

KAWENNÍ:IOS

Akenhnà:ke | Summer 2026



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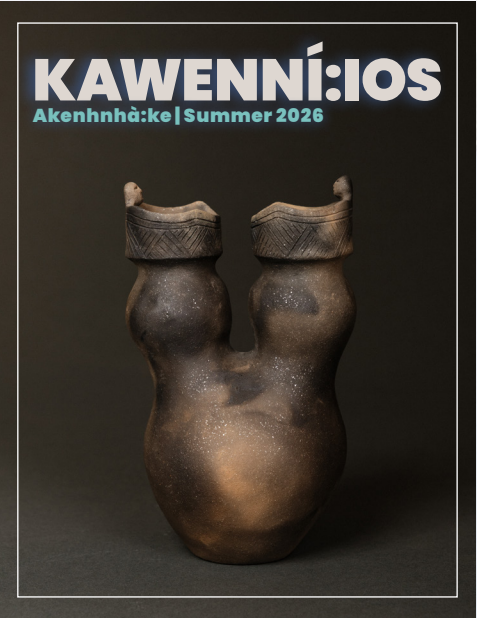


Photo Contribution: Jaiden Mitchell ▲

Kahentase Terrance
A/ Communications Specialist

Ohiarikhó:wa/July 17, Akwesasne Travel celebrated the winners of the 2026 Juried Art Show with a public viewing and awards ceremony hosted at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort Winter Ballroom.

This year's prestigious **Best of Show Award** went to Roger Sosakete Perkins for his fire-forged Haudenosaunee celestial inspired "*Marriage Pot*" depicting two spirits coming together in an organic and synergistic union, made with clay from the St. Lawrence River, then fired with Mesquite wood.

Perkins, a multi-media artist, views his work as an encompassing journey inspired by the natural world and the cosmos. His work was among 66 pieces submitted into this year's Juried Art Show.

EXPLORE MORE OF PERKINS' WORK ON PAGE 26.



COUNCIL GREETINGS

Tekwanonhwerá:tons Akwesasne,

Summer has finally arrived, bringing longer days, warmer weather, and plenty of opportunities to enjoy everything our community has to offer. I hope the community is looking forward to making new memories with family and friends—whether that's gathering for backyard barbecues, attending community events, spending evenings around the campfire, or simply enjoying a beautiful sunset on the river. As we all know, the seasons seem to pass by faster every year, so let's make the most of these summer days while they're here.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) is excited for another busy and productive season. We look forward to welcoming our enthusiastic summer interns, cheering on our local athletes at Generations Park, and seeing families take advantage of the beautiful weather at the Tewatahita Walking Trail. Summer is a wonderful time to get outside, stay active, and connect with one another.

One of my memorable highlights leading up to summer was participating in the first annual Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers Recognition Day held at the la'teiewenhnani'haras *Echo/A Voice that Reaches Far Away* Amphitheater in Generations Park on May 22, 2026. I was honored to serve as master of ceremonies for this meaningful occasion. The event celebrated the bravery and service of our Mohawk Code Talkers, whose use of the Kanien'keha language during World War II helped protect critical military communications. It was inspiring and humbling to witness so many family members in attendance as we recognized and commemorated the lasting legacy of these remarkable veterans. Their courage continues to make Akwesasne proud.

Summertime is also an exciting time for agriculture in Akwesasne. I encourage everyone to look for Mother Earth Products, available at local convenience stores throughout the community. I would also like to welcome the refreshed look of Kawenní:ios. This edition reflects a renewed visual identity that incorporates more cultural motifs and design elements that celebrate who we are as Kanien'kehá:ka people. Thank you to the Center for Media and Communications Team for their creativity and dedication in bringing this vision to life.

As a board director with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County, I am proud of the strong partnerships we continue to build with Akwesasne. Through canning workshops, soil testing, agricultural support services, Camp Overlook, and youth programming with the Akwesasne Boys & Girls Club, we are creating opportunities for learning, growth, and success for community members of all ages.

As you enjoy the weeks ahead, I encourage everyone to spend time outdoors, support local events, and visit the farmer's market. Connect with family, friends, and neighbors because that is what Akwesasne is about. Above all, take time to relax, have fun, and enjoy all the wonderful experiences that summer in Akwesasne has to offer. As always, be sure to visit the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's [website](#), as well as all social media platforms.

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and memorable summer season.

Niawen'kó:wa,

Sub-Chief Benjamin Herne

Welcome to Kawenní:ios Magazine

"Good Words"

Capturing the rich culture of Akwesasne – our vibrant Kanien'kehá:ka community, one story at a time.

KAWENNÍ:IOS

AKENHNHÁ:KE | SUMMER 2026

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NAHÒ:TEN IORÌ:WASE

What's New?



Photo Contributions: Haley Shattuck

AKWESASNE MOHAWK CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION DAY

For decades, Akwesasne Mohawk veterans carried a secret home from World War II. Their dedication, strength, and resilience would later bring recognition to both their military service, our Kanien'keha language, and Akwesasne community.

Kahentase Terrance | A/ Communications Specialist



Photo Contributions:
Haley Shattuck and Austin Herne

Language is POWER

On Oneratohkó:wa/May 22, 2026, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council held a private ceremony for the 1st Annual Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers Recognition Day at la'teiewenhni'haras *Echo/A Voice that Reaches Far Away* Amphitheater at Generations Park. The event marked the 10th anniversary of the presentation of Silver and Bronze Congressional Medals to the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers in May 2016 at the Travis Solomon Memorial Lacrosse Box.

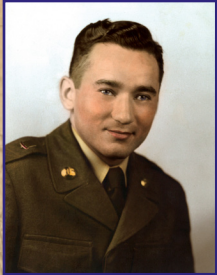
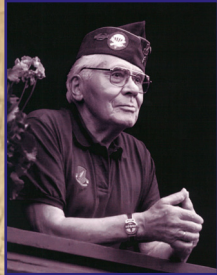
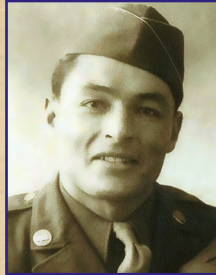
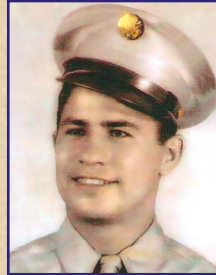
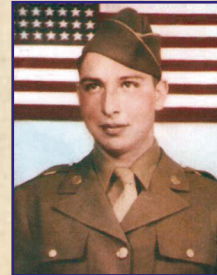
Descendants of the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers, and students from the Akwesasne Freedom School, recited the Ohén:ton Karihwatékwén *Words Before All Else*, followed by the American Legion Post 1479 Color Guard opening.

24 Mohawk Code Talkers from Akwesasne were honored for their service during World War II, where they used the Kanien'keha language to transmit undecipherable military communications, which contributed to the allied forces success in the South Pacific, New Guinea, and the Philippines.

At one time, Onkwehonwe people were punished for speaking their language under assimilation policies, late-19th-century philosophies aimed at erasure. Yet the language endured, carried forward by those who refused to let it disappear. Despite this, many continued to speak their language, preserving it through generations. During World War II, members from 33 Indigenous nations used their languages as unbreakable codes, contributing significantly to Allied success. These messages were never deciphered by the enemy and helped save countless lives. Many code talkers kept their work secret for decades after returning home.

Nearly 200 people gathered for the ceremony, including families of the honorees. One by one, descendants of the code talkers were called forward and presented with commemorative awards, with metal coins to be distributed at a later date.

The Tribal Council formally established the annual Resolution 2026-18, ensuring Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker Recognition Day, observed on the Friday preceding Memorial Day. The resolution affirms both the longstanding tradition of military service within Akwesasne and the recognition of the Code Talkers' contributions.

 ABE RANSOM	 ALBERT TARBELL	 ALEX OAKES	 ALEX WILSON LAZORE	 ALEX W. PETERS	 ANDY ROURKE
 ANGUS B. COOK	 ANGUS J. LAUGHING	 CHARLES LAZORE	 EDGAR E. JOCK	 JOE HARRY PYKE	 JOE KING
 JOSEPH BARNES	 JOSEPH ROBERT HERNE	 LOUIS KING	 LOUIS LEVI OAKES	 LOUIS RANSOM	 LOUIS STANLEY CONNERS
 MIKE ARQUETTE	 MITCHELL SUNDAY	 PETER WHITE	 PHILLIP THOMPSON	 REGINALD WHITE	 THOMAS COLE

Kiótkon roti'nikonhratshà:ni
"They are always Brave"

Chief Garrow shared, “Their work demonstrated that Indigenous languages were not only cultural treasures, but also strategic assets that strengthened wartime communication. It’s about remembering their bravery and service, valuing our identity and Kanien’keha language, and ensuring our recorded history includes the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers, and so we will continue to commemorate their contributions and honor their sacrifices.”

A powerful moment followed with the recognition of centenarian **Jack Leaf**, an Akwesasrón:on and United States Army veteran of World War II. As one of the last remaining Mohawk veterans of that era, he received a standing ovation.

Sub-Chief Benjamin Herne, master of the ceremonies, reflected on its emotional impact, “It was an emotional time for many of our families in attendance. I was very happy to have an opportunity to acknowledge our Mohawk soldiers and the recognition they deserved; for their bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism that will forever live in our hearts for generations to come. It was a powerful day for the families of the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers and a great way to help us kick off Memorial Day weekend.”

Following the recognitions, the Echo Sky singers and drummers performed an honor song in Kanien’keha. The beat of drum echoed through the amphitheater, drawing in attendees who stood in quiet respect, many emotionally moved.

About The COIN

Front

The front features an Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker equipped with his infantry rifle and carrying a field radio used to transmit secure military messages in Kanien’keha (Mohawk). Three upright eagle feathers adorn his helmet, symbolizing his Mohawk identity. Above him is an eagle, representing the courage, wisdom, and strength embodied by the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers. Along the lower edge of the coin appears the inscription Kiótkon roti’nikonhratshà:ni, meaning “They are always brave.”

For many families, the recognition was deeply personal.

Mike Tarbell spoke about his father, Albert Tarbell, a highly decorated U.S. Army veteran and the first Mohawk paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division.

“This day is about honoring my father and all Mohawk Code Talkers for their sacrifice and service during World War II. Seeing his legacy finally recognized means everything to our family. It gives us a chance each Memorial Day weekend to come home, remember, and make sure their stories are never forgotten.”

Veterans from American Legion Post 1479 Color Guard stood in both ceremony and reflection. Among them, veteran Andrew Phillips took in the moment from the amphitheater.

“It was beautiful up there,” Phillips said, looking out at the families gathered. Looking down at the pamphlet with the Code Talkers’ pictures, he shared. “I recognized all of them—the Code Talkers being honored. Their pictures are hanging up at the Legion.”

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is honored to formally enact the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers Recognition Day, and looks forward to its annual observance and commemoration on the Friday preceding Memorial Day.

▼ FRONT



▼ BACK



Back

The back depicts the same code talker in a crouched position, holding his rifle while transmitting coded military communications through the radio carried on his back. The inscriptions “WWI” and “WWII” appear on either side of the figure, honoring the service of Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers in both World War I and World War II. Through its imagery and symbolism, the coin serves as a tribute to their contributions and helps preserve the legacy of the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers.



▲ Emily Leaf and centenarian Jack Leaf during the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers Recognition Day ceremony.

Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers Recognition Day Ceremony

▼ Photo Contributions: Haley Shattuck and Austin Herne





Photo Contribution: Austin Herne

THE 2026 CHILDREN'S POWWOW

Strengthening Connections to Culture & Identity

Cultural teachings are strongest when they are shared with youth. Through educational workshops and community events, the Native North American Travelling College (NNATC) continues to create spaces where children can learn, grow and celebrate their Indigenous identity.

Austin Herne | Publications Manager



On Onerahtohkó:wa/May 16, 2026, parents and children gathered at the A'nowara'kó:wa Arena on Cornwall Island for the 2026 Children's Powwow. Hosted by the Native North American Travelling College (NNATC) the Children's Powwow has become an important cultural event in Akwesasne and surrounding communities. In 2003, the powwow started as a smoke dance social and has grown over the years into the event we know today, attracting tots and kids from all over.

The Akwesasne Children's Powwow is for children to express their dance skills and to learn powwow protocol. When the bigger Akwesasne Powwow is held, the children will have some sense of what their role is in the event and be comfortable participating. It will be a more enjoyable experience," shared Joyce King, Executive Director of the NNATC.

Powwows are social events by nature but, for children who are not familiar with the traditional aspect or have experience performing in front of a crowd, it can be daunting for them to participate.

The Children's Powwow bridges the gap for dancers to graduate to the Akwesasne International Powwow in the fall, and gives a space for the children to gain confidence in their performance and show an interest in the Kanien'kehá:ka culture.

King added, "During the powwow at Generations Park, the lead dancers approached me and asked if they could do a social dance. I answered 'this is your event, you call it.' From that point, social dances have been integral to the event." Participants having a larger role in how the event operates has helped children see that they can be a part of something bigger.



"In the past, residential schools took Indigenous identity away from so many. Speaking Native languages or dressing in traditional clothes was punishable. Hosting the Akwesasne Children's Powwow allows them to take pride in their traditional clothing and dances: building up their self-esteem, so they know who they are in society – gaining their power and self-identity back. The hope is to involve children in cultural teachings and allow them to focus on their own identity. Having a strong identity builds a strong person who might not be easily influenced by drugs and alcohol," shared King.

As a Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund recipient, the Tribe supports NNATC cultural programming and events, including the drum group for this year's powwow, which was made possible through this funding.

Keep an eye out for upcoming NNATC events, including the annual Friendship Day celebration on July 25, 2026. Be sure to visit their website at nnatc.org and follow NNATC on Facebook for the latest news, updates, and event information.



▲ Photo Contributions: Austin Herne



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IAKOTERIEN'TATSHENRIÁ:TSKONS

Creativity



▲ Liz Perkins Traditional Clothing.
Photo Contribution: Haley Shattuck.

THE PERKINS FAMILY

Generational Creativity



In some family's creativity is encouraged, and in others creativity is a way of life, carried through generations of traditional craft and teachings.

The Perkins family has built a unique and recognizable presence in Akwesasne representing versatility across mediums. Each member brings their own technique and perspective, shaping work that reflects individual expression and blends traditional techniques with modern themes to reclaim Rotinoshonni heritage.

Kahentase Terrance | A/ Communications Specialist



LIZ PERKINS

Traditional Clothing

Open some days and closed others, a small shop sits tucked away from State Route 37 on the Perkins family compound. Inside, Elizabeth "Liz" Perkins creates traditional clothing for community members, fit for students preparing to graduate or those in need of attire for longhouse ceremonies.

Liz began sewing at a young age, learning from her mother and other women in the community. She said her skills were mainly self-taught, from creating patterns out of paper bags to hand sewing garments before she was old enough to use a sewing machine. Perkins began making ribbon shirts for her son Kenny, when he was 10 years old and started attending longhouse, marking a shift in her work towards making ribbon dresses and shirts for children, women, and men.

Perkins' customer base spans Onkwehonwe communities across the United States, Canada and overseas. She said her clothing has been shipped to states including California, Arizona and North Carolina, with orders continuing to grow as her work gains popularity. "I get all kinds of orders. I'm only one person," adding that the volume of requests can become overwhelming at times. Still, the most rewarding part of her work comes after the clothing is delivered. Hearing feedback from customers who say her work fit perfectly and want to

place additional orders is a moment she reflects on her accomplishments.

Perkins recalled when members of the Haudenosaunee National lacrosse team visited Japan and traded their ribbon shirts with players from other countries. She said, "I want people to feel proud of themselves," knowing her clothing was shared across cultures made her feel proud and reinforced her goal of encouraging confidence in traditional clothing. Perkins reflects that traditional Onkwehonwe practices of exchange and reciprocity. Some customers trade services instead of money, and in the past, Liz has traded clothing. In one instance, she said she traded seven ribbon shirts to young boys in return for help with outdoor work around her house, continuing the art of bartering within the community.

For Liz, encouraging creativity within her own family is just as important to her as the work she shares with the community. She grew up surrounded by family and community members who treated creativity as a way of storytelling to carry Onkwehonwe culture forward. That same perspective continues to encourage her today, "I always encourage them," she shared. Speaking about her children and grandchildren, now adults, each has followed their own creative path, building successful work inspired by Haudenosaunee culture.



▲ Liz's iconic storefront signage outside her shop.



▲ Liz Perkins Traditional Clothing. Photo Contribution: Haley Shattuck



▲ Photo Contribution: Elizabeth Perkins





ROGER SOSAKETE PERKINS

PowwowPopArt

Roger has been creating for as long as he can remember “I’ve been an artist since I was a little boy, drawing pictures and whittling wood,” he says. Early inspiration came from his aunt Joyce whose paintings, books, and art supplies opened the door to a creative path that would expand across disciplines.

Today, Perkins works with a range of mediums including painting, carving, digital arts, screen-printing, pottery, and woodworking, but it is contemporary Mohawk pottery that he connects the most deeply with. “Mohawks didn’t really have a word for art...We simply and creatively made tools and objects that reflect the beauty of nature,” he shares. Grounded in Hodinohso:ni cultural values, and guided by a relationship with the natural world, his work blends Indigenous-inspired abstract design with meaning and responsibility. “My motto is ‘educate through art,’” shared Perkins.

Art is more than expression, it is a way to carry teachings forward Perkins explained. Each piece is created with intention: to inspire, to awaken, to honor, and to unite. His work reflects a long-standing Indigenous tradition of sharing knowledge through visual language, where stories, histories, and responsibilities are embedded in form and design.

“Our art helps provide an understanding of the natural world and the responsibilities we have to protect it for future generations,” he shared.

His daily practice reflects both this philosophy and the realities of being a working artist. Many days are spent digging, cleaning, and processing clay, then transforming raw materials into pots, pipes, and bricks. Other days might shift toward painting or carving wooden feathers, depending



▲ Roger Perkins,
“Gunshot”

on inspiration or necessity. “Some days I’m just inspired to make something different,” he shared. “Other times, I’m hustling to get the rent paid.”

At the center of his inspiration is community, especially his children, and the youth of Akwesasne. Perkins sees a resurgence of cultural expression unfolding, as younger generations reconnect with art forms such as beadwork, pottery, woodworking, and more. This energy extends beyond individual practice, reflected in pow wows, art markets, and community-led efforts to strengthen cultural spaces.

“Our community is embracing our culture and showing pride in who we are.”

Perkins’ journey is also deeply rooted in family. He often shares space and opportunities with relatives, having work featured in his mother’s shop. The guidance and support of his family particularly his mother and aunt Joyce have been central to his development as an artist.

“My family has always been a guiding force in helping shape my journey,” he shared.

Generational creativity continues to influence not only his work, but the broader artistic landscape in Akwesasne. Through his practice, Perkins contributes to a living continuum where tradition and contemporary expression meet. For the next generation of artists, his advice is both simple and inspirational. “First, know who you are. Then find your way to express it and don’t stop.”

CHECK OUT ROGERS WORK:
[@POWOWPOPART](#) _ OR [POWOWPOPART.COM](#)



▲ Roger Perkins,
“Bear Greetings”

SOSAKETE



▲ Roger Perkins,
“Mini-Mohawk Pots”



STUDIO VISIT WITH *Niio Perkins Designs*

For Niio Perkins, beadwork is more than just a medium, it's connection to storytelling, lineage, and identity. "Beadwork is my primary medium because it holds so much history, memory and meaning," she shared. Working mainly with glass beads, Perkins process is created by patience and intention. Growing up, she understood that Haudenosaunee art was more than decoration, it carried teachings, relationships and pride. Creating became a way for her to reconnect with who she is as a Mohawk woman going on to say, "Every bead feels connected to story, lineage and identity." Perkins expressed, "I love that beadwork can carry both softness and strength at the same time."

That connection began early, influenced by culture, her family, and community. Surrounded by Mohawk women creating, she quickly learned that her work held deeper meaning beyond visual appeal. "Our art was more than decoration." Perkins further explained that "It carried teachings, relationships and pride." A special influence in that journey was Karen Francis, whose encouragement led her to juried art shows. That experience opened new doors. "From there, I saw endless opportunities," reflected how participation helped expand both confidence and visibility.

Daily life as an artist is constantly shifting. Some days are quiet and focused spent beading for hours, while others involve designing, sewing, teaching, or preparing for exhibitions. "A lot of creativity also happens outside the studio through conversations, community, and observation," she shared. Inspiration flows from both past and present forms of Haudenosaunee art, historical beadwork and regalia, while also looking to nature and fashion. What drives the work most is the connection between tradition and contemporary expression.

"I'm always thinking about how our ancestors adapted and created beauty even during difficult times, that inspires me deeply," Niio shared. Traditional knowledge plays a central role in her creative work. Whether through materials, techniques or storytelling, each creation reflects careful



▲ Seafoam Collection.
Photo: [NiioPerkins.com/Gallery](https://niioperkins.com/Gallery)

study and respect for cultural practices. "I see my work as part of a continuation rather than something separate from the past, even when the work feels contemporary, it is still rooted in cultural memory and responsibility," she shared. Community has been important in shaping both perspective and purpose. Growing up among artists, knowledge keepers, dancers, and singers reinforced the idea that art carries responsibility. "Community taught me that our work carries responsibility, not just individuality." To carry cultural values and practices as Onkwehonwe artist, making sure traditional knowledge is not lost.

Perkins' creative space is also shaped by family. A mother's commitment to professionalism, a brother's creativity and a sister's organizational discipline all contributed to her approach, "Their support gave me the confidence to take my art seriously," she shared. She also shares studio space with her oldest daughter, Tia, who often joins her in their home studio. Whether assisting with small tasks or offering a fresh perspective. Tia brings her own sense of style into the work. With a strong interest in fashion, she contributes ideas that influence how pieces are styled and presented. Their time together is a growing collaboration, where creativity is shared and continues to evolve.

Tracing the origin of Perkins' creativity is not simple.

It existed everywhere at home, among relatives and within the community. The influence of families like the Porters, where beadwork was practiced daily around the kitchen table reinforced that normalcy. "Being surrounded by all of that made creativity feel expected and connected to community and family," Niio shared. For emerging Indigenous artists, Perkins offers grounded advice in identity and self-trust. "Trust your voice and don't feel pressured to create for trends or outside validation." She emphasizes the importance of learning and connection as a foundation for creativity. "Spend time learning where you come from and let that guide your work, your perspective matters because nobody else can tell your story the way you can."



▲ Tia Perkins art directing photoshoot for Niio x Pruitt Titanium Celestial Earrings.
Photo: Haley Shattuck

◀ Niio x Pruitt Titanium Celestial Earrings.
▼ Photo: ArtsyLensPhotography



NIIO X PRUITT COLLAB

Niio recently collaborated with Pat Pruitt, a metalsmith from the Pueblo of Laguna who specializes in stainless steel, titanium, and zirconium.

This collaboration merges together beadwork with titanium, re-imagining one of Perkin's classic Celestial earring designs in metal. Inspired by the movement, color transitions, and detail of the original beadwork, the earrings reflect both Niio and Pruitt's artistic practices. Pat captured the ombre effect beautifully in titanium, creating a piece that honors the original design while introducing a new material language. The result is an exploration of tradition, innovation, adornment, and contemporary Native design. Collaborations like this are one of the many ways participating in larger markets has expanded opportunities for growth, allowing Perkins to connect with artists across disciplines and explore new possibilities for her work.





Custom-Made Cornhusk Skirt: Tisha Thompson
Necklace & Earrings: Anna Thompson
Custom Belt: Fire Loom Creations

Photo Contribution:
Laurie Gardner Photography



THREADS OF THE LAND

Akenhnhá:ke | Summer Fashion



What's summer without fashion that reflects sustainability, responsibility, culture, and bio-mimicry?

Kahentase Terrance | A/ Communications Specialist

Design WITH THE LAND

For Akwesasne designers Tisha Thompson and Karen Francis, fashion begins long before the sewing and beading begins. Their design process starts off in sustainability, cultural responsibility and a connection to the natural world. Inside their studio, those principles are shown in the materials they use and the stories they tell through their designs.

Birch bark, sweetgrass, corn husks, leather hides, black ash, reclaimed textiles and beadwork are found throughout the space. Outfits in progress hanging beside fabric swatches and natural materials waiting to be modeled into future pieces. The studios approach that guides their process is drawing inspiration from the land while creating contemporary Indigenous fashion.

Their creative process often begins with gathering rather than sketching. Thompson and Francis thrift textiles, source materials and experiment with different combinations of textures, colors and forms. Fabrics, beads and natural elements are laid side by side as they explore new ideas.

"We swatch things together and see what sparks," they shared.

The pair described their work as being influenced by bio-mimicry, a design approach that looks to nature as the mood board. Sustainability is not treated as a trend but as a core part of their design practice. Reclaimed materials and natural textiles are mindful sourcing that help shape their work.

One textile fabric hanging in the studio mimicked that philosophy. A skirt with a textured pattern that resembled the branching veins of a leaf and the organic lines found in tree bark. When pointed out the resemblance, Thompson and Francis said that was exactly the response they hoped for. Their goal is to take inspiration from the land and incorporate its patterns, textures and forms into their work that are created into contemporary designs.

While nature plays a significant role in their work, community is equally important.

Thompson and Francis spoke about collaborating closely with other artisans such as beadworkers and basket makers. An important part of their process is ensuring that community members who contribute are properly recognized. Whether someone contributes beadwork, sewing or another creative skill, acknowledgment matters. "We make sure everyone is recognized," they shared.

That commitment is centered around accountability, reciprocity and respect. For Thompson and Francis, fashion is often the result of collaboration, shared knowledge and community involvement. Those values also guide how they approach cultural representation. Before moving forward with certain concepts, they consider how their work reflects Akwesasne and Mohawk identity. When questions arise regarding cultural protocols, they seek guidance from knowledge keepers and clan mothers. As their work reaches larger audiences through fashion shows and public events, they remain mindful of the responsibility that comes with representing their community.

Being an iconic duo is also part of their success.

In an industry where creative collaboration can be challenging, Thompson and Francis have built a working relationship based on trust and shared vision. They described themselves as being on the same wavelength and able to understand each other's ideas without extensive discussion. Thompson laughed when she admitted that working with someone else might not be easy.

"I'd probably drive them crazy," she joked.

With Francis, the process works naturally. Together, they handle every step of their work including sewing, beading, fittings, styling, makeup and fashion show production. Their partnership is not divided by forced roles. Instead, it is built on collaboration and a shared commitment to their values and creative goals. Their work has recently gained recognition beyond Akwesasne. Akwesasne actress Kiawenti:io Tarbell wore one of their designs to the Gold Gala, a high-profile cultural awards event hosted by Gold House. For the event, Tisha and Karen collaborated with Leticia Llesmin—celebrity hair and makeup artist, creative consultant, and founder of DUSTED—to bring the complete look to life. The opportunity introduced their work to an upscale audience while showcasing Indigenous fashion on a larger international stage.

With the growing recognition, Thompson and Francis remain focused on the principles that first inspired their work. Inside their studio surrounded by natural materials, textiles, and beadwork, they continue to create designs that strengthen their relationship with the land, their community and each other. Through their work, they show how fashion can bring together sustainability, cultural knowledge and contemporary designs in Akwesasne.

As summer approaches, take a moment to spend time out in nature. You might find inspiration with the natural elements of the land.



▲ Actress Kiawenti:io Tarbell poses for behind-the-scenes photos before attending the Gold Gala.



BTS Photos + Hair: Leticia Llesmin
Makeup: Jasmin Stephen
Styling/Jewelry: Tisha Thompson & Karen Francis



Model wearing woven black ash and sweetgrass skirt, necklace, and earrings. ▲

Photo Contribution:
Laurie Gardner Photography



▲ Tisha Thompson & Karen Francis



▲ Photo Contributions: Austin Herne

Nature
is our
mood board

Juried Art Show WINNERS

Ohiarikhó:wa/July 17,

Akwesasne Travel celebrated the winners of the Juried Art Show at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort Winter Ballroom, featuring 66 pieces of artwork. Honors were awarded by jury across nine categories, all works were created by 50 Indigenous artists and included a wide range of both contemporary and traditional pieces.

Ohiarikhó:wa/July 16,

A Youth Art Show preceded the Juried Art Show where honors were awarded across three categories. Winners of this year's Youth Art Show include Kahnekanonnhá Kasokeo, "Feelin' Fancy" won 1st Place for the 6-12 age category; Kaida Thompson, "Every Feather" won 1st Place for the 13-17 age category; Bruno Light "Heart of the Tipi" won Best of Show for the 6-12 age category.

BASKETS FANCY

1ST PLACE

Holly Pike
The Thunderers

2ND PLACE

Carrie Hill
Moon Cycle in Splint

TRADITIONAL/ CONTEMPORARY ATTIRE

1ST PLACE

Marlana Thompson
Skywoman's Purse

2ND PLACE

Teiosakentison Elijah
*Roan Roan
(Hummingbird)*

TEXTILE ART

1ST PLACE

Elisha Ieshonténhawe King
*Ratinehtanónhnhá
They Look After the Garden*

2ND PLACE

Carolyn Cook
Purple Haze

FINE ART 3 DIMENSIONAL

1ST PLACE

Roger Perkins
Truth Bomb

2ND PLACE

Andrew Cook
Eagle Automata

FINE ART 2 DIMENSIONAL

1ST PLACE

Mark Light
Celestial Tree

2ND PLACE

Jordan Thompson
*9 Clans of the
Haudenosaunee*

NEW MEDIA

1ST PLACE

Ansley Hill
Morph

2ND PLACE

Yvette White
Untitled 26

CULTURAL DIVERSE ART

1ST PLACE

Kahionwinehshon Phillips
Tota's Fine China

2ND PLACE

Shannon Lazore
Bee-utiful

BASKETS UTILITY

1ST PLACE

Karò:n:ies Thompson
Kanoharénion À:there

2ND PLACE

Joanne Jocko
*EAB Emerald Ash Borer,
Agrillus Planipennis*

BEADWORK

1ST PLACE

Kelly & Tyson Back
Gratitude of the Hunt

2ND PLACE

Kimberly Confer
Blue Moon Rising



Akwesasne Art Market Brings ARTISTS, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Ohiarikhó:wa/ July 18, 2026, Akwesasne's Generations Park was the place to be as community members, visitors, and art enthusiasts gathered for the 2026 Art Market. The annual event brought together Akwesasne's most talented artisans and community members to bask in the resilience of Mohawk culture, promising a day filled with spectacular art, live demonstrations, music, dancing, and food from local vendors. Some 50 artists displayed diverse collections of contemporary and traditional works, inviting visitors to experience Indigenous creativity, cultural knowledge, and craftsmanship.

The first-ever People's Choice Award, resulting from votes tallied at the Juried Show, was presented to Kelly and Tyson Back of Fire Loom Creations. *Gratitude of the Hunt*, a loom beaded portrait of a deer, was created by Kelly as a tribute to her husband's successful hunt. The piece expresses gratitude for the sustenance provided by the deer and honors the Indigenous teachings of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. Incorporating traditional knowledge and materials derived from the deer, the artwork reflects a connection to culture, family, and the natural world.

"It was very uplifting to see the large turnout of artists, vendors, and guests" stated Raeann Adams, Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Development and lead member of the organizing team. "Our community and visitors look forward to this event more and more each year. The Art Market is becoming more popular, and drawing people to Akwesasne each summer for culture, connection, and commerce."

Tribal Council shared, "The 2026 Juried Art Show and Art Market was a stellar event this year with over 100 vendors seeing hundreds of visitors that traveled to Akwesasne from all over, including our New England neighbors from Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Last year, an estimated tens of thousands of dollars in just art was sold. We very much are looking forward to seeing the economic impact from this year's event. Congratulations to everyone that entered this year's Juried Art Show, especially our emerging youth artists, and of course to all the award winners across the many categories. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the local food vendors whose participation helped make this year's event such a welcoming and enjoyable experience for visitors and participants alike."

The staff of the Office of Economic Development and Akwesasne Travel, extends a special niawen'kó:wa to all the artists, vendors, entertainers, demonstrators, SRMT partners, volunteers, sponsors, and especially the Generations Park crew for contributing to the success of this year's Art Market. Much appreciation and gratitude for the community members and visitors who came to celebrate Indigenous artistry and culture, making the fifth Akwesasne Art Market a memorable and meaningful event for all.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
THE 2026 JURIED ART SHOW AND
ART MARKET SCAN THE QR CODE
AND FOLLOW AKWESASNE TRAVEL
ON SOCIAL MEDIA.





.....

KIONIKONHRATIHÉN:THO

Pulls at the Mind



SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE AIR QUALITY PROGRAM

Tracking Pollution Through Rain and Snow

.....

Environmental monitoring plays a vital role in protecting the health of our people, land and water. By collecting and analyzing data over time, researchers can better understand how pollution affects the community and support informed decision-making.

Haley Shattuck | Graphic Designer

Every week, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Air Quality Program collects rain and snow samples as part of a nationwide effort to monitor air pollution and better understand its effects on ecosystems across North America.

Located on a local farm, a solar-powered monitoring station known as National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) site NY22 has been collecting precipitation samples since 1998. The site is part of a national network of approximately 250 monitoring locations that measure the chemical composition of rain, snow, sleet and hail.

Dylan Herne, Air Quality Program Technician and environmental assessment coordinator, said the station helps scientists track how pollutants move through the atmosphere.



▲ Photo Contribution: Haley Shattuck

"It's an acid rain monitoring site," Herne said. "The purpose is to monitor precipitation chemistry and track how pollutants move across regions and throughout the country."

Data collected at the site helps researchers monitor pollutants such as sulfur, mercury and other chemicals that can affect air, water, soil, ecosystems and human health.

"The data helps build a clearer picture of how pollutants travel through the atmosphere and where they're coming from," said Jaeide Jawahill, SRMT Air Quality Program Manager. "It's also used to help shape policy under the Clean Air Act and to track improvements in regional and national air quality. What ends up in the air eventually ends up in the water and soil, so acid rain impacts water quality, soil quality, agriculture, forests and public health."

Although much of the work happens behind the scenes, the information collected at the site has real-world implications for environmental quality and public health. Maintaining the station presents a variety of challenges, especially as equipment ages and weather conditions fluctuate throughout the year.

"The site has been part of the program since 1998, and although it has only moved once, much of the equipment is older and has been refurbished," said Troy Francis, air quality technician. "Over time, parts inevitably fail."

Francis said staff spend significant time troubleshooting equipment, documenting maintenance and ensuring instruments continue operating properly.

"We spend a lot of time troubleshooting equipment, taking notes, tracking replacements and making sure everything is functioning properly," he said.

One of the most significant challenges in recent years involved the site's solar power system.

"This year we had major issues with the solar batteries," Francis said.



"We worked with a solar vendor and realized the temperature swings in this region were degrading the batteries much faster than expected. We ended up building an insulated battery box inside the unit to help stabilize temperatures and extend battery life."

Winter conditions can create additional complications.

"The site also isn't mounted on a concrete slab, so frost heaves and ground movement can throw equipment out of level," Francis said. "These are delicate instruments, and even small shifts can affect the accuracy of the data."

Despite those challenges, the station continues to provide valuable long-term environmental data. From January through November 2025, site NY22 recorded 28.83 inches of precipitation.

Jawahill said one of the program's most notable findings has been the improvement of rainwater chemistry over time.

"One interesting thing about the site is that we've seen long-term trends over time," Jawahill said. "As industry declined in the area, we saw measurable improvements in rainwater chemistry."

In 2025, data collected at the site showed lower conductivity and higher pH values, indicators of less acidic precipitation.

"Overall, our air quality is good most of the time," Herne said. "We mainly see issues during wildfire events or periods of high summer heat and UV exposure that contribute to ozone formation."

Air pollution can travel hundreds of miles. Depending on wind patterns, we can sometimes detect impacts from places as far away as California or northern Mexico."

The findings demonstrate how environmental conditions in Akwesasne can be influenced by both local activities and pollution sources located hundreds of miles away. Data collected at site NY22 is publicly available through the NADP database.

The monitoring station is one part of the SRMT Air Quality Program's broader mission to protect environmental quality and community health. In addition to monitoring acid rain, the program tracks ozone, particulate matter and fluoride levels, conducts indoor air quality and radon testing, studies climate change and provides environmental education.

"At the end of the day, a lot of what we do is about education and peace of mind," Francis said.

Through school visits, outreach with elders and free community services, the program helps residents better understand air quality and its effects on daily life. Staff encourage community members to avoid burning garbage, treated wood and construction debris, and to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling whenever possible.

Program officials say small actions taken by individuals can contribute to cleaner air and a healthier environment for future generations.



▲ Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa / WICC 2026

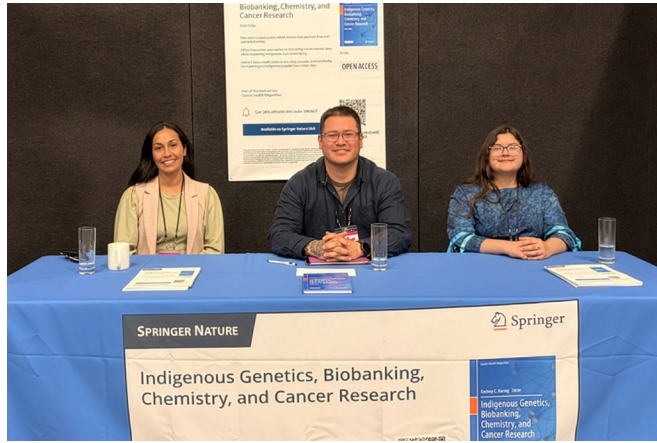
FROM AKWESASNE TO AOTEAROA

2026 World Indigenous Cancer Conference



Indigenous knowledge, research and collaboration are helping shape the future of health and medicine. Across Turtle Island and beyond, emerging Indigenous scholars are contributing new perspectives and advancing solutions to improve health outcomes for future generations.

Katelynn Delormier
A/ Center for Media and Communications Director



▲ Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa / WICC 2026



▼ Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa / WICC 2026



◀ From Left to Right: Haley Cree, Hugh Burnam, Ansley Hill.
Photo: ARCH New Zealand Trip.



In April 2026, aspiring medical professional and Akwesasró:non, Ansley Hill, traveled to Rotorua, Aotearoa, New Zealand for the 2026 World Indigenous Cancer Conference (WICC). Hill was one of the few students selected to present cutting edge cancer therapy research findings as a result of her participation with the Akwesasne Research Center for Health (ARCH) and the Roswell Comprehensive Cancer Institute.

ABOUT ANSLEY

Ansley is an Akwesasne Mohawk who comes from a family of artists' basket makers, painters and beaders. She is currently studying at the Rochester Institute of Technology, transferring into the illustration program with a minor in biology studies and museum studies. In 2024, Ansley was part of the Mohawk Youth Health Ambassadors cohort and a year later, joined ARCH as a summer college intern. Of her experience overseas, she shared,

"I WAS ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT OTHERS WORK, SUCH AS THE USE OF BEE VENOM AS A POTENTIAL CANCER TREATMENT OPTION. WE WERE INVITED TO A HAKA CEREMONY WHERE WE WERE ABLE TO INTERACT AND RESPOND IN KANIEN'KÉHA. DURING OUR TIME IN NZ, WE FORMED WONDERFUL CONNECTIONS AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHERE THEY LEAD."

THE WICC

The WICC is a conference that occurs every 2-3 years with the mission of advancing the Nation-to-Nation approach to cancer equity, governance and global responsibility. The conference took place on the traditional Māori territory, consisting of "more than 600 researchers, clinicians, whānau (family), rangatahi (youth), and advocates coming together in a space of deep connection, learning, and cultural celebration," according to the Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa. (heiahurumowai.org.nz)



▲ Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa / WICC 2026

THE RESEARCH

Ansley worked alongside Dr. Brian Betts on revolutionary Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T Cell immunotherapy to treat hematologic malignancies, lymphoma and multiple myeloma. Ansley assisted with introducing armored CAR T-cell therapy, using IL-18 as an added segment, to mice with triple-negative breast cancer and recorded a promising outcome on the effectiveness of the treatment on this particular cancer. The findings, along with further research, could result in more efficient treatment options for cancer patients.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

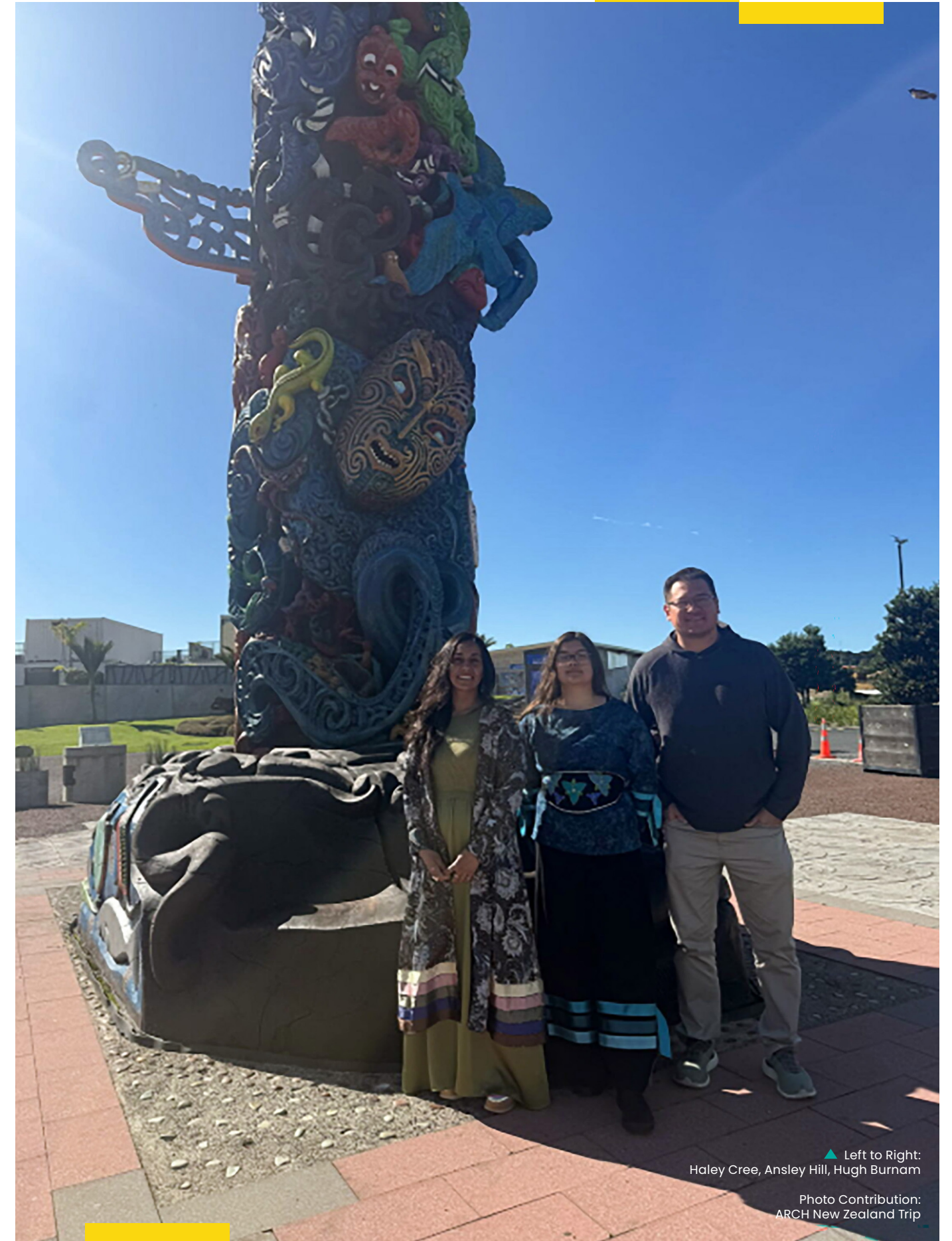
Ansley not only shared her expertise in cancer research but also spoke about what it means to be a Mohawk from Akwesasne. During the visit, the group was honored to be invited to a local Indigenous high school, where they spent a Friday evening learning traditional haka song and dance, a ceremonial dance that prepared warriors for battle. The energy of the welcome strengthened their commitment to bringing home the knowledge needed to build lasting relationships for their families, community and other Indigenous peoples. Through collaboration, nation-building and a shared goal of eliminating preventable cancers, the work remains focused on prioritizing the health and well-being of the Mohawk community. Supported by leadership within this grant and inspired by the perseverance and curiosity of the youth, efforts will continue to advance education and promote healthy lifestyles.



Photo Contribution: ARCH New Zealand

NIAWEN'KÓ:WA/THANK YOU

Without the help of our partners, this collaboration would not be possible. We express gratitude to the following: the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Roswell Cancer Institute and the Department of Indigenous Cancer Health, The National Institute of Health, ARCH Student Coordinator Haley Cree, Roswell Park Department of Indigenous Cancer Health Assistant Professor of Oncology, Hugh Burnam, Dr. Brian Betts, Beverly Cook, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Health Services Director, Michael Cook, and Dr. Rodney Haring.



▲ Left to Right:
Haley Cree, Ansley Hill, Hugh Burnam

Photo Contribution:
ARCH New Zealand Trip



THE TRIBAL OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUND REPORT

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council awards \$489,093 in
Fiscal Year 2026

Jori Rourke | Chief of Staff

The Tribal Council shares that since 2023, the Tribe has received settlement monies from the litigation amounting to \$2,202,400, thus far and expects annual distributions in varying amounts until 2037 in accordance with the following settlement schedule (subject to change based on actual amount received).

The amount of the settlements that is allocated among each federally recognized Tribe and Alaskan tribal health organization was determined with the aid of the 2020 U.S. Census. The Tribe continues to stress the importance for tribal members to participate in the decennial census.

In accordance with settlement terms, the funds received shall support programs on an approved list of abatement strategies; and also, for culturally appropriate activities that are aimed at remediating the opioid epidemic's impact on the Akwesasne community. The terms recognize that tribal communities possess unique cultural practices that play an important role in the health and wellbeing of tribal members.

On Seskéha/August 9, 2025 the Tribal Council shared this information at the August Tribal Monthly Meeting, along with additional information on requests for funding through the Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund. At that time in 2025, the Tribal Council reviewed and approved funding request as follows:

Supplemental support for the Tribe's Kanien'keha Language Program (KLP) in FY 2026 for an approved budget of \$724,606. This funding will sustain current and future program cohorts as the Administration for Native Americans grant cycle concludes on September 30, 2026. This allocation supports language teacher retention and recruitment through competitive wages, fund a Teacher's Aide position, and ensure there is no interruption in programming or services for participants as the federal grant funding ends. By providing continuity and stability during this transition period, the funding will enable the KLP to maintain operations and continue advancing in Kanien'keha language revitalization efforts.

Second, the Tribal Council received a request from Salmon River Central School District to provide assistance with a new athletic wrestling program to help uplift and empower Akwesasne Youth through Good Mind Grappling ("GMG"). The total commitment to these efforts was \$57,500, which included the creation of a structured curriculum for wrestling coaches to guide youth participants. In addition, the first year involved

creating a comprehensive training framework that outlines key wrestling techniques, fundamental movement skills, and age-appropriate progressions while incorporating safety protocols, injury prevention strategies, and structured warm-up and cool-down routines. As required in award conditions, GMG presented its FY 2025 expenditure and programming report at the March 7, 2026 Tribal Monthly Meeting. The Tribe encourages members to view the presentation and meeting recording on the Tribal Member Portal.

On Seskéha/August 29, 2025, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council published a request for proposals, welcoming community groups/organizations to submit proposals for FY 2026 (January 1-December 31, 2026) in accordance with the settlement terms, specifically for culturally appropriate activities that are aimed at remediating the opioid epidemic's impact on the Akwesasne community.

A total of 12 proposals were accepted to receive a notice of award, with five (5) proposals denied for various reasons, including being late and/or incomplete, or if there were other/less restrictive funding opportunities available to applicants.



▲ Haudenosaunee Everlasting Academy of Learning (HEAL) Lodge.

The Tribal Council is proud to share the 2026 recipients of Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund awards, as follows:

ASESHATE:KA'TE GRIEF SERVICES (LEONA SWAMP)
\$28,350 to sponsor seven (7) groups through the FIRE Process.

GOOD MIND GRAPPLING VIA THE CEDAR FUND
\$53,028 – Year two (2) of Youth Wrestling Program.

HAUDENOSAUNEE EVERLASTING ACADEMY OF LEARNING (HEAL)
\$105,840 for construction of four (4) retreat cabins and sponsor of one (1) retreat.

HAUDENOSAUNEE UNIVERSE
\$50,000 for cultural programming including program supplies (gardening, land-based materials, and wellness activities), cultural supplies (leather, rocks, sage, cedar, sweat lodge), and instructor fees.

HOLISTIC LIFE FOUNDATION (HLF)
\$8,500 for community engagement and to provide free yoga in the community and host workshops with local traditional programs to help lower stress, anxiety, or depression, plus medium and social connection.

MOHAWK ASSEMBLY OF GOD
\$31,200 for physical indoor/outdoor activities and various clubs (gardening/carpentry).

NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN TRAVELING COLLEGE
\$30,000 for instructors, workshop materials, food, socials, and the Akwesasne Children's Powwow.

RATISIENHANÓNHNHA (BRAYDEN SONNY WHITE)
\$25,000 for cultural revitalization programming.

SEED & SKY CONSULTING (SHARA FRANCIS HERNE)
\$53,000 to implement monthly Youth Circles that draw on traditional teachings and healthy relationship practices, guided by Haudenosaunee principles, with focus on empowerment, identity, peer support, and resilience-building. Plus, seasonal land-based retreats and caregiver engagement events will further strengthen intergenerational connections and community wellness.

SEVEN DANCERS COALITION
\$45,115 for training fees, contracts and consultants, healing circles, ceremonies, youth leadership and development gatherings.

39 SERENITY PLACE (MELISSA WARD)
\$9,060 Sober Clubhouse at 84B Center Street in Massena to be used towards one year of operating expenses including rent, cable, electric utility.

ST. REGIS MOHAWK SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO) (KANDY GARROW AND SARA BERO)
\$50,000 to implement a culturally grounded program that strengthens Mohawk identity, increase protective factors against substance misuse, and provide healing-centered activities for students and families.

Fiscal Year 2026 Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund Recipients Are Required to Adhere to Following Funding Conditions

- Submit an annual expenditure report to certify that funds were properly utilized in accordance with funding proposal no later than Friday, January 15, 2027;
- Maintain records and financial documents for five (5) years after all funds have been expended;
- Return any unspent funds to the Tribe by Friday, January 29, 2027;
- In addition, Tribal Opioid Settlement Funds are restricted to the expressed uses, and shall not be co-mingled with personal banking, or other funding sources, even if derived from the Tribe, i.e. SRMT Community Partnership Fund (administered by the Executive Director's Office), or Community Support funding;
- Recipient and employees of the organization shall express positive messages acknowledging the Tribe's support, and submit and permit relevant photos for the Tribe's use; and
- Present at monthly Tribal meetings upon request.

The Tribe is grateful to continue Tribal Opioid Settlement funding and is proud to share that a total of \$489,093 was disbursed to Akwesasne Non-Profit organizations and groups for Fiscal Year 2026. The total unallocated amount for the Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund account, as of July 1st, is \$931,201. Please join us in congratulating the 2026 awardees!

We encourage community members to stay up to date on Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund sponsored events, workshops, and initiatives by following the Tribe's social media page on Facebook.

2026 AKWESASNE POWWOW

WWW.AKWESASNEPOWWOW.COM

SEPTEMBER 12 - 13, 2026
LAMOUREUX PARK, CORNWALL

GRAND ENTRY BEGINS
AT 12 P.M.

GATES OPEN
AT 10 A.M.

**TRADITIONAL CRAFT
& FOOD VENDORS**

**DANCE, DRUM, &
SMOKE DANCE
COMPETITIONS**

FREE PARKING

**THIS IS A DRUG
AND ALCOHOL
FREE EVENT**

**NO PETS ALLOWED
(SERVICE ANIMALS ONLY)**

FROM THE FARM, TO YOUR TABLE.



CLEAN, LOCAL, NATURAL.

Mother Earth Eggs are available at the following locations: Speedway, Truckstop #9, Red Fox, CT's Country Market, Wild Bills, Bears Den Main and Bears Den Western Door, Akwesasne Mini Mart, Twinleaf (Akwesasne & Fort Covington locations), Jocks Kwik Stop, Duty Free Akwesasne. Other locations off-territory include Corner Convenience in Massena, Nature's Storehouse in Potsdam, Potsdam Co-op, and Big Spoon Kitchen in Potsdam.



People's Choice Award

Kelly & Tyson Back,
"Gratitude of the Hunt"



www.srmt-nsn.gov

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

71 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way, Akwesasne, NY 13655

Ska'tne ionkwaio'te ón:wa wenhniserá:te ne sén:ha aioianerénhake ne enióhrhen'ne
Working Together Today to Build a Better Tomorrow