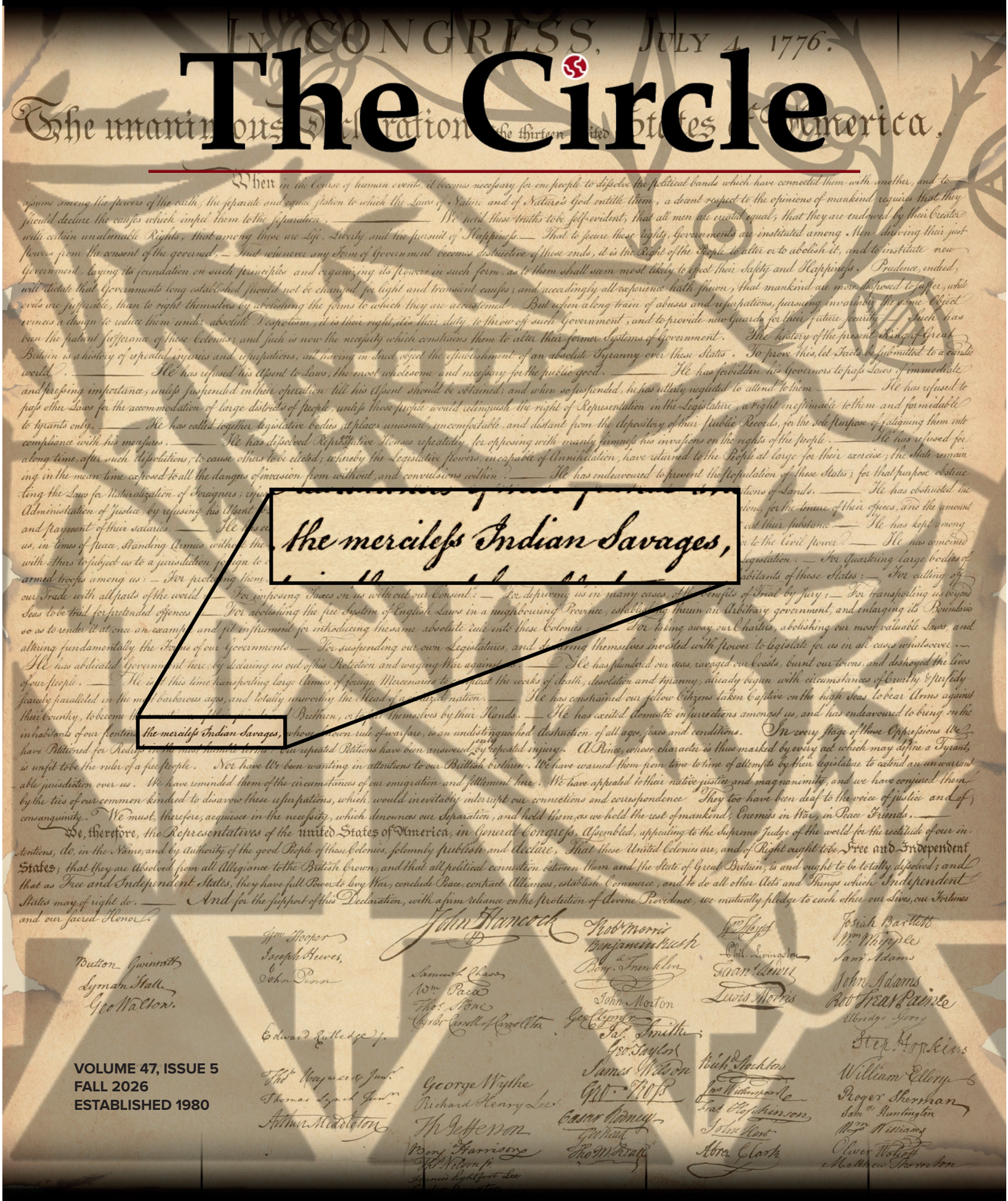
The Circle



VOLUME 47, ISSUE 5
FALL 2026
ESTABLISHED 1980


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NATIVE AMERICAN NEWS AND ARTS

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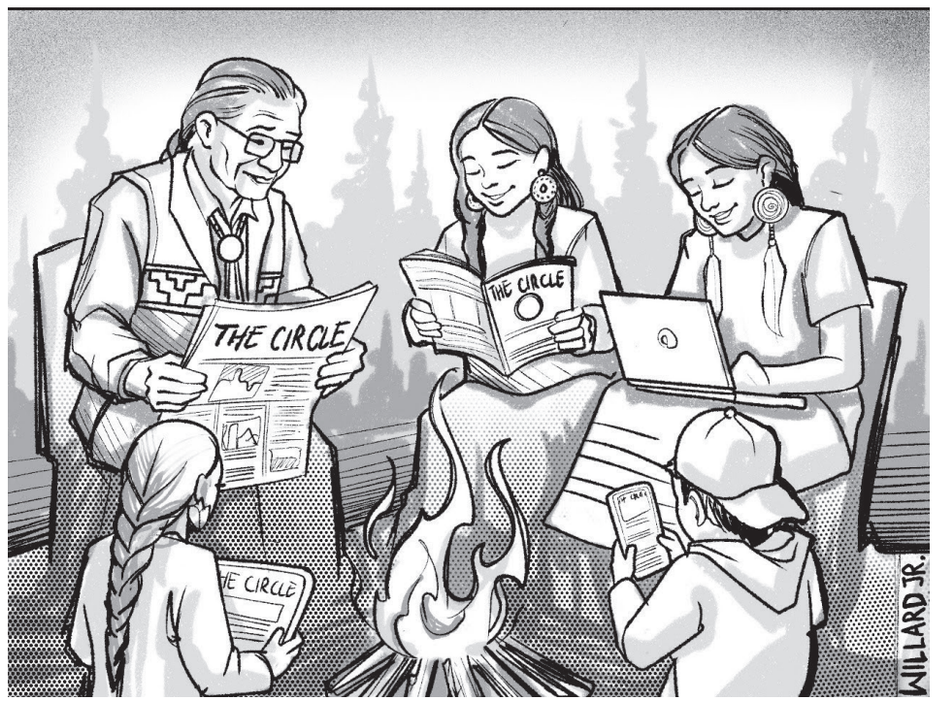
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Scan the QR code or visit thecirclenews.org to access The Circle's website and social media. Thanks for supporting local Native news!



THE CIRCLE UPDATES

Letter from the Editor

BY ROBERT PILOT
Editor

It's election season, and I want to remind everyone to VOTE. Our voices matter, and one way we can exercise our rights and ensure that Indian Country is represented in our country's politics is by showing up to vote.

Check www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/ for resources on how to register and voting locations on Nov. 3.

This issue, I also want to mention a fire that damaged the building that houses The Circle's office.

Thankfully, with help from dedicated community members, we recovered our newspaper archives dating back to the 1980s. While the newspapers appear to have survived without significant damage, the fire has highlighted the importance of protecting and preserving these irreplaceable historical records.

These archives are more than just old newspapers. They hold decades of Native community history, cultural knowledge, stories, photographs, and the voices of generations of Native people. This history deserves protection and should be passed down to future generations.

We are asking our community, readers, supporters, and allies to help The Circle recover from the fire and safeguard this important collection.

Donations help support fire recovery, archive preservation, and continuing Native journalism.

For decades, The Circle has helped document our communities' stories. Now, we're asking for your help to preserve those stories for generations to come.



Every contribution, no matter the amount, makes a difference. Visit www.thecirclenews.org to donate.

Pinagigi — thank you for supporting The Circle and the preservation of Native history!

AMERICAN INDIAN OIC

#NativeRISE
Tomorrow Today!
2026

American Indian OIC Annual Gala

Friday, November 13, 2026
5:30 PM – 10:00 PM
Nicollet Island Pavilion

The countdown is on!

Join us for **#NativeRise: *Tomorrow Today!*** and be part of a special experience.

MINNEAPOLIS NEWS

New clinics open in South Mpls

BY JACOB CROONENBERGHS
For The Circle



Photo courtesy of the Indian Health Board

Indian Health Board's new Medical and Dental Clinic opened on Sept. 22, 2026, on East Franklin Avenue, in the American Indian Cultural Corridor.

Franklin Avenue is experiencing a resurgence of new buildings created by and for the Native American community along the historic Franklin Corridor. On September 22, Indian Health Board (IHB) opened its doors to patients at its brand-new Medical and Dental Clinics at 2027 East Franklin Avenue.

Nearly 10 years in the making, IHB's new Medical and Dental Clinic represents a significant investment in the health and well-being of the Native American community. The project came together through years of collaboration and support from leaders at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as community partners and supporters who have helped bring this vision to life.

Dr. Patrick Rock, an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and CEO of IHB, has led these efforts. Dr. Rock has worked at IHB for over 30 years, starting as a physician, and still sees patients today in addition to his responsibilities as CEO.

Dr. Rock was recently awarded the 2026 Indian Health Service (IHS) Bemidji Area Leadership Award.

"This is not necessarily my award," he says. "[It] really, I think, reflects the organization. So that was the way that I accepted the award. I don't do things in a vacuum. It requires a lot of people working together and looking for a desired outcome."

The history of the Indian Health Board is closely linked to the Urban Indian population in the Phillips Neighborhood. "Indian Health Board was originally founded over 50 years ago, in response to the healthcare needs of the Urban Indian population here in the Minneapolis St. Paul metropolitan area," says Dr. Rock.

"It was the very first Urban Indian healthcare organization in the United States. It was founded in response to the relocation efforts of the US government back, starting in the 1950's, when the federal government tried to entice Natives from their reservations and into urban centers for what several historians consider assimilation efforts."

"Really one of the big reasons and drivers in moving us to a new location on Franklin Avenue is that historically access to our facilities has been limited in terms of transportation. Changes in bus routes have essentially made the old 1315 location an island in a residential area. With the new bus routes and nearby access to the light rail system, there is now a wealth of access points, and we are now closer to our core community, which resides in the Little Earth Housing Complex. These factors helped to dictate our decision to move and develop our campus here on Franklin Ave.," Dr. Rock explains.

One of the new building's defining features is the Jingle Dress design incorporated into the central stairwell. "Back in 1918 during the Great Pandemic [caused by] the Spanish Influenza, the story goes is that up in Northern Minnesota, there was a dance that was developed - a healing dance. And that dance was in response to the impact the Influenza virus had on a particular Indigenous community up in Northern Minnesota," says Dr. Rock.

"So that Jingle Dress translated in our minds to really the services we provide in Minneapolis, South Minneapolis, and really the whole metro area that we served during our COVID pandemic response. It really exemplifies the healing concepts of our organization, the wellness concepts of our organization, the traditional concepts of our organization. These are really a central part of our motivations here at IHB."

Asked about IHB's future, Dr. Rock offers some details. "Really this is a legacy concept, for example if you've ever heard about the 7th generation. Our forefathers left us with an organization, [which] is IHB... [our future] is really to continue the work into the next 50 years of IHB. Really, this grounding of the community within South Minneapolis... is an important part of who we are and what we do at IHB. We want to make sure that the Federal government does not forget about its treaty obligations no matter where you live and including into the future."

MINNEAPOLIS NEWS

Fire on Franklin Ave. damages structures, including Minnesota Chippewa Tribe office

BY MIISKOGIHMIIWAN POUPART-CHAPMAN
For The Circle

The Oct. 11 fire began at Dollar Plus, a Somali-owned store at 1300 E. Franklin Ave., and spread to the connected Minnesota Chippewa Tribe building that houses urban tribal offices. The store and offices occupy connected buildings; the fire did not begin in the urban offices. The cause remained undetermined at the time of publication.

Store owner Abdullahi Omar and his brother escaped safely, as did five people gathered for sewing and beading at the Bois Forte Urban Office. The store was destroyed. Omar told MPR News his insurance had lapsed as rising premiums and declining sales strained his business.

The neighboring tribal building houses the Bois Forte and Fond du Lac urban offices, which provide food, clothing, and other essentials to tribal members and neighborhood residents. Water and smoke damage have disrupted services.

In a Facebook update, Rolanda Laroque said administrators entered the building Monday afternoon and found severe water and smoke damage. Fire reached only a small portion of the tribal building and was quickly extinguished.

Laroque reported that the room holding historical Dakota and Ojibwe language records was the only room on her organization's side left undamaged. Staff are working with community partners to relocate archives and classroom materials.

Administrative offices remain closed, with a temporary location hoped for by the end of the week.

MPR News also reported that Wicoie Nandagikendan's curriculum materials and archives escaped fire and water damage. The Circle's editor, Robert Pilot, confirmed its archives were undamaged.

Residents should watch for reopening notices from each office.



Photo by Robert Pilot

The Dollar Plus store was severely damaged in a fire. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe building next door also sustained damage.

MINNEAPOLIS NEWS

Community gathers after fire

BY VICTORIA FOX
For The Circle

MINNEAPOLIS — After the devastating fire at the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) building on Franklin Avenue, local Native organizations, staff, and volunteers came together on Friday, October 16, for an Intertribal Community Feast, turning a difficult week into an opportunity for generosity, connection, and community support.

The fire, which broke out Sunday, October 11, affected several Native organizations and tribal offices housed in the building, including the Fond du Lac and Bois Forte urban offices, The Circle, and Wicoie Nandagikendan, an early childhood Indigenous language immersion program that provides Dakota and Ojibwe language education.

As organizations assessed damage, recovered belongings, and determined next steps, another concern emerged: what to do with the traditionally processed foods in the building's freezers.

Wicoie Nandagikendan also leads Our Sacred Foods Project, a community food sovereignty initiative focused on preserving traditional Indigenous foods and cooking practices. The organization planned the Intertribal Community Feast so they could share the food from the building's freezers with the community rather than letting it go to waste.

The event's message was: "No one turned away, nothing goes to waste." The menu featured traditional foods, including bison, venison, lamb, turkey, walleye, and an assortment of side dishes.

The Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) provided space in its parking lot for the gathering. Bob Rice, owner of Pow Wow Grounds and the Frybread Factory food truck, helped prepare meals and generously let staff and volunteers use his food truck to cook more food.

Organizers estimated that several hundred people were served, including unhoused individuals in the surrounding area. Attendees were encouraged to bring containers to take home extra food, helping ensure as much as possible was shared rather than discarded.

What began as an effort to prevent traditional foods from going to waste became a demonstration of community resilience, generosity, and the importance of looking out for one another during difficult times.

OPINION

Take heart

BY JOE HOBOT, PH.D
For The Circle

Our society faces unprecedented challenges as the norms of the dominant culture have begun crumbling beneath our feet. What were once considered articles of faith - our democratic institutions, the rule of law, seemingly endless economic growth - have all, in one way or another, been stretched to their breaking points by recent political upheaval. Nothing seems assured anymore, and as a result, many in the United States now look to the future with a growing sense of foreboding...

Just as our elders have passed down their knowledge from one generation to the next since time immemorial, it is now incumbent upon our generation to actively share our wisdom with others so we can collectively transcend these trying times. This is even more important when it comes to sharing what we know with our youth, because they are the ones who will be inheriting all of this in the years to come. This may seem like a tricky proposition for many, as they may feel they have yet to gain enough meaningful knowledge to compare with the wisdom passed down to us by our own elders and wisdom-keepers.

Take heart! We already have all that we need. Our lived experiences, complete with all of the wins and losses, the highs and lows, the pain and glory, are all that is required. Our lives, as we have experienced them up to this point, can offer invaluable lessons when shared with those around us. No two people have walked the same path, which means any two people have something to learn from one another. In this respect, we don't need to be "experts" per se; we just need to be good relatives to one another. We need generosity of spirit and the courage to share transparently with those who could benefit. Through such acts of sharing, a real transfer of knowledge occurs as other people can learn from what we have personally lived through. Perhaps they will repeat our successes, avoid our mistakes, or better understand the broader context of how their lives fit into the current dominant culture. By sharing what we know with each other, we greatly increase the odds that our wider community might benefit from this knowledge and traverse these current troubles safely.

In addition to courage and generosity, it is important to include one of the more

See Page 11, HOBOT

ART

New art installation is response to ‘America’s 250th celebration’

BY ALEXANDRA BUFFALOHEAD
For The Circle



Photos by Alexandra Buffalohead

From left to right: Alejandra Peña Gutiérrez, Natchez Beaulieu, Marlena Myles, Missy Whiteman, and Kendra Greendeer.

On Saturday, September 26, artists, community members, and arts supporters gathered at the Weisman Art Museum (WAM) to celebrate the opening of the exhibition “‘Merciless’: Indigenous Lands Since 1776.” The event featured artist talks, an artisan market, workshops, and performances.

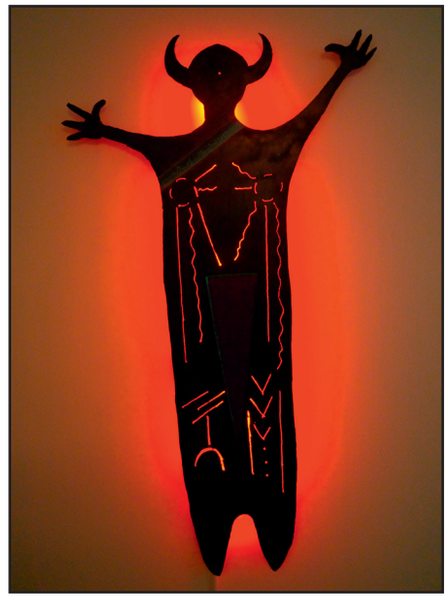
The exhibition features outdoor and indoor interactive installations by artists Natchez Beaulieu (White Earth Nation), Marlena Myles (Spirit Lake Dakota, Mohegan, and Muscogee), and Missy Whiteman (Northern Arapaho and Kickapoo). It was organized by Dr. Kendra Greendeer (Ho-Chunk Nation and descendant of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe), the Ihlenfeld Curator of Collaborative and Community Exhibitions at the Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis.

The name of the exhibition is a response to the United States’ 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, which excluded Indigenous peoples’ liberties, and led to policies of our forced removal. These three artists show the strength, power, and beauty of their cultures, histories, and futures beyond the last 250 years, with an emphasis on place in Minneapolis, also known as Bde Óta Othúŋwe.

At the entrance on East River Road facing the Mississippi, you can see the two outdoor installations, “Ancestral Currents: From Bdóte to the Stars” by Marlena Myles and “Ojichaagobiishin (Reflections in Water)” by Natchez Beaulieu. The space and seating invite people to reflect. The artists depict symbols and stories from Dakota and Anishinaabe star teachings to inspire and guide future generations and students at the University of Minnesota. Next to “Ancestral Currents: From Bdóte to the Stars,” interpretive signs include QR codes that link to augmented reality created by Marlena Myles, which activates the space, connecting the land and waterscape with symbols and images of Dakota storytelling.

Inside the galleries, visitors can immerse themselves in Missy Whiteman’s world of “Starseeds: Big Lodge People Beesowuunenno.” Whiteman recreated a lodge with video projection mapping and a soundscape of images and graphics honoring her Arapaho ancestors. The installation features two of her father’s iron and neon-lit figures. When a viewer gets close enough, they trigger a sensor, and one can hear recordings of Ernest speaking about his work. It is a very moving collaboration between a daughter and her father, who inspired her work and has passed on.

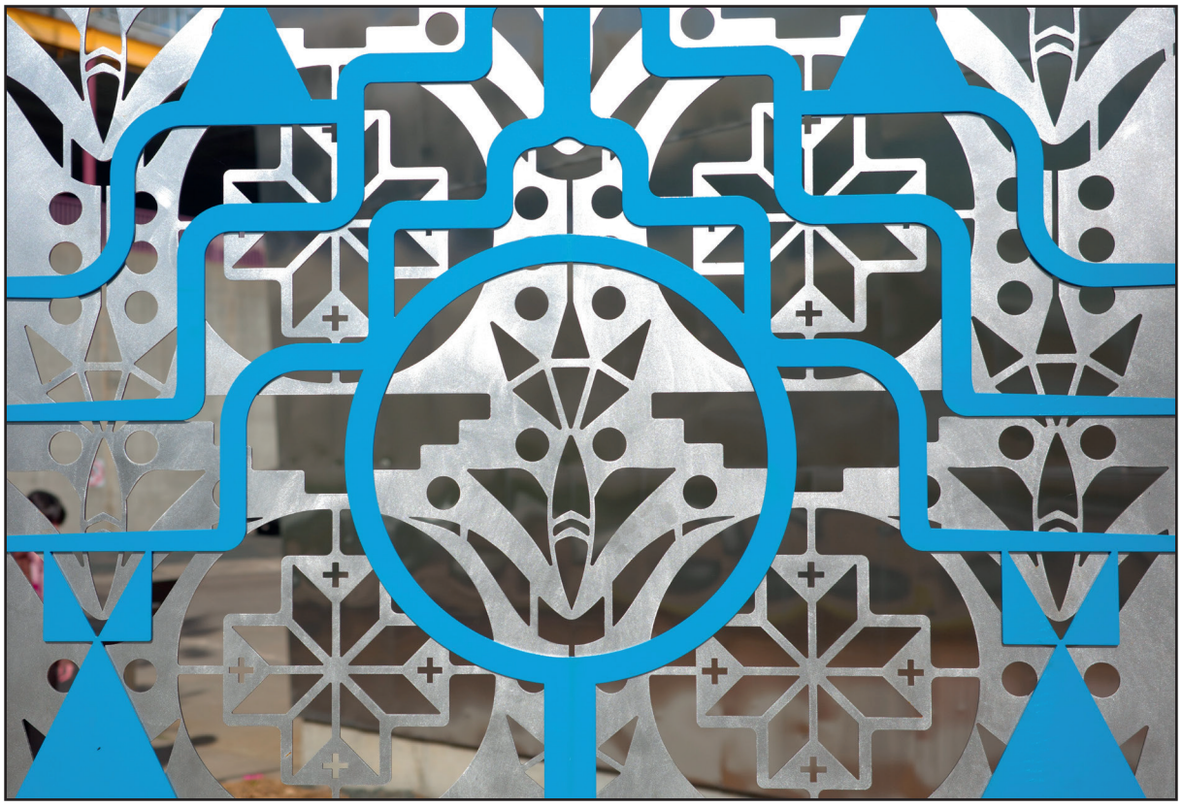
Together, the exhibition educates and inspires audiences by sharing the artists’ histories and connecting the land, waters, plants, stars, and Indigenous futures. This exhibit shows that our Indigenous relatives and future generations will continue to be here, to create, to inspire, and to remember.



Spirit Pictograph: A Bountiful Hunt, 1989, iron, neon, and acrylic.

See “‘Merciless’: Indigenous Lands Since 1776” in person. It is on view until May 16, 2027, and is free and open to the public.

Learn more: https://wam.umn.edu/merciless-indigenous-lands-1776



Photos by Alexandra Buffalohead

Top: Ancestral Currents: From Bdóte to the Stars, 2026, augmented reality; layered stainless steel, powder-coated mild steel, and weathering steel by Marlena Myles.

Bottom photos: Ancestral Currents: From Bdóte to the Stars, 2026, augmented reality; layered stainless steel, powder-coated mild steel, and weathering steel by Marlena Myles.





CULTURE

More than a game - bringing the Ojibwe Moccasin Game to the next gen

BY TONY DREWS
For The Circle



Photo provided by Tony Drews
The traditional Ojibwe Moccasin Game is a game of chance, strategy, and sleight of hand.

For generations, games have brought people together, created laughter and competition, strengthened relationships, and provided opportunities to share language, stories, teachings, and cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

The traditional Ojibwe Moccasin Game is one of those games. It has been played across many Native communities. This game of chance, strategy, and sleight of hand has connected families for generations. Today, it's helping preserve culture and language.

At Nashke Native Games, our mission is to increase awareness and empower the learning of Ojibwe language and culture through gameplay. We want Native and non-Native people alike to learn about Native American culture from Native people and through resources created from a Native perspective.

One way we are working toward that mission is by creating contemporary adaptations of traditional games, including our version of the Ojibwe Makizinataagewin, or Moccasin Game.

Historically used to bring communities together at large social gatherings and even to resolve disputes, this traditional game remains a vital pillar of Anishinaabe cultural heritage. To play, one team uses rhythm, song, and clever techniques to hide a small token beneath one of four "moccasins," challenging their opponents to guess its location using long striking sticks.

In the spirit of doing things in a good way, we work alongside Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members, listening to their guidance as we develop these adaptations. While making the games accessible for contemporary classrooms, families, and communities, it is important to remain respectful of their origins.

Nashke's version of the Moccasin Game isn't about replacing the traditional game or suggesting one "correct" way to play. This game belongs to generations of Native people who have carried traditions forward in their own ways. We see our reimagined adaptations as an accessible invitation for everyone to reconnect with something familiar or discover something new.

We want teachers to bring the game into classrooms, Native families to reconnect with traditional games, and non-Native students to experience Native culture as something living and present, not just a chapter in a history book. We want the joy of playing games to spark curiosity.

When someone asks, "Where did the Moccasin Game come from?" "What does this word mean?" or "How was this traditionally played?", the game opens a door to something much larger.

That is why we often say our games are catalysts for something bigger. The real learning happens in the conversations around them.

We have watched students use Ojibwe words while playing, Elders share memories and stories, educators discover new ways to bring Native content into classrooms, and families sit together, laughing, competing, and learning from one another.

We're excited that the newly redesigned second edition of our Moccasin Game will be available just in time for the holidays! Visit the link below to learn more and sign up to be notified when it's available for purchase.

www.nashke.com/products/p/makizinataagewin-moccasin-game

"Games That Save Our Ways."

Tony Drews is the founder and CEO of Nashke Native Games.

EVENTS

KOJB "The Eagle" Brings The Voice of Leech Lake to the Minnesota State Fair

BY LORI MARTIN-KINGBIRD
For The Circle

MINNEAPOLIS — The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's KOJB "The Eagle" Radio Station brought Leech Lake voices, music, and community programming to the Minnesota State Fair on September 4, broadcasting live from the Education Building as part of the State Fair's 2026 programming.

With 155,204 people attending the fair that day, KOJB had the opportunity to bring the voice of Leech Lake to a large audience in the Twin Cities while continuing to broadcast live for listeners back home.

KOJB General Manager Chris Bedeau, along with the station's sound engineer, Autumn Haeg, led the day's live broadcast. Programming began with The Rez Morning Show with Marie Rock, followed by performances and interviews featuring the Starboy Singers Drum Group and Ojibwe Hymn Singers.

Throughout the day, the station featured an Indigenous music countdown, interviews with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe guests, the Minneapolis AIM Director Lisa Bellanger, a Powwow Showcase, and additional programming highlighting Native people, music, culture, and community.

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Secretary-Treasurer Cindy Jackson-Kingbird was also among those in attendance, joining others who came out to support the station and its presence at the state fair.

For years, the Minnesota State Fair has provided an opportunity for organizations and communities to share their work with thousands of visitors. KOJB's presence created a space for Native representation while bringing the voice of Leech Lake into a setting that reaches far beyond Leech Lake.

Bedeau's team recognized an opportunity to expand the station's reach and took the initiative to bring KOJB into the Twin Cities metro area while continuing to broadcast back to listeners across northern Minnesota. The result was a live connection between communities that can sometimes feel separated by distance.

The broadcast also highlighted the role that community media can play in strengthening those connections. Through radio, Band members were able to hear familiar voices, music, and programming while listeners outside of Leech Lake were introduced to the people, culture, and perspectives of the community.

KOJB's State Fair broadcast offered a glimpse at what is possible when communication, technology, and community come together. As the station continues to look for opportunities to expand its reach, live broadcasts such as this one can help create new pathways for representation, connection, and community engagement.

HOBOT

From Page 7

precious values – patience. We must remember that people need time to process and reflect on new information. This also means we need to prepare ourselves for the possibility that, after we have shared what we know, they might still make the same mistakes or use what they have learned in a manner different from how we would choose to use it ourselves. In essence, we must allow them space and time to move forward on their own terms. We must remember to offer a measured, gentle kindness once we have shared our wisdom so that it can be incorporated in the healthiest and most long-lasting of fashions.

In this respect, we all become teachers in our own right, rather than the more dictatorial "preachers" who bloviate and pontificate about what others should be doing. These folks are less interested in achieving understanding or the transfer of knowledge than in molding others into their own likeness. Preachers typically never offer opportunities for conversation or, more importantly, the time and space needed by an individual to process their newly gained knowledge and apply it in their own way.

We are now living in an age where teaching each other will offer genuine guidance by sharing our hard-earned wisdom. It will undoubtedly broaden everyone's personal knowledge, and in the ideal, equip us all with strategies that will empower us to navigate the seismic changes that are rocking the dominant culture here in 2026.

As Indigenous peoples, we often proudly proclaim that our Native wisdom has existed since time immemorial. This, in fact, is true because we acknowledge that we are teachers to one another, rather than preachers.

Remember: you do possess your own wisdom. Share it with those in need, with a generous spirit and the courage to be as honest with yourself as possible. Most of all, share your lived experiences with the patience of the elders, watching as our relatives incorporate this new knowledge in ways that work best for them. As we continue to do this, our communities will continue to survive through the years, just as we always have, irrespective of what is happening within the dominant culture. Take heart! We already have all that we need.



Photo by Shirley Sneve, ICT

Kate Beane, left, and Carly Bad Hear Bull share a laugh recently. The identical twins dropped out of school at age 15 but each went on to get advanced degrees and assume leadership roles in their communities.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

They dropped out - but later led

BY SHIRLEY SNEVE
Indian Country Today

MINNEAPOLIS – How do high school dropouts get advanced degrees and become leaders in their community?

Turns out one of the keys might be language. Indigenous language.

Kate Beane and Carly Bad Heart Bull are identical twins and citizens of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and Muscogee Creek.

They dropped out of school in El Cerito, California, at age 15 but each went on to get advanced degrees and move back to – and take leadership roles in – their ancestral community in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on unceded Dakota land.

"For both of us, reconnecting to our Dakota language and really understanding, not just the root words or vocabulary, but the meaning and how the language is so closely tied to the land. All of that was incredibly important for us to feel centered and to understand also our place in Minnesota," Beane said. "Because as people who come from a community that was removed from the state, for us to come back home and to understand this place at that deeper level helped us to understand ourselves."

In 2018, the sisters led an effort to change Lake Calhoun to its traditional Dakota name, Bde Maka Ska. Named for John C. Calhoun, who was no friend to Dakota people and a pro-slavery politician. Bde Maka Ska is the largest lake in Minneapolis. It is surrounded by city parkland and a favorite for year-round recreational activities.

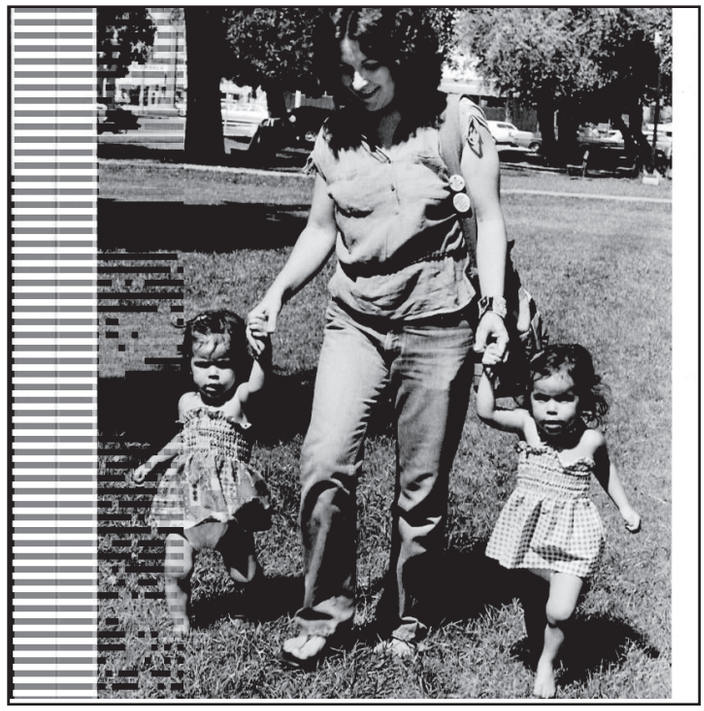
In their day jobs, Beane is the executive director of the Minnesota Museum of American Art. She holds a Ph.D. in America Studies from the University of Minnesota. She was also the Charles A. Eastman Predoctoral Fellow at Dartmouth College.

Bad Heart Bull is the executive director of Native Ways Federation. She holds a Juris Doctorate degree cum laude from the University of Minnesota Law School, a Bachelor of Arts degree summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota, and an Associate of Arts degree from Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

I got the chance to ask them about their journey from dropouts to leadership in March during the Indian Land Tenure Foundation conference at Mystic Lake Casino in Pryor Lake, Minnesota – a property of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

Beane is the oldest – by three minutes. Her Indian name is Ahdipiwiŋ, which translates to English as "Brings Them Home Woman." Bad Heart Bull's Dakota name is Wakan'yan Mani Win, "Woman who Walks Toward the Future."





Courtesy photos

Left: Twins Kate Beane, left, and Carly Bad Heart Bull made the cover of City Pages magazine in Minneapolis for their successful efforts to change the name of a major lake in the city to remove the name of a Civil War era politician who championed slavery.

Right: The twins toddle along with their mother Beck Barnette Beane in this undated family photo.

The family lived in El Cerrito, California, when the twins were growing up.

"We went to a large high school where the history of our people was not being taught. We didn't see the use of going, and, you know, when I look back now, I wish that wasn't the case," Bad Heart Bull said. "I used to blame myself for it. It wasn't my fault. It's the system."

Beane said the school let them skip the eighth grade.

"They gave us a social promotion, because they said we were more mature than other students. We stopped going to school and they wanted us to go back," Bad Heart Bull said. "What they found was it wasn't an issue with the work. We could do the work. We just didn't want to."

The twins dropped out when they were 15 years old. Because a student needed to be 16 to take the GED (general education development) test, they took the California High School Proficiency Exam.

"When we took that test, it was a legal way to opt out of school so that our parents wouldn't get in trouble," Beane said.

"No teachers encouraged us to stay. And that's something that I've thought about a lot as a parent now. As a mother of three little girls, two of whom do not like school, and who struggle in school, I constantly tell them what really is important for them to understand is not the grades that they bring home, it's that they're good people."

Charles Eastman, the storied medical doctor and writer is a great uncle, or grandfather in the Indian Way. For generations, education for the Flandreau Santee Dakota family has been important.

But the twins credit their parents with their ability to learn beyond the classroom and the sisters agree that, while education is important, it's the connections to people and organizations that have really shaped their careers. Understanding "the system" has been instrumental in being change makers.

Parents Syd Bean and Beck Barnette Beane made careers out of activism and working to create better economic and cultural opportunities for Native peoples.

"We grew up going to nonprofit board meetings, sitting under the table with those yellow notebooks and pens and playing office," Bad Heart Bull said. "We played nonprofit, because that's what our parents were doing."

Beane added: "We were raised to read. We were avid readers growing up. For us, our frustrations were with the educational system. We came from a family of teachers and organizers who told us, if we don't like the system, change it. And when we were younger, that was something we had no interest in. We were like, why are we going to fix that problem? It was really frustrating. But then as we grew older and I think for me, it was years of waitressing, it was years of working in a factory. It was like doing all these jobs, across the country, struggling and working for other people. We were frustrated with the educational system coming from a family where our grandparents were in boarding schools. They didn't trust that system. And I think at a certain point, I realized I needed to figure out a way to create a better opportunity for my kids. And so for me, it was thinking about the next generation."

MINNEAPOLIS NEWS

New program helps Native youth run

BY NATALIE RADEMACHER
For The Circle

A new pilot program is making running more accessible for Native youth. More than 40 kids participated in the IndigeFit Kids Native Youth Run Program this summer, and they finished the season by running at the Twin Cities Marathon Weekend, the largest race in Minnesota.

On Saturday, Oct. 3, the youth ran with thousands of others in the 5K and 10K (6.2 and 3.1 mile) races. They were joined by family, friends, and coaches who helped run with and cheer them to the finish line. This program helps show our youth that running can be a helpful tool for staying healthy, a way to be in community, and an outlet for navigating life's stressors.

Youth participated in a nine-week summer running program created through a partnership between the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community's (SMSC) IndigeFit Kids campaign and Twin Cities In Motion. Youth were provided running shoes, team gear, transportation, and supportive coaches who created a safe space rooted in Native community and culture.

The pilot program took place in Saint Paul, Minneapolis, and Leech Lake. Native running coaches led participants through training while teaching them about running techniques, nutrition, injury prevention, and how running can be a way to connect with one another, the land, and our culture.

Marathon Weekend gave participants the chance to put their summer of training into action and connect with the greater running community.

That morning, youth cheered on elite runner Hosava Kretzmann (Hopi/Diné) as he competed in the USATF 10K Championship. Kretzmann, a 2028 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier, helped the youth stretch and warm up before their own races.

On race day and throughout the entire program, the youth have had coach, community, and family support. Relatives attended practices and walked while the kids ran. On race day, family and members of local run clubs Native Women Run and Four Winds Native Run Club ran with the youth and cheered them to the finish line. I was one of the runners helping out, and it was heartwarming seeing how excited the youth were to cross the finish line and get their medals.

Races can be expensive, and running can be daunting. This program helps reduce those barriers by providing a safe space, resources, and community support.

We have a fairly large Native running community here in the Twin Cities, and it's exciting seeing the next generation find meaning and joy in running, too.



Photo by Natalie Rademacher

Youth in the IndigeFit Kids Native Youth Run Program received participation certificates, along with their race medals, for completing the Twin Cities Marathon Weekend 5K or 10K races on Oct. 3, 2026.









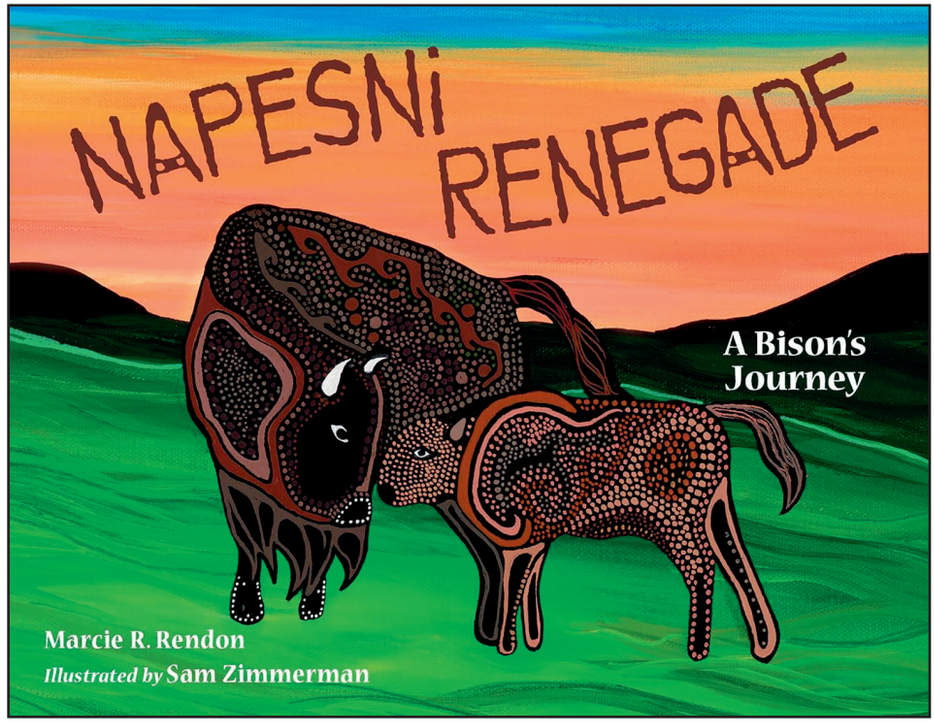
Photos by Natalie Rademacher

40 Native youth participated in the IndigeFit Kids Native Youth Run Program this summer. Months of training prepared the youth for the 5K and 10K races at the Twin Cities Marathon Weekend in early October. Family, coaches, and members of the local running community came together to run with and cheer on the youth.

BOOK REVIEW

‘Napesni Renegade’ brings a true bison adventure to life

BY DEBORAH LOCKE
For The Circle



Who doesn’t enjoy the story of a real-life renegade?

“Napesni Renegade” (Charlesbridge, 2026; $17.99) tells the true story of a bison calf that escaped from a trailer while being relocated from South Dakota’s Cheyenne River Reservation to the Red Lake Nation in northern Minnesota.

The children’s book was written by Marcie Rendon and illustrated by Sam Zimmerman. The complementary efforts of these talented Natives recreate an adventure sure to entertain young children while teaching the environmental and cultural importance of bison.

The story introduces a bison calf at home on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Under an agreement with Red Lake Nation, seven bison were to be transferred from the Lakota reservation to Red Lake. Among the adult bison was a calf that, upon arrival in Minnesota, managed to escape from the group.

The calf earned the name Renegade from the Red Lake ranchers who pursued him. As Minnesota’s deer hunting season approached, efforts to bring the rogue calf into the safety of the fenced herd doubled. Rendon described Renegade’s encounter with an Ojibwe man who was looking for him and who gained the calf’s trust. The man patiently explained to the calf the benefits of returning to the herd and then left.

Renegade already knew that other bison, including his mother, were nearby as the wind carried their scent at times. A day after the man left, Renegade stood outside a fence as though awaiting entry. The gate opened, and the calf walked in, stamped his hooves, sniffed the air, snorted, and galloped away to find his mother and cousins.

Artist Sam Zimmerman illustrated this compelling, sweet story of escape and reunion. The stylized bison hide contains multiple shades of brown set against lush green fields and a broad blue sky. The vivid colors will appeal to readers of all ages.

Throughout her writing career, Rendon has appealed to a wide range of readers. She introduced the Cash Blackbear mystery series for adults and wrote the best-selling crime novel, “Where They Last Saw Her.” This short story for children ages three to seven shows Rendon’s flexibility with storytelling. She is successful with the youngest readers, who will enjoy learning about the spunky calf that outsmarts the adults and runs for the border.

Meanwhile, Rendon’s adult audience looks forward to her next crime novel, which will be equal to or better than those from mass markets.

But there’s more than entertainment here. The book provides background and history on Plains bison and the critical importance of bison to American Indians. Additionally, it includes a glossary of a few Dakota and Ojibwe words and a synopsis of the tribes who seek to increase the bison herds throughout the U.S.

Marcie Rendon is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation. She is an author, playwright, poet, and freelance writer. She has won many awards for her work and lives in Minneapolis.

Sam Zimmerman is a descendant of the Grand Portage Band. His storytelling and artwork feature themes of environmental stewardship and conservation. He received a Midwest Book Award and lives in Duluth.

POETRY

Aadizookaanag & 7 generations

BY JOSIE HOFFMAN
For The Circle

Is knowing aadizookaanag earned?
Maximus Fixico once said,
"We might not know it happened until the light travels across the universe to show us."
Aadizookaanag are spirits
Aadizookaanag are stories
I have been told that some aadizookaanag, we wait to be with until snow is on the ground This has been a rule
This has been felt
Will future generations know these aadizookaanag if there is no snow?
Indaanikoobijigan is the Ojibwe word used for both
"my great-grandparent"
"my great-grandchild"
I wonder if I can hear indaanikoobijigan speak with these aadizookaanag I wonder if indaanikoobijigan can hear me

About the Author

Josie Hoffman (Grand Portage Ojibwe and European descent) is a multi-media teaching artist, aerialist, powwow dancer, and emerging curator based in Minneapolis. In 2020, she graduated with her BFA in studio arts at the Minneapolis College of Art & Design. Over the years, she has shown her work in group exhibitions and performances, collaborated and worked with various artists and organizations such as Native Youth Arts Collective (Little Earth), All My Relations Gallery, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Emerging Curators Institute, SAROS field/works, Minneapolis American Indian Center, and more. Since 2018, she has been teaching aerial arts across the Twin Cities at several aerial studios, pop-up community events, and workshops in her tribal community in Grand Portage. She is currently finishing her Master's in Fine Arts with the Institute of American Indian Art, where she is making artwork and writing about dance, aerial arts, beadwork, Ojibwe storytelling, and Indigenous feminism.



LOCAL EVENTS

Annual adoptees powwow set for Nov. 7

BY VICTORIA FOX
For The Circle



The 20th Annual Gathering for Our Children & Returning Adoptees Powwow will take place Saturday, November 7th, 2026, at the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

The annual gathering has long served as a place of welcome, healing, and reconnection for Native adoptees, formerly fostered individuals, birth relatives, and families. The gathering was established in 2003 to create a space for Native people separated from their families and communities through adoption and foster care to reconnect with their cultures and one another.

Past gatherings have welcomed adoptees and formerly fostered relatives back into the community through powwow, ceremony, and opportunities to connect with others who share similar experiences. The event has also included the Wablenica Ceremony, featuring the Wablenica, or Orphan Song, as part of a healing ceremony recognizing the grief associated with separation from family and heritage.

In a previous story about the gathering, The Circle reported that hundreds of families came together for the powwow and described the event as an important space for community healing and celebration. Returning adoptees and formerly fostered relatives have been welcomed into the Grand Entry, while community members and dancers have helped recognize their return.

This year's gathering marks the event's 20th annual powwow and will once again be held at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, 1530 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.

Community members are encouraged to save the date for this milestone 20th annual gathering and stay tuned for more information as November 7th approaches.

Event Details
Date: Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026
Time:
Grand Entry: 1:00 p.m.
Feast: 5:30 p.m.
Grand Entry: 7:00 p.m.
Location:
Minneapolis American Indian Center
Address:
1530 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404



SPORTS

Native All-American football game coming to Mpls

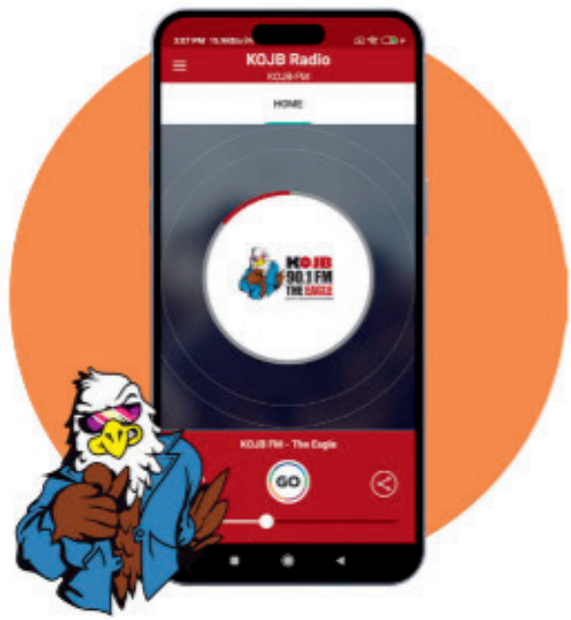
MINNEAPOLIS—The Native American Athletic Foundation (NAAF) will host its sixth annual Native All-American Football Game and Camp Dec. 29, 2026, through Jan. 2, 2027, culminating in an exhibition game at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

In partnership with the Minnesota Vikings and the NFL, NAAF will select 70 Native American high school football players from across the United States for the multi-day program. The event is designed to recognize Native athletes, expand collegiate opportunities, and develop leadership through football.

Participants will receive coaching and mentorship while taking part in sessions focused on college preparation, scholarships, leadership, Native culture, mental wellness, life skills, and service to Tribal communities.



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OPINION

10 years on

BY WINONA LADUKE
For The Circle

In the 10 years since the Standing Rock resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline, 10,000 people came to Standing Rock, and most of our Indigenous nations sent strong delegations, along with leaders from nations and movements internationally. What we saw and felt transformed us. When we came to Standing Rock, we came with our hearts full, prayers in abundance, and a rekindling of our power. We learned we have power, and we learned about the abuse of power.

By the time we left, having seen the brutality of Tiger Swan, the $38 million spent on repression and violence against unarmed people, and the blatant lies of North Dakota politicians and the media, we clearly understood what fossil fuel addiction looks like, and how far North Dakota was willing to go for oil.

That study continues, as North Dakota ravages Dakota, Anishinaabe, and Lakota homelands for profits, while manipulating legal systems and political institutions. It's said that the states are a laboratory for democracy, and if so, North Dakota is a meth lab. The Trump Administration has adopted most of their policies, and a former Governor, Doug Burgum, to dismantle federal land protections.

Power to the People

The fires rekindled in our hearts at Standing Rock continue to grow, like healing cultural burns. The Water Protector movement has grown and flourished, deepening roots in our own communities, as we returned home re-inspired by the vision of peace with Earth and with each other. Some of this work is at Standing Rock itself.

David Archambault II, the former Standing Rock Tribal chairman, was in the crossfire for most of 2016 and 2017. Since 2021, he's been working on a community project called WOZU (translated from Lakota as "to plant, to grow, to care for"). Formed in Cannonball, WOZU "promotes community-based Indigenous-led, work organized to regenerate land, people, increase biodiversity, and foster climate resiliency."

At Wozu, just off Highway 1806 (the blockaded road), I went to see Dave a couple of years ago and saw buffalo, innovative climate-resilient agriculture, including potato boxes, underground greenhouses, and many chickens. And WOZU has processing infrastructure. Indeed, if we are going to have food sovereignty, we will need this kind of example.

SAGE, a renewable energy initiative also at Standing Rock (coordinated by one of Sitting Bull's descendants, Ron McNeil). The organization works to create more renewable energy, saying on their website, "SAGE embodies the resilience of the Standing Rock Nation. We aim to harness the power of the land and our people to create economic opportunities and energy independence, protect the environment and invest in our future..."

A lot of us returned home to work on food and energy. It's a way to heal from war. Seeds and farming projects have increased dramatically in Indian Country over the past decade, not only impacted by Standing Rock, but also by COVID. Today, Indigenous farmers and farming projects flourish in our communities, like the Red Lake Agriculture Program, Makoche, Dream of Wild Health, and so many more. We seek to rebuild the self-sufficiency of our ancestors.

Read the full article at thecirclenews.org. Opinions are by guest authors and are not an endorsement of The Circle.



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