

Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi Newsletter

Summer 2023



A Message From the Chief

Kwai Kwai,

Nibe (Summer) is well underway! This is a wonderful time of year to embrace and share all the gifts of N'dakinna (our land). Our tribal office will be offering several events in the next couple of months, and we hope that you will be able to join us. For information about all our events, please check out our Facebook page and [our website](#).

Joanne Crawford, Sôgmô (Chief)

Office News and Events

A Visit from Deb Haaland



Photo by Deb Haaland,
Twitter: [@SecDebHaaland](https://twitter.com/SecDebHaaland))

On July 7, 2023, the US Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, visited the Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge for a discussion around conservation of the land, water and cultural heritage. She met with Chief Joanne Crawford of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and several folks from the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife. Secretary Haaland is the first Native American to ever serve as a cabinet secretary in US history.



Totem Dedication - Chief Richard Menard

The day began with a full room at the Swanton Public Library for the dedication of the totem pole to Chief Richard Menard. Lots of great stories and memories were shared and the space was filled with gratitude and love for this amazing man. Speakers shared his contributions to the Abenaki community. Several Chiefs spoke of his dedication to his people, while family members shared heartwarming tributes of his strong connection to his roots, family, and community.

We extend gratitude to our friends at the Swanton Public Library for sharing their beautiful space with us and to Jeff Benay for providing refreshments for the event. The plaque presented will be placed at the totem pole in Swanton's Village Green Park for all to enjoy. The Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi would like to thank all those who attended from both near and far. It was a joy to share the morning with you!

Swanton Enhancement Project Visit

On May 4th, Chief Joanne Crawford and Office Manager Debbie Lavoie hosted and were guest speakers for the Swanton Enhancement Project. It was so enjoyable to give a tour of our office and food pantry to the large group in attendance and share all that we do. They were impressed at the number of services we provide and we look forward to continued partnership with them in the future.

Visit from Age Well

We had the privilege of hosting Age Well on May 5th at our office. For over 40 years, they have provided individuals with healthy meals, care coordination and the community resources needed to remain at home, where they want to be. Most of these services are provided at no charge. Tracey and Erin did an amazing job with their presentation, and we will be inviting them back soon to share more useful information with our community.

Presentation of the Chief Leonard Lampman Scholarship

Maquam Board President Bob Richard had the honor of presenting the Chief Leonard Lampman scholarship to Aireonna Brewer at MVU this Spring. The scholarship is a testament to Chief Lampman's unwavering belief in the power of education and his dedication to fostering the growth of Abenaki youth. Aireonna will be attending Pennsylvania College of Art and Design this fall. We wish her the best as she begins this new journey!



Beading Class

The Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi hosted a beading class with Takara Hansell in our Tribal office on Saturday, June 10th, which was very well attended. Takara is a Missisquoi Abenaki, Lumbee, Seminole and Muskogee Woman-Veteran business owner who established her own small business in 2007, named W'Abenaki Stylez. Takara is a self-taught artisan who beads many techniques and styles.

We thank our guests for attending; our instructor, Takara; The Circle of Courage for sharing their beading needles with us, and Chevon for filming it. We are also grateful to the Hoehl Family Foundation for their support in providing the grant that made this possible. We will be hosting other workshops and plans are underway for another beading event in early fall for "beginners" with Takara. We hope to see you there!

Please check our Facebook page and website for more upcoming events or simply call our office at (802)868-6255. We are open on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays from 9:00am till 2:00pm.



Covid Grant Updates

We are so grateful for the extension of the Covid grant, which has allowed us to continue to offer supplies to the community to combat infection and classes to address the stress and anxiety resulting from the pandemic. Although access to Covid test kits has diminished due to a smaller supply from the State, we currently have some stock left to distribute and have face masks and hand sanitizer, as well as shields offered for free through the office. You can stop by during office hours for pickup or contact Faith at (802)868-2559 or faith.dubois@abenakination.com.

Monthly Vaccine and Health Clinic

The free monthly vaccine clinics continue, from 4:00-6:00pm on the last Monday of each month. The Vermont Dept. of Health has expanded this offering to additional vaccines beyond Covid, such as Hepatitis, Tdap and the vaccine for monkeypox virus. In addition, volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corp. have generously offered to provide health services at the clinics, including blood pressure and blood sugar checks, foot care and wound care. (These services will vary, depending on the availability of volunteers each month.)

Yoga Classes

The Spring yoga series was held in April, led by Kat Hartson, and a Summer Beach Series with Kat is currently underway. Holy Trinity church generously offered space free of charge as a backup for bad weather for the summer series when the original library space was compromised due to water damage in the basement. We are extremely grateful to both these partners for their kindness and support!

Chair yoga/mindfulness with Faith has continued once a month at the Swanton Library during the gathering of the Terrific Tuesday's group and has been well received. These classes are open to everyone in the community, whether or not they are members of SASH (Support and Services at Home), which hosts these weekly events.

Art Journals, Birds and Books

In May we partnered with the Friends of the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (FMNWR) for the Beginner Birder's outing held as part of World Migratory Bird Day. FMNWR member Julie Filiberti has kindly offered to lead another birding outing, which will be on August 3rd. We're excited for the opportunity to share this enjoyable nature activity with the community!

In June, we held a book group discussion of Braiding Sweetgrass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This group generated a lot of excitement and connection. Copies of the book were provided to community members joining the discussion and Swanton Library Director Abbey Gaudette generously provided additional copies. A lively discussion transpired and everyone present agreed that reading the book has helped to reduce their stress and given them a new perspective on spending time in nature and connecting with the natural world in the future.

We've also held a monthly art journaling night at the library, taking a break for the summer months. These will restart in the fall. The art supplies that the Swanton Arts Council provided for this group have been shared with the domestic violence office for use with their clientele as well.



Chill Foundation Learn-to-Skateboard Clinic

In July, the Chill Foundation held a skateboarding clinic. This was a once-a-week series held over three weeks teaching youth ages 11-19 how to skateboard. The sessions addressed physical skills as well as elements of self-confidence and team building. All necessary gear is provided through Burton and Chill. The series was a great success, and our new skateboarders left the park at Marble Mill with smiles on their faces and new skateboarding tricks!



Heritage Cornmeal Grant

We're excited to be working with the UVM and state Agricultural College on increasing awareness of heritage corn in Vermont and have been busy carrying out this goal with funds they've provided. We've created cornbread kits containing the dry ingredients to make cornbread (including heritage cornmeal provided by Borderview Farm in Alburg), a recipe card and an information card about the types of heritage corn available in Vermont. These kits were distributed at our Abenaki Wellness Event in June. They will also be handed out at the Corn Fest on August 12th during our cornhusk doll making class (see details below). Samples of the baked cornbread will be offered at our canoe event on August 26th, along with recipe and info cards for folks to replicate the process at home.

Learn to Make a Cornhusk Doll!

Curious about the Indigenous way of life, its history etc.? Come join us for a fun filled workshop, where you will learn how to make a traditional Abenaki Corn Husk doll and celebrate Vermont's harvest this year! Each workshop begins with the telling of the Legend of the Corn Husk Doll. There will be two workshops offered later this summer. The first will be offered at 3:00 pm on Saturday, August 12th at the Swanton Recreation Center during the Corn Fest. Please call the Swanton Rec Center or [register online](#) to reserve your spot. Space is limited, so sign up early!

The second workshop will be offered at 10:00 am on Saturday, August 19th and will be conducted in the Bliss Room at the St. Albans Museum. There is an open enrollment at this workshop. Workshops are free and open to the public! Both children and adults are encouraged to participate, and it is recommended for children over 6 years of age to come with an adult, as tying knots is involved in the construction of the doll. Looking forward to having you join us!

-Donna Toneatti, Community Health Worker

Food Pantry Happenings



In April our pantry fed 500 clients for the month and our numbers are rapidly growing. Our largest month to date was May, with 672 clients.

In 2022 we fed 5,000 clients and will surpass this number easily in 2023. This increased demand is challenging and with funding ending in June 2023, it continues to grow. Our pantry team is doing their best to serve as many folks as possible. We have had to set guidelines limiting clients to once a month. While our client numbers have tripled, our donations and grants have not. Please be understanding; we are doing the very best we can.

Each month we feature the "Maquam Bay Recipe of the Month", utilizing whatever ingredients we have in excess that month. We create a recipe card for clients and distribute it with the main ingredient on a first-come/first-served basis. Special thanks go to Administrative Assistant Amanda Jettie for heading up this project!

We have recently been awarded several large grants, which will enable us to support a local farm. We are thrilled for the opportunity to work with these local farmers and provide fresh Vermont produce, eggs and meat to our clients!

We also partner with the Vermont Food Bank and with Feeding America, which allows us to pick up supplies from local grocery stores weekly. We are so grateful to the stores that make this possible.

We continue to work on fundraising, and recently sold some donated patio furniture, bringing in close to \$900.00! We thank all those that purchased the furniture. A coin drop was held on July 8th, which raised \$2,000.00 for our pantry. It was a very hot morning, and we thank our volunteers who helped to make this possible - Butch Barratt, Dianne Day, and John and Debbie Lavoie. Thank you to all who donated to help fight food insecurity in our community and surrounding communities!

While we have passed out close to 3,000 diapers since February through the Diaper Bank, they will no longer have funding, and July was our last pick up. Once our inventory is gone, we will no longer be able to supply diapers, as with the rising prices, inflation and this week's flooding, funding will no longer support operations of distribution. We are saddened by this news.

To utilize the food pantry, we ask that you please call your order in before you arrive. Some days we are swamped, and we have limited volunteers and a part time staff, so kindly call in before you come to pick up. We strive to provide the best possible service and experience. If you have any questions about how our pantry works, please call and we will be more than happy to explain.

A huge thank you goes out to all our donors, Costco's, Food City, Hannaford's, Maple Fields, Price Chopper, General Dollar, and Healthy Roots! We greatly appreciate your continued support. We also send a huge thank you to our Pantry team and volunteers for their continuous hard work and dedication to our pantry and our community. They are all rock stars!



Our Staff and Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and we appreciate their cheerful, can-do attitudes!

