

The Counting Cord

Nitnuqeyishi



September-October 2017

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE NEWSLETTER



Sandy K Wilson, Kambree Whittom, Joshua Grosvold and others work to prepare salmon strips for a brine solution during Yaghanen Youth Program's senior fish camp.

'Where hope and love bloom'

New supervised visitation room creates safe, warm environment at Na'ini building

Garages don't typically evoke feelings of hope, harmony or love. Yet that's exactly the case for one recently transformed space in Old Town Kenai.

The tribe in August completed a major renovation of the garage attached to its Na'ini building, transforming the empty space into a family visitation room for people served by the Family Services Program. The space includes a day bed, throw pillows, books, baskets, mirrors, and more – all designed to create a warm, safe environment.

"It took the hands and hearts of multiple people to make a former garage and storage area into a place where hope and love

See **FAMILY SERVICES**, p. 2

Learning about salmon, ɫuq'a

Camp teaches Dena'ina values, promotes fish knowledge

High winds and rough surf kept the net out of the water, but it didn't dampen spirits at the Yaghanen Youth Program's 2017 Senior Fish Camp.

"I think it's great, it's fun," first-time participant Jazlyn Harrison said. "I like that we get to learn how to smoke fish and learn about the Kenaitze tribe and hear from the Elders."

Fish Camp, held in July, teaches traditional methods of harvesting and processing salmon while promoting the Dena'ina way of life. The tribe hosts two camps each summer, a junior session and a senior session, in partnership with Cook Inlet Tribal Council. Evenings are spent at Spirit Lake, where campers enjoy food, activities and time around the fire.

This year, for the first time, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District students were eligible to receive a half-credit toward high school graduation for attending camp.

Some campers attended for the first time, while others returned



Campers take notes in a workbook provided to them this year. Students enrolled in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District can receive school credit for camp attendance.

after enjoying camps of years past.

Harrison, a senior at Bartlett High School, was part of a Cook Inlet Tribal Council group that traveled to camp from Anchorage. She is part Yupik and for the past few summers has visited the village of Kotlik to help her grandmother cut and smoke fish.

She said an early highlight of camp was walking on the beach

and seeing a seal in the water after weather conditions prevented the group from fishing on Day 1.

It was Harrison's second time visiting Kenai and she looked forward to making new friends.

"I can get to know them," she said of her fellow campers.

Nerius Wilson-Phillips, a sophomore at Service High School in Anchorage, attended

See **FISH CAMP**, p. 2

Tribe earns two education accolades

The Alaska Head Start Association has recognized the Kenaitze Indian Tribe with a pair of 2017 Awards of Excellence.

Charmaine Lundy, Alaska Native Education Coordinator at the Early Childhood Center, received the Humanitarian Award. The tribe's Yaghanen Youth Program received the Cultural Awareness Award.

The awards recognize individuals and organizations for making positive differences in the lives of students and families across Alaska.

Lundy has worked at the tribe for many years and spearheaded the "100 Books for a Bike Program," which rewards children for reading.

"Her respectful demeanor and approach allows her to address the needs of our children and families without judgment and with

See **AWARDS**, p. 5



Campers add salt to water – enough to make a potato float – while preparing a brine solution for the fish.

FISH CAMP, from p. 1 for the fifth time. In addition to catching fish, he hoped for a chance to go swimming.

With family in the area, Wilson-Phillips is no stranger to Kenai and has learned a lot over the years thanks to Fish Camp

“Most of this stuff I already know,” he said.

Camp opened with a presentation from tribal Elder Clare Swan on a blustery afternoon at the tribe’s fishery site.

Swan was instrumental in helping establish the tribe’s

educational fishery about 30 years ago. She recounted the hard work and determination it took to bring the fishery to Kenai.

Her message to campers was that determination pays off in life.

“Go for it, don’t stop,” Swan said. “Never give up. If you’re on the right track, keep it up.”

Swan also discussed why the fishery site is important to the tribe and Dena’ina people. The fish that swim to the net feed families, of course, but it’s the



A camper cuts salmon into strips for the smoker.

time around the fire and camaraderie among tribal members and loved ones that she most appreciates.

“It’s great to fish and all that, but coming together is the important part,” she said.

On the second day of camp, participants learned about salmon from a scientific perspective.

David Wartinbee, a retired professor of biology, delivered a presentation about stewardship, salmon life cycles and the idea that everything in nature is connected.

Wartinbee, who has studied fish biology for decades, said much of what he’s learned supports traditional Dena’ina beliefs about salmon.

“The Elders knew lots of ways and lots of things that they learned over the years,” Wartinbee said. “Now scientists, we’ve learned the same things, many

of the same things, and we’ve learned the details of how it happens and why – what’s the chemistry, what’s going on, and so on.”

Throughout camp, students kept journals detailing what they learned. The journals covered everything from tidal information, to staying safe in bear country, to methods of preparing salmon for the smoker, and more.

After camp, students submitted the journals as part of the requirement to earn school credit.

Rachel Pioch, Title VI teacher with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, said the district supports the authentic learning experience students receive at camp.

“They are getting to learn from their tribe about their tribe,” Pioch said.

FAMILY SERVICES, from p. 1 bloom,” said Katie Watkins, the tribe’s Director of Human and Community Services. “It is a fun place for children where many positive things will happen.”

The Family Services Program offers services aimed at keeping families together and well. Child and adult protection, Indian Child Welfare Act services, foster care, preservation, and domestic violence and sexual assault support are among the services available. The Na’ini building also houses the tribe’s Education and Career Development Program as well as the Social Services Program.

The new room is being used in a variety of ways.

It is a child-friendly area where parents can learn new parenting skills during supervised visitation. Those visitations are supervised by staff members who understand child development, trauma and

parenting skills. The room also can be utilized by people who have experienced trauma and seek a safe place to talk, as well as for occupational therapy.

Feedback has been positive since the doors opened.

“Our un’ina have said it’s a comfortable and friendly environment,” said Maria Guerra, ICWA tribal representative. Un’ina is the Dena’ina word for “those who come to us.”

A unique feature of the room is a day bed made from wood salvaged from the old Libby, McNeill and Libby Cannery in Kenai. The bed was made by inmates at the Wildwood Correctional Center.



A new family visitation room has been added to the Na’ini Social and Family Services building.

The room also has a private entrance. Many of the items in the room were donated.

“The room was a simple idea that became a wonderful place thanks to many special people,” Watkins said.

Receive support

To contact the Family Services Program, please call 907-335-7600. The program is located in the tribe’s Na’ini building at 510 Upland St. across from the Dena’ina Wellness Center in Kenai.

NOTE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Aa' yaghali!
(Yes, It is good!)

This has been a busy year for the Tribal Council to ensure the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

The Tribal Council has been working to ensure all tribal members are heard at quarterly meetings, committee meetings and regular council meetings. Quarterly meeting topics have included a proposed change to our Constitution, updates to the Educational Fishery, and information regarding our early childhood facility. The Annual General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 7, at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. The annual meeting is your most important opportunity to have your voice heard.

Education continues to be a huge focus across the tribe. We have operated a Head Start program since 1998, graduating approximately 775 students. Studies show that students who complete Head Start are more likely to graduate high school and pursue higher education. Our Early Childhood Center also has provided a summer camp the past nine years. The camp includes a large focus on education and is administered by caring people. This fall, in a testament to the good work of our staff, the Alaska Head Start Association recognized the tribe with two Awards of Excellence. Early this year, we received an Early Head Start grant that will help us work toward establishing services for pregnant mothers and infants/toddlers.

Our Yaghanen program continues to provide cultural education to youth in the forms of Native Youth Olympics, traditional Dena'ina dancing, and camps to teach fishing, gathering, hunting and archaeology.

The tribe also created an internship program, which works with five Kenaitze/Salamatof youth participants they hope to identify more youth at our annual meeting who are interested. Youth have the opportunity to participate in various tribal departments for up to 10 weeks to help them figure out what they "want to be when they grow up." This also teaches skills that often are assumed people know, like being places on time, what to wear for work, and how to be polite to people who may be upset.



I am very proud of these efforts, as I see it as a way for our youth to make a difference in their own lives and across our tribe! There

are several scholarships available to our youth, including an income-based Bureau of Indian Affairs scholarship that offers up to \$3,500 to those pursuing a health-related degree. The Tribal Council assisted in setting up an additional scholarship that also

funds up to \$3,500 for Kenaitze tribal members seeking degrees in the health field. This program will assist members in locating other scholarships, too, such as the Cook Inlet Region Incorporated scholarship.

After completing school, whether it be high school or higher education, the tribe offers a huge employment opportunity for our whole community! We currently employ more than 300 people in which we strive to have as many Kenaitze members/citizens employed as we can. Currently, about 11 percent of the Kenai Peninsula is Alaska Native. For those interested in working with the tribe, we are excited to have worked out some of the kinks of the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO). This ensures that any tribal member interested in employment receives extra support and preference and has ample opportunity to succeed. It is the hope of the Tribal Council for our youth to get the education they want and need to be our future providers and leaders.

Throughout all this, we have a health care system that serves the health needs of our people. Our new Optometry Program, added this year, has been another great addition. We recognize that there are some areas we need to work on. I encourage you to talk with your children and grandchildren about what they want to be when they grow up and help them find their dreams. Who knows, they might be our next doctor!

There are many programs I did not mention, but we all have such an important role and all programs integrate well and hold each other up.

Have a wonderful day, and chiqinik – thank you – for taking time to share your ideas.

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Executive Council Chairperson

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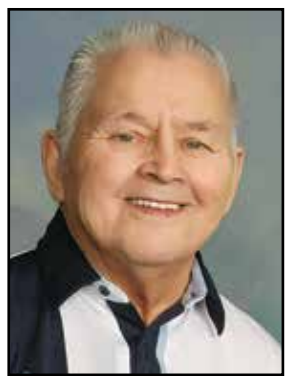
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Moving soon? Please keep in touch

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

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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 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.



Sharing the fruits of their labor, and love

Yaghanen Youth Program hosts annual fall Harvest Camp

Jenny Williamson walked into the Tyotkas Elder Center excited for good food and conversation.

Not long after she sat down, she was excited for a whole new reason.

Williamson was among a group of Elders who received an unexpected gift in the form of fresh jams, jellies and pain salves when participants in the Yaghanen Youth Program's annual Harvest Camp made a surprise visit to Tyotkas during a daily lunch service in August.

The campers, six in all, arrived just before meal time bearing trays of homemade goodies.

"I never saw young girls go out there and do all the stuff like they do," said Williamson, who received a jar of blueberry jam and a container of cottonwood salve. "I think camp is a wonderful thing. They learn so much. And the people teaching, they deserve a lot of credit."

Harvest Camp, held annually in late summer or fall, is open to female students interested in learning about traditional and ethical harvesting methods along with Dena'ina history and culture.

This year's camp, spanning three days, included students in elementary school up to high school.

On the first day of camp, the group visited Jackson Gardens south of Soldotna. Campers spent a couple hours walking through the sprawling gardens, plucking vegetables straight off the vines.

They picked well-known



Megan Whittom and Emilee Wilson deliver freshly made blueberry jam to Sharon Isaak and other Elders at Tyotkas Elder Center at the conclusion of the Yaghanen Youth Program's Harvest Camp in August.

"Picking the berries is a lot of fun," said Kya Ahlers, a sophomore at Soldotna High School. "Making the jam is a lot of fun."

Fellow Soldotna High School sophomore Makala Whittom agreed, adding that she learned the difference between jellies and jams. Jellies, Whittom explained, don't include seeds.

"But with jams, you use the whole berry," she said.

The second day of camp included activities with Estelle Thomson and Tia Holley of the tribe's Wellness Department.

gathering wild food.

"You can't pick when you are upset or mad because it's bad luck," Whittom said. "You want to pick when you are happy and in a loving mood because that's good luck."

By the final day of camp, the students were ready to share their work with Elders.

They arrived to Tyotkas in time for the daily lunch service and began walking from table to table, presenting gifts.

For both Ahlers and Whittom, it was a memorable and rewarding experience.

"You could tell they were really thankful," Ahlers said.

Added Whittom: "I thought it was so cool because they were so nice and they were very thankful for them."

For Elder Williamson, who grew up on the island of Sanak in the Aleutian chain but has lived in the Kenai area for many years, it meant a lot to receive the jams and salves.

Many of Williamson's family members are involved in tribal programs, and she appreciates that youth learn at camps and have opportunities to share their knowledge.

"I think every year they do a marvelous job. They know how to pick berries, do fish, they know everything," Williamson said.

"They are wonderful." After their visit to Tyotkas, campers returned to the Yaghanen



Emilee Wilson is all smiles - and blueberry jam - as she enjoys the meal she helped make.

facility in Soldotna. There, they prepared a meal with the food they had gathered over the previous few days.

The menu included vegetable soup and salad made from the produce gathered at Jackson Farms, along with red salmon and fry bread spread with the fresh jams.

Camp organizer and Yaghanen youth advocate Sandy K Wilson said it was hard work harvesting and preparing the food.

But as one of her own children looked on, she said it was worth every minute.

"The quality time you get to spend with your family is just amazing," Wilson said.



Sandy K Wilson, third from left, teaches campers how to make Indian fry bread. The bread was served as part of a full meal at the conclusion of the Harvest Camp.

veggies such as carrots, cucumbers and tomatoes. But they also encountered lesser-known fare such as burdock, kohlrabi and rutabaga.

Soon the group shifted its focus to picking berries to use in jams and jellies, an activity that proved to be a favorite among campers.

Campers learned about harvesting medicinal plants and had a chance to make salves from cottonwood. Salves, they learned, can be used to treat painful conditions such as arthritis.

The group also discussed traditional beliefs in relation to

Yaghali Nusdlan

He or she got well

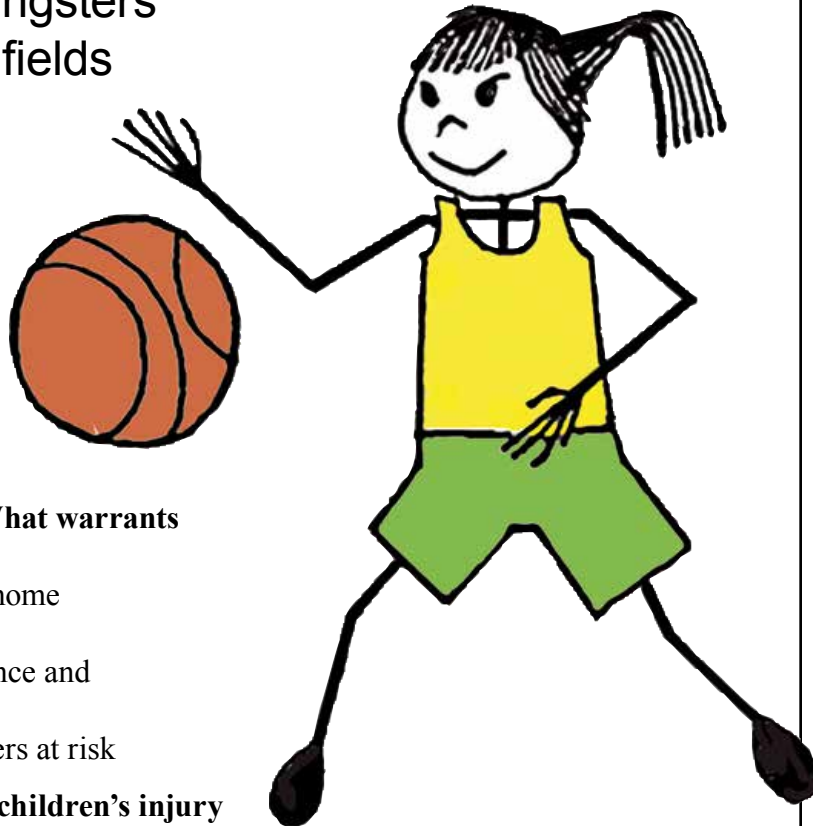


Back-to-school health tips for parents

Keep your family well as youngsters return to the classroom, ball fields

“I don’t feel good.”
 “I got hurt at practice.”

They are words parents dread, yet all too often hear, not long after school begins. With children heading back to the classroom and ball fields for the 2017-18 school year, here is some helpful information to help families get through the inevitable sports injuries and germs.



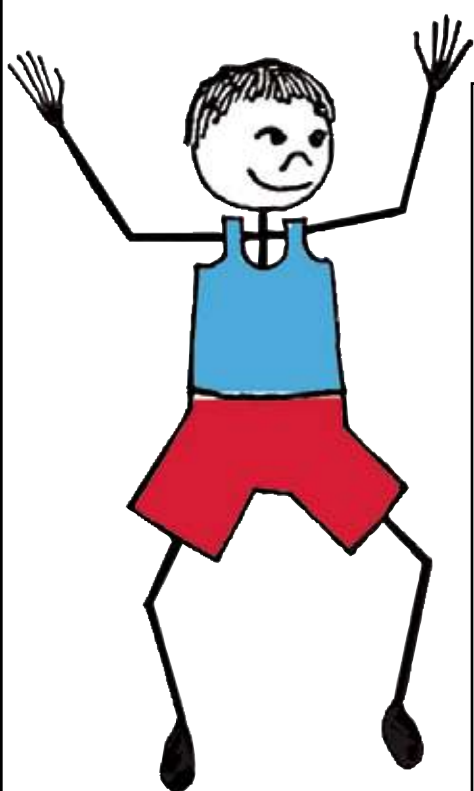
Sports injuries

My child got hurt during sports practice. What warrants a trip to the doctor?

- Symptoms that remain even after rest and home treatment
- Symptoms that affect training or performance and are undiagnosed
- Symptoms or conditions that could put others at risk

Something looks off, but I’m not sure if my children’s injury is serious. What warrants a consultation with a doctor?

- Joint swelling, locking, or instability
- Visible deformity or mass in arms, legs or joints
- Inability to fully move a joint, arm or leg
- Inability to stand or walk
- Back or neck pain-especially accompanied by discomfort running down the arm or leg
- Pain that does not go away
- Pain that disrupts daily activity or sleep



Cold or the flu? Learn to tell the difference

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches	Slight	Usual; often severe
Weakness	Mild	May last up to 2-3 weeks
Exhaustion	Rare	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild/Moderate	Common; can become severe

Information courtesy of Betty Kramp, Primary Care Health Systems Administrator, Dena’ina Wellness Center

Did you know?

The only students who require a physical before school begins are those who are entirely new to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District or are enrolling in kindergarten. “Schools do not require an annual physical for kids,” said Dr. Heather Callum, physician at the Dena’ina Wellness Center. Callum noted that signed physicals are required for high school sports. The Dena’ina Wellness Center offers physicals year-round. To schedule one, please call 907-335-7500.

Yaghanen Now accepting 17-18 applications

The Yaghanen Youth Program is now accepting applications for the 2017-18 school year.

Yaghanen offers a host of after-school activities, including drumming and dancing, archery, study hall, and more. The program offers a safe, substance-free environment for children in elementary school up to high school.

For an application, please visit the Yaghanen page on the tribe’s website, www.kenaitze.org, or call 907-335-7290.

AWARDS, from p. 1

profound sincerity,” said Katie Watkins, the tribe’s Director of Human and Community Services. “She is supportive and empathetic and strives to unlock the full potential of all children that she serves.”

The Yaghanen Youth Program hosts a variety of summer camps and offers after-school programming during the regular school year.

The program aims to provide a safe, substance-free environment for area youth, working closely with the Early Childhood Center.



Charmaine Lundy

“The collaborative relationship between the Yaghanen Youth Program and the Early Childhood Center results in providing students, families and staff with a strong sense of self, cultural awareness and pride in developing life skills that will help them grow into the future leaders within our community,” said Teresa Smith, Early Childhood Center administrator.

Cooking with Kenaitze: Harvest Season



This is the season for fresh vegetable soup.

For thousands of years, Dena'ina people have hunted and gathered food across Yaghanen, the good land. From moose to salmon to wild berries, food harvested from the land is important to Dena'ina life. Cooking with Kenaitze highlights ingredients and recipes relevant to Dena'ina culture. This time we focus on fruits and vegetables harvested during fall, before snow arrives.

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

BLUEBERRY JAM

Ingredients

4 cups fresh blueberries
7 cups of sugar
1 pouch of CERTO pectin

Directions

Measure sugar and set aside. Rinse blueberries. Bring cleaned berries to a full boil in a large saucepan, using a potato masher to mash up the berries. Add sugar, bringing back to a boil. Add liquid pectin and boil for two to three minutes. Pour hot jam into sterilized jars. Wipe rims and add prepared two-piece lids. Close tightly. Put the jars in a 10-minute water bath. Or, instead, place them upside down for five minutes and then right side up, and wait for them to seal.

ORGANIC VEGETABLE SOUP

Ingredients

Carrots and carrot greens (tops)
Leeks
Cabbage
Green beans
Rutabagas
Parsnips
Kohlrabi
Golden beets
Burdock
Potato
Onions

Directions

Bring large pot of water to a rolling boil. Rinse vegetables and potatoes under cold water. Chop vegetables and potatoes to desired size. Boil all ingredients until potatoes are soft, adding your favorite seasonings. Serve hot.

ORGANIC HARVEST GREEN SALAD

Ingredients

Carrots and carrot greens
Peas
Cucumbers
Swiss chard
Kale
Lettuce
Purple cabbage
Edible flowers
Tomatoes
Beet tops
Collard greens

Directions

Rinse vegetables under cold water. Cut vegetables to desired size. Toss all ingredients together in a large bowl. Serve with a dressing of your choice.

From farm to table, one meal at a time

Tribe hosts series of events as part of Harvest Moon Local Food Festival

Jeff Swan set the steak on a cutting board, turned the slab on its side and began running a knife along its edges. With each stroke, shavings of the crust peeled away.

“Oh, yeah, this turned out nice,” Swan said to the audience.

Swan, a tribal member and employee, and fellow employee Andy Ellestad hosted a workshop on UMAi aged beef at the Dena'ina Wellness Center in August. The workshop was among the events the tribe hosted as part of the Harvest



Andy Ellestad slices steaks from previously aged beef during a presentation on how to prepare the delicacy.

Moon Local Food Festival, a weeklong celebration of locally grown food.

The beef workshop included a demonstration on how to craft dry aged steak using UMAi plastic bags. The bags allow moisture release and oxygen exchange without contamination or odor, meaning meat can stay in them for weeks at a time in a cool environment, without spoiling.

Swan and Ellestad sautéed a batch of New York strip steak that had been aged in one of the bags for about 35 days. They seasoned the steak with salt and pepper and cooked it with butter, onions and mushrooms.

Ellestad said the steak originally cost about \$8 per pound but was worth much more after being aged



Rhoda Turinsky gives an aged steak a sniff test during a presentation at the Dena'ina Wellness Center on how to prepare aged beef. The free public event was in association with the Harvest Moon Local Food Festival. She was impressed with the finished product and savored cooked samples in the center's educational kitchen.

because the process tenderized the meat and intensified flavor.

“The idea is to take a cut of meat that's not very expensive and turn it into something that would be expensive,” he said.

Cooper Landing resident Robert Gibson was among those who attended.

Gibson makes his own cured meats, including prosciutto and salami, air drying and aging them for as long as two years.

He most appreciated the tips Swan and Ellestad shared about seasoning aged meats.

“The best way to get good food is to learn how to make it,” Gibson said.

As part of the festival, the tribe also hosted a sourdough cooking workshop, a presentation on kitchen alchemy and a kids cooking class,



Dena'ina Wellness Center employees Jeff Swan and Andy Ellestad prepare a cut of beef for vacuum packing during a presentation about preparing aged beef held in association with the Harvest Moon Local Food Festival.

among others. The festival, in its fifth year, is organized by the



Participants had an opportunity to savor the results at the conclusion of the presentation.

Kenai Local Food Connection. The event recognizes people who eat and grow food locally, promoting organic food as a healthy option. The effort aligns with the tribe's traditional value of stewardship and incorporates messages similar to that of the Wellness Department, which encourages healthy eating as part of overall wellness.

Eliza Eller, one of the festival coordinators, thanked the tribe for its involvement. She said the demonstration kitchen at the wellness center is as nice as any kitchen she has seen in the area.

“We just appreciate the tribe's support and involvement,” Eller said. “It's helped make this a lovely event.”

The Big Picture



Kya Ahlers and Makala Whittom pick fireweed blossoms as Sandy K Wilson collects the bounty during Yaghanen Youth Program's Harvest Camp in August. Wilson taught campers how to make fireweed jelly from the flowers. See story, p. 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.

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Tyotkas Elder Center

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Yaghanen Youth Program

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Environmental Program

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Dena'ina Wellness Center

508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
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Na'ini Family and Social Services, Education and Career Development

510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
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Tribal Court

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