

# ONKWE'TÀ:KE

THE MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 Issue 1

FREE

Tsiothohrhkó:wa/January 2026



## MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



As we step into 2026, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne takes pride in looking back on the many achievements and milestones reached in 2025. These accomplishments reflect the dedication, teamwork, and commitment of our staff, Council and community members. We are thankful for the collective efforts that made last year so successful and memorable. We look ahead with excitement to the new initiatives, opportunities, and successes that 2026 will bring.

## UPCOMING MCA MEETINGS & SPECIAL DATES:

### JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

January 29, 2026 • 6 p.m.

Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center

The MCA General Meeting will be a hybrid event  
(in-person and virtual).

To receive the Zoom link, please email [meetings@akwesasne.ca](mailto:meetings@akwesasne.ca)

### AKWESASNE ELECTION LAW REFERENDUM

January 31, 2026 • 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Voting will be held at the following locations:

Tsi Snaihne School

Ahkwasahsne Mohawk School (AMS)

Kana:takon School



# MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE 2024-2027

## Grand Chief

Leonard Lazore

## Kana:takon District

Chief Cody David  
Chief Fallon David  
Chief Theresa Jacobs  
Chief Teresa Oakes

## Kawehno:ke District

Chief Lisa Francis-Benedict  
Chief Lacey Pierce  
Chief Tom Thomas  
Chief Vince Thompson

## Tsi Snaihne District

Chief Scott Peters  
Chief Tesha Rourke  
Chief Sarah Lee Sunday-Diabo  
Chief JoAnn Swamp

## Administration

Shannon Roundpoint  
Executive Director  
Donna Lahache  
Director  
Ahkwesahsne Mohawk  
Board of Education

Ashley Tarbell  
A/Director  
Dept. of Communications

Jaime Beechey  
Director  
Dept. of Community & Social Services

Kylee Tarbell  
Director  
Dept. of Economic Development

Heather Phillips  
Director  
Dept. of Finance & Administration

Tessa Jocko  
Director  
Department of Health

Leslie Papineau  
Director  
Dept. of Infrastructure, Housing & Environment

Cactus Cook Sunday  
Director  
Dept. of Justice

Ranatiostha Swamp  
A/Chief of Police

# WAT'KWANONHWERA:TON/GREETINGS

She:kon and welcome to the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's community newsletter, Onkwe:tà:ke, which means "For the people." The primary goal of this publication is to deliver MCA's news and updates straight into the hands of community members. Should you wish to stay connected in other ways, the following channels are provided:

**Contact:** If you have any questions about MCA departments and services, please email [info@akwesasne.ca](mailto:info@akwesasne.ca) or call 613-575-2250.

**E-newsletter:** Register for a weekly e-newsletter delivered straight to your email inbox. It's a great way to quickly stay up to date! Sign up by visiting [www.akwesasne.ca/signup](http://www.akwesasne.ca/signup).

**Social Media:** Visit us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat!

## FIVE THINGS

OUR MONTHLY LIST OF FACTS, REMINDERS & IMPORTANT MESSAGES

1

The January General Meeting will be taking place on Thursday, January 29 at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center starting at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be a hybrid event (in-person and virtual). To receive the meeting link, please email [meetings@akwesasne.ca](mailto:meetings@akwesasne.ca).

2

The Akwesasne Election Law (AEL) Sec. 16.2 (a) Amendment Referendum will be taking place on January 31, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eligible referendum voters may vote at the following locations: Ahkwesahsne Mohawk School, Tsi Snaihne School, and Kana:takon School. The proposed amendment to the AEL can be viewed on the back page of this newsletter.

3

Stay informed and connected with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne by signing up for our free mobile text alerts! Receive important updates from office closures and delays to event reminders and emergency announcements. To register, please visit [www.akwesasne.ca/textalerts](http://www.akwesasne.ca/textalerts).

4

The deadline to order MCA's Community Health Services (CHS) Green Food Bag is February 6, 2026. The cost is \$20 CAD per bag (max. two per person), payable at time of order. Payments can be made in cash at CHS at the Kanonhkwa'tsherio Health Facility, or by e-transfer to [etransfer@akwesasne.ca](mailto:etransfer@akwesasne.ca) (include "Green Food Bag" the month you are ordering for, your name and contact number). For more information, call 613-575-2341 ext. 3220.

5

Have you signed up for the MCA Community Portal? Akwesasronon (ages 18+) can register for the secure Community Portal at [my.akwesasne.ca](http://my.akwesasne.ca). The portal provides exclusive access to Council Reports, General Meeting videos/information, and updates from our Entewatatha:wi self-government negotiations. Sign up today!

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## OFFICIAL SIGNING CEREMONY FOR TSIKARISTISERE TRUST

In January 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was proud to announce the successful signing ceremony of the Tsikaristisere Trust, which took place at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center. This event marked the formal establishment of the trust, with Trustees and Council members officially signing the documents in the presence of community members.

In 2015, Canada presented a Land Claim Settlement Offer to the Mohawks of Akwesasne, including the opportunity to reclaim 18,282 acres of land through Canada's Additions to Reserve Process and a monetary settlement of \$239,808,436.00. This settlement addressed claims related to the historically leased lands known as Tsikaristisere, or 'Dundee.'

Following negotiations, the final agreement was put to a referendum vote, conducted online and by ballot from October 1 to December 8, 2018. The community approved the settlement, with the results validated on January 7, 2020.

The creation of the Tsikaristisere Trust marks a major milestone in this journey, reflecting a commitment to responsibly manage the settlement's resources. The Trustees are tasked with holding, managing, and investing the Trust Property in accordance with the terms of the agreement for the benefit of the Beneficiaries. A primary priority of the Trust is the purchase of land to be set apart as reserve land for the Mohawks of Akwesasne under Article 3.2 and 5.0 of the Settlement Agreement and additionally, through community consultation, the following areas were identified as community needs and priorities:

- Land management activities and programs, including the Additions to Reserve process;
- Education or training;
- Advancement of culture, heritage, and/or language;
- Environment;
- Green energy initiatives;
- Economic development;
- Housing;
- Indigenous rights;
- Infrastructure;
- Public safety;
- Emergency;
- Social welfare, health, and/or wellness;
- Sports, recreation, and/or the arts; or
- Other essential public services.

Since the initial payment from Canada, the settlement fund has been in the RBC and as of December 31, 2024, is now valued at \$259,683,600.93. These funds are now able to be transferred to the Tsikaristisere Trust, where they will grow at a significantly quicker pace.

Grand Chief Leonard Lazore addressed the significance of the moment, stating: "Tonight marks a milestone in our journey to reclaim what rightfully belongs to our people. This trust represents more than just a financial step; it embodies our people's rights, our collective vision for the future, and the power of what we can achieve when we come together."

Executive Director Shannon Roundpoint added: "When Akwesasne began discussions on the settlement of the Tsi Karistisere claim, the return of land and access to funds for important community needs were the driving hopes that are now becoming a reality. Thank you to the trustees for stepping up into a role that will pave the path for future generations; it will be rewarding for them as well as the community. We also extend our appreciation to the community members who have stayed engaged in this process, and to the technical team for their hard work."

For more information about the trust, please contact the Internal Technical Team (ITT) at [itt@akwesasne.ca](mailto:itt@akwesasne.ca) or ARRO Program Manager Cheyenne Lazore at 613-575-2250 ext. 2134.



Pictured from L-R are the Tsikaristisere Trustee's: James Lazore, Connie Lazore, Ryan Jacobs, Susan Sunday, and Lloyd Benedict Jr.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY CELEBRATED OPENING OF SATELLITE TSI SNAIHNE MEDICAL CLINIC

In January 2025, the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Tsi Snaihne Medical Clinic (TMC) radiated warmth as years of hard work and dedication finally came to fruition. This milestone event, marked the official opening of the much-anticipated satellite clinic, a significant step in bringing healthcare services closer to the residents of Tsi Snaihne.

MCA Grand Chief Leonard Lazore commended the perseverance and teamwork of everyone involved. "This clinic represents a major step forward in ensuring the residents of Tsi Snaihne have access to vital healthcare services close to home. It is a testament to the hard work of the Department of Health, the Health Portfolio Chiefs, and all those who have worked tirelessly on this project."

It was only fitting that Karen Loran had the honor of cutting the ribbon. As a former Tsi Snaihne District Chief and Health Portfolio holder, Karen worked tirelessly over the years, advocating and lobbying for this initiative. Her participation in the ceremony symbolized the culmination of years of dedication and commitment to making this vision a reality.

The Tsi Snaihne Medical Clinic will temporarily operate out of a dedicated space in Iakhihsotha Lodge, with its entrance located at the far end of the building. To ensure the safety of Iakhihsotha residents, the clinic has a separate, secure entrance, designated parking, and strict safety protocols. This design ensures that patients and residents can benefit from this service without compromising health and safety.

The TMC will provide a variety of services, including primary care, blood work clinics, immunizations, diabetes prevention and care programs, Jordan's Principle services, and mental health appointments.

"The opening of the Tsi Snaihne clinic is an example of service delivery that we strive for," said Executive Director Shannon Roundpoint. "Our health department and leaders past and present recognize that there is a strong need to support residents of Tsi Snaihne who are burdened by the remote location of the district. It should not cost community members an hour of travel time to receive basic health services, and I commend all those who recognized this and worked to provide a solution. In addition to supporting residents of Tsi Snaihne, the satellite clinic's services like bloodwork and same-day appointments will serve all community members and is another need the team has heard and addressed."

Amber Montour, former Director of Health added, "This clinic is more than a facility; it is a promise. A promise that our elders will receive care close to home, that families will have access to preventive services, and that every individual will be treated with dignity and compassion."

Nia:wén to everyone involved in bringing this essential service to the residents of Tsi Snaihne.

To book or schedule an appointment, please call 613-575-2341 ext. 3215.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## BUILDING FUTURES: CELEBRATING THE UNVEILING OF THE KAHERI:IO TRADES TRAINING FACILITY

In January 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was proud to celebrate the unveiling of the Iohahi:io Trades Building, Kaheri:io. This modern facility represents a transformative step in empowering Akwesasronon with practical, hands-on training opportunities, ensuring a skilled workforce ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Purpose-built to provide education in woodworking, welding, construction, and other trades, the Kaheri:io Trades Training Facility embodies innovation, collaboration, and the pursuit of excellence. Its creation was made possible through the partnership of Akwesasne Career & Employment Support Services (ACESS), the Department of Community & Social Services (DCSS), and the Department of Infrastructure, Housing & Environment (DIHE). The building's creation also stands as a testament to the strength and potential of students, as many played an active role in its construction.

The building was doubled in size thanks to the support of ACESS, CSP, and DCSS funding. This expansion added two washrooms, a classroom, and a new room designed to house 10 welders. This addition to the building was a collaborative effort, with students who had been trained in trades such as masonry and carpentry working alongside tradespeople as mentors and instructors. These students gained hands-on experience in real-world projects, further solidifying their training and skill development.

The building, located next to Iohahi:io in Tsi Snaihne, currently hosts a Welding course in the evening and a Pathways to Trades course during the day. Iohahi:io is also exploring pre-apprenticeship programs, as well as pre-employment offerings, to continue expanding opportunities for the community.

The grand opening brought together community leaders, staff, and officials to celebrate this milestone. Remarks were delivered

by Grand Chief Leonard Lazore, alongside Norma Sunday (Associate Director of Post-Secondary & Continuing Education), Russell Roundpoint (Executive Director of ACESS), Leslie Papineau (Director of DIHE), and Donna Lahache (Director of AMBE). Attendees, including representatives from Iohahi:io, ACESS, the Community Support Program (CSP), and MP Eric Duncan (SD&G), joined a guided tour led by Trades Training Coordinator Ron Lazore. The event concluded with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and a ribbon cutting to mark the official opening of the facility.

Grand Chief Leonard Lazore highlighted the profound impact of the facility in his remarks: "It's exciting to see how this new facility is already being utilized to host trade courses. Building a strong labour force is not just about meeting the needs of today, but also about preparing for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. This facility will provide our community members with the tools, resources, and training they need to succeed and build sustainable futures."

"It's equally inspiring to hear that students have played an active role in the construction of this project," added Grand Chief, reflecting on what it took to bring the building to life. "This hands-on experience not only helps them develop valuable skills but also provides a sense of pride for everyone who contributed. By participating in opportunities like this, they are truly building their futures—brick by brick."

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne congratulates the staff of the Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education and Training Institute and the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education for their vision, dedication, and achievements. Kaheri:io is more than just a building; it is a beacon of what can be accomplished through collaboration, determination, and shared purpose. Together, we are empowering Akwesasronon to construct sustainable and successful futures.



Pictured L-R: Gary Cole, Kawehno:ke District Chief Lacey Pierce, MCA Grand Chief Leonard Lazore, Tsi Snaihne District Chief Sarah Lee Sunday-Diabo, Associate Director of Post-Secondary Education Norma Sunday, ACESS Executive Director Russell Roundpoint, and MP Eric Duncan (SD&G).



Exterior of the Iohahi:io Trades Building, Kaheri:io, located on Iohahi:io Rd. in Tsi Snaihne.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## WATER/WASTEWATER PROGRAM HONORED WITH NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In January 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was proud to announce that the Water/Wastewater Program was nominated for the prestigious 2024 National First Nations Water Leadership Award!

This recognition highlights the exceptional dedication and leadership demonstrated by the following individuals:

- John Adams
- Clayton Barnes
- John 'Tate' Lazore
- Pat David
- Keith Mitchell
- Tom Oakes
- Conway Thompson
- Shane Francis
- Craig Cree

The National First Nations Water Leadership Award honours individuals or organizations that showcase excellence in advancing safe, clean, and reliable drinking water for First Nation communities—both today and for generations to come.

The nomination was put forth by Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict, recognizing the teams leadership qualities, innovation, knowledge, creativity, and collaboration. Their professionalism, expertise, and unwavering commitment to ensuring access to safe drinking water in Akwesasne are a source of pride for the entire community.



Pictured L-R: Tom Oakes, Shane Francis, Craig Cree, Keith Mitchell, and Pat David. Missing from photo: John "Tate" Lazore.

Leslie Papineau, Director of the Department of Infrastructure, Housing & Environment, noted, "This nomination is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and expertise of the Water/Wastewater Program staff. Their efforts ensure that our community has access to safe and reliable drinking water, and this recognition is well-deserved. We are incredibly proud of their accomplishments and the positive impact they continue to have on Akwesasne."

Executive Director Shannon Roundpoint added, "We should all be incredibly proud of our Water/Wastewater Program team and the work they do to ensure we have safe drinking water. We are fortunate for the infrastructure, service and dedication that they provide. This national recognition highlights the vital role they have in our community and their commitment to generations of Akwesasronon."

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne applauds the Water/Wastewater Program for their tireless efforts and leadership. This nomination reflects their commitment to the community and their role as stewards of sustainable water infrastructure.

Nia:wén for your hard work, and congratulations on this well-deserved nomination!



Pictured L-R: Conway Thompson, and Clayton Barnes.



Water and Wastewater Program Manager John Adams

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## MCA WELCOMED NEW YOUTH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

In February 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne held a swearing-in ceremony to welcome the newest members of the Akwesasne Youth Council (AYC). This event marked a significant moment for the community as Cayde Lazore, Starlyn Mason, liokonhahes King, and Taylor Day officially joined the council.

The new AYC representatives took their oaths before Justice of the Peace Alexandra David at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Center, surrounded by family, friends, Council chiefs, and community members.

Congratulations to our Youth Council members! The

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne looks forward to seeing the positive impact these young leaders will have in our community.



The newest members of the Akwesasne Youth Council. Pictured L-R: Cayde Lazore, Starlyn Mason, liokonhahes King, and Taylor Day.

## 2025 AKWESASNE WINTER CARNIVAL: MCA VS SRMT BATTLE ROYALE

In February 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) faced off against the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) in the 2025 MCA vs. SRMT Battle Royale. This friendly competition put teamwork, strategy, and skills to the test, with both teams bringing their energy and enthusiasm to every challenge.

From volleyball and kickball to trivia and tug-of-war, both teams brought their A-game in this friendly but fierce competition. Ultimately, SRMT came out victorious with a score of 5-1. While MCA didn't claim the title this time, the real prize was the



laughter, camaraderie, and community spirit shared throughout the event!

Congratulations to SRMT for showing up with great sportsmanship and skill. A heartfelt niá:wén goes out to those who organized the activities, and to the staff who participated in the events. We look forward to the challenge next year, SRMT!



Pictured L-R: Tom Oakes, Shane Francis, Craig Cree, Keith Mitchell, and Pat David. Missing from photo: John "Tate" Lazore.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## WINTER ROYALTY CROWNED AT IAKHIHSOHTHA LODGE

In February 2025, Iakhihsoshta Lodge was filled with excitement, as residents, families, and staff came together to celebrate the Akwesasne Winter Carnival! The day began with a chili and bread cook-off, where judges had the tough job of selecting the best homemade creations.

After much deliberation, the winners were announced:  
**Chili Cook-Off Champion:** MaryFaye Roundpoint  
**Bread Cook-Off Winner:** Krystian Mitchell

Following the announcement, everyone gathered for a delicious spaghetti lunch before the highlight of the day — the crowning of Iakhihsoshta's Winter Carnival King & Queen! A big congratulations to Jack Leaf & Esther Mitchell, who were honored with the titles.



## KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL CEREMONY RECOGNIZED AKWESASRONON HONOREE



In March 2025, a ceremony was held to present the King Charles III Coronation Medal to individuals recognized for their leadership, perseverance, and contributions to their communities. Among the recipients was Akwesasronon Feryn King, who was nominated for the honor by Member of Parliament Eric Duncan.

King was recognized for her dedication to youth and the arts. A talented hoop dancer, she has shared her skills with many young Akwesasronon through classes and performances. Her passion for her craft also led her to perform with Cirque du Soleil.

Congratulations to all recipients for their dedication and impact!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH THANKED DR. SAYLOR FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF SERVICE



In March 2025, Dr. Saylor concluded his services with the Department of Health. Dr. Saylor has provided paediatric services to the community of Akwesasne for over 10 years.

Dr. Saylor has been an integral part of the Department of Health's

Primary Care Team since January 2012, in which he provided outstanding paediatric care to the Akwesasne community. His compassionate approach and unwavering commitment has significantly impacted the health and well-being of our children and youth.

We extend a heartfelt nia:wen (thank you) to Dr. Saylor for his years of dedicated and compassionate service. His presence, kind demeanour, and caring heart will truly be missed. The Department of Health wishes Dr. Saylor all the best in his future endeavours.

## BACK TO THE LAND: SURVIVAL SKILLS CAMP

In March 2025, Akwesasne Child & Family Services Traditional Support Unit hosted a survival skills camp, reconnecting participants with the land and traditional knowledge. Led by Angello Johnson and Eric Sunday, the camp covered essential bushcraft skills: building shelters, starting fires, trapping, skinning, and cooking wild game.



Department of Health  
Celebrated Dr. Horn &  
Janet Brant, NP for  
10 Years of Service!



DR. HORN



JANET BRANT, NP

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, CONFIDENCE: AKWESASNE'S FIRST MODEL BOOTCAMP CONCLUDED

In April 2025, a group of aspiring runway stars took their first confident steps into the world of modeling through the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Model Bootcamp, hosted by the Department of Economic Development. After weeks of hard work and hands-on training, participants wrapped up the program with a mock fashion show featuring the stunning designs of Stacey Mitchell.

Friends and family gathered to cheer on the graduates, who showcased their polished runway walks, graceful posing, and growing confidence. Throughout April, participants received expert instruction from Akwesasronon models Steevi King, Ryan King, and Steven Thompson, who were instrumental in building the skills — and self-assurance — of the next generation of Kanien'keha talent.

This free bootcamp also featured special sessions with makeup artists Tisha Thompson and Vanna White, along with skincare tips from medical aesthetician Amanda Wanamaker, helping participants feel their best both inside and out.

A special nia:wen/thank you goes out to all of our instructors and guest speakers for sharing their time, talent, and encouragement!

Economic Development Director Kylee Tarbell shared the following about the growing potential of creative industries for Indigenous communities:



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## RED DRESS DAY 2025: MMIWG2S+ HONOURED

In May 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne stood in solidarity with communities across Canada in recognizing Red Dress Day, held annually on May 5 as a day of remembrance and action in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited People (MMIWG2S+). Red Dress Day brings visibility to the deep injustices and violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. This crisis has touched every First Nations community and continues to leave lasting pain and trauma in its wake. We honour the lives lost, the families left behind, and the voices that continue to call for justice.

We recognize that this is not only a crisis, but a deeply rooted issue that calls for continued action, accountability, and change.

The violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirited people has been ongoing for generations and must not be ignored. Their lives matter, and their memories must fuel meaningful change.



## MARKING MILESTONES: CAREY TERRANCE JR. SIGNED IONKWAKWÉ:NION BOOK OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In May 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe came together at the A'nowara'ko:wa Arena to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of one of Akwesasne's own — Carey Terrance Jr. The event coincided with the 2025 season home opener for the Akwesasne Jr. B Thunder, setting the perfect stage to recognize a young man who continues to inspire both on and off the ice.

Before the game, Grand Chief Leonard Lazore delivered a warm welcome and presented Carey with a beautifully beaded medallion featuring the Anaheim Ducks logo — a symbol of both his accomplishments and his roots. In his address, Grand Chief Lazore remarked that "we honor one of our brightest athletes" and emphasized the importance of representing Akwesasne with pride and heart. He also gave heartfelt thanks to the coaches, volunteers, parents, and caregivers who uplift youth sports in the community, saying their time and dedication leave a lasting impact on the next generation.

The evening was made even more meaningful with the reintroduction of the Ionkwakwé:nion Book of Accomplishments — a tribute to Akwesasronon who excel in academics, athletics, arts, culture, and leadership. Reviving this cherished tradition, Carey was the first to sign the book under the current Council, making his mark not only in the world of sports but also in community history.

Carey Terrance Jr. is no stranger to success. At just 20 years old, he has earned gold with Team USA, played in three IIHF World Junior Championships, and signed a three-year NHL contract with the Anaheim Ducks — making him the first Akwesasronon to reach these historic milestones. The celebration took place on the very floor where he once played both hockey and lacrosse as a youth — a full-circle moment that touched the hearts of all in attendance.

What sets Carey apart isn't just his talent, but his unwavering humility, strong work ethic, and connection to home. He carries Akwesasne with him wherever he goes, serving as a powerful symbol of perseverance and possibility for Indigenous youth across Turtle Island.

During the first intermission, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Chiefs presented Carey with their Hometown Hero Award, recognizing individuals who embody hope, perseverance, and commitment. Following the ceremony, Carey Jr. was welcomed by fans of all ages during a community autograph session, where he graciously signed cards, hats, jerseys, and more — leaving many with memories to treasure and stories to tell.

Carey's journey is a testament to what can be achieved with discipline, determination, and heart. His story reminds us that greatness isn't just about breaking records — it's about lifting others up and staying grounded in who you are and where you come from.

To the youth of Akwesasne: dream big, work hard, and never lose sight of your goals. With determination in your spirit and the support of your community behind you, there are no limits to what you can achieve.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AMBE HOSTED ANNUAL CULTURAL CELEBRATION

In May 2025, the Akwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education held its annual Cultural Celebration at the A'nowara'ko:wa Arena for a two-day celebration. The arena came alive with laughter, drumming and song as Early Years students through Grade 8 sang, danced, and honored our Onkwehonwe culture through music, movement and traditional dress.

As a special highlight, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was joined by Canada's Minister of Public Safety, Sathiyas-

angaree "Gary" Anandasangaree, for a community tour — and made a stop at the arena to witness the celebration and experience the strength and beauty of our culture firsthand.

Nia:wén to the singers, drummers, organizers, parents, and everyone who helped bring this joyful event to life — and a big thanks to our friends at the Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance Unit and Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service for joining us and helping keep our students safe.



## CELEBRATING SAFETY, SERVICE, AND COMMUNITY: POLICE WEEK 2025

In May 2025, the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service (AMPS) proudly participated in Police Week 2025, held from May 9-16, celebrating the strong connections between police, youth, community members, and local partners.

Throughout Police Week, AMPS took part in a variety of events focused on safety, youth engagement, and community connection. From serving lunch to our beloved totas in long-term care to fun activities such as Kids for Fishing and Girls Skate Day, there was something for everyone.

Students enjoyed the Spring into Safety series, where officers visited all three AMBE schools to share safety tips

through engaging demonstrations, hands-on activities, and a friendly game of kickball with the officers. At Salmon River Central School, a Mock Car Crash helped raise awareness about impaired and distracted driving.

The week wrapped up with a visit to the Cornwall Police Open House, where AMPS joined other first responders for a fun, interactive day with the public.

Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who helped make Police Week 2025 a success. Together, we are building a safer and stronger community.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW PARAMEDICS

In June 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance extended a heartfelt congratulations to Brooklyn Johnson, Dennis Bero, Melanie Jacobs, and Serena Sunday on their graduation from the Clarkson University EMS Paramedic Program!

Your dedication, perseverance, and commitment to serving our community are truly inspiring. The AMA, MCA, and the entire Akwesasne community are incredibly proud of your achievement.

Nia:wén for choosing this path of service — your work will make a lasting impact.



Paramedics pictured L-R: Dennis Bero, Brooklyn Johnson, Melanie Jacobs and Serena Sunday.

## CELEBRATING AKWESASNE ART: KIRBY THOMPSON'S MURAL UNVEILED AT SIBC

In June 2025, the Seaway International Bridge Corporation (SIBC) proudly hosted a meaningful and vibrant event celebrating the unveiling of a new mural 'Three Sisters' by Kirby Thompson, a talented Akwesasnonon artist and daughter of Chief Vince Thompson of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA). Kirby, who also works at SIBC, continues to use her art to uplift and reflect the spirit of the Akwesasne community.

congratulations to Kirby Thompson on the unveiling of her mural 'Three Sisters.' Her artwork continues to uplift and unite our community through the beauty of storytelling and tradition.

The mural can be seen on the historic Cornwall Bridge pier, facing Cornwall, Ontario.



The Three Sisters hold a sacred place in Haudenosaunee culture and storytelling. Corn, beans, and squash, known as the Three Sisters, are not only traditional staple crops but also symbolize balance, sustainability, and the strength of working together. For generations in Akwesasne, these plants have nourished both the body and spirit, often grown together in the same mound to support one another. The Three Sisters represent an enduring relationship between the people, the land, and each other, values that continue to guide the community today.

The event began with warm welcome remarks from Marc Chénier, Bridge Director of the SIBC. Kirby then shared heartfelt insights into her creative process and the cultural inspiration behind her work. Chief Vince Thompson of MCA and Chair of the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) Natalie Kinloch also offered thoughtful remarks, recognizing the importance of Indigenous voices in public spaces.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne extended a heartfelt



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AMBE CELEBRATED THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2025

In June 2025, the Akwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) proudly honoured the achievements of its Grade 8 graduates from AMS and Tsi Snaihne School during a heartfelt ceremony held at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort ballroom. The evening was filled with pride, joy, and celebration as families, friends, and educators gathered to cheer on the students as they crossed the stage, marking the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

The ceremony highlighted the many accomplishments of this



## GOOD MEDICINE & MEMORIES: ACFS HOSTED A DAY FOR DADS

In June 2025, Akwesasne Child & Family Services hosted a special Father's Day gathering filled with spirit, culture, and connection. The day featured traditional lacrosse teachings, followed by a meaningful Father and Son Medicine Game — a celebration of family, tradition, and wellness through sport.

A heartfelt niawenhkó:wa goes out to our esteemed Traditional Knowledge Holders, Mike Mitchell and Richard Mitchell, for their powerful tobacco burning ceremony and their invaluable presentation on the traditional knowledge and history of lacrosse. Your teachings continue to guide and inspire our community.

We also want to thank Chad Thompson and Nathan Thompson from the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service for organizing the Father and Son Medicine Game and for your encouraging words that lifted spirits and brought generations together on the field.

As a token of appreciation, our Traditional Knowledge Holders were gifted pack baskets handcrafted by Gary Thompson, along with gift certificates for ribbon shirts made by Marlana Thompson Baker of Okwaho Creations.

Immediately following the lacrosse game, the ACFS Commu-

nity Support Unit hosted its annual "Bubba-Q," in collaboration with the Akwesasne Zero 2 Six Program. This Father's Day activity featured a catered cook-out and a lesson on how to braid hair. Nia:wen to Tisha Thompson for leading the lesson, as well as Darius and Tlesia White for catering the Bubba-Q!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## A SUCCESSFUL WEEKEND OF PET WELLNESS & PREVENTION

In June 2025, a Pet Wellness Clinic was held in Akwesasne, which was a huge success — thanks to the incredible collaboration between the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne!

Over the course of three days:

- 60 spay/neuter surgeries were completed.
- 16 wellness appointments were provided.
- An estimated 3,300 unplanned puppies and kittens were prevented.

Hosted at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Center, this MASH-style event made a meaningful impact for Akwesasronon families and their beloved pets.

The MCA Compliance Program extends a heartfelt niawenhkó:wa to the veterinarians, vet techs, students, organizers, and volunteers whose hard work, compassion, and care made this clinic possible. Your efforts truly made a difference!



## ALL HEART, ALL HUSTLE: YOUTH FOOTBALL CAMP RETURNED TO AKWESASNE

In July 2025, the grounds of the A'nowara'kó:wa Arena was full of excitement as the uOttawa Gee-Gees and the Ottawa REDBLACKS returned to host a youth football camp for Akwesasronon!

Led by Gee-Gees quarterback and Tyendinaga's own Ben Maracle, the camp brought together local youth for a day of learning, teamwork, and fun — all with the goal of fostering a love for football in Indigenous communities.

Now in its third year, the camp is a collaborative initiative made possible through the efforts of the Ottawa Redblacks, University of Ottawa Gee-Gees, and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. This year's event was proudly supported by the MCA Department of Health, MCA Economic Development, and Akwesasne Child & Family Services, who joined in by leading an energetic ice-breaker and volunteering throughout the day.

Around 30 young participants took part in skill-building drills, met with players during a Q&A session, and sported their official camp t-shirts with pride. The event

wrapped up with autographs, photo ops, and plenty of smiles.

A delicious lunch was provided by Big Russ' Catering, featuring Indian tacos, Three Sisters salad, strawberry drink, and desserts — the perfect fuel for a fun-filled day.

Nia:wen to the Gee-Gees, the Redblacks, and all our partners for making this opportunity possible for our youth — your commitment to community and sport continues to make a lasting impact. See you on the field in 2026!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AMPS & HAVFD GAINED NEW TOOLS FOR TOUGH TERRAIN

In July 2025, the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service and Hogansburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department participated in a two-day training with their newest emergency response vehicles: Fat Trucks.

These amphibious, all-terrain vehicles are built to take on the most challenging environments — from water to wetlands and everything in between.

With support from both teams and hands-on training, AMPS and HAVFD are enhancing their ability to reach and assist our community safely, no matter the conditions.



## TURTLE TIME: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & CONSERVATION

In August 2025, the MCA Environment Program held its annual turtle release gathering at King's Marina in Tsi Snaihne. Under sunny skies, community members joined the Turtle Team to witness the joyful release of baby snapping turtles from their shells to the shores of Snye.

This year, the team incubated both painted turtles and snapping turtles — two species considered at risk. The painted turtles were released earlier in the season, while the snapping turtles made their way home during our special community event. Each year, the Environment Program works to protect vulnerable nests, incubate eggs, and support hatchlings in safely beginning their journey. These efforts, along with the support of community members, help ensure that these important creatures continue to thrive for generations to come.

In total, 156 turtles were released this year, including 54 snapping turtles at our event in August!

The Turtle Team was joined by community members Dawn Day and Cindy Garrow, who shared traditional stories, legends, and songs about turtles.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE A'NOWARA'KO:WA ARENA

In August 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Department of Economic Development welcomed the community to celebrate a very special milestone — the 30th Anniversary of the A'nowara'ko:wa Arena. It was a day filled with pride, reflection, and community spirit.

The celebration began with Peter Garrow welcoming a parade of athletes, proudly sporting their team jerseys. Grand Chief Leonard Lazore offered heartfelt words in honour of the late Jay Benedict, recognizing the pivotal role he played in the arena's development. The Benedict family was presented with a commemorative gift — a meaningful token of appreciation for Jay's lasting legacy. Former Grand Chiefs Mike Mitchell and Russell Roundpoint also shared stories and reflections on the arena's early development, offering the community a glimpse into the vision and perseverance that brought the facility to life. Feryn King closed out the opening remarks with a vibrant and engaging hoop dance performance.

Outside, families enjoyed an afternoon of fun with carnival-style games, bounce house obstacle courses, disc golf, a balloon pop game, and a photo booth — not to mention cotton candy and other sweet treats. Powerplay Gaming kept youth entertained, while Big Russ

catered a delicious lunch for all to enjoy. As a special keepsake, attendees received commemorative 30th anniversary traditional lacrosse keychains and Akwesasne Wild t-shirts — a perfect way to mark the milestone occasion.

Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who joined in the celebration and to MCA's Department of Economic Development for organizing a memorable event. A special thank you to all staff, volunteers, and community members who contributed to the celebration!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AMPS HONORED FIRST JUNIOR POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATES

In August 2025, the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service (AMPS) hosted their first annual Junior Police Academy program, offering Akwesasronon youth a unique opportunity to work alongside AMPS officers. For one week, participants explored every side of policing, gaining an unforgettable look at the skills and responsibilities of law enforcement.

Throughout the week, attendees took part in hands-on learning. From exploring police tools and vehicles, to marine patrols, drone operations, and fitness training. Youth also gained insight into forensic identification, organized crime investigations, and tactical unit operations, while practicing drills and teamwork along the way.

The week wrapped up with a graduation ceremony, where families, community leaders, and AMPS officers gathered to

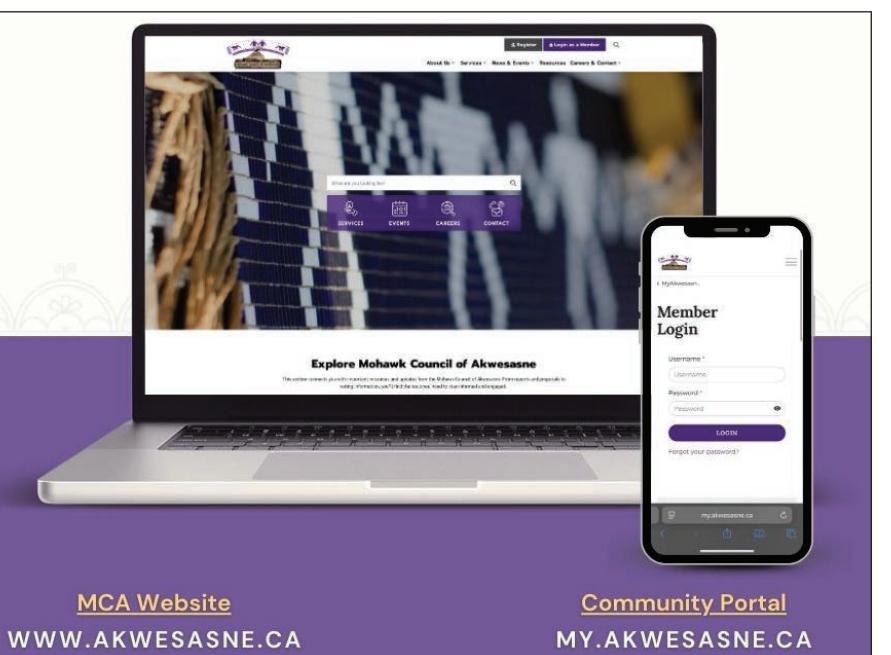


## DISCOVER MCA'S NEW WEBSITE & COMMUNITY PORTAL

In September 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was excited to launch a completely redesigned website to make it easier than ever to stay connected. The new site is a central hub for news, events, programs, and services — all in one easy-to-use location.

Members of the Mohawks of Akwesasne (age 18 and older) can register for the secure Community Portal at [my.akwesasne.ca](http://my.akwesasne.ca). The portal provides exclusive access to Council Reports, General Meeting information, and updates from our Entewathata:wi self-government negotiations, with more features to be added over time.

We encourage everyone to explore the new site at [www.akwesasne.ca](http://www.akwesasne.ca) and for members to take advantage of the portal. Staying informed and connected has never been simpler!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## MCA NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In September 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) was pleased to announce that it has appointed Shannon Roundpoint to the position of Executive Director. Ms. Roundpoint has been acting in the position since December of 2024 and has accepted the permanent role as of September 15, 2025.

The Executive Director oversees all departments of MCA: Health, Community & Social Services, Justice, Police, Education, Economic Development, Communications, Finance & Administration, and Infrastructure, Housing & Environment.

Ms. Roundpoint, an Akwesasne Mohawk, has been leading Communications at MCA since 2011 and has 22 years of leadership experience in Akwesasne.

As a transformational leader, Ms. Roundpoint has demonstrated an ability to build a healthy and productive team, to be strategic and goal oriented, and to prioritize a community-based service culture. She has played a major role in many initiatives and projects at MCA, including emergencies and crises, and she has been vital in advising leadership and Council in the areas of community relations and communication throughout her years of service.

Ms. Roundpoint holds a Master's degree in Management

(M.S. - Business Administration) and she will be pursuing a Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator (CAPA) designation from AFOA Canada (Aboriginal Financial Officers Association).

"Council recognizes that Shannon's vision, work ethic and experience with Mohawk Council make her an ideal candidate for the position," said Grand Chief Leonard Lazore. "Council and the Executive Director share a commitment to work together to improve the lives of Akwesasronon."

Prior to joining MCA in 2011, Ms. Roundpoint was the editor of Akwesasne's community newspaper, Indian Time, for nine years, during which time she developed a strong connection with the community that she credits for shaping her professional ethics.

"It is a great honour to serve in the role of Executive Director where I have the ability to help in different ways," said Ms. Roundpoint. "I am passionate about working toward the vision of a thriving community, where our language efforts are supported, our health is prioritized, our families are safe, our environment is respected, and the needs of the community are understood and at the forefront of MCA's services. This vision will be supported by promoting a workplace culture of exceptional service, respect and well-being, for everyone. A healthy MCA builds a stronger and healthier community."

Ms. Roundpoint is also a wife and mother to three children ages 13, 10, and 7. She spends most of her free time cheering them on at sports.

**TESSA JOCKO**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**JAYME BEECHEY**  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICES

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## ORANGE SHIRT DAY IN AKWESASNE: A DAY OF STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

In September 2025, Akwesasne came together under bright autumn skies to honor residential school survivors during Orange Shirt Day. Survivors, leaders, community members, youth, and local artists gathered at Generations Park in a spirit of unity and remembrance, creating a day filled with healing, cultural pride, and powerful moments of reflection.

Orange Shirt Day 2025 marked the first time the event was hosted together in partnership by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, and Akwesasronon Sonatanoron, a local non-profit led by survivors and their families. The organization's proposal to Council inspired a community event to honor residential school survivors. Their guidance was central to planning the day in a way that honoured the strength, courage, and resilience of our survivors, while offering space for the community to come together in solidarity and healing.

The day began with a free orange shirt giveaway, featuring designs created entirely by local artists. Each shirt carried teachings, imagery, and stories that honoured our children, elders, and cultural survival.

From there, the community took part in a unity walk, beginning at Mill Street. With support from the Akwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education's Transportation Services, Seven Dancers Coalition and the Akwesasne Young Women's Singing Group, Route 37 was transformed into a sea of orange. Together, Akwesasronon reflected, sang, burned tobacco, and carried their good minds into the day.

The walk led into the Travis Solomon Lacrosse Box, where Akwesasne held its first official ceremony honoring residential school survivors. Survivor Billy Sunday opened the ceremony, followed by words from MCA Grand Chief Leonard Lazore, SRMT Sub-Chief Derrick King, Akwesasronon Sonatanoron Executive Director Rick Oakes, and members of Ionkwahronka'ohnhá:tie', a grassroots Kanien'kéha language group that expressed gratitude



to survivors who continue to guide language revitalization efforts. An honor song, led by Keena King and community singers, filled the space as survivors were gifted quilts by Renee Adams, as well as baskets lovingly made by Shirley Thompson, Denise Jock, and Judy Cole. The gifts were presented to the survivors by Akwesasronon youth, symbolizing the connection between generations.

The day continued with presentations by Marjorie Skidders and Phillip White-Cree, whose discussions grounded the event in culture and healing. Akwesasne's Youth Hoop Troupe and Akwesasne Ratirennenhawi (Akwesasne Men's Singers) brought energy and spirit through dance and song. Attendees enjoyed a Three Sisters sit-down meal along with a variety of refreshments from local food and drink vendors, who provided delicious and nutritious options for the community. Meanwhile, interactive activities and teachings showcased the depth of knowledge, artistry, and spirit within our community. Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who shared their skills and teachings — from the artists, to organizations showcasing their programs, to those offering healing services at the SRMT Senior Center — for creating important spaces for connection, culture, learning, and wellness.

To close the day, laughter and joy rang out as Seven Dancers Coalition and MCA's Traditional Medicines program hosted a spirited medicine game, reminding us of the strength of our people and the healing power of coming together.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne extends its deepest gratitude to all survivors, speakers, artisans, youth, volunteers, and partners who made this day possible. Orange Shirt Day in Akwesasne was good medicine — a gathering that honoured the children who never came home, celebrated the resilience of survivors, and strengthened our path forward together.

Every Child Matters.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## MCA DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDED OFNEDA 2025 AWARD

In September 2025, Kylee Tarbell, Director of Economic Development for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, was awarded the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNEDA) Economic Development Officer of the Year Award at the 2025 First Nations Economic Advancement Conference (FNEAC) — for the second year in a row.

Kylee was nominated by a community member and was one of three finalists at the gala evening. Each finalist spoke to the audience before the winner was decided by live vote. In her remarks, Kylee highlighted her team and the important role they all play in bringing positive change to the community. She showcased initiatives such as the Anowara'ko:wa Arena and grounds development, the Thompson Island staff and their incredible knowledge, and the community's entrepreneurs. She also emphasized MCA's commitment to upholding inherent and jurisdictional rights while advocating for the community.

Kylee noted, "I am deeply honored to be recognized as the 2025 Economic Development Officer of the Year by the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNE-

DA) at the First Nations Economic Advancement Conference (FNEAC). To stand among so many passionate leaders from across Ontario, and to have this award decided by a live audience vote, was truly humbling. This recognition is not mine alone, it reflects the incredible mentorship I've received, the hard work and dedication from the incredible team I work with, and the determination of our entrepreneurs in Akwesasne. Every day I am reminded of our strength, innovation, and resilience. I am proud to serve my community and to support our businesses as they continue to grow, thrive, and shape our future!"

Congratulations Kylee on this wonderful achievement!



## DISTRICT CHIEF OF KANA:TAKON CINDY FRANCIS-MITCHELL RESIGNED FROM OFFICE

In October 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne informed the community that Kana:takon District Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell has resigned from her position on Council. In accordance with the Akwesasne Election Law and the Akwesasne Procedural Regulations, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) had 90 days to hold a by-election for the vacant Kana:takon District Chief seat.

Cindy Francis-Mitchell was first elected to Council for the 2021–2024 term as a Kana:takon District Chief and was re-elected to serve the community in 2024. She was also appointed Acting Grand Chief by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in July 2024, following a re-election in which the former Grand Chief stepped down.

At the time of her resignation, Cindy was serving on the Akwesasne Rights and Research Office, Government Secretariat, Justice, and Nation Building portfolios. She also sat on the following committees: CBSA, Executive, Finance, Gover-

nance, Green Team, Beautification, Waterways, and Hydro Québec.

Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell was recognized as a strong advocate for border rights, ensuring that Akwesasne's unique cross-border challenges remained a priority. She championed women's leadership through her role as an elected women's representative with the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), advancing the voices of Indigenous women in governance. On Council, she contributed to nation-to-nation relationships, governance renewal, and rights advocacy. She was also dedicated to language revitalization, actively learning Kanien'kéha and encouraging others to strengthen cultural identity through language.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne thanks District Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell for her dedication and contributions to the community, and we extend our best wishes to her in all future endeavors.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## MCA HONORED DEDICATED EMPLOYEES AT LONG SERVICE RECOGNITION & RETIREMENT AWARDS

In October 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) proudly celebrated their incredibly dedicated employees at the Long Service Recognition & Retirement Awards.

This event acknowledges the commitment to those who remained with MCA over the years. Each recognized employee received special gifts and certificates in appreciation of their milestone at MCA, including handcrafted items made by local artisans.

Grand Chief Leonard Lazore and Executive Director Shannon Roundpoint both shared words of gratitude, thanking employees for their dedication and the important role they play in delivering MCA's programs and services to the Akwesasne community.

The community could not be served without the hard work and commitment of our team, and we are proud to celebrate these accomplishments. Niawenhkó:wa and congratulations to all who have worked over the last several years to bring programs and services to the Akwesasne community.

The following employees were honored for their work MCA years of service:

### 10 YEARS:

Naeem Irshad  
April Terrance  
Cullen Jacobs  
Danielle George  
Madeline Peters  
Herbert Oakes  
Aliyah Thompson  
Natalie Jacobs  
Rhonda Garrow  
Fallan Jacobs  
Breann Bigtree  
Gordon Sunday  
Shauna C. Thompson  
Katie E. Cook  
Cheavee J. Willie  
Derek Cook  
Justice Thompson  
Christopher Nalepa  
Lauren A. Chubb  
Nathan Thompson

### Amy Benedict Aaron Terrance

### 15 YEARS:

Lisa Cook  
Yolanda David  
Tasha Thompson  
Tameka E. Thompson  
Vincent R. Lazore  
Walter Peters  
Angela Caldwell  
Phillip Boots  
Andrew Francis

### 20 YEARS:

Sharla Burns  
Tina Mitchell  
Spencer R. Thompson  
Rachel T. George  
Misty D. Lazore  
Deana A. Mitchell  
Micheal L. Buckshot

### 20 YEARS CON'T:

Amber J. C. Lazore  
Charlene A Lazore  
Robert W. Mitchell  
Tracey Lynn Sunday  
Micheal Boots  
April Adams Phillips

### 25 YEARS:

Clayton R. Barnes  
Lynn M. Tarbell  
Corrine T Johnson  
Colette M MacDonald  
Mary Faye Roundpoint  
Kellie A. Jacobs  
Norman King Sr.  
Phillip Mitchell

Delia Thompson  
Aroniennens Porter  
Dolores Oakes  
Christine Francis  
Karakwenta Lazore

Sarah R. Peters  
Ryan M. Seymour

### 30 YEARS:

John T. Lazore  
Philip Swamp  
Patricia M. Ransom  
Arlene David  
Sheila Oakes

### 35 YEARS:

Maryann Jacobs  
April White  
Kim M. Loran  
Velma Cook  
Donna Roundpoint

### RETIREES:

Maureen C. Thompson  
Patrick Pyke  
Phillip Mitchell  
June King



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AKWESASNE MOHAWK POLICE SERVICE ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY

In October 2025, the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service (AMPS), along with family, friends and community members gathered under one roof to celebrate a vibrant event – the AMPS Annual Award Ceremony. Held at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort, this event recognized officers and staff whose exceptional service, courage, and commitment have made a lasting impact on the community and the organization.

The ceremony highlighted individuals who exemplify the values of integrity, dedication, and compassion – honoring not only those who went above and beyond the call of duty, but also the collective strength of the AMPS team and their unwavering support for one another, their families, and the people of Akwesasne.

Below are the award recipients for this year's AMPS Award Ceremony:

- Bravery Award: Constable Aaron Simpson
- Supervisor of the Year: Sergeant Phil Swamp
- Community Service Award: Constable Norman King Sr.
- Road Safety Officer of the Year: Constable Nathan Boots
- Behind-the-Scenes Hero: Network Analyst and Technical Support Chris Nalepa
- Dispatcher of the Year: Dispatcher Lori White

All AMPS retirees were then honored for their years of dedicated service and lasting contributions to the organization, with legacies that continue to inspire. Retired AMPS members Kevin Nanticoke, Peter Francis, Bill LaFrance, and James Sunday were present and further enriched the ceremony. Roger Mitchell, one of AMPS's retirees, played a dual role as both an honored attendee and the evening's DJ. We extend heartfelt thanks to all retirees for their service, and to those who joined us in celebration alongside AMPS members.

Members of the AMPS Police Commission, Steve Thomas and Johanne Jackson, also joined in the celebration, underscoring the deep community ties and shared commitment to public service. We extend our sincere gratitude to Steve and Johanne for their presence and continued support.

Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who helped make this year's ceremony a meaningful celebration. And a special congratulations to all the award recipients!



## MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE | 2025 DONATIONS

**Ionkwahronkha'ohnháti'**  
\$336,135



**Tsiakwawennatónhe'ts  
Mohawk Language Program**  
\$151,753



**"Rock the Block" Event**  
\$30,000 CAD and \$10,000 USD



Funding from the First Nations Child & Family Services (FNCFS) Settlement

**Red Sky Outdoors**  
\$30,226



**Onkwe**  
\$117,636



**Iahki'nikonhketskwas  
(Lifting Their Minds)**  
\$24,538



**Haudenosaunee Everlasting  
Academy of Learning (HEAL) Lodge**  
\$117,600

Funding from the Healing and Wellness Committee



## YEAR IN REVIEW

### WALKING TOGETHER FOR HOPE & HEALING: DOH HOSTED INAUGURAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS WALK

In October 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Department of Health (DOH) proudly held its first Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in the District of Kana:takon.

Community members, friends, and families of survivors and those affected by breast cancer came together to raise awareness and show solidarity. Many participants carried heartfelt signs and wore commemorative t-shirts honoring loved ones. Community members also jumped into the walk as the crowd passed their driveway, adding to their presence to the moment.

Nurses from Community Health Services and Clinical Care Services were also on hand to provide resources, offering community members with vital information on various cancer screenings available and what age demographics should begin cancer screenings.

The goal of the Breast Cancer Walk was to raise awareness about breast cancer within our community and to send a message of love and hope to those currently battling the disease. The DOH wants our community members to know they are not alone and that we stand with them in their fight.

The Department of Health extends sincere appreciation to the amazing and dedicated staff who planned and organized this meaningful event, and to every community member who joined us to show support. Your presence and commitment make a difference.



### CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY: MCA OPEN HOUSE 2025

In November 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne had the pleasure of meeting community members at our open houses in Kawehno:ke, Kana:takon, and Tsi Snaihne.

Each event featured interactive displays, hands-on activities, and MCA staff from across all departments sharing information about the programs and services that support Akwesasne every day. Visitors also had the chance to enter prize

draws, explore resources, and learn more about the work happening throughout our organization.

Nia:wen to everyone who stopped by, asked questions, connected with our team, and made this year's series such a success. We're grateful for the opportunity to serve and engage with our community — and we look forward to seeing you again soon!



## YEAR IN REVIEW

### IAKHIHSOHTHA LODGE CELEBRATED 35 AMAZING YEARS

In December 2025, Iakhihsoshta Lodge proudly marked its 35th anniversary! Since opening in 1990, the Lodge has been a warm and welcoming place that fosters dignity, comfort, and a true sense of community — while supporting independence for our beloved totas.

The celebration was filled with entertainment, laughter, and delicious goodies for totas, their families, and guests. Joe Herne brought the house down with country classics that had everyone clapping, laughing, dancing, and reminiscing together. What a joyful afternoon!

A heartfelt nia:wen/thank you to everyone who joined us and made this milestone so special. An extra big nia:wen to our amazing staff: your hard work, dedication, and unwavering support made this day unforgettable. We appreciate you more than words can say!

Here's to 35 years of care, community, and love — and many more to come!



### CELEBRATED THE SEASON TOGETHER: MCA'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNERS

In December 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was pleased to host three annual Community Holiday Dinners this December, welcoming families from all three districts for an evening of food, fun, and festive cheer. From Kana:takon to Tsi Snaihne to Kawehno:ke, each gathering brought the community together to share a delicious meal, enjoy good company, and celebrate the season.

Guests were treated to hearty dinners prepared by local caterers (TLC Catering, Three Feathers Cafe, Island Girlz, and Kelly Back), joyful visits and photos with Santa, and plenty of laughter throughout the night. Many also enjoyed the holiday photo booth to capture memorable moments with friends and family. The warmth of community connection was felt at every table.

A special niawenhkó:wa to the DOH Mental Health & Wellness Sector for generously sponsoring a beautiful basket giveaway at each dinner, made by Ann Mitchell.

MCA extends its heartfelt thanks to all who joined us. Your smiles, stories, and spirits made this year's holiday dinners a true success. We look forward to celebrating together again next year!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## MCA SWORE IN NEWLY ELECTED DISTRICT CHIEFS

In December 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) held a swearing-in ceremony for the newly elected District Chiefs of Kana:takon and Kawehno:ke, following the recent by-election. The event took place at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Center with community members, Council, and staff in attendance.

The by-election filled three Council seats: two for the Kana:takon district and one for the Kawehno:ke district. Cody David was sworn in as Kana:takon District Chief, and Tom "Gulla" Thomas was sworn in as Kawehno:ke District Chief. Teresa Oakes, also elected as a Kana:takon District Chief, was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Her swearing-in ceremony was arranged at a later date.

Justice of the Peace Alexandra David administered the oaths of office, officially welcoming the new Chiefs to Council. MCA leadership shared remarks highlighting the important work ahead and the Council's ongoing commitment to serve the people of Akwesasne with integrity, accountability, and care.

"This honour also comes with great responsibilities and the impact of your leadership can be far-reaching, across generations. You each bring different skills, education and life experiences," said Executive Director Shannon Roundpoint. "I wish you the best in making decisions

that are good for the community today, as well as for the future."

Grand Chief Leonard Lazore also addressed the attendees, warmly welcoming the new Chiefs to Council. "Today marks the beginning of an important chapter for our Council and our community," he noted. "I look forward to working with Chiefs Tom 'Gulla' Thomas, Cody David and Teresa Oakes as we work together for the benefit of Akwesasronon."

Congratulations to all newly elected District Chiefs. Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who attended and supported the ceremony.



## MCA SWORE IN KANA:TAKON DISTRICT CHIEF TERESA OAKES



In December 2025, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) is pleased to announce that Teresa Oakes was officially sworn in as Kana:takon District Chief, at the Kana:takon Recreation Center.

The swearing-in took place in a ceremony attended by immediate fam-

ily. Justice of the Peace Alexandra David administered the oath of office, formally welcoming Chief Oakes as she rejoins Council.

Chief Oakes was elected during the recent Kana:takon and Kawehno:ke by-election and will serve the remainder of the 2024–2027 Council term. She was unable to attend the larger ceremony held on December 19 due to unforeseen circumstances.

Congratulations to District Chief Teresa Oakes as she continues her work on Council for the remainder of the current term.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AKWESASNE RIGHTS & RESEARCH OFFICE

### 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Akwesasne Rights and Research Office focused in 2025 on advancing claims work while strengthening community understanding and participation in claims and consultation processes. ARRO supported the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in protecting lands, resources, and inherent rights, while prioritizing community education and transparent engagement

#### ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

##### 1. Claims Advisory Committee

ARRO reactivated the Claims Advisory Committee, reinstating a key forum for community guidance on claims negotiations and settlements. Comprising five community members, the CAC advises the MCA Principal Negotiation Team, reviews relevant materials, and helps ensure negotiation strategies reflect the best interests of the Mohawks of Akwesasne.

The committee also serves as a bridge between negotiations and the community by promoting transparency, maintaining confidentiality, and supporting the development of agreements and communication strategies that respect the community's rights, history, and future.



Claims Advisory Committee members pictured L-R: Peter Garrow, Mia McDonald, Mindy Thompson, Theresa Thompson, and William Sunday.

##### 2. New York State Claim

The New York State Claim advanced significantly in 2025 with the signing of the settlement agreement by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. First announced on January 6, 2025, the claim seeks the return of Akwesasne lands and resources in St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties. Following amendments during negotiations, the agreement was formally signed later in the year, representing a major step forward in this decades-long claim.

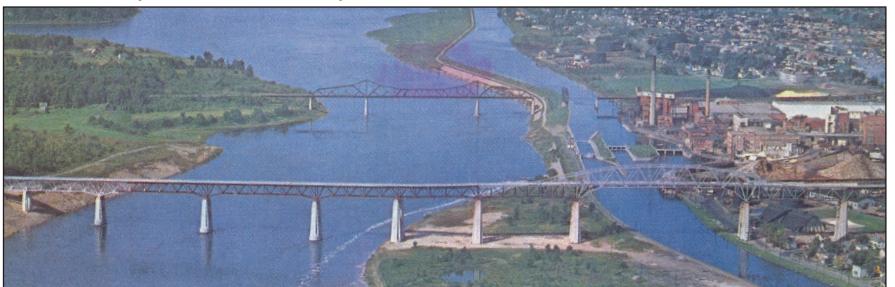
The settlement provides benefits for the Mohawks of Akwesasne, including up to eight semesters of free tuition at SUNY colleges, the return of lands in the southern portion of Akwesasne, restored access to Baxter, Barnhart, and Croil Islands, nine megawatts of low-cost power in perpetuity, and seventy million dollars in financial compensation over thirty-five years.

##### 3. Seaway Claim

Following the failed 2023 Seaway referendum, ARRO renewed efforts on the Seaway Claim, advancing negotiations while preparing for potential litigation. Originally filed in federal court in 1976, the claim addresses damages to Akwesasne resulting from the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the 1950s.

Elders are being consulted to share knowledge and lived experiences that guide both negotiation and legal strategies. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and ARRO continue to engage with relevant parties to ensure that all approaches reflect the best interests of the Mohawks of Akwe-

sne. This work balances careful negotiation with strong legal preparedness while prioritizing transparency and community involvement.



##### 4. Reburial and Repatriation

ARRO continued its work to protect and honor cultural heritage through the reburial and repatriation of Indigenous ancestors and artifacts. Activities were carried out in consultation with the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and in accordance with cultural protocols.

The office also engaged with museums to facilitate the return of items belonging to the Mohawks of Akwesasne and focused on building lasting relationships to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of future repatriation efforts. These initiatives reflect ARRO's ongoing commitment to cultural respect and stewardship.



"String of Wampum Early Iroquois. This string was taken to Pacific Coast by Indians about 1880".

##### 5. Cultural Awareness Training with CBSA

ARRO delivered two cultural awareness training sessions for the Canada Border Services Agency in March and November, reaching thirty-four officers and executives. The sessions enhanced understanding of Akwesasne's unique geography, history, and jurisdiction, supporting respectful engagement and improved communication at points of entry.

##### 6. Renewal of Parks Canada Contribution Agreement

ARRO renewed its contribution agreement with Parks Canada, strengthening collaboration on stewardship, consultation, and the integration of Akwesasne perspectives into Parks Canada initiatives. This partnership supports the protection of natural and cultural resources and reinforces ARRO's role in land and resource management decision-making.

#### Looking Forward

The achievements of 2025 reflect ARRO's continued commitment to advancing Akwesasne's rights, safeguarding cultural heritage, and promoting community-led participation in claims and consultation. Through strengthened advisory structures, renewed negotiations, and sustained partnerships, ARRO is building a foundation for lasting progress. The year's work demonstrates that community-guided decision-making remains essential to protecting Akwesasne's lands, rights, and culture for present and future generations.



# AKWESASNE ELECTION LAW REFERENDUM

Sec. 16.2 (a) Amendment

**JANUARY 31, 2026**  
**9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

**Voting poll locations are:**

- 📍 Ahkwesahsne Mohawk School (AMS)
- 📍 Tsi Snaihne School
- 📍 Kana:takon School

The ballot question  
to be voted on will  
read as follows:



Per MCR 2025/2026 – #281: "As a Voter of the Mohawks of Akwesasne, do you approve of the proposed amendment to the Akwesasne Election Law Section 16.2(a), to read:

*(a) A petition requesting the removal of a District Chief is signed by an equal number plus one of eligible voters from that District Chief's district, based on the official total number of votes he or she received on election or by-election day, and delivered to the Council at a duly convened General Meeting; or.."*

For more information, contact the Chief Referendum Officer at the Angus Mitchell Memorial Building (15 Akwesasne Street), by calling 613-575-2250 ext. 2126, or by email at [chief.electoral.officer@akwesasne.ca](mailto:chief.electoral.officer@akwesasne.ca).

## IF WE CAN'T FIND YOU, WE CAN'T HELP YOU

**When the snow hits this  
season, be sure emergency  
services can find you.**

**Please ensure that your  
home address is visible.**



**CENTRAL DISPATCH: 613-575-2000**

