# OTIPACIMO Storyteller

Tom Junior Kamenawatamin, Bearskin Lake Food Co-Op



### **Tom Junior Kamenawatamin** Supporting food security in Bearksin Lake First Nation

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#### Message From JANET GORDON Chief Operating Officer



It is my pleasure to present the Spring edition of SLFNHA's newsletter, Otipacimo, Storyteller. Winter is a time to slow down and reflect, the snow protecting the earth and allowing it to recharge. Spring brings with it warm days as winter cautiously loosens its grip on the earth.

My responsibility is to oversee and direct SLFNHA's healthcare services. These include the Primary Care Team, Developmental Services, Approaches to Community Wellbeing, Nodin Mental Health Services, Health Transformation, and Physician Services. During the past year, we were able to complete both the Diabetes and Childhood Vaccination Coverage reports, as well as finalize the Mental Health and Addictions report.

I want to take this time to acknowledge the hardships communities have faced during this past winter season. Communities have had to cope with tragic events in the midst of trying to deal with everything else, including surges in COVID cases and respiratory illnesses.

We are on a path of recovery from the pandemic that we have been experiencing for the past three years, and the health services staff have worked hard to resume services at the community level. There have been challenges surrounding health human resources but despite this, we have been able to continue our work.

We are also reconnecting through service delivery and resuming activities that were paused due to COVID, including dental services. The Oral Health Team began booking appointments at Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre (SLMHC) on January 9, 2023 to address the backlog of children requiring dental surgery. This is the result of a partnership with SLFNHA, SLMHC, Sioux Lookout Anesthesia Associates, Jordan's Principle and ISC Sioux Lookout Dental Program on the Jordan's Principle General Anesthetic Dental Initiative (GADI). SLFNHA is also working towards opening its own dental clinic in Sioux Lookout.

Looking forward, we are moving towards collaborating with other organizations with the intention that these relationships will increase capacity within our region. As we transition into ziigwan, we also move towards a time of renewal and growth, and we are excited to see this reflected in our upcoming work. We will continue to deliver health services to all communities.

Miigwech!

#### **Contact Information:**

Janet Gordon Email: janet.gordon@slfnha.com



#### What's in a name? People helping people.

Meno Weecheeheeway ۲۵ ۵۰۲۰۰۵۵ is Anishinabe for "Good Helper"

Meno Weecheeheeway Navigators support Anishinabe people who must leave home for health care.

SLFNHA has Meno Weecheeheeway Navigators in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, and Winnipeg.

Learn more at SLFNHA.com



Otipacimo is produced by the SLFNHA Communications Department.

Questions/Comments/Story Suggestions? Please email or call: communications@slfnha.com, 807-738-6108



Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority

61 Queen Street PO Box 1300 Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B8

981 Balmoral Street Suite 200 Thunder Bay, ON P7B 0A6

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Vision Resilient and Healthy Nations supported on their path to wellness.

#### Mission

Transforming the health of Anishinabe people across Kiiwetinoong by providing community-led services and a strong voice for their community health needs.

#### Values

We value respect, relationships, culture, equity, and fairness. We work to protect the Anishinabe teachings of love, courage, respect, wisdom, truth, honesty and humility. 4 | OTIPACIMO

## Community Sunlight: Tom Junior Kamenawatamin

Tom Junior (Jr) Kamenawatamin is the manager and bookkeeper for the Bearskin Co-op Store in Bearskin Lake First Nation. He has dedicated most of his life to maintaining food sovereignty in his community by operating the Co-op and living off the land. Tom Jr is also a pilot and a skilled hunter, allowing him to provide traditional foods to the community. Following in his family's footsteps, Tom Jr continues the practice of sharing traditional food from the land at the Co-op.

"I've been doing this since I was a kid. My family would go fish netting and I would see my parents give away most of the fish. So I carry on with that. I share the food to all community members, and people can pick up the bounty at the store. I'm trying to teach the younger generation how to do that too. "

The Bearskin Lake Co-op Store started in the late 70's by having community members contribute \$5 each to start the new store at the time. The Co-op was to be independent of the Hudson Bay store and the Band Office, and operated by community members only. Tom Jr says the reason the Co-op store was started was to offer food security to the community and allow community member to have a say in food cost and variety.

"The Co-op still has the same rate of \$5 to join. Once you are in the Co-op you have a say in who is hired, selecting the Board and providing guidance on day-to-day operations. The Co-op is there to give a better price and a better selection of products." "Love your land. Teach the new generation to live off the land. Invest in that lifesyle."

Above: Bearskin Lake Co-Op store Bottom Left: Tom Junior's Plane Bottom Right: Ice fishing with nets



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Maintaining the Co-op is very rewarding for Tom Jr, but it does come with challenges.

"Every day and every hour I am checking food prices and they often go up. Air freight is also going up all the time. I ordered fresh produce more than a week ago and still have not seen it. I'm unsure the condition it will be in when I receive it. Some of the harder times are when the freezers are empty because the demand is high for the food here."

One way he has been able to continue to live off the land and refill the Co-op freezer is being able to fly. Tom Jr is a skilled commercial pilot. Flying gives him access to more of the land and in less time than on ski-doo or by boat.

"Flying was vital in my upbringing. Our family used to go to our camp by bush plane. That's how I got connected to the land. My family would go out at spring break up and fall freeze up and live off the land. The float plane gave us easier access to traditional foods. My father called the area where the camp is, 'Our Plate', as you can get moose, rabbits, geese, and other game in great abundance in that region. This provides much for our plates, and good food for the family."

Even though flying was part of his upbringing, becoming a pilot was almost out of reach for Tom Jr at one point in his life.

"I used to sit in the back of the plane when I was a child, that's when I fell in love with bush flying. In grade 10 I had to get glasses and I thought my dream was dead. But I went for my medical to fly when I finished high school and passed! Me and a guy from Round Lake went to Toronto where we finished our commercial requirements and then I could fly!"

Despite all the challenges Tom Jr faces maintaining food sovereignty in his community he is dedicated to living off the land and sharing that with everyone around him.

"Love your land. Teach the new generation to live off the land. Invest in that lifestyle. Education is important too. I got to fly because I finished my education. Education is important, living off the land is important."



Above: Tom Junior's Plane Below: Ice Fishing Hole



Community Sunlight is a recurring feature article in Optipacimo that highlights and celebrates work of SLFNHA staff and partners in communities across Kiiwetinoong. To suggest a person to feature in Community Sunlight, please contact the Communications Department, communication@slfnha.com or 807-697-3206.

Below: Netting Holes



Below: Catch of the Day



## You're the Chef: Full Meal Pasta Salad

Bi-izhaa wiisini (come to eat!). We have a school cooking program for kids called You're the Chef that we want to share!

### Full Meal Pasta Salad

This salad is a complete meal in one bowl. And is a fresh way to enjoy trout fish. However, it is equally good with canned salmon. It can be enjoyed as leftovers the next day.

#### Ingredients

2 cups	bite-size whole wheat pasta, dry (e.g. macaroni)	500 mL
¼ cup	olive oil	60 mL
2 tbsp	vinegar	30 mL
1 tsp	savoury seasoning blend*	5 mL
¼ tsp	salt	1 mL
pinch	ground black pepper	1 pinch
1	carrot, peeled and sliced	1
1 stalk	celery, sliced	1 stalk
2 cups	mixed vegetables	500 mL
	(bell peppers, chopped, broccoli, small florets, cauliflower - small florets	5)
2	green onion, chopped	2
1/3 cup	mayonnaise	75 mL
2 cups	cooked trout, deboned OR	500 mL
2 - 213 g cans	canned salmon, drained	2 - 213 g cans



Source: Kanina Terry, 2019

#### Directions

- 1. Following package directions, cook pasta until tender but firm. Drain and rinse well with cold running water.
- 2. In a large mixing bowl, combine olive oil, vinegar, savoury seasoning blend, salt and ground black pepper mix well with a whisk. Add pasta and toss to coat.
- 3. Add vegetables to pasta and mix well.
- 4. Stir in mayonnaise.
- 5. Break fish into bite-sized pieces. Gently stir fish into salad.
- 6. Season with salt and ground black pepper.





# "What's Up Cuz?" Tyrell Monias, Youth Faciliatator at ACW

#### Wachiye,

Spring, a parting farewell by winter. As I am writing this, January 31, it is very cold and nowhere near spring, everything has ice on it, from trees, houses, cars, and roads. I see the days grow longer with light. A sign of spring just barely over the horizon.

I have a great appreciation for the winter, as it reminds me of a time of hibernation, such as Makwa. We often stay in our homes or must endure the cold outdoors. As everyday passes, we all are getting closer to the warm gentle breezes of summer, we are ready to start anew with spring. Coming together is my value and personally my favourite thing to do, whether with family, friends, or colleagues, it fills my heart up knowing people and their stories, as we all offer something special.

On a freezing night, my partner, Bryanna, and I were sitting outside, we saw pillars of white light shining in the clear night sky, about a dozen of lights shooting straight up. One of them beaming red and blue. We stood there watching the lights, in this frozen and quiet night. Stunned by how beautiful they were, it almost seemed supernatural. Somethings have an explanation of how they work, and other things do not need one. I am that type of person to find out the answer to everything, but I am growing in not needing an explanation.

Renewal of relationships is such an Indigenous trait. Ever since I have begun my healing journey, one of first things I learned was relationships are treaties. Ever evolving, changing, and recreating. This is the case of our relationships with people, seasons, animals, and plants. We change, they change, therefore our understanding of each other changes. We must renew ourselves and our relationships. I asked one of my many grandfathers (great uncles) about what it means to be Indigenous and what we have as culture or traditions. What he told me was something I did not expect. Essentially, we Indigenous people are free to be whoever we want. Who I am as an Anishininew, is up to me.





Recently, I had a dream of being with my grandfather who lives in Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Manitoba. During this dream, my gramps and I were on those aluminum boats you see often out in the lakes. It was us, on a nice summer day, white fluffy clouds high in the sky, with thirst quenching water all around us and calm as ever, islands of spruce dotted the lake, with us seemingly in the centre between them.

This place was my community without a doubt.

As we were in the boat, gliding over the water, waves breaking at the bow of our vessel, and we are not the only ones on the water. We turn our heads behind us and see moose, around 6 of them, all different sizes. They were swimming along the boat and behind us, diving under the water, and coming up after 20 seconds. They were having fun. Then one cow came to our boat, and stuck their head in. For such a big creature, it felt tense, any movement felt like it was slower than anything, and I held her head in my hands, in that very moment a pause and clarity came to me, it was a profound moment.

P.S. The pillars of light turned out to be light refracted off icicles. Even if you don't know the answer now, you will know eventually.

## **SLFNHA Photo Contest:** Winter Winners & Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who has submitted photos over these past 4 seasons! Keep your eyes out because SLFNHA will be hosting more contests in the future to win prizes!



On The Land / Ah-ki-Kank (photo below): Roseanne Bluecoat, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug

Grand Prize Winners:

(left) Geordina Okees, Eabametoong

(right) Priscilla King, Kingfisher Lake



My Community / Nitashiikewin (photo below): Cheryl Kakepetum, Sandy Lake







Meal Time / Miichim: Riley Dinsmore, Sioux Lookout



Family / Tipenchikewin: Margaret Whitehead, Weagamow



Get Moving / Majaan: Kyla Barkman, Sachigo Lake

## Health Directors Retreat with Approaches to Community Wellbeing



SLFNHA's Approaches to Community Wellbeing (ACW) hosted a Health Directors Meeting on February 7-9 in Thunder Bay.

The Meeting focused on working together with all partners within SLFNHA's service area.







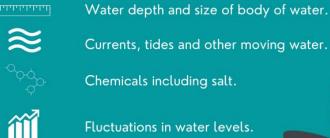




## **Ice Safety: Safe Communities Team at Approaches to Community Wellbeing**

## Ice Factors to Consider

Many factors affect ice thickness including type of water, location, the time of year and other environmental factors such as:



-00





Changing air temperature.

Shock waves from vehicles traveling on the ice.

# GOODT is an indication of its strength



Clear Blue Strongest





HELLO PEEKO

White Opaque or Snow White Half as strong as blue

Grey Unsafe





15 cm for walking or kating alone



skating parties or games



Peeko the Penguin is here to show you how to keep safe and dry on the ice this winter.

For more information on ice and winter safety, please contact acwinfo@slfnha.com



## **Spring Moons:** Lyn-Marie Manitowabi, **Healing and Wellness Coordinator**

# 

to the stories from your community. As a disclaimer, my ancestors are the Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibway of Manitoulin Island.

Mother Earth is magnificent: home to all life, seen and unseen. Bacteria, viruses, fungi, microscopic critters, plants (food and medicines), animals, crawlers, swimmers, flyers. All related and live together. Earth is dynamic, every moment has movement.

Spring is a time of awakening after winter rest. It nudges all senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch, as spirit responds to remind us to maintain healthy relationships.

Earth spins and wobbles on its axis. As it revolves around the sun, the moon dances around earth. If you watch the position of the sun as it appears each morning, notice the slight shift of the sunrise and sunset. It is only during the spring and fall equinoxes that the sun rises and sets exactly in the east and west directions. These sky dances mark seasonal practices. The moon does not rise and set at the same time as the sun - it has its own dance, it guides the waters, plants, and women. We refer to her as Grandmother.

Not long ago people lived freely in the natural environment. Every day was Earth Day. Relationships with sky beings were honoured morning and night. Teachings provided balance with all earth life.

Location is relevant to teachings. Listen As the winter blanket melts and the snow Crusts. This signals families to prepare camps to harvest game and set up blinds for the arrival of waterfowl. Springtime signals spawning. Some call this Sucker Moon or Frog Moon. Where I come from, spring brings maple sap harvest. Guidance comes from nature. People excitedly wait for the return of nika and zhiishiib. As the daylight lengthens, the ground warms up. Muskeg, rock, and soil create the perfect combination for underground creatures to rise from their place. Seeds break through and are nourished by the land to sprout green reaching towards the sky.

Spring is renewal, rebirth.

A medicine wheel teaching I heard says that the East is represented by the colour yellow. It is the place of vision, morning, first stages of life, childhood, the good life. Children bring the teachings of joy. Tobacco is the medicine of the East where spirit sits with eagle. What are the practices in your community?



"Ask your Elders what life was like before the reservations. A good life was hard, but filled with purpose, meaning, hope and belonging. What are you doing to bring spring in?"

#### **Dates To** Remember

March 21 – This new moon falls just after the Spring Equinox. The dark nights are crisp, and creatures can still walk on the crusted snow. Sugarbush is starting and the lingering smoke streams the woods with fragrance.

April 5 – The moon is full and marks the return migration of the flyers. Hunts are being prepared, blinds are built, and patience is practiced.

April 19 – Marks a new moon, as water is released from its frozen state, and the travel ways are opened for the swimmers to go upstream to spawn.

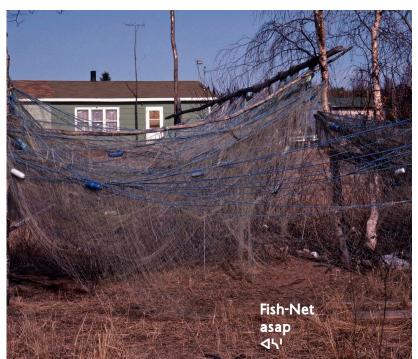
May 5 – The Moon will show her full face. The waterfowl start to build nests and turtles start their slow journey to get where they are going. It is the time to notice the tree buds.

May 19 – This new moon triggers the springing of seeds that are nurtured by the warming ground, some of which may break through and bring forth lush green shoots of plants and grasses. Bare trees become magnificently filled with leaves where buds used to be.

June 3– The last full moon of spring. It is the time when leaves grow larger and cover the trees, creating canopies for summertime. Or this might be the year that caterpillars feast! Blossoms stand their ground and bloom bright and tall as they reach the sky, kissing the sun as solstice approaches.

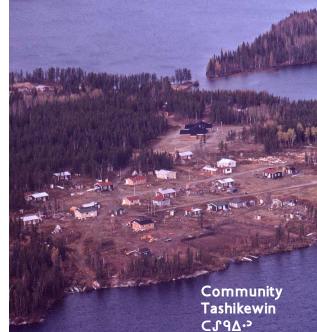
June 17 – This new moon happens before the summer solstice and marks the blossoming of strawberries.

#### <sup>12</sup> OTTPACIMO 5P⊃° PC⊲σ∫ QVJ·Δ° Saa-kih-toon-kit-anishinabemowin Love Your Language





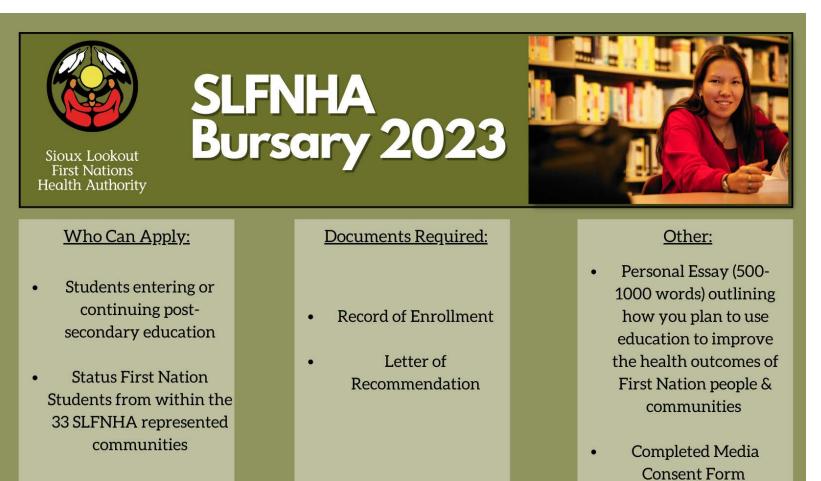






Sunset paankishimwon <²₽∫J⋅²

## **SLFNHA Bursary 2023**



### Deadline to submit: May 1st, 2023

For more information, and to apply, visit SLFNHA.COM

To help achieve its mission of transforming the health of Anishinabe people and communities across Kiiwetinoong, SLFNHA is striving to increase representation of People of First Nations ancestry working in the field of health care.

The Annual SLFNHA Bursary Program is designed to support First Nations individuals with their journey towards improving the outcomes of First Nations people and communities through the attainment of post-secondary education.

### **Congratulations to 2022 Bursary Recipients**

Congratulations to the 3 recipients of the 2022 SLFNHA Bursary!

Tyson McKay Michelle Quedant Rita Winter-Duncan



The Meno Weecheeheeway  $\[Gamma \Delta \cdot \cap \Delta \nabla \cdot Program can provide any assistance and support you need to help you get the best care you deserve.$ 

Contact Information:				
Sioux Lookout	Thunder Bay	Winnipeg		
Barb Peetwayway	Evelyn Hattie	Willie McKay		
807 - 738 - 6737	807 - 738 - 6717	807 – 738 – 0220		
Frances Machimity	Shannon Kakepetum	Alisa Moose		
807 - 738 - 0989	807 - 738 - 1700	807 - 738 - 5218		



Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority

## **SLFNHA** is Hiring

SLFNHA is hiring in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, and in Northern Communities! We have many job opportunities waiting for you:

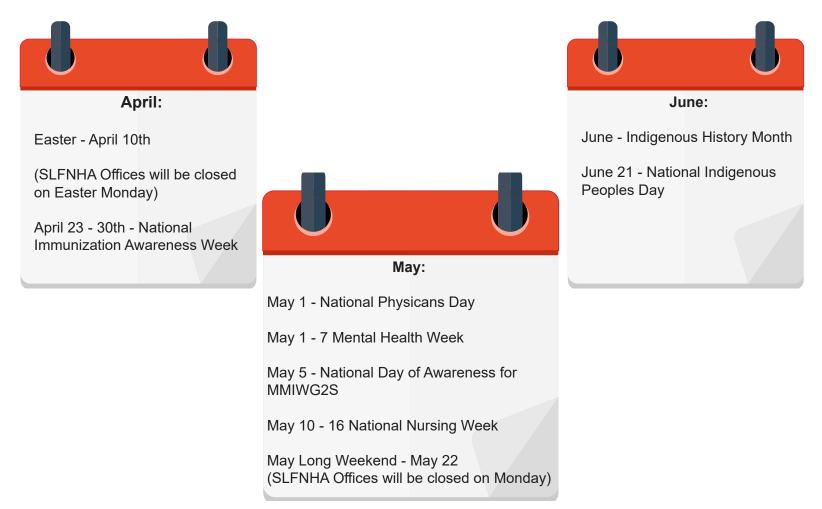
- Registered Nurses
- Administrative Assistants
- Mental Health Counsellors
- Manager, Outpatient Mental Health Service
- Meno Weecheeheeway Navigators
- Oral Health Treatment Coordinator



- Medical Director
- Laundry Aide
- Dispatch Clerk
- Housekeeping Aide
- Dietary Aide
- Interpreter
- Maintenance Worker

See these job postings and more at **SLFNHA.com/careers** 

### **Dates to Remember on the SLFNHA Calendar:**

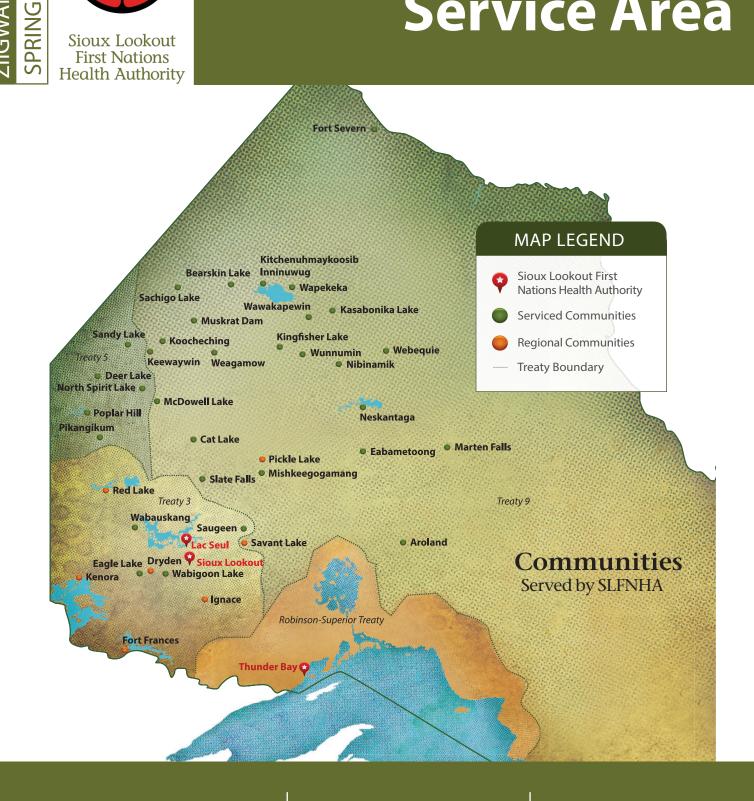




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# SLFNHA Service Area



Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority P.O. Box 1300, 61 Queen Street Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B8 Phone: 1 (807) 737-1802 Toll Free: 1 800- 842-0681

www.slfnha.com

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