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Red Lake Nation goes on sales trip to Indian for trade, walleye, wild rice



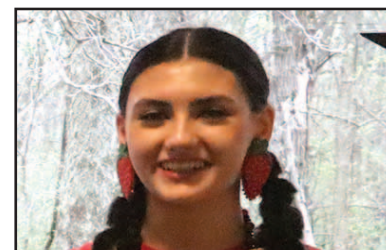
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FREE

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FREE

## MAIC, RLNC hold Grand Openings



A beautiful atrium now links two other buildings at the Red Lake Nation Collage Minneapolis campus. President Dan King said it can be used for classes, other school events, and for lease for other purposes such as weddings. (Photo by Lee Egerstrom.)

BY LEE EGERSTROM

In back to back ceremonies at the end of April, Minnesota's Native and political leaders gathered to celebrate the state's cultural heritage and Indigenous history and form new bonds of friendship strengthening the sense of community for future generations.

The first celebration was April 25 at a pre-opening gathering for political leaders and others at the newly remodeled and expanded Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC). Its official re-opening is May 1.

Amid public comments of awe and praise for the MAIC improvements, Executive Director Mary LaGarde encouraged the visitors to use a printed map of the property to visit all the center sites that house programs and facilities to serve the Native community and neighbors in the metro area.

How pleased is she with the completion of the two-year project? "It's so great!" she said. "Now we need a map to see the building."

A second large ceremony for the Native community in the Twin Cities metro area came a day later, on April 26. The Red Lake Nation held a pre-opening ceremony at its newly constructed Red Lake Nation College (RLNC) campus, 900 S. 3rd St., in Minneapolis.

President Dan King, a Red Lake member and one of its seven hereditary chiefs, explained that opening an off reservation campus in Minneapolis was a logical step for serving Red Lake people and others in the metro area who share their values.

Half the Red Lake population lives off the reservation, he said. Beyond them, he added, about 50,000 people in the Twin Cities metro area are identified as being Indigenous people from tribes scattered across the U.S.

To support both the Red Lake and diverse members of this large, loosely connected Native community, the Minneapolis campus will make the education programs of its home campus on the shores of Red Lake more available to urban dwellers.

Like at home at Red Lake, King said, the Minneapolis campus' curricula will be anchored on the seven core Ojibwe values ("humility, truth, courage, honesty, respect, love and wisdom").

The fully accredited Red Lake Nation College offers two two-year associate of arts degrees and promotes itself as "a great place to start." It currently has 330 graduates from the main campus and several are currently enrolled in Minnesota and colleges and universities elsewhere completing bachelor's and graduate degrees.

The Minneapolis campus is the first Native owned and operated higher education site in an urban area anywhere in the entire country. In a beautiful atrium area connecting three previous but adjoining buildings, the president told visitors the college is a community college and its credits are transferable to all Minnesota state academic institutions.

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## RLNC/MAIC are lessons in economics/community building

BY LEE EGERSTROM

You won't find economics in the catalog of courses offered by Red Lake Nation College (RLNC) But the community college is giving Native Minnesotans and all Minnesotans an understanding of principles of economics and community building.

The same is happening at the Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC). It applies to various other projects in the works around the state and especially in the Twin Cities metro area.

At ceremonies in April celebrating the re-opening of the MAIC after extensive remodeling and expansion, and completion of construction at the Red Lake Nation College urban campus in Minneapolis, local construction companies, business vendors and professional service providers were also saluted.

Officials at both events (see accompanying article) stressed how their projects engaged Minnesota companies and laborers and especially Native Minnesotans the center and college serve.

It's a matter of trust, said RLNC President Dan King. That's a trust built on knowing each other and sharing common goals and objectives, he said.

Both projects were large capital investments in community development. The end result is to provide better service to community. The planning, building and equipping of the projects, meanwhile, supported Minnesota and Native businesses over the past two years.

The MAIC plowed back more than \$32 million into the community with a mix of local contributions and city, state and federal dollars to support the two-year construction project. It doubles MAIC space for hosting events, shops, and for offices and rooms for groups that support the Minneapolis and metro Native community.

RLNC's urban project of more than \$16 million mostly went to Minnesota and Red Lake businesses. Through them, as the economy twists and turns, it went on to Native and other Minnesota laborers and service providers.

The objective was to build America's first tribal community college campus off reservation in a major urban center. It is where about half of Red Lake Nation members currently live. In doing so, the investments support Native-owned and other Minnesota businesses that further expand the shared Minnesota gross domestic product - the shared "economic pie."

A lot of the groundwork for such projects get started with Sam Olbekson, chief executive and founder of Full Circle Indigenous Planning and Design. A White Earth Nation member, Olbekson served as design architect and master planner for MAIC and as design architect for the Red Lake campus project.

Mary LaGarde, MAIC executive director, said Olbekson is nearby when any major planning is underway. He is currently engaged with a project building a high school for Indigenous students in St. Paul. And he also now serves as president of the MAIC's board of directors.

Cunningham Group, another Minneapolis architect office linked with architects across the country and abroad, worked the MAIC project with architecture and interior design services and also did landscape architecture.

Firm Ground Architects, a Minneapolis-based firm that also provides a vast assortment of design services, was the project manager and architect for the Red Lake urban campus at 900 S. 3rd St., in the shadow of U.S. Bank Stadium.

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# Red Lake Nation goes on sales trip to India for trade, walleye and wild rice

BY MATHEW HOLDING EAGLE/MPR

India is now the world's most populous nation with 1.4 billion people. In April, Red Lake Incorporated looks to tap into that giant market by joining a US trade mission to India. From his reservation government office Red Lake Incorporated Chief Development Officer Jaycob Robinson is busy finalizing plans for the trip.

"We have enterprises that have been focused in export marketing of agricultural products, primarily cultivated wild rice for over 25 years. So, we've been really active in export market and export market development," Robinson said. "We've been working with the USDA and the Intertribal Ag Council and the American Indian Foods Program for five or six years now."

Currently Red Lake Incorporated oversees a portfolio of 13 different companies. They've participated in past trade missions with the USDA to East Africa, the Netherlands, Japan and Chile.

"For India, we're primarily focused on looking for surplus markets for some of our seafood products, as well as looking for value add and production opportunities with cultivated wild rice or value-added products based around cultivated wild rice," he said.

The seafood is walleye from Red Lake and the salmon from their minority share in a wild Alaskan salmon company.

And the wild rice?

"We have one of the largest rice specific farms in the state of Minnesota, where we produce and grow our own rice every year," Robinson said. "All the harvesting, all the planting, all the farm maintenance is done by Red Lake tribal members."

Robinson says processing of the wild rice is done by a third party, but packaging is done at the tribal-owned facility in Bemidji. Distribution is also done by a third party.

"We service direct to consumer, domestic markets, retail, as well as bulk exports," he said.



Red Lake Nation is one of 47 businesses and organizations going on the trip. As the only representative from a Native or tribal community they will receive in-depth market briefings from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and industry trade experts. (Photo by Mathew Holding Eagle III / MPR News.)

Red Lake will join 46 other businesses and organizations on the mission. However, it will be the only representative from a Native or tribal community.

"It feels unfortunately familiar. You know, there's been a lot of instances where we are one of the only Native businesses or Native producers represented at a lot of events," Robinson said. "It's a great opportunity, very, very thankful and very grateful for the opportunity. It's made possible by working with the Intertribal Ag Council who provides the support for us to attend these events."

The benefits trade missions offer are familiar to Brian McClung. As deputy chief of staff and press secretary for Gov. Tim Pawlenty, he took part in three trade missions, including one to India.

"I really believe that the Red Lake Nation is going to be a signature highlight of this trade mission, because of their deep history, their deep knowledge and a product like wild rice that is so important to the culture, the Native American people and here in Minnesota, and bringing that to India," McClung said. "Those trade missions really are an exchange of cultures."

One major booster for Red Lake's trip to India is U.S. Sen. Tina Smith.



on these trade missions," Smith said from her office in Washington, D.C. "I'm delighted that this is finally happening, and it will be a great benefit to Red Lake."

In his Red Lake office Jaycob Robinson makes sure he has all he needs for this trip, including the 20-pound sack of wild rice he'll show potential customers. As a young Red-Laker he never dreamed he'd have a job in international business.

"Absolutely not. It's been a great learning opportunity. And just learning how to engage in business relationships on a global setting," he said. "Also just seeing how forthcoming and how willing people are to learn about new things and try different things and work to incorporate our products into their markets or into their products, has been very eye-opening, and very inspiring."

Robinson says this mission will be an opportunity to educate Indian consumers about new products while building awareness and distribution networks within new markets.

*Minnesota Public Radio News can be heard on MPR's statewide radio network or online.*

"As you know, they participated in trade missions before and it has helped to open up markets for their products," she said. "The global markets are very interested in authentic Native Indigenous foods from the United States. And so, this is a huge opportunity."

Smith says for a long time tribes weren't represented on trade missions. That all changed with the 2018 farm bill.

"I pushed hard to get tribal representation



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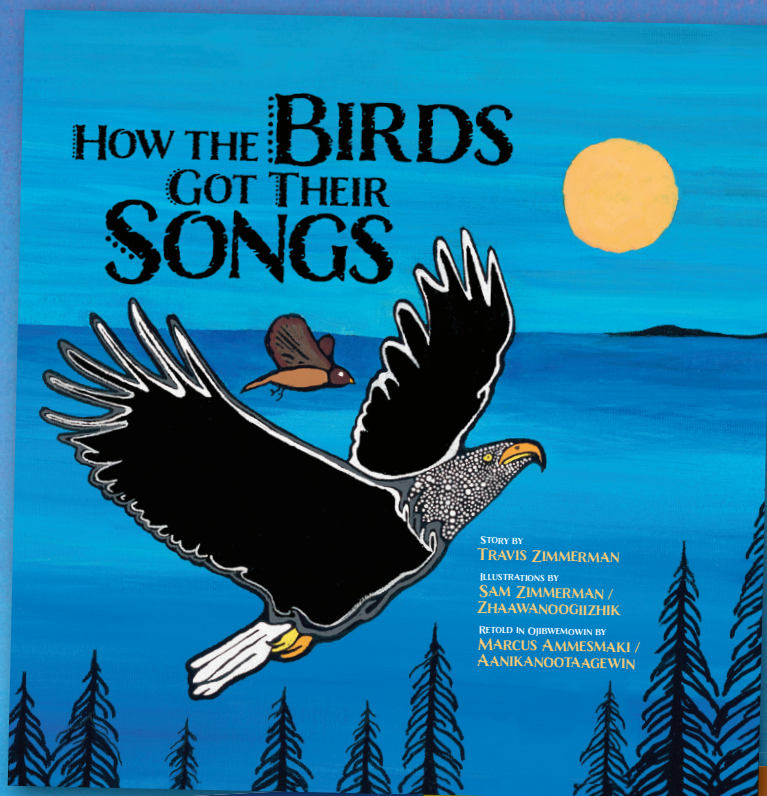
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Featuring original acrylic paintings by Sam Zimmerman / Zhaawanoogiizhik, this narrative is presented in both English and Ojibwemowin, and commemorates traditional knowledge from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Translation by Marcus Ammesmaki / Aanikanootaagewin.



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## Natives travel to Guatemala to learn from the Mayans



Dr. Igor Xoyon and Dr. Mary Fong Hermes at the Nimalāj Kaqchikel Amaq in the Maya Kaqchikel community in Chimaltenango, Guatemala. (Photo by Govinda Budrow.)

BY DAN NINHAM

As part of their ongoing efforts to promote and preserve indigenous languages, Dr. Mary "Fong" Hermes, a University of Minnesota professor, and others, including Govinda Budrow and Biidaabanikwe (Kim Anderson), traveled to Guatemala in April.

The group visited Nimalāj Kaqchikel Amaq, a Kaqchikel medium school located within the Maya Kaqchikel community in Chimaltenango. In just eight short days, they aimed to absorb as many language teaching/learning experiences as possible, focusing on bringing their newfound knowledge back to their own communities. They learned about the incredible work being done by Igor Xoyon, the school's principal. In a region where racism and prejudice towards Mayan people are still prevalent, Xoyon has dedicated himself to preserving the Kaqchikel language.

Dr. Hermes is of mixed heritage including Irish American, Chinese American, Dakota, and Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe community member. She is a Professor in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Hermes spent ten years as an Associate /Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota, Duluth from 2001 to 2011. She also co-founded the Waadooko-daading Ojibwe Immersion School.

"To be in an environment where an indigenous language is the norm with Mayan spoken by 800,000 people was amazing," said Dr. Hermes. "The school we visited, Nimalāj Kaqchikel Amaq, is a Kaqchikel medium school, situated in the Maya Kaqchikel community in Chimaltenango, Guatemala."

"We contacted Igor Xoyon, principal of the school. We had only read about the school in an article but he opened his

heart and his school to us. In his particular community there was a genocide of 200,000 indigenous people there a few decades ago so despite the large numbers, Chimaltenango has no Kaqchikel first speakers," added Dr. Hermes.

"The racism and prejudice to the Mayan people is palpable, and Igor and his school are doing a brave thing. He feels somewhat isolated, as all indigenous language folks do at times, so he was happy to spend the entire day with us - we felt very akin and inspired by him as well. Then he fed us the most beautiful Mayan foods, and gave us a lesson on sucking a mango," added Dr. Hermes.

Govinda Budrow, direct descendent of White Earth Nation, is an Education Faculty Member at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College. She is a consultant with the Minnesota Department of Education on the Dream Catcher Project and Native Voices, and a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, Curriculum and Instruction Department with an emphasis on Culture and Learning.

"The most profound experience visiting the immersion school in Guatemala was to observe the teaching strategies," said Budrow. "The teachers were all first language speakers so it seemed to place an ease into their teaching that they could focus on their pedagogy. They were comfortable allowing the children to connect to their instruction through their home languages and seamlessly bridging the gap between understanding without breaking from the immersion instruction."

"It made me think about the state we are in with Ojibwemowin, where most of our teachers are language learners and attempting to reclaim language as well as centering in a pedagogy of love for caregiving and teaching. It is a big stressor attempting to bring these worlds back



together that had been intentionally separated through government policy with religious crimes codes and boarding schools,” added Budrow.

Budrow continued to talk about her profound experience being connected to her educational journey. She said, “My hope is to focus my PhD research on bringing and reclaiming these pieces of ourselves back together. Even a small movement of mending education and caregiving back together with our language and cultural ways of life is meaningful and worthwhile.”

Biidaabanikwe (Kim Anderson) is from the White Earth Reservation. She is the language director for a non-profit called the Niibi Center. She also contracts with various entities including OOG - Ojibwemotaadidaa Omaa,

an Ojibwe Immersion Academy for adult language learners who seek to improve their proficiency and pass the language on to others.”

“The most profound experience was witnessing the immersion school in action with very little materials and little to no technology, which really put into perspective to me that immersion can be done no matter what,” said Biidaabanikwe. “Often, we in America, let material things limit us in our practice. I also really respected the effort and promotion to bring their traditional clothing back to everyday life.”

*The article on the school in Guatemala: <https://folklife.si.edu/magazine/stream-of-voices-guatemala-maya-kaqchikel-language>.*



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While a few people and firms, such as Olbekson, worked both projects, MAIC and Red Lake Nation College had different teams of consultants.

The team for MAIC involved several local engineering companies. They included:

Edina-based Emanuelson-Podas Inc., provided mechanical and electrical engineering services; St. Paul-based Reigstad Associates, structural engineering; and Brooklyn Center-based BKBM Engineers, civil engineering.

Other consultants, Olbekson said, included:

Hopkins-based Robert Rippe & Associates, a consultant on food service

design, for kitchen design at the new Gatherings Café; the Kvernstoen Ronholm and Associates firm for acoustics; Intertek Testing Services, an international firm with St. Paul and other metro area offices, for various testing oversight; Bloomington-based Landmark Environmental LLC, providing services regarding environmental conditions; St. Paul-based Pigeon Consulting that supports clients with historical designations and tax credit questions, and Eagan-based Milestone Real Estate Partners as owner's representative. It, coincidentally, is currently providing similar services for the Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi project in St. Paul.



Red Lake Nation College officials and staff greeted friends at the pre-opening celebration for the Minneapolis urban campus. From left to right: counselor Cheryl Goodman, financial aid specialist Justin Heminger, communications director Kayla Duane and President Dan King. (Photo by Lee Egerstrom.)



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Any institution or center providing services for children on up to senior citizens has special furnishing needs. Plymouth-based Intereum Inc. provided services and found furniture to support technology and operational needs at the center.

Fundraising consultants were Crowley, White, Helmer & Sevig, Inc., a firm serving nonprofits based in St. Paul.

Putting all these talents and services together was the role of Loeffler Construction & Consulting, the Native-owned Lakeville firm that does major construction projects for Indigenous clients across the Upper Midwest.

White Earth member Tammy Loeffler, founder and former chief executive, and her husband George, the current CEO, started the company in their home basement in 2010. The company has now completed more than \$350 million worth of projects in 20 states, especially serving Native communities.

Loeffler Construction was the lead builder of the RLNC Minneapolis campus site as well. Elsewhere in Minneapolis, it is building Mimbimaadiziwin ("the good life") for the Red Lake Nation. That mixed development will have housing units, a health care clinic and the Red Lake Nation's urban embassy to serve it people living in the metro area.

Economists call this "ground up," or "percolate up" development; not the "trickle down" economics that often are just crumbs that fall down through cracks

in the system.

Red Lake Nation College tribal leaders at the opening celebration spoke of how the Minneapolis campus will perpetuate Red Lake and Indigenous culture and values for their young people living in the Twin Cities. Several talked about how this investment helps the here and now.

Two of the latter were present as vendors. One was Ryan King, owner of R&R Enterprises and a Red Lake member, whose White Bear Lake firm painted classrooms, college corridors and meeting rooms.

Another example of how the project invests in the present came when several speakers cited the beautiful floors and woodwork in the campus building.

That work was performed by John Boyd, another Red Lake member. His team from Bear Claw Hardwood Floors, a Northeast Minneapolis based company, did the flooring.

After working as a craftsman in that business for more than 20 years, Boyd told the gathering that he started his own business in 2020. That was tough timing. Business opportunities were shrinking as the COVID pandemic had people reluctant to bring workers into their homes and businesses.

He was emotional in thanking RLNC for generating work for his firm. It is an example of how community investments do maintain the present and support and carry forward opportunities for the future.





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King said this new campus is a Red Lake Nation commitment to both higher education and to service to community. He also said 75 percent of the Red Lake Nation College faculty and staff are Native Americans. And 43 percent of the vendors who completed the Minneapolis campus project are Native owned.

Both the MAIC and Red Lake ceremonies stressed service to community. Personal, and sometimes emotional stories from visiting public officials, revealed community ties aren’t just lofty words chosen for the occasion.

Consider these comments at the MAIC:

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, a White Earth Nation member who grew up on the metro area, was both emotional and humorous in recalling her experiences at the center. She was introduced to her father there when she was a child, she said.

Other important dates she remembers at the center include launching campaigns for public office. Both of her statewide campaigns with Gov. Tim Walz were started there. And, she joked to great laughter, she had “many dates there” growing up around the center.

In a news briefing issued by the governor and lieutenant governor, Flanagan turned emotional again. “I was so overwhelmed celebrating the grand opening (of MAIC) – a powerful community space dedicated

to improving the lives for Indigenous youth, families and elders,” she said.

Both Minnesota U.S. Senators, Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, attended the ceremony and area Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who had visited a day earlier, left behind a video complimenting LaGarde and all who worked to make the two-year remodeling and expansion project possible.

Klobuchar joked, “It’s so great to see no buckets of water.” It was a reference to a leaky roof that was a major driving force for getting the project underway.

Further noting her familiarity with the center, she spoke of improvements that will help MAIC serve the 10,000 people from Minneapolis and 35,000 metro area people annually with its programs.

“A lot of Peggy Flanagans will come out of this place,” she predicted, a point not lost of the ceremony’s guests. As a lieutenant governor, the White Earth member is diplomatically recognized as the highest ranking Native woman in America.

Senator Smith told stories of working with MAIC and of bringing a Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing there before the construction project started. Smith is a member of that committee.

She and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey both stressed how important the center is in bringing people together as a commu-



Above: Tribal leaders were among special guests at the MAIC re-opening celebration. From left to right: Lower Sioux Indian Community President Robert 'Deuce' Larsen, Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe Chairperson Cathy Chavers, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin. (All photos by Lee Egerstrom.)

Below: Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan told of many childhood and professional memories from the MAIC.



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nity. Citing talks about Minneapolis city topics and projects, the mayor said, “Some of the most important conversations I’ve had have been right here.”

Several speakers said MAIC’s circle of community involvement extends far beyond Franklin Avenue and the American Indian Cultural Corridor in south Minneapolis.

State Sen. Mary Kunesh, DFL-New Brighton and a descendant of the Standing Rock Lakota in South Dakota, was one of them. She is a leader in bringing Native American legislation to the Minnesota Legislature and she serves as chair of the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators that coordinates with contemporaries all across the nation.

The center is as a gathering place for community that in turn helps muster support for legislation supporting Native groups and causes, she said. With this community support, a caucus of Minnesota legislators are

again promoting legislation to help both urban and reservation communities in the current session of the Legislature.

Among these are continuing efforts to restore reservation lands taken from tribes over the years. Accomplishments from the session a year ago has several repatriations underway, she said. More efforts are underway.

MAIC celebrants were given another reminder that community and family are interconnected. In the audience, cheering on Kunesh and her allies in the Legislature, was Patrice H. Kunesh, the commissioner of administration for Native Americans at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington.

The Kunesh sisters were raised near St. Cloud without benefit of being on a reservation or with a nearby facility like the MAIC to promote community a sense of community, the legislator said.





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## Jack Brown is looking for college opportunities next season

Jack Brown is a member of the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe. He is a graduating senior looking for an opportunity to play college basketball next season. The opportunity may exist nearby but he is also interested and available to travel.

Brown is a part of a legacy of high scorers for the Red Lake HS Warriors basketball team. He broke the school record with 12 made three point field goals ending with 45 points. He had more than four games with nine or more three point field goals made in his career.

Brown was scrambling to get his 1000th career point as the game days continued into the 2024 Minnesota Class A Section Tournament this past season. The math included the more section games won the more games he could score to achieve this milestone and get his name on the gymnasium banner.

His traditions as an Anishinaabe helped him to stay focused. He said, "I hand drum every morning on game days, because it helps me focus and keeps me focused all game."

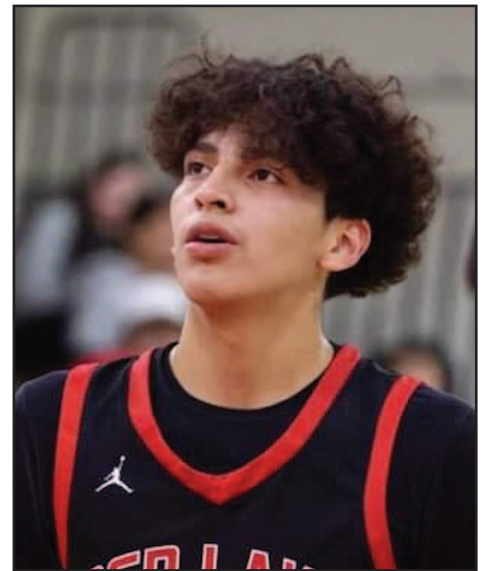
"I had to get 609 points this season," said Brown. At the beginning of the section tournament he had to get 60 points.

Head Coach Nolan Desjarlait encourages the athletes to get good grades and this is for all athletes since he's also the long time Athletic Director.

Playing with the Silver Medal-earning Team Minnesota in the 19U basketball tournament at the North American Indigenous Games helped Brown come out of his shell. "In Halifax it may have been some of the best ball I've seen him play, people start calling him 'Downtown Brown'," said Chris Jourdain, Team Minnesota chef d'mission and assistant varsity basketball coach for the Red Lake Warriors. "With only one sub they had to play some smart basketball against some top competition from across Turtle Island."

Volunteer assistant varsity coach and former Red Lake HS Warrior Rob McClain played NCAA D1 basketball and was also a former NJCAA All American at United Tribes Technical College. McClain served as the bench coach for several games into the section tournament. He said, "Jack Brown is an awesome shooter and scorer overall. He's a kid that can get hot very quickly and just has a good touch to his shot. You can see he has put in a lot of work. So to see him get his 1000 was just a nice touch to his legacy and the Warriors' history."

To play at the next level each athlete needs to play both ends of the court equally well. Coach McClain said, "I



honestly think to be able to play at the college level but he has to show he is a capable defender. I think if he shows he can guard at a high level he can gain more college interest."

There are still opportunities for late bloomers in the post-senior recruiting time to show what they can do to college recruiters. The NCAA-certified tournaments are always important to shine at. There are also many native tournaments available on a national scale that coaches may also attend when they know who they are observing.

"I plan on attending tournaments this summer in Oklahoma, Las Vegas, Seattle and Arizona," said Brown.

One opportunity to play may be at the local Red Lake Nation College (RLNC), a two-year tribal college. The men's basketball team started four years ago with a condensed season, started and ended abruptly the next season, and didn't start last year until the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), comprised of Tribal Colleges throughout the country, held their education conference and men's and women's basketball tournament in the Twin Cities. A team was put together quickly and ended up taking third place.

Player-coach Dustin Harris thinks the RLNC Eagle will be making a return to the court next school year. He had his recruiting eyes on the lone Warrior that is looking to go to college and play next season.

"He can shoot the lights out," said Dustin Harris. "I believe he'd be a threat on a college team."

See Brown score his 1000 career point: [https://youtu.be/tr5g9nY\\_kKQ?si=gTn2-cjnK0YpOl0l](https://youtu.be/tr5g9nY_kKQ?si=gTn2-cjnK0YpOl0l)



# Ojibwe Girl Scout awarded Bronze Cross Lifesaving Award

Senior Girl Scout Ilona Delaney (Miskwaa’Benaisi’Kwe, Mikanaak’Ikwe) was honored April 28 for heroically risking her own life to save her mother and grandmother from drowning during a family boating trip last summer. She is a member of the Red Lake Ojibwe Nation.

The Bronze Cross is one of the highest honors that Girl Scouts of the USA can bestow, and is one of two medals youth can be awarded for their efforts related to saving a life. The Bronze Cross is presented when a Girl Scout has shown special heroism or has faced extraordinary risk of their own life to save another’s. Ilona is the first Indigenous Girl Scout in council history to achieve this honor.

“My mom and grandma are my only family and I couldn’t believe I was watching them drowning right in front of me,” Delaney said. “Even though I’m scared of lakes and fish, I jumped in, we formed a human chain, and I swam against the wind and waves in choppy water to get us back to safety. I will forever be changed by this, and I hope to educate others on what to do in this exact situation.”

In a special ceremony, Ilona was presented with her Bronze Cross award by Girl Scouts River Valley’s Chief Operating Officer, Lynnea Atlas.

“Ilona has proven herself to be a testament to the highest principles in Girl Scouting,” said Atlas. “We are deeply honored for the opportunity to present her with this well-deserved award alongside her naming and feathering ceremonies.”

Next up for Ilona includes swim trials with Team USA this summer, working at her Gold Award project



Left to right: Ilona Delaney, Pam Wurster, Lynnea Atlas, and Erin Delaney (Ilona’s grandma) put the award on Ilona’s Girl Scout vest, which is shown below. (Photos courtesy of the Girl Scouts.)

aimed at increasing swim literacy, and continuing to teach water safety and swim lessons to local youth—with a focus on marginalized youth who face the highest rates of drowning.

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys’ work is supported by 6,300 volunteers who deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to nearly 17,200 girls in southern Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and one county in Iowa.



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**Ongoing**

**Call for Native Artists**

Native American artists, performers, and culture bearers looking to exhibit, enhance, or share their artistic talents and cultural knowledge are invited to apply to the Cultural Programs offered through THE INDIAN MUSEUM OF NORTH AMERICA® at the Crazy Horse Memorial in S.D. For info, see: <https://crazyhorsememorial.org/the-museums/cultural-programs-opportunities> or call 605-673-4681, ext. 286.

**Thru May 26**

**Moments of Memory Exhibit**

Plein air painting is the art of capturing outdoor scenes from life. Named from the French for "open air," this form of painting from life moves artists out of the studio to study real landscapes, focusing on how light and shadow interact with things in particular places. Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. For info, see: <https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/moments-of-memory-minnesota-landscapes-painted-from-life>.

**Thru May 27**

**Reimagining Native/American Art**

What happens when Native

American and American art is seen together, rather than in separate places? What stories and connections emerge from this new way of being together? These are some of the questions that guided a collaboratively reimagined suite of galleries. This Indigenous-led, consensus-based curatorial experiment is based on Dakota philosophies and ways of being. It includes thematic installations that center "place", honor the living land, explore the power of relationality and ends with a reflection, inviting visitors to join us in imagining the future we wish to have. Galleries 301-304. Free. For info, see: <https://new.artsmia.org/exhibition/reimagining-native-american-art>.

**Thru Oct 2025**

**Reframing Our Stories**

From a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians," came the idea for a powerful new exhibit. Inside the box were dozens of pictures of Native community members, organizations, activities, and events that are relevant today. As part of the Our Home: Native Minnesota exhibit, Reframing Our Stories showcases the strength and resilience of Native people and inspires audiences to learn about the past, present, and

future of these communities. Native community members get in free. Minnesota Historical Society, 345 W Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul. For info, see: <https://www.mnhs.org/historycenter/activities/museum/our-home/reframing-our-stories>.

**May 6**

**American Indian Day on the Hill**

Meet and Greet elected tribal leaders and legislators, honoring our elders, Bear Run drum group, networking, lunch provided by Powwow Grounds, acknowledgement of 100th anniversary of Indian Citizenship Act. Speakers include Lt. Gov Peggy Flanagan, Senator Mary Kunish, Jerry Dearly (Blessing and MC), and other speakers. 10 am to 1pm. Minnesota State Capitol, 109 Aurora Ave, St Paul. For info, contact: Michele. [Poitra@state.mn.us](mailto:Poitra@state.mn.us).

**May 8**

**Founders' Day Open House and Career Fair**

Career Fair at 10am, Open House starts at 11am, Program at 11:30 with lunch following program. There will be music, a raffle, community tables, and more. 10am-2pm. Rain or shine. American Indian OIC - Takoda,

1845 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: [aioic.org](http://aioic.org).

**May 9 – June 13**

**AL-TER-NA-TIVE: Frank Buffalo Hyde Exhibition**

The Native American Community Development Institute presents a solo exhibition featuring a collection of paintings and sculptures from artist Frank Buffalo Hyde (Onondaga/Niimiipuu (Nez Perce)). Vivid and pop-culture saturated, his work reflects on the commodification of Indian culture, and the assertive roles for Native American identity in the contemporary world. Opening reception: May 9th from 6pm to 8pm. Artist talk: May 31 from 5pm to 7pm. NACDI, 1414 East Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://nacdi.org>.

**May 9**

**Native American Adoptees**

Mental Health and Health Outcomes for Native American Adoptees webinar. Elder in Residence, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition with Sandy White Hawk (Sicangu Lakota). 12-1pm CST. Webinar – Registration: [https://mc-meet.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_uKkFQJZjTIS8B\\_R\\_CNa](https://mc-meet.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uKkFQJZjTIS8B_R_CNa)

mgQ.

**May 10**

**13th Annual Wanaiguni Hikurus Hajawi 5K Run/Walk**

Join us for the 5k run/walk 13th annual Wanaiguni Hikurus Hajawi event! This year's event will be held in person at Lake Phalen. Lace up your running shoes and get ready to hit the trails with us. Whether you're a seasoned runner or just looking for a fun way to get active, this event is perfect for all levels of fitness. 5 - 8pm. For info, see: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/13th-annual-wanaiguni-hikurus-hajawi-5k-runwalk-tickets-871030173697>.

**May 11**

**Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

Minneapolis Institute of Arts hosts in-person event featuring works by local teens. For the third year, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will be celebrating its partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and introducing the exhibit in its Community Commons Gallery. Students from the Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource (FAIR) School for the Arts, Highland Park Senior High School, Hopkins High School, Performing Institute of

Minnesota Arts High School (PiM), Perpich Arts High School, Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Arts (SPCPA), Simley High School, and South High School will attend to see the works they created on Mia's walls and meet the artists who facilitated their workshops. This year's exhibition includes approx. 30 works from 26 student artists. Opening reception on at 10:30am - 12pm. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Community Commons Gallery, First Floor, 2400 3rd Ave S, Minneapolis. For info, contact Leah Kondes, at 612-270-1563.

**May 11 - 12**

**White Earth Mothers Day Powwow**

MCs: Branden Bowstring and Wes Jourdain. ADs: Lucas Hisgun and Jimmy Uran Jr. Host drum: Littlebear. Co-host drum: Smokey Hill. Grand Entries: Saturday at 1 and 7pm, and Sunday at 1pm. Feast on Saturday at 5pm. Shooting Star Event Center, 777 Casino Rd, Mahanomen, MN. For info, contact Orville "Casper" Bower at 218-204-0578.

**May 13 – 17**

**Boarding School Healing Coalition**

The National Native American

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Boarding School Healing Coalition MINNESOTA VIRTUAL GATHERING. As part of the US Department of Interior's Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, NABS will be in Minneapolis, MN to gather stories from Indian boarding school survivors to create a permanent oral history collection that will be available to the public. Survivors will have the opportunity to share their lived experiences to help others understand the true history of US Indian boarding schools. On **May 7th** NABS will be hosting a Virtual Gathering at 12pm. For more info on either event, or to sign up to be interviewed, see: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/oral-history-project> or email: [OralHistoryProject@nabshc.org](mailto:OralHistoryProject@nabshc.org)

**May 15**  
**Owóžu Mayà Akàrjñ**  
**Medicine Garden**

Wakarj Tipi Awarjyarkapi will be hosting a day of learning at our medicine garden Owóžu Mayà Akàrjñ. We will have Carol Charging Thunder join us with some teachings about plant medicines and Fern Renville will lead us in a nettle weaving activity. If there is time at the end of the event, participants are welcome to help with some light weeding and mulching of the garden. We will have light refreshments and snacks!! 5:30-7:30pm. 749 Arkwright St, St Paul. This event is intended for the American Indian community. Email Jenna Grey Eagle at [jgreyeagle@wakantipi.org](mailto:jgreyeagle@wakantipi.org).

**May 16**  
**MIWRC Open House**

Indian Month Minnesota Indian Women's resource center Open House! Learn about the programs we are offering, meet staff, community gathering and celebrate Indian Month with MIWRC. Free. 11-3pm. Minnesota Indians Resource Center, 2300 15th Ave S, Minneapolis. For info, contact Graeme Parrish at 612-728-2000 or [gparrish@miwrc.org](mailto:gparrish@miwrc.org). For see: <https://www.miwrc.org>.

**May 16**  
**Building Capacity**  
**for Partnering**

Building Capacity for Partnering: How to engage Native Families with Tribal Practices Part 2. This training will introduce social workers, social work students, and attorneys to basic American Indian cultural practices to better serve American Indian families in child welfare. 8:45 am - 1 pm. MAIC, 1530 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. Register at: <https://building-capacity->

[part-ii.eventbrite.com](http://part-ii.eventbrite.com)

**May 17**  
**MEDA Gala: Dream Big, Scale Bigger**

The MEDA Gala is a celebration of BIPOC Entrepreneurs and their contributions to the community. Under the theme "Dream Big, Scale Bigger," the 2024 event will highlight MEDA's legacy of tackling economic disparities and historical disadvantages by providing services and opportunities for BIPOC entrepreneurs. The MEDA Gala is a unique space where industry leaders, entrepreneurs and change-makers can all come together to support, foster and celebrate BIPOC entrepreneurs. A dress-to-impress event, the evening will be emceed by Emmy award-winning journalist Shayla Reaves, an anchor and reporter for WCCO. Highlights will include live entertainment and a silent auction, with proceeds going toward services and programs that support BIPOC businesses. The VIP arrival begins at 5pm, and doors open at 5:30pm. 5:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. at the US Bank Stadium, 401 Chicago Ave, Minneapolis. Purchase tickets at [meda.net/gala2024](http://meda.net/gala2024).

**May 17 - 19**  
**Native Art Market & Showcase**

Please join us at The Native Art Market & Showcase during Art-A-Whirl. This year we will be located in and around the sculpture garden at Northrup King in Minneapolis. Over 10,000 people visit over this 3-day event. This is a celebration to showcase the resilience of Native art and artistic talent of our Native communities. Attendees will have the chance to experience live art demonstrations, captivating installations, engaging presentations, and mesmerizing entertainment. The Native Art Market & Showcase will also offer an array of Indigenous food, providing a delightful culinary experience for all visitors. Northrup King Building, Sculpture Garden, 1500 Jackson St NE, Minneapolis. For info see: <https://www.mnindianartists.org/native-art-market>.

**May 18**  
**Seedling Giveaway**

Seedling Giveaway: Four Sisters Food Sovereignty and EPIC Spring Welcoming Event. We will celebrate the upcoming growing season with food from Las Cuatro Milpas food truck, music, fun activities from several other community organizations, and seedlings to give away grown in partnership with Dream of Wild Health. We will

also hear from candidates for the East Phillips Improvement Coalition board as they kick off their voting process. Come enjoy being in community as we get our gardens started and welcome spring. 11 am: EPIC annual meeting. 12 pm: opening ceremony. 12:30-3 pm: plant giveaway, food and music. 11am-3pm. 2839 17th S Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://nacdi.org/events/seedling-giveaway-four-sisters-food-sovereignty-and-epic-spring-welcoming-event>.

**May 18**  
**White Earth Powwow**

The 1st Annual White Earth Urban Community Council Metro Powwow. Grand entrees: 1 & 6pm. Feast: 5pm. Payouts: 8pm. Traditional powwow. MAIC, 1500 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. For info, contact: Char Lee at 651-262-7602.


**May 30**  
**IHB Health Day**

Brain health refers to your thinking, understanding, processing, and memory abilities. It also can refer to the things you do to keep your brain healthy and active, like staying physically active and following a healthy diet. Held at the East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center, 2307 S 17th Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://www.indianhealthboard.com>.

**May 31 (deadline)**  
**Bush Prize: Minnesota**  
Minnesota celebrates organizations that have a culture of innovation and a history of building creative solutions for challenges in Minnesota communities. The Bush Prize award is flexible and can be used to build up reserves, test that next big idea or whatever else would best support the organization's ongoing good work. The award amount is up to 25% of an organization's most recent fiscal year expenses, with a maximum of \$500,000. For info, see: [https://spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/bush-prize-minnesota?utm\\_campaign](https://spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/bush-prize-minnesota?utm_campaign).

**May 31**  
**Columbia Heights Public Schools Powwow**  
The Columbia Heights Public Schools' 10th Annual Community traditional powwow honoring students. MC(s): Shawnee Hunt, CHHS Alum. AD: Norman Benson. Host Drums: Hoka Hey. Invited drum: Little Otter. Dinner at 5:30 (Indian tacos). Grand Entry at 6pm. Dave Larsen Memorial. Mens traditional special. Womens jingle special. Dancers in regalia paid day money. Registration opens at 5 and closes after grand entry. Dinner for the first 300 people will be free. CHHS Football Field, 1400 49th Ave NE, Columbia Heights. For info, call 763-528-4729.

**June 28 (deadline)**  
**Good Relatives Collaborative**  
The 2024 GRC Grant application is now open for Native-led organizations. The following are eligible for grant funding: Native-led, Native-serving organizations with operating budgets under \$500,000. Organizations must be serving Native communities in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota or one of the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. This grant application is for a 12-month term and is considered an unrestricted grant. For info, see: <https://www.goodrelativescollaborative.org/grants>.



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ALL MY RELATIONS ARTS PRESENTS


**AL·TER·NA·TIVE**  
**FRANK BUFFALO HYDE**



*AlterNative is a solo exhibition featuring a collection of paintings and sculptures from artist Frank Buffalo Hyde (Onondaga/Niimiipuu (Nez Perce)). Vivid and pop-culture saturated, his work reflects on the commodification of Indian culture, and the assertive roles for Native American identity in the contemporary world. Self-proclaimed as consciously, culturally non-transactional, Frank's work comments on cultural appropriation and societal disruption through his uncompromising satirical eye. A defiant take on the skewed perceptions of Native American art and culture tourism, Frank's allegorical work is geared towards Native people first and disarms through banter.*

Opening Reception: May 9, 6 - 8 pm  
Artist Talk: May 31, 5 - 7 pm  
On View: May 9 - July 13, 2024

Frank Buffalo Hyde, *SWIPE WHITE*, acrylic on canvas, 2023.



1414 E. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404 | [ALLMYRELATIONSARTS.ORG](http://ALLMYRELATIONSARTS.ORG)

Get your events listed!  
The community calendar is FREE.  
Email your events before the 25th of the month to: [thecirlenews@gmail.com](mailto:thecirlenews@gmail.com)



# I just got back from Atlanta

BY ARNE VAINIO, MD

(Editors note: written in 2014.)

I just got back from Atlanta, Georgia. As a board certified family practice physician I need to recertify for my boards this year. The exam covers all of medicine and no one knows for sure what will be on it. I am a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and they offer an intensive course to prepare for the exam.

The course was serious business and the lectures cover the high points of hypertension, strokes, bleeding disorders, endocrinology, musculoskeletal, hyperlipidemia, maternity care, pediatrics, newborn issues, acute coronary syndromes and everything else we see. Family practice covers the entire field of medicine and we refer out to specialists for specific diseases if they need procedures or a higher level of specialized care.

My flight left early in the morning and I was in Atlanta the day before the course began. I knew I wouldn't have time once lectures started so I took a train, then a bus to the Ebenezer Baptist Church where Martin Luther King, Jr. was the preacher. There is a historic center there run by the U.S. National Park Service with a monu-

ment and other things for tourists, but I did not come here to be a tourist. From the moment my hand touched the door handle, I wanted to stand where Martin Luther King, Jr. stood and I wanted to walk the streets he walked.

I opened the door and a woman behind a small counter invited me in. I climbed a short flight of stairs and stepped in to the church. Stained glass windows lined both sides and the light streamed in to the congregation area. I was alone and recorded gospel music and sermons by Dr. King played over the speakers. It didn't take much imagination to see him standing at the pulpit and I remembered the brutal images of the police turning fire hoses on black people and of a little black girl walking into a public school with U.S. Marshalls on both sides to protect her from being assaulted. I thought about four innocent girls dying in a church bombing in Birmingham in 1963. I thought about their families and their overwhelming grief and I couldn't stop myself from crying.

Five middle aged women came in together, but they sat far apart from each other. I didn't want them to see me crying, but I heard them weeping, too. We sat in the church, alone and together and none of us said anything.

I decided not to go back to the bus stop,

but to walk a mile or so through blighted neighborhoods to the train station. Certainly Dr. King would have walked these streets and alleys. Graffiti, broken bottles, a syringe and other signs of poverty were everywhere. I was clearly out of place here and as I walked several groups of people stopped talking and simply watched me walk past. I did not feel threatened, but I did not feel welcome, either.

A woman came up and asked me for money.

I grew up looking for pennies on the ground and a heads up penny was good luck if you gave it away. I was thinking about a friend of mine and I wanted to find one for her in this neighborhood and send it to her. I didn't find it.

The next morning the boards review sessions started right to the minute at 8:00 and after every two sessions there was a sixty second break to stand and stretch. After every four sessions there was a fifteen minute break, but this was also the question and answer period and I didn't want to miss any of it. Those breaks in reality were less than five minutes long. The lunch break was an hour, but with the question and answer period turned out to be about forty minutes and lunch had to be fast.

The sessions were very well organized and the doctors presenting the material covered it quickly. They were stopped if they went over thirty minutes and the next presenter was ready to start as soon as one stopped talking. I cannot believe how much information there is in four years of medical school and three years of residency and we were covering it all in three and a half days. By 5:30 I was exhausted and totally overwhelmed with the information presented.

I went online and found a soul food restaurant about a mile from my hotel and I walked there for dinner. On the way back it was dark and the neighborhood was run down. There were four men standing on a street corner and I crossed to the other side of the street so I wouldn't have to walk through them. An old man with no teeth stepped out of the bushes and asked me for money. He told me he had AIDS and was living in a homeless shelter. I walked past an abandoned church that had a chain link fence around it. There was a man smoking a cigarette on the steps and he asked me for money.

I was almost to my hotel and a man was kneeling on the sidewalk pulling a trumpet out of its case. I was well past him and was about to cross the street when he started to play.

Jazz? Blues?

I don't know, but it was beautiful and haunting and sad and there was no way I could not go back to him. We looked into each other's eyes and he played just for me. His trumpet was dented and tarnished and the green velvet in the case was worn through in places. The notes went past me and into the darkness behind me and I



could hear them echo off the buildings down the street. He came to a slow passage and he closed his eyes as he played. I don't know if the song was his or if it was passed down to him, but I could hear strains of Africa in his music and he played from generations of lost and taken dreams. I was close enough to hear the clicking of his fingers on the keys. One of them seemed to stick a little, but he was used to it and played through.

The last notes were fading into the night when he opened his eyes. They were glistening and moist and he nodded at me. I bent down and put money in the trumpet case. I told him he had a gift and that his music was beautiful. We shook hands and his was dry and callused when I held it.

As I turned around I saw something on the sidewalk. I bent down and picked up a heads up penny. It was only a few years old but had definitely seen better days. I put it in my pocket and started walking. The trumpet started to play as I crossed the street and the echoes followed me for a couple of blocks, then the sounds of the city swallowed them.

The review course went fast and each day was as intense as the one before. I have a 752 page syllabus of the slides presented and each page has six slides. I have notes scribbled on every single one of them.

This trip was a pilgrimage. The review course was everything I hoped for and is only a part of the studying I need to do. To stand where one of the greatest men in my lifetime stood and to walk the streets he walked will stay with me forever.

I gave money to everyone who asked. The opportunity to give money to a homeless man with a trumpet was an education in itself.

He gave me much, much more than I gave him.

*Arne Vainio, M.D. is an enrolled member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and is a family practice physician on the Fond du Lac reservation in Cloquet, Minnesota. He can be contacted at [avainio@hotmail.com](mailto:avainio@hotmail.com)*



## SECTION 8 OPENING

Mental Health Resources, Inc. will be opening our Section 8 waiting list and accepting pre-applications

starting at 9:00AM on May 21, 2024, and continuing until 4:00PM on May 23, 2024. In order to qualify for assistance, the family's head of household or spouse must qualify as disabled and must earn at or less than \$43,500 (single) - \$62,100 (family of four). In addition, this waiting list will have preferences. Those applicants who qualify for these preferences will be placed higher on the waiting list. The pre-application will state these preferences. MHR will hold a computer-generated lottery to randomly choose 1000 qualified pre-applications to be placed on the waiting list. Pre-applications will ONLY be accepted online. If you are unable to complete an online application based on your disabling condition and would like to submit a reasonable accommodation request to MHR in order to assist you in completing an online application, please call 651-659-2942.

To apply, go to [www.waitlistcheck.com/MN2854](http://www.waitlistcheck.com/MN2854) from 9AM 05/21/24 until 4PM 05/23/24.

After you have successfully applied, you will receive a receipt with a confirmation number and instructions for checking your status online. Online status will be available after 06/14/2024.





body is in decline and it really sucks. I think of my Gramma Rose who said to me, “don’t ever get old my Girl” and now I understand what she meant by that.

Here it is my birthday month (May 26). Yes, I am a Gemini and probably have everything coming to me that I deserve, but why all at once? It’s not like I’ve ever had it easy; being born a brown girl (hence the title of my column) but I’m really being tested. I have diabetes, cataracts, a broken tooth (that must come out surgically), lactose intolerance, and have had 13+ surgeries. Plus I also have depression, anxiety and PTSD.

Too much information? My bad. I reiterate that I am grateful for having so much fun when I could, when physical activities did not cause me pain. I know, I know! Wah, wah, wah, poor old Ricey, ennit? I pray to Creator every day and know I am blessed and show my gratitude.

For some reason this came to me for those of you who are in jail, prison or in the prison of your own mind - that there will be a day when you will sort it all out and be well. Get you a therapist, to start. Kudos and a deep appreciation for those who are all about helping those of us who seek it. I send

yooz hugs.

Chii miigwech (a big Thank You in Ojibwe) for reading this if you got this far. I usually like to keep my miseries in check but I couldn't help but dump on yooz who, like myself, experience the mockeries and ironies of our lives. There are times I wonder, “did that really happen?” and sadly or badly or hilarious, it did.

Meanwhile, life goes on around me in my wigwam. Just the other night the Fuzz beamed a light into my home and I had to speculate, “what did I do now”? It dawned on me that I rarely go outside so it was cool and I knew I did not commit any crimes except for being so sweet and kind. Ayyyyy!!!! Had yooz going there for a minute, hah?

Also, there were paranormal incidents going on in my home and outside. I asked my son to use salt and asema (tobacco) around the perimeter of my house and yard, and the presences have left me be.

I dunno if I ever shared the story of Sasquatch being all nose? I had shoulder surgery and was sleeping opposite of the head board when I smelled the most foul, rancid stench ever. I was also using a wheelchair and initially thought that one of my Rez doggos had yakked up. With my head under the quilt to

block out the nasty odor I decided to check it out in the morning. Nothing!!! No piles of puke or poop or anything like it. Of course I was puzzled but only one thing came to mind. It must have been Sasquatch coming to check on me.

I remember articles and stories of their very vile odor so I concluded that must be the reason. No, I wasn't frightened because they are spiritual beings and as far as I understand, mean humanity no harm. It is we who are their homelands. Look it up.

I really don't like to tease but this is for my niece Stephanie Ulrich. Many years ago there was about a four-foot diameter in my backyard, which is now grown over. On a bright June day I woke with the thought, “there is something out there for me”. I did not go to look right away but when I did I remembered that my services were no longer needed, meaning the ‘Aliens’ had no more use for me. I was all used up for their research.

I asked them to leave me a small token so I knew what I have experienced my entire life was real. They complied and I have a witness. No pictures though not thinking of it at the time. Aliens as we name them have a sense of humor. Who knew?

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**Seedling Giveaway**  
**Four Sisters Spring Welcoming Event**

**May 18th, 11-3 pm**  
at the **Four Sisters Urban Farm**  
2839 17th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN

Join us for our second annual spring welcoming and seedling giveaway event at the Four Sisters Urban Farm. Connect with neighbors, engage in local community, vote for EPIC board members and get seedlings to start your garden!

**11 am: EPIC annual meeting**  
**12 pm: opening ceremony**  
**12:30-3 pm: plant giveaway, food and music**

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