

JUNE 2022

# CHOOSE LIFE NEWSLETTER



Nishnawbe  
Aski Nation  
ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ ᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ



## JUNE - STRAWBERRY MOON (ODEMIN GIIZIS)

June is known as the Strawberry Moon, the strawberry is also known as the heart berry "Ode" meaning heart. When cut in half the strawberry looks like a heart and is a medicine often used in ceremony. Representing healing and reconciliation, an appropriate time of year to recognize June as National Indigenous Peoples History Month as well as Pride Month!



## INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM MEMBERS!



**Bibianne Charles** is a wife, mother of 3, & grandmother of 3 who is from Ginoogaming First Nation. She lives 20 mins from the city of Thunder Bay, ON on a beautiful piece of land filled with ponds and trails which she enjoys along with her family who hunt, fish and even gather traditional medicines on the property. Bibianne shares "I guess you can say this is my own land based healing that I continue to learn about."

Bibianne has an extensive background working with children and youth, having worked, in child welfare for 29 years. She has also worked as a PSW, worker for Head Start and daycares, she has supported children as a TA in an elementary school, with most recent work in Child Development as a Healthy Babies Healthy Children worker. After missing the connection gained from visiting the communities, she is happy to shift her focus to a new to her position as the **NAN Choose Life Coordinator**.



We would like to also take the time to introduce **Allan Turtle** who has recently accepted the position of NAN Choose Life Community Advisor. He joins our team with, 8 years of work history, creating opportunities for youth. He is experienced in research, project management and youth based programming.

Originally from Fort Severn First Nation and has lived in Northwestern Ontario most of his life, Allan is a man of few words but comes with a wealth of expertise. He has since relocated from Sioux Lookout to join our NAN Choose Life Team as our new **NAN Choose Life Community Advisor**.

## IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT

**NAN Hope**  
CALL 1-844-NAN-HOPE  
(626-4673)  
[nanhope.ca](http://nanhope.ca)

**Crisis Services Canada**  
[crisiservicescanada.ca](http://crisiservicescanada.ca)  
Call 1-833-456-4566  
Text 45645

**Hope for Wellness Help Line**  
CALL 1-855-242-3310  
[hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca)

**Kids Help Phone**  
CALL 1-800-668-6868  
Text 686868  
[kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)

**Talk4Healing**  
CALL 1-855-554-HEAL (4325)  
[talk4healing.com](http://talk4healing.com)

**CMHA Crisis Response**  
[thunderbay.cmha.ca](http://thunderbay.cmha.ca)  
Call Thunder Bay:  
807-346-8282  
District/Toll-Free:  
1-888-269-3100  
Northwest Region:  
1-866-888-8988

WE ASK YOU TO PLEASE REACH OUT TO SOMEONE

## NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM

RECENT STAFF CHANGES BELOW IN PURPLE

**NAN Director Social Services**  
Robin Quachegan

**NAN Choose Life Manager**  
Marla Murray [mmurray@nan.ca](mailto:mmurray@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Policy Analyst**  
Jessica Gacsi [jgacsi@nan.ca](mailto:jgacsi@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Community Advisor**  
Allan Turtle [aturtle@nan.ca](mailto:aturtle@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Data Officer**  
Hannah Caruana [hcaruana@nan.ca](mailto:hcaruana@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Officer**  
Kiaya Drake [kdrake@nan.ca](mailto:kdrake@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Training Coordinator**  
Miranda Echum [mechum@nan.ca](mailto:mechum@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Coordinator**  
Bibianne Charles [bcharles@nan.ca](mailto:bcharles@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Cultural Coordinator**  
Janine Desmoulin [jdesmoulin@nan.ca](mailto:jdesmoulin@nan.ca)

Please contact Kiaya Drake at [kdrake@nan.ca](mailto:kdrake@nan.ca) to provide updates contact information when Choose Life Staff changes occur in your community or organization.

# CHOOSE LIFE: SELF CARE PLAN ACTIVITY

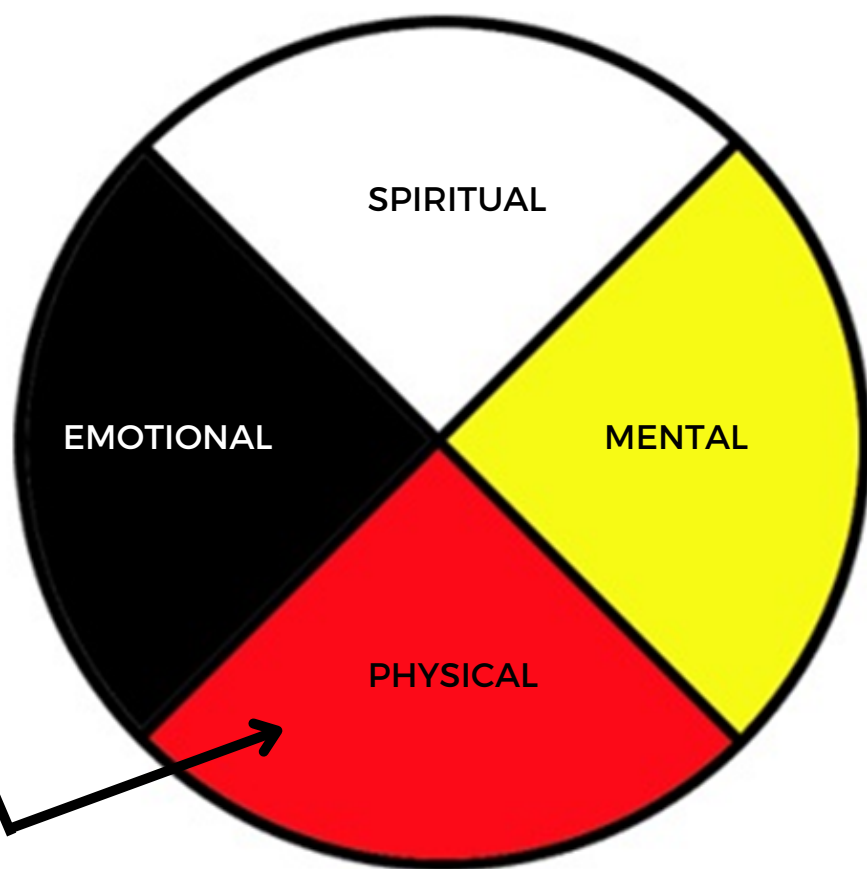
This activity can be used to create a Self-Care Plan: To Reset & Restore Balance within self by looking at the 4 areas of self on the Medicine Wheel.

1) Take a look at Medicine Wheel. It has four (4) parts which make up Self; Spiritual, Physical, Mental, and Emotional are all things each person has and also are 4 areas of self we each have to spend time working on (exercising) daily to have a sense of well-being and to feel our best.

2) Review the list of activities below. Feel free to add a few of your own not listed and draw a line from the activity to one or more area of self in the Medicine Wheel; example below. Remember there are NO WRONG ANSWERS and the activities listed may even fall under multiple sections! Each persons sense of self is different so our answers may be different too!

- Gardening
- Smudging Ceremony
- Cooking
- Dancing
- Journaling
- Eating Healthy Food
- Running
- Swimming
- Chopping Wood
- Taking a Bath
- Fishing/Hunting
- Laughing
- Crafting
- Finding Support
- Napping
- Time in Nature
- Listening to Music
- Climbing a Tree
- Learning Something New
- Sitting by the Fire
- Sewing
- 
- 
- 
- 

## MEDICINE WHEEL



3) Now that the activities are sorted. Circle 4 activities that you would like to try this week or continue doing, (1) for each section of the Medicine Wheel, these will make up your plan. When we exercise each area of self we work toward creating balance in our day, each day we work toward our goal(s) we are caring for self.

4) Try to do one or more of the activities circled this week to see your plan in action!  
This is a simple and easy self-care exercise to help identify a first step based on your own goals and what area of self you want to begin exercising today!



"A Ribbon Skirt can be as simple as a piece of clothing, or as Sacred as a piece of regalia used only for Sweatlodge and Ceremony. It can be an expression of womanhood and strength, of remembrance of the Missing and Murdered, a symbol of defiance and protection of natural resources against corporate powers, or a representation of the journey of those who are reclaiming their identities through traditional practices. Ribbon Skirts are a symbol of resilience, survival and identity, but their meaning changes with each person who wears one and each person who shares their history." - *The Ribbon Skirt Project from Indigenous Nouveau*



The NAN Choose Life Team began taking part in Wellness Days, to promote healing and connection, to gather, learn and share with one another. This past month we were grateful to participate in Ribbon Skirt Making, led by local artist Mary Magiskan, who provided teachings and direction to our team. We hope to begin pressing record during these Wellness Days to share with the extended Choose Life Teams in the coming months.

So Stay tuned!



Choose Life also had an opportunity to connect with Chiefs during the NAN Chiefs Spring Assembly, in Thunder Bay on May 10-12, 2022, at our first information booth this fiscal year!



## CHOOSE LIFE TRAINING SESSIONS

REPORTING TRAINING with Hannah Caruana

NEW STAFF ORIENTATION with NAN Choose Life

"Journey Around the  
Medicine Wheel"  
with Earl Lambert

Join us every Friday at  
10am-12:30pm EST

- For a FREE Virtual Training Opportunity for all community Choose Life Staff.
- Training Certificate will be provided to those who are in regular attendance.
- First Session April 1, 2022 & final session June 24, 2022. 4 Weeks left!

Email NAN Choose Life Training Coordinator Miranda Echum [mechum@nan.ca](mailto:mechum@nan.ca) to book your training session or inquire about any other training opportunities or events hosted by NAN Choose Life.

Choose Life and other NAN events can be found on attached calendar.

LIVE WITH  
**pride**

## CULTURAL DATABASE

NAN Choose Life Team is happy to announce the creation of a Cultural Database is underway! If you can share any Cultural Resources to include on the Cultural Database or know of anyone willing to share their cultural or land-based teachings/skills/gifts within Choose Life please encourage them to fill out the **Cultural Helpers Form** accessible at: Choose Life ([nan.ca](http://nan.ca)). If you have any questions regarding the data base please contact Janine Desmoulin [jdesmoulin@nan.ca](mailto:jdesmoulin@nan.ca).

## HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

You can contribute to the Newsletter, Calendar or nominate a Choose Life staff for **Honorable Mentions** by emailing Janine Desmoulin [jdesmoulin@nan.ca](mailto:jdesmoulin@nan.ca). Please feel free to also share teachings, helpful resource links, photos, activities or events which promote the good work of Choose Life throughout NAN. Archived Newsletters can now be accessed on the NAN Choose Life webpage: **Choose Life - Nishnawbe Aski Nation** ([nan.ca](http://nan.ca))

## REFERENCES

1. <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/chapter/13-grandmother-moons/via/@pressbooks>
2. <https://www.theribboniskirtproject.ca/whatisaribboniskirt>