

Children start summer in style



Children play under a tarp during the Early Childhood Center's picnic on the Cook Inlet Beach.

Annual picnic wraps up the school year

The Early Childhood Center hosted an end-of-year beach picnic at the tribal fishery site in May, welcoming about 150 people for an afternoon of food, music and fun in the sand as the 2016-17 school year officially drew to a close.

The event, open to students and their family members, included a barbeque lunch as well as a performance by the Del Dumi Drum Group. But not before dozens of students between the ages of 3 and 5 spent time building sandcastles, splashing on the shoreline and even flying kites.

"Kids love the beach, right?" said parent Troy Mack as his

See **PICNIC**, p. 2

All rise: Court grand opening draws crowd

A grand opening celebration for the Henu' Community Wellness Court drew a standing-room only crowd outside the Kenaitze Tribal Courthouse in June. Afterward, a hearing open to the public occurred next door at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Henu' is a joint-jurisdictional healing-to-wellness court operated in partnership between the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and Alaska State Court, serving offenders who face legal trouble stemming from substance use. It is Alaska's first joint-jurisdiction court operated in partnership between a tribe and the state.

The court takes a rehabilitative rather than punitive approach, giving participants resources to get to the root of their issues. When accepted into the program,

participants gain access to behavioral health treatment, transportation assistance, housing assistance, and more. The program is voluntary but intense, taking at least 18 months to complete. "Instead of incarcerating somebody for several years, we try to fix them by providing lots and lots of services and lots and lots of encouragement," said Anna Moran of the Kenai Superior Court.

Under the court structure, Kenaitze Chief Tribal Judge Kim Sweet and Moran oversee cases together and sit beside each other during hearings. If offenders successfully complete the program, which includes everything from drug tests to creating a life plan to working with a probation officer, their jail sentencing can be reduced or even removed altogether.



Chief Judge Kimberley Sweet, Kenaitze Tribal Court, and Judge Anna Moran, Kenai Superior Court, offer encouragement to participants enrolled in the Henu' Community Wellness Court during a court session held after the court's grand opening in June. Henu' is a joint-jurisdictional healing-to-wellness court operated by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and Alaska State Court.

The model is designed to set people up for long-term success, which could help reduce recidivism rates.

Tribal Elder Eli Darien enrolled in the court on March 8, 2017, after struggling with addiction following the death of his wife in 2002.

"I was pretty heavily into getting high," Darien said.

Previous attempts to quit using

drugs, especially marijuana, had been unsuccessful. On probation with the state, and struggling to stay sober, he chose to try the Henu' court.

At the time of this interview, he had been sober 110 days.

"It really works," Darien said. "People that knew me before in my drug addiction, they couldn't believe that."

See **HENU'**, p. 2

PICNIC, from p. 1

3-year-old son, Link, scooped handfuls of sand.

The Mack family, from Soldotna, learned of the Early Childhood Center through word of mouth. The picnic marked the end of their child’s first year in the program. Husband Troy and wife Marisa agreed that the curriculum helped Link both academically and socially.

Marisa said Link’s confidence and behavior improved and that her son, who she described as shy, became more comfortable talking to others as the year progressed.

“He went into the year not really talking much, and I can’t get him to keep his mouth shut now,” she said, laughing.

Marisa said Link benefited from the center’s daily routine – which includes breakfast and lunch in

HENU’, from p. 1

In remarks during the grand opening ceremony, Sweet shared the Dena’ina story of “Nant’ina.”

As the story goes, Nant’ina is an evil figure who creeps into villages under the cover of fog and inflicts pain and misery on anyone it can.

Today, Sweet said, Nant’ina appears across the community in the form of drugs and alcohol.

“The appearance of our land has changed – roads, malls, asphalt and concrete,” Sweet said. “Nant’ina has changed too. No longer an outcast, he is found in our homes, the places we go for companionship, our family gatherings.”

The establishment of Henu’ is a step toward defeating Nant’ina, added Sweet, who is a tribal member.

The event’s keynote speaker, Judge Korey Wahwassuck of the State of Minnesota Ninth Judicial District Court, was a founding member of the nation’s first joint-jurisdictional, state-tribal wellness court. The court is located in Minnesota.

Wahwassuck helped the tribe and state in the planning of Henu’ and said it was an honor to participate and see the court become reality.

When she helped establish the court in Min-

Contact Henu’
To learn more about the Henu’ Community Wellness Court, please call the tribe at 907-335-7233.

nesota, in the early 2000s, drugs and alcohol were ravaging the community. But recidivism rates have since gone down.

“We just knew that justice as usual was not working,” Wahwassuck said. “We knew that if we worked together good things would come and lives could be saved.”

addition to classwork – so much so that she and Troy plan on enrolling their younger child, Cabela, into the program next year.

In the meantime, Link will participate in the center’s summer program.

“We had a great experience,” Troy said.

Up the beach from the Mack family, another young student dug in the sand.

Although Brody T. struggled to spell his full last name, the 5-year-old said he was enjoying the beach. His favorite part was playing near the water and finding rocks. Brody also built a sandcastle he described as “big.”

As for the classroom, the youngster said his favorite book is “Hungry Caterpillar” and that he prefers the color blue to all others.

For 6-year-old Scarlet Charbonneau, one of the best parts of summer is getting to ride her bike at Captain Cook State Recreation Area in Nikiski.

Don’t blame her if she’s even more excited than usual for this summer.

In May, Charbonneau was among 25 Early Childhood Center students who received a new bicycle for completing the center’s “100 Books for a Bike” program.

“I’m mostly excited to ride it and play on it and have fun,” Charbonneau said.

The program challenges students to read 100 books at their reading level during the school year. Those who meet the goal earn a certificate of achievement along with a new set of wheels before summer begins.

Salamatof Native Association contributed the bikes to this year’s program.

“These guys are setting the goals and working for it,” said Charmaine Lundy, the tribe’s Alaska Native education coordinator. “It builds confidence, competence and resiliency – and that’s a life-long skill.”

This was the third year the center offered the program. Lundy, who came up with the idea, said it

Brody also has a favorite teacher. “I love Miss Andy,” he said.

Also attending the picnic was Dr. Laura Anderson, a professor of education at Lee University in Tennessee.

For the past 13 years, Anderson has been bringing students to Kenai and other parts of Alaska on cultural exchanges. This year, 12 students participated.

Anderson said that visiting the tribe gives her students, who are aspiring teachers, unique exposure to new forms of music, language and tradition.

“This has really been a great opportunity for them to learn about the customs and about the groups in the Dena’ina area with the Athabascan subculture,” Anderson said. “It’s helped to build their understanding.”

Students improve their literacy, of course, but they also learn to set, work toward and achieve goals.

Those abilities, Lundy said, help prepare students for long-term success in and out of the classroom.

“Resilient people have solid goals, and a desire to achieve those goals,” Lundy said. “These children took on the challenge in the fall, maintained commitment throughout the year and seized personal control of this proposed goal.”

Charbonneau, the 6-year-old, read 110 books. She said her favorite was “The Cat and Dog” because it was funny and cool.

And in completing the challenge, she gained more than just a new bike.

Meanwhile, as the drum beat and staff prepared lunch, Early Childhood Center administrator Teresa Smith reflected on the school year. She said the center experienced many highlights, including helping students transition from preschool to kindergarten, earning a large program grant, maintaining enrollment, and receiving strong parent participation, among others.

Smith said visiting the tribal fishery is a perfect way to end the school year because it brings people together and connects students to the land.

“It means a lot for us to be able to come down here and do this, for all of our families and all of our kids, because we are all one people,” Smith said. “We are just very blessed that the tribe has this and we are able to use it.”

Beatrice Sagoonick, a parent with two children who completed the challenge, said it helped keep them motivated.

Sagoonick’s 9-year-old daughter Cora Sagoonick read 120 books, while 6-year-old son Jaxon Sagoonick finished 125.

“I think it was a great incentive for them to keep reading,” Beatrice Sagoonick said. “It encouraged them to keep going.”

Meanwhile, Lundy said she was proud of all the children who completed the challenge.

She also pointed out that two recipients chose to give away their bikes, donating them to peers.

“That’s the spirit of this group of kids,” Lundy said.

Turning pages and pedals

Early Childhood Center rewards students for completing “100 Books for a Bike” program



Jessica Segura helps Starla Oskolkoff ride the new bike she received for reading 100 books at the Early Childhood Center.

NOTE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

It's a busy time for the tribe as we continue to work to improve the lives of our people and the community. Here are a few areas Tribal Council has been addressing in recent months:

Educational Fishery

Our Educational Fishery continues to thrive. Everyone is excited to fill their smokehouse, freezer and salt buckets! This year we are authorized to harvest 10,000 fish. As of July 13, we had harvested 2,409 fish – 2,369 reds, 21 pinks, 17 kings and two silvers. As a reminder, according to the recently updated fishery permit policy, you must be a Kenaitze or Salamatof tribal member residing in Alaska and at least 18 years old to hold a permit. Additionally, discharging firearms on the site is prohibited. Instead, our new policy states: "The Tribal Harvest Program Manager shall be authorized to discharge firearms under the authority of the subsistence permit as issued by the Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission." This is to ensure the safety of all people fishing the net. If you have questions, please contact the Tribal Government Department at 907-335-7200 or attend a Hunting, Fishing, Gathering Commission meeting.

Tribal Government

The Tribal Government Department is working on a number of updates that will benefit tribal members. We have hired a special contractor to help identify areas of potential improvement and offer guidance on how to most efficiently make those improvements. We have amazing tribal members already employed at the tribe and hope to find a few more. If you are interested in working for your tribe, please contact the Human Resources Department at 907-335-7200!

Sterling Highway Project

Many of you are aware of a years-long effort to reroute a section of the Sterling Highway between Mile 45 and Mile 60 near Cooper Landing. The Federal Highway Administration and the Alaska Department of Transportation have, after some 35 years of studies, selected a preferred route called the G South Alternative. The tribe strongly opposes the selection and instead supports the selection of the Juneau Creek Alternative. Our tribe is joined in this view by the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the cities of Kenai and Homer, Cook Inlet Region Inc. and nearly all other key stakeholders in our region. We are working vigorously to advance our preferred route in order to better protect Kahtnu (the Kenai River), and in order to better protect the tribe's cultural resources.

Focus on youth

We are focusing on how we can prepare our youth to be future leaders. Our Daggeyi Internship Program currently has five enrolled interns. The program offers assessments helping youth



discover their strengths and weaknesses as they think about future education and career aspirations. Interns receive training on public speaking, customer service, time management, problem solving, and positive peer mentorship, among others. Interns also set goals such as saving money, building credit, buying a car, getting good grades, completing college prep and going to college. This program is a wonderful way we can support our youth and build our community. I can't wait to see how this program continues to grow in the future.

Dena'ina Language and Culture

Last year the Tribal Council approved funding for the Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project. Tribal member Joel Isaak is working on this effort and has had some amazing projects occur. Some of these include offering sewing kits with language lessons at the Dena'ina Wellness Center; recording language segments at KDLL public radio for use soon; conducting a Ya Ne Dah Ah language teaching exchange in Chickaloon; participating in a history conference at Kenai Peninsula College; participating in the opening of the net ceremony; and meeting with the commissioner of education for the state of Alaska to work on options for opening a tribal school.

Fourth of July Parade

For the first time in many years, the tribe entered a float in Kenai's 4th of July Parade. Not only was it a beautiful day for a parade, but our float earned a first-place award!

Housing

In June 2015, the tribe addressed a huge housing need by acquiring the Toyon Villa apartments in Old Town Kenai. Although the building is dated, originally built in 1967, it provides 32 units under one roof and is located adjacent to our Old Town campus. The tribe has since renovated over half the units, updating the flooring, painting and appliances, and remodeling bathrooms and kitchens. We are currently renting to five tribal families and five other Alaska Native families. Additionally, we are looking into the feasibility of transforming some of the ground floor units into Elder-accessible apartments. This would offer convenient access to the Tyotkas Elder Center and Dena'ina Wellness Center. For questions about housing, please call our administration office at 907-335-7200.

I hope you are having a great summer and I look forward to seeing and hearing from you in the coming days! Chiqinik!

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Tribal Council Chairperson

TRIBAL COUNCIL

Jennifer Showalter
Yeoman
Chairperson
jyeoman@kenaitze.org



Wayne Wilson
Vice Chairperson
wwilson@kenaitze.org



Liisia Blizzard
Secretary
lblizzard@kenaitze.org



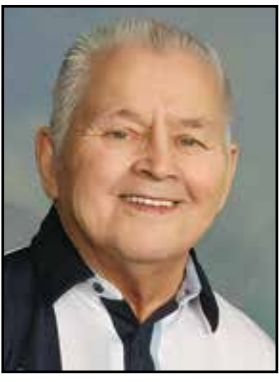
Clinton Lageson
Treasurer
clageson@kenaitze.org



Bernadine Atchison
Council Member
batchison@kenaitze.org



James O. Segura
Council Member
jsegura@kenaitze.org



Diana Zirul
Council Member
dzirul@kenaitze.org



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: Jessica Crump
P.O. Box 988
Kenai, AK 99611

jcrump@kenaitze.org
907-335-7204

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.



Tribe celebrates fishery opener

Families, friends come together for day-long festivities

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe officially opened the 2017 Educational Fishery on May 1, welcoming scores of tribal members to the fishery site in Kenai for a day-long celebration that included food, music, dancing and time around the fire.

It's the 28th year the tribe has operated the fishery along the shores of Cook Inlet, Tikahtnu, near the mouth of the Kenai River. No salmon came to the net, but that didn't dampen the mood on the season's opening day.

"This tribal fishery has given us much more than fish," Tribal Council secretary Liisia Blizzard said. "We have reconnected with our culture, our identity, and we have pride in our heritage. We are teaching our children our language, songs, dance and values of our ancestors."

Under late-morning, overcast skies, the event began with remarks from tribal leadership.

Jim Segura, Chairman of the Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission, provided an overview of new fishery policies and procedures while introducing the staff members who will manage the site this summer. Segura said the tribe is authorized to fish one net through June and four nets in July. The tribe's quota is 10,000 fish for the season, he added.

Tribal Council Chairperson Jennifer Showalter Yeoman welcomed attendees and thanked past and present tribal leaders for advocating for the tribal fishery, which the tribe began operating in 1989.

"This is a dream of all of our Elders to be able to fish together," Showalter Yeoman said.

Highlights early in the day also included a prayer from Elder Linda Ross as well as a performance by tribal members Joel Isaak and Jasmine Koster, who sang a duet of a song called, "Dena'ina Qenaga."

After lunch was served, families spent time around the fire, children played in the sand and the fishery crew prepped the net. The evening included drumming by Heartbeat of Mother Earth and a performance



The fire was a popular stop during the opening of the net.



The Jabila'ina Dancers perform during the opening of the net on May 1. The annual event featured music, dancing and good food.

by the Jabila'ina Dance Group, which is made up of Yaghanen Youth Program participants.

From Elders to youth, those who attended enjoyed the day for different reasons.

Mountain View Elementary School fourth-grader Robert Hayes, 10, said he appreciated spending time with his friends and family and meeting new people.

Hayes wasn't sure how many net openers he had attended in the past, but he looked forward to fishing with his family this summer. To Hayes, the net is important not for what it gives him but for what it provides for others.

"Elders can have fun and get some food," Hayes said.

Friend William Wilson, 11, who attends Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School and participates in the Yaghanen Youth Program, also spends time at the net with his family each summer. What Wilson looks forward to most, he said, is the anticipation of catching fish – staying up late, waking up early, waiting for the tide, and pulling the net out of the water.



A banquet full of food options was available during the potluck.

But for Wilson, the highlight of opening day was dancing with the Jabila'ina Dance Group.

"It's fun and we laughed a lot," he said.

Meanwhile, for others, it was their first time attending the celebration.

Early Childhood Center employee Josie Oliva, attending for the first time, said it wasn't until last summer when she worked at the

K'Beq' Interpretive Site in Cooper Landing that she learned the tribal fishery existed.

She enjoyed many different aspects of the celebration.

"The food, seeing people I know, seeing the kids have fun, and watching everybody dance," Oliva said of the highlights.

Another first-time attendee was Catherine Wolk, an anthropology student at Kenai Peninsula College.

Wolk, who was born in Soldotna and raised in Kasilof, grew up set-net fishing with her family and carried those experiences into adulthood. For Wolk, being at the tribal fishery brought back fond memories of childhood.

"It was really important, it was a lot of fun and we got a lot of fish," she said. "It was a time for everyone to meet up at least once a year."

Visit the net

To schedule a tide or learn more about this year's fishery policies, please contact the Tribal Government office at 907-335-7200.



Jarrett Wilson and Gage Moto help install trusses in a cabin they helped build during the Construction Academy camp for youth earlier this summer. The camp was a partnership between the tribe and Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

Of culture and construction

Yaghanen Youth Program hosts Construction Academy Camp in partnership with school district

On a gray morning along the banks of the upper Kenai River, the sound of thumping hammers and buzzing saws broke the silence.

All four walls were up, the floor had been installed, and painting was underway. Now it was time to install windows and secure trusses for the roof.

“Let’s go with it this way!” one worker said to another.

A group of area high schoolers recently participated in Construction Academy Camp hosted by the tribe’s Yaghanen Youth Program in partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. The five-day camp, in its second year, taught students construction skills while incorporating activities relevant to Dena’ina culture and history. Those who completed the camp earned half a credit toward graduation.

Campers slept in cabins at Spirit Lake before heading to the



construction site each morning at the tribe’s K’Beq’ Interpretive Site in Cooper Landing. Their job was to build a 16-foot-by-24-foot shed to store tribal supplies. The school district provided the equipment and materials.

For Cheyenne Juliussen, 13, the best part of camp was seeing the project come together. An incoming freshman at Kenai Central High School, she chose to attend primarily to earn school credit.

Despite having limited construction experience – she once helped her sister’s boyfriend build a three-level tree house – Juliussen said it was a smooth process constructing the shed.

“There were some parts of the floor where we had a little trouble,

but we figured it out,” she said.

Tatihana DeHoyos, 14, going into ninth grade at Soldotna Prep School, said she couldn’t pick a favorite part of camp because she enjoyed the whole experience.

The biggest project she had worked on prior to camp was helping put an addition on her family’s house.

At camp, DeHoyos learned how to install a floor and run a miter saw – skills she will carry forward in life.

“Maybe you’re going to have to build something when you get older,” DeHoyos said.

In addition to the shed project, campers also worked on projects at Spirit Lake. They made moccasins out of moose skin, hand drums and



Above, Construction Academy campers had a view of the Kenai Mountains near Cooper Landing as they worked at K’Beq’.

At left, Tatihana DeHoyos, Katrina Conaway and youth tutor Zach Kudla install a window in the cabin built at the K’beq’ Cultural Site during the Construction Academy.

even constructed bunk beds. Time around the fire, games and plenty of food rounded out the experience.

Michael Bernard, Yaghanen Youth Program administrator, said the combination of Dena’ina culture and general construction skills made the camp unique but also practical.

“The skills that they are learning out here this week could possibly lead them into an apprenticeship or entry-level construction job or even allow them to build their own home,” Bernard said. “We’re teaching safety, we’re teaching teamwork, how to use the tools properly, and they are getting a good idea of the labor involved.”

Making each bead count

Yaghanen students embrace Dena’ina history, culture with counting cords

Strands of little red beads are growing longer by the day inside the Yaghanen Youth Center.

They dangle from a wall near the entrance of the building, some running halfway to the floor, others all the way. Many are freckled with blue dots, and almost all have a few knots.

“They are all unique, just like the kids,” said Sandy Wilson, Yaghanen youth advocate.

Each day when children arrive, one of the first things they do is add a bead to their personal counting cord. Red beads indicate attendance, while blue beads are earned through significant achievements or good behavior. The beads slide directly onto the cord, which is made of string.

For program staff, the cords are a good way to keep attendance and reward participants. But they also are used to help youth understand the historical and cultural

significance of counting cords to the Dena’ina people, who have used them for thousands of years to track time and key events.

“It’s kind of a basic representation of a traditional calendar,” said Michael Bernard, Yaghanen Youth Program administrator. “For these guys, it’s a way of introducing them to the culture.”

Yaghanen has intermittently used counting cords to track attendance and highlight key achievements over the past 10 years, but program leaders made a renewed effort to incorporate them into daily activities at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year.

Denali Bernard, one of the older



Hannah Ellis pins her counting cord to the wall at Yaghanen Youth Center after adding the day’s attendance bead.

children enrolled in Yaghanen, said she began adding beads to her cord early on this past school year and that it soon became part of her normal routine.

She wasn’t sure how many beads were on her cord.

“Every day you come here, you put a bead on the counting cord and they help you count how many days you’ve been here,” she said. “If you want to go to a meet, they help you see if you can go.”

Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School student Taylor Whittom, 9, estimated she had about 30 beads

on her cord.

Her favorite color is red, yet she most looks forward to earning blue beads.

“I like getting the special beads because it makes it colorful,” Whittom said.

Last winter, some of the cords were even attached to a tribal banner that athletes carried during the Native Youth Olympics Senior Invitational in Anchorage. Each athlete who competed had a chance to fasten their cord to the banner.

“It’s definitely unique,” Michael Bernard said.

Candlelight vigil honors those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault

Thirty years ago, on Alaska’s largest island, Linda Ross began her healing journey.

Ross was attending a women’s conference on Kodiak Island, where she lived at the time, when a woman from Texas stepped to the podium. Speaking to the audience, the woman described experiencing severe sexual and physical abuse during her childhood and as a Holocaust survivor.

It proved to be a life-changing message for Ross, a tribal Elder.

“When I sat in that audience and heard her tell her story, it terrified me that somebody would openly talk about something like that. I almost felt like I should slink down in my chair and hide myself because, who would talk about it like that so openly?” Ross said. “It started me thinking, and I felt like now as a result of that, God put his thumb on me and said, ‘OK, now you can look at this issue. Now you can begin to look at it.’”

“And so I began a healing journey.”

Ross, who was sexually abused as a child and raped as an adult, shared her own story during a

candlelight vigil the tribe hosted at the Dena’ina Wellness Center in April. The vigil, which drew about 30 attendees, honored victims of violence in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

After the conference on Kodiak Island, Ross began seeing a counselor. Over time, she became more comfortable discussing her abuse and how it affected her. She has since dedicated much of her life to working with victims of abuse, including Alaska Native and American Indian women.

Ross, a mother of four and grandmother of 13, delivered a message of healing and hope.

“I know how harmful it is and how it has impacted my life for many, many years,” she said.

In Alaska, 47 percent of adult women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, according to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Additionally, the council reports, more than one in three Alaska Native or American Indian women will be raped in their lifetime.

Stacy Larion, a victim advocate for the tribe’s Domestic Violence

and Sexual Assault Program, which offers a range of victim services, said violence can affect anyone, anywhere.

She encouraged people to reach out for support.

“If you are someone who is a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, or if you know someone, send them our way,” Larion said. “We want to help, and we want to raise awareness, and we want to be there for you.”

Lucy Daniels, the tribe’s education coordinator who previously served as a victim advocate, also attended the event.

She, too, emphasized the importance of addressing the issue of sexual assault and domestic violence, lauding those who have built up the courage to find support.

“The bravest women are the ones who come to us for help,” Daniels said.

After Ross spoke, attendees moved outside and stood in a circle around the fire pit at Raven’s Plaza. Each person held a lit candle during a moment of silence.

Attendees also had a chance to share with the group why they chose to attend and who they were

there to honor. The list included mothers, friends, siblings, and more.

“It’s something that touches the lives and hearts of so many people,” Larion said.

If someone you know is being harmed

- Listen to and believe their story
- Keep information confidential
- Let them know they are not to blame for the violence
- Tell them they are not alone
- Support them
- Allow them to make their own decisions
- Make sure they understand that they have choices

Reach out

The tribe’s Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Program serves women, men and children. To contact the program, please call 907-335-7600.

Setting them up for success

Interns receive career advice and more during four-day orientation

Cover letters. Resumes. Reference checks.

Those were just a few of the topics a group of tribal interns learned about to kick off summer.

In June, the Education and Career Development Department hosted a four-day orientation for youth participating in tribal internship programs. The tribe offers two internship programs – one called Daggeyi and another through the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act.

The orientation was a partnership between the tribe, Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Alaska Job Center. Interns gained information about everything from team building to communication to work ethics to customer services, and more.

“We hadn’t done anything like this before, so it’s exciting to see the interns doing so well,” said Misty Klodt, Daggeyi program supervisor.

Over the first two days, participants worked closely with Camai Cassey, a youth coordinator who helps prepare students for internships with CITC in Anchorage. Cassey gave participants tips on workplace etiquette, ethics, team building, budgeting and professionalism, among others.

On the third day, interns listened to a presentation by Jason Warfle of the Alaska Job Network. Warfle, an employment services technician at the job center in Kenai, gave tips on writing resumes and cover letters while offering general career advice.

When writing a cover letter and

resume, he emphasized the importance of focusing on employer needs and describing how those needs can be met.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining a good reputation.

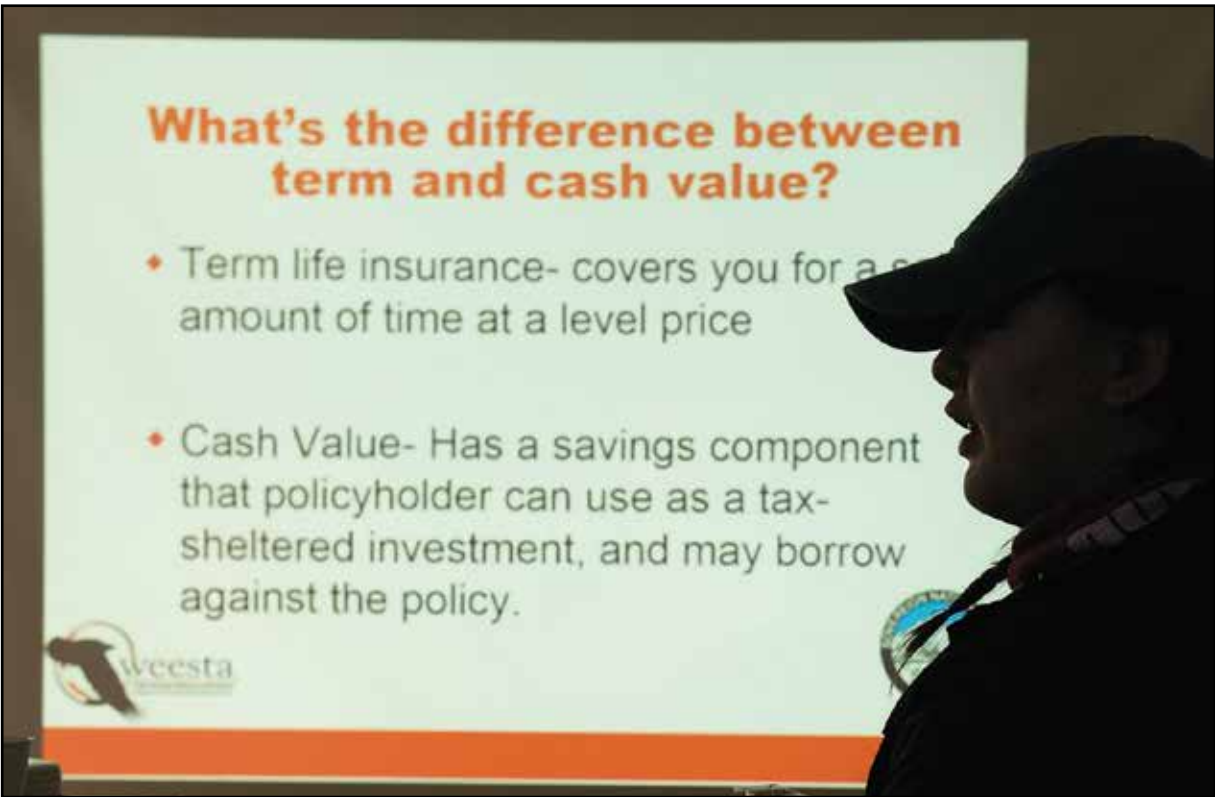
“To have positive relationships with everybody they meet because the people we come into contact with might play a big role in the future in our jobs or other, so those positive relationships are super important,” Warfle said.

After Warfle’s presentation, interns took quizzes that identified potential career matches based on their personalities and interests. Later that day, they received a tour of the job center.

Some participants also began setting career goals.

“I want to get a job next year when I’m 15,” said participant Levi Rickard.

Intern Mirissa Green said she most enjoyed the team-building activities over the first couple days, but that she would remember the



Nadia Walluk asks a question during a discussion about life insurance in a financial literacy course offered to tribal interns and others interested in managing their money.

career advice and apply it in the future.

“We can use it, and say, ‘OK this is what I learned,’” Green said. “And it will help you be more professional when you’re older.”

On the fourth and final day, the group traveled to the tribe’s K’Beq’ Interpretive Site in Cooper Landing before visiting Kenai Lake for a scavenger hunt, lunch and nature walk.



Tribes hosts youth finance course

The tribe also recently hosted a three-day course to help youth become financially savvy.

The course, hosted by tribal employees, covered a wide range of topics, including credit management, budgeting and insurance. “Everything was a surprise,” said Cheyenne Wilson, who will begin 10th grade this fall at Kenai Central High School. “I didn’t really know a lot about any of it.”

Course instructors shared personal stories – successes and setbacks – to help participants understand the importance of financial management.

The group also discussed

seemingly minor expenses such as ATM fees or gourmet coffees, but how those costs add up over time.

“What I want them to learn is that you need to be aware of the money coming in and the money coming out,” said Elizabeth Kleweno, social services specialist.

Participant Haley Trefon said she’s at a point in her life where she needs to understand finances – both for short-term and long-term planning.

“Just learning how important having good credit is and building it,” she said. “That’s the most important thing for me right now.”

K’Beq’ site opens for summer

The tribe’s K’Beq’ Interpretive Site, which includes informational displays depicting Dena’ina history and culture, is open for the summer. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday until Sept. 3. Admission is free. Walking tours are available. The site also includes a gift shop. K’Beq’ is located at Mile 52.6 of the Sterling Highway in Cooper Landing. The tribe operates it in partnership with Chugach National Forest. For more info, please call 907-335-7290.

At right, Gideon Collver and Ruby Willoya-Williams are helping visitors at the tribe’s K’Beq’ Cultural Site this year.





Mushroom hunters found several handfuls of the delicious edibles, even though the outing was early in the season.

A walk through the woods

Tribal Harvest Program takes group on a search for fresh morel mushrooms

As a child, one of Sharon Tyone's favorite activities was going on foraging trips with her grandmother. Together they gathered leaves, wild rice, wild celery, wild potatoes, and more, wandering for miles across the Alaska tundra.

Tyone is an Elder now, but she recently got to go foraging again, this time for something different – morel mushrooms.

"Love it," she said of the experience. "Would do it again."

In late May, the tribe's Wildlife Harvest Program hosted a day trip to hunt morel mushrooms near Sterling. The harvest program, which the tribe launched this past spring and is still under development, promotes traditional and ethical methods of harvesting wild resources, among other efforts.

In April, the program offered free kits for people interested in tapping fresh sap out of birch trees, something Dena'ina people have done for many years.

The morel-picking excursion was another effort to promote the Dena'ina way of life while

encouraging tribal and community members to embrace wild harvesting.

"It's great to grab a grocery bag and go shopping in the woods," said Micah Johnson, the program manager, who led the trip.

On this day, the group trekked across rolling hills in a wooded area ravaged by wildfire two years ago. Morels thrive in burn areas, Johnson said, and often appear in large clusters.

The hunting proved difficult as members of the group slowly navigated soot-covered trees, scanning the ground. Many of the morels the group encountered were small – the trip occurred early in the mushroom season – and there were no big patches to be found.

Another challenge was deciphering between edible morels and "false morels," which are poisonous. The false morels on this excursion were reddish-brown in color, featuring large caps with a brain-like appearance. The true morels, on the other hand, were hollow and pointier with the cap fused to the stem.

Despite the challenges, everyone



Audre Gifford, Jasmine Koster and Sharon Tyone search for morel mushrooms earlier this summer during a tribal outing through forest burned in last year's Card Street fire.

on the trip found a few good morels.

Tyone planned on preparing her mushrooms in butter and garlic. She considered the trip a success because she achieved her two primary goals in going.

"The exercise and to find mushrooms," she said.

Miranda Boehmler, a tribal member and employee, agreed that

a great way to prepare morels is to sauté them in butter and garlic. She likes serving them with steak and in pasta.

For Boehmler, a mother of young children, an appeal of morel picking is that it's relaxing.

"Being out there is my outlet for peace," she said.

Passing down the knowledge

Tribal Elder leads salmon smoking workshop in partnership with suicide prevention program

With an ulu in her right hand and a salmon filet under her left, Mary Lou Bottorff leaned forward and slid the blade toward the fish’s tail. A thin strip of meat, the length of a ruler, peeled away from the slab.

“You get better leverage with an ulu than a long knife,” Bottorff said. “Always cut from the head end of the fish toward the tail.”

About 15 people huddled around the wooden table, covered in burlap, as the tribal Elder neatly cut filet after filet into dozens of strips. Between slices, she slashed the ulu across a smooth rock sitting



Mary Lou Bottorff, in grey at center, shows participants how to cut salmon into strips for smoking during a Yinihugheltani workshop at the tribal fishery in June. Grass on the cutting board serves the same purpose as the burlap - to keep the fillets from sliding as they are cut.

to anyone interested in attending. The goal was to teach attendees traditional methods of preparing salmon for the smoker.

Bottorff processed her first salmon at the age of 8 when she was an orphan at the Holy Cross Mission

- of tips:
- When cutting the meat, slice from the head of the fish toward the tail
 - When putting the meat up to dry, hang it vertically with the tail end of the fish up
 - Soak the first batch of fish in brine for 25 minutes, and add five minutes for each additional batch
 - After brining, hang the fish to dry until a glaze appears over the meat
 - A “cold” smoke requires more smoking time than a “hard” smoke
- Working alongside Bottorff, participants had a chance to cut fish, place it in the brine and hang it to dry. Those who attended called the demonstration a great learning experience.

Ensley, attended because she doesn’t have much experience processing fish and wanted to learn. It was only the second tribal event Ensley had attended but now she plans on attending more.

The best part of the demonstration, she said, was getting hands-on experience.

“Mary Lou was really sweet,” Ensley said. “It was really cool to learn from an Elder that has been doing this pretty much her whole life now, learning from somebody who already knows the tricks of the trade and everything, and then teaching youth.”

And Bottorff was happy to share her knowledge.

“I need to pass it down,” she said. “It needs to be passed on.”



Mary Lou Bottorff offers pickled salmon to Julianne Wilson and other participants to sample during of the workshop.

atop the table. Soon the strips went into a bucket of brine, where they would soak for precisely 25 minutes before hanging to dry.

Bottorff, 77, led a salmon smoking demonstration in partnership with the tribe’s suicide prevention program, Yinihugheltani, at the tribal fishery site in June. The event catered toward tribal and community youth but was open

along the Yukon River.

In those days, Bottorff remembers, it was not unusual for her and the other orphans to clean 500 king salmon a day.

“It was up to us kids to do all the cutting, stripping, hanging,” she said.

On this afternoon, Bottorff was preparing sockeye or “red” salmon for the smoker and offered a range

Youth tribal member Jasmine Koster was impressed that Bottorff didn’t use exact measurements when creating the brine – choosing instead to dip her finger into the liquid and lick it for taste before adding more ingredients.

Koster, who is enrolled in college and currently working as a language apprentice for the tribe, said it’s important for youth to learn from tribal Elders so traditions can be passed down to future generations.

It’s important to honor peoples’ journey that they’ve gone through over the course of their life by coming out and listening to them,” she said.

Koster’s friend, Marianne

Get involved

The tribe’s suicide prevention program, Yinihugheltani, which organized the salmon smoking workshop, continues to offer a range of opportunities for youth to get involved. The program has been hosting youth hikes each Friday this summer. It also hosted a “Two Spirit Celebration” in recognition of Gay Pride Month in June. The program aims to raise awareness around the issue of suicide across the community. For more information or to get involved, please call Audre Gifford at 907-335-7335.

Yaghali Nusdlan

He or she got well



From the ground up



Low bush cranberries, also known as lingonberries or by their Dena’ina name hey gek’a, are among the many edibles growing across Yaghanen.

Dena’ina Plants as Food and Medicine Conference planned

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe will host the 2017 Dena’ina Plants as Food and Medicine Conference Sept. 16-17 at the Dena’ina Wellness Center in Kenai.

The event, a partnership between the tribe and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, will promote traditional plant

knowledge, ethical harvesting and more.

Highlights will include demonstrations, workshops and special presentations around the theme Nudnelyahi Qudulyi, meaning “that which grows medicine.”

Participants will gain traditional plant knowledge, and have a chance to embrace values of responsible stewardship of Alaska’s lands, waters, flora and fauna. The event also will explore the history, traditions and values of the Dena’ina people while highlighting their rich lifeway and belief systems.



DENA’INA PLANTS AS FOOD AND MEDICINE CONFERENCE

NUDNELYAHI QUDULYI ♦ THAT WHICH GROWS MEDICINE

Dena’ina Plants as Food and Medicine Conference

Dates: Sept. 16 and 17
Location: Dena’ina Wellness Center
For more information: Watch the tribe’s Facebook page, facebook.com/kenaitze.

Travel information announced for ANMC appointments

Travel and housing arrangements for visits to the Alaska Native Medical Center are coordinated by the ANMC travel office in Anchorage. The Dena’ina Wellness Center can no longer make these arrangements.

To schedule flights and housing, please call the ANMC travel office at 907-729-7720.

On the options menu:

- Press 1 if you have Medicaid
- Press 3 if you do not have Medicaid

If your plans change, please contact the ANMC travel office at 907-729-7720.

Other Important Contact Numbers and Information

The Qu yana House front desk is open from 7:30 a.m. to midnight daily.

Shuttle service is available from the airport in a green and silver ANMC shuttle van. For questions about the shuttle, call 1-855-482-4382.

Suicide awareness walk announced

The tribe’s suicide prevention program, Yinihugheltani, will host a beach walk to raise awareness around suicide and mental health. The event is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 10, at the tribal fishery site off Cannery Road in Kenai. Check-in opens at 1 p.m. and the walk begins at 2 p.m. The walk is a fundraiser for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. As part of the effort, participants can register online today and begin raising money. Those who raise \$150 will receive an official event T-shirt. The registration website with full details is <http://bit.ly/2uaXJc9>. The event also will include an honor garden, where walkers can post photos of loved ones lost to suicide. For more information, please contact Audre Gifford at agifford@kenaitze.org or 907-335-7335.

Cooking with Kenaitze: Salmon, łuq’a

When Dena’ina Elders share their fondest memories, many times they include stories of hunting, gathering and preparing food across Yaghanen, the good land. From moose to salmon to wild berries, food is an important part of Dena’ina life. Cooking with Kenaitze highlights ingredients and recipes relevant to Dena’ina culture. This time we focus on salmon, łuq’a, which swim to our people each summer.

PICKLED FISH

- Ingredients**
- 2 lbs. fish, fresh or thawed from freezer, cleaned and cut into bite-size pieces
 - 1 ½ cups canning salt
 - 1 gallon white vinegar
 - 7 cups sugar
 - ¼ cup pickling spice (or make your own spice mixture)
 - 2 sweet onions (Vidalia preferred)
 - ¼ cup zinfandel wine (optional)

Directions

Start with a clean one-gallon jar. Layer fish with canning salt until jar is half full. Pour in vinegar until it’s 2 to 3 inches over the top of the fish. Let stand five days in refrigerator. Once a day, gently shake jar to mix ingredients. After five days, rinse fish and discard vinegar and salt. Next, put fish in ice water for one hour. In a large cooking pot, mix 8 cups of vinegar with 7 cups sugar, ¼ cup spices and optional wine. Stir frequently over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and then slowly bring to a boil. Simmer five minutes, then cool. Skim off most of the pickling spice but leave some for color. Remove fish from ice water. Next, layer sliced sweet onions and fish almost all the way to the top of the gallon jar, packing it firmly but not smooshing. Pour in vinegar, sugar, spice and wine to the top of the jar. Place in refrigerator for two days. Serve.

**Recipe submitted by the Wellness Department at the Dena’ina Wellness Center*



BROWN SUGAR SALMON BRINE

- Ingredients**
- Salmon
 - Brown sugar
 - Deionized salt or tender quick salt
- Directions**
- Place salmon pieces in a plastic container skin side down, leaving ¼-inch spaces between each piece. Mix a dry brine of 4 cups of brown sugar to 1 cup deionized salt or tender quick salt. Spread the brine on top of the fish. Place next layer of fish facing the meat side of the fish you just covered with brine, continually stacking the fish meat-to-meat, putting dry brine between the layers. Once all fish is stacked, cover with plastic wrap and add weight to press the fish down into the brine. A clean 5-gallon bucket works well to brine the fish in, and a 1-gallon jug works well as the weight to place on top. Let the fish set in brine for 12 to 14 hours. Then rinse under cold water, removing all sugar and salt from the fish. Pat the fish dry and lay out pieces on a towel to air dry all the way. A fan can speed up the process. Allow fish to dry until it becomes tacky to the touch. Lastly, if desired, sprinkle a favorite seasoning on the fish and place in smoker.

**Recipe submitted by Andrew Ellestad, maintenance technician at the Dena’ina Wellness Center*

SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE

Have a recipe to share? Please send it to Editor M. Scott Moon at smoon@kenaitze.org.

SMOKED SALMON OMELET

- Ingredients**
- 7 ounces egg whites
 - 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
 - ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
 - ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - ½ cup zucchini rounds thinly sliced
 - 2 tablespoons fresh herbs, finely minced (basil, parsley and dill)
 - About 2 ounces smoked salmon, thinly sliced
 - 1 avocado, thinly sliced
 - Mixed baby greens (optional)

Directions

Lightly mist a small frying pan with avocado oil or olive oil. In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg whites, apple cider vinegar, turmeric and black pepper. Set the pan over medium heat for one minute. Meanwhile, stir the zucchini and herbs into the egg white. Pour the egg white mixture into the pan and allow it to cook for about six minutes, or until almost set. Before folding the omelet, arrange the smoked salmon in a single layer on one side. Use a spatula to lift one edge of the omelet and fold it over the smoked salmon. Let any remaining uncooked egg white run underneath. Cook for another two minutes, then transfer to a plate. Serve with a mixed-green salad and avocado slices, if desired.

**Recipe submitted by the Wellness Department at the Dena’ina Wellness Center*

The Big Picture



Jasmine Koster, covered in ash, shows off a morel mushroom she found during a tribal mushrooming trip earlier this summer through forest burned in last year’s Card Street forest fire. See story, p. 8.

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

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

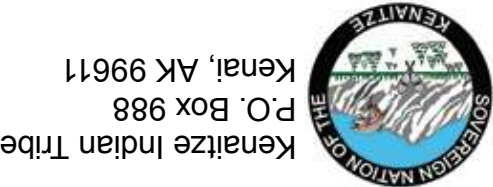
Environmental Program
1106 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-398-7933

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
507 Overland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7217

On the Web: kenaitze.org
On Facebook: facebook.com/kenaitze



Kenaitze Indian Tribe
P.O. Box 988
Kenai, AK 99611