

DECEMBER

CHOOSE LIFE NEWSLETTER



Nishnawbe
Aski Nation
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DECEMBER-BLUE MOON/BIG SPIRIT MOON (MNIDOONS GIIZIS)

DECEMBER – LITTLE SPIRIT MOON THE TWELFTH MOON OF CREATION IS THE LITTLE SPIRIT MOON, A TIME OF HEALING. BY RECEIVING BOTH VISION OF THE SPIRITS AND GOOD HEALTH, WE MAY WALK THE RED ROAD WITH PUREST INTENTIONS, AND WE CAN SHARE THIS MOST POSITIVE ENERGY WITH OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.



13 GRANDMOTHER MOONS

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|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Spirit Moon | 8. Raspberry Moon |
| 2. Bear Moon | 9. Thimbleberry Moon |
| 3. Sugar Moon | 10. Corn Moon |
| 4. Sucker Moon | 11. Freezing Moon |
| 5. Flower Moon | 12. Little Spirit Moon |
| 6. Strawberry Moon | 13. Blue Moon/Big Spirit Moon |

CHOOSE LIFE 2023 COMMUNITY VISITS



Aroland Choose Life Bush Camp

The Choose Life team was able to spend time with Aroland First Nation in the Choose Life bush camp. It was Aroland's Annual Fall Harvest, where the the kids were able to take part in different land based activities such as wild rice making, filleting fish, goose calling, learning how to skin a beaver, and many more!



Long lake #58 First Nation

Longlac #58 shared some of the amazing programs with us during our visit! We were taken on a tour to some of the community housing they have established for the members of the First Nation, including their transitional and youth homes.

Ginoogaming First Nation

The Choose Life Team had the opportunity to sit down with Ginoogaming First Nation to work on program fiscal planning and reporting. The First Nation shared the success of their programs.



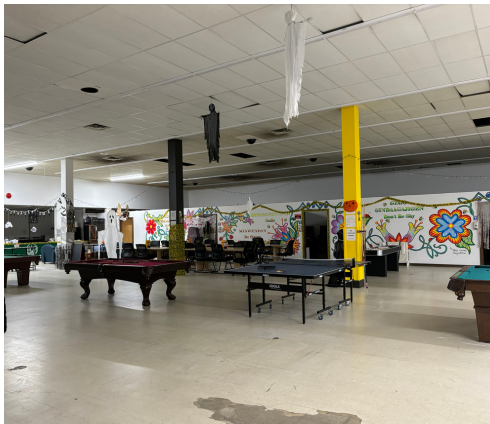


Our NAN Choose Life team spent the day with the Choose Life program in Lac Seul First Nation, including being able to share space with Chief and Council. The Choose Life Coordinator brought us to Frenchman's Head, Whitefish Bay, and Kejack Bay, where programs are also carried out. We were able to see all the great things their program has done and is currently doing! It's nice to see all the great things these programs are doing for our youth.

Keep up the great work!



The NAN team first met with Shibogama Choose Life team. Shibogama is a tribal council representing five First Nation communities: Kasabonika, Kingfisher Lake, Wapekeka, Wunnumin Lake, and Wawakapewin. We met with Colleen Berry and other supporting staff who shared the success of the “Shib Crib”, the location that they provide after school programming for Shibogama youth residing in Sioux Lookout while attending school.



The Choose life team was invited to visit W.I.N.K.S (Windigo, IFNA, NNEC, KOBE, and Shibogama) Active Wellness Program. W.I.N.K.S is an amalgamated organization of four tribal councils Windigo, Independent First Nations Alliance (IFNA), Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO), Shibogama as well as the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC). The space was quite large, with six pool tables and separate rooms for various activities (e.g., a golf simulator, an art room, video game room and an exercise room). The program coordinator Rachel, highlighted how many youths come in the evenings to use the space, as well the strengths of the building as a multi-purpose venue.



My name is Rebecca Allison, and I recently joined the NAN Choose Life team as the new Choose Life Policy Analyst. I have resided in Thunder Bay for almost 10 years, having first arrived here to complete my Honour Bachelors in Kinesiology in 2014. After 2 years in the program, I realized my true passion was Psychology, which I was minoring in at the time. I went on to complete my Honors Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, graduating in Spring 2019. I started at NAN in late November 2019 in the Community Wellness Department as the Administrative Health Support Officer in the Indian Residential School (IRS) Program. It was in this time that I had the privilege of listening to survivors and their families tell their stories. Hearing these firsthand accounts and lived experiences was so impactful. I have learned so much during my time at NAN and was able to apply my knowledge from the IRS program during my time in NAN's Health Transformation team. Now that I am with Choose Life, I look forward to advocating for the holistic wellbeing of NAN members throughout the region. In my spare time, I enjoy leaning into my creative side by expressing myself through art and enjoy taking opportunities for self-care when I can.

**WELCOME TO CHOOSE LIFE
REBECCA!**

Choose Life Suicide Awareness Walk 2023



In recognition of World Suicide Awareness Day, on September 10th, the NAN Choose Life team joined with others to take part in this meaningful walk to raise awareness for this vital cause. The walk took place on Sept 8, 2023, where we walked to remember, raise awareness and help break the stigma surrounding mental health. You are not alone!



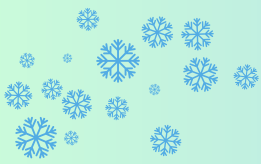
Winter Solstice



What is Winter Solstice?

Winter Solstice is on December 21, 2023 this year, it is special time for those who would like to honor and acknowledge the patterns of the natural world. On this day, the sun is at its lowest point in the sky, resulting in the shortest day and the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Because of the interconnectedness of all things, we recognize that the cosmos- the sun, moon, stars, and other planets can affect us and connect us in unique ways. In its period of darkness, the winter solstice is an opportunity to go inward with deep intention, to care for our spiritual selves, our bodies and minds, our loved ones and families, and to prepare for the longer days ahead. In the spirit of self care, community care, accessing our ancestral memory and our most powerful selves, here are 7 different ways that you and your loved ones can spend the winter solstice in observance of a natural phenomena that comes only once a year. Take what you resonate with from the list below, and if you would like to connect with an elder and your own traditional teachings for guidance on the best ways to acknowledge this event and deepen your spiritual connection during this time.

Ways that you and your loved ones can spend the Winter Solstice



Cook and share a healthy meal with a loved one:

Sharing space and taking the time to cook, eat, and nourish our bodies. The preparation of healthy meals is both physical, communal and spiritual. Seek out traditional and clean foods to prepare, or cook your favorite recipe from a loved one!

Reflect on the past year:

Taking some time to reflect on the past year and acknowledge and celebrate your growth, your resilience, your strength and the blessings you may have overlooked. And last but not least, let go of what doesn't serve you in order to create space for the positive ahead of you in the coming year. Make amends with others if you need to and set yourself up for new possibilities, new friendships and deepened connections.

Clean and honor your living space by decluttering:

Our homes are the sacred spaces where so many important things happen. We rest in our homes, we eat in our homes. We gather, commune, and even raise children in our homes. Creating a sacred space in your home sets you and your family up for success each day. Create an environment on solstice day that allows you to just be present in your home and to focus on the things that nourish and inspire you.

Drink natural medicines and teas:

Our natural world is rich with medicines, for both body, mind and spirit, and our ancestors knew the power of drinking medicinal teas. Drink tea with loved ones. Pray over your tea, pray to the root and plant nations, to ancestors, and to the water, and know that you are activating medicine on a cellular level.

Practice special self-care for self and others:

Care for your physical and spiritual self with a warm shower or bath, with rich lotions, essential oils, etc. Put on a luxurious face mask if that's your thing. Give yourself a manicure or pedicure. Get a massage or give a massage. Braid someone else's hair for them, or ask them to braid your hair.

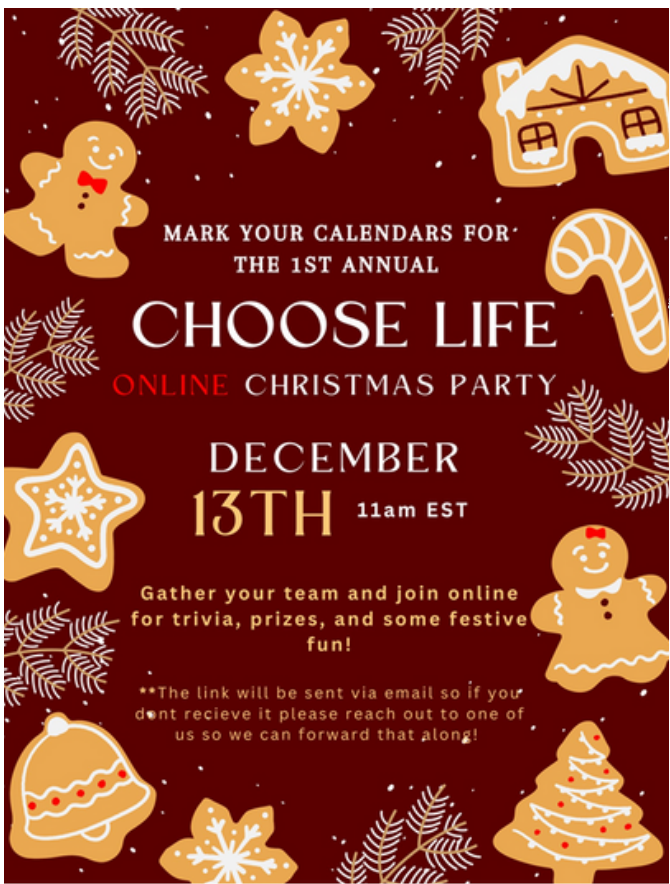
Light a fire:

Winter solstice, and winter in general, is a time of fires, and fire is an old soul. Fire is also comforting, beautiful and mesmerizing to look at. You can put medicines on the fire, like sage or cedar. You can sit around a fire and feel its warmth. You can cook over a fire, put offerings into a fire, even pray, sing and tell stories next to a fire.

Make offerings:

While we ask for good things for the upcoming year and give thanks for our blessings, it's so important to also give back and make offerings. Reciprocity, even to the spiritual world, matters. Set out food, make prayer ties, or whichever offering is prescribed by your own teachings.





The NAN Choose Life team will be holding its first online Christmas party!

Make sure to gather your team and join us for trivia, prizes and some festive fun!!

If you haven't recieved a link and would like to join please reach out to any one of our Choose Life staff



We wish you a very Happy Holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year!

From the NAN Choose Life Team!



HELPFUL RESOURCES

NAN Hope 1-844-NAN-HOPE (626-4673) nanhope.ca	Kids Help Phone CALL 1-800-668-6868 Text 686868 kidshelpphone.ca
Hope for Wellness Help Line CALL 1-855-242-3310 hopeforwellness.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
Talk4Healing CALL 1-855-554-HEAL (4325) talk4healing.com	
Crisis Services Canada crisisservicescanada.ca Call 1-833-456-4566 Text 45645	If you need support please reach out.

References

<https://ndncollective.org/acknowledging-the-winter-solstice-is-a-decolonial-act-for-indigenous-people/>
<https://www.kanawayhitowin.ca/>

