

The Counting Cord



Together again -
*Tribe celebrates
Opening of the Net*

**Yaghanen keeps youth
engaged all summer**

'A rebirth of our culture'
*Tribal Members get a
peek inside Kahtnuht'ana
Duhdeldiht Campus*

Summer 2022

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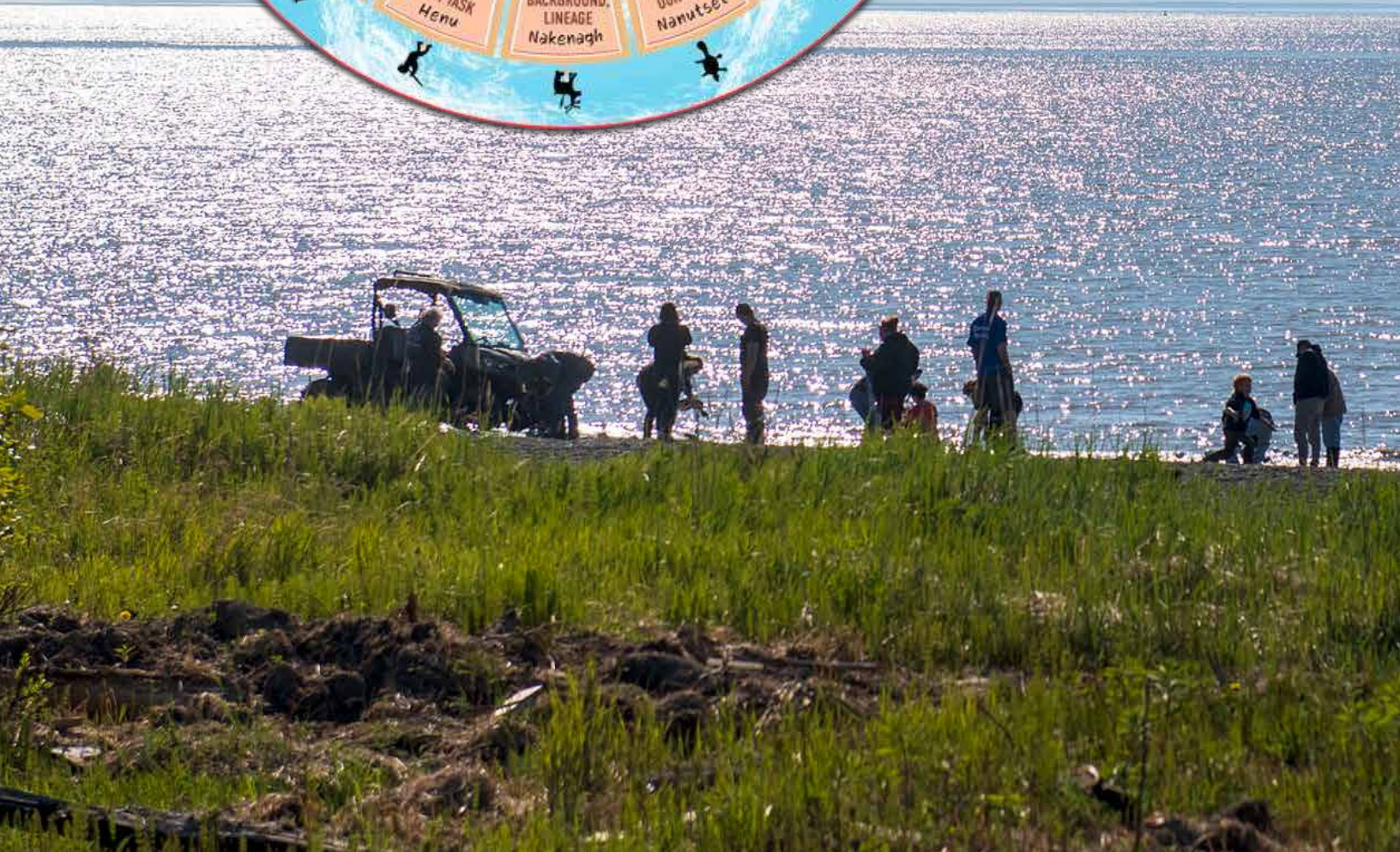
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tence, living upon the outdoors

Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina call this place Yaghanen, the Good Land, because of the abundant natural resources. We continue to value those resources, from the fish that come to our nets, to the plants and berries we gather, to the animals that come to us each fall. We share our traditional hunting, fishing and gathering knowledge and skills, so that we may continue the Dena'ina way of living upon the outdoors.





Yaghalí du?

Ready for learning



The Tribal Council provides updates to Members during the quarterly meeting held at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.

The Tribe's vision is "To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever," and I can't think of a more important way of doing that than sharing language, culture, and traditional knowledge.

On Sept. 1, Tribal Members will gather to celebrate the grand opening of our new space for learning, the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus. Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht is Dena'ina for "the Kenai River people's learning place."

A dedicated educational facility has been part of the Tribe's vision for many years, and I am elated to see this project come to fruition. All of the Tribe's education programs, which serve learners from birth to adulthood, will be together under one roof.

In-person services at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus will begin on Sept. 6.

So much has happened since our ceremonial groundbreaking in April of 2019. Two years ago, construction crews were just starting to lay the groundwork for the building you see today. A year ago, the multi-purpose wing was just a framework of steel beams, with no roof, no walls and no windows.

This summer, Education staff have started moving in, completing the transformation from empty lot to a place for learning.

Some of you got a sneak peek inside the building during our June quarterly meeting. I am grateful to all who were able to share in the excitement. I look forward to seeing learners of all ages in the building this fall, with all the finishing touches in place and the campus ready for sharing knowledge.

Duk'idli, respectfully,
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Tribal Council provides update on construction, broadband projects

The Tribal Council provided an update on a number of projects during the June Quarterly Membership Meeting, held at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.

Peter Evon, the new Executive Director of Tribal Administration, reported that work is underway on the Qiz'unch' Tribal Courthouse renovation and expansion; the Qenq'a Yuyeh Qiqizdlu Maintenance and Warehouse; and the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Community Hall and Harvest Pavilion.

The contractor on the Tribal Courthouse project, UIC Nappairit LLC, began work on May 9. Demolition was completed, and construction crews had started pouring concrete for the expansion. When completed, the expansion will add more than 3,200 square feet to the original 1,480-square-foot structure. There will be two larger courtrooms, expanded and remodeled space for Tribal Court Judges and administrative staff, and two Ts'itq'u Circle rooms.

UIC Nappairit LLC is also the contractor for the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Community Hall and Harvest Pavilion at the Tribe's Waterfront. Work there started right after the June 1 Opening of the Net celebration. Excavation for the foundation began on June 13.

At the Maintenance and Warehouse building, contractor Ames1 LLC began work to erect the pre-engineered structure on May 13. The contractor was ahead of schedule, with the concrete pours for the footings and stem walls completed in early June. The 15,050-square-foot building, located on the Kenai Spur Highway



Crews from Foster Construction and Statewide Steel work June 19 on the Qenq'a Yuyeh Qiqizdlu "the house we put things inside" Maintenance and Warehouse building at the site of the old Anchor Trailer Court, across from Salvation Army in Kenai.

at the former Anchor Trailer Court property, will have room for storage, Maintenance workspace, and offices and a conference room.

Evon also shared that the Tribe has been awarded a \$5 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development Indian Housing Block Grant Competitive program. The funds will help to build an 18-unit Elder housing facility for Kenaitze and Salamatof Tribal Members. Property purchased earlier this year near the intersection of North Forest Drive and Redoubt Avenue in Kenai is being evaluated for the project. The facility is expected to be completed in 2025.

Diana Zirul, Tribal Council Treasurer, shared an update on Nit Qenach'delgesh, an intertribal consortium with the Ninilchik Village Tribe. Zirul also serves as chair of the Nit Qenach'delgesh board of directors.

The purpose of the project is to provide fast, efficient and affordable broadband access to Tribal Members and underserved house-

holds across each tribe's service area, Zirul said.

"I think that's critical," Zirul said. "As we moved into the pandemic, we discovered the value of telehealth, but we also discovered that so many of the people we serve cannot access the internet."

Zirul said the project had identified 21 tower locations. Seventeen have been constructed by other telecommunications companies, and the consortium would lease space on them. The tribes are purchasing land to construct the other four, providing an opportunity to lease them to other telecommunications providers.

Federal funds to improve internet connectivity on tribal lands are being used for the project. The Tribe is continuing to pursue several federal grants as well.

Zirul said the consortium is also looking at other needs Tribal Members might have, such as modems and other computer equipment.

The quarterly meeting closed with self-guided tours of the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.



Healing where there was hurt

Research shines light on boarding schools in Alaska

Benjamin Jacuk was recently named the Alaska Young Professional of the Year. Jacuk has spent the past decade researching boarding schools in Alaska, and has become an expert on the subject.

Benjamin Jacuk was surprised to be nominated for the 2022 Alaska Young Professional of the Year award, and even more surprised when he was announced as the winner.

But he is also grateful for the award, because it reminds him of the people who have influenced his life.

"I'm extremely grateful for getting it. My grandfather died last year, and it's a reminder that he's up there, still looking out for me," Jacuk said.

Jacuk's grandfather was Mackarius "Mack" Dolchok. His parents are John and Katrina (Dolchok) Jacuk.

"Whenever anyone needed help, he was always the first person to be there, no questions asked," Jacuk said of his grandfather. Because of that, Jacuk added, many people called his grandfather "Uncle Mack" – even those who weren't related.

"He was the one to teach me that's what we do, not as only as human beings, but as Native

people," Jacuk said. "It's all about helping, and building other people up."

Jacuk, a Kenaitze Tribal Member, said his mother reinforced those values. Jacuk has gone on to earn master's degrees in Theology and Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

"(Helping others) is not only what we do, it's who we are. And then you throw in the theology major, and there's one thing in the Bible that's very clear: go help those in need," Jacuk said.



'When people are able to live with their

Native culture, it reduces suicide and

increases wellness. When we bring back

culture, we give people ownership of

their lives to live successfully with a

Native lens in a modern world.'

Benjamin Jacuk

Jacuk's main focus in his current work is research into boarding schools in Alaska. He has become an expert on the topic. His work has a very personal nature as his grandfather attended boarding schools growing up. Jacuk was also just the second Alaska Native or American Indian person to graduate from the Princeton seminary. A big part of the reason why, he learned, was that the seminary had "a massive hand" in establishing boarding schools in Alaska and across the country.

However, his theology studies provided him with access to resources he otherwise would not

have known about. His studies also gave him a vocabulary for interpreting the research, and he has been able to pick up on nuances that might otherwise be missed.

In his research, Jacuk has been asking why and how churches and religious organizations had such a large role in boarding schools. He has also been asking two other important questions: "What did they intend to do with us as Native people, and what did they intend to do with the places we live?"

Jacuk has been working at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage as an Indigenous

Researcher and Unguwat Program Manager for almost a year, but has been researching boarding schools for eight to 10 years.

In addition to his research, Jacuk also works to connect young adults, mostly in the Anchorage area, with their culture to prevent suicide and substance abuse.

"When people are able to live with their Native culture, it reduces suicide and increases wellness," Jacuk said. "When we bring back culture, we give people ownership of their lives to live successfully with a Native lens in a modern world."

Jacuk said he grew up on the Muscogee Creek reservation in Oklahoma but spent time in Alaska, especially during the summers, when he learned to fish from his grandfather and his uncle, Ron Dolchok Sr.

Jacuk has worked in many different areas for the betterment of Alaska Native people, including the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. He is also co-chair of the Society for Pentecostal Studies Diversity Committee, which assists scholars from minority backgrounds with scholarships. He is an ordained minister and has led outreach events for at-need individuals throughout Anchorage.

Jacuk credits his grandfather for inspiring his work of helping others and shining a light on the past.

"It's really him that I owe a lot of this to," Jacuk said. "If I can bring healing to a place where there was hurt, it's worth it. It's about the past, and the future of those who come after us."



Together again

Tribe once more celebrates Opening of the Net



Tribal Members and visiting staff join together around the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum for a closing prayer near the end of the Opening of the Net gathering.



Sasha Jackson and Savannah Sparks cook up a batch of fry bread.

Each year, the salmon that have sustained the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina for thousands of years return to Tikahtnu, Cook Inlet, and Kahtnu, the Kenai River.

This year, the people returned too.

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Opening of the Net celebration came back to the Tribe's Waterfront.

"It's very nice to be down here with everybody else. We've been staying apart for so long," said Jolene Ross.

This year's educational fishery opened on June 1. The celebration included lunch at the net for Elders and the Tribe's employees; fresh salmon for dinner; activity booths; and drumming and dancing. The day concluded with a filleting contest.

'It's good to see people I haven't seen in a long time. I miss my fellow Tribal Members – the ones I can remember, and the ones who remember me. I'm happy to see the Tribe prospering and doing well.'

Dennis Davidson

Ross said that she remembers growing up, when somebody was fishing the Tribe's net, all the kids would sit on the beach and watch the net.

"When there were a lot of fish in it, we went and told the grown-ups and they pulled the net," Ross said.

As an adult, Ross said she looks forward to the fresh salmon that come to the net.



Tribal Council Member Virginia Wolf demonstrates her technique for "salmon bacon" using an ice cream scoop to get strips of fish off the bones.

"Whenever I fish the net, it's the first thing I have for dinner," Ross said.

Val Anderson, Ross' aunt, said that in past years, they've even brought a camp stove down to the beach and cooked their salmon at the net.

Anderson said it was exciting to see the first fish of the season come up from the net. Jake Kooly, the Tribal Harvest Program Manager, said about 30 fish had come to the Tribe on the morning tide.

The salmon was very good, said Dennis Davidson, who came from

Anchorage for the event. Davidson said he comes down to the net every year. He worked for the Tribe in the 1980s, and also worked for the Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

"It's good to see people I haven't seen in a long time," Davidson said. "I miss my fellow Tribal Members – the ones I can remember, and the ones who remember me. I'm happy to see the Tribe prospering and doing well."

One of those who remembered Davidson was John Juliussen, who also remembered when the Tribe first set its net, in 1989.

"Everybody wanted to be a part of it," Juliussen said.

Juliussen said there was a period of time when many Tribal Members did not have access to salmon fisheries, and the Tribe's educational fishery helped to meet the need.

Bobbie Oskolkoff noted that many people have contributed to the Tribe's growth over the years.

"It's amazing how many people there are, who you never hear about, who worked so hard to get our people where they are today," Oskolkoff said. "... There's so



Stanley Holland steadies Brylee Renner's hand as she cuts through the tough tail skin of the first salmon she ever filleted.

many things that people here did, and all those little things made a big thing."

The celebration was capped off with a salmon filleting contest. Virginia Wolf and Diana Zirul went first. Then, Art Barbaza was matched up first against Julianne Wilson, the Tribal Harvest Program Supervisor, and Kooly.

Barbaza edged Wilson, filleting a salmon in 53 seconds. Kooly, however, showed his skill with the

fillet knife, cleaning two fish in 32 seconds. Barbaza still won a knife set for his efforts.

Barbaza said he learned to fillet fish from his father when they commercial fished on the lower Yukon River, where he grew up.

"To me, (the key to a good fillet) is cleanliness and making sure there's no waste, Barbaza said.

Earlier in the day, Wolf demonstrated one way to get as much

'Whenever I fish the net, it's the first thing

I have for dinner.'

Jolene Ross

meat from each fish as possible. She showed how to use an ice cream scoop to make what she termed "salmon bacon." With a filleted fish, she runs the scoop along the backbone. The meat comes off in long, thin strips, which she then freezes for three days. After that, she likes to marinate the strips, mince them and use them to make salmon jerky. The minced salmon could also be used for other dishes, such as salmon patties.

Staff from the Wellness department at the Dena'ina Wellness Center also were on hand to share tips for tanning salmon skin. The Education department had activities for kids, and Dr. Ripan Malhi, a genetic anthropologist from the University of Illinois, had a booth to share projects he and his team are working on with the Tribe. (See Page 29)

The celebration also included drumming and singing from the Salamatof Youth Education Program and the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Intertribal Drum group. It was also an opportunity for people to catch up with each other, and share their own fish stories.

"It's nice to be out here with everybody," Ross said.



Sterling Highway project

Ruby Willoya-Williams and Andrew Wilson, in yellow at right, observe a crew from HDR as they conduct a “shovel test” at a Dena’ina cultural site located within the Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60 project in June. The two Kenaitze Tribal Members work as cultural observers on the massive construction job.

‘It’s a beautiful piece of agate found in an isolated area. I like to wonder, what they would have traded for that? How long did they hang on to it? What they would have used it for, and did they think it was a lucky stone?’

*Ruby Willoya-Williams,
Lead Cultural Coordinator for
the Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60 Project*

When an archaeological crew recently found a piece of agate while excavating a site near Cooper Landing, Ruby Willoya-Williams wondered how it might’ve gotten there.

“It’s a beautiful piece of agate found in an isolated area,” said Willoya-Williams the Tribe’s Lead Cultural Coordinator for the Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60 Project. “... I like to wonder, what they would have traded for that? How long did they hang on to it? What they would have used it for, and did they think it was a lucky stone?”

The Sterling Highway project has been talked about for decades.



An agate was discovered in a layer of material associated with Dena'ina culture.

Environmental studies, engineering and public involvement studies were conducted from 2000 to 2018. Actual construction began in 2020.

The Sterling Highway passes through the Sqilantnu Archaeological District, a culturally rich area around the confluence of the upper Kenai and Russian rivers.

The archaeological record shows Dena'ina people arriving in Sqilantnu, which means "ridge place river," more than a thousand years ago. At least four other Alaska Native cultures inhabited the area for 5,000 years before that.

Willoya-Williams and her team of Cultural Observers monitor

the work of the contractor's data recovery team to ensure that cultural and historical resources are excavated and documented before construction moves through an area.

"I like to call us the eyes and the ears of the Tribe out here," Willoya-Williams said.

Many cultural sites are sprinkled along the Kenai River, which is also the current path of the Sterling Highway. The project calls for construction of 10 miles of new roadway north of Cooper Landing, including a new steel arch bridge across Juneau Creek Canyon. The road at the east and west ends of the project will be reconstructed with wider should-

ders, passing lanes, pathways and wildlife crossings.

"Where they're building the new highway, it's affecting (historic Dena'ina) cache pits, and house sites, and travel corridors – they used to mark trails by marking the trees – so it's important for us to categorize the things we're finding," said Virginia Wolf, a Tribal Council Member who has served as the Tribe's liaison to the Alaska Department of Transportation and the other state and federal agencies involved in the project.

Being involved in the project also enables the Tribe, if a burial is found, to collect the remains and ensure they are placed somewhere they can rest in peace, and not under a highway, Wolf said.

The Tribe has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Transportation to hire Cultural Observers for the project.

To help the data recovery crew know what they're looking for, Willoya-Williams provided a tour of the K'beq' Cultural Heritage Site, where they could see a Dena'ina house foundation and a model of a Dena'ina dwelling.

Willoya-Williams said she grew up with Dena'ina culture and feels a personal connection to the Sqilantnu area.

"When I was younger, I went to every Tribal function I could. My grandmother (Deborah Coveyou) made sure we had a connection to our culture," Willoya-Williams said. "It's really easy to fall in love with this area, especially knowing the history of this area."

The Tribe has been involved in documenting and preserving the history of the area for 30 years.



Ruby Willoya-Williams, pictured at the Tribe's K'beq' Cultural Site

The Susten archaeology program was launched in 1992 to educate Tribal youth about their cultural history and heritage. Over the ensuing years, youth archaeologists have worked hand in hand with U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service archaeologists, serving as field crews and laboratory assistants. Their work has led to meaningful scientific discoveries.

The Tribe has also developed and maintained the K'beq' Cultural Heritage Site, where Tribal Members share Dena'ina culture and traditions with visitors from Alaska and beyond.

On the Sterling Highway project, discoveries during the 2021 construction season included hearth

features and cache pits, including one lined with birch, and faunal remains. Data recovery crews also have found chipped stone flakes and tools, such as stone ulus.

Artifacts discovered during excavations are first sent to the Museum of the North at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where they are recorded and catalogued by researchers.

"We're getting information about our history, so we can learn about it, and tell our story," Wolf said. "So much of the past isn't correctly reflected, so having the opportunity to study the past and tell our own story about our history is important."

Prehistoric Dena'ina were drawn to the area for the same reason

that many people visit today.

"This whole area is culturally precious. Everywhere you look, there's something you could use for medicinal purposes, or food purposes," Willoya-Williams said. "... We always say this is the grocery store of the Dena'ina – there's so many resources."

Willoya-Williams said it has been exciting for her to have a front-row seat to watch the archaeological work going on, especially when it involves her cultural heritage.

"It's really exciting being a part of it," Willoya-Williams said. "I've gotten to see the data recovery first-hand, and I sometimes think, 'Hey, that might have been used by my ancestors.'"



Growing up with culture



Tia Holley, a Wellness Consultant at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, helps Ursa Bayes and Christopher Wearly make beaded birch bark ornaments during the Yaghanen Language and Cultural Program's Youth Culture Camp.

School may be out for the summer, but participants in the Yaghanen Youth Program Summer Culture Camp are still doing plenty of learning.

On a recent day trip to the Nikiski Community Recreation Center, learners from ages 5 to 14 took a nature walk to identify plants and trees by their Dena'ina names, made beaded ornaments using birch bark, and capped their day with a dip in the Nikiski Pool.

"It's all been fun," said Hezekiah Curren, age 10, when asked about his favorite activities.

The culture camp has about 45 participants split into three groups based on their age. De-

na'ina language is part of the camp's focus, and the groups have Dena'ina names: Bessi, or owl; Kazhna, or lynx; and Elt'eshi, or black bear. Culture camp runs Monday through Thursday, and participants take part in a wide range of activities.

Trips have included excursions to the Alaska Island and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer and a canoe safety session on Kelly Lake with Kenai National Wildlife Refuge staff. Playing in the Cook Inlet mud was a highlight of a recent trip to the Bishop Creek beach in Captain Cook State Recreation Area.

"I was covered, even my face," said Trey Dodge, an 8-year-old camp participant.

Dodge said he also likes doing the one-foot high kick during Native Youth Olympics. He is working on a drum – one of several he has made – and when they do drumming, his favorite song is Gguggu-yni's Song.

Dodge said his favorite Dena'ina word he's learned is mugulu, which means "milk."

In addition to drums, camp participants have also made medicine pouches, medicinal salves, and birch bark crafts. They've learned about different plants and how they can be used. They've also had swimming lessons and learned about different careers around the Tribe.



Katie Johnson, a Daggeyi Intern with the Tribe, leads the Kazhna group on a plant identification hike. Kazhna is the Dena'ina word for "lynx."

The summer culture camp will end with Fish Week, where participants will spend time at the Tribe's Waterfront and learn about processing salmon.

During their nature walk, Curren and the rest of his Kazhna group were identifying chuq'eya, or birch, and ch'wala, or spruce. They talked about their importance to the Dena'ina, and also paused to share a couple of moose stories.

Miyah Eason, a Yaghanen program Cultural Instructor, said kids pick up the Dena'ina words quickly. Many are able to memorize the words as soon as they hear them; others know the words the groups use every day.

By participating in traditional activities and learning about culture and language, Eason said children think of Dena'ina culture as a regular part of their life.

"They understand culture as something they grow up doing," Eason said.



Veronica Weeks identifies ch'wala, a spruce tree, as Zoey Mitchell watches.

Eason said she's enjoyed working with kids over the summer.

"I grew up in these programs, so it's nice to be a part of them," Eason said.

Yaghanen staff also are preparing for the start of the academic year and the opening of the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus. The

Del Dumi Drum Group, Jabila'ina Dance Group, and Native Youth Olympics are all scheduled to resume on Sept. 7.

To learn more about Yaghanen Youth Language and Cultural Programs, visit www.kenaitze.org/education/youth-language-and-cultural-programs/ or call 907-335-7290.



Culture Camp participants disembark from the Transportation department bus for a day trip to the Nikiski Community Recreation Center.



Brayden Gregory, Jakxton Dalebout, Teddy Dodge and Tanner Gregory play a football game.

A seat at the table



'The Alaska Tribal Health Compact is the single umbrella agreement ... that sets forth the terms and conditions of the government-to-government relationship between Alaska Native tribes and/or tribal organizations, and the United States government through the Indian Health Service.'

Diana Zirul, Tribal Council Treasurer and

Alaska Tribal Health Compact Co-Lead Negotiator



Co-Signers to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact gather in person and on Zoom for a group photo during this spring's annual negotiations with the Indian Health Service in Anchorage.

Having a seat at the table for negotiations with the federal government for healthcare funding is an important part of tribal sovereignty.

The Alaska Tribal Health Compact ensures that the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, along with the other 228 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, not only has that seat, but also a strong voice in advocating for the health and well-being of those the Tribe serves.

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"The Alaska Tribal Health Compact is the single umbrella agreement ... that sets forth the terms and conditions of the government-to-government relationship between Alaska Native tribes and/or tribal health organizations, and the United States government through the Indian Health Service," said Diana Zirul, the Tribal Council Treasurer and an Alaska Tribal Health Compact Co-Lead Negotiator.

The Alaska Tribal Health Compact is authorized under the

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. The Compact supports tribal sovereignty and self-governance, and enhances the statewide Alaska Tribal Health System.

The Tribe has been an active participant in the process since the Compact was formed in 1994. It is the only compact in the nation that covers funding agreements with multiple tribes and tribal organizations, known as Co-Signers. The Alaska Tribal Health Com-



Peter Evon, Executive Director of Tribal Administration; Diana Zirul, Tribal Council Treasurer and Alaska Tribal Health Compact Co-Lead Negotiator; and Mary Ann Mills, Tribal Council Vice Chair, talk during a break in negotiations.

**'The strength of
the Alaska Tribal
Health Compact is
clearly demonstrated
through its consensus
building and unified
approach during joint
negotiations.'**

Diana L. Zirul

pact includes more than \$862 million in funding agreements each year, of which the Tribe receives about \$17 million on average each year.

There are currently 26 Co-Signers. The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is one of just a few tribes to manage its own compact. Many of the Co-Signers are Tribal Health Organizations, such as the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, which co-manages the Alaska Native Medical Center, and the Tanana Chiefs Conference, which provides services to 42 tribes.

The negotiating process begins in March each year with pre-negotiations. During that time, Co-Signers meet with IHS to identify issues to be addressed or reports that are needed before the final negotiations take place over five days in May.

Each Co-Signer has the right to negotiate specific provisions of their own funding agreement. However, items that affect all Co-Signers are negotiated together. Those items might include the annual funding table, which is based on tribal shares; compact language changes; funding agreement changes requested by IHS due to changes in law, regulations or policy; and individual funding agreement changes that might benefit another Co-Signer.

Formal consensus and unity are two of the guiding principles followed by Co-Signers throughout the negotiating process. Other principles include the government-to-government relationship which serves as the foundation for negotiations; respect for all participants; access to information; transparency; and an agreement to discuss the unique character of the Alaska Tribal Health System.

A set of negotiated ground rules help Co-Signers and the IHS improve preparation, planning and communication, streamlining the negotiating process. In fact, Alaska's process and ground rules are often referenced during other negotiations around the country.

"The strength of the Alaska Tribal Health Compact is clearly demonstrated through its consensus building and unified approach during joint negotiations," Zirul said.

Zirul has served as a Co-Lead Negotiator since 2018. In that role, she has been delegated the authority to speak on behalf of the Co-Signers during common negotiations. In years past, former Tribal Council Members Rose Tepp and Jennifer Showal-

ter Yeoman have also served as Co-Lead Negotiators.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe's first medical clinic was opened in 1972 and was managed by the IHS. The Tribe implemented its first compact to provide services itself in the 1990s. Those services have grown into the integrated model of health care offered at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

The Tribe was awarded an Indian Health Service Joint Venture Project award in 2011 to build

and operate the Dena'ina Wellness Center. The project was one of just three projects selected for the highly competitive program that year. Under the terms of the award, the Tribe agreed to design and construct the facility, and the IHS agreed to fund the operation and maintenance costs of the facility for a minimum of 20 years. The Dena'ina Wellness Center opened its doors in 2014.

In addition to Tribal Members, the Tribe has compacted with IHS to provide primary care,

dental, behavioral health, optometry and wellness services to more than 4,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people who live in the Tribe's service area.

Zirul said the Tribe renewed a three-year funding agreement during final negotiations in May.

"The Tribe continually assesses its individual funding agreement to ensure that the services provided at the Dena'ina Wellness Center are eligible for IHS funding," Zirul said.



Kenaitze Tribal Council Treasurer Diana Zirul speaks in her role as an Alaska Tribal Health Compact Co-Lead Negotiator during this spring's negotiations with the Indian Health Service in Anchorage.

'A rebirth of our culture'

Tribal Members get a peek inside Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus

Tribal Members crowd together to join in the festivities as the opening ribbon is cut at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus during the Quarterly Membership Meeting and open house in June.

With a fresh breeze coming off of Tikahtnu, Cook Inlet, and the sound of the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum drifting across the landscape, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe cut the ribbon on the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.

The opening ceremony was held as part of the June Quarterly Membership Meeting – the first event held at the new education campus.

"It's not just a building. What it represents is a rebirth of our culture," said Laurie VanBuskirk.

For as long as she can remember, VanBuskirk said, she has heard people talking about the need for the Tribe to have its own education facility, where learning can be

infused with Dena'ina language, culture and traditional values.

"We can find better ways of teaching to keep our kids more engaged," VanBuskirk said. "Being able to learn the language is huge."

VanBuskirk said she also thinks about the Tribe's Elders who have passed away over the past several years, and how they might not have had the opportunity to share their knowledge with the younger generations. The new building, she said, would provide a space for sharing those experiences.

"It's important to make sure our kids and future generations hang on to that," VanBuskirk said.

The opening ceremony began at the building's entrance

with the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum group. Following the group's closing honor song, Tribal Council Member Liisia Blizzard offered a prayer.

Linda Ross, a Tribal Elder and member of the Education committee, said she was feeling emotional as she offered an opening prayer on what she said was a "very historic occasion."

"I am proud of being Dena'ina, and all of us who are Dena'ina, we love this place," Ross said.

Father Peter, Rector of the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Kenai, also offered prayers and a blessing.

Following the prayers and blessings, Bernadine Atchison,



The Tribal Council provided updates to Members during the meeting, which was held in the building's multipurpose room.

'It blends in with the environment, which is a big part of the Tribe. As big as it is, it still feels cozy and welcoming.'

Terri Murray

Tribal Council Chair, invited all the Tribal Members in attendance to join her in cutting the ribbon.

Following the quarterly meeting, which was held in the building's multipurpose room, Tribal Members were invited to explore the facility.

The 67,259-square-foot building will house the Tribe's Education programs, including the Early Learning preschool, Yaghanen Youth Language and Culture programs, Community Education and Career Training, and the Dena'ina Language Institute. Over the past several years, services have been offered at several different locations.

The education wing includes preschool classrooms on the main floor, and additional classrooms and learning space on the top floor. The basement will include staff workspace.

The multipurpose wing has space for a gathering of up to 300 people. Just off the main room is a cultural classroom, where traditional activities such as processing moose can be done, with observation windows and video capabilities to share the activities in other parts of the building.

A walking track rings the second floor of the multipurpose wing.

The central part of the building includes the main desk, reception

area, library, commercial kitchen and dining area.

Atchison said it was important to the Council that Tribal Members have the first opportunity to tour the building. In naming the campus, she said there is not a specific Dena'ina word for school, but calling it a "learning place" felt appropriate. Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht means "the Kenai River people's learning place" in Dena'ina.

Atchison said that in a recent Education committee meeting, the question was asked, "Why is it important to have this campus?" She said the committee came up with 42 reasons.

"And then when I think of our Tribal Members, we have 1,800 reasons why," Atchison said.

Jessica Newton said she appreciated the exterior of the building, especially the area by the main entrance that resembles fish scales or a basket weave.

"I love it. This is very cool," Newton said. "(My daughter Daisy) has been home-schooling for the last couple of years. She's excited to be able to come here."

Terri Murray said she liked the natural look of the building. Reclaimed wood from the Libby, McNeill, and Libby Cannery, where many Tribal Members worked over the years, is used inside and outside of the building. Colors in the education wing are meant to reflect the colors of the Kahtnu, the Kenai River. The wood grain pattern in the multipurpose room flooring is oriented to point toward Mount Iliamna, Mount Redoubt, and Mount Spurr. When completed, an artic-



Maddy Morris, center, and Nicole Harmon, right, laugh as Nicole's grandma Mary Lou Bottoroff dances with her hands to the Heartbeat of Mother Earth drummers during the quarterly meeting.

**'I like it. If I had little
ones, I'd be happy
to have them come
here. It's about time
we have a building
to call our own.'**

Joy Schwarz

ulated skeleton of a beluga whale will hang from the ceiling of the reception area.

"It blends in with the environment, which is a big part of the Tribe. As big as it is, it still feels cozy and welcoming," Murray said.

Murray said the building will be a wonderful place for the Tribe to gather.

"It's about community. It brings people together," Murray said.

Karen Tollackson said she loved the outdoor space, and appreciated the fence built high enough to keep moose from wandering in.

"The playground is awesome," Tollackson said.

The playground has areas for different developmental stages. The equipment is crafted from

natural wood, and encourages climbing and balancing skills.

Tollackson also liked the classrooms.

"The classroom where Helen is going to be teaching is phenomenal," Tollackson said, referring to Helen Dick, a Dena'ina Elder and first language speaker who has worked extensively with Tribe's Dena'ina Language Institute.

"I like it. If I had little ones, I'd be happy to have them come here," said Joy Schwarz as she finished her tour. "It's about time we have a building to call our own."

Grand opening festivities for the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus are being planned for Sept. 1. In-person, onsite services will begin on Sept. 6. For more information about the Tribe's education programs, call 907-335-7667.

Do you know a Tribal Member who deserves recognition? Nominate them for a Kenaitze Tribal Member Award!



Kenaitze Tribal Member Awards recognize Tribal Members who have shown dedication to Alaska Native culture, heritage and communities.

Kenaitze Tribal Member Elder Recognition Award: This award is for recognition of Tribal Members who are 55 years of age and older.

Kenaitze Tribal Member Legacy Award: This award is for recognition of all Tribal Members regardless of age and may include a Tribal Member who has passed on.

Kenaitze Tribal Member Youth Recognition Award: This award is for recognition of Tribal Members who are 12 to 17 years of age.

Find more information and nomination forms on the Tribe's website at <https://bit.ly/KITAWards>.

Questions? Call Tribal Member Services at 907-335-7204 or email Jessica Crump, Tribal Services Supervisor, at jcrump@kenaitze.org.

Nominations must be received by August 30, 2022.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe **Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program**

Serving Alaska Native and American Indian people

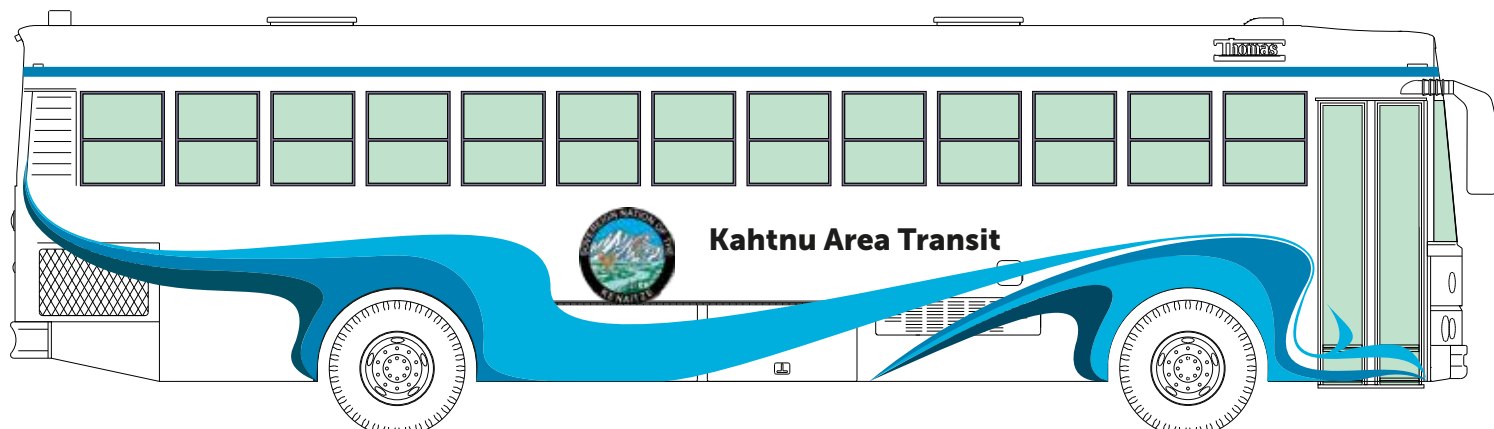
- Do you pay for water service in Kenai or Soldotna?
- Has your water service been disconnected?
- Do you have a pending disconnection?
- Do you need assistance with your current water bill?
- Do you need new service?

Income Eligibility Guidelines	
Family Size	Maximum Net Monthly Income
1 person	\$2,011
2 people	\$2,721
3 people	\$3,431
4 people	\$4,141
5 people	\$4,851
6 people	\$5,561
7 people	\$6,271

Call Na'ini Social Services to schedule an appointment.
907-335-7600 • 1001 Mission Ave., Suite B • Kenai, AK 99611



Tribe to launch Kahtnu Area Transit



This artist's rendering shows the design for the Kahtnu Area Transit bus. The design is intended to evoke Kahtnu, the Kenai River.

Kahtnu Area Transit, the Tribe's fixed-route bus service, is getting ready to roll.

Earlier this year, the Tribe was awarded a \$1.1 million Federal Transit Administration grant to pilot fixed-route bus service on the central Kenai Peninsula.

"Access to reliable transportation is one of the biggest drivers of quality of life on the central Kenai Peninsula. Reliable transportation improves access not just to the Tribe's services, but also employment, education, essential life activities such as grocery shopping, and healthy social opportunities," said Brandi Bell, Elders and Transportation Manager. "The Tribe is excited to provide this new service to the area."

Kahtnu is the Dena'ina word for the Kenai River. The Tribal Council recently approved a design for the bus that evokes the river.

Bus service will be open to Tribal Members, Alaska Native and American Indian people, and the general public. It is the Tribe's vision that Kahtnu Area Transit fill in gaps in the area's transportation network and complement existing trans-



Kahtnu Area Transit service will launch with a bus traveling between Sterling and Nikiski.

portation services, including Central Area Rural Transit System Inc. and Alaska Cab taxi service.

Kahtnu Area Transit service will launch with one bus traveling between Sterling and Nikiski on the Kenai Spur Highway and Sterling Highway. The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is working with other local

governments to determine bus stop locations.

Kahtnu Area Transit is expected to be fully operational in 2023.

The Tribe is working with the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the cities of Kenai and Soldotna to finalize the initial route and determine bus stop locations.

DNA research continues with salmon study

The Tribe first contacted Dr. Ripan Malhi, an anthropology professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign who specializes in tribal DNA studies, in 2013.

Since then, the Tribe's collaboration with Dr. Malhi has grown. During a recent visit to Kenai, Dr. Malhi was able to touch base with the Tribal Council and the Tribe's Research Review Board to discuss a new project to map the use of salmon as a cultural keystone species of the Dena'ina people.

Dr. Malhi's original project with the Tribe was to analyze the DNA from the remains of a Dena'ina ancestor discovered in the Kenai area.

That project was expanded to include analysis of DNA from present-day Tribal Members. Dr. Malhi and his research team also recruited people to participate in a study on the effects of historical trauma and cultural revitalization on genetics.

Dr. Malhi's team also is analyzing the DNA from ancient salmon excavated by the late Dr. Alan Boraas, a former Professor of Anthropology at Kenai Peninsula College.

Prior to the pandemic, Dr. Malhi had been making annual visits to Kenai to update the Tribe on his work. In 2018 and 2019, he was able to present some community results on the analysis of mitochondrial DNA, which comes from a person's maternal lineage. He also met with people individually.

While the pandemic limited his travel to Kenai for two years, his research continued with analysis of the entire genome. With those



Dr. Ripan Malhi, an anthropology professor who specializes in tribal DNA studies, tours the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus in June.

results, Dr. Malhi and his team can begin comparing the Dena'ina ancestor's DNA to that of living Tribal Members, and to other groups.

Dr. Malhi provided some general results to Tribal Members last fall, and continues to gather feedback and thoughts on how the information can be used to further other projects.

Dr. Malhi's most recent project looks at DNA from ancient and modern sockeye, pink, and coho salmon to identify genetic changes over the past 2,000 years.

The project will use interviews, surveys, focus groups and archival work to supplement historical and legal documents that demonstrate how salmon have been used from pre-European contact to present times.

The project will also integrate genomic information and traditional knowledge to understand salmon stewardship practices of indigenous people over time.

Dr. Malhi's research team will collaborate with the Tribe and Kenai Peninsula College on the project.



Elders take on summer



Nancy Nelson gets help with a fancy hat from Brandi Bell, Elders and Transportation Manager, during a Kentucky Derby themed tea party at Tyotkas Elder Center.

Stop by Tyotkas Elder Center on any weekday this summer, and you'll find it buzzing with activity.

Tyotkas is back to serving dine-in meals five days a week. There is also a full slate of daily activities scheduled. Groups for men and women each meet once a week, live music is back during Wednesday lunches, and there's even arts and crafts activities geared for Elders to do with their grandchildren. Wellness staff stop by to do fitness classes and blood pressure checks. And, field trips are being planned each month.

"This is fantastic. They do so much to cater to us, and treat us with so much respect. When you come here, you feel special," said Diane Autry as she enjoyed a recent Kentucky Derby-themed tea party.

Brandi Bell, the Tribe's Elders and Transportation Manager, said staff have been reaching out to Elders to encourage them to get out and reconnect after two years of pan-

demic-related restrictions.

"We really try to get them out of the house, and back out in the community. We do try to make those connections," Bell said.

Autry said she appreciates all of the effort. Because she no longer works, visits to Tyotkas provide her with opportunities to socialize. She missed those opportunities during the pandemic.

"That really put us in a slump, not going anywhere or doing anything. Then you get into a routine of not going anywhere or doing anything," Autry said, adding that she has too many years left to spend them sitting at home.

Autry said she also enjoys the field trips and outings. She recently went on a day trip to the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward. Even though she needed some assistance, she still had a great time.

"They don't make me feel handicapped," Autry said.

Bell said that accessibility and accommodations factors in planning Tyotkas day trips.

"And we try to make it a trip that our Elders want to do and see and experience," Bell said.

Tina Strayhorn said she has enjoyed the trips to the Tribe's Waterfront, as well as to other beaches in the area.

"I like going to the ocean and watching the setnetters, or just walking on the beach," Strayhorn said.

Strayhorn was enjoying the Kentucky Derby tea party with friends Barb Miller and Flora Melovedoff. They said Bingo is their favorite activity, but they're starting to branch out.

"Bingo is the best, but now that it's summer, I like going down to the net to see how they do all of that," Strayhorn said.

While Elders are being encouraged to come back to Tyotkas, Bell said that Elders Advocates are doing home visits for those who aren't quite ready.

In addition to the regularly scheduled activities, Bell said that Elders staff are planning some special events, such as a dinner theater featuring a local performing group.

Tyotkas is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Coffee and tea are served from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays.

For more information about Tyotkas Elder Center, call 907-335-7280.



Tribal Member hired for Director of Health Systems role

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is pleased to announce that Christopher Koski has accepted the position of Director of Health Systems. Chris started in his new role on July 8.

Chris is a Kenaitze Tribal Member. He says the position incorporates his professional interests and provides an opportunity for him to put his skills to work for his Tribe. In his role, he will oversee operations at the Dena'ina Wellness Center and Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House.

Chris will also provide guidance to the Tribal leadership in planning health and wellness strategies, integration of care, goals, initiatives and structure in align-

ment with the Tribe's values and vision.

Chris comes to Kenai from Klamath Falls, Oregon, where he has served as Director of Customer Experience and Health Equity for Cascade Health Alliance. Chris has also worked in management and administration for Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage. Chris is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and Navy veteran.

Chris grew up in Anchorage, and is excited to move back to Alaska, and especially to the community where his family is originally from. He sees his new role as an opportunity to give back to his Tribe.

Outside of the office, Chris enjoys spending time with his wife and

their two cats, woodworking and working outdoors. He also enjoys fishing with his family and travel.



Chris Koski, Health Systems Director

Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus Grand Opening

Kenaitze Indian Tribal Members are invited to celebrate the grand opening of the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus, the "Kenai River People's Learning Place."

Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus
12271 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai

Opening Ceremony and Ribbon Cutting
at 10 a.m., followed by lunch and
guided tours throughout the day.

**10 a.m. Thursday,
September 1, 2022**



Bequsilna, 'those who are gone'

Douglas Alexander Darien Sr.



Corporal Douglas Alexander Darien Sr., 87, passed away from natural causes in Anchorage on April 30, 2022.

A celebration of life was held May 28 at Witzleben Legacy Funeral Home in Anchorage. Marine Corp Honors were presented at the service.

Douglas was born on May 3, 1934, in Kenai to Manuel and Doris Darien. He was a husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, friend, commercial fisherman, commercial painter and Marine. He was very honored and proud of his Marine Corps service.

Douglas was preceded in death by two children, Douglas Darien Jr. and Baby Darien.

He is survived by his loving spouse, Judy Darien; son, Gabriel Darien; son and daughter in law, Robert and Alvina Darien; grandkids, Dylan Darien, Hunter Darien, Wendy Darien, and Ashley Darien; great-grandkids, Alex and Aspen; best friends, Mike Carpenter and Susan Wells; and numerous other family members and friends.

Read his full obituary at <https://bit.ly/DDarien>.

Elizabeth Ann 'Betty Ann' Kirschner



Longtime Nikiski resident Elizabeth Ann "Betty Ann" Kirschner passed away on Saturday, March 12, 2022 at home after an extended illness.

Betty Ann, age 77, was born on April 7, 1944, in Anchorage, Alaska. Her parents were the late Sussanna "Susie" (March) Wik Dalton and Alfred Wik, both born in Kenai.

Before moving to Nikiski in the early 1980s, Betty Ann was a barber. In Nikiski, she continued to cut hair while working at the M & M Market and for many years at the Nikiski Post Office where she never met a stranger. She was artistically gifted with her paintings of Alaskan landscapes and tole painting. Betty Ann loved to collect and surround herself with beautiful things. She was a Kenaitze Tribal Member and a shareholder in both Cook Inlet Region, Inc. and Kenai Natives Association.

Betty Ann is survived by her son Wayne Kirschner Jr.; daughter-in-law Darla Kirschner; grandchildren Taylor Kirschner, Timothy Griffith, Ford Kirschner and Zoe Kirschner; as well as two great-grandchildren; her sister Norma Johnson and brother Harold Wik; and numerous

nieces, nephews and cousins. She is also survived by a community of friends and extended family and will be dearly missed.

In addition to her parents, Betty Ann was predeceased by her premature maternal twin daughters, Carrie Ann and Betty Ann Kirschner; her husband Wayne Kirschner Sr.; daughter Suzanne "Sis" Davidson; brothers Jordon Wik and Hayward Wik; and second husband Rod Thompson.

Betty Ann was well-loved by all. She will fondly be remembered for her "green eyes," sense of humor and big personality. She loved nature and one of her favorite things to do was to teach others the best way to call in a moose. When Betty Ann was in a room, the room was full!

Philip 'Little Guy' Wilson Jr.



Philip "Little Guy" Wilson Jr., age 74, a resident of Anchorage, passed away of natural causes, on Saturday, April 9, 2022, at his

daughter's home.

He was born March 9, 1948, in Kenai to Philip Wilson Sr. and Fiocla Wilson. He served in the United States Army and was in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 with the 44th Medical Brigade.

Little Guy fished commercially in Cook Inlet with his brother

Coby for many years. He was employed for many years with Atlantic Richfield (ARCO) on the platforms of the Cook Inlet and on the North Slope. He has resided with his daughter, Norma Johnson, son-in-law, Brian Johnson, and his two granddaughters, Bella and Audrey, for the last 16 years. His granddaughters were the highlight of his life, as he watched them grow from birth to now ages 13 and 10.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Philip and Fiocla Wilson; sister, Joyce Williford; and two infant brothers.

He is survived by his daughter, Norma Wilson Johnson; stepdaughters, Sherry Graves and Jamie Hoehne; siblings, Phyllis Bookey, Kathy Rodgers, Coby Wilson, and Russell Wilson, all of Kenai. He has numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends all over that he loved.

Read his full obituary at <https://legcy.co/3MQGJxb>.

Virginia Gail 'Sister' Hunter



Kenai resident Virginia Gail "Sister" Hunter, 82, passed away Friday, July 15, 2022 at home.

Funeral services were Monday, July 25, at Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church. Burial followed in the church cemetery. Pallbearers were George Hunter, Stephan Plagge, Codie Dockter, Lance Necessary, Nathan Orloff and Bill McCann.

Virginia was born Nov. 6, 1939, in Anchorage. She lived in various places throughout the world during her life, including Africa. Early in her life, she did housekeeping, but really enjoyed the years she worked at the Katmai as a prep cook with her friend, Genny Williamson.

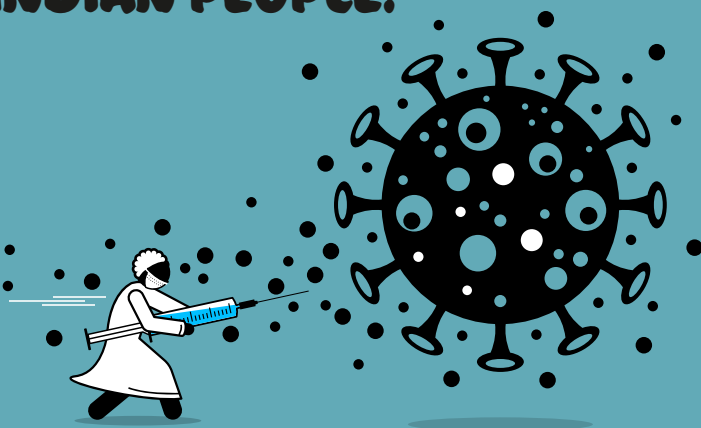
Virginia was preceded in death by her parents, George Hunter and Rika Murphy, three brothers, two sisters, and her daughter, Doreen Harmon.

She is survived by her daughters and their spouses, Bernadine Atchison and James Bartl of Soldotna, Cathleen "Cookie" and Charles Pinkerton, and Elizabeth "Libby" Atchison, all of Kenai; grandson, Casey Mitchell of Anchor Point; granddaughters, Jessica Newton of Soldotna and Jacqueline Franke of Ft. Hood, Texas; grandson, Bobby Smith Jr. of Wasilla; granddaughter, Shannon McCann of Kenai; grandson, Lance Necessary of Kenai; and granddaughters, Nichole Harmon of Soldotna and Olivia Tjapkes of Montague, Michigan; 10 great-grandchildren; her sister, Hazel Felton of Anchorage; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Read her full obituary at <https://legcy.co/3Bbbbis>.

THE DENA'INA WELLNESS CENTER HAS COVID-19 VACCINES AND BOOSTERS FOR ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLE.

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Tribal Member News

Pitto earns master's from Gonzaga



Tribal Member Lucy Pitto recently earned her master's degree in Communications and Leadership from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

Johnson graduates from Fort Lewis College



Patrick Johnson recently graduated from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado with his bachelor's degree in Computer Science Technology. Patrick plans to pursue a career in the defense industry.

Patrick is pictured with his parents, Travis and Sarah Johnson. Sarah and Patrick are Tribal Members.

Baldwin joins Alaska Institute for Justice

Ben Baldwin recently accepted a new position as the Climate Justice Tribal Liaison Director with the Alaska Institute for Justice, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of all Alaskans.

In his new position, Baldwin is working with tribes to document shifts and changes in the environment related to the climate crisis, among other duties. The organization's focus is on tribes that are in imminent danger due to environmental impacts such as melting permafrost and erosion.

The Alaska Institute for Justice is partnering with the Woodwell Climate Research Center and the Arctic Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School on this work. This project aims to engage in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adaptation dialogues to increase the awareness of the dangers of melting permafrost, advocate for human rights on Arctic communities, and help tribes exercise sovereignty as they deal with the impacts of the climate crisis.

Victoria Rodriguez accepted into doctorate program

Victoria Rodriguez received a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology and minor in Sociology in 2021 from Nevada State College. This fall, Victoria has been accepted into the Doctorate of Pharmacy program at Roseman University in Henderson, Nevada. She is celebrat-



ed by her proud parents Tracy and Tammie Rodriquez and her three brothers.

Tammie Rodriguez joins Moapa Band of Paiutes child care program

Tammie Rodriguez has joined the case management team for the Moapa Band of Paiutes Tribal Child Care 12-month certificate subsidy program in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The program's mission is to provide safe, supportive, high-quality cultural and educational childcare services to Native American and Alaska Native families. Ashly Osborne, MBOP Tribal Child Care Project Director, writes that Tammie's "kind, caring, quality work ethic and understanding of our tribal workplace culture was a perfect fit to help assist children and families. ... Mrs. Rodriguez has



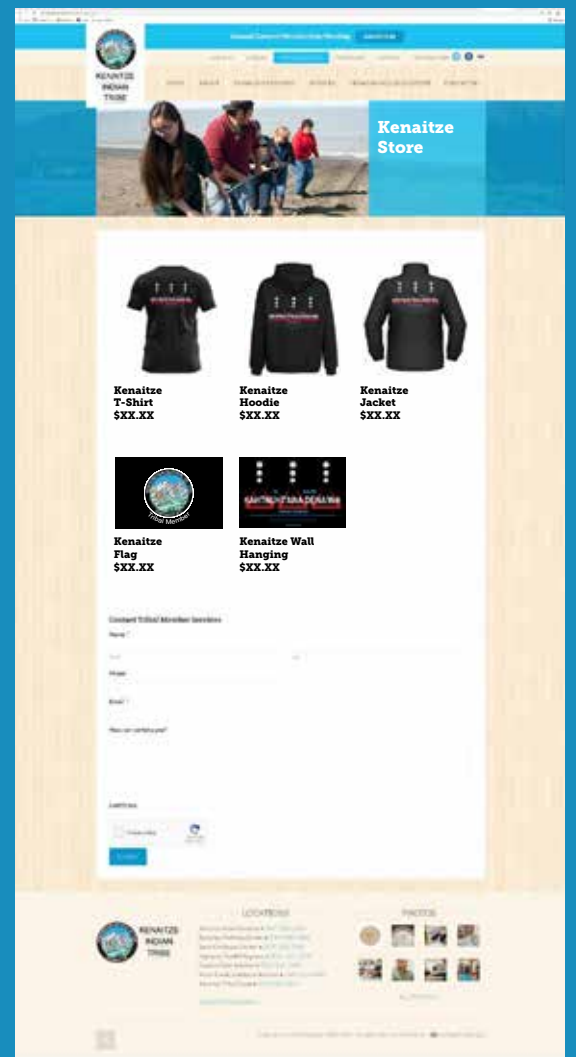
been a delightful addition as she has quickly acclimated as a part of our team. It's important to our participants to see our staff to have a diverse Native team, and she is a proud member of your tribe representing honorably. My tribe along with our program is greatly appreciative that her passion is a central part of serving our participants."

Show your Kenaitze Tribal Member pride!

Clothing and other items featuring the Kenaitze Tribal Seal and Logo are available from Tribal Member Services.

- Sweatshirts, vests and jackets
- Flags and plaques
- Backpacks
- Hats
- And more!

Visit www.kenaitze.org/tribal-member-services/kenaitze-store/ or scan the QR code to see what's available.



Share your news

Do you have any news you'd like to share? Graduations, marriages, or births? Any other personal milestones?

Email news@kenaitze.org to be considered for inclusion in a future edition of the Counting Cord.

Have you lost a loved one?

For information about services and support provided by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, please contact Jessica Crump, Tribal Member Services Supervisor, by phone at 907-335-7204 or by email at jcrump@kenaitze.org.



Cooking with Kenaitze



Thai Moose and Brussels Sprout Stir-Fry with Sweet and Spicy Spruce Tip Dressing



Thai Moose and Brussels Sprout Stir-Fry with Sweet and Spicy Spruce Tip Dressing

This month, we put an Alaska twist on an Asian dish. Thai Moose and Brussels Sprout Stir-Fry with Sweet and Spicy Spruce Tip Dressing incorporates moose and spruce tips with seasonally available vegetables and greens, such as Brussels sprouts and kale. Add the sweet and spicy dressing to give this summer dish a kick!

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Calories: 457 per serving

Ingredients

¾ cup brown rice

½ cup cashew nuts or peanuts, chopped

1 ½ tablespoon vegetable oil

1 tablespoon lime juice

14 ounces moose steaks (or other game meat)

1 pound Brussels sprouts, sliced

1 ½ cups chopped curly kale

1 carrot, skin peeled and discarded, the rest peeled into ribbons

4 ounces radishes (4-5 radishes), sliced

4 ounces mushrooms (about 1 cup), sliced

¼ cup fresh basil, chopped

Sweet and Spicy Spruce Tip Dressing

1 tablespoon sweet chilli sauce

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 red chilli, finely chopped

2 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon spruce tips, finely chopped

Directions:

1. Heat 1 ½ cups of water to a boil in a pot. Add rice to the boiling water, reduce heat to medium-low and cook until the rice has absorbed all the water (about 30-45 minutes). Remove rice from heat once it has absorbed all the water.

2. While the rice is cooking, heat 2 teaspoon of the vegetable oil in the frying pan and cook the steaks for 2-3 minutes on each side for medium-rare, or an extra minute on each side for medium. Remove from the pan; set aside to rest.

3. Add the remaining oil to the pan. Fry the Brussels sprouts for 3 minutes, stirring, then add the kale, carrot, radishes, and mushrooms, and continue to cook for another 5 minutes.

4. Whisk the dressing ingredients together. Thinly slice the steaks, then toss with the vegetables and dressing. Place ½ cup of rice on four plates, then divide up the stir-fry evenly on each plate. Top each plate with basil and cashews to serve.

Tips:

To save time, money, and reduce prep work, substitute: fresh Brussels sprouts with frozen Brussels sprouts; fresh Kale with frozen spinach; fresh carrot with frozen carrots; and fresh mushrooms with frozen mushrooms.

Moose can be substituted with caribou, elk, bison, or other lean meats. Kale can be substituted with spinach, collard greens, cabbage, radish greens, and mustard greens.

Registered Dietician Stephen Kronlage assists un'ina at the Dena'ina Wellness Center with medical nutrition therapy, which includes managing weight loss, diabetes, IBS, weight gain, Celiac disease, and other conditions through an individualized nutrition plan. To make an appointment, call 907-335-7500.



Dena'ina naqenaga

Ch'ishanich • Midsummer

Dena'ina naqenaga is "our Dena'ina language." Find more Dena'ina language resources online at www.kenaitze.org/education/denaina-language-institute/, including an interactive audio dictionary with this and many more Dena'ina words and phrases.





Addresses and Phone Numbers



Administration Building
150 N. Willow St., Kenai
907-335-7200



Na'ini Family and Social Services
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7600



Qiz'unch' Tribal Court
130 S. Willow St., Suite 3
907-335-7219



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



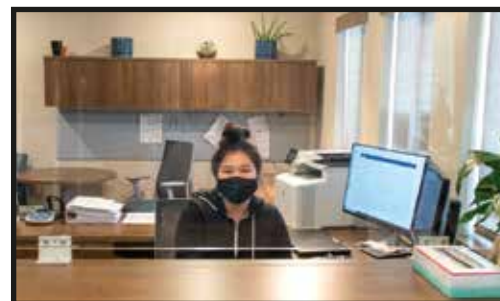
Dena'ina Wellness Center
508 Upland St., Kenai
907-335-7500



Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus
12271 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai
907-335-7667



**Chuq'eya Qenq'a
Birch Tree House –Behavioral Health**
510 Upland St., Kenai
907-335-7300



**Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally
Designated Housing**
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7228



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