

# KAWENNÍ:IOS

Akohserà:ke | Winter 2026



# Table of Contents



**04** Haudenosaunee Everlasting Academy of Learning



**08** No Ice Is Safe Ice

**10** Akwesasne Indigenous Fashion Show

**22** Connecting Community Through Inherited Treasures

**24** Candidly! A Look at What's Happening at the Tribe

**26** Building Your Future: A Guide to Financial Readiness



**20** Bringing the Good Medicine to Akwesasne

**Contributing Authors** Chief Michael Conners, Mose Herne, Katelynn Delormier, Madison Breen, Austin Herne, Haley Shattuck

**Design:** Austin Herne - Publications Manager, Haley Shattuck - Graphic Designer

**Editor:** Katelynn Delormier

**Executive Editorial Team:** Mose Herne and Jori Rourke

**Photo Contributions:** Austin Herne, Haley Shattuck, Laurie Gardner, Aimee David

**Publisher:** The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Center for Media and Communications, Akwesasne, NY

**Printer:** Modernlitho



## Chief's Note: A Good Time To Reflect

Greetings Akwesasne,

As we embrace the beginning of 2026, it is a good time to reflect on the past year and begin our planning for the year ahead. We worked our way through numerous challenges in 2025 and set the stage for more progress in 2026.

Throughout, we've done, and will continue to do our very best to learn and grow from the challenges put before us. We will continue to work to make the Tribe more visible and included in decisions affecting the Tribe at the state and federal levels. We will also set the strategic vision for the Tribal organization and develop new goals for the coming years.

We extend a special niawen'kó:wa to Chief Beverly Cook for her 12 years of dedicated service to Akwesasne. She made enduring contributions across the organization and beyond, especially the incorporation of trauma-informed awareness training, as well as significant impact through her service on numerous federal advisory committees.

We welcomed Chief Ross Garrow to Tribal Council. Chief Garrow has quickly gained the trust of our community and from those within Tribal government. He is dedicated to our youth and has advocated strongly for a new Mohawk School. He has already made significant contributions to important discussions around several community priorities.

Our negotiated settlement to the long-standing land claim was passed by the House of Representatives on December 9<sup>th</sup> and has been received by the Senate and ultimately land on the President's desk for signature. Once signed into law, land can and will be returned to full Akwesasne reservation status, tax free and under our jurisdiction again.

Council members were proud to join many other volunteers in handing out much appreciated food to approximately 1,200 Akwesasne households in November. Laughs and appreciation were shared for a full Saturday, bringing joy and food to our local families. We thank all of the planners who organized the event.

Council members also attended a tour of the new Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance substation, located next to the clinic in the former Food Distribution Program building. We are proud to offer that space for our vital first responders, so that there is a central location in our community for the AMA. We thank all of the Departments involved in planning and renovating the space for the safety of our community.

We have nearly completed our housing project located on Kahrhaká:ion Road leading to Wahta Street, which will be occupied soon by new homeowners and their families. These homes will help families to occupy their first owned homes, fostering a sense of pride in homeownership for generations to come. This will not solve the housing shortage overnight, but is an important step in moving us forward. I hope you all enjoyed a healthy holiday season, from my family to yours, along with a prosperous 2026.

**Niawen'kó:wa,**  
**Chief Michael Conners**

# Haudenosaunee Everlasting Academy of Learning

**Mose Herne**  
Director, CMC

Founded in 2022 by Della Adams and Eddie Gray, the Haudenosaunee Everlasting Academy of Learning (HEAL) Lodge emerged from a shared vision to offer culturally grounded healing beyond clinical walls. After 23 years of creating and building the Traditional Medicines Program at the Kanonhkwa'tsheri:io Health Facility, Della and Eddie retired and co-created the HEAL Lodge to provide comprehensive Traditional Knowledge and practices in a welcoming, non-clinical setting for Haudenosaunee communities. Since its founding, the HEAL Lodge has supported over 1,500 "cuzzins"—a term lovingly used to foster belonging and kinship—by offering a safe space for healing, learning, and personal growth.

"We wanted people to know and feel that they are in an environment that is safe and supportive, some have made the comparison that it's like walking into their Tota's house." The mainstream reference to clients/patients or office building has been eradicated from the HEAL teams' vocabulary. Our people are referred to as 'our cuzzins' or 'ionkwarase'a' and the building is referred to as a lodge (home). "At our core, we desire a sense of belonging. My purpose is to create a space where our cuzzins feel seen, supported, and at home in their healing journey," Della explains.



HEAL Lodge's approach centers on addressing the root causes of pain, not just treating their symptoms. They're not focused on the disease as an illness but rather on the DIS-EASE, a mindset of not being at peace. The goal is to consider the whole person and support individuals in achieving a deeper understanding that fosters healing. Each visitor is asked three guiding questions: Who are you? What are you? Where are you going?—with the first often being the most difficult to answer. Della says, "The most common response is 'I don't know'". This acknowledges their disconnection and comes from a place of honesty. "Some of our people were harmed very young and have carried that pain for a lifetime. True healing doesn't happen overnight, it takes time to face your pain, honor your spirit, and grow into who you're meant to be and to see yourself as Creator does."

Healing has no magic wand, it asks for something deeper: your participation, honesty, and a willingness to be guided. Della expands, "Your visit is not simply to receive sage advice—you're here to awaken your spirit and take the steps it's guiding you toward. This is a lifestyle change that requires abstinence of mind changers, and to be fully committed to your healing journey." A general rule of thumb is that noticeable changes in the body may begin around the three-month mark—but for some, the healing process takes longer, depending on the depth of their experiences and readiness to engage.

Della is intentional about language—she avoids calling her team "healers." Instead, she describes their role as guides who help individuals reconnect with their personal spirit. "Healing doesn't come from us," she explains, "Creator and the spirit helpers bring healing through your spirit. Your spirit holds the wisdom of what you truly need. It's your responsibility to listen closely, follow its guidance and fully participate in every step forward that is led by your spiritual connection."

Nestled along 1516 River Road in Tsi Snaihne, the Lodge offers a tranquil setting with views of the river, a wooded lot, and a peaceful clearing. A repurposed utility building also houses the Standing Sky Academy named in honor of her missing brother, Richard. It is located at 275 Maple Road, which sits directly behind the HEAL lodge. This space was thoughtfully modeled in the style of a small longhouse, designed

to ease the discomfort some may feel about entering a traditional longhouse for the first time—offering a familiar, welcoming environment where cultural learning feels natural and accessible. Within its walls, participants engage in Kanien'kéha language, traditional teachings such as creation story, Kaianere'kó:wa (Great Law of Peace) and cycle of ceremonies, medicine walks and sweatlodges to name a few. "We encourage everyone to check out our monthly calendar of events, shared regularly on our Facebook page," Della says.

For more information, visit the HEAL Lodge Facebook page titled "Heal Lodge," or stop in at 1516 River Road in Akwesasne, Quebec, email: [heal1516@yahoo.com](mailto:heal1516@yahoo.com), or call (613) 575-2954. The HEAL team consisting of medicine people, healers/guides, body work therapists, cultural counseling therapists, cultural and ceremonial teachers who look forward to working with their cuzzins. Niawen to the community and beyond for all your support.



# Tribal Chief Recap

**Katelynn Delormier**  
Communications Specialist

## Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance Substation Tour

On November 4, 2025 Tribal Council toured the new Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance substation located at the previous Food Distribution warehouse, beside the SRMT Health Services facility. The AMA's new location will allow their team of trained first responders to attend to individuals in need of emergency services from a central location to better serve Akwesasne and the surrounding communities.



## XMAS Enchantment Tree

Tribal Council sponsored the “Buy Local” tree at this year’s Christmas Enchantment hosted by the Snye Recreation Center. The “Buy Local” tree featured over \$5,000 worth of gift certificates and handmade items from local Mohawk artisans and businesses. Tribal Council is a proud sponsor of Christmas Enchantment, spreading cheer year-after-year through holiday gift-giving.

## Kahwa:tsire Housing Project Tour

In mid-October, Tribal Council, joined by the Executive Director’s Office, toured the Akwesasne Housing Authority’s newly completed Kahwa:tsire Housing Project located at 249 Helena Rd., Akwesasne NY. The Kahwa:tsire Project will help moderate-income families achieve their life-long dreams of home ownership. The five 1500 square-foot houses will provide affordable, energy-efficient and safe housing for Tribal members. The lottery for the 5 completed homes has been completed and the second stage of development for this project is currently underway.

**Cornell Cooperatives Extension (CCE) Visit**  
Tribal Council, SRMT Environment Division Director Tony David, Agriculture Program Manager Emma Phillips and CCE representatives from Cornell University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences met to discuss opportunities for collaboration on ecological sustainability and economical vitality for Akwesasne’s abundant natural resources.

## Trunk or Treat and ABGC Trick or Treaters

The Akwesasne Coalition for Community Empowerment hosted the Annual Trunk’R’ Treat at the Mohawk International Raceway in Frogtown. Tribal Council joined Akwesasne’s local law enforcement, government programs, and non-profit organizations promoting a safe Halloween.

# NO ICE IS SAFE ICE

Madison Breen  
Communications Officer

With another Akwesasne winter around the corner, that means ice fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and many other frosty adventures. One thing that we do know is all these activities come with the risk of being on or around unstable ice and dangerously cold water.

The Office of Emergency Management and Safety and the Hogansburg Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department are reminding the community that even though snow and ice have arrived, weather conditions are unpredictable and can, at any time, become unsafe. Prioritize safety over fun whenever you are on or near ice. The safest option is to stay off the river and ice entirely. It's difficult to know the exact thickness of the ice or what is occurring in the water below. Some ice can't support the weight of your pets, much less a snowmobile or a vehicle.

The river can look calm and harmless this time of year, but the frigid cold temperature of the river poses a significant health and safety risk. Every year, people underestimate how quickly cold water can incapacitate a person. It doesn't have to be freezing, just cooler than body temperature to put anyone at serious risk. Water pulls heat away from your body 25 to 30 times faster than air, and that means even strong swimmers can find themselves in serious trouble within minutes.

If you end up submerged in extremely cold water, the most important thing to remember is: don't panic. Take a moment to get your breathing under control. Keep your clothes on, wet clothing can actually help hold in warmth by trapping a thin layer of water against your skin. Keep your head out of the water, and if you're wearing a helmet, leave it on for insulation and flotation. Try to get out as soon as you can, before you lose the use of your hands. Don't swim unless safety is very close by. Even slow-moving rivers can have currents strong enough to overcome the strongest swimmers. If you can't get out right away, stay as still as possible. Shivering and pain are part of your body's natural reaction to extreme cold and distressing conditions.

As we head into winter, we urge everyone to stay safe around the river and other waterways. Ice can look solid even when it's not, and cold water can turn deadly fast. Please be cautious and make every effort to stay off the ice this season.

## If you are going to be around ice this winter, please remember:

- **Safety Doesn't Sink** — Wear a flotation suit or personal flotation device, when on the ice.
- **Ice Can Crack** — Never go alone. Always share your plan with someone and your expected time of return.
- **Safety Never Freezes** — Bring a cell phone with you when you are on the ice in case of an emergency.
- **Ice Changes Fast** — Stick to known and designated trails and remember the direction you came from to aid in navigation.



# Akwesasne Indigenous Fashion Show

**Katelynn Delormier**  
Communications Specialist

For decades, the mainstream notoriously appropriated the livelihood of Indigenous peoples to push stereotypical representations on television and replicate traditional designs for the spoils of fast-fashion. With the mission to reclaim our stories, our style, and traditional knowledge, Indigenous designers and models have carved a restorative path in an industry finally ready to embrace our unique cultural influence.

In 2007, a group of four women with decades of combined experience in visual arts, hair, and makeup sought to illuminate the talent right here in Akwesasne.

Akwesasne's very first fashion show made its debut at Jacobs Tobacco, a cigarette factory located on the Southern portion of the Akwesasne Territory. The show initially set to give opportunities to aspiring models to break into an industry with very little Indigenous representation.

What started years ago as "Nation's Best" has grown



into a grand celebration of Indigenous ingenuity and innovation, now known as the Akwesasne Indigenous Fashion Show (AIFS).

After a few years of running the show, the AIFS committee took a short hiatus to work on other projects. In 2022, the AIFS committee came together to revive the show, adding twelve new

members to their team. Together, they worked laboriously to bring a larger and grander show to Akwesasne that highlighted the talent and creativity of designers throughout Turtle Island.

**"It gives me a huge sense of pride to be able to help showcase the designers' looks, the hair and makeup, the bead work artists and the models. The show has given a platform to a lot of our people, and**

**that's why we do this. We enjoy showcasing our people and helping them get started in this industry,"**

shared AIFS Committee member Lauren Mitchell. Mitchell is an Akwesasne local, mother and hairdresser of 23 years who collaborated alongside Tisha Thompson, Tanisha Thompson and Laurie Gardner on the very first show. She continues to participate on the committee and lends her hairstyling skills backstage.

In this year's show, Sub-Chief Derrick King debuted as a model for designer Terry Cree.

Sub-Chief King shared his nuanced perspective on the rise of Indigenous fashion as both a Tribal leader and a fashion enthusiast, "The Akwesasne Indigenous Fashion Show was a true celebration of creativity and pride as well as a display of our resilience, our beauty, and our cultural heritage. It was a mix of our traditional regalia and modern-day fashion showcasing vibrant fashion-forward clothing. Indigenous fashion is rooted in ancestral knowledge while pushing the boundaries of contemporary design. Indigenous fashion changes with world fashion trends by blending traditional



elements with modern styles to create contemporary looks that reflect our identity and adaptation.”

Since Akwesasne’s fashion scene has grown, the show has likewise expanded year-after-year to keep up with an evolving industry ready to embrace Indigenous style. Model, actor, and environmental rights advocate Steven Thompson shared, “It’s a powerful movement that, to me, represents cultural preservation,

resistance against appropriation, and storytelling.”

Experiencing the Indigenization of big fashion first-hand, he adds, “I believe it has influenced the industry by promoting sustainability and the authentic representation that you can only find in Indigenous communities, with such beautifully diverse authenticity.”

Thompson, a seasoned model who’s walked runways from Toronto to Paris, brought to life

the nightmarish horned creature from Tasha Marie’s avant-garde take on a classical pirate-themed line and opened for Marlana Thompson wearing a traditional fur and buck skin ensemble. Thompson, alongside Steevi King and Ryan King, served as model coaches for the inaugural Youth Fashion Show that took place at the Snye Recreation Center located in Tsi Snaihne. With the help of their direction and coaching, the next

generation trendsetters strutted the catwalk adorned in local threads, proudly representing their cultural identity. He shares, “It was my favorite part of our fashion weekend here in Akwesasne. Seeing all those young aspiring models ace each pose and slay those confident walks was so heartwarming.”

Through an inaugural partnership with the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort and the Saint Regis Mohawk

Tribe, the AIFS set sights on a larger venue for this year’s show, delivering high octane fashion and grandeur to a much larger audience. “The casino sponsored the venue and the Tribe is a big donor every year. They’re always a big help,” shared Mitchell. When asked about next year’s show, Mitchell shared, “We do know we’re going to have it at the casino again. They have already booked the date for next year, so we’ll be back at the casino on October 11th.”

To get updates on where to purchase tickets for next year’s show, follow the Akwesasne Indigenous Fashion Show on Facebook or visit their website: [www.akwindigenoufs.com](http://www.akwindigenoufs.com)

### About the Planning Committee:

The committee members include: Tisha Thompson, Tanisha Thompson, Lauren Mitchell, Laurie Gardner, Shari Adams, Clarissa Chatland, Steevi Lazore, Ryan King, Rena Smoke, Jebby Thompson, Steven Thompson, Leona Francis, Babes Thompson, Kendall Horn, Carlene Cree and Shannon Oakes.



# The Designers



## Jolene Robichaud

Indigenous designer, Jolene Robichaud, delivered fashion with a side of sacred, featuring traditional patterns through a modern application, signifying the resurgence of Acadian and Mi'kmaq cultural practices.



## Tisha Thompson

Akwesasne artist Tisha Thompson's high fashion-inspired lineup demonstrated her ability to take on new passions and exceed expectations. For this year's show, she teamed up with Karen Francis to accessorize with one-of-a-kind beaded necklaces and earrings.

## Marlana Thompson

Marlana Thompson, an Akwesasne designer, creates outfits appropriate for ceremony but flashy enough for powwows. She weaves Onkwehonwe elements into all of her designs.



## Jennifer Benally

Owner of ShinyMoon Creations, Jennifer Benally, paid homage to her Dine' and Oneida heritage by splashing geometric patterns and floral motifs throughout her line.





## Cami Jones

Cami Jones designs featured traditional pit-fired pottery, natural materials, and plant-based dyes, signifying her deep connection to the natural world.



## Terry Cree

Terry Cree, an AIFS veteran and Akwesasne seamstress of over 50 years, showed out on the runway with silks, cultural prints and expertly-crafted garments.

## Robin Marquis

Kahnawakeronon designer, painter, and moccasin maker Robin Marquis made her AIFS debut in style, merging contemporary applications with a traditional flair.



## Tina Bradley

Transforming tradition through a contemporary lens, Tina Bradley or "Queenena," consistently delivers traditional and on-trend styles on every runway.





## Samara Tobeck

Afro-Ama-zonia creator, Samara Tobeck infused her rich African and Guaraní heritage into her designs, while celebrating BIPOC and models of all body types.



## Tasha Thompson

Tasha Thompson, the Akwesasne designer behind “Tasha Marie,” her culturally-rich upbringing inspires her artistry and influences the deep meaning she weaves in every line that graced the AIFS runway.



## Dee Back

Akwesasne designer Dee Back, lit the runway with creations featuring regal patterns and skull-prints, demonstrating pure talent and dedication in carrying on Mohawk tradition.

## Thea Thomas

Returning Kahnawake designer Thea Thomas once again impressed with her ‘tradition meets streets style’ line honoring her deep cultural roots.



## Tammy Beauvais

Tammy Beauvais, an Kahnawake designer, wowed with her elaborate velvet ball gowns and matching Men’s blazers, tribal printed ensembles, leather-work, accompanied by intricately beaded accessories.



## Waverli Thompson

Local Akwesasne designer Waverli Thompson, widely known her intricate beadwork, made the leap into designing attire, unveiling timeless and modern pieces inspired by her heritage.



# Bringing the Good Medicine to Akwesasne – Snipe Clan Botanicals

Austin Herne  
Publications Manager

Hidden away in an unassuming building, located at 482 State Route 37 in Akwesasne, is a treasure trove of not only natural medicines and sweet treats but a stewardess of our land and the natural resources she has to offer. Snipe Clan Botanicals, owned by Akwesasne local Sateiokwen Bucktooth, in conjunction with Snipe Clan Sweets and AK Traditional Crafts and Goods owned by Kanietahare and Kahawis, carries a myriad of organic teas, roots, salves, jewelry and a seasonally inspired fruit whip made with mountain spring water!

Bucktooth’s journey started in 2013, where she was an apprentice for the Akwesasne Cultural Restoration Program. After completing a four year apprenticeship and introduction into plant medicine, she was blown away with the many uses of plants growing in our area. Bucktooth was fascinated by the relationship between plants, people, the environment and the connection that occurs when gathering plant materials.

**“Plants help support our health and we, in turn, can help support them” shared Bucktooth.**

The rise of health issues due to environmental factors, caused in large part by the air and water contaminants left by the two Superfund sites up-river, has motivated her to look for ways to combat these issues with the help of natural medicines, incorporating plants into teas and tinctures instead of pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceuticals can, depending on the individual, can cause adverse reactions.

In her endeavor to increase Akwesasne’s access to traditional medicines, Bucktooth researched what it takes to get a storefront business operational. This led her to complete a 12-week business class sponsored by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne’s Economic Development Program. From there, she had all the tools and knowledge needed to get her business running.

After completing all of the necessary training, she came up with a business plan. With just \$50 to purchase metal tins, oil and beeswax, Snipe Clan Botanicals was born. The business started out of her house where she ran her in-home apothecary, but soon realized that the ever-growing need for medicine would require expansion.



With her growing family and business, Bucktooth took the leap and financed a storefront. A decade of tending her garden, one 4-year apprenticeship and a love for traditional medicine, all culminated into a successful plant-based business. Taking what was once not readily available to the community and making it accessible through her storefront and website has brought immense joy and purpose to Bucktooth.

To further spread the knowledge she’s gathered on the power of plants, Bucktooth works alongside the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s Environment Division as a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Consultant. Her research has been instrumental in the remediation of the Grasse River sites since 2018.

She has also completed work with McGill University, Trent University, Cornell University and Syracuse University to bring TEK to Native American alliance groups internationally.

Reflecting on what she has accomplished in the last few years, Bucktooth shares her greatest achievement. **“When I see my six-year-old daughter in the garden, picking leaves and flowers and making me tea, that is when I am the most proud. Being able to see her actively engage in her environment or ask for a cup of tea because she feels something coming on is a different type of awareness for a six-year-old. Even if she doesn’t take over the business my hope is that she will continue the tradition and I can picture her making tea for my grandbabies or making a salve to put on them.”**

Whether you are in need of natural medicine, a salve, tea or a sweet serving of fruit whip, Snipe Clan Botanicals has what you need. Stop in to see what she has in store and learn about natural healing from Sateiokwen herself. Visit [www.snipeclanbotanicals.com](http://www.snipeclanbotanicals.com) for more information or to order medicine delivered straight to your door!



# Connecting Community Through Inherited Treasures

**Haley Shattuck**  
Graphic Designer

After the passing of Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal member Calvin Delorimiere in March 2025, his stepdaughter, Tiffany Otten, became the owner of a remarkable collection of his personal belongings. Included were items that held not only sentimental value, but cultural and historical significance for his family and the community. Wanting to honor Calvin's memory, Otten reached out to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Historic Preservation Office (THPO) to see if the materials could be returned to his relatives in Akwesasne.

Receiving on behalf of THPO, Records Manager Lillian Benedict Barton became the point of contact. Otten shared Calvin's collection, which included a family tree dating back to 1817, historical family photographs and a 1918 yearbook from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Incredibly, the yearbook was signed by Jim Thorpe, one of the greatest sports figures of the 20th century. Thorpe was the first Native American to win a gold medal for the United States in the Olympics and is regarded as one of the most versatile athletes in sports history. He attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School intermittently from 1904 to 1913, where he was a three-time All-American on the school's football team under then coach Pop Warner.

Recognizing the significance of Calvin's collection, Benedict-Barton began searching for his relatives in the Akwesasne area. After reaching out to community members who might recognize the family name and searching through ancestry records, she had no clear leads.

A few weeks later, Benedict-Barton was contacted again by Otten after she uncovered more of Calvin's belongings. Among the new documents she received, one stood out – an invitation to the Thompson family reunion held in 2006. The names listed on the invitation – Agatha, Donald and Sharon – were all familiar names to Benedict-Barton.

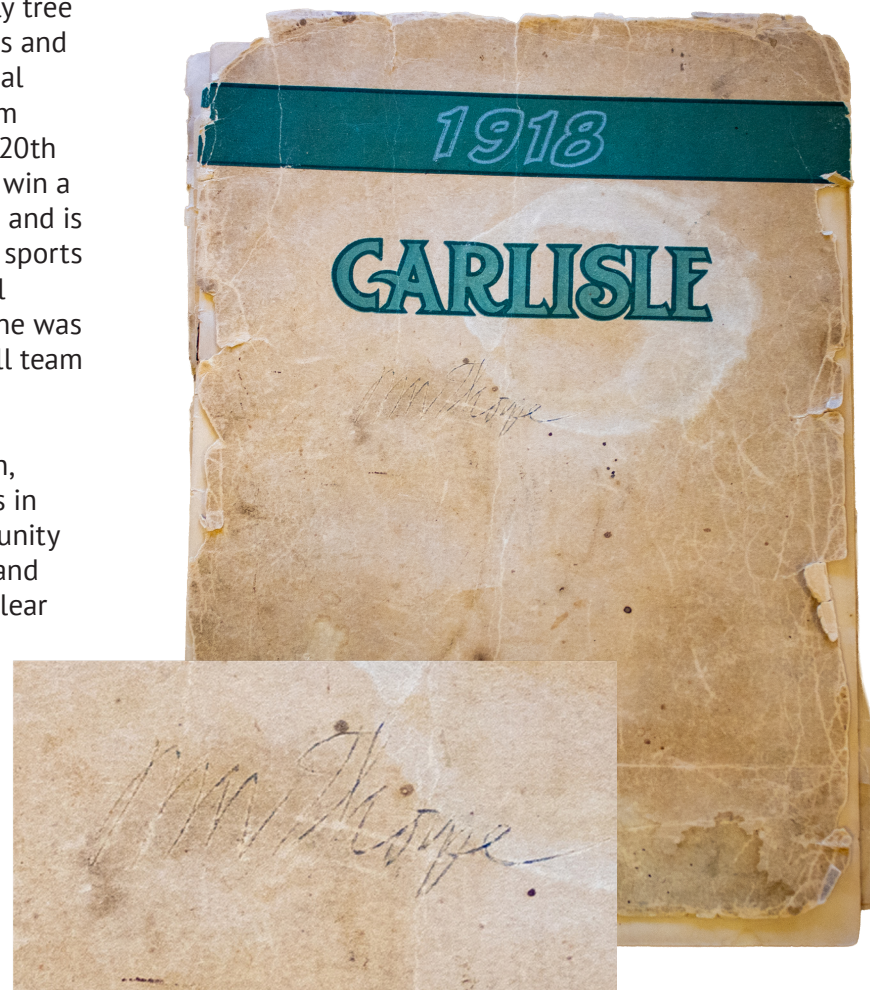


Using this newfound information, Benedict-Barton contacted Agatha, who confirmed she and Calvin were related. Agatha agreed to take the box of photos, documents and cultural items to share with her family with the assurance that they would be properly cared for. Benedict-Barton immediately updated Otten, who was overjoyed to know the pieces of Calvin's life and ancestry would not be lost to time or withering in storage. Otten shared how Calvin would be so happy to hear that his relatives were found and his items would be well-looked after. Benedict-Barton also shared

**"In our everyday routines and busy lives, we don't realize our ancestral connections are out there; unbound by time and distance, until someone reaches out. They see the importance of family and keeping the lines of communication open, hope for ensuring their ancestors remain an important part of their lives, for this I am grateful because this doesn't happen every day."**

Calvin's collection represents far more than personal memories. Each piece carries its own powerful story and historical significance. The 1918 Carlisle yearbook ties the family to a pivotal and painful era in Indigenous history, where federal boarding schools sought to erase Native identity and culture, only to give rise to a legacy of courage and resilience. The family tree safeguards vital ancestral information, offering rare continuity across generations. The photographs memorialize the people those closest to Calvin, visually linking past to present.

These important historical items are a bridge between history, culture, and kinship, and their return to Calvin's family is an act of both remembrance and repatriation. It affirms that reconnecting families is not only about preserving keepsakes, but about honoring memory and ensuring that heritage continues to be passed forward. Through persistence, community knowledge, and a deep respect for ancestral ties, meaningful connections are being rebuilt, one long-lost relative at a time.





# CANDIDLY!

## A LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE TRIBE



# Building Your Future: A Guide to Financial Readiness

**Madison Breen**  
**Communications Officer**

Planning for the future and building wealth can feel overwhelming, but there are simple steps you can take today to create a stronger financial future. Throughout life, our financial situations will shift, but having a plan in place can keep us on track to meet our goals and help us to navigate major or minor financial setbacks.

## Estate Planning

Estate Planning is the management and distribution of personal assets following the passing of the individual. These typically involve a will, trust and insurance policies. A good estate plan can also include decisions about healthcare, guardianship for minors, and powers of attorney for managing finances if you're unable to do so. A will is one of the main tools in estate planning. It outlines who will inherit your assets, names an executor to carry out your wishes, and can designate guardians for your children. To develop a will, start by listing your assets and deciding who you want to receive them. Then, work with an attorney or use a trusted legal service to draft the document according to state laws. Once completed, it's important to review and update your will periodically as your life circumstances change.



No matter what age you are, the best time to plan for your future is today. Read on to see how you can set up planning, the benefits of a Roth IRA and traditional 401k retirement plans, and how to develop a trust to ensure wealth and prosperity for generations to come.



## Roth IRA and 401(k) Retirement Planning

A Roth IRA is a tax-advantaged individual retirement account to which you can contribute after-tax dollars towards your retirement. These are like a traditional IRA; the only difference is whether you would like to be taxed upon investing or when you are withdrawing your funds. A Roth IRA (Individual Retirement Account) is a type of retirement savings account that allows your money to grow tax-free. You contribute after-tax dollars, meaning the money you put in has already been taxed.

Any interest, dividends, or investment gains inside the account aren't taxed, and qualified withdrawals in retirement are also tax-free, as long as you're at least 59½ and have had the account for at least five years.

Roth IRAs offer several benefits. Unlike other retirement accounts, there are no required minimum distributions (RMDs), so you have more control over when and how you use your money. You can contribute at almost any age if you have earned income, and the account can be passed on to heirs, making it a valuable tool for long-term financial planning and building a secure future. If you don't have access to this type of retirement savings account, or your employer doesn't offer sponsored Roth IRA retirement plans, that's okay! Traditional 401k retirement plans are company-sponsored retirement accounts that employees contribute a portion of their pay before taxes. This means you can add money every pay period to this account and it won't be taxed until the money is withdrawn. Many companies offer a percentage match for every contribution made by the employee.

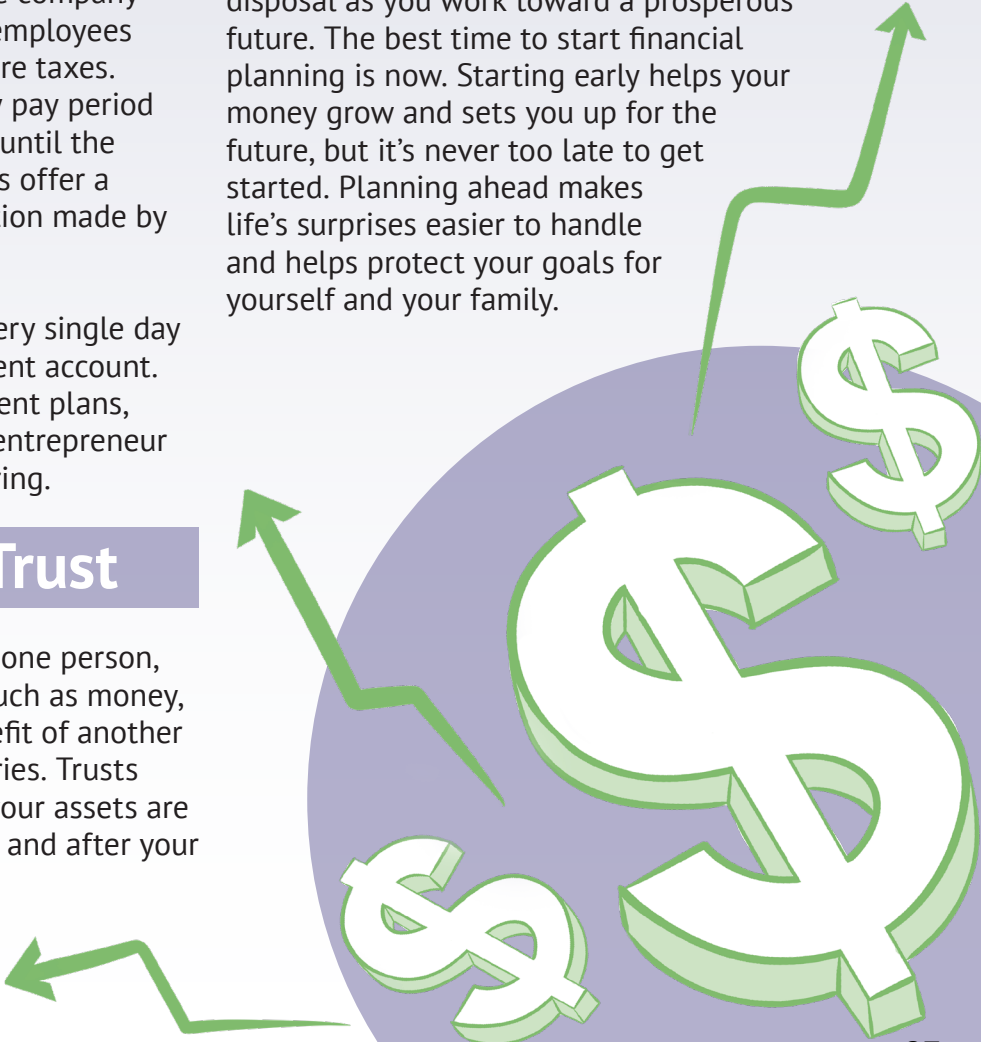
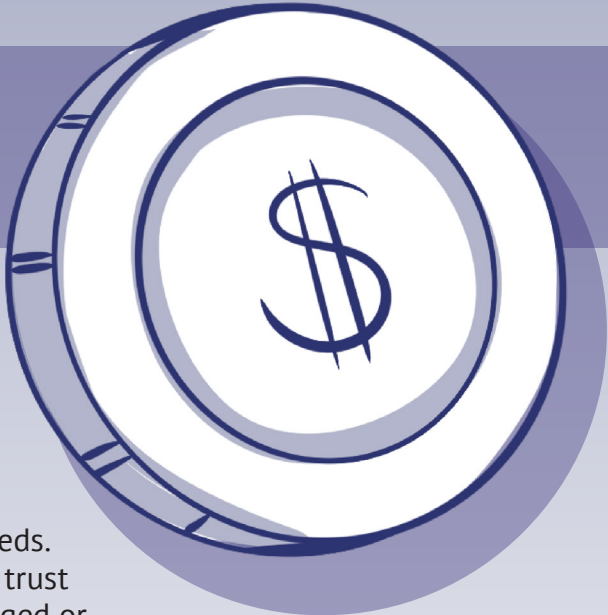
That's money left on the table for every single day you are not contributing to a retirement account. Many banks also offer 401(k) retirement plans, which is a great option if you are an entrepreneur and still want to look forward to retiring.

## How to Develop a Trust

A trust is a legal arrangement where one person, called the trustee, manages assets, such as money, property, or investments for the benefit of another person or group, called the beneficiaries. Trusts allow you to control how and when your assets are distributed, both during your lifetime and after your death, and can be an important tool in estate planning.

There are different types of trusts to meet different needs. A revocable trust can be changed or canceled during your lifetime, while an irrevocable trust is permanent and can provide tax benefits and asset protection. Trusts can also help avoid probate, the court process for distributing a will, which can save time and reduce costs. Overall, trusts give you more control over your assets, protect your loved ones, and help ensure your wishes are carried out.

These are just a few tools to use at your disposal as you work toward a prosperous future. The best time to start financial planning is now. Starting early helps your money grow and sets you up for the future, but it's never too late to get started. Planning ahead makes life's surprises easier to handle and helps protect your goals for yourself and your family.



# RECOVERY

**Begins with the first step...**

**Monday-Friday** 12 p.m. AA meeting (Alcoholics Anonymous)  
**Monday evenings** 8 p.m. NA meeting (Narcotics Anonymous)  
**Tuesday evenings** 7 p.m. CODA meeting (Co-Dependents Anonymous)  
**Wednesday evenings** 7 p.m. AA meeting  
**Friday evenings** 7 p.m. AA meeting  
**Saturdays** 12 p.m. Al-Anon meeting  
**Saturdays** 2 p.m. Recovery Dharma meeting (Guided meditation and Talking Circle)  
**Sundays** 10 a.m. AA meeting



Sewakwatho Corporation  
"A Safe Place For Continued Recovery"  
(518) 333-0067  
18 Eagle Drive Hogansburg, NY 13655

**Family Support  
is Hiring**

## **DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

**Make a direct  
impact in your  
community!**

Full-time and Part-time  
Positions

\$1,250 sign-on bonus and  
shift differentials offered

\$19.07–\$26.22/hour

All training provided, no  
experience required

### **Requirements**

- High School Diploma or GED
- Valid driver's license



Job information and application instructions are available online at  
**[www.srmt-nsn.gov/employment](http://www.srmt-nsn.gov/employment)**

# Community Workshops and Events Highlight Traditional Plant Knowledge

**Haley Shattuck**  
Graphic Designer

A series of free community workshops and events this fall brought the community together to learn, harvest, and reconnect with long-standing Indigenous knowledge. Hosted by the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Land Resources Program and Agriculture Program, the events emphasized practical skills, cultural history, and the importance of tending the land in ways that sustain both the community and the environment.

## Sweetgrass Workshop

On September 18, the annual Sweet Grass Workshop took place at the Generations Park Pavilion. Led by McKay Burley, Plant Nursery Technician, and community member Debbie Cook-Jacobs, the workshop focused on the cultural and ecological importance of sweetgrass. Participants learned how to correctly separate, propagate, and replant sweetgrass, gaining the skills to start their own patches at home. Attendees left with sweetgrass propagations they had prepared themselves, along with information on creating raised beds and maintaining healthy sweetgrass gardens.



## Elderberry Workshop

On October 20, the Elderberry Workshop was held at the Community Services Building (CSB) Teaching Kitchen. Led by Burley and Alicia Cook of Canoe Woman Herbs, this session explored the many benefits of elderberry, including its historical and modern-day uses in the community. Participants learned how to make their own elderberry syrup using Akwesasne-grown elderberries and went home with a batch of elderberry gummies they created during the workshop.



# Cooking With Dandelion Workshop

The community returned to the CSB Teaching Kitchen on November 8 with the Cooking with Dandelion Workshop. Led by Burley and Pat Banker 4-H Program Educator at the Cornell Cooperative Extension, this engaging workshop focused on dandelion as both food and medicine, along with native and non-native sunchoke roots. Participants got hands-on experience identifying and harvesting the plants at the SRMT Native Plant Nursery, then returned to the kitchen to prepare dandelion hot cocoa, dandelion root fudge brownies, and sunchoke fries. Each attendee left with harvested dandelion root, a harvesting knife, and recipes to continue exploring traditional foods at home.



# 2025 Seed Symposium

The 2025 Seed Symposium held on November 15, opened with welcoming remarks from Jessica Raspitha, Program Manager of the SRMT Land Resources Program. The morning featured a range of presentations on cultural teachings, practical skills, and community connection.

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Solid Waste Coordinator Tianna Back began with an introduction to vermicomposting, demonstrating how any household can use worms to create nutrient-rich compost. Raymond Rourke Jr. of SRMT Mental Health Services followed with a discussion on gardening and mental wellness, emphasizing how land-based activities support emotional balance and reinforce Indigenous identity.

Seed Keeper Craig Arquette then shared guidance on seed saving, including selecting, processing, and storing seeds. He encouraged community members to participate in Seed Keeping as a pathway to greater food sovereignty. Troy Francis, SRMT Environment Division's Air Quality Program discussed traditional smudging and its impact on indoor air quality, offering tips to improve airflow and prevent mold and mildew.

The morning presentations concluded with a compelling seed story from Nelson Jock, Onkwe he engaged in a guided discussion with Burley, during which he shared his journey into Seed Keeping. Jock discussed how he became invested in this practice, what he learned about seed saving, and the advice he would offer to new growers or those interested in Seed Keeping. He also highlighted the role of Onkwe, a community organization that shares traditional farming and gardening knowledge passed down from elders, in supporting local growers.

After the presentations, attendees enjoyed a traditional foods lunch catered by Toya Loves Cooking, featuring locally sourced venison, wild rice, corn soup, and produce grown by the SRMT Agriculture Program. After lunch, participants were invited on a tour of the Native Plant Nursery and Tribal Farm, where staff showcased nursery operations, restoration work, greenhouse production, and ongoing efforts to revitalize White Corn.



# Looking Ahead

Together, these free workshops and events underscore the community's commitment to cultural revitalization and environmental stewardship. For those interested in getting involved, the SRMT Land Resources Program invites community members to join the Native Plant Working Group for early access to workshops, plant knowledge, and volunteer opportunities. A QR code is available for sign-up information.



# FEEDING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

With the uncertainty around the future of government-funded supplemental nutrition programs, many Akwesasró:non are understandably worried about how they'll feed their families. No one should have to face hunger alone, and in Akwesasne, there are many programs on both sides of the territory dedicated to supporting community members and their families.

The following information lists resources for Akwesasró:non to obtain food assistance as necessary or as needed.

## Southern Portion of the Territory

**Mohawk Indian Housing Corp.**  
Food Distribution every third Thursday of the month  
188 McGee Road, Hogansburg, NY 13655  
P: (518) 358-4860

**SRMT Food Distribution Program**  
Located in the Community Services Building  
850 State Route 37, Akwesasne, NY 13655  
P: (518) 358-2272

**Joint Council of Economic Opportunity**  
43 Valco Dr. Malone, NY (Next to the YMCA)  
P: (518) 319-4028

**St. Vincent de Paull Society (St. Lawrence County)**  
128 Mian Street, Massena, NY 13662  
P: (315) 769-1207

**Salvation Army-Massena Corps Food Pantry**  
Open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
20 North Main Street, Massena, NY 13662  
P: (315) 769-5154

**Massena Neighborhood Center**  
61 Beach Street, Massena, NY 13662  
P: (315) 764-0050

**Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club**  
Club Members have access to a refrigerator stocked with snacks. Children and parents are encouraged to speak with staff about available options.



## Northern Portion of the Territory

**St. Regis Mission Church Food Pantry**  
Open Thursday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
3rd St, Akwesasne, Quebec H0M 0A1

**Green Food Bags-Community Health Services**  
\$20 CAD for a large bag if fresh vegetables!  
31 Hilltop Drive, Kana:takon, Akwesasne, QC H0M 1A0  
P: (613) 575-2341 ext. 3220

**The Agapè Centre (Community Market & Food Bank)**  
Open 5 days a week for food bank  
40 Fifth Street West, Cornwall, Ontario K6J 2T4  
P: (613) 939-9297

**The Salvation Army- Cornwall**  
Hours: Tues-Thursday 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
(Closed from 12:00 - 12:30)  
500 York Street, Cornwall, Ontario K6J 2T4  
P: (613) 932-7515

**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul- Cornwall**  
Hours: Tuesday and Friday (9 a.m. - 11 a.m.)  
434 Second Street West, Cornwall, Ontario K6J 2T4  
P: (613) 932-9345

Akwesasne has always banded together to support families in their times of need, please share this information so that no family goes hungry.

# Akohserà:ke | Winter 2026



[www.srmt-nsn.gov](http://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*