After years of planning, the tribe has officially opened an optometry program at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. The program, managed by Dr. Will Phillips, began serving un'ina earlier this year.

“I’m excited about the opportunity to start a new program and help provide a much needed service,” Phillips said. “It’s good to be able to provide the service, and there’s definitely a need for it.”

The program offers examinations, contact lens fitting, disease management, special testing, and surgical referrals. Phillips said there are two common conditions that affect eyesight – diabetes and glaucoma – that he can help treat. Glasses are not currently offered in-house, but Phillips said they might be added in the future.

“We’re working on it, but we don’t know how that will take shape,” he said. “There are still a lot of things we are going to figure out.”

The program does offer Medicaid eyewear, giving un’ina access to a basic set of frames that the Alaska Medicaid Program uses. The tribe verifies that the un’ina is eligible and electronically orders glasses through the official Medicaid provider.

Most appointments will last between 30 and 45 minutes, Phillips said, and un’ina are encouraged to bring any glasses or contact lenses they wear. Appointments

Judging wellness

Joint-jurisdiction state-tribal therapeutic court begins serving participants

The Henu’ Community Wellness Court, a joint-jurisdiction state-tribal therapeutic court aimed at addressing the issue of substance abuse across the Kenai Peninsula, is officially open. The court began hearing cases this past winter and currently has multiple participants.

“We’re literally learning new things every day,” said Terri Telkamp, project coordinator.

The court is a partnership between the tribe and Alaska Court System that allows a tribal judge and state court judge to oversee cases together and sit beside each other during hearings. It is modeled off similar courts that have been successful in the Lower 48.

The court takes a whole-person approach toward rehabilitation, offering mental health counseling, substance use treatment and other services aimed at addressing the root causes of a person’s substance use issues. It is structured to be demanding and hold participants accountable, yet offer incentives for success. Random alcohol and drug tests are a key component, and each participant is assigned
2

NOTE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yaghali du? How is it with you?
I’m happy to write that we continue
operating from a position of both
abundance and competitive strength.
We have the funds we need to continue
offering the services we have been
providing, and continue to save for the
future.

From the largest grant, to the smallest
donation, the tribe’s 300 employees work
to make sure our resources are
utilized to serve the needs of our
people. Stewardship – the respectful use
of land, resources and all creations – is one of the tribe’s
highest values.

As we consider stewardship of our
resources, and to better understand
where we need to invest time and assets
now and in the future, we just recently
completed a comprehensive needs
data survey. Chiqinik – thank you – to those of
you who took time to answer the survey’s
questions. We are in the process of
evaluating the results to ensure we have in
place the programs we need to meet your
needs.

One opportunity we are moving forward
with is the expansion of Early Head Start
services for our families. In March, the
tribe received a new $1.4 million grant
to expand the services we already are
providing. Just as we did to build the
Dena’ina Wellness Center, we are working to
strengthen and grow partnerships within the
community to allow us to fully utilize
this new funding source.

As we discuss our community needs,
we are going to focus on what is real. We
know what our needs are and will continue
our tireless efforts to assure that the
Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

Happy spring!

Chiqinik.

— Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director

Learn more
For additional information about the Henu’
Community Wellness Court, please contact
the Tribal Courthouse at 907-335-7217
or Terri Telkamp at 907-283-8552.

Early Childhood Center enrollment applications available
old by Sept. 1, 2017, 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 center’s main line
at 907-335-7260.

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:
Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Attn: Sasha Jackson
P.O. Box 988
Kenai, AK 99611
sjackson@kenaitze.org
907-335-7202

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 and like us on
Facebook at 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.
Note from the Council Chairperson

Hello and chiqinik for your continued support!

The past few months continue to be busy for your Council and myself. It seems there is not a day that we are not working on things to help improve our people and community.

I would like to keep you up to date on some of the things that we have been working on.

We held a quarterly tribal meeting to explain changes to the Constitution being recommended. Out of this meeting several questions and concerns were expressed that are being considered, such as having one Tribal Council member and one tribal member on the Bureau of Indian Affairs committee that will be working on changes. This will ensure better accountability for who oversees our election process once the BIA is no longer part of it, improve trust and transparency, and provide a clear timeline on how this process works.

We also discussed fishing guidelines for this summer. Some questions that emerged were around how our Elders would be getting fish, how the proxy fishing works, and how fish from the Elder Fish Day are dispersed. Thank you to all the tribal members who came to this meeting to discuss these issues and for providing feedback on how we can better meet your needs.

The Council has recently passed a Fisheries Permit Holder Policy that outlines many of the concerns brought up at the meeting. This can be accessed through the Tribal Government office. Tribal members are encouraged to have their ID cards available at the fish site. Our tribe has grown much in recent years and we don’t always recognize each other! I hope we can all get to know each other more while spending time at the beach and remembering the stories of our Elders in how they relied on fish. We are blessed to live in such a beautiful place that we are not always aware that health care is available to all beneficiaries and that people are getting the services they need. We are blessed with what we have and what we are able to do for others. My heart goes out to others around the state who are fighting to have an appropriate facility to have health care services provided. Others are unable to get health care providers at all, while some areas are blessed with many of their youth choosing to go to school, become doctors and other health care professionals, and who come back to their communities to provide services to their people. We can all learn from each other and it is nice to come together and proudly provide a high level of health care to our people.

We continue work on the goal of increasing the number of tribal members employed at the tribe. Recruitment efforts for summer and full-time positions are still underway.

In our tribal internship programs, our youth are able to work for the tribe and get an opportunity to train in workplace settings they might be interested in pursuing in the future. These programs help encourage our youth and guide them to make good choices while they try new things to better their future. If you see a youth working for the tribe, please take the time to thank them and ask them what their future plans are!

I would like to again encourage tribal members to come to Council and committee meetings to voice your concerns and also to let us know what you like. If you are unable to come to the meetings, writing a letter to us is also a good route. A quick way to accomplish this is to fill out a “Chiqinik Card” available at each of our facilities. The cards are also a good way to thank an employee who has gone the extra mile for you.

Chiqinik!

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Tribal Council Chairperson
Top-notch competition – and sportsmanship

Native Youth Olympics Invitational marks 5 years with the Peninsula Winter Games

When he was called to the stage during an awards ceremony at the 2017 Native Youth Olympics Invitational, Joseph Whittom didn’t believe his ears.

“When they called my name, I was super surprised. I was like, wait, did they say that right? I was amazed,” Whittom recalled.

“When I went up there, I wasn’t smiling at first and my mom looked at me and was like, ‘smile,’ and then I was OK.”

Whittom, 12, earned the Male Sportsmanship Award at the fifth-annual NYO invitational, which the tribe hosted in January as part of the 2017 Peninsula Winter Games. Allie Toloff of the Qutekcak team earned the Female Sportsmanship Award, while Chickaloon won the Team Sportsmanship Award. Coaches and officials vote on the awards.

The invite, spanning three days, featured competitive events such as the one-foot high kick, arm pull, seal hop and stick pull as about 150 youth athletes competed in junior and senior divisions. Teams from across the Kenai Peninsula and beyond competed.

Although records fell and the competition was stiff, those who participated agreed being a good sport was more important than winning and losing.

“It’s all about sportsmanship and beating your own personal best,” Whittom said. “Everybody helps out everybody.”

Whittom, a sixth-grader at Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School, began participating in NYO about three years ago.

His favorite events include the one-foot high kick, Eskimo stick pull, Indian stick pull, arm pull and Alaskan high kick. Competing in the junior boys division, Whittom placed first in the Alaskan high kick, arm pull, Eskimo stick pull and seal hop.

But throughout the competition, his priority was supporting fellow competitors.

“I was encouraging other kids to beat their personal bests and giving them some tips on what to do,” Whittom said.

Judah Eason, 14, competed in the senior division for the Ninilchik team and has participated in NYO for six or seven years.

Like Whittom, Eason also posted impressive results, placing first in the one-foot high kick, Alaskan high kick, Eskimo stick pull and scissor broad jump.

But he, too, relished the support and camaraderie among athletes as much as winning.

“These events are awesome, the cultural aspects, the social aspects – everyone coming together,” Eason said. “I think it’s great that there is a sport where everyone helps each other.”

Tanner Fry, 15, participated for the first time as a member of the Chickaloon team.

Fry, who learned of NYO through his brother, had about a month of practice before his debut. He admitted he wasn’t sure what to expect as a first-time participant, but walked away with a positive experience and plans to participate again. The Eskimo stick pull and Alaskan high kick were the events he most enjoyed.

“Amazing,” Fry said of the experience. “Great support from everybody.”

Yaghanen program administrator Michael Bernard, who has helped coordinate the event the past five years, said more athletes competed this year than ever before.

Because the event was open to the public, a few new people also expressed interest in joining Yaghanen.

“The event went really well,” Bernard said, adding that it was rewarding to see a Kenaitze athlete earn a sportsmanship award. “It’s one of the top three awards that those kids could walk away with.”
One-foot high kick
Junior girls
1. Emilie Wilson, Kenai, 47 inches; 2. Lydia Alverts, Chickaloon, 46 inches; 3. Robin Cronin, Seward, 40 inches; 4. Leila Kell, Chickaloon, 40 inches; 5. Morgan Lemm, Kenai, 52 inches.

Senior boys

Senior girls

Senior boys

One-hand reach
Senior girls

Senior boys

Two-foot high kick
Junior girls

Senior girls
1. Julianne Wilson, Kenai, 73 inches; 2. Kya Ahlers, Kenai, 57 inches (1 miss); 3. Misty May Agoff, Chickaloon, 57 inches (2 misses); 4. Trillum Kell, Chickaloon, 50 inches; 5. Auna Reed-Lewis, Kenai, 48 inches.

Senior boys

Alaskan high kick
Junior girls
1. Leila Kell, Chickaloon, 58 inches; 2. Emilie Wilson, Kenai, 44 inches; 3. Alexia Richard, Ninilchik, 44 inches; 4. Robin Cronin, Seward, 44 inches; 5. Angel Anderson, Kenai, 44 inches.

Junior boys

Senior girls

Senior boys

Arm pull
Junior girls

Junior boys

Senior girls

Senior boys

Knee jump
Junior girls

Junior boys

Senior girls

Senior boys

Scissor Broad Jump
Junior girls
1. Leila Kell, Chickaloon, 19 feet, 3 inches; 2. Lydia Alverts, Chickaloon, 18 feet, 11 inches; 3. Kylies Rickard, Ninilchik, 18 feet, 8 inches; 4. Alexa Richard, Ninilchik, 16 feet, 7 ½ inches; 5. Robin Cronin, Seward, 18 feet, ½ inch.

Junior boys
1. Ceoey Allen, Ninilchik, 20 feet, 6 inches; 2. Seth Strange, Mirror Lake, 19 feet, 9 ½ inches; 3. Joe Whitтом, Kenai, 19 feet, 4 ¼ inches; 4. Isaiah Kruo, Chickaloon, 18 feet, 5 ½ inches; 5. Rylan Krege, Ninilchik, 17 feet, 11 inches.

Senior girls
1. Julianne Wilson, Kenai, 26 feet, 9 ½ inches; 2. Allie Toloff, Seward, 23 feet, 3 ½ inches; 3. Tierra McGovern, Redington Junior/Senior High, 22 feet, ½ inch; 4. Auna Reed-Lewis, Chickaloon, 21 feet, 10 ½ inches; 5. Trillum Kell, Chickaloon, 21 feet, 5 inches.

Senior boys

Seal hop
Junior girls

Junior boys

Wrist carry
Junior girls (in seconds)

Junior boys (in seconds)

Senior girls
1. Savanna Wilson, Kenai, 55 feet, 3 inches; 2. Misty May Agoff, Chickaloon, 29 feet; 3. Auna Reed-Lewis, Chickaloon, 14 feet, 8 inches; 4. Trillum Kell, Chickaloon, 11 feet, 2 feet; 5. Hanna Wilson, Kenai, 7 feet, 5 inches.

Senior boys
CHAMP, from p. 1
get information out there about things that are happening to Alaska communities.”
Indians were invited to Washington D.C. in February for a series of recognition events and to meet with members of the Senate and House of Representatives as well as other political figures. They also received a one-year term on the Center for Native Youth Advisory Board.
Throughout the year, program participants are invited to share their perspectives at conferences, meetings and other speaking engagements. They stay connected through video conferences once every two months.
“We created the Champions for Change program to recognize young Native Americans who, by their work, are inspiring hope in Indian Country,” said Byron Dorgan, Founder of the Center for Native American Youth. “Each of the young leaders chosen this year has a remarkable story of leadership that has touched and inspired other young people in their communities.”
Schimmel has been focusing on two issues that he says are affecting many tribal communities across Alaska: climate change and food subsidies.
The visit to the Capitol was a success, Schimmel said, because he established connections with influential political figures and leaders in the tribal community.
“It was nice. I was able to get my message across about the issues that are important to us,” Schimmel said. “It was no different than meeting with any of our Elders. They are people who are wanting to help you.”
Schimmel spends each summer visiting family and friends in both Kenai and the village of Gambell on Saint Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. He is the great-grandson of Fiocla Wilson, who was the oldest living Kenaitze Elder before she died in 2016 at the age of 100.
An avid hunter and fisherman, Schimmel believes that far-north communities such as Gambell are being negatively affected by warming oceans and melting sea ice. Subsistence hunting and fishing are an important part of life and tradition on the island, he said, and relied upon to feed families.
Schimmel has seen firsthand what shrinking ice does to sea animal populations.
“One of the direct affects we see is that they have nowhere to go,” Schimmel said. “Without our ice, we are ending up with less walrus.”
The Champions for Change program isn’t the first time Schimmel has been noticed for his work.
In summer 2016, he interned with the Smithsonian Institute’s Museum of Natural History. During the internship, he worked on a slide collection of biological and botanical research on Saint Lawrence Island.
Through his efforts advocating for communities such as Gambell, Schimmel also has met an array of Alaska politicians – including Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Sen. Dan Sullivan and Rep. Don Young.
With plans to study political science or international affairs in college, Schimmel hopes to carve out a career representing tribal communities in government or law.
And no matter which direction he goes, he won’t forget his people along the way.
“Losing or not having tradition leaves an empty space that gets filled too often with poor choices,” Schimmel said. “If we are listening to our Elders, dancing, drumming, hunting, and picking berries, we are not drinking or doing drugs, and our traditions stay strong.”

OPTOMETRY, from p. 1
are available from about 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.
Phillips, who joined the tribe in 2016, previously worked in private practice in Texas as well as with the United States Army as a civilian employee at Fort Sill in Oklahoma. He attended Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, before studying at the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago, Ill.
He encouraged un’ina to schedule annual check-ups, even if their eyes are seemingly healthy.
“It’s really about prevention,” Phillips said. “Eyes are something that if they aren’t causing you issues, they are off the radar. But it’s really important to stay on top of it.”
Phillips’ ‘team’ completed more than 100 eye exams in February and he said he is happy to be serving un’ina and looks forward to growing the new program.
“It’s satisfying to put everything together,” Phillips said. “The tribe has been great to work with.”
To make an appointment or receive additional information, please call the Den’a’ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500.

Susan Wells, left, speaks April 29 during a meeting to discuss resolutions passed by the Council regarding herself and Mary Ann Mills.
Custom Seafood Processors Inc is seeking Alaska Native artists who would like to sell their artwork. The artwork will be sold on consignment in the gift shop of the processor’s facility, which is located along the Kenai Spur Highway in Soldotna. The processing business serves more than 1,000 recreational fishermen, tourists and visitors each summer. Many of the processor’s customers live in the Lower 48 and enjoy returning home with Alaska-themed gifts.
Artists interested in selling their work or learning more are encouraged to contact Pam at 907-262-9691. Custom Seafood Processors is owned by Kahtnaht’ana Development Corp., a federally chartered business corporation wholly owned by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.
Some were there for the candy. Others came for the prizes. But to many, the best part was the company. On a sunny Saturday afternoon in April, the tribe hosted its annual children’s Easter party at Mountain View Elementary School in Kenai. The event, put on in partnership with Salamatof Native Association, attracted more than 100 people who enjoyed lunch, bike giveaways, egg hunts – and quality time with their loved ones.

“It’s a family thing,” said Peggy Brown, who is enrolled with the Salamatof tribe. “We get to see other tribal members. We feel like one big family and we are all interacting with each other.”

Brown, a Kenai resident, participated in the event for the fifth time. She attended with three grandchildren – Zohni Tiepelman-Sours, 12; Brooklynne Erlich, 10; and Jody O’Hara-Sours, 4.

In addition to coming together to celebrate the holiday, each of Brown’s grandchildren enjoyed the event for different reasons. For Zohni, no single aspect of the gathering was any better than the others. She said it was simply nice to participate. For Brooklynne, the best part was the hunt for candy-filled eggs. And for Jody, the youngest of the bunch, one of the highlights was seeing friends.

“Kids these days should be outside, a little less screen time, especially in the summer time,” said Kaarlo Wik, Chairman of the Board at Salamatof. “This is our contribution to get kids outside and get some exercise and have fun riding bikes like I did growing up.”

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Tribal Council Chairperson for Kenaitze, said the party was a great family event. She also thanked Salamatof for contributing to the Easter party and for its support of the tribe’s “100 Books for a Bike” program, which rewards Early Childhood Center students with new bikes for reaching reading goals.

“All of our kids have benefited from that in many, many ways – whether it’s from literacy or it’s getting on a bike and getting that clean exercise going on,” Showalter Yeoman said. “This is a lot of fun for all of our families.”

Back out on the playground, as her grandchildren stood beside her holding buckets of plastic eggs, Brown said she appreciated the efforts of event organizers and looked forward to attending again in the future.

“We just want to thank the organizers and the volunteers,” she said. “They made it a lot of fun for these kids. It’s a good way to start the celebration of summer.”
Tribe begins new suicide prevention project

With an emphasis on awareness and prevention, the tribe has launched a new program aimed at reducing suicide rates across the community.

The program is named Yin-huhgeltaani – meaning “one’s spirit” – and operates as part of the Behavioral Health Program at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. It is funded by a five-year grant from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

Although the effort is in its early stages, project leaders have started shaping a framework for the program.

A 12-member advisory group made up of tribal and community members was formed to help set goals and priorities. Project leaders completed a community readiness assessment in which community members were interviewed about their views on suicide. The program also hosted a gathering in February that included drumming, snacks and time around the fire, with suicide awareness and prevention information made available to attendees.

Project coordinator and tribal member Audre Gifford said the tribe has lost some of its members to suicide and that the issue affects the entire community. She hopes the new program encourages people to get involved, but also appreciates that suicide can be a difficult topic to discuss.

“I think it’s important to know that it’s a problem in our community and that we need to talk about it,” Gifford said. “What I really encourage people to do is reach out.”

To learn more about the new program, please contact Gifford at agifford@kenaitze.org or call the Dena'ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500.

Dena'ina Wellness Center offers a mix of tobacco cessation resources

Quitting tobacco can be difficult, and frustrating, but support is available if you’re willing to try.

That was the message Dena'ina Wellness Center health care professionals conveyed in February when the tribe participated in “Through with Chew Week,” a nationwide effort aimed at reducing the use of smokeless tobacco and raising awareness about its dangers.

Throughout the promotion, free tobacco quit kits were made available at the Dena'ina Wellness Center – and 91 were distributed.

Deb Nyquist, Director of Wellness, said she hoped that anyone considering quitting understood at least two things:

“That their overall health will improve, and we have direct services available.”

The Wellness Department delivers an array of tobacco cessation services. The department offers two types of tobacco quit kits – one targeting cigarette use and another targeting smokeless tobacco use – that are available year-round. It also has tobacco cessation specialists on staff who offer assistance to those interested in living a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Another good resource, Nyquist said, is the Alaska Tobacco Quit Line. The line offers many resources, including online coaching, tobacco information and nicotine replacement starter kits.

Tobacco use, Nyquist added, affects people of all ages and walks of life.

“We work with 18-year-olds all the way up to Elders,” she said.

“It’s really a range.”

According to the Peninsula Smokefree Partnership, which helped organize “Through with Chew Week” efforts on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska adult use of smokeless tobacco ranged from 4 to 6 percent from 1996 through 2015. Youth smokeless tobacco use declined from 16 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2015.

Jenny Olendorff, Peninsula Smokefree Partnership program coordinator, said it’s important for people to understand the dangers of using tobacco.

“The use of smokeless tobacco, including chewing tobacco, is a serious problem in Alaska,” Olendorff said. “Smokeless tobacco has serious health effects and is not a safe alternative to cigarettes.”

Mouth cancer self-screening tips

One danger of smokeless tobacco use is mouth cancer, which can be deadly. Chances of recovery greatly improve when the disease is discovered early. Help protect yourself by completing these self-examinations on a monthly basis:

Face and neck

Look in the mirror. Do both sides of your face and neck look the same? Gently press your jawbone to feel for lumps.

Lips and gums

Pull down your lower lip. Are there white or red patches or sores that bleed easily? Are there any signs of irritation, like tenderness, burning or a sore that will not heal? Look very carefully at where you place your tobacco. Do you see color changes or rough areas? Squeeze your lip and cheek between your fingers. Are there bumps or soreness?

Roof of the mouth

Tilt your head back and open wide. Do you see any discoloration, sores, bumps or swelling?

Floor of the mouth

Put the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth. With one finger, press around the floor of your mouth. Do you see sores, bumps or swelling?

Tongue

Stick your tongue out. Grab it with a clean piece of cloth or paper towel. Move your tongue from side to side. Do you see any color changes or bumps?

Call it quits

The Alaska Tobacco Quit Line can be reached at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or at www.alaskaquitline.com.
After she had visited each booth and filled her bag with an array of items promoting good health, the woman thought about her parents.

“My mother died of lung cancer and my father died of colon cancer,” she said. “It really hits home.”

Isabel C., who requested that her full last name be omitted for privacy reasons, was among those who attended a health fair at the De-na’ina Wellness Center in March. The event, hosted by the tribe in partnership with Southcentral Foundation, included displays and activities as visitors learned about cancer prevention, healthy lifestyle choices and more.

There was an appearance by “Nolan the Colon,” an inflatable replica of the human colon used to raise awareness about colorectal cancer and the importance of screening.

Alaska Native and American Indian people experience high rates of colorectal cancer, making it important to get screened and make healthy lifestyle choices.

For Isabel, who was born in Alaska and recently returned to the state after living in Arizona, the fair helped her better understand the disease. She also received information about heart disease, picked up healthy recipes focusing on whole-grained foods, and learned healthy and safe ways to cook meat.

By the end of the fair, she had accrued an assortment of pamphlets and brochures and planned on reading them when she got home. She said it’s getting more important that she pay attention to her health as she ages.

“You’re not like Superwoman anymore. You’re a retired one,” she said. “You’ve got to learn the growing old pains.”

Another attendee, Cecil Anowlic, who frequently participates in activities at the Tyotkas Elder Center, also learned a lot.

He discovered tips for preventing bad cholesterol and came away appreciating the importance of eating a balanced diet.

What might have been most surprising, he said, was learning how much sugar is in certain soda and energy drinks.

“Back then, we didn’t have that kind of stuff,” Anowlic said of his earlier years.

This was the third consecutive year the tribe partnered with Southcentral Foundation to host the event, which was free to attend. The event covered a range of health issues.

There was a fitness booth where visitors learned about the importance of exercise. There was a beading activity dedicated to breast and cervical cancer. There was a dental station complete with oral health information.

Also available was information about the tribe’s suicide prevention program, food security and sovereignty, and family and social services, among others.

“We are promoting the whole scope of things here,” said Deb Nyquist, Director of Wellness.
As a foreign exchange student attending Kenai Central High School for the past six months, Jen Almosawi has been living thousands of miles away from her family and friends. But she felt right at home during a recent visit to the tribe’s Dena’ina Wellness Center.

Almosawi, who lives in Bahrain, and about a dozen other high school students participated in a job shadow event at the center in February. “Job Shadow Day,” in its 23rd year, was organized by the Kenai Chamber of Commerce to give students hands-on experience in career areas of their choice. Dozens of area businesses and organizations participated in the 2017 event, which was open specifically to juniors at Kenai Central High School.

“It was a fantastic and amazing opportunity. I learned a lot, a lot, a lot about it, and I’m so happy I got to do it,” Almosawi said. “I feel like it narrowed down my choices for college and now I feel like I’m even more passionate about what I want to do. I feel like it’s the right job for me.”

Almosawi, who arrived to Alaska for me,” Almosawi said. “I feel about it, and I’m so happy I got to do it,” Almosawi said. “I feel like it narrowed down my choices for college and now I feel like I’m even more passionate about what I want to do. I feel like it’s the right job for me.”

Almosawi, who arrived to Alaska for a recent visit to the tribe’s Dena’ina Wellness Center.

Yaghanen children receive fire extinguisher training

Two at a time, they stepped forward and toed the line.

“One … Two … Three … Four …”

“Hurry, hurry!”

That’s the sequence that played out on a recent afternoon at the Yaghanen Youth Center as about 15 youngsters took turns racing against the clock. Except on this day, the goal wasn’t to cross a finish line – it was to extinguish fire.

That the flames were simulated did not matter.

“I’m trying to instruct them that fire extinguishers aren’t toys, that they’re tools, and how to properly use the tools so they can potentially save their parents lives in the event of a home fire – or themselves or a pet or anyone at any point in time in their life,” said trainer Jason Bailey, the tribe’s safety coordinator.

Bailey used a fire-simulating machine – which displayed flames on a digital screen – to teach participants how to hold and operate fire extinguishers. Working in teams of two, participants clutched life-size extinguishers that were connected to the simulator through a laser. When they took aim at the flames, the fire shrank or grew depending on how accurate teams were with their extinguishers.

Lathan Petersen, 12, had never used a fire extinguisher before he completed the training. In addition to learning how to properly hold and aim them, he gained a better understanding of a fire extinguisher’s capabilities.

“I thought they lasted longer than they actually do,” said Peterson, a sixth-grader at Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School.

Peterson teamed with fellow student Joe Whitton to extinguish a blaze in about 4 seconds, though the duo was quick to point out that Bailey set the simulator to “easy” rather than a more difficult setting.

For Peterson, it was useful training because he expects to be home alone more often as he gets older and will take on added responsibility.

“If there’s a fire, I’m going to have to be the one to put it out,” he said.

William Wilson, a fifth-grader at Kalifornsky Beach Elementary, said it was fun using the extinguishers.

Although he has never come face-to-face with a serious blaze, he agreed it’s important to know what to do if the situation occurs.

Fire extinguisher safety tips

It’s appropriate to use a portable extinguisher if:

- The fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket
- The fire is not growing
- Everyone has exited the building
- The fire department has been called or is being called
- The room is not filled with smoke

To operate a fire extinguisher:

- Pull the pin
- Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism
- Aim low, pointing the extinguisher at the base of the fire
- Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly
- Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side

But his most important takeaway?

“If the fire extinguisher isn’t working, run,” he said.

The event was part of a larger effort by Bailey to train the tribe’s entire workforce on fire safety and fire extinguisher use. Bailey also has offered training at community outreach events, taking an educational approach.

His goal is to train as many people as he can in hopes that it makes a difference for someone.

As for his experience at Yaghanen, Bailey said the children embraced his message.

“They are very receptive,” he said. “Kids love learning new things, so any time you can put something in front of them, they are all about it. I think it plays to the children very well.”
Cooking with Kenaitze: Heart-healthy snacks

Three recipes to support your cardiovascular wellness

BLUEBERRY (TS’IGEK’A) MUFFINS

**Ingredients**
- 1 ½ cups, plus 1 tablespoon, white whole-wheat flour, divided
- ½ cup old fashioned rolled oats
- ½ cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, non-fat milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries (do not thaw if frozen)

**Directions**
Place rack in center of oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Lightly coat a standard muffin tin with cooking spray or line with paper liners; coat liners with cooking spray. Set aside. In large mixing bowl, stir together 1 ½ cups flour, rolled oats, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. In separate bowl, whisk together milk, butter, eggs and vanilla. Make a well in center of dry ingredients and add wet ingredients to the well; carefully stir by hand until blended. Gently toss blueberries with remaining flour and fold into batter, leaving excess flour in bottom of bowl. Divide batter between prepared muffin cups. Bake 16 to 20 minutes until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from oven and let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

RED SALMON (K’O’UYA) SALAD

**Ingredients**
- 6-7 ounce can red salmon
- 2 medium green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoon organic hummus or light mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 medium stalk of celery, diced
- Hot sauce to taste (optional)

**Directions**
Drain salmon and flake with fork. Mix in all remaining ingredients. Chill until ready to serve.

HUMMUS

**Ingredients**
- 1 clove garlic
- 19 ounce can garbanzo beans, half the liquid reserved
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Black pepper to taste

**Directions**
Chop garlic using a blender. Pour in garbanzo beans, reserving 1 tablespoon for garnish. Place lemon juice, tahini, chopped garlic and salt in blender. Blend until creamy and well mixed. Transfer mixture to medium serving bowl. Sprinkle with pepper and pour olive oil over top. Garnish with reserved garbanzo beans.

SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE
Chiqinik to the Wellness Department for submitting these recipes. Have a recipe to share? Email it to M. Scott Moon at smoon@kenaitze.org

Blueberry (ts’igek’a) muffins can be a tasty addition to a heart-healthy diet.
The Big Picture

Kids scramble at the start of an egg hunt at the annual Easter Party at Mountain View Elementary School. See more on p. 7.

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
  888-335-8865 fax

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

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

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

- Environmental Program
  1106 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
  907-398-7933

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

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

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

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