

CHOOSE LIFE NEWSLETTER



Nishnawbe
Aski Nation
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Our team acknowledges that NAN communities have varying dialects, languages, and cultural teachings. Teachings vary from First Nation to First Nation and even from one geographic region to another. For more information, please consult with a Traditional Elder, Healer or Medicine Person. With respect to this, our newsletter will do our best to be inclusive to both Ojibwe, Ojicree, and Cree teachings that are shared. Please share any teachings that you are comfortable sharing and it will be included in our newsletter. Protocols will be followed with semaa (tobacco).

MARCH: SNOW CRUST MOON

OJIBWE: ONAABANI GIIZIS

Snow Crust Moon is a time of reawakening and rebirth. We recognize it as the time of new beginnings. During this moon, we sound out our voices and begin the process of planting the seeds of creation.



The snow still covers the earth, but underneath it, we know the world is awakening from its slumber. This moon is also known as the Worm Moon, Goose Moon, Sugar Moon, Eagle Moon, and well as many others.

MARCH: SUGAR MOON

OJIBWE: ZIISBAKDOKE GIIZAS

The third moon of Creation is Sugar Moon, as the maple sap begins to run, we learn of one of the main medicines given to the anishnaabe which balances our blood and heals us. During this time, we are encouraged to balance our lives as we would our blood sugar levels. This moon also teaches us the time of year when the sap is running for maple sugar harvest. This is celebrated as the Anishinaabe new year.

THIRTEEN MOON TEACHINGS

The cycles of the moon determine our yearly calendar. The changes that come with each passing moon indicate the times for planting, harvesting, hunting and gathering. In the Anishnawbe calendar the names of each month include the word 'moon' and reflect the close connection between the cycles of the moon and the plant and animal life on Turtle Island.

DO YOU HAVE A CULTURAL AND/OR LAND BASED COORDINATOR?

The Choose Life Cultural Coordinator is looking to connect with all of the Choose Life Cultural & Land-Based Coordinators. Please scan the QR code with your phone to fill out this form on their behalf or forward the newsletter to them or you can email kdrake@nan.ca to request a link to access the form.



TOBACCO TEACHINGS

Tobacco is considered a sacred medicine. The smoke is believed to be the pathway to the spirit world. It is also used as an offering of thanks or when requesting something from nature, an elder or knowledge keeper. Sacred herbs are powerful. Tobacco can be healing or harmful depending on how it is used. When used in a sacred way, it can promote good health and assist with spiritual guidance, gratitude and growth. Sacred tobacco is sometimes not the actual tobacco plant but a blend of plants such as kinnikinick and the bark of the red osier dogwood. When offering asemaa, place the tobacco in an area that will not be stepped on, such as the base of a tree, in a river, or in another appropriate place. Asemaa is also used in pipes for giving prayers. The amount of asemaa used is based on the guidance or exchange being asked, from requesting a teaching to giving thanks to a hunter. Asemaa is used to respectfully harvest plants and animals in and to give thanks to the spirits for providing sustenance.

OFFERING TOBACCO TO HARVEST TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

1. Hold tobacco in your left hand.
2. Pray to the Creator/God.
3. Tell the medicine what you want and what it will be used for (verbally or mentally).
4. Lay down the tobacco, then harvest the medicine.
5. When done using the medicine and ready to take it back out on the land, offer tobacco to give thanks.



OFFERING TOBACCO IN A SACRED FIRE

1. Hold tobacco in your left hand.
2. Say a prayer.
3. Offer tobacco in the fire, or
4. Offer in a feast/ceremony with spirit plate (feast plate for ancestors)

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Ralph Begg

Kasabonika First Nation

"He's done a lot for his community and anyone would be honoured to get points from him"

"he is very understanding and resourceful"

Nominated by Crystal Barkman

Darren Matasawagon

Aroland First Nation

"He is extremely dedicated to the Choose Life Program. Darren is a very talented artist. Whatever the program needs, Darren is very skilled in canvas, paper, or wood working. He is well respected by the students of JTS and the community of Aroland. He also shares his skills in trapping and fishing with the students. Darren is a positive role model for JTS students and the youth of Aroland. Darren also leads by example living life drug and alcohol free."

"he's a great co-worker"

Nominated by Donald McLeod

Samuel Mekanak

Bearskin First Nation

"Samuel works tirelessly to support at-risk youth by taking them out on the land."

"Continue to do the work you are doing and enjoying the outdoors"

Nominated by Anonymous

Dennis Angees

Wunnumin Lake First Nation

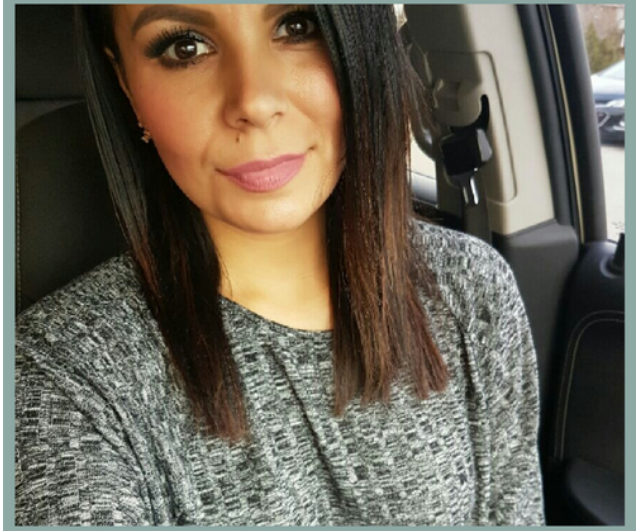
"This man is jack of all trades. He helps out in anyway he can within the Choose Life Program. He painted the Choose Life Logo on ice, back in 2018, and numerous traditional paintings on ice over the years."

"He's my childhood brother and I'm grateful for the ways he kept me going."

Nominated by Josh Mamakwa

On behalf of the NAN Choose Life Team, we acknowledge and commend all of the Honourable Mentions for sharing their gifts and skills, for being role models in their communities, and for all of their ongoing efforts to support the youth. We also acknowledge the nominators for acknowledging your Choose Life Team members. Chi Miigwetch to all Choose Life staff. Your ongoing commitment to support the youth and your community is truly appreciated. Miigwetch for all that you do!

WELCOME TO THE TEAM



My name is Shelley Fugere, and I am the new Choose Life Training Coordinator! I am happy to have the opportunity to work with NAN and excited to bring my positive energy and skills to the Choose Life Team. I have 5 years of Social Work experience; the majority of my career has specialized in mental health and addictions. I am a wife and mother of 3 who enjoys travelling, cooking, and spending time with family.

CHECK THIS OUT

What is We Matter?

We Matter is an Indigenous youth-led and nationally registered organization dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion.

Our Mission

Our mission is to communicate to Indigenous youth that they matter, and create spaces of support for those going through a hard time while fostering unity and resiliency. We provide a forum for people across the country to share messages of hope and positivity. By sharing our stories, our words of encouragement, and our authentic messages of hope and resilience, we help to make a community and nation stronger.

We remind youth that I Matter. You Matter. We Matter. We prove that we are all #StrongerTogether

To learn more, visit: <https://wemattercampaign.org/>

ANNOUNCING THE WE MATTER REGALIA GRANT

We matter's new one time grant is \$700 for Indigenous Youth to purchase or make their very own Indigenous, Inuit, or Metis regalia! For Indigenous youth up to the age of 30!

Applications are open from March 8th to March 15th! For more information and guidelines, please refer to the document sent with this month's newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOOSE LIFE NETWORKING CALLS

Please join our team once a month on Microsoft Teams to stay connected with one another!

Dates: Every 2nd Wednesday of the month

Mar 8 | Apr 12 | May 10 | Jun 7 | Jul 12
Aug 9 | Sept 13 | Oct 11 | Nov 8 | Dec 13

Time: Log in @ 10:45AM EST
Starts @ 11:00AM EST

There will be attendance prizes!

The March Networking call will focus on topics relating to 2023-2024 Applications, Equipment Needs, and upcoming training in April 2023.

Training Opportunity! Mental Health First Aid March 23 & 24, 2023. All spots have been filled! Our Team is looking forward to seeing you there!

STAFF CONTACT UPDATE FORM

Has your team had any recent staff changes? Please let us know so we can update your contact information in our database. Scan the QR code to the right or contact Rauslyn Laviolette our Choose Life Officer and she will provide you with the link to complete the form.



RESOURCES

NAN HOPE
CALL 1-844-NAN-HOPE (626-4673) nanhope.ca

Hope for Wellness Help Line
CALL 1-855-242-3310
hopeforwellness.ca

Talk4Healing
CALL 1-855-554-HEAL (4325)
talk4healing.com

Please reach out if you need support!

Kids Help Phone
CALL 1-800-668-6868 Text
686868 kidshelpphone.ca

CMHA Crisis Response
thunderbay.cmha.ca
Call Thunder Bay: 807-346-8282

District / Toll-Free: 1-888-269-3100 Northwest Region:
1-866-888-8988

Crisis Services Canada
crisisservicescanada.ca
CALL 1-833-456-4566
TEXT 45645

REFERENCES

<https://mushkiki.com/our-programs/moontime-and-grandmother-moon/>
http://www.glifwc-inwe.com/assets/Asemaa_Teacher_and_Caregiver_Supplemental_Document_MASTER_FINAL_3.11.21.pdf
<https://www.creehealth.org/health-tips/traditional-medicine-tobacco>
https://www.kanawayhitowin.ca/?page_id=214
Our Plants: Sweetgrass, Tobacco, Sage & Cedar – Mother Earth Essentials
<https://www.onwa.ca/full-moon-ceremony>

NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM

Interim NAN Social Development Director
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NAN Choose Life Cultural Coordinator
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NAN Choose Life SW Student
Jenna Panontin, jpanontin@nan.ca

(* RECENT STAFF CHANGES)

NAN Choose Life welcomes new staff and wishes those who have left the Choose Life Team many thanks for their role in Choose Life and well wishes as they journey forward.

CULTURAL DATABASE

Please share any Cultural Resources that you would like to make accessible on the Cultural Database or if you know of anyone interested in sharing their cultural or land-based teachings/skills/gifts with Choose Life. Please fill out the Cultural Helper Form. It is accessible at: Choose Life - Nishnawbe Aski Nation (nan.ca). You can also scan our QR code. If you have any questions regarding the database or would like a link forwarded to you, please contact Kiaya Drake.



HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

By emailing Kiaya Drake to share teachings, resource links, photos, activities and/or events which took place in your community that you wish to highlight and share with other Choose Life Teams throughout NAN. You can also nominate someone in our Honorable Mentions section. You can do this by scanning the QR code.

