

# the Council

Vol. 44, No. 8

A REPORT TO THE MEMBER TRIBES OF TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

August 2019

## Alaska Fish & Game visit the *Mighty Yukon River*



On June 18th - 20th, 2019, the Alaska Fish & Game Fish Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lane, Director of Commercial Fishing Sam Rabung, Director of Wildlife Conservation Eddie Grasser, members of the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and TCC key staff toured communities along the Yukon River, accompanied by Chief Victor Joseph.

During their three day trip, they visited eight communities; Nunam Iqua,

Alakanuk, Emmokak at the mouth of the river, as well as Kaltag, Koyukuk, Ruby, Tanana, and Fort Yukon.

The delegation attended meetings in each community and heard testimonies from Chiefs and community members about fishing and hunting concerns. Local knowledge was shared in each village the delegation learned about the complexty of the river.

These trips have shown the impor-

ance of building partnerships, understanding, and utilizing local knowledge.

Our shared vision is to be united and work together to help the Yukon River King Salmon run rebound to historic numbers and to strengthen the families and communities along the waterways into the future.

See photos from this trip on page 3.

## Submit Your Photos

### Submit your photos for the 2020 TCC Calendar!

You can now submit your photos on our website at  
[www.tananachiefs.org/calendar-submissions](http://www.tananachiefs.org/calendar-submissions)

The deadline to submit photos is Friday, October 18th.

\*Out of respect for our animals, please refrain from submitting photos that include hunting large game animals. Thank you!



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## MISSION STATEMENT

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

## VISION

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

## TCC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Donald Honea Sr./Ruby  
*1st Traditional Chief*

Trimble Gilbert/Arctic Village  
*2nd Traditional Chief*

Victor Joseph/ Tanana  
*Chief/Chairman*

Charlene Stern/Arctic Village  
*Vice President*

Jerry Isaac/Tanacross  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

William "Chaaiy" Albert/Northway  
*Upper Tanana*

Nick Alexia Sr./Nikolai  
*Upper Kuskokwim*

Nancy James/Fort Yukon  
*Yukon Flats*

Eugene Paul/Holy Cross  
*Lower Yukon*

Frank Thompson/ Evansville  
*Yukon Tanana*

Norman "Carl" Burgett/ Huslia  
*Yukon Koyukuk*

Peter Demoski/Nulato  
*Elder Advisor*

Jolie Murray/Beaver  
*Youth Advisor*

## CHIEF'S REPORT

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,



I hope everyone is enjoying the warm summer months and able to spend time outdoors with family and friends! For those who have spent time fishing, I hope you were able to catch what you and your family needed!

Last month I recognized tribal members that recently received their Honorary Doctorate Degree from the University of Alaska. Shortly after the Newsletter was mailed out, I received a call informing me that I missed a number of remarkable people who have also received an Honorary Degree which includes: Dr. Mary Demientieff of Nenana, Chief Dr. David Salmon of Chalkyitsik, Dr. Katie John of Mentasta, Dr. Howard Luke of Nenana, and many others. My intention was not to leave anyone out as this list is significantly long. I would like to offer congratulations to all those who have received this honor.

This summer, Alaska Fish and Game Fish Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Director of Commercial Fishing Sam Rabung, Director of Wildlife Conservation Eddie Grasser, members of the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and TCC staff had a successful and productive trip visiting communities along the Yukon River. Over the three days we visited Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Ruby, Tanana, and Fort Yukon. These communities can be, or are a part of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Our shared vision is to unite and work together to protect our way of life while maintaining healthy salmon runs for today and future generations. These trips are extremely important, as it allows the highest level of Alaska Fish and Game leadership to hear the voices of the people who rely on these resources. Throughout the trip, we heard testimonials from Chiefs and community members who shared their local knowledge and concerns regarding our fisheries. I would like to thank each community for hosting us, and especially Kwikpak in Emmonak and Ruby for hosting us overnight. More information from this trip can be found on page 1.

Throughout July and August we'll be meeting with each of our subregion boards. We are always excited about these meetings and to travel throughout our region to meet with community members to share updates, accomplishments, answer any questions, and address any concerns. Subregional meetings are a high priority for TCC to ensure our staff continue to work in alignment with you as we strive to maintain our vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.

It's about that time again where we gather at the polls! Municipal and Rural Education Attendance Area (REAA) elections are October 1, 2019. I urge you to remain involved and supportive of issues that protect what is important to you and your community. These elections offer an opportunity to select representatives who share your values and visions. Remember, you can make a difference. Every vote counts, as we learned last year when Kathryn Dodge lost to Bart Lebon by 1 vote. For helpful information on voting in Alaska, see page 3.

As you know, the Governor's budget has put many programs in the State at risk. The budget cuts will affect our VPSO program, Head Start, Senior Benefits, Medicaid, and Power Cost Equalization (PCE). However, we have been working with our legislators to overturn the governor's cuts. You can help too! Call your Senator and Representative now, and tell them Alaska cannot afford these type of cuts.

As we prepare for berry picking, fall fishing, hunting season, and the start of school, please be safe.

Ana Bassee,  
**Victor Joseph**  
Chief/Chairman



## Helpful Tips on *Voting in Alaska*

- ❁ Make sure you are **registered to vote** in Alaska and your **information is correct**. If you live in Alaska, you can register to vote and update your registration information online up to 30 days prior to any election at <https://voterregistration.alaska.gov/>
- ❁ **Vote early!** Anyone can vote using early and in-person absentee voting options. Times, dates, and locations may vary depending on the location and/or community.
- ❁ **Mark your calendar.** Municiple and REAA election day is October 1, 2019.
- ❁ **Get to the polls!** Your voice matters.

Take a selfie and show us you voted! Use #GOTNV-Interior and #NativeVote

# Ch'eghwtsen'

By Rachel Saylor  
Communications Manager, TCC

*Close your eyes and think about a moment in your life where you felt loved unconditionally. A time where you felt supported, understood, and appreciated. There is a word for that feeling - Ch'eghwtsen'.*

Ch'eghwtsen', when translated from the Lower Tanana dialect, means 'True Love'. The word is one that has been spoken at length by one of our most revered native leaders- the Late Traditional Chief Peter John, who described it as 'pure' and 'powerful'.

For years, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) looked for a word that could accurately describe what they wanted to achieve. When Ch'eghwtsen' was presented, it was exactly what they had been looking for – a culturally relevant word that embodied the fundamental concepts of compassion and empathy.

However, the road to Ch'eghwtsen' was not straightforward. It took a lot of planning, preparation, people, and just a little bit of serendipity.

## How It All Began

In 2017, at a Health Management Meeting in Anchorage, several key strategic planning initiatives were identified, one of which was to develop or explore tools to initiate a relationship training that would improve compassionate care and compassionate interaction.

These initiatives were developed at the direction of TCC Chief/Chairman Victor Joseph in an effort to improve access to care at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) and ensure that patients were leaving TCC's facilities feeling like they were truly cared for. This has been a long-time need for the organization and was supported by the TCC Executive Board of Directors (E-Board), with cross-cultural sensitivity training for staff having already been identified in TCC's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

CAIHC Deputy Director Leah Thompson was assigned to look into ways to carry out these initiatives, "When I looked at those initiatives, my thought was that all of these stemmed from the need for our staff to be culturally aware."

The initiatives would require collab-

oration and coordination with other TCC divisions to generate true change throughout the clinic. With the guidance of Chief Joseph, a work group was assembled that would assist in developing and implementing the training. One of those work group participants was Executive Director of Human Resources, Heather Rogers.

At the time, Rogers had been entertaining the idea of re-defining TCC's Core Values, "We wanted a list of values that reflected not only what our organization does, but what we expect of the people within our organization," Rogers explains.

With support from Human Resources, the work group decided that it was important to expand this training to the entire organization, not just Health Services. It wasn't long before the work group realized that what they were trying to do was bigger than simply implementing a cultural sensitivity training. It was completely re-defining the company's culture and the way employees interacted with those we serve, other agencies and other programs throughout the organization. In summary, everyone that our employees come into contact with.

## The Light bulb

While the group was still brainstorming ideas, Thompson heard about a relationship-based training in Anchorage that focused on the importance of sharing your story and having empathy and understanding for others.

"The light bulb came up," says Thompson, "I thought 'this is really what we're trying to do. That's the foundation of this idea.'"

Chief Joseph designated several directors from TCC to attend the training, which was hosted by an organization that was a two-time winner of

the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation's highest presidential honor of performance excellence.

While the focus of the training was what TCC wanted to achieve, it didn't tie back to the organization's core values or operational principle – something that would be important moving forward.

*We wanted a list of values that reflected not only what our organization does, but what we expect of the people within our organization.*

Adventist Health Castle, a small hospital in Hawaii, was another recipient of the Baldrige award. A group of TCC staff and two E-Board Members, Julie Roberts-Hyslop and Nancy James, toured the facility and met with their leadership to find out how they had achieved the award and changed the culture of their organization.

Adventist Health had a few components that stood out – specifically a set of core values and guiding statements that resonated with their employees and the culture of the Native Hawaiians they served.

According to Rogers, having these set in place is essential in guiding employees, "When you have core values and a guiding principle it reminds employees of what they are supposed to be doing and why they are here."

After seeing the operations of other organizations who were successful, TCC finally had an outline that would help them in achieving their goal. However, true change in an organization has to come from the top down. While Chief Chairman Victor Joseph was already in support of the proposal, it was the approval of the E-Board that would be essential in moving the initiative forward.

In 2018 it was presented to the E-Board who, impressed with what they had heard, authorized resources to implement a customized training for

TCC employees. With the blessing of the E-Board behind them, there were only a few more pieces to put together.

### Meant to Be

While all of the pieces to the puzzle were there – they were still scattered. They were missing that one component that could tie it all together.

“We needed to develop terms that were relevant to us,” says Chief Joseph, “We were looking into a lot of different words that we could use to fit the organization.”

Much like, Adventist Health, TCC needed language that could resonate with employees and also be reflective of the culture of the region.

“We wanted something in our dialect,” explained Thompson, “Something profound that reflects what we envisioned that training to be.”

Then it revealed itself – hidden in the pages of The Gospel According to Chief Peter John – there it was.

#### *Ch’eghwtsen’.*

“It was as if it was meant to be,” says Rogers, “It’s describing exactly what we are doing. It’s not some new corporate idea, it’s truly rooted in culture, with elders talking about it and driving it.”

From there – all of the pieces began to fall into place. Once a name was

given to the initiative, it began to take on a life of its own.

The root of Ch’eghwtsen’ became the basis for TCC’s new core values – TRUE LOVE.

A new guiding principle for the organization was also developed “Accessible and trusted world-class services provided with unconditional love, compassion, dignity and respect. HEAR ME.”

And the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award? TCC is currently working towards achieving this prestigious honor in the next several years.

In November 2018, the TCC Full Board of Directors unanimously approved to adopt the Baldrige framework, embed the new guiding principle, and embrace the spirit of Ch’eghwtsen’ throughout the organization.

### Ch’eghwtsen’

The word has a deep meaning in Athabascan culture, and while ‘true love’ seems like a tangible concept to grasp in the English-speaking world – the actual definition can be difficult to explain.

“None of us will really understand the true meaning of Ch’eghwtsen’,”

said the late Traditional Chief Peter John.

This is because **Ch’eghwtsen’ is more about the heart behind your actions.** It’s not just a word. As Chief Peter John would say – Give it your all.

*Ch’eghwtsen’ is more about the heart behind your actions.*

“How people feel when they leave our facility is what explains Ch’eghwtsen’,” says Chief Joseph, “It means people leave feeling like they were the most important person at that moment in time.”

“It’s being a good human being,” explains Rogers, “That’s what it is at the heart. We struggled with defining it. But I feel like most of our employees already have this within them-it’s just reminding them to pull it out.”

And for Thompson, “Ch’eghwtsen’ is the very core of your person. Having the innate desire to treat others with compassion and respect – the way you want to be treated. All of this other stuff you want to do, the work that you do...if you aren’t serving from a place of Ch’eghwtsen’... it’s not going to mean very much.”

Or, in the words of Chief Peter John, “You have to give everything...do it with an open heart.”

## Ch’eghwtsen’ According to Our Elders

While Ch’eghwtsen’ was only recently adopted by TCC, it has been a term that has long been used in Athabascan culture throughout history. Check out some of the insights on the word from the perspective of our elders.



### Chief Peter John

Ch’eghwtsen’ that we put into this, is something that none of us will really understand the true meaning of - Ch’eghwtsen’. You do it for the love of the person that you lost. That’s why you gotta give everything the best.



### Helen Peters

You have to show yourself what you can do for others. To really let other people see what love you have for them. By action. That will teach you to reach out to who needs you. You’ll recognize the person you need to help. You’ll know.



### Neil Charlie

Ch’eghwtsen is a pretty strong native language way of saying ‘I love you’. Loving children is what it means. Loving our children. Loving our grandchildren. Loving our friends. Loving our neighbors. Is what Ch’eghwtsen’ means.



### Geraldine Charlie

We’re old now. We know what’s right and wrong. I really believe that word - Ch’eghwtsen’ - means love from our heart our, love for children, you know.

# Ch'eghwtsen' What's next?

Ch'eghwtsen' is actively being implemented throughout TCC in a variety of ways, from employee engagement activities, to a new 3-day training being developed, and this is only the beginning. TCC employees

have already begun to embrace Ch'eghwtsen' in their day-to-day work.

As for those receiving services from TCC, our goal is ensure that anytime someone leaves our facilities, they feel like they were treated with love

and compassion.

We look forward to sharing more information about this exciting new initiative. Here on this page, you can see our new core values, guiding principle and more.

## Guiding Principle

Accessible and trusted world-class services provided with unconditional love, compassion, dignity and respect. HEAR ME.

## TCC Core Values

**Trust** - We earn the trust of those we serve.

**Resiliency** - We value our self-identity and look to our history and cultures to adapt.

**Unified** - We are strong, unified and coordinated in the advocacy and delivery of our services.

**Empathy** - We provide services from the heart with the spirit of Ch'eghwtsen' which includes unconditional love, forgiveness, compassion, dignity and respect.

**Listen** - We are mindful and give our full attention - "Hear Me".

**Ownership** - We own our behaviors and the way we impact others.

**Voice** - We stand up, advocate, educate and share our stories - Our Voice Matters.

**Excellence** - We strive to provide world-class, accessible, and effective quality services while continuously improving to promote the mental, physical, spiritual and socioeconomic wellness of our people and communities now and into the future.

## What does Ch'eghwtsen' look like?

There are many ways to show Ch'eghwtsen' in your day-to-day interaction with others. Here are a few great examples of TCC employees demonstrating Ch'eghwtsen' at work:

### EXAMPLE 1:

In January, a young lady came in to TCC in tears. She was lost and didn't know what to do. OCS had taken her children and she was laid off from her job due to an accident that kept her from performing her duties. The Case Manager at TCC created her a plan of action to get her kids back, but to also teach her to value herself.

A sign in and out sheet was created to have signed by every person and place she went. This was to show proof to OCS that she is making all of her appointments, and keeping her accountable for all her actions. She was set up with counseling. She attended AA/NA meetings.

Suddenly, things took a turn for the worse - she found out that OCS was going to be placing her child with a family member. Her attorney setup a mandatory court hearing the next day, where the TCC case manager went and presented all the signatures from the sign-in sheets she was having people sign. The case manager showed progress of counseling, AA meetings, acceptance by SS and DVR, and more. The Judge looked at her (the client) and said he was sorry for this mix up by OCS and he is court ordering a plan for placement back into her home and to cancel the placement of her child with a family member.

After the hearing, she broke down in tears and told the TCC case manager that she is alive because of TCC. The case plan had given her hope of getting her child back and that was enough for her to keep living.

She did not have any family or friends here in the Fairbanks Area so TCC was the only place that she could turn to.

### EXAMPLE 2:

In June, a physician's assistant at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center accompanied one of her patient's to the Emergency Room (ER) in an ambulance. The patient was resistant and scared to go the ER and was very emotionally fragile. The physician's assistant not only accompanied the patient in the ambulance, but stood by her side as she was checked into her room and examined.

# Elders Work to Develop Region-Wide Protocols on Use of *Chief's Necklaces*

By Rachel Saylor,  
Communications Manager, TCC

The Chief's necklace has long been used in Athabascan culture to symbolize leadership. You often see the large, dentallium shell necklaces draped across the necks of prominent native leaders and chiefs during large meetings such as the Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention and Tanana Chiefs Conference's Annual Convention.

However, in recent years, the necklaces seem to be showing up everywhere. You see them being presented to politicians, public service officers, and others who are not part of the native community. You see them being worn by those not in leadership positions. You see them being worn in grocery stores.

All of these situations bring up the question- are people forgetting the significance of these necklaces? But also, what are the rules of Chief's necklaces? **Who is allowed to wear them? Who is allowed to gift them? When should they be worn? Where should they be worn? What is their significance?**

These are some of the questions that the Denakkanaaga Board has been trying to answer.

"There has been concern about the use of a Chief's necklace and what it really signifies," explains Sharon McConnell, Executive Director of Denakkanaaga, "People are wearing them more and more, without regard to their significance. Nowadays, it seems people wear them more as a source of Native pride."

In an effort to educate people on what the protocols are surrounding the use of Chief's Necklaces, the Denakkanaaga Elders held a meeting in May to begin the discussion.

The meeting also included other native leaders such as TCC Chief/Chairman Victor Joseph, Will Mayo of TCC, FNA Executive Director Steven Ginnis, Denakkanaaga Executive Director Sharon McConnell, Traditional First Chief Don Honea Sr. and Traditional Second Chief Trimble Gilbert.

"I thought it would be good to have a bigger discussion and make sure that we pass it on correctly to our younger people," explained Chief Joseph, "it has all become gray and I would like to know what the protocols are. Not just to document it in the western way, but to have it documented in the right way so that people don't forget."

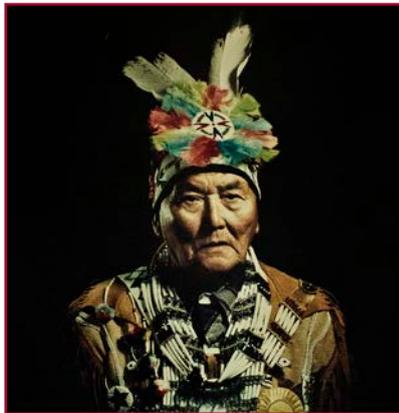
Denakkanaaga Board Member Jack Wholecheese of Huslia expressed that Chief's Necklaces

should only be given to Native chiefs, "It's a Native tradition that you give it to another native. It's OK to give a gift, but something that symbolizes a native chief should never be given away."

Other elders shared that Chief's Necklaces weren't traditionally used in their village until as recent as the 1940's and 50's, which leads to another important element of this discussion – traditions are not the same in every village. The TCC region covers a vast area of land that contains many different cultures and each of those has their own set of rules and protocols when it comes to



Denakkanaaga Meeting held May 23rd to discuss protocols surrounding Chief's necklaces.



The late Traditional Chief Andrew Isaac shown here adorned in Chief's necklaces.

traditional activities.

"Each subregion has their own protocols and we have to be sensitive to that," explains McConnell, "But leadership realizes that there needs to be some sort of guidance so people don't forget the significance and history of the Chief's necklace."

The topic was also discussed in a special presentation at the Denakkanaaga Elders and Youth Conference this past June. Comments from the May and June meetings are now being compiled and sent to the tribes throughout the region as well as Interior Native organizations for review and comment.

The goal is to develop a region-wide document that would cover the basic protocols on the use of Chief's necklaces.

However, there is no official due date and, considering the complexities of the subject, the Denakkanaaga elders believe that it is something that should be thoroughly researched and thought out.

More information will be made available as the discussion progresses.

McConnell stated that Denakkanaaga plans to continue work on drafting cultural protocols on various topics once done with the Chief's necklaces.



Will Mayo presents Chief Joseph with a Chief's necklace during the 2018 AFN Convention.

If you have comments or know of local history and traditions regarding Chief's necklaces, you can contact Denakkanaaga at 907-451-3900

# Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center COLA Accreditation

## Continues

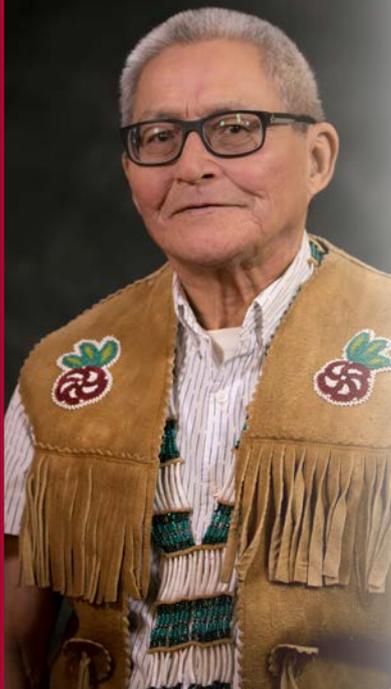
Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center Laboratory has met all criteria for Laboratory Accreditation by COLA, a national healthcare accreditation organization. Accreditation is given only to laboratories that apply rigid standards of quality in day-to-day operations, demonstrate continued accuracy in the performance of proficiency testing, and pass a rigorous on-site laboratory survey. Stephen Duprey, Laboratory Director and the Laboratory Team at CAIHC have

earned COLA accreditation as a result of a long-term commitment to provide quality service to their patients.

COLA is a nonprofit, physician-directed organization promoting quality and excellence in medicine and patient care through programs of voluntary education, achievement, and accreditation. As a leading laboratory accreditor in the United States, COLA is the only laboratory accreditation provider that operates its accreditation

program in accordance with a quality management system certified to ISO 9001:2015. Laboratories of all types and sizes are evaluated and mentored to produce accurate test results and meet CLIA regulations. COLA is sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Medical Association, the American Society of Internal Medicine and the American College of Physicians.





### PETER DEMOSKI, NULATO

Peter Richard Demoski was born in 1942 in the village of Nulato. Demoski was only three years old when his mother passed away, leaving his father to raise him. However, with his father continuously leaving to go out hunting and trapping, it soon became clear that it would be impossible for his father to raise children himself. As a result, Demoski and his siblings were sent to the mission in Holy Cross, a boarding school 200 miles south of Nulato.

During that time, Demoski and other Native children were punished for speaking their language. "I think they were trying to westernize us and make us forget," says Demoski as he remembers the treatment made him feel ashamed for being Native.

Demoski later joined the U.S. Navy and was in the Vietnam War. The war gave him an awareness of issues that he had never known about while living in Alaska. "You step out of that box and go to a place like Vietnam and there are people who have it worse than you do," says Demoski. "How they go about surviving is something we barely imagine, living here in a secure place like Nulato. I always think about that...we're lucky to be living."

When the Nulato Tribal Council was formed in 1993, after the federal government recognition of tribes in Alaska, Demoski was hired as the tribal administrator. He worked there for 16 years before retiring.

Although today's youth don't have to go through the hardships of the past, Demoski's advice to future generations is to apply those same principles to their lives today. "The younger people don't have to live like that anymore but they can still have that same drive, determination, commitment to preserve not only themselves but their culture and traditions."

TCC's Legacy of our Elders series documents the lives and stories of Athabascan elders throughout the TCC region. Their interviews are compiled into volumes that include a DVD movie as well as an accompanying book. The books and DVDs highlight the elders and the stories that they want to share. These videos are available on our website at [www.tananachiefs.org](http://www.tananachiefs.org)  
Funding for Legacy Project made possible by TCC & The National Park Service.

*August is National*

# NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION

*Month*

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages and all of us here at Tanana Chiefs Conference want to provide you with some great educational materials that could **SAVE YOUR LIFE**. NIAM was established to encourage people of all ages to make sure they are up to date on the vaccines recommended for them. Vaccines play a role in preventing serious, and sometimes deadly, diseases.

If you are worried about your vaccination record or want to know more about immunization, make an appointment with your provider.



## 5 FACTS ON VACCINES

### *Vaccines are safe and effective*

Any licensed vaccine is rigorously tested before it is approved for use, regularly reassessed and constantly monitored for side effects. In the rare event a serious side effect is reported, it is immediately investigated.

### *Vaccines prevent deadly illnesses*

Vaccination protects children from diseases like diphtheria, measles, mumps and pertussis (whooping cough). Failure to vaccinate leaves children and adults vulnerable to diseases, complications or even death.

### *Vaccines provide better immunity than natural infections*

The immune response to vaccines is similar to the one produced by natural infection but less risky. For example: natural infection can lead to cognitive impairments from *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), birth defects from congenital rubella infection or irreversible paralysis from polio.

### *Combined vaccines are safe and beneficial*

Giving several vaccines at the same time has no negative effect on a child's immune system; reduces discomfort for the child; and saves time and money. Children are exposed to more antigens from a common cold than they are from vaccines.

### *If we stop vaccination, diseases will return*

Even with better hygiene, sanitation and access to safe water, infections still spread. When people are not vaccinated, infectious diseases that have become uncommon—diphtheria, measles, mumps and polio – quickly reappear.

## ARE *you* UP-TO-DATE?

Source: <http://www.who.int/campaigns/immunization-week/2017/infographic-5-facts.jpg?ua=1>

# TANACROSS

## *Culture & Wellness Camp*



"I think cultural camps are really important," says Diane Titus, camp coordinator for the Culture and Wellness Camp hosted by Tanacross, "When you are way out in the woods with no distraction, you can concentrate on getting well."

This is the purpose of the Culture and Wellness Camps which are being sponsored by Tanana Chiefs Conference throughout the region and promote the idea that health

and wellness are deeply rooted in Athabaskan cultural values.

The village of Tanacross kicked off the first camp of the 2019 season in June, which took place along Mansfield Creek.

Cultural activities at the camp included beading and sewing, spear making, fish cutting, traditional drumming and dancing, learning about healing plants, and traditional storytelling. Several TCC staff also

attended to cover various wellness topics including the harms of tobacco, making good choices, and bullying.

Due to heavy rainfall in the days prior to the camp, participants were able to go to Mansfield Lake by boat and visit the original Mansfield camp.

The camp provided a safe space for youth to learn about their cultural values, disconnect from the modern world, and find a deeper connection to their cultural roots.





# 2019 Culture & Wellness Camp Schedule

## Lower Yukon

- **Shageluk** - August 27-29
- **Anvik** - July 30-August 2

## Upper Tanana

- **Tanacross** - June 17-21
- **Healy Lake** - Dates TBD

## Yukon Koyukuk

- **Galena** - Dates TBD
- **Koyukuk** - September 1-7

## Upper Kuskokwim

- **McGrath** - August 5-9
- **Takotna** - TBD

## Yukon Flats

- **Circle** - August 12-16
- **Birch Creek** - August 29-September 3

## Yukon Tanana

- **Rampart** - September 11-16
- **Nenana** - August 19-23

# NOW ACCEPTING NEW BIA HOUSING APPLICATIONS

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Housing Improvement Program (HIP) is a Grant Program to help eligible American Indians/Alaska Natives renovate existing housing or build new homes!

## Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for HIP assistance, you must be a member of a federally recognized American Indian tribe or be an Alaska Native; live in an approved tribal service area; have an income that does not exceed 125% of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Poverty Guidelines; have present housing that is substandard, as defined by the regulations; have no other resource for housing assistance; have not received assistance after October 1, 1986 for repairs and renovation, replacement or housing, or down payment assistance; and have not acquired your present housing through a federally sponsored housing program that includes such housing assistance.

## How to Apply:

- ✿ Pick up an application at your local Tribal Office
- ✿ Provide a copy of your Tribal Enrollment Card
- ✿ Provide proof of income for entire household
- ✿ Proof of ownership of land or obtain a 25 year lease agreement
- ✿ If you are claiming disability, provide a letter stating disability from clinic

TCC Housing department recommends mailing in your application & documents to our office. Please make a copy for your record, if addition information is needed or if documents are missing

## Questions or Concerns?

Call 1-(800)-478-6822  
Mitchell Shewfelt Sr ext. 3319  
Fax: 907-459-3944  
Mail: 122 1st Ave Suite 600  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

# DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15, 2019



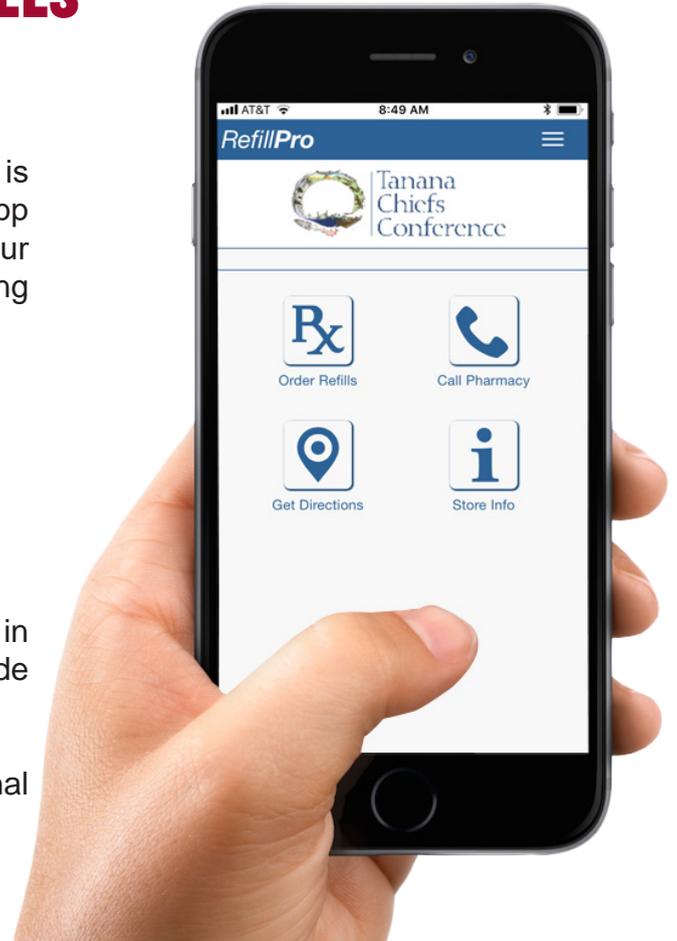
# ORDER YOUR PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

*from your phone!*

The Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Pharmacy is now able to accept refill requests via the Refill Pro Guide app on your phone! This is a new, easy way to request refills of your medication by entering the RX number or by simply scanning the barcode on your bottle.

### How It Works:

1. **Download the App.** Search for 'RefillPro' in the App Store OR Google Play Store on your phone.
2. **Find Our Pharmacy.** Search for the phone number 907-459-3807 to find the CAIHC Pharmacy
3. **Order Your Refill.** Selected the 'Order Refills' icon, where you can either enter your RX Number (highlighted in yellow on your medication bottle) OR you can scan the barcode on your medication bottle.
4. **Complete Order.** Select whether you are picking up your medications or if you need it mailed, leave any additional comments, and that's it!



**Download the ReFill Pro App today.**



## WARRIOR PROFILE

*"I am Koyukon, and wellness starts with me."*

Elaine Wright, Wellness Warrior  
Koyukon, Athabascan  
Yukon Koyukuk Subegion  
Nulato, Alaska



*Apply Today*

for the  
Tanana Chiefs Conference  
Indigenous Wellness Academy

.....

January 2020 - June 2020

For more information on the 2020 Indigenous Wellness Academy please contact:  
**Division of Wellness & Prevention**  
907-452-8251 | 1-800-478-6822  
Ext. 3004  
[Isabelle.Salmon@tananachiefs.org](mailto:Isabelle.Salmon@tananachiefs.org)



# Changes to the Patient Shuttle

The Chief Andrew Isaac Patient Shuttle has recently made changes to their schedule to better accommodate patients. This is a **FREE** service and only intended for individuals **receiving services**. There is no longer scheduled pick up/drop off times. You can now **call from anywhere** to request a pick up. The shuttle runs Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.

To make the shuttle service successful, please follow these guidelines:

- Use **cab vouchers** when possible
- Give drivers **ample time** for pick ups
- Always have a **back up plan** for your appointments, as shuttle rides are **not guaranteed**
- Always call and **check availability**
- Please be **ready at pick up time** requested
- Wait time can be **no longer than 5 minutes**

Call the Patient Transport Specialists to request a pick up



**Amanda**  
(907) 347-0765



**Stephanie**  
(907) 347-6764

If you have questions or concerns, contact:  
Patient Transport Specialists at 907-347-0765/907-347-6764  
Patient Navigators at 907-451-6682 ext. 3792/3484  
Patient Experience Manager, Leilani Sauer at 907-451-6682 ext.3143

## We're Here to Help!

The Health Services' Patient Experience Program is here to assist you. For more information contact the Patient Experience Team or visit [www.tananachiefs.org](http://www.tananachiefs.org)



Answer questions about our health systems and processes



Provide guidance on the Purchased-Referred Care process



Accompany patients to appointments and take notes.



Walk patients from one area of the clinic to another.



Assist patients in completing surveys



Manage patient grievances and facilitate responses



Assist with requests for uncovered services (missed travel, lodging/ meals, etc.)

# Commissioned Corps Officers stationed at TCC

## Promotion Ceremony 2019

On July 2, 2019, Garrick Olsen, PA-C, CAIHC Medical Services Primary Care and Brian Robb, PA-C, Gateway to Recovery (FNA) were promoted in rank at a Promotion Ceremony performed at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC). Our congratulations go out to these officers as they are recognized for their hard work and dedication.

Senior Officer, CDR Stella Wisner, officiated the ceremony, LCDR Kimberley Blood, was the adjutant and read the orders and gave the commands. LT Kelly Genskow performed the National Anthem and delivered the invocation.

The U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps is one of the seven Uniformed Services of the United States. Promotion is an integral part of an officer's career and is formally recognized by the Uniformed Services with a promotion ceremony. An official promotion ceremony provides an opportunity for an officer to receive recognition from his/her peers

and family, enhances a feeling of pride, fellowship, and common loyalty among officers, increases visibility of the service, and may enhance recruitment and retention of officers.



Overseen by the Surgeon General, the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is a diverse team of more than 6,700 highly qualified, public health professionals.

These men and women fill essential public health leadership and clinical service roles with the Nation's Federal Government agencies. There are many opportunities to serve in the Commissioned Corps throughout the Nation. Areas of interest include: Physician, dentist, behavioral health, clinical and rehabilitation therapist, dietitian, engineer, environmental health, nurse, pharmacist, health services, science & research health and veterinarian.

**Student Opportunities Offered by USPHS I.** The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS)

Commissioned Corps offers two excellent opportunities for students to serve their country while completing or continuing their education. If you are interested in a public health career, we encourage you to learn more about each of these opportunities by visiting:

<http://www.usphs.gov/student/jrcostep.aspx>

OR

<http://www.usphs.gov/student/srcostep.aspx>

**Student Opportunities through Other Agencies I.** In addition to the above opportunities offered by the Commissioned Corps, students can take advantage of programs offered through other agencies:

<http://www.usphs.gov/student/usu.aspx>

OR

<http://www.usphs.gov/student/nhsc.aspx>

OR

[http://www.usphs.gov/student/ih\\_loanrepayment.aspx](http://www.usphs.gov/student/ih_loanrepayment.aspx)

OR

[http://www.usphs.gov/student/more\\_opportunities.aspx](http://www.usphs.gov/student/more_opportunities.aspx)



TCC US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officers: L to R: CAPT Adrian Palmer, CDR Monica Rueben, CDR Stella Wisner, TCC Dental Services; CDR Brian Robb (promoted from LCDR), FNA Gateway to Recovery; LCDR Kimberley Blood, CAIHC Special Diabetes; LCDR Garrick Olsen (promoted from LT), CAIHC Primary Care; and LT Kelly Genskow, TCC Office of Environmental Health.

# Family-Centered Care Teams

An exciting new change is coming to the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center!

There is a change coming to the way medical care will be provided at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. Currently, Pediatric and Women's Health care is being provided by specialist practitioners separately from Family and Internal Medicine. We will be changing this by moving Pediatric and Women's Health providers into the three primary care teams, Deneege, Teekona and Tudi.

Our reason for doing this is to create teams that can truly take care of patients and families from birth to the end of life. We believe this will improve the care we give our patients because the teams will come to know the family as a whole, and will work together to meet all your needs. By incorporating the specialty providers with primary care, we will be offering a more comprehensive approach by expanding access to the specialty provider's expertise. The result will be higher quality and more efficient

care with uniform practice guidelines across the clinic.

The change will also bring more resources toward patient care and improve coordination as case managers, care coordinators and team nurses are concentrated into three teams, rather than being spread out among five. This will help improve communication between the providers and case managers and will allow the team to focus more on patient centered care.

The integration of the specialty providers into the primary care teams will result in a change to the clinical layout. Urgent Care will move to the Specialty side and will have its own check in desk and waiting room, separating patients who are sick from

those who are not. We will also be placing a triage station with a registered nurse in the waiting room so that we can better monitor the status of patients who check into Urgent Care. Patients with Family Medicine, Pediatric and Women's Health appointments will check in at the current Urgent Care and Family Medicine desk.

**The move will take place at the end of August** and there will

be no disruption to patient care. There will be staff available to inform patients of the new check in process and direct them to the correct check in desk.

As always we continue to find ways to improve your care at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center.

*Our goal is to create teams that can truly take care of patients from birth to end of life.*



## NEW Patient Sub-Committee

We want to hear from YOU on what is going well and what can be improved around Patient Experience at TCC.

**5-7 Members**

**Volunteer Positions**

**Meet Quarterly**

If you are interested in being a part of this unique opportunity, please contact Leilani Sauer, Patient Experience Manager at 907-451-6682 ext. 3143

# Preparing for *Wildfires* in Your Community

Fires are a natural part of the environmental cycle, but each year wildfires threaten to destroy property and resources around rural communities in Alaska. This year's fire season has impacted many Interior communities with heavy smoke and widespread fires near villages.

TCC can provide supplies and support during times of need by coordinating with both state and federal agencies. TCC has always been willing to assist our tribes during emergency situations. Preparation before wildfires begin will ensure life and property are protected and health and safety are maintained.

**To report an Alaska Wildland fire call 1-800-237-3633 or 911.**

## Protect Yourself & Your Family

Preparing for fires now can help save time and property later. TCC recommends the following guidelines for protecting your loved ones and your home during this wildfire season.

- Have your emergency kit ("go-bag") ready if you need to shelter in place at your home or move to a different area in your community. Remember to include

food, water and medications.

- Limit your exposure to smoke by staying indoors whenever possible with windows closed. Use air conditioners if possible, to limit smoky air in the home.
- Know your community's emergency plans, and follow the plan guidance. Find out if your community has a "clean room" for sensitive groups during severe smoke events.
- Plan to stay at home unless an evacuation is called for. Have activities on hand to occupy children and books or movies to keep adults entertained for long periods indoors.
- Remember to plan for visitors who might be in your village during wildfire season.
- N95 or similar respirators/masks are designed to filter out particles in the air. Using a mask will reduce airflow and can make breathing difficult, so use with caution.
- If it is too hot to stay indoors with the windows closed and you do not have an air conditioner, seek shelter elsewhere.
- Check out local air quality reports or visibility guides. AK Depart-

ment of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Division of Air Quality publishes Air Quality Advisories. The Fairbanks North Star Borough publishes an Air Quality Index with information about smoke, cautionary statements and health statements. You can also monitor local village visibility by consulting the FAA Aviation Weather Cameras.

## Protect your Property, Protect the Land

Before wildfire seasons begins, clear out dead vegetation and other flammable items within 30 feet of your home and outhouses, garages or sheds. This includes stacked wood and propane tanks. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house or other buildings.

- Dry grass and brush are fuel for wildfires. Cut it down.
- Know your community's plans for working with fire response agencies so you will know what to expect during a wildfire.
- Follow any instructions given from local leadership or fire response personnel about property management during wildfires.

## GOING HUNTING SOON?

### August is Gun Safety Month

August is gun safety month! When handling a gun please remember the *5 basic rules of gun safety*:

1. Treat guns as if they are **always loaded**.
2. Keep finger **off the trigger and out of the trigger guard** until ready to shoot.
3. Keep gun pointed in a **safe direction** at all times.
4. **Be sure** of your target - what's beyond and around it.
5. Always **lock** up your guns.

Stay safe!



## Save the Date

**Behavioral Health & Hunting Fishing Task Force Summit**

**November 13th-14th, 2019  
Westmark Hotel  
Fairbanks, AK**





# Molly of Denali

ATHABASCAN WOMAN BLOG BY ANGELA GONZALEZ

<http://athabascanwoman.com/>

It's finally here! A groundbreaking PBS Kids cartoon, Molly of Denali, premiered across the country on July 15. I have been looking forward to the show since I heard about it a couple years ago. Producers, animators, storytellers and funders teamed up with Alaska Native writers and cultural advisors to make Molly come to life.

With the support of her family and friends, Vera Starbard hosted a Molly of Denali Premiere Party in Anchorage. It was great to hear some insights on episodes she and others wrote. From what I've heard from friends and colleagues who have worked on the show, much thought has gone into every single detail of the show. It was great to hear kids and adults singing along to the catchy theme song! Vera asked trivia questions for adults and children. It was a fun way to celebrate the huge accomplishment of the show's debut.

At a time when representation matters more than ever, it was great to hear words in the three cultures represented by Molly (Dena'ina Athabascan/Gwich'in/Koyukon Athabascan) in languages of Dena'ina, Dinjii Zhuh K'yaa and Denaakk'e. With repetition, kids across the nation will learn words in these Alaska Native languages. I also love listening to Molly's voice, because I kept thinking she sounds like my relatives. I also loved seeing the mannerisms and sayings by the characters in the show, like when Aunt Midge said 'real good' just our Elders.

It is awesome people of color are represented. One of the reasons I do the Athabascan Woman Blog is to change the narrative by sharing stories and perspectives of Athabascan and Alaska Native people. The writers, creators and producers of Molly of Denali are truly changing the narrative at the very beginning by reaching kids. If my friends and relatives are any indication, the show is reaching kids, adults and Elders. I love all of the details, like multiple family pictures

on the walls and the beadwork on the characters' clothing.

"My kids just watched the blueberry

episode. My son Skyler said, 'It's cool they made a show about Natives.' My daughter Skarlett and her friend Ava were singing along with the theme song. All three of them went to pick blueberries down the road from my house. They went 3X today. Also my son, Keenan, who's 3 years old said he likes Molly and asked to watch Molly again. Thank goodness

*"My son is so excited and has been counting the days down daily..."*

I recorded the series, so he can re-watch it." – Rona Vent (Koyukon Athabascan) of Huslia and Fairbanks

"My son is so excited and has been counting the days down daily. He's so excited that it's about Alaska." – Dena Sam (Iñupiaq/Koyukon Athabascan) of Alatna and Fairbanks

Episodes are packed with educational lessons reaching the hearts and minds of people. I watched a couple short episodes and it touched me to the core. I could probably go on all day about the things I love about every aspect of the show, but I want to share perspectives from my friends and relatives. Molly also vlogs during her show – super cute!

"Molly of Denali aired today on PBS!!!! A huge shout of thanks and appreciation to those of you who made this possible. Princess, you



rock!!! Thanks for bringing this to AK and assembling the team you did.” – Sonta Hamilton Roach (Deg Hit’an Athabascan) of Shageluk

**April Henry of Fairbanks shared:**

“A few months ago, we saw that Peter Pan had been brought out of the Disney vault. We popped some popcorn and bought it and sat down with our kids, eager to share with them a cartoon from our childhood. The movie had barely begun when John Darling reminded the other children, ‘Indians are cunning, but not intelligent.’ Our three-year-old Kai sat between us, eyes glued to the screen. My heart sank. My husband and I looked at each other and steadied ourselves for the tears we knew would erupt when we shut it off. But we knew that much bigger than the tears shed over a cartoon promised and taken away is the pain Indigenous children grow up with and carry into adulthood when they internalize the racism so prominent in depictions of Indigenous people in media. Kai saw children who fly, and a land where kids stay young forever, and fairy dust, and a very clear message – you are not intelligent. You are less than. So when Kai first saw the preview for Molly of Denali, he said, ‘Hey! I think I know her. I think I’m in there!’ And he was really very excited. But I was moved to tears with gratitude. As an activist in these trying times, the victories are few and far between. But progress of this kind means so much. In the opening scenes...they were going to a tribal hall, and told us that the grandpa had a necklace ‘like dad’s’. But shortly after that, he simply fell into this quint-

essential American experience that has been a staple to the majority and fully inaccessible to indigenous children until now – he watched a cartoon he could relate to.”

An episode called, Grandpa’s Drum, tackles our boarding school story. I watched it three times already and cried each time. It’s a story of triumph, speaks to honoring our cultures and traditions, and a healing song is shared. When little is taught about boarding school history in the US, I’m glad it touches on the story in a positive way. I loved the song! When you watch the episodes, they also weave in real people and stories sharing singing, dancing, life in Alaska and making aquataq, and more. Check out the episode below.

[https://youtu.be/UzuWW\\_6sZm4](https://youtu.be/UzuWW_6sZm4)

After seeing the amazing response to Grandpa’s Drum, Producer Princess Daazhrai Johnson (Neets’aii Gwich’in) shared a little bit more about working with Elder Revrend Luke Titus of Minto. “We came to Luke for his approval – that’s when we took this photo together. Dewey also teaches often in the Denaakk’e immersion classroom so that’s why he’s dressed in uniform love to our language warriors! What goodness we are capable of when we work together hold each other up. All this guided by our Ancestors,” says Princess Daazhrai Johnson.

“Oh man how amazing it is to see them identify with a cartoon show!!! They knew the grandpa song thanks to teacher Dewey. This is huge. They

love it! So thankful this is now available to them.” – Kimberly Nicholas (Koyukon Athabascan) of Kaltag and Fairbanks

“We just watched two episodes, and tears fell. Our babies will never know a time without representation of their beautiful culture shown so lovingly on TV. So much love to our amazing fam working so hard for years to make this day a reality: Princess Daazhrai Johnson, Dewey Kk’oleyo Hoffman, Vera Starbard, Du Aani Kawdinook Xh’un-ei, Rochelle Adams and everyone else involved. Quyanaqpak from this thankful mama and future ancestor.

I wish everyone would watch this, especially our elders and parents/aunties/uncles generation. I watched Grandpa’s Drum twice today and cried both times. Healing is happening through our storytelling in real time I love #MollyofDenali.” – Ayyu Qassataq (Iñupiaq) of Uᅇalaq̄liq/Unalakleet and Anchorage

I’m impressed with the excellent writing, production, animation, storytelling, education, singing, partnerships, actors, and so much more! Kudus to Princess Daazhrai Johnson (Neets’aii Gwich’in) and to all of the contributors to this show. I’m a #MollyofDenali fan. Enaa baasee’,

Mahsi’ choo and Chin’an for this healthy dose of truth, racial healing and transformation.

The Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center has an exhibit dedicated to Molly of Denali. Check it out if you have a chance!

*When you watch these stories, they also weave in real people and stories.*



## Angela Gonzalez

Angela Gonzalez is of Koyukon Athabascan heritage, a wife and a mother of two. She is from Huslia, but lives in Anchorage and works in the PR/communications field. She enjoys sharing photos and stories of life in Alaska, with a focus on Alaska Native culture.

The Athabascan Woman Blog is about Athabascan culture and Alaska Native topics. Stories of growing up in fish camp and life in the village and city are often shared. She also highlights Alaska Native people doing great things. Occasionally, a guest author shares a story, poem or video.

Angela’s sister, Tanya Yatlin, is the editor of the Athabascan Woman blog. Tanya currently lives in Huslia, Alaska and works in early childhood development.



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

## THE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Letters to the Editor, other written contributions and photo submissions are welcome. However, space is limited and program-oriented news has priority. We reserve the right to edit or reject material. Letters and opinions are not necessarily the opinions of Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Follow us:     

## JOIN THE TCC FAMILY

[WWW.TANANACHIEFS.ORG](http://WWW.TANANACHIEFS.ORG)

### Village Vacancies

- Behavioral Health Aide (Nulato, Dot Lake, Anaktuvuk Pass)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner (Alatna, Tetlin, Kaltag, Allakaket)
- Cook(EHS) (Galena)
- Elder Nutrition Cook (Nikolai)
- Family Visitor (Hughes, Huslia, Allakaket, Kaltag, Shageluk, Tanacross, Tetlin)
- Healthy Transitions Clinician (Tok)
- Physician Assistant-Upper Tanana Health Center (Tok)
- Preschool Assistant Teacher (Huslia, Northway, Fort Yukon)
- SOC Youth Lead (Kaltag)
- Tribal Family Youth Specialist (Evansville)
- Village Public Safety Officer (Nulato, Huslia, Ruby, Tanana, Circle, Venetie, Grayling, McGrath)

### Fairbanks Vacancies

- Addictions Behavioral Health Clinician
- Behavioral Health Assessment Clinician
- Behavioral Health Clinical Associate-Fairbanks
- Behavioral Health Crisis Clinician
- Brownfield Technician
- Camp Counselor
- Certified Medical Assistant
- Coding Manager
- Communications Intern
- Early Intervention Specialist
- Employee Health RN
- Executive Medical Officer
- Exercise Technician (Part-time)
- Health, Nutrition and Safety Coordinator
- Health, Nutrition and Safety Coordinator
- Hospitality Support Staff
- Housing First Behavioral Health Clinician
- Itinerant Behavioral Health Clinician
- Nurse Practitioner - Urgent Care PRN
- Operations and Maintenance Engineer
- Outpatient Behavioral Health Case Manager
- Patient Navigator II
- Physician - Primary Care
- Physician - Urgent Care
- Physician Assistant - Urgent Care PRN
- Psychiatrist
- Revenue Cycle Director
- Urgent Care Lead RN

### Region- Wide Vacancies

- Healthy Transitions Project Manager
- Itinerant Clinician - SOC
- Medical Coder II
- Wild Land Firefighter Type II Crew Member

JOB LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF July 12th, 2019

## UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

Circle Culture & Wellness Camp  
August 12-16 • Circle, AK

Nenana Culture & Wellness  
August 19-23 • Nenana, AK

Shageluk Culture & Wellness  
August 26-30 • Shageluk, AK

TCC CLOSED  
September 2 • Labor Day



# KIDS ARE BACK IN SCHOOL

TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS  
IN SCHOOL ZONES