Forum shines light on epidemic

Since she began working at Na’ini Family and Social Services in December 2016, Stacey Larion said she has screened more than 200 victims of domestic violence – and that doesn’t take into account that many victims are part of a large family, and there may be secondary victims of violence, too.

“I don’t know anybody who hasn’t been affected by domestic violence on some level,” Larion, who played a lead role in organizing the second annual Community Forum on Violence Against Women, said.

During the forum’s panel discussion, Barbara Waters, Batterer Intervention Program facilitator at the LeeShore Center, shared some more numbers, holding up a spreadsheet of domestic violence charges filed this year – 158 charges filed between Jan. 1 and June 29.

With the prevalence of violence against women in mind – “epidemic” is how many at the forum described the issue – Larion said she wanted to set some achievable goals in planning the event.

Dr. Adams brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the post – demonstrated when he jumped right in to do pushups in the Dena’ina Wellness Center gym during a tour of the facility in August.

But he also showed insight into the successes and challenges of providing health care in Alaska and across the country, asking questions and sharing his personal experience at the Henu’ Community Wellness Court and interacting with staff at the Wellness Center.

Not only is U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams impressed with the integrated approach to health care at the Dena’ina Wellness Center, he wants to share it with the rest of the country.

At the Henu’ court, Dr. Adams was introduced to three of the program’s participants. He asked questions of each of them, focusing on why Henu’ was working for them where other programs hadn’t.

A model for wellness

Participants gave him a number of reasons. The Henu’ court can draw on resources at the Wellness Center and other Tribal programs to create an individualized path toward wellness, rather than the one-size-fits-all approach of other treatment options. And all of those resources can be found in one place; otherwise, it could be overwhelming for a person in recovery if they had to go to multiple agencies to get needed help or care.

After hearing from participants, Dr. Adams shared the impact that addiction has had within his own family. His brother, he said, is in prison for crimes stemming from addiction. He has asked for treatment, but has never been able to get it. When he’s released, he can’t get a job, and without anything to look forward to, falls back into his previous behavior.

“The story is not uncommon,” Dr. Adams said, adding that one of his goals is to figure out what’s working and then find ways to make resources available to those who need them.

At the Dena’ina Wellness Center, Dr. Adams heard about the Dene’ Philosophy of Care, and loved that the first thing you see when you enter the facility is the Skilak Lake Kitchen – just like home. He said that if he were looking for health care for himself, the Dena’ina Wellness Center model is what he would want it to look like.

“I love that you call it a wellness center,” Dr. Adams said. “Ten percent of...”
Do you know these people? Help us update their Tribal Member Services address

If your name is on this list, the post office has returned mail we have tried to send. Please call Jessica Crump at 907-335-7204 or email her at jcrump@kenaitze.org so that we can update your records.

Sonya Astad
Allan Baldwin
Jonathon Baldwin
Maximillian Baty
Joel Blatchford
Amanda Bliss
Claude Blatch
Autumn Boling
Sharon Boling
Camryn Boulette
Erica Branson
James Brown
Richard Brunni
Marjana Busande
Manual Busane
Margaret Byron
Michael Carlough
William Carlough
Tina Chaffin
Marie Chaffin
Kenneth Chaffin
Hazel Chaffin
James Cross
James Cross Jr
Megan Cunningham
Edward Darien
Lisa Darien-Hileman
Rebecca Davis
Lisa Dean
Clifford Dean
Tracy Deitz
Emelie Demidoff
Mack Dolchok
Clifford Dolchok
Jay Edelman
Drasanna Edelman
Edwin Edelman Jr
Jamie Edwards
Jarrod Edwards
Courtney Edwards
David Engelstad
Patricia Englund
Daniel Fauckett
Katheryn Frostad
Christopher Frostad
Brian Frostad
Vivian Gains
Amber Gardner
Tanner Geiser
Elijah Gesh
Amer Gibson-Rehder
Justin Graham
William Green
Mathew Gregoire
Garett Grothe
Cameron Grothe
Steven Hallstead
Keith Hallstead Jr
Joseph Hansen
Solori Harker
Danielle Hartnett
Nathaniel Hartnett
Samuel Hatfield
Sentilla Hawley
Priscilla Hawley
Raymond Hawley
Emily Hawley
Donna Hembroff
Virginia Hoak
David Holzwarth
Jessica Huf
Nathasha Huf
Taylor Huf
Ivanov Don
Naomi Jackinsky
Jay Jennings
Tamara Johansen
Ryan Johnson
Randee Johnson
Austin Johnson
Sarah Johnson
Allison Jones
Josephine Jones
Zane Juliulessen
Elizabeth Kehi
Travis Kiddor
Marshall Kiddor
Seth Kilgore
Benjirsen Kilgore
Zachary Kooly
Douglas Lecceardone
Cindy Lesamiz
Ryan Lewis
Cherie Lindstrom
Anthony Lorenzo
Calvin Mack
Calvin Mack
Gerald Mahle Jr.
Gerald Mahle Sr.
Nadine Maupin
Shawn Mccurdy
Lane Mccurdy
Anthony Mesa
Violet Mesa
Natasha Miller
Mikayla Miller
Brittney Mills
Casey Mitchell
Richard Mueller
Karina Munson
Brandi Murphy
Michael Norbett
Nathan Olliestad
Alexis Oskoloff
Kayla Osness
William Overstreet
Christian Paxton
Devan Paxton
Dawn Paxton
Delores Peterson
Lucy Pitto
Snowyde Poage
Denali Poage
Jenna Pomeroy
Cameron Ramos
Analisa Ramos
Roger Randall
Miles Richardsson
Autumn Richardson-Card
Christina Rifenidi
Darick Robin
James Rouse Iii
Jon Sacaloff
Nick Sacaloff
James Sanders
Veronica Sandoval
Alvaro Sandoval
James Scagg
Sarah Scott
Carol Seibert
Michael Seibert
Kendra Shepherd
Lori Sloan
James Smagg
Erlsa Smith
Erika Smith
Shannon Smith
Landis Smith
Winston Smyth
George Stockwell
Ruby Stratton
David Stroman
Jonathan Swan
Emma Tanner
John Taylor
Jeffrey Taylor
Crystal Tilley
Logan Trigg
Tah Trigg
Courtney Tweedy
Megan Webb
Ruby Williams
Stephan Wilson
Brandon Wilson
Joshua Wolf
Norman Wood Jr
Neshonie Wright
Alyssa Wright-Nelson
Devin Zajac
Elcie Dexter
Sarah Tressler
Marisa Garrigues
Jana Garrigues
Baldw Daniel

SURGEON FROM P. 1

health is health care. “(Health is) our environment and everything around us. We focus on sick care, not wellness.”

Dr. Adams also touched on the idea of resilience and building a healthy community.

“The way you build resilience is through culture, community and traditions,” Dr. Adams said.

From the kitchen, Dr. Adams ducked into the fitness area, where he jumped in on a workout, before moving along to the integrated workspace and the un’ina talking rooms. He stopped to talk with Estelle Thompson, a Traditional Healer at the Wellness Center, and Craig Culver, Primary Care Director, and said he loved seeing practitioners of modern and traditional medicine working side-by-side. He said in most places, those services are found in separate facilities.

“One of the things I love, and we saw it in Anchorage at the Southcentral Foundation, it that it’s not ‘either-or,’ it’s ‘and,’” Dr. Adams said. “Why do we have to make it either?”

Dr. Adams said he would like to look at ways to incentivize the integration of physical health and behavioral health. He said he can now point to the Dena’ina Wellness Center as a model for how it might work when grants are designed.

“This is a tremendous asset for the community. It’s a model for the rest of the country,” Dr. Adams said of the Wellness Center.

Dr. Adams also commented on the opioid epidemic that has impacted Alaska and the rest of the country, and the challenges in addressing the issue.

“We can’t rely on having an addiction-trained specialist in every community – but the opioid epidemic has touched every community,” Dr. Adams said.

Referring to Henu’ participants, Dr. Adams said he was struck by the ability and willingness of people in recovery to help others – an added benefit of the therapeutic court.

“One life you invest in ... can turn around and save other lives,” Dr. Adams said.

The Surgeon General’s visit to Kenai concluded with a meeting with members of the Tribal Council and officials from the Indian Health Service. Discussion centered on areas in which government agencies can help – and areas in which government gets in the way. One of the main topics was the barriers people in recovery face after completing treatment, including limited access to housing, transportation and employment opportunities.

Tribal Council and administration described the limited options available to assist those with barrier crimes on their record – and the significant time and resources that go into pursuing those options. While no specific commitments were made, visiting officials agreed that it would worth looking for solutions to the problem at the federal level.
Hello,

Fall is here and the weather has been amazing so far. The silvers are here but fishing season is finally coming to an end with the moose now in our sights.

The Council established the Kahlnuht'ana Den'a'ina Health Board whose responsibility will be to advise the Council on all matters related to health care services. Soon you will receive a letter regarding the application process to serve on the Health Board. I would encourage Members who are interested in the health system to apply. Later this fall, you will also receive notice of additional opportunities to serve on various committees.

A success story for the Tribe is our Henu’ Community Wellness Court. Not only has the Tribe received state recognition for its success with the Court, but we were honored to be selected to host a visit from Surgeon General Jerome Adams. The Surgeon General reached out to the Tribe in search of an alternative solution to deal with substance abuse after hearing about our therapeutic court. This fall, the Henu’ Court will have its first graduate, who also happens to be a Tribal Member.

The Council has received many applications for the Executive Director of Health Systems, Executive Director of Tribal Administration and the Senior Executive Assistant for the Council. We will begin the interviews in the coming weeks.

The Council hired a recruiting firm to assist in the hiring of two additional physicians. In the meantime, we have contracted with a company who has provided a temporary physician while we are recruiting these physicians.

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting on Oct. 6. Please remember to RSVP to be registered for the special RSVP drawing.

Sincerely,

Wayne Wilson Jr.
Tribal Council Chairperson

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
the community more aware of the services offered by the tribe.

The June 29 forum included a wide-ranging panel discussion, and wrapped up with attendees breaking into small groups to focus on steps to achieve specific goals. While the groups worked independently, there was general agreement that events that raise awareness of the issue need to be held at a time when they are more accessible to community members.

To open the panel discussion, participants were asked a question about the community impacts of violence against women. Tia Holley, an Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center board member, said that “violence is not our tradition.”

“If we follow the values of our ancestors, we will have a violence-free life,” Holley said.

When asked why it continues to be a problem, Sgt. Paul Cushman of the Kenai Police Department said “we’re not doing a great job of making it clear that it’s not acceptable.”

“It is a generational problem. Trauma tends to repeat itself.”

Christa Chellini, a legal advocate for the LeeShore Center, said, adding that community members don’t look after each other like they used to.

“We’ve stepped away from being a community. We don’t do that anymore. People are almost afraid (talking about domestic violence) will affect them like a disease, and they close themselves off to it. We’re still making excuses. We need to keep pushing to make people aware, but people have choices. We need to make a choice to be a community again.”

On the subject of changes that could be made to reduce the incidence of violence against women, Cushman suggested that a mentoring group for men who are in intervention programs would be beneficial.

Karen Stroh, the shelter manager at the LeeShore Center, circled back to changing societal acceptance of violence.

“It pervades society, but it is absolutely ignored,” Stroh said.

She compared the needed change in social attitude to campaigns to raise awareness for people to use seatbelts and child car seats. What was commonly accepted a generation ago is not tolerated today.

That type of push for awareness hasn’t happened on the issue of domestic violence.

“Where’s the responsibility in our community to ensure everyone in our community remains safe?”

Stroh asked.

Sgt Leaders, the district attorney in Kenai, discussed challenges in the legal system for women who come forward to report acts of violence. Victims may be left wondering if anyone will believe them, or if anything will be done, while Leaders says he has to weigh available evidence to determine the likelihood of success at trial. The high burden of proof – reasonable doubt – can be one of the biggest obstacles, he said.

Crystal Schwartz, a child advocate with the tribe’s Na’ini Family Services, said a person may be slow to come forward due to years of victimization.

“Don’t listen to answer; don’t listen to have a response,” Chellini said. “You don’t have to know anything. You just have to listen.”

Cushman drew applause with his answer to an earlier question about what community members should do when it comes to helping victims of assault.

“We need to never, ever, ever give up on victims,” Cushman said.

“... It can be exasperating and frustrating, but we cannot grow weary of doing good. We’re the lifeline. We’re here to help. If we give up on them, who have they go?”

In an interview after the forum, Larion and Schwartz shared some additional thoughts on ways to raise awareness of the issue.

For men, Schwartz said, attending events and doing more to understand the prevalence of the violence against women is a good place to start.

“At a very practical level, stop brushing this under the rug,” Schwartz said.

Larion said her hope for next year is to have a true community forum.

“We want our community engaged and involved,” she said. “I want anyone to understand how to help someone. … I want to create a climate in our community that wraps victims in love and support.”
‘A very special place’

K’beq’ hosts cultural gatherings in August

When you think about places to share the Dena’ina way of living, the K’Beq’ Cultural Site is a perfect spot.

K’Beq’, which means “footprints,” is situated along the Kenai River in Cooper Landing, a place known as Sqilantnu in Dena’ina, or “ridge place river.” Visitors to K’Beq’ can view the Darien-Lindgren cabin, stroll along a boardwalk with interpretive displays, and learn about Dena’ina culture from Tribal Members and staff.

On four Fridays in August, that included cultural presentations from Yaghanen Youth Program staff and participants. Visitors to K’Beq’ could watch the Del Dumi Drum Group and Jabila’nina Dancers; learn about traditional uses of plants and berries; play the Intertribal Drum; and dance the Kalthu’t’ana way.

“It’s just a nice place, and a very special place for the Tribe,” Yaghanen Program Administrator Michael Bernard said. “I don’t think we get out here to appreciate it as much as we should.”

Benjamin Baldwin, a Tribal Member who formerly worked at K’Beq’, teamed up with Yaghanen Youth Advocate Sandy K Wilson to share knowledge of edible berries and traditional uses of plants. Leading a walk along the site’s boardwalk, the two could hardly go a few feet before finding another plant or berry to share.

Both stressed the importance of showing respect for the plants to be harvested.

Wilson said she tells people to be thankful, and to “pick with a happy heart” – if you’re stressed, your harvest won’t be as good.

“I usually thank the berry plant, and tell them what I’m using it for,” Wilson said.

Baldwin said respect for the plants you are gathering is a vital part of Dena’ina culture.

“You ask the plant for permission to pick it, and say ‘thank you’ that it’s giving itself to you,” Baldwin said. “It’s important to have the proper interaction with the things we take.”

It’s also important, when gathering wild plants, to know what you’re doing, Baldwin said. Some plants look similar, and consuming the wrong one could have severe consequences.

“The best way to do that is to go out with people who know what they’re doing, so that knowledge can be passed on, the way it’s always been,” Baldwin said.

During the stroll along the K’Beq’ boardwalk, Wilson and Baldwin pointed out a cornucopia of plants that can be used for food or medicine – low bush cranberries, rose hips, spruce, birch, fireweed, old man’s beard, fiddlehead ferns, high bush cranberries, horsetails, willow, crowberries, and mountain hemlock were among the plants they discussed.

“One of the things the Dena’ina believed was that in order for plants to come back, they had to be used, and used properly,” Baldwin said.

Along the way, both shared stories about the plants learned from parents and grandparents.

Wilson said her grandparents told her that when fireweed got as tall as it was going to get, that indicated how much snow was going to fall that winter. Baldwin shared the Dena’ina story of how Spruce and Dog became so important to the Campfire People, the animals’ term for humans.

Baldwin said he gleaned much of his knowledge from his grandparents and his mother. His grandfather, Dick Baldwin, was an agricultural consultant for the state of Alaska and wrote a book on the topic.

Baldwin said he enjoys sharing what he’s learned.

“It’s a great way to keep our culture alive,” he said.

Baldwin continues to use traditional plants. He said he recently came across an “incredible” patch of black currants along Tustumena Lake. While his grandparents have passed away, eating things like the berries he collected brings back memories.

“When you eat (traditional foods), you keep those alive,” Baldwin said.
Summer camps make science fun

When you think of science, you might think of stuffy old professors in lab coats. But the goals of the Tribe’s Janeth Science Camps is to change that perception.

“We want (our kids) to really love science,” Brenda Trefon, Environmental Program Coordinator, said. “We want them to go back to school thinking science is something they love, something they’re good at.”

She also wants students to think of science as fun.

This past summer’s camps inspired some well-rounded future scientists. The program offered a “Growing Green” camp, which focused on food and sustainability; an Earth Camp, which focused on Earth science; and Ocean Camp, with an emphasis on marine biology.

Ocean Camp, which was held in late July, culminated with a trip to Seward for a Kenai Fjords cruise and an overnight stay at the Alaska SeaLife Center, a public aquarium and marine research, education and wildlife response facility.

Before their trip to Seward, campers visited the other end of the Kenai Peninsula, exploring the Homer Spit.

Kluane Pannick-Pootjes, a camp participant, explained the “belly biology” campers did in Homer. “You lie on your belly on the dock, and look into the water,” Pannick-Pootjes said. “We saw crabs, jellyfish, sea anemones, and sea stars.”

Pannick-Pootjes said it was fun to be able to touch the sea stars.

Gracelyn Moore said she learned about keeping trash out of the ocean, and efforts to “clean up all the trash that people put in there.” She also enjoyed making wind chimes and beading, but was especially hoping to see whales on the Seward excursion.

Emilee Wilson added sea urchins to the list of creatures spotted from the boat. “I think having the kids for an overnight gives them a better camp experience,” Trefon said. “It lets them really build friendships and get to know other Tribal Members.”

With trips to Homer and Seward, Schadle said the camp involved more travel than other science camps. The goal, she said, is to introduce kids to science.

Located in Fort Kenai, just across from the Denaina Wellness Center campus in Old Town Kenai, the Environmental Program office is now home to a Kenaitze Science Library. Resources are available for students and parents, including homework help and printer access. For more information or for a schedule, call Environmental Program Coordinator Brenda Trefon at 907-398-7933.

“We’re trying to get kids introduced to the idea that science can be fun” Schadle said. “We decided to do all these cool marine biology field trips.”

The Environmental Program will host a number of activities throughout the school year. Watch for family activities once each quarter, a recycling party sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and an Earth Day activity next spring.
‘Giving back to the system’
Campers learn fish lifecycles and continue traditions

When you’re processing 50 fish, many hands make light work. And when all those hands belong to teenagers interested in learning about the process, it even makes all that work fun.

“This is what the educational fishery is about – teaching the next generation,” said Sandy K Wilson, a Youth Advocate with the Yaghanen Youth Program who coordinated the Senior Fish Camp with her fellow staff members.

Held in late July, fish camp participants learn all the steps for harvesting and preserving salmon, from picking the net to filleting to smoking to pressure cooking. With 50 salmon coming to the net, campers were able to get plenty of practice, and bring home plenty of salmon to share with Elders and their families when the week was over.

Wilson said she holds a deep appreciation for having the opportunity to share her knowledge.

“I remember when the fishery first opened, I was almost a teenager,” Wilson said. “Before that, my family hardly got any fish.”

After the fishery opened, she was able to learn from her extended family – parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles.

“No, I’m teaching my kids, but also teaching the kids at Yaghanen, passing down traditions,” Wilson said.

Campers started their week with a presentation from Dr. David Wartinbee, a retired Kenai Peninsula College biology professor, on the life cycle of salmon and the science behind traditional preservation techniques.

From there, they went down to the Tribal net, where they were treated to a fish processing demonstration from Mary Lou Bottorff, a Tribal Elder.

Bottorff shared her technique for filleting salmon, showing how she uses a long fillet knife for the fillets, and an ulu for cutting the fillets into strips for smoking.

“When you make strips, always cut to the tail – otherwise, the meat will fall off,” Bottorff said.

She also leaves strips attached in pairs with a little bit of skin – it saves on the time and effort of tying string to hang them for smoking.

Bottorff also showed campers how to process fish heads for soup. “Who wants to eat the eyeballs?” she asked – but there were no takers among the fish camp participants.

Campers then had an opportunity to try their own hand at filleting a salmon.

“Everyone cleans their fish a little different,” Josh Grosvold said.

“You can learn something new from everyone,” said Sandy K Wilson, a Tribal Elder.

Dr. David Wartinbee, a retired Kenai Peninsula College biology professor, talks during the camp about the many tiny bugs that play a vital role in the life cycle of a salmon.

Beyond learning about fish, campers also learn traditional values.

“We teach the kids to be respectful to the Earth, to the land, to the fish,” Wilson said. “Any parts of the fish we don’t use, we return to the ocean.”

“We’re teaching the kids to be thankful and grateful, and to work together.”

Wilson said she was grateful to have a group of kids so willing to learn.

“I’m really excited that these kids are going to pass this knowledge along to the next generation, to their kids,” Wilson said.

Denali Bernard, a high school freshman, said part of the appeal of Fish Camp is getting her hands dirty.

“It’s really fun being here. I like cutting fish a lot,” Bernard said. “I’ve done heads a lot, but I haven’t really done fillets as much.”

Cheyenne Juliussen, a high school sophomore, is an old hand at filleting fish – she had plenty of practice at her grandparents’ fish site in Cohoe. In fact, she learned from Bottorff, she said. Still, there’s always something more to learn.

“I like learning how to fillet in different ways than I already know,” Juliussen said.

Campers said they learned quite a bit from Wartinbee’s presentation on stream ecology and the life cycle of salmon. Wartinbee also offered some scientific insight on why traditional methods of preserving fish were successful.

“There are only a few salmon cultures in the entire world, and those are the folks who figured out how to preserve and use fish year-round,” Wartinbee said.

Campers were able to glean a lot from the session. Judah Eason, from Ninilchik, said it all came together for him with the salmon life cycle – juvenile salmon feed on invertebrates that feed on leaves that fall into the water from riparian habitat, which receives important nutrients from the salmon that die in the river after spawning.

“It made sense that fish are giving back to the system,” Eason said.

Alexis Kinneeveauk came to Fish Camp from Anchorage. A freshman, she said she hadn’t realized how complex stream ecology is, particularly “the bugs.”

“All I thought about was the fish, but not all the other little things in the streams and the creeks,” Kinneeveauk said.

Campers also had the opportunity to dissect a salmon in an activity with Park Ranger Leah Eskelin at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge visitor center in Soldotna.

“We teach the kids how to fillet fish, how to clean them, but we never knew all the anatomy,” Wilson said.

“It was interesting taking fish apart one piece at a time.”

The camp is based at Spirit Lake near Kenai, where campers stay in cabins and have the opportunity to enjoy other activities like canoeing and campfires. They also had a visit from Tia Holley, a Wellness Consultant at the Dena’ina Wellness Center. Holley showed campers how to make a salmon from spruce, devil’s club and yarrow to ease aches and pains.

“I think that’s very important as part of their culture, too, learning about (traditionally used) plants,” Wilson said.

Campers have the opportunity to earn a half credit for a high school elective by participating in the camp and completing a project and work book – or “fun” book, as they are referred to at camp.

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Planting the seed

Head Start alumni find Tribe a good place to start careers

One remembers goofing off during the class picture. Others remember the bus rides, time spent on the playground, and learning to tie a shoelace.

The Early Childhood Center’s Head Start preschool program was launched 20 years ago, and its early graduates are now young adults. After starting their education with the Tribe, some are now finding the Tribe a good place to start their careers.

“It’s a little bit like planting a seed,” Charmaine Lundy, a longtime staff member at the Early Childhood Center, said. “We don’t see the bloom, but we know it’s going to be there!”

Teresa Smith, the Early Childhood Center Administrator, said staff aren’t always able to see the end result of the education that began with Head Start, so they appreciate seeing former students come back as interns or employees.

In addition to several employees, there are a number of high school-age students, many of them graduates of the Tribe's Head Start program, who are beginning to explore possible career paths through internships with the Tribe. Some of those former students found their career path early on.

“I had always crossed my mind that one day I would work for the Tribe,” said Ashley Segura, the Human Resources Recruiter for the Tribe. “But after giving birth, I realized I wanted to work at the Tribe again in the future. I had to spend time as an archaeologist assistant for the Tribe's Susten Archaeology Camp. In that position, she had the opportunity to work with children, something she doesn’t necessarily think he’d be doing.

“After high school, I wasn’t sure I wanted to go to college, but after working as an archaeologist assistant for the Tribe, she realized that she wanted to work with children, something she didn’t necessarily think he’d be doing.

“After high school, I wasn’t sure I wanted to go to college, but after working as an archaeologist assistant for the Tribe, she realized that she wanted to work with children, something she didn’t necessarily think he’d be doing.

”

Segura said she doesn’t remember much from Head Start. One thing she does recall was a time close to Christmas, when there was a bunch of small items put out and students could pretend to shop for gifts for their families, even wrapping the items up. She also remembers playing in a loft area, and the teeter-totter and sandbox on the playground.

Ashley’s sister Jessica Segura said she always wanted to work at the fishery, and that knowledge with the Head Start helped her toward that goal.

This past summer, Julianne Wilson worked as a Tribal Fishery Education Assistant, following in her older brother Jonny’s footsteps.

“I wanted to work at the fishery ever since I was 11, and my older brother worked there,” Julianne Wilson said.

Julianne Wilson said that ever since she learned how to fillet a fish in camp, she’s been in love with the process. While fishing was slow this summer, she said she still enjoyed the experience.

“It was slow, but it was fun when we did catch fish,” she said.

Julianne Wilson had a second summer job working as an archeologist assistant for the U.S. Forest Service, providing additional documentation for known archeological sites. In that position, she had the opportunity to work with programs like the Tribe’s Susten Archaeology Camp. She has since returned to Valley City State University in North Dakota for her sophomore year of college, where she’s studying environmental science. While she said she’s still exploring career options, she said she'd like to work for the Tribe again in the future.

Laural Schadle also remembers a lot of art projects with paint and feathers, a field trip to the Nikiski Pool and cutting fish from the net.

Julianne Wilson said she remembers her dad teaching her to tie her shoes, and being excited to share that knowledge with the Head Start staff.

“I was really excited to show Mr. Mike, my teacher at the time, that I could tie my shoes,” she said.

Jonny Wilson said he doesn’t recall all that much from his Head Start days.

“I know I got sent home quite a few times back then,” he said.

Schadle said she always hoped to land a job with the Tribe’s Environmental Program – camps with Program Director and Early Childhood Center Administrator, said...
Early Head Start up and running

September marks an exciting month for the Early Childhood Center as Early Head Start staff begin home visits with participating families and also move into their new space in the Na’ini building.

The new Early Head Start program serves children ages 0 to 3 – it is open to pregnant women as well as infants and toddlers up to age 3. Children ages 3 or 4 by Sept. 1 can enroll in the Tribe’s Head Start preschool.

Early Head Start Coordinator Diane Bernard said staff are excited to be able to reach families in their homes.

Early Head Start staff began home visits Sept. 4. The program has three teams of two home visitors. One team member works with a child or parents while the other observes and takes notes. Visits are scheduled with families once a week, year round, and last about 90 minutes.

“Home visitors help families obtain skills, and teach families how to be advocates for their children,” Bernard said.

Staff are able to watch each child for developmental milestones, and design an individual learning plan tailored to each child’s needs.

On a typical home visit, a home visitor might introduce an activity to work on together between visits.

“We can help families obtain skills, and give them confidence in the things that they’re doing right,” Bernard said.

Early Head Start also offers socialization opportunities every other week, providing a time for children to come together and interact while parents can connect and network. On the alternate weeks, parent training is offered.

Early Head Start staff are eagerly anticipating the move into their new space. Dubbed the “Foundation,” it is located in the basement of the Na’ini building on the Dena’ina Wellness Center campus. Construction crews have spent the summer renovating the space. It includes reception and working areas for program staff, an office space, a kitchen area and a fellowship room. There also will be plenty of built-in storage, and, if needed, staff will have access to a storage shed to be installed next to the building.

Early Head Start staff got a sneak peak of the space during a tour in late July.

“It’s really exciting,” Early Education Tutor Kari Pralle said. “We keep hearing about it, but actually seeing it makes it more real.”

Contractors installed a pair of 40-foot structural steel beams to open up the space and added insulation to the walls to muffle noise from the building’s plumbing and mechanical systems.

The floor is polished concrete, with a ribbon of blue winding throughout to represent the Kenai River. There is plenty of light, with recessed lighting and track lighting all controlled by dimmer switches.

The color scheme for the space includes a palette of natural, earthy tones. Other touches include a screen of birch logs to separate the reception area from the work space, and feature walls with reclaimed wood from the old Libby, McNeill and Libby cannery.

In-floor heating will warm the space, and an air exchanger will keep fresh air circulating year-round.

Kathy O’Dell, an Early Head Start Teacher Specialist, got to see the support beams going into the building, and said the transformation has been amazing.

“It’s a beautiful space,” O’Dell said.

Alby Hanna, an Early Head Start Teacher Specialist, said she was excited to have adult chairs – though she’ll probably continue to use the child-size chairs much of the time.

Pralle said she appreciates all the thought that went into designing the new space.

“Children deserve beautiful spaces,” she said.

To learn more about Early Childhood Center programs, including Head Start and Early Head Start, call 335-7260 or visit www.kenaitze.org/programs/early-childhood-center.

Fresh takes

Greenhouse produce put to use in Tribal programs

Carey Edwards appreciates the fresh herbs coming out of the new greenhouse on the Dena’ina Wellness Center campus.

The cook at Tyotkas Elder Center, Edwards said the folks who visit for lunch rave about the rich flavors, too.

“I use them in everything,” Edwards said. “I do a lot of roasted dishes and soups, so they get well used.”

Named Ch’k’denyah yuyeh, Dena’ina for “we grow something inside,” the new greenhouse has been supplying Tribal programs with fresh produce throughout the summer. Na’ini Family Services, for example, has been able to include lettuce, cabbage, zucchini and cucumber in some of its Food Cache boxes.

At Tyotkas, the fresh produce is being used to supplement and enhance the menu.

“I do a kielbasa with roasted vegetables, and I put a lot of herbs in that,” Edwards said. “They love it.”

Edwards said the fresh dill goes well with salmon dishes, and thyme gets used with green beans.

“I love fresh herbs,” Edwards said. “I grow them at home, too. I’d much rather use the real stuff, especially when I’m doing a roast or steaks. They really give off a good flavor.”

This summer proved to be a learning experience for greenhouse gardeners. Dena’ina Wellness Center staff learned how to deal with pests, specifically aphids, which infested some of the plant beds midsummer. The solution was to release ladybugs into the greenhouse, throughout the Kenai River. There is plenty of light, with recessed lighting and track lighting all controlled by dimmer switches.

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On a recent Thursday afternoon, four women gathered with three Dena’ina Wellness Center staff in the Skilak Lake Kitchen for a Diabetes Prevention Class.

While there was some time spent discussing the goals and content of the curriculum, there was just as much discussion of individual challenges and successes.

“It’s mostly a support group, with some education sprinkled in,” said Caraline Place, a Registered Dietician at the Wellness Center.

The class, which follows a Centers for Disease Control curriculum, is geared toward helping people prevent prediabetes from becoming Type 2 diabetes.

Participants started off the recent session by sharing their successes and challenges from the previous week, from keeping track of steps to coping with the stress of visitors to dealing with unexpected sad news.

They watched a video about a study that found that 1 in 3 American adults are prediabetic, but that healthy lifestyle changes were effective in preventing the onset of diabetes.

“Diet and lifestyle modification are scientifically proven to work better than any other intervention,” Place noted.

Mollie Burton, a class participant from Nikiski, offered a reply: “Thank you for helping us save our lives.”

Burton, who said she is originally from Southeast Alaska, said the class has been worth it.

“It helps having people that have the same goals as me, to teach me the ropes of the ways they cope with it, and learning about healthy ways to eat,” Burton said.

Burton said being part of the class has motivated her to be more active.

“I got a pedometer, and I have a thing with myself that I’ve got to get my steps in,” she said.

As part of the class, Burton said she’s learned how to keep track of what she eats. She has been inconsistent, though, and said she’s set a goal to improve in that area.

One tip she’s picked up is to add things like cucumbers or berries to water.

“It tastes really good, but it’s a beverage that’s healthy,” Burton said.

Tina Mulcahy, who lives in Sterling, said she’s getting back in the habit of taking time to focus on her own health. She said participating in the class has helped her dedicate one day a week to focus on her own well-being, something she intends to continue.

Mulcahy said the connections made with her classmates have helped her.

“I’m pretty much a hermit, so it is good to connect with other people. You get different perspectives,” Mulcahy said.

A former teacher herself, Mulcahy said she liked the way Wellness Consultant Levi Sutton, Place and Wellness Assistant Bessie Phillip lead the class.

“I think these guys are doing a great job teaching,” Mulcahy said. “Part of it is what you teach, but part of it is hearing the people you’re teaching.”

The instructors said class participants have become much more aware of what they eat, and particularly of portion sizes. They get excited when they see progress, such as a big number of steps in a week, and have opened up with each other.

“It’s become a safe class for them to come and share common struggles – I don’t think they even knew each other before this,” Sutton said.

The program had a kickoff meeting for the class in March, and the group has been meeting every Thursday at noon since April. July marked the halfway point of the 32-week program; for the second half, meetings are scaled back to once a month.

“They have the tools, they have the idea, they have the support – I want to see where they go with it,” Sutton said.

Sutton said the instructors learned a lot from teaching the class this year, and will look for ways to tweak the curriculum when they start another class next spring.

For more information about diabetes prevention, reach Place at 335-7582; Sutton at 335-7583; or Phillip at 335-7584.
Cooking with Kenaitze:

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 preventing diabetes.

RHUBARB SALSA

Ingredients
4-5 Roma tomatoes
2-4 stalks celery
1 bunch green onion
½ red onion
2-4 cups sliced rhubarb
3-4 peppers, all colors
1 seeded jalapeno
5 limes, juiced
1 tsp brown sugar
2 tsp salt
Pepper to taste
Cilantro to taste

Directions:
Thinly slice/dice all ingredients and add to bowl. Juice the limes over the chopped vegetables, add in sugar, salt, pepper, and stir to combine.

Recipe courtesy Bobbie Oskoloff

INGA BINGA’S SALMON SALAD

Participants in the Dena’ina Wellness Center’s Diabetes Prevention Program learned that one way to eat healthier is to add grains such as quinoa to salads to create a hearty meal. This recipe combines quinoa with fresh salmon.

Makes: 4 Servings

Ingredients
For the salmon:
1 pound salmon fillets
1 lemon, juiced
Beau Monde Seasoning, or any seasoning you like, to taste
For the quinoa:
1 cup quinoa, rinsed
2 cups water
2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
2 cups minced arugula
3 tablespoons plain Greek-style yogurt
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
Dash sea salt

Directions:
Make the salmon:
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees or preheat the grill to medium.
2. Brush both sides of the salmon with lemon juice and sprinkle with the Beau Monde Seasoning. Arrange the salmon in a large baking dish or place it directly on the grill.
3. Bake or grill the salmon until cooked through, about 25 minutes in the oven or 10 minutes on the grill.

Make the quinoa:
1. In a medium saucepan, bring the quinoa and water to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the quinoa is tender, about 15 minutes. Let the quinoa cool then add the tomatoes and arugula and stir to combine.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, and salt. Add the yogurt mixture to the quinoa salad, and stir to combine.
3. To serve, place a small (4-ounce) piece of salmon on top of some salad. (Salmon can be served hot or cold over the salad.)

From the “What’s Cooking USDA Mixing Bowl,” what'scooking.fns.usda.gov

SPA WATER

A favorite of participants in the Diabetes Prevention Program, make a pitcher of Spa Water to replace sugary sodas, sports drinks or juices. Fresh produce adds minerals and nutrients to the water, in addition to giving it a light, refreshing flavor.

You can try any combination of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs, but here are some favorites:

- Mint
- Sliced cucumber
- Pineapple sage
- Fresh or frozen berries
- Sliced citrus fruits

Directions:
Add ingredients to a large pitcher (a clear glass container lets you appreciate your beverage’s visual appeal). Partially crush herbs or leafy greens to help release their flavor. Fill the pitcher with water and give it a stir. Cover the pitcher with a lid or plastic wrap and let it chill in the refrigerator for a couple of hours for the water to absorb the flavors. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Enjoy!

Submit your favorite Recipe
Chiqinik to those who submitted these recipes. Have a recipe to share? Email it to M. Scott Moon at smoon@kenaitze.org
The Big Picture

Smoked salmon strips fill jars ready for the pressure canner during Yaghanen Youth Program’s senior fish camp. See story, Page 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

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**Yaghanen Youth Program, Education and Career Development**
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907-335-7290

**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**
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**Tribal Court**
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