



The Alliance

INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS ALLIANCE
MAY 2023

- Reconnecting Water & Wastewater
- Bringing in an ASIST
- Enhancing Emergency Medical Response
- Innovating Agriculture in our Communities
- Coming Together for Community Health
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RECONNECTING WATER & WASTEWATER

TECHNICAL SERVICES

In April, the Water & Wastewater Hub held its first annual Water Hub Conference in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The event gathered together IFNA staff and member community Water Operators to provide networking opportunities and hands-on training as well as identify future operator needs in a group setting.. With the operators from the communities being flown in, they had the chance to meet each other and the Water Hub team and engage in various events such as jar testing, water quality sampling, and more.

Kristin Cawley, Water & Wastewater Hub Supervisor, said “Hosting an event like this was a lot of planning, I am appreciative of the Hub team and all their hard work in coordinating this event. We enjoyed having our operators come out and spend some time with our team. We hope that our next conference is just as successful.”

The team looks forward to running this conference in the future and continuing to improve and enhance the capabilities of the water plant operators and their systems.

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF



WHITESAND



LAC SEUL



KITCHENUHMAYKOOSIB
INNINUWUG



MUSKRAT DAM



PIKANGIKUM

BRINGING IN AN ASIST

HEALTH SERVICES



The IFNA Mental Health Team recently hosted ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) in Pikangikum First Nation. Nine community members took the 2-day intensive, interactive, and practice-dominated course designed to help understand and recognize the risk of suicide as well as learn methods to help prevent thoughts becoming behaviours. The participants learned to understand the ways that different attitudes affect views on suicide and interventions, gained ways to provide guidance and first aid to people at risk, recognize the importance of self-care as a way of prevention, and much more.

"Talking about suicide is difficult, learning ways to prevent suicide is powerful. Let's congratulate these valuable workers in Pikangikum who committed to 2 days of ASIST Suicide intervention training with the Mental Health team this week. Thank you for your dedication to the tough conversation and the well-being of your community. Way to go!"

-From Jessica & Derek

The team will be in Whitesand the week of May 15th to conduct the ASIST course. To learn more or book training for your community, please contact jljaesser@ifna.ca.



ENHANCING EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE

INTEGRATED EMERGENCY SERVICES

In addition to ASIST training, the very first class of Emergency Medical Responders recently graduated from Pikangikum. Ten community members were able to graduate from the program at the end of March. As a more complex and comprehensive course with higher expectations than a regular first aid course, this program will help the community enhance emergency response. On top of the two ambulances received last Fall, IFNA and Pikangikum look forward to receiving potential funding to hire emergency responders and putting the training to us in more than a volunteer capacity.

INNOVATING AGRICULTURE IN OUR COMMUNITIES



TECHNICAL SERVICES

Technical Services is proud to announce the development of six greenhouses as part of a project centred around innovating agriculture in our communities. The aim of this project is to utilize greenhouses to grow produce, such as vegetables and some berries, year-round while furthering agricultural understanding between community members. The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership will be one of the main policy frameworks used to apply for funding from AgriScience and AgriInnovate, seeking both provincial and federal streams for funding.

IFNA staff were invited to tour other greenhouses in Calgary as a learning and collaboration opportunity.

“With food being grown year-round, this will allow for communities to develop sovereignty and autonomy regarding where their produce comes from and will create healthy and affordable options for many community members to purchase,” said Jonathan Gregg regarding this project.

“We look forward to seeing more self-reliance as our communities grow,” added Andrew Pedersen, Environmental and Solid Waste Coordinator. IFNA plans to build a greenhouse in each community, as well as one in either Thunder Bay or Sioux Lookout where people can be trained on the various tasks involved in greenhouse operation.

COMING TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH



**Mamow
HEALTH**

HEALTH SERVICES

Back in March, FNFPHS and AMDOCS amalgamated to join IFNA and become Mamow Health. Mamow Health aims to improve not only the health care and well-being of the communities but also break down communication and accessibility barriers to health care. Alana Anderson, Executive Director, had the following to say; “I’m so excited to see this take off after months of planning. It’s been a long time coming, and letting our communities have full control of their physicians is a major step towards a healthier future.”

Mamow Health plans to provide a calendar of when physicians will be in community, important national and international health promotion days, run various contests to improve ongoing engagement with our community members up and help reduce any concerns they may have over health. Follow along on the Facebook page [@mamowhealth](#) to stay up to date on all the latest health news and to stay informed on any future updates.



EXPLORING POST- SECONDARY IN TORONTO

EDUCATION SERVICES

Prospective college and university students from the Home Away Program recently had the opportunity to fly to Toronto and visit George Brown College and the University of Toronto. While there, the students listened to what those post-secondary institutions had to offer in terms of education and campus life, took a tour of the buildings, and met some of the staff and alumni. A couple of the Home Away graduates even began the process of applying to programs at the university! This is the second trip for post-secondary tours that the Home Away Program has conducted this school year, the first being Winnipeg in November.

While visiting Toronto, Education staff added some fun to the trip as a reward for the students' hard work during the school year, such as attending a feast and watching jousting at Medieval Times.

FOCUSING ON MENTAL HEALTH

At the beginning of April, Muskrat Dam First Nation was the host for a 4-day Mental Health conference, involving members of the community as well as staff from various organizations that came together. IFNA Health staff, as well as staff and volunteers from other organizations such as SLFNHA, Tikinagan, Choose Life, and many more, joined Muskrat Dam First Nation leadership and community members to discuss community mental health challenges and potential solutions. Each day, group sessions were held to provide feedback and presentations were made by the various groups to go over topics such as grief, addictions, and the impact of trauma. In the afternoons, hands-on activities involving crafts, baking, and other land-based teachings provided an outlet from the heavy mornings.



COMMUNITY CONNECTION & DEPARTMENT REJUVENATION



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Over the past couple months, the new Economic Development team had the opportunity to visit the five IFNA member communities. IFNA Business Development Officers, Nathaniel Anderson and Colin French, came prepared with presentations to discuss IFNA activities, various projects under development in the communities, and the tools needed to ensure these projects are fulfilled. In the future, the department looks forward to launching its drone cargo project and financial literacy workshops in each community with funding from the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund.

"It has been a good time transitioning to new titles as business development officers within the new department, trying to target the organization's own projects as well as assisting with community projects from a two-pronged approach. We're looking forward to working with each community to help businesses and bring in new streams of revenue."

- Nathaniel Anderson, Business Development Officer

FOCUS FIRST: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FORUM



INTEGRATED EMERGENCY SERVICES

Following the successful After-Action Responders Forum in May 2022, the Northwestern Ontario Emergency Management Working Group expanded to include representatives from across Ontario and rebranded to the First Nation Emergency Response Association (FNERA). This February, FNERA hosted the Focus First: Emergency Preparedness Forum in Sault Ste. Marie bringing together emergency professionals to learn from each other and collaborate in preparation for the 2023 flood and fire season.

IFNA was heavily involved in the event with Emergency Operations Manager, Darrin Spence, leading FNERA as Chair. While on an operation assisting Pikangikum, Director of IES, Nicholas Rhone, alongside Sam Manitowabi and Douglas Pamment from the IES team presented virtually on All Hazards Response: The IFNA Journey. Pikangikum's Roley Peters also took the stage as part of the 2022 Season Community Emergency Panel sharing the community's experience with flooding last Spring.

"Coming together as emergency professionals from First Nations, industry, and government is crucial to developing emergency management and services in First Nation communities. This is a pivotal time, where we have the opportunity to be leaders and ensure the safety of our communities now and in the future."

- Darrin Spence, Emergency Operations Manager

A HISTORIC COMMUNITY MILESTONE



On April 11, 2023, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) held a historic signing ceremony implementing Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Dibenjikewin Onaakonikewin (KIDO) their own family law. This is the second coordination agreement of its kind in Ontario and the seventh in Canada. The event was held in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug with federal and provincial ministers and other dignitaries in attendance.

KIDO is more than a law for the community, it is a promise for a better future for the children, youth, and the generations to come. The law approaches child and family services with love and compassion and focuses on its guiding principles of traditional childrearing and care involving all members of a Dibenjikewin (Family) and community.

"It has been a long time in coming, but KIDO will help our Awaashishag, Oshkaadizagegwa Dibenjikewinan, it will provide jobs within KI and it will provide an opportunity for growth within the community. We are looking forward to seeing the benefits of the new onaakonikewin in the years to come."

- Chief Donny Morris, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug

BIOMASS GENERATION FACILITY



In February, Whitesand First Nation was proud to announce \$35 million in funding to help build a biofuel facility in the community. The facility will create jobs, stimulate the economy, and aid the community in moving away from diesel fueled power. This project is estimated to create around 100 one-time construction jobs and over 200 direct, indirect, and induced jobs as the project moves forward.

Craig Toset, Business Development in Whitesand, had the following to say: "Our first proposal for this project in 1992 was turned down, but since [Whitesand] returned to our land in 1987 every chief has been involved, their commitment helped keep the vision alive. This project is near and dear to our heart; it isn't just designed around the employability of our people but protecting our land and water as well."



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