

JUNE 2023

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.

JUNE : STRAWBERRY MOON

OJIBWE: ODE'IMINI-GIIZIS

The sixth moon of Creation is Strawberry Moon. The medicine of the strawberry is reconciliation. It was during this moon cycle that communities usually held their annual feasts, welcoming everyone home, regardless of their differences over the past year, letting go of judgment and/or self righteousness. The strawberry is the first berry to ripen it is thought to be a good medicine for the heart and the teeth.



JUNE : STRAWBERRY MOON CONTINUED

Strawberry Moon represents and acknowledges the growth needed to build strong relations with all of Creation. The strawberry represents the heart and working together with kindness and love. During this moon, we turn our focus to growing strong relationships and supporting one another in all that we do.

This moon is also known as Booming Moon, Hot Moon, Mead Moon, Rose Moon, Egg Laying Moon, Hoeing Moon, Honey Moon, as well as many others.

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 includes the word 'moon' and reflects 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.



HAND DRUM TEACHINGS

The drum is the heartbeat of our people; it's the heartbeat of life. We live the first nine months of our lives within our mothers and we listen to the heartbeat; it sets the pattern of existence.

The hand drum is considered a sacred item - part of your bundle. It is taught that you are to feast your bundles twice a year - Spring and Fall. Depending on where you come from, the teachings of the hand drum can be different from one community to another. If you have a hand drum and are unsure of how to care for it and how to use your sacred item, please reach out to an Elder or Traditional Knowledge Carrier in your community or region to learn more.

If you are interested in learning new songs to sing on your hand drum, please visit the website below. There you will find videos and the words to sing along to with your drum.
ONWA (Ontario Nation Women's Association)
<https://www.onwa.ca/drum-book>



HAND DRUM MAKING WITH DFC YOUTH

In May, the Choose Life Cultural Coordinator partnered with Dennis Franklin Cromarty staff to facilitate Hand Drum Making and Hand Drum Teachings with a group of DFC students. They learned about how to make the 'Dreamcatcher style hand drum' and during the two-day workshop, they learned many teachings about the hand drum and how to care for the hand drum. On the final day everyone feasted their new hand drums and the Traditional Teacher shared a song with everyone to begin their own journeys with connecting with their hand drums.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM



Hi, my name is Lael Rae, and I am a Summer Student with the Choose Life program at Nishnawbe Aski Nation. I recently graduated from high school last year and jumped right into college. I am moving forward into my second year in the fall with the Onajigawin Indigenous Services program. I enjoy going for walks.



The NAN Choose Life Team attended a sweat lodge ceremony in May. Our Team learned teachings about how to make birch bark spirit dishes, and participated in the sweat lodge ceremony as a team and afterward we feasted together. The Lodge conductor is a NAN member and talented artisan Jordan Quequish. He was supported by his lovely partner Reena Larabee throughout the ceremony. If NAN CLC are interested in attending a sweatlodge in Thunder Bay, please reach out to the Choose Life Cultural Coordinator so we can ensure this is something our team can support in the future.

NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM

Our Team attended the 33rd Annual Suicide Prevention Conference in May, as a means to network and to gather resources and current frameworks and practices from other Indigenous led organizations, who have successfully reduced suicide attempts & suicide completions within the First Nation communities that they provide supports and services to.



On May 16-18, NAN Choose Life held an ASIST Training workshop for Choose Life Coordinators at the Delta Hotel in Thunder Bay - with the support of the NAN Training Team facilitating the workshop. The content and discussions throughout the training were about suicide and suicide prevention, which may have been very triggering to the coordinators in attendance. So, our team ensured to include ice breakers and self-care-based activities to provide holistic support for everyone. Smudging & Mental Health support were available for attendees throughout the workshop as well.



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

Jun 7 | Jul 12 | Aug 9 | Sept 13
Oct 11 | Nov 8 | Dec 13

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE JUNE NETWORKING CALL IS CANCELLED AND TOPIC WILL BE COVERED IN JULY

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

There will be **attendance prizes!**

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Trauma Informed Care Training

Maple Leaf Training in TIMMINS, ON June 13-15 2023.

All spots have been filled! Please watch for when our training opportunities are sent via email, because spots for attendees are limited and registration fills up very quickly! 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/>

<https://www.onwa.ca/full-moon-ceremony>

<http://muskratmagazine.com/ojibwe-moons/>

<https://mushkiki.com/our-programs/sacred-items-and-bundles/>

NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM

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(* 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.

