

Mattagami
First Nation

DRUM



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Volume Eight
Issue One

WORDS FROM THE CHIEF



**Chief
Jennifer
Constant
Mattagami
First Nation**

I am so humble and grateful for all of those who voted me as Chief of Mattagami First Nation. I believe the people of Mattagami FN have embraced and launched a new era here in our community. It has been a long time since a woman has been elected as Chief in Mattagami FN and I am proud to be the person that demonstrates to our young people and in particular our girls and women that anything is possible if you set your sights on success.

This is also an important election as we now have a four year term as compared to the two year term of office in the past. The longer time frame now allows our leadership to develop new projects and have the time necessary to achieve our goals.

None of my journey has been easy on the way to this critical leadership position and I certainly have had to deal with a lot of controversy, negativity and the ups and downs of political life. The fact is that I never gave up on my dreams and happily this one has come true. This is a win for all those in Mattagami FN who want to break free of the old ways of doing things but still keep a traditional approach revolving around our culture and history. It really is the beginning of a fresh new approach to going forward.

My win is for all of our Elders, our youth, those who are struggling, those who are figuring out how to fit into a world based on our traditions and culture. As someone who has attended university and participated in programs and courses for years I firmly believe in encouraging our youth and in fact everyone to pursue education and new knowledge to make life better for all of us. In fact

my election was a milestone in that I am the first Chief elected here in Mattagami FN with a university education.

My goal is finish my degree and to continue my education further. I've participated and completed many post secondary programs and education courses throughout my career and I continue to do so. Most recently, I was proud to say that together with four of our staff, we attended an executive education program at Harvard University in Boston which further added to our education and our experience. This is the first time a Chief from our community has attended a program at the Harvard Business School in Boston. Education is an important addition to our leadership and to our administration staff as it creates the foundation for us to better represent our community.

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In this issue of the Mattagami Drum, we also want to promote our youth by celebrating the Mattagami FN Eagles hockey team who won the Mushkegowuk Cup tournament this past February. Through careful consideration of tournament rules and regulations it was determined that our team who had come second in the event actually qualified as the winners. Congratulations to all our team members, coaches and parents as well as organizers for a wonderful tournament. I also want to give thanks to all those who volunteer. The First Nation leadership is working at setting up a charitable umbrella fund which will help to raise funds through organized licensed gaming

and enable donations that would benefit the identified non-profit groups in the community such as the Elders Committee, Youth Committee, Women's Committee, Men's Initiative, the Mattagami Fire Department, the Mattagami Eagles and our Mattagami Pow Wow.

The inauguration of our new Chief and Council in a special swearing in ceremony was an all time highlight for me. It was great to see a formal event based on tradition and culture where our leaders took an oath in representing Mattagami FN. Many of our members were on hand to witness this event which also featured a cultural day of events which was broadcast locally and documented on video. Gone are the days of simply running for office and just showing up. We now have policies to follow, a consultative process to our members and an orientation system so everyone understands what their roles, responsibilities and representation means.

I was so proud to represent our First Nation when the communities of Wabun Tribal Council received the Skookum Jim Award at the Prospectors Developers Association of Canada (PDAC). The award is presented to a recognized Indigenous group that has demonstrated exceptional achievement in an Indigenous company or business in the mining industry in Canada. I believe in participation with all kinds of corporations, all levels of government and organizations to make sure Mattagami FN is realizing as much benefit as possible in any type of development on our lands. The role of Chief and Council is challenging when it comes to development as we must always follow our traditional and cultural approaches in making sure we are taking care of the land, its creatures, the water and air.

We have great challenges ahead and also wonderful successes to look forward to and with that I appeal to everyone to work with each other, heal any divisions, respect each other's beliefs and do our very best to inspire all of our youth.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

This has been a very busy fall, winter and spring for all of us here in Mattagami First Nation. We all have so much to be grateful for as our Elders, leadership, staff and members are stepping up every day to make life better in our community. Our new Chief Jennifer Constant and council members have been doing a great job in terms of guidance and knowledge which makes life easier for all of us. We are also thankful for the good work of past Chiefs and Councils as well as our Elders who have contributed to the vibrant, safe and caring community we call home.

The big news we experienced was in our swearing in for Chief and Council which was held on our Culture Day on October 18, 2023. This was an occasion to swear in the Chief and Council before the community. The recent election is also a huge development for our governance model as it is part of the new First Nations Elections Act which we have signed on to. Now we have elections happening every four years rather than the past system which was a two year period. Many thanks to all who participated and in particular to Nicole Richmond who has guided us on the path to this development and was on hand to assist us with the swearing in ceremony and cultural day. Nicole has assisted our community on many projects over the past few years as she is an Anishinaabe lawyer from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River) FN and is a recognized academic in Indigenous governance training and education.

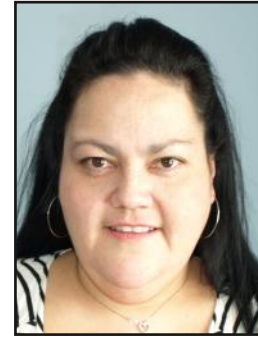
I am also pleased to see that our members are really taking an interest in engaging with our leadership and I see more and more that we are moving toward a traditional and cultural reality that connects us to our roots. This is exciting to see as it is part of a greater healing that will allow our people to develop in a strong way based on our historical foundations. In so many ways we are becoming a more stable, positive and invigorated community.

*In so many ways
Mattagami FN
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mind*

We have such a great community when it comes to the support of so many members who volunteer and become involved in events throughout the year. Thanks to all those who make our community events, our cultural gatherings and other activities possible. We do a lot in our First Nation with our Elders and our young people in mind. We also developed the Odamino Centre, a youth facility to provide a safe and positive space for our young people and I want to thank everyone who was involved in making that happen.

In so many ways Mattagami FN is developing with self sufficiency in mind and I am excited about the new Miikogi Project, which involves food sovereignty. Miikogi is an Anishinabe word that translates to 'it grows well'. We are looking at developing this concept which could include a greenhouse, composting facility and community freezer which would be useful in storing wild game that has been harvested.

In addition we have a new fitness centre that is equipped with exercise



**Juanita
Luke**
Executive
Director

equipment, room for physical health, access for natural health healing practices and a space for nutritional foods. This is an exciting development that can be used by all our members and will contribute to the health and well being of our community.

I want to thank and congratulate so many of our members and staff who have participated in all kinds of higher education. Madison Nicolas is graduating from a housing manager program from the Vancouver Island University as she continues her work with our housing department. I am so happy that we had eight people, including myself, as recent graduates from the Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator (CAPA) program through the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA). It was a great recognition for us all when we received our certifications at the 23rd Annual AFOA Conference in Winnipeg.

I am also very proud of our staff members and our Chief who attended an executive education program at Harvard University. Chief Jennifer Constant, Eileen Boissoneau, Tracy Harvey and Cindy McKay took part in this week long program which is offered through a partnership between the AFOA Canada, Harvard Business School and the Native American Financial Officer's Association (NAFOA).

We believe in education in Mattagami FN and the results are obvious in the great job our staff are performing. You can read about many of the good things happening in our community in this issue of the Mattagami Drum and that is proof that we are focused on success and self sufficiency.

Front Cover

*photo by
Devin Naveau*

First Nation Women in leadership meeting at a Ribbon Skirt Gathering in Mattagami on October 17, 2023 are from L-R: Nicole Richmond, an Anishinaabe lawyer from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River) First Nation, Mattagami First Nation Chief Jennifer Constant and Juanita Luke, Executive Director of Mattagami FN.

Golinowski Elected To Council



**Janelle
Golinowski
Councillor
Mattagami
First Nation**

Janelle Golinowski is a new member of Mattagami First Nation Council. She is focused on her goals for this four-year term on Council in dealing with education, traditions/culture and health and well-being. She believes that the youth of Mattagami FN are the community's future leaders. She is working to ensure the youth get the best possible education and have endless opportunities so that they can flourish and thrive with their future endeavours.

An area she thinks is a priority is bridging the gap between secondary and post-secondary studies. She points out that many young members are graduating high school with some entering directly into the workforce however others should know they have plenty of opportunities to continue their studies. She plans on hosting a career fair within the community to inspire youth to work towards their dreams and know that the community is there to support them every step of the way.

Golinowski added that there are several projects coming up in the future where people can find employment. She explained that it is important to help guide youth so that the positions within the community and/or at the local mines and other developments are filled by Mattagami FN members. She provides an example in that the new school will have a daycare centre that would need staffing with the necessary education to qualify for this employment.

"I look forward to sharing and expanding my knowledge throughout this term on council and I am hopeful that together we can continue to plan and work towards the future of Mattagami FN. I am excited to see what takes place over this term and I hope that my current role on Council

inspires other youth in the community to become future leaders," commented Golinowski.

In her ongoing plans for assisting the youth in Mattagami FN she believes that everyone would benefit by the development of a youth centre.

"I wish that when I was growing up in the community I would have had access to a youth centre which would provide a safe space to enjoy in the evenings, weekends and on holidays. It is my goal to meet with the youth in our community and work with them to create this space inspired by their vision," explained Golinowski.

She wants to see more emphasis put on teaching our youth and community members how to practice their traditions including hunting, trapping and traditional ceremonies such as the sweat lodge, shaking tent and full moon. Most of all, she believes it is critical that everyone has the opportunity to learn their original language. There are efforts to teach the language in the local elementary school and plans to facilitate Ojibwe language lessons for the community. She believes the Elders play a crucial role in terms of culture, traditions, and language.

"The Elders are the backbone of the community. They have nurtured the community for decades and raised us to be the exemplary nation we are today. I think it is important to keep our Elders here in the community and I would like to see the development of an Elders Home. This will allow Elders who require care and assistance with daily living, the comfort of aging in the place they've spent most of their lives and being surrounded by those they love most. The continuity of care will focus specifically on directives supporting traditional knowledge, culture, and language," explained Golinowski.

Although this is the first time she has been elected to council she has worked in administration for the First Nation for seven years and is currently employed as the Executive Assistant working for Executive Director, Juanita Luke. She also has been a member of the Board of Directors for the Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services for more than two years. Golinowski is involved with the Mattagami FN Fire Department #5252 and she currently holds the rank of

Captain. This role required a lot of dedication and hard work with a commitment to training over the past six years. In addition to her participation in working for the First Nation she is also the Council representative on the Mattagami FN Community Development Trust as well as a member of the MFN Fishing Committee and Beaverfest Committee.

She is dedicated to assisting those who struggle with mental health issues and addictions due to traumas that have happened in the past over time. She would like to implement resources within the community for members who require the support and assistance and/or provide access to services outside of the community as needed.

The 28-year-old is raising her daughter Blakeney with her fiancé Michael in the community.

"I grew up in a family of women and it wasn't common practice for them to have learned how to hunt or trap. I have had the privilege to join my fiancé and his family out at their camp over the last eight years and I have learned so much from being on the land and being provided with teachings from him and his father. I am proud to be able to say I successfully harvested my first moose in October 2023 on the land and with my family by my side. It's very important to me that I pass down all the knowledge and teachings I've been given over the years," commented Golinowski.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

FIRST MOOSE HARVEST WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY COUNCILLOR JANELLE GOLINOWSKI. SHE IS PICTURED HERE WITH HER DAUGHTER BLAKENEY.

Sue Prince Returns To Council

Sue Prince was elected as Council member during the September 30, 2023 election for Mattagami First Nation Council. This is her second term on Council as she had previously held the position in 2003.

“It feels exciting to be back on council. There have been so many changes over the past 20 years. Not only has the community grown but the administration has developed in size and in terms of professionalism. Our previous leaders have done a lot of hard work to build our community and I feel good being able to be part of the continuity in leadership to make sure the needs of our people are addressed,” explained Prince.

She is hopeful to see not just economic and infrastructure development for the community but to also see more cultural awareness and promotion.

“It’s important to see more language revitalization and preservation for our members. The language is the root of our culture and we need to encourage and foster our Oji-Cree language. We do not have as many Elders as we once did as a lot of our grandmothers and grandfathers have passed on. However, we are fortunate to still have Elders for guidance and there is still a lot of generational knowledge that was passed down to Elder’s children and we need to make sure we find those teachings and share it with our younger generations. It’s so important for us to share that knowledge,” commented Prince.

She resides in the community but

maintains a position with a major international company from her home office. She is an Indigenous Relations Specialist for Hatch Limited, a global multidisciplinary management, engineering and development consulting company based in Mississauga, Ontario. The company works with industry and resource developers in infrastructure development by providing technical assistance in engineering and environmental consulting services. Although Prince is involved in various projects, she works remotely at her home office to stay close to her family.

In the past she worked as an Indigenous Relations Advisor for 14 years for Ontario Power Generation. At one time she also worked as a Personal Support Worker in the community.

She prefers to stay close to home with her family and to care for her mother-in-law Elder Clara Prince, who is now 87 years of age.

“It’s important to me to keep my family close. My husband and I have been married for 28 years now and two years after we married, we brought my mother-in-law into our home. We like to lead a very traditional lifestyle so it was important for us to take care of our parents and keep them close to our children,” said Sue Prince.

Her family refers to their grandmother by the traditional Oji-Cree word ‘Koko’. She added that having her Koko in their home has had a great impact on the lives of their



Sue Prince
Councillor
Mattagami
First Nation

four children Gillian, Neebin and twins Shirley and Leon.

Her eldest daughter, Gillian Prince works with the Ojibwe Women’s Lodge in Nipissing First Nation where she is involved as a traditional body markings artist.

“Their grandmother enjoys picking berries and at the time of her birthday last summer, Gillian carefully made a small traditional hand poked design of some blueberries on Koko’s hand,” said Sue Prince.

Her daughter Neebin Prince works for the Indigenous Primary Health Care Unit, a non-profit group that is supporting the advancement of Indigenous Primary Health Care services in Ontario. Neebin Prince is following in her mother’s example as she is involved in various Indigenous organizations and groups to advocate for First Nation communities and projects.

Her youngest children are twins Shirley and Leon Prince. Shirley is at Canadore College where she is currently in her first year in an Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Counselling Program. Leon will be entering the same program later this year.

“We are very proud of our children. Three of them are part of the LGBTQ+ community and we are very supportive of them. It’s important for us as leaders to identify and include everyone for who they are. Our whole family feels the same way and it’s important for us to show how proud we are of everyone. We all have a unique gift to share, including our Two Spirited people because when it comes down to it, we’re all just people. I am a huge advocate in trying to address gender based barriers in everything I do,” explained Sue Prince.

She is now excited to see her first grandchild as her daughter Neebin is expecting a new baby due to be born in May 2024.

She is also happy to have the support of her husband Tom Prince, who works in the First Nation as the Arena Maintenance Worker at the newly built Mattagami Odamino Centre.



MATTAGAMI FIRST NATION SENT A GROUP IN MAY 2024 TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERED THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM BETWEEN ABORIGINAL FINANCE OFFICERS OF CANADA (AFOA) AND HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL AND TOOK PLACE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY IN BOSTON. FROM L-R ARE: TIM HARVEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MATTAGAMI AKI LP; EILEEN BOISSONEAU, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, MATTAGAMI FN; CHIEF JENNIFER CONSTANT, MATTAGAMI FN; COUNCILLOR CINDY MCKAY, EDUCATION DIRECTOR AND TRACEY HARVEY, PRINCIPAL AND 7/8 TEACHER, MARY JANE NAVEAU MEMORIAL SCHOOL (MJNMS).

Swearing In Ceremony Celebrated



SUBMITTED PHOTO

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR NEWLY ELECTED CHIEF AND COUNCIL. FROM L-R ARE: DEVIN NAVEAU, SUE PRINCE, CINDY MCKAY, CHIEF JENNIFER CONSTANT, JANELLE GOLINOWSKI, KOURTNEY BAULNE AND DERECK MCKAY.

Mattagami First Nation held a Swearing-In Ceremony on October 18, 2023 in the community to officially present and celebrate its newly elected Chief and Council who were elected on September 30. The event was part of a cultural day of activities which included traditional drumming, singing, dancing and ceremonies. The swearing-in ceremony was led by Nicole Richmond, an Anishinaabe lawyer from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River) First Nation and recognized academic in Indigenous governance training and education.

“This was an important event for all of us. It is a formal event to introduce our leadership by incorporating cultural traditions and it is an opportunity for us as leaders to present our oath of office to our members. I was extremely honoured to participate in this event. I’ve been part of the local leadership for many years and it was a very moving experience to have this done in front of our community members,” commented newly elected Chief Jennifer Constant.

She was elected to her first term as Chief after having served the community as Council member for nine terms over the past 20 years. She took over the position from previous Chief Chad Bois-soneau.

The newly elected council includes Councillors Devin Naveau, Sue Prince, Cindy McKay, Janelle Golinowski, Kourtney Baulne and Dereck McKay.

The recently elected leadership is looking forward to a newly established four year term under a new election code the community adopted. This is a major change from the previous two year term

that existed under the old government mandated Indian Act.

Councillor Kourtney Baulne, who was reelected to her second term, commented that she is looking forward to what they can accomplish over the next four years.

“I felt that this was a great moment for everyone and that my ancestors were there with me in spirit. Once we got up in front of everyone, it was a powerful experience to be able to smudge, to have the drummers perform and to be able to dance with everyone. Towards the end of the event, everyone lined up to greet us and give us a hug. I didn’t expect it

but it was a very emotional and happy time. It was a great day for me, it was amazing. Every swearing in ceremony should be conducted in this way,” commented Baulne.

Councillor Devin Naveau, who returned for his third term on Council commented that he was proud to take part in the ceremony.

“I am incredibly grateful to be in the position I was elected to. I take my role on Council very seriously and I strive to meet the goals of serving my community to the fullest. Although I’ve been with council before, this was the first time I took part in a ceremony like this. There was a lot of great positive energy and it felt good to be part of this and share in the day with fellow members of our community,” said Councillor Naveau.

Councillor Sue Prince was moved by the ceremony and pointed out how much of a change it was compared to how it felt when she last held the position of Councillor 20 years ago.

“It was a beautiful event that was a new experience for me and everyone who took part. The drumming and singing were wonderful and I was able to dance with my regalia. It’s really important for me to take part in all this. The ceremony and being in front of the community, to hold that eagle feather and take on the responsibility as Council member all had a great impact on me. It was a powerful moment for myself and everyone who shared in this day,” said Councillor Prince.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

THE MATTAGAMI FN FITNESS CENTRE IN THE COMMUNITY WAS LAUNCHED WITH A RIBBON CUTTING BY CHIEF JENNIFER CONSTANT (CENTRE) AND COUNCIL MEMBERS. FROM L-R: SUE PRINCE, CINDY MCKAY, JANELLE GOLINOWSKI, CHIEF CONSTANT, KOURTNEY BAULNE, DERECK MCKAY AND DEVIN NAVEAU.

Project Miikogi For Food Sovereignty

Mattagami First Nation is developing Project Miikogi, a food sovereignty and horticultural initiative aimed at creating a sustainable low cost supply of food for the community. The word Miikogi is an Anishinabe word that translates to 'it grows well'. Horticulture is defined as the art and science of growing plants.

"This is a major project for the community as we are planning for the long term. The main goal is to cultivate and supply low cost food and even free food to the community. It's also a way to create indoor and outdoor horticultural spaces for learning, healing and for the general enjoyment of everyone," commented Mattagami FN Councillor Devin Naveau, who is acting as project lead for Chief and Council.

The technical aspects of the project are being led and developed by Ava Rentelis, Horticultural Lead. She is responsible for the planning and development of the overall project but also in providing informative horticultural activities for the community including education on plants, gardening and propagation.

"There are many aspects of this project that we would like to cover over time but the overall goal is to provide the community with knowledge about horticulture and create ways to provide food sovereignty by growing food," explained Rentelis.

She started her work in Mattagami FN in September 2023. She is introducing the community to horticultural knowledge and skills through the creation of a community garden and a green space next to the Keewaytinook Internet High School (KIHS).

As the weather warms, they are planning on building heated greenhouses as well as a hydroponic farm.

"This is an exciting project for the community because it is something that many members have been talking about for a long time and a project that everyone would like to see succeed. Our goal is to provide either free or low cost food that the community can create for themselves and hopefully in the long run even create an economic benefit by selling extra or additional surplus to others in the surrounding area. It would provide Mattagami FN with more food security," said Rentelis.

The recent Covid19 pandemic highlighted the need for secure food sources for the community. During the height of the pandemic lock downs came into effect which made it difficult for community members to leave or enter the First Nation. Since there are no major grocers or food suppliers in the community, Mattagami FN members found it difficult to maintain an affordable and continuous way of accessing healthy food.

Rentelis explained that one of the major building projects being planned is a heated growing space in the shape of a geodesic dome that could provide year round growing. The Miikogi project is planned to also include hydroponic containers, outdoor growing spaces, processing areas, storage areas and a farm hub. The overall project will also include a game processing facility that community members can use to share and gain knowledge about animal and fish processing, gathering and harvesting. The processing facility would also



Ava Rentelis
Horticultural Lead

include a composting facility to gather organic waste from animal carcasses to create compost for the growing spaces.

"There are so many benefits to creating horticultural spaces and projects such as this. It not only helps to grow food but it also brings people out to raise their own plants and take part in a community project," commented Rentelis.

She is actively working with the community in educational events and workshops as well as collecting feedback and input as the project develops.

She is originally from Timmins and has been living in Mattagami FN for the past six years with her partner Ian Vaithilingam who works as a teacher for the Keewaytinook Internet High School in the community. At 32 years of age, she graduated from Dalhousie University in May 2023 where she studied Plant Science.

"I've just been so fortunate to be involved in the community already and to have this opportunity to apply my education and training. I want to acknowledge the First Nation leadership for this position and for their continued support," said Rentelis.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AVA RENTELIS



THE MIKOGI PROJECT FEATURES PLANS FOR MULTIPLE BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES. HERE IS A DIORAMA OF THE PLANNED PROJECT.

AVA RENTELIS, HORTICULTURAL LEAD EDUCATING STUDENTS ABOUT GROWING PLANTS AT THE MARY JANE NAVEAU MEMORIAL SCHOOL.

Eagles Fly To Championship

The Mattagami Eagles hockey team was awarded the Championship title for the U15 Bantam age group at the Mushkegowuk Cup this winter. The U15 Bantam age group is a recreation team tournament for players between the ages of 13 and 14.

The 14th Annual Mushkegowuk Cup hockey tournament was held on February 16 to 18, 2024 in Timmins, Ontario. The annual event is hosted by Mushkegowuk Council and it is meant to bring together youth for a fun gathering featuring sport and competition. This year's event is estimated to have brought together over 700 players from the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council territory on the James Bay coast, as well as affiliated players and participants from across northwestern Ontario and northern Quebec. The tournament featured 16 First Nations with players who took part in recreational and competitive divisions in age groups from U7 to U21.

The Mattagami Eagles played six games through the tournament to make it to the final playoffs of their age group. They played their final game against the Constance Lake Oji-Cree U15 team but had lost in actual play. After the event it was determined by the Organizing Committee that the Constance Lake team had been in breach of tournament rules which caused their disqualification. The final game was then awarded to the Mattagami FN Eagles.

"We were so proud of our players during the final game. Even though it was a tough game for them and they knew there was an unfair advantage against them, they played their best and gave it their all. They were disappointed with the loss but when we got news that we had been granted the

win, we were very happy with the announcement," explained Kinessa Storey, Mattagami Eagles General Manager.

She commented that their team was a mixed group of boys and girls who are all known to each other. The team members are all friends from school but they also play as members of various teams in the Timmins Minor Hockey Association.



"Our team is split between boys and girls and many people saw that as a disadvantage since the other teams were all boys. They all did great and there were even times when we placed an entire line on the ice with just the girls. All our players did a great job as individuals and together as a coordinated team, they were even better," said Storey.

Normally the Mattagami FN players would have taken part in the tournament with other teams. However, there were not enough opportunities to join the tournament so the young players asked adult organizers to help them form a team for Mattagami FN. Six Mattagami FN players were able to join together with eight other hockey friends in the Timmins area who were eligible to participate in the tourna-

ment. General Manager Storey worked with her husband Roderick McKay and other parents to build the team.

"It's been a long time since Mattagami FN formed a team to play at tournaments like this because we have so few young people to build a team. We were lucky this time to get enough people together, to get help from the community. We chose the name Eagles and we got help to create a logo and have jerseys made. Everything seemed to just fall into place as we worked to get our young people into this tournament," commented Storey.

The Eagles received sponsorship support from Mattagami First Nation and Mattagami Aki LP. The team logos were created by Shannon Storey and Kylie McKay.

The team goaltender was Kylee McKay (#32). Defence positions were played by Kolton Cheena (#87), Taya Hunter (#11), Arianna Naveau (#15), Aaralyn Echum (#14) and Deidre Etherington (#13). Forward positions were played by Brody McKay (#91), Skylar Quachegan (#34), Colbie Corston (#10), Olivia Etherington (#16), Chloe Innes (#5), Tyler Wesley (#22), Roman Alisappi (#72) and Chase Nadon (#88).

Most Valuable Player awards during the tournament were received by Kylee McKay, Brody McKay, Aaralyn Echum, Roman Alisappi, Chace Nadon and Kolton Cheena. Six of the players are from Mattagami FN while the rest of the team are members of First Nations from the Muskegowuk territory. Team management included Head Coach Sterling Innes, Trainer Trevor Echum, Manager Kinessa Storey and Assistant Coaches Derek Etherington and Roderick McKay.



PHOTO AND IMAGE SUBMITTED BY KINESSA STOREY

THE MATTAGAMI FIRST NATION EAGLES HOCKEY TEAM WON THE U15 BANTAM AGE GROUP AT THE MUSHKEGOWUK CUP IN FEBRUARY 2024. PICTURED IS THE TEAM WITH THEIR COACHES AND TRAINERS. SEE THE STORY FOR LIST OF NAMES.

Madison McKay-Nicolas Is New Rental Housing Manager

Madison McKay-Nicolas has been hired as the new Rental Housing Manager for Mattagami First Nation. She had previously held the position of Public Works and Housing Administrative Assistant at the Mattagami FN administration office. This change came about as Dorothy Naveau moved to concentrate on the Home Ownership Programs which required a knowledgeable person to move into a management position in rentals.

"I am acquainted with the requirements needed to do this job. Right now I am in charge of the more than 40 rental units we manage," explained McKay-Nicolas.

McKay-Nicolas is a recent graduate of the First Nations Housing Manager Program from Vancouver Island University. She has been working towards this accreditation since 2022 and recently graduated from the program. McKay-Nicolas, who graduated from Timmins High and Vocational Secondary School in 2018 is also continuing her education through her enrolment in a program with the First Nation Housing Professionals Association (FNHPA). In the past, she also attended Cambrian College in Sudbury.

"This FNHPA program was very beneficial for me and helped prepare me for this managerial position. It covered the financial part of this position in terms of funding and budgets while also providing me with education on supervising and managing the operation and staff," commented McKay-Nicolas.

She is also a member of the First Nation's Housing Professional Association. She is looking forward to a future where housing opportunities expand and there is

new construction in Mattagami FN. Due to continued and sustained job creation there has been an increase in community members living on reserve and the possibility of more families wanting to move to their home community from outside cities and towns.

"One of the things I really like about this position is that the work I am doing in housing opens up the opportunity for our people to move back into the community and find good accommodation. It is rewarding to see our First Nation develop and our members moving back and contributing to Mattagami First Nation," explained McKay-Nicolas.

A housing committee supports the management of housing in the First Nation.

"There are sometimes difficult and tough decisions to make in managing rental operations like this and it is good to have the support and direction of the committee to help in these decisions," explained McKay-Nicolas.

She pointed out that her family and friends have been a big help in supporting her over the years. Her late father Michael Nicolas, who was a good friend to many in the community, was on hand to assist in the community's annual Pow Wows. Her mother Brenda McKay is a well known educator in the community who has worked as a Teachers Assistant at the local Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School for many years.

"My parents have always pushed us to excel in everything we do. My mother has been in our elementary school for years and she was there the whole time I went through grade school to support and



Madison McKay-Nicolas
Rental Housing Manager

encourage me and all the other students. Even as I grew older, she has always been there to inspire me to achieve as much education as I can," said Madison McKay-Nicolas.

She also works alongside her brother Michael McKay-Nicolas, who is employed with the finance department of the Mattagami FN administration office. She also has two other siblings Sarah and Mackenzie.

"I did not know early on if I was interested in coming back to the community but I am so happy I made that decision to be able to give back to my First Nation. It is great to be here and only a short walk to my work. I was a dancer previously and I am planning on getting back into this important traditional and cultural activity in the future. I like to remind our youth that although they may want to leave for education or other reasons they should remember how good we have it here and that it would be rewarding to return and give back to Mattagami First Nation," commented McKay-Nicolas.

PHOTOS BY DOROTHY NAVEAU



TRADITIONAL POW WOW DANCERS (L-R) CHARLIE KIOKE, ATTAWAPISKAT FN AND MAX NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN TOOK PART IN THE MATTAGAMI FN POW WOW ON MARCH 23, 2024.



THE MATTAGAMI FN POW WOW ON MARCH 23, 2024 DREW DANCERS AND PARTICIPANTS FROM FAR AND WIDE. HERE WE SEE TRADITIONAL DANCING DURING THE EVENT.

MFN Pike Ice Fishing Derby



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MFN FISHING

THE MFN FISHING PIKE ICE FISHING DERBY WAS HELD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2024 ON MATTAGAMI LAKE. PICTURED ON THE LEFT IS ORGANIZER CRYSTAL VALLEE WITH A VISITING YOUNG ANGLER DURING THE TOURNAMENT.

Mattagami First Nation Fishing hosted their annual Pike Ice Fishing Derby on February 24, 2024. The one day event saw 150 tournament participants on Mattagami Lake.

Top four winners were:

- First Place - Stephane Sauve
- Second Place - Braeden Holotuk
- Third Place - Robert Pelletier
- Fourth Place - Cody Bishop.

The tournament was affected by dramatically changing weather conditions as the temperatures leading up to the day dipped to well below minus 30 degrees with windchill. The prospect of extreme cold meant that only 150 participants took part which was less than the planned 200.

"We were a bit disappointed with the extreme cold but it so happened that on the day of the event, the weather changed again and it ended up being a great day with more moderate temperatures for everyone to be able to have fun," said Jessica Naveau, President of MFN Fishing.

The organizers were very thankful to everyone who came out to make the event a success.

"We want to thank Mattagami First Nation, our Chief and Council and the community members for allowing us to host this event in our First Nation. We would not be able to host these major events without their support. We are also thankful to our committee who have helped us to organize these events for our visiting anglers and of course we are grateful to all the participants who came out," commented Naveau.

She works with a planning committee which includes Crystal Vallee, Larry Naveau, Dan Secord, Aaliyah Naveau and Janelle Golinowski.

Sponsors of the Pike Ice Fishing Derby include: Mattagami FN, Mr Sub Timmins, Pick Of The Crop, Mikey's General Sales and Environmental 360 Solutions.

MFN Fishing also hosted a 2023 June Walleye Tournament and a Championship Tournament in September 2023. The annual spring Walleye Tournament hosted by MFN Fishing is a major event that is part of the Northern Ontario Walleye Trail fishing tournament circuit that includes several major fishing events across northern Ontario. The tournament in September 2023 was



FISHING FOR PIKE ON MATTAGAMI LAKE DURING THE MFN FISHING PIKE ICE FISHING DERBY WAS AN EXCITING DAY OF ACTIVITY FOR VISITING ANGLERS.

a multiday event including fun and games for children, gathering for participants and an awards ceremony for winners.

Jessica Naveau and her family helped to establish the fishing tournaments in Mattagami FN. Her father Larry Naveau and her grandfather Elder Leonard Naveau are known as very knowledgeable and experienced hunters, trappers and fishermen in the community. In 1999, Larry with the help of his father Leonard helped to organize the first walleye fishing tournaments in the community. Since then, the Naveau family have been major contributors and organizers of these annual tournaments including a summer event, a fall classic and a winter ice fishing event. The events have evolved over the years with multiple organizers and organizations.

"I've been involved for many years and so has my father but it has been through the work of our committee members that has made our latest events so successful. We need the help of a core group people and the support of the community to make this possible," explained Jessica Naveau.

MFN Fishing is preparing for their next event, the Spring Walleye Tournament 2024 which will take place May 31 to June 1, 2024 in Mattagami FN.

For more information go to:
www.mfnfishing.com
or on Facebook
@MFNFishing



FRIENDS AND ORGANIZERS FOR THREE NORTHERN FISHING TOURNAMENTS ARE L-R: JESSICA NAVEAU, CRYSTAL VALLEE AND CHANTAL BERNARD

Ribbon Skirt Gathering Celebrates Tradition



PHOTOS BY DEVIN NAVEAU

A RIBBON SKIRT TRADITIONAL GATHERING WAS HELD IN MATTAGAMI FN ON OCTOBER 17, 2023. HERE WE SEE L-R: APRIL NAVEAU, KOURTNEY BAULNE, SAMARA FOWLER, ELDER NANCY NAVEAU (SEATED IN FRONT), BETTY NAVEAU, DOROTHY NAVEAU AND JOANNE NAVEAU.

On October 17, 2023 Mattagami First Nation members hosted the Second Annual Traditional Ribbon Skirt gathering to celebrate women in a ceremony at the First Nation Healing Lodge. The gathering featured traditional ceremonies and teachings as well as a photo shoot to document the event and display the colourful Ribbon Skirts that the women wore.

"I feel that it is a great to be able to bring together the women in our community to have a fun time, to learn and to share our stories. Our women of all ages are a source of strength in our communities and we need to encourage and support them as often as we can. These gatherings really uplift my spirit and it allows me to see the best in my community," said Councillor Kourtney Baulne, who helped to organize the gathering.

Photos were taken by First Nation Councillor Devin Naveau.

Most of the participants were able to attend the gathering with their own ribbon skirts but some had to borrow outfits from others. Councillor Baulne explained that they are planning on hosting the event again later this year and it will incorporate a ribbon skirt making workshop to allow every participant to make their own skirt for cultural events such as this.

The Healing Lodge is a traditional structure that was built near the community to host cultural gatherings and conduct ceremonies. The site had al-

ways been identified as sacred grounds by the community and now it has been established as a permanent space for the Healing Lodge. Baulne explained that this Healing Lodge was made possible through the encouragement and guidance of Joanne Naveau, a community traditional teacher.

"We hold regular Full Moon ceremonies at the lodge and it was Joanne that started the idea of building a proper Healing Lodge. She provides a lot of teachings to community members and

we look up to her like a traditional mother. The Healing Lodge is meant for everyone in the community to use for any traditional ceremony, teaching event or gathering," explained Councillor Baulne.

A major supporter of cultural activities in the community, Baulne performs at gatherings such as Pow Wows as a dancer and performer with her own regalia as a Jingle Dress dancer. For many years, she has devoted a lot of her time in learning about traditional ceremonies and teachings from her Elders and from her family. She has also learned a great deal about traditional medicines and how they can be collected and harvested from the surrounding land to be used to treat or support the health of people in the community.

"It's important for us to learn as much as possible about our traditional past. I never thought I could learn much about my traditional past but Joanne was one of the people that encouraged me and helped me. I never knew I could learn so much and now I am starting to show others," said Councillor Baulne.

She added that her young son Delsin is starting to show interest in cultural activities as well.

"All of these traditional activities are encouraging everyone especially our young people to learn about their heritage. It feels good to learn for myself but it also satisfying to see others wanting to take part," commented Councillor Baulne.



A RIBBON SKIRT GATHERING WAS HELD AT MATTAGAMI FN HEALING LODGE ON OCTOBER 17, 2023. FROM L-R ARE: TRACY HARNACK, SUE PRINCE, KOURTNEY BAULNE, CHIEF JENNIFER CONSTANT, APRIL NAVEAU, DOROTHY NAVEAU, SAMARA FOWLER AND SAMANTHA MCKENZIE.

Odamino Centre Opens

Mattagami First Nation announced the opening of the Mattagami Odamino Centre and Rink facility on January 29, 2024 for the season. Janelle Golinowski has been integral in the development and running of the new facility. This centre, which is being provided for youth and youth programming, is named after the Anishinaabe word “Odamino” which refers to children playing. More specifically it relates to “she/he plays” so when saying Odamino Centre it translates to ‘Children Playing Centre’. Golinowski explained that the Odamino Centre provides a safe space for youth and community members to access in Mattagami FN.

The Odamino Centre opened for the winter months to ensure people had a place dedicated to their well-

being. Youth and community members were able to enjoy public skating and have access to an activity space. The centre is equipped with a pool table, foosball, tennis/ping pong table, skee-ball, shoot out basketball, children/adult colouring books, puzzles, and board games.

“This space is very beneficial to youth and all members of all ages, and this was made available through the efforts of many. I would like to thank our staff/arena attendants Tessa Thomas, Kelly Naveau and Brooke Kirley, who were responsible for developing, organizing, and supervising recreational programming and activities for the Odamino Centre. I would also like to thank all of the youth and community members who came out to access the space during the winter months,”

commented Golinowski.

In her first year as an elected member of Mattagami First Nation Council Golinowski is dedicated to making day-to-day life better for everyone in the community. She encourages people to follow healthy lifestyle choices including exercise and activities as well as learning about tradition and culture.

For more information, members are invited to visit their Facebook page at ‘Mattagami Odamino Centre & Rink’.



ODAMINO CENTRE AND RINK FACILITY

Beaverfest 2024 A Success



THE ANNUAL BEAVERFEST IN MATTAGAMI FN IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT EVENT THAT WAS STARTED IN 1991 BY ELDERS LEONARD NAVEAU AND LINDA PENASSE ALONG WITH FRIENDS EVELYN BOISSONEAU AND WILLARD HARNACK TO EDUCATE THE YOUTH AND MEMBERS OF MATTAGAMI FN, GOGAMA AND SURROUNDING AREA ABOUT TRAPPING AND TO ENCOURAGE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES. THE EVENT GIVES LOCAL TRAPPERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE HISTORY AND CULTURE AND PRACTICES OF ANIMAL TRAPPING.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOSEF FORGET

NINE YEAR OLD AVERY FORGET AT THE ANNUAL BEAVERFEST IN MATTAGAMI FN.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY TIMMINS FUR COUNCIL



Mattagami FN Drum

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