilson, Bernadine Atchison, Clinton Lageson, Rosalie A. Tepp and Jennifer Showalter Yeoman during the Opening of the Net.

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the improvements the tribe has made.

"They've done a lot with this over the years," he said.

Meanwhile, husband and wife Johnette and Neal Hedrick attended the opening of the net for the third time.

The Hedricks moved to the Kenai/Soldotna area from Homer about three years ago and have enjoyed attending the celebration each year since the move. Johnette is originally from Unalakleet, while Neal is from Port Graham.

The couple also has children who participate in the tribe's Yaghanen Youth Program, competing in the Native Youth Olympics. Johnette said she enjoys attending tribal events.

"I think all the villages should do this," Hedrick said. "It's important."

Keynote speaker Victor Joseph, President and Chairman of the Tanana Chiefs Conference, said he was honored to attend the event. During remarks to the audience, Joseph said it was important for Alaska Native and American Indian people to have an equal voice in decisions made that affect their people and way of life.

He said he studied the history of the tribe before the event and was impressed with the resiliency displayed by Dena’ina people over the years.

"That just really resounded with me," Joseph said. "That's why we are so strong, that's why we have the perseverance we have. That's why we've been able to live on this land since the beginning of time."

Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren offered a fishery update on behalf of the Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission.

Peterson-Nyren said the tribe’s quota of fish is 10,000 in 2016, up from 8,000 in 2015, and that the tribe has been working on a fisheries curriculum that will serve as the core of the permit in the future. She said that the curriculum focuses on ecology, preservation, art and more, and reflects what the fishery means to the tribe and its people.

"It is integral to the value-based system of sharing what the tribe has. It is mindful of need, not want," Peterson-Nyren said. "People learn from the effort put in here when they fish. It educates and orients tribal staff and other to the culture and values of the tribe."

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### Applications being accepted for next school year

The Early Childhood Center is currently accepting applications for the 2016-2017 school year. The program serves families from many different backgrounds, Native and non-Native, low income and not, as well as children with disabilities. Children must be 3 or 4 years old by Sept. 1 to be eligible. The no-fee program operates Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information or to schedule a school tour, please call the school's main line at 907-335-7260 or Sasha Fallon, Community Partnership Coordinator, at 907-335-7259.

### ECC summer school program fills up

The center's summer program, an extension of the curriculum offered to preschool and after-school students during the regular school year, is full.

### Collaborations key to successful year

The center enjoyed many successful collaborations with tribal and community programs throughout the school year. Twice a month, students visited the Tyotkas Elder Center to share lunch with Elders. This activity became something to which students, Elders and staff always looked forward. Thursday Story Nights and Saturday Play Days also were popular. In another partnership, Wells Fargo offered financial literacy training to families of ECC students. Lastly, Alaska Christian College students visited the center to take in skills and techniques modeled by tribal staff. The college requested a cultural exchange and expressed interest in participating in traditional drumming and dancing.

### K'Beq' set to open

The K'Beq' Interpretive Site opens June 2. The site, featuring informational signs, boardwalks and displays depicting Dena'ina history and culture, will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays. Free tours are available and there is a gift shop onsite. The tribe operates K'Beq' in partnership with the Chugach National Forest at Mile 52.6 of the Sterling Highway near Cooper Landing. For additional information, call 907-335-7290.

# To the beach they go



Jazmin Lopez helps her daughter Emily and Emily's friend Angel Johnson as they play in the sand during the Early Childhood Center's year-end picnic.

## Early Childhood Center hosts end-of-year picnic

Andrea Takak gazed at her 5-year-old son as he talked with classmates and munched on a hot dog.

"Before I enrolled him in the school, any time we went to a park or someplace public and there would be other kids, he would turn around and say, 'I don't want to be here. There are too many kids,'" Takak said. "Now whenever we go to the park or someplace public, he says, 'Yay, kids!'"

In May, Takak and son Joseph Smagge attended the Early Childhood Center's end-of-year beach picnic at the tribal fishery in Kenai. About 150 students and family members attended.

The afternoon included fun in the sand, a barbeque lunch and camaraderie among students and families as they marked the end of the 2015-16 Head Start school year and prepared for summer.

For Takak, who attended the event for the first time, it was the culmination of a breakthrough year for her son.

She said she enrolled Joseph in Head Start to prepare him academically for kindergarten, which he will begin this fall, but also to give him exposure to other kids.

"He was really, really shy and I thought putting him in school would help open him up," Takak said.

Mother Jessie Huett, also in attendance, had a similar story.

She was there with her two daughters, 3-year-old Erin and 2-year-old Calliope.



Early Childhood Center students, their families and center staff gather at the tribe's Educational Fishery site on Cook Inlet for the center's year-end picnic on May 12.

It was Erin's first year as a student at the center. And like Joseph, her social skills improved throughout the year.

"Her social involvement with other people and other children, she's just bloomed from this tiny little girl who wouldn't talk to anybody to a social butterfly," Huett said of Erin. "It's really helped."

Teresa Smith, Early Childhood Center Director, said forty-three students will transition into kindergarten next year.

It was fitting to end the year at the fishery, Smith said, because students also go to the fishery when the school year starts. Those visits

help connect the curriculum to Dena'ina culture.

"We try to relate the cultural values and customs," Smith said. "With it being an educational site we do what we can with the preschool-

ers to talk about why we fish and what we use it for and why it matters to take care of our earth and clean up our beaches."



Erin Huett blows bubbles with help from her mother Jessie.

# Recognizing courage and strength

In April, a candlelight vigil honoring those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault drew 25 attendees at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

The event, hosted by the Na'ini Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program, included drumming, prayer and a lighting of candles around Raven Plaza outside the center.

After a moment of silence at Raven Plaza, attendees shared their reasons for coming.

Barbara Waters of the LeeShore Center said she attended to honor her mother, who experienced domestic violence.

"I know that each one of you knows somebody affected by domestic violence or sexual assault, and I know that's why you're here," Waters said. "I commend you for being here."

Na'ini employee Lindsey Anasogak, who helps coordinate the tribe's domestic violence and sexual assault services, said it was an appropriate time to host the event because April was Sexual Assault



People gather at Raven Plaza to remember those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault during an event at the Dena'ina Wellness Center in April.

and Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

She also explained that Na'ini, a Dena'ina word, translates to "cour-

age and bravery."

"We picked that word to recognize the clients who come to us," she said.

For more information about the tribe's domestic violence and sexual assault services, please contact Anasogak at 907-335-7600.

# Court Appointed Special Advocates gain volunteers

Judith Martin spends a lot of time around convicts.

She speaks with them. She listens to them. She studies them.

And she believes many of them have something in common.

"A lot of their stories involve a horrible childhood," said Martin, a probation officer at Spring Creek Correctional Center in Seward. "I get the impression from my guys that if they had support when they were children, then maybe they wouldn't be incarcerated."

Martin was one of four new volunteers sworn into the Kenai Peninsula Court Appointed Special Advocates Program during a ceremony at the Tribal Courthouse in April.

The program, commonly known as "CASA," pairs trained adult volunteers with foster children going through the court system. Volunteers advocate on behalf of the child throughout the court process, getting to know them, attending proceedings and making recommendations in their best interest.

Martin was inspired to join the program due in large part to her job. A correctional officer prior to becoming a probation officer, Martin has devoted her career to working with people facing legal trouble.

Many of the people who pass across Martin's desk, she said, trace their troubles back to a difficult upbringing. They get on the wrong path and have trouble



Jessica Crump, Thia Peters, Stevie Matney, Kenai Superior Court Judge Anna Moran, Kenaitze Tribal Court Chief Judge Kim Sweet and Judith Martin pose for a photo following the ceremony.

## Become a volunteer

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or learning more about Kenai Peninsula CASA, please contact Thia Peters at 907-335-7219.

getting back on track.

"I feel like I can make a lot more of a difference being involved in the beginning," Martin said.

Soldotna resident Stevie Matney, another volunteer sworn in in

April, chose to join the program because her brother and sister went through the foster care system.

Matney said both her brother and sister were severely abused and neglected before they were adopted by Matney's family.

"So it's kind of a giving back for me because if they would have had somebody, their outcomes would have been different," Matney said.

The CASA Program was founded in 2005 under Tribal Court. In 2011, the tribe signed a partnership

with the Office of Public Advocacy making it possible for any child in its territory to receive a CASA volunteer. As part of the agreement, CASA volunteers are dually trained to participate in tribal and state court proceedings.

Kim Sweet, Tribal Court Chief Judge, said there is great demand for CASA volunteers because the court system is full of children needing help.

"My wish is to have a CASA volunteer assigned to every kid in the court system," Sweet said.

Program coordinator Thia Peters and program assistant Jessica Crump also were sworn in at the ceremony in April, giving Kenai Peninsula CASA a total of 12 volunteers.

Peters said volunteers typically take on one case at a time, but sometimes two. Cases can span months to years.

Volunteers go through a rigorous training process before they receive their first case.

Martin called the experience "very intense," saying she learned about state and tribal court processes, how to identifying signs of abuse, and more.

Matney said the training required a lot of homework but also encouraged her to evaluate her own beliefs, history and outlook on life.

"It's been a challenge, but it's been amazing," she said. "There's growth I can identify within myself."

# Yaghali Nusdlan

## *He or she got well*

### Using resources wisely

There are many reasons why it is worth signing up for health insurance

Many Alaska Native and American Indian people now qualify for health insurance through Medicaid, Denali KidCare and the new Health Insurance Marketplace, which was created as part of the Affordable Care Act.

If you don't already have health insurance, you might be wondering, "Should I sign up through the Marketplace?" For Alaska Native and American Indian people, the answer is, "yes," and there are many reasons.

You might also be asking yourself, "Why do I need health insurance if I already have Indian Health Service care at my tribal health clinic?"

The reason is, because the Indian Health Service is not health insurance. It provides many services, but it may not cover all your health care needs.

Another benefit of health insurance is that you can receive access to care when you are on vacation or away from your tribal health facility.

It gives you peace of mind because you'll have more health care options for you and your family.

It also can protect you from unexpected health costs that are not covered by Dena'ina Wellness Center or Purchased and Referred Care.

To sign up or if you have any questions, please contact Joanne Shepard at 907-335-7562 or Annette Schultz at 907-335-7563 in the Billing Department at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.



### Dena'ina Wellness Center uses special tape to ease pain, increase mobility

When Alexandra "Sasha" Lindgren went to the hospital because of lower-body pain so severe she couldn't walk, she faced the possibility of needing a wheelchair.

A torn left meniscus and lymphedema growth under the same knee, plus anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) issues, had left her nearly immobilized.

Compounding those difficulties, Lindgren admits she is overweight.

"You can't lose weight if you can't exercise, and you can't exercise if you can't walk," said Lindgren, a tribal Elder.

But today Lindgren is upright, mobile and – compared to that day in the hospital – feeling much better.

And she attributes the turnaround to something simple.

Kinesio tape.

Staff members at the Dena'ina Wellness Center use the tape to help un'ina – those who come to us – gain strength, increase mobility, reduce pain and swelling, and more. Lindgren was introduced to the tape in December after Paul Carlson, physical therapist at the center, applied it to the problem areas on her body.

It didn't take long for Lindgren, a cancer survivor, to see results.

"It's just been really good for me," she said.

The tape is made of cotton and medical-grade adhesive. It is light, stretchable and waterproof, allowing those who use it to shower, bathe and swim. It is applied over and around areas of discomfort, providing support while protecting muscles and joints.

Carlson recommends getting re-taped about every three to five days. Taking breaks be-

tween tapings can be beneficial as well.

What makes the tape appealing to many people, Lindgren included, is that it's comfortable.

Unlike traditional athletic tape, which is rigid and designed to be tightly wrapped and restrict movement, Kinesio tape allows range of motion to the applied areas.

"It allows you normal movement with protection, which is different than being strapped in and immobilized," Carlson said. "What we are trying to do is help people return to function and heal and be able to move around in their real life because that's what they need."

Some people's skin may react

## Sticking to health



Alexandra "Sasha" Lindgren visits with Physical Therapist Paul Carlson as he affixes strips of Kinesio tape to her left leg at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. Lindgren said the tape has helped her move without pain.

poorly to the tape, Carlson added, in which case they should gently take it off. But for Lindgren, the benefits have been profound.

She estimated that, on any given day, she walks five to six times more than she did prior to using the tape. And now her shoes are two sizes too big because the swelling in her feet has substantially subsided.

Although she occasionally takes Tylenol for pain relief, Lindgren credits the tape for giving her an alternative to prescribed main medication.

"I would be sitting here getting fatter, older and hazier because I'd just be taking pain pills," she said.

Carlson said some staff members in the primary care area are trained to use the tape as well, supporting the tribe's integrated and holistic approach to care.

The tribe also recently hosted a two-day workshop for Dena'ina Wellness staff and members of the surrounding medical community on how to use the tape. Similar sessions will be planned so coaches, parents and community members can learn how to appropriately use the tape.

In the meantime, Carlson looks forward to utilizing it to help un'ina on their path to wellness.

"Get stronger, get healthier, lose weight – those are all things we are trying to help people with," Carlson said.



Kendra Ahlers talks about how the tape is helping her recover from burns. She said it relieves pain that has affected her for two years.



# Counting every step

## Dena’ina Wellness Center offers free pedometers to encourage active lifestyle

How many footsteps will you take this summer?

Whether or not it’s a question you’ve pondered, the Dena’ina Wellness Center can help you discover the answer.

The Wellness Department is providing free pedometers to people interested in tracking their steps. Anyone eligible for services may utilize the devices, as can tribal employees and buddy program participants such as family members.

“It’s about encouraging people to get out and be active,” said Deb Nyquist, Wellness Director.

The lightweight devices clip on to belts and waistbands and feature

a single reset button, making them easy to operate.

The way the program works, participants should track their steps and report them once a week to the Wellness Department. After a week’s steps are recorded, the pedometer is reset for a new week.

Nyquist said the goal is for people to move a little more each week. She encourages participants to wear the device consistently and as much as possible to accurately gauge their progress throughout the summer.

“We want people to wear them all day long so they can see where they are and challenge themselves to make improvements,” Nyquist said.

Walking and running are the most effective activities to tally steps, Nyquist said, but other activities can be good as well. The devices should not be worn in water.

The department began handing out the pedometers in May and will make them available throughout summer. Participants can begin using them at any time.

“People are very, very enthusiastic and they are already beginning to have their friendly competitions,” Nyquist said.

To learn more, please contact the Dena’ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500 or stop by the activities area located on the first floor.

## Registration open for summer camps

Registration is now open for the following summer camps hosted by the tribe:

- June 20-24: Susten Archeology Camp, open to ninth through 12th grades
- June 27-July 1: Susten Archeology Camp, open to ninth through 12th grades
- July 5-8: Janteh Science Camp (day camp), open to first through fifth grades
- July 18-22: Jr. Fish Camp, open to sixth through eighth grades
- July 25-29: Sr. Fish Camp, open to ninth through 12th grades
- Dates will be announced for Harvest Camp and Moose Camp at a later time.

Applications for Susten Camp and Fish Camp are available at the Yaghanen Youth Program office at 35105 K-B Drive, Suite B in Soldotna. Yaghanen can be reached at 907-335-7290. To receive information about Janteh Science Camp, hosted by the Environmental Protection Program, contact Brenda Trefon at 907-398-7933.



## New support group formed: Rise Up and Walk Recovery offers a helping hand

To those suffering, no matter the reason, mark your calendar for 5:30 p.m. Friday.

That’s when the recently formed Rise Up and Walk Recovery Group meets in Room 3 of the Dena’ina Wellness Center.

The group offers support to anyone struggling in life, whether it be with substance use, depression or something else. There is no charge to attend and anyone is welcome. Coffee and light snacks are provided.

The group was formed following a quarterly tribal meeting in December. At the meeting, several people requested a gathering space to host support groups.

“Anybody who has got a problem and is struggling with their life habits – anything they think they

need help with – we are going to try to be there and be there with a helping hand,” said Smokey Poage, who helped spearhead the group.

The group uses the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step recovery program as a model for its meetings, Poage said, emphasizing the third and eleventh steps.

According to AA’s website, Step 3 focuses on turning your life over to God while Step 11 focuses on prayer.

“What we’re trying to do is expand people’s knowledge of what the Bible says about the conscious

contact with God,” Poage said.

Group facilitators change week-to-week to give everyone an equal voice and role. All attendees sign a confidentiality agreement and it’s emphasized that what is said during the meeting, stays in the meeting.

In forming the group, Poage was inspired by the substance abuse problems and suicides he’s seen not just across the Kenai Peninsula but the entire state.

He said he’s seen too many devastating circumstances to sit back idly. And if there’s one thing he wants the group to accomplish, it’s to help people see a brighter future.

“Maybe it’ll be something that saves someone’s life,” Poage said. “If they can get something out of it that will help them get a glimmer of hope, then it’s worth it.”

### Have an idea for a group?

If you or someone you know is interested in forming a supportive group and needs meeting space, please contact the Dena’ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500.

### Get involved

For more information about the Rise Up and Walk Recovery Group, contact Smokey Poage at 907-398-5444.

### Grieve with others

The Loss & Grief Support Group meets at 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the Dena’ina Wellness Center. Anyone can attend. Contact J.W. Myers at 907-335-7517 for more information. If you have questions about the tribe’s Behavioral Health Program or are seeking help, please call the Dena’ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500 during regular business hours or call the 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 877-266-HELP.

# The Big Picture



Youngsters from the Early Childhood Center eat lunch during a field trip to the Educational Fishery site on Cook Inlet. The annual picnic and gathering marks the end of the school year. See story, Page 4.

## Our Mission

To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

## Our Values

These are the beliefs and principles that define our people and will assure our future as a tribe:

**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

## 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.

## Addresses and phone numbers

**Administration Building**  
150 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7200  
907-335-7239 fax

**Early Childhood Center**  
130 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7260

**Tyotkas Elders Center**  
1000 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7280

**Yaghanen Youth Programs**  
35105 K-B Dr., Soldotna, AK 99669  
907-335-7290

**Environmental Program**  
150 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7287

**Dena’ina Wellness Center**  
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7500

**Na’ini Family and Social Services**  
510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7600

**Tribal Court**  
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611  
907-335-7217

**On the Web:** [kenaitze.org](http://kenaitze.org)

**On Facebook:** [facebook.com/kenaitze](https://facebook.com/kenaitze)



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