



The Alliance

INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS ALLIANCE
MARCH 2024

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PIKANGIKUM SEES 18 CARPENTRY TRAINING GRADS



TECHNICAL SERVICES

In partnership with Mohawk College, IFNA recently conducted a carpentry training program in Pikangikum led by home improvement celebrity, Jon Eakes. Three different groups of trainees from Pikangikum learned basic carpentry and renovation skills for building and repairing houses over 2-week periods. Jon provided hands-on learning with some theory components to introduce participants to power tools, hand held

tools, job site safety/best practices, and more. Eighteen Pikangikum community members now have basic carpentry and renovation skills to either help in finding jobs, pursue further education or training in the trades, or be able to perform small maintenance/renovation in their own homes!

"Part of this first run of the program was to build a collection of resources that will allow us to expand the training to other IFNA communities in the future," said Jonathan Gregg, IFNA Strategic Initiatives Director, "this program is a step forward in solving the housing issues in our communities."

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF



WHITESAND



LAC SEUL



KITCHENUHMAJKOOSIB
INNINUWUG



MUSKRAT DAM



PIKANGIKUM



ALL HAZARDS RESPONSE ADVANCES WITH ICE RESCUE TRAINING

INTEGRATED EMERGENCY SERVICES



The Independent First Nations Alliance (IFNA) Regional Fire Rescue (RFR) sponsored Ice Rescue Training in partnership with Sioux Lookout Fire and Emergency Services this past February. The course was provided to NFPA 1006 standards of Ice Rescue and provided by recognized industry expert, Paul Sevcik of Advanced Rescue by DIMERSAR and supported by IFNA partner ERT-SAR (The Emergency Response Team - Search and Rescue).

During an intense week of training, a specially selected team of rescuers from IFNA, Lac Seul, Pikangikum, and Sioux Lookout Fire, were trained to respond to ice emergencies involving the rescue of people who have become trapped or fallen through ice. Several scenarios were practised from ice fishing mishaps to skidoos falling through thin ice using established fire rescue standards. The Ice Rescue team members built their knowledge and skills over the week until they were tested to competently demonstrate rescue drills and needed knowledge and skills.

“The Ice Rescue training was another step in building capacity for IFNA communities as well as a partnership we are establishing with Sioux Lookout Fire. All hazard response training like this will provide stronger emergency support in these situations to member communities.” said Nicholas Rhone, IFNA Regional Fire Rescue Chief and Integrated Emergency Services Director.

The training went incredibly well with all attendees attaining certificates at Technician Level according to established Fire Rescue standards.

DO YOU HAVE A SMOKE ALARM?

IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

Smoke alarms are the first line of defence in a house fire. It's important to have a working alarm in every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas.

IFNA Regional Fire Rescue and Fire Co. field officers worked diligently over the Summer and Fall months of 2023 to ensure every home in the IFNA member communities was either offered or had a smoke alarm installed in their home!

We are proud to congratulate Lac Seul and Whitesand with 100% of households accepting smoke alarms.



IF YOU NEED A SMOKE ALARM, CONTACT SMOKEALARM@IFNA.CA AND ONE WILL BE SENT TO YOU! SMOKE ALARMS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

MAKING CAREER CONNECTIONS

HUMAN RESOURCES



The IFNA recruiter has been busy connecting with budding professionals about future career opportunities available to them at the Tribal Council level. In March, Dan connected with high school students at the Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School Career Fair and post-secondary students at the Lakehead University Graduate & Grow: March Career Expo. To invite us to your career fair, please reach out to recruitment@ifna.ca!

Upcoming Career Fairs

- April 9, 2024:** Tournament of Hope, Thunder Bay
- April 18, 2024:** Enchokay Birchstick School, Pikangikum
- April 30, 2024:** Frenchman's Head, Lac Seul

YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT IFNA.CA/CAREERS!



DEVELOPING A VISION FOR INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY HEALTH SERVICES

The Reclaiming Our Bundle project began in December 2023, with the goal of exploring the IFNA communities' readiness and vision for the revitalization of Indigenous Midwifery care as an identified priority under health transformation.

Since the late 1960s women and families have had been forced to evacuate their community for birth, leaving women and infants isolated and at risk. The impacts of colonization have resulted in the loss of sacred knowledge, teachings, and care practices surrounding pregnancy and birth. The role of an Indigenous midwife, and the bond they formed with the newborn (and family) was one that was deeply rooted in respect, love, and nurturing as well as recognized the interconnectedness of all aspects of life.

Throughout this work, IFNA is focused on making space for, and honouring traditional birthing practices and cultural knowledge unique to each member nation that has been passed down for generations. The revitalization of community centered Indigenous Midwifery care will promote sustainability through practices that are deeply rooted in the land, environment, and support the health and holistic wellbeing of generations to come.



Share Your Knowledge on Birth

Win an iPhone for
completing the survey

Scan or visit [https://
wkf.ms/49hKyXz](https://wkf.ms/49hKyXz)

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES? INTEGRATED EMERGENCY SERVICES



Although difficult to forecast, experts say that indicators are predicting a serious fire season. What should you and your community do to be prepared?



Know the Risks

It is important to know what risks, threats, and exposures your community is facing each season. This can help to limit impact, injury, and possible loss of life.



Make a Plan

For community emergency leads: it's important to plan, organize, coordinate, train, and exercise - keep your skills and abilities sharp!

For individuals and families: make a family emergency plan and kit you can easily take with you during an evacuation.



Communicate

For community emergency leads: identify and work with all resources and agencies available to ensure well-rounded service provision and support.

For individuals and families: be aware of the communications channels that are used in your community to communicate important information and check them regularly.



Stay Ready!!!

Know your plan, keep supplies stocked, and communicate with others to ensure you are prepared and anticipating challenges as they may arise within your community.

For support with your community's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) or general questions about Emergency Management resources please email jjohns@ifna.ca



THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY IN ONTARIO'S NORTH HAS A LEADER

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Neeganii-Iishawiin, “to lead to the gathering place”, occurred over three days (February 27-29, 2024) in Thunder Bay, ON. With regards to the groundbreaking success of a sold-out show, over 227 individuals attended and over 40 vendors. Like-minded individuals were able to focus on promoting the inbuilt prosperity of Ontario’s northern economic development and reconciliation.

The event was born from a need discovered through many conversations and collaboration of five Tribal Councils, the need for a network of resources to support Ontario First Nations’ businesses. IFNA, Windigo Community Development Corporation, Matawa Firsts Nations, Shibogama First Nations Council, and Keewaytinook Okimakanak collaborated to establish the Neeganii-Iishawiin Gathering. Numerous communities, organizations, and businesses were able to come together, network, and create a pivotal moment of opportunities and partnerships for each other. Some highlighted focus points of the gathering were human resources, financial acuity, opportunity for readiness/capacity, lands, and infrastructure.

Guest speaker JP Gladu was the emcee who facilitated three days of keynotes, joined by many others such as, Elder Martha Sturgeon, special guests from Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Fort William First Nation and leading sponsors from across the powerful foundation of First Nation businesses.

“Neeganii-Iishawiin is an important step in fostering economic development among First Nations so we can not only survive but thrive. We are grateful to have a group of like-minded Tribal Councils to work with as well as all those that were a part of making the event happen. We look forward to seeing the results of the discussions had this year and gathering again next year.” - Colin French, Economic Development Officer



HOME AWAY PROGRAM UPDATES

EDUCATION SERVICES

Students Take to the Land

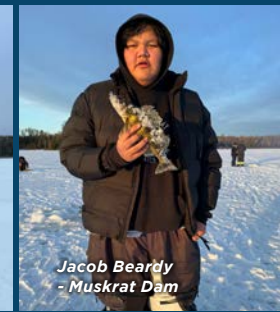
In February, Home Away Program students had a chance to go ice fishing and hiking a few times. The youth had a lot of fun exploring the land and caught some fish themselves!



Allison Fox
- KI



Carmen Beaver
- KI



Jacob Beardy
- Muskrat Dam



Ice fishers taking a break

Students Recognized for Achievements

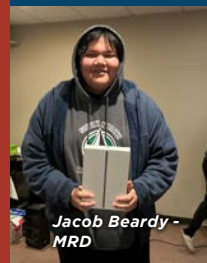
Some of the Home Away Program students were awarded for excelling during the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year. Awards included achievements like best report card, highest grade, and best attendance. New iPads were given to the students in recognition of their hard work.



Carmen Beaver
- KI



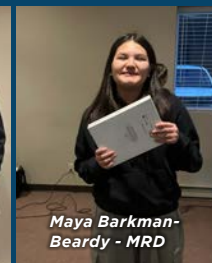
Deanna Hearly
- KI



Jacob Beardy - MRD



Matthias Beardy - MRD



Maya Barkman-Beardy - MRD



Serena Sakakeep - KI



Trey Mckay - KI

UNITY AMIDST GRIEF: KITCHENUHMAYKOOSIB INNINUWUG'S PATH OF RESILIENCE

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig came together with partners and other First Nations to support grieving families in December, persevering through the loss of a number of their fellow community members. Solidarity and compassion were demonstrated through this unprecedented time, with everyone working to lend a hand where needed in preparing meals, providing counselling services, and ensuring overnight crisis support.

"The mental health support was key in getting our members through these past few months. We appreciate everyone that provided assistance while pillars of our community could not, especially our community crisis team that coordinated the daily events," said Chief Donny Morris, "With the support of IFNA as mental health lead, KI was able to take proactive efforts to address the emotional wellbeing of our members."

NODIN, Keewaytinook Okimakanak, NorthWind Counselling Services, and the Mobile Crisis Response Team as well as the neighbouring communities of Wapekeka, Kasabonika, Cat Lake, and Sandy Lake also joined the mental health response.

Throughout January to March, wellness checks, counselling services, sharing circles and psychoeducation sessions were provided to community members with a focus on grief and trauma.

"It is important that community members be provided a safe space to express their emotions and seek support when experiencing loss," said Jessica Laesser, IFNA Mental Health & Addictions Manager, "providing various ways for individuals to do so is key to meeting the needs of each person where they are at in their healing journey."

As KI progresses through the healing journey, it continues to uphold its commitment to providing support to its community members while preserving the cherished memories of those who have passed. Chief Morris stated, "With a foundation built on community and compassion, guided by the resilient spirit that defines us, we are moving forward."



INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS ALLIANCE

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