



54th Annual

"Honoring All of Our Relations"

Native American Critical Issues Conference

February 29-March 2, 2024
Manistee, MI
Little River Casino Resort



Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Gary Peterson

Teaching for Social Justice:
If You're Doing The Work,
You're Already in Trouble

Michigan Indian Education Council

<https://www.mieconference.org/>



Little River
CASINO RESORT

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We value your feedback! Please complete the survey after taking conference sessions.

President's Greeting

Boozhoo (Greetings),

On behalf of the Michigan Indian Education Council, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2024 Native American Critical Issues Conference. Over the next few days, the presenters will be providing important information about issues impacting American Indian communities throughout the state of Michigan and beyond. Our theme this year focuses on honoring all of our relations. As we gather here in Naaminitigong (Land Under the Trees), we will be thinking about how our actions honor the sacrifices our ancestors made on our behalf, as well as how we are impacting the future generations. We will ponder about what we learn in each session and how we can use these teachings to help revitalize and reindigenize our communities. As always, I encourage you to ask questions, share information, and above all, take time to make new friends!

Miigwech (Thank you),

Dr. Martin Reinhardt, MIEC President



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Donations help us to carry out our mission of creating an opportunity for a broad range of constituents to hear about serious issues impacting Indian people and tribes in Michigan, as well as learning about best practices from professionals in various fields in a holistic manner.

Michigan Indian Education Council 54th Annual

Native American Critical Issues Conference

February 29 - March 2, 2024

Little River Casino Resort, Manistee, MI

Thursday, February 29, 2024

10:00am-4:00pm	Pre-Conference Session Hosted by MSU Extension
4:00-8:00pm	Reception Refreshments Provided Sponsored by Michigan Inter-Tribal Land Grant Extension System

Friday, March 1, 2024

7:00-8:30am	Breakfast Sponsored by the Little River Band Of Ottawa Indians		
8:30-10:00am	Opening Ceremony Keynote Speaker, Dr. Gary Peterson Sponsored by GVSU		
10:00-10:15am	Break		
10:15-11:15am	General Track 1 101	General Track 2 102	Youth Track 103
11:15-11:30am	Break		
11:30-12:30pm	201	202	203
12:45-1:45pm	Lunch On Your Own		
1:45-2:45pm	Little River Band Culture Session Sponsored by Little River Band Of Ottawa Indians		
2:45-3:00pm	Break		
3:00-4:00pm	301	302	303
4:00-4:15pm	Break		
4:15-5:15pm	401	402	403
5:15-5:30pm	Break		
5:30-6:30pm	Michigan Boarding School Study Facilitated Discussion		
6:30-7:30pm	Michigan Native American Studies Resource Sharing Discussion		



Saturday, March 2, 2024

7:30-8:30am	Continental Breakfast Sponsored by Bay Mills Community College		
8:30-9:30am	CMTED and IEI Updates		
9:30-9:45am	Break		
9:45-10:45am	501	502	503
10:45-11:00am	Break		
11:00-12:00pm	601	602	603
12:15-1:45pm	Lunch MIEC Distinguished Service Award Closing Ceremony Sponsored by Little River Band of Ottawa Indians		

Honoring All of Our Relations

From our position in time, we look back and say miigwech to our ancestors who sacrificed so much that we might enjoy mino-bimaadiz—the good life. We look forward and strive to make the world a better place for subsequent seventh generations. We look around us in all directions and acknowledge that we are part of a spiritual ecology that requires our adherence to long held principles regarding our relationships with each other and more than human relatives. We are reminded that ceremony is necessary to mark new beginnings as we commit to healing Mother Earth and in this way we honor all of our relations.

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DAY 1 | Friday, March 1, 2024

Plenary Session 1: Breakfast

7:00-8:30am, Event Center

Sponsored by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

Plenary Session 2: Opening Ceremony, Welcome & Keynote

8:30-10:00am, Event Center

Opening Ceremony Welcome Song, Thunder Bear Prayer by Kenny Pheasant

Welcome, Dr. Martin Reinhardt, MIEC President and Larry Romanelli, Ogema, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

General MIEC Election, Rochelle Ettawageshik, MIEC Vice President

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Gary Peterson, "Teaching for Social Justice: If You're Doing The Work, You're Already In Trouble"

Sponsored by Grand Valley State University


101: Games that Save Our Ways

10:15-11:15am, Odawa Room

Anthony Drews

Learning our language can be difficult; finding opportunities to speak our language and practice can be even more so. Anxiety and fear often bubble up at varying levels and times throughout our language learning journey, holding us back from actually producing *gidiniwewininaan* (our sound). Nashke Games has developed a line of games with language resources to help take the stress out of learning and create opportunities for language learners of all ages and levels to speak together. Whether you are a beginning learner, or a first language speaker, our games help bring language back into the home in a way that will engage even your youngest.

Through the support of guided gameplay and language resources, participants will spend over half the session immersed in language while playing new games that can be used to bring language and culture into the classroom. Additionally, participants will get a short overview of Nashke Games: our mission, vision, and philanthropic pursuits.



102: Meeting the Changing Needs of Community through Career & Technical Education

10:15-11:15am, Ojibwe Room

Jon Anthony, Courtney Lewis, & Tosha Otto

At a time when people are more skeptical of the benefits of traditional higher education than ever before, it is safe to say Career & Technical Education is becoming increasingly more appealing. Providing shorter training in fields that lead to employment with little to no school debt is certainly an avenue for individual success, and ultimately can lead to generational wealth. Join us, Waganakising Odawa Career & Technical Education Program or WOCTEP, for a look at how we have chosen to support our relatives as best we can through a CTE focused NACTEP grant. The principal concept of NACTEP is to provide training in high-skill, high-demand, and high-wage industries for Native American and Special Population learners. As a long-time recipient of this grant, LTBB has a unique perspective on the need to remain fluid while pursuing these goals. We will share our successes as well as our challenges, discuss our history to add context to where we are now, and where we hope to be in the future.

103: Eshkiniigijig (Adolescents): Anishinaabek "Coming of Age" Traditions and Protocol

10:15-11:15am, Event Center

Paula Finrock

As Anishinaabek continue to revitalize and reclaim their cultural practices, there is an increased urgency to include and encourage adaptations to education. This presentation is one of the first of its kind to include Anishinaabe teachings and protocol centered around puberty and transitioning into adulthood as an Indigenous youth. This presentation includes an interactive grounding activity through an Indigenous lens that can be used outside of this session for a more culturally inclusive learning environment. *Disclaimer: the information shared in this presentation is specific to the Anishinaabek and should be taught by a Native Educator. It is, however, open to anyone to learn in a respectful manner.

11:15-11:30am Break

201: National Indian Education Study Panel Presentation

Dr. Chris Gordon, Dr. Susan Faircloth & Dr. Martin Reinhardt

11:30 -12:30pm, Odawa Room

Join members of the Technical Review Panel for an overview and discussion regarding the National Indian Education Study (NIES)--the largest continuous study of American Indian and Alaska Native students in the United States ever conducted.

202: The Hemp Tribal Research Initiative for Michigan: A "New Green Revolution"

Dr. James DeDecker & Emily Proctor

11:30 -12:30pm, Ojibwe Room

Hemp is legally defined as Cannabis spp. with less than 0.30% THC, the primary psychoactive compound in marijuana. Hemp is grown to produce three primary products including grain, fiber and non-THC cannabinoids like Cannabidiol (CBD). Cannabis has become part of the "New Green Revolution" sweeping Indian Country as communities seek to address food sovereignty, health disparities and economic development in relationship with plant relatives. In 2020, Bay Mills Community College (BMCC) and Michigan State University (MSU) received support from the USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Tribal Colleges Research Grant program to investigate the potential for hemp production as a tool for agricultural and economic development in Indigenous communities. The Hemp Tribal Research Initiative for Michigan (Hemp TRIM) project engaged partners at BMCC's Waishkey Bay Farm, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College and Little Traverse Bay Bands' Ziibimijwang Farm in hemp variety trials and outreach to build agricultural research capacity at the tribal institutions while working to identify adapted and compliant hemp genetics for Michigan. While the nascent U.S. hemp industry faces ongoing challenges related to regulation, processing capacity and markets, our project demonstrated that hemp production is feasible for tribes when best management practices identified through our work are applied.

203: Better Than Tik Tok: The Case for Language, Culture & Traditional Medicine for Youth

Dr. Chloe Kannan, Alk Sabatine, Rowan Carter, Piper Bernier, George Solomon & Molly Escherich



11:30 -12:30pm, Event Center

This session is presented by youth researchers from the Indigenous Education Youth Collective. They will present their perspectives and their own youth participatory action research projects around the importance of language, culture, and Traditional Medicine for Anishinaabe youth in their local community. Get ready for a session that will show how our youth are fighting to save our language, culture, and knowledge.

12:45-1:45pm Lunch on Your Own

River Rock Grill & Rapids Bistro are onsite

Plenary Session 3 | Little River Band Culture Session

Gary DiPiazza

1:45-2:45pm, Event Center

Come learn about the history and culture of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. Bring your mocs and join us in a round dance. Sponsored by Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

2:45-3:00pm Break

301: Waganakising Odawak Community Co-designed Indigenous STEAM

Amanda Weinert, Kerstine Omev, Kayley Lewis & Riley Albrecht

3:00-4:00 pm, Odawa Room

Join our session to hear about intergenerational STEAM learning within the Waganakising Odawak community. We collaborate with other LTBB governmental departments, elders, knowledge keepers, and community co-designers to create culturally-relevant experiential learning. ISTEAM is a National Science Foundation funded collaborative of researchers and educators that engages in cognitive and community co-design research to advance general knowledge, develop approaches for engaging youth in land and water-based learning, and provide learning materials to Indigenous families.

This is a multi-site research-based project that is based in community design. The research gathered from this project will serve two main purposes:

- Bezhik (1): Develop a Waganakising Odawak educational framework that can be incorporated into LTBB tribal programming.
- Niizh (2): Develop professional development opportunities for other Tribal Nations to create similar Indigenous education framework based in community.

During our session you'll hear from youth and educators about their time on Jiimaan (Canoe) Journey, connecting with the land where our community lodge lives and our relatives have been rematriated, sugarbush season, ice fishing, and more!

302: Blossom Anishinaabemowin Project Translations

Kenny Pheasant & Carla Osawamick

3:00-4:00 pm, Ojibwe Room

The Blossom Anishinaabemowin Project's goal is to build a digital bilingual Anishinaabemowin/English library of original children's books focused on Anishinaabe culture regarding traditional food, agriculture, or nutritional practices. Kenny Pheasant and Carla Osawamick will showcase two books that are in different stages of production and explain the process used to translate and edit the books from English to Anishinaabemowin.

303: Beyond Reservation Dogs: Influences on Native Youth Identity

Dr. Chloe Kannan, Jennifer Dale-Burton, Jay Johnson, Lorelai Kachur, Kamryn Corbiere & Caliana Bouschor

3:00-4:00 pm, Event Center

This session is presented by youth researchers from the Indigenous Education Youth Collective. They will present their perspectives and their own youth participatory action research projects around how Native youth identity is influenced in today's world. Get ready for a session that will open up your eyes to how Native youth make sense of themselves in today's society.

4:00-4:15pm Break



401: Honoring All of our Relatives: Cattail and Sweetgrass

Yvonne Peterson

4:15-5:15pm, Odawa Room

As a Chehalis Tribal Master Weaver, I work to share basketry as a sit-beside art. Participants will have an opportunity to work with cattail and sweetgrass, and use their curriculum knowledge to create a culturally relevant plan for working with basketry material. Many basketry plants are first foods and medicine for Indigenous People in the Puget Salish area of Washington State. The trees and plants stood up at the beginning of time to serve the humans who were coming – they provided the teachings handed down through origin stories and basketry continues to be an art reclaimed and revitalized by Master Weavers. Baskets will be examined for materials, technique, utilitarian purpose, and for the story's baskets tell about climate conditions, weather impacts upon basketry materials, and the teachings about how animals, numerous trees, and plants supply tools for weavers. The extended family and village members support the gathering, processing, storage, and weaving of basketry – honoring the collaborative efforts to revitalize a traditional art of Tribal people that was taken through laws, policies, and a western assimilation education system purposely erasing the traditional knowledge of Tribes. Traditional first foods, plants, and medicine and the basketry created from the same plants complete the circle of traditional ecological knowledge.

402: Creating Community Through Culture in the Virtual Classroom


Kathleen Carty-Fisher

4:15-5:15pm, Ojibwe Room

Looking to the future of higher education for Native students, Bay Mills Community College offers an example of a tribal college which has embraced distance learning, creating a highly effective educational model which promotes access to higher education and nurtures community through the inclusion of cultural pedagogy in the virtual classroom. Teaching remote courses there has impressed upon me how the accessibility of distance learning, coupled with integration of Native American culture throughout curricula, advances student success.

Virtual learning transcends borders, encouraging enrollment of Native students across the country. Students connect in the online classroom, engaging about culturally relevant topics where Native identities and ancestral knowledge are valued. In this supportive environment, students find empowerment as members of the tribal college community. Honoring cultural wisdom is at the heart of this model, and students in my courses are excited to engage in virtual learning, citing the network of support they experience in a classroom community reflective of their cultures.

In bringing together distance learning and the integration of culturally grounded education, tribal colleges can illustrate a framework for student success, opening opportunities to higher education and cultivating community, impacting the lives of Native students for the next seven generations.



403: Seeking a Higher Education

Karen Moses

4:15-5:15pm, Event Center

In this presentation, the speaker will share videos from various Native Americans who sought and followed a higher education after graduating from high school. They aim to continue to get advice from others who have succeeded in college or the military and encourage Native American youth to set higher goals for themselves after high school.

5:15-5:30pm Break

Plenary Session 4 | Michigan Boarding School Study Facilitated Discussion

Dr. Veronica Pasfield, Leora Tadjerson, Dr. Aaron Payment & Dr. Martin Reinhardt

5:30 – 6:30pm, Event Center

Members of the Michigan Boarding School Study group will facilitate a discussion about the plans to conduct the study.

6:30pm Dinner on Your Own

Big Lake Buffet, River Rock Grill & Rapids Bistro are onsite

Special Interest Session | Michigan Native American Studies Resource Sharing Discussion

Dr. Martin Reinhardt

6:30 – 7:30pm, Event Center

Dr. Martin Reinhardt will lead a discussion focused on sharing [Native American studies faculty and courses](#) between higher education institutions in the State of Michigan.

DAY 2 | Saturday, March 2, 2024

7:00-8:30am Continental Breakfast

Sponsored by Bay Mills Community College

Plenary - Session 5 | CMTED and IEI Updates

Lisa McGeshick, Melissa Isaac, Nate Beelen & Jennifer LaPointe

8:30-9:30am, Event Center

Representatives from the Michigan Department of Education's Indigenous Education Initiative and Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments will share updates on shared work to support Indigenous education.



9:30-9:45am Break

Saturday Series 500 | 9:45-10:45am

501: Wenji-gikinoo'amaadiwin: The Reason is Education

Melissa Isaac, Lisa McGeshick, Melissa Petoskey, & Holly Bird

9:45-10:45am, Odawa Room

A panel of Indigenous kwewag will share their experiences serving on local district boards of education. Find out how they secured their seats. Hear their very different experiences. Understand how these positions can impact Indigenous learners and Tribal communities. Learn how your local board of education can strengthen educational sovereignty.

502: Honoring Grandmother's Dreams

Sonja Ballew

9:45-10:45am, Ojibwe Room

In this session, the presenter will share the honor, hardship, and resilience in fulfilling their Grandmother's Dreams. Their Grandmother, Rosemary Gaskin, worked dutifully to have our Native Youth receive an education and get out of poverty. She left a legacy and impact in Indian Education in Michigan. She always shared and elevated the community. In doing so, Rosemary left an impact that has rippled through the public school systems in the Eastern UP of Michigan and in Indian Country.

503: Nashke Native Games

Anthony Drews

9:45-10:45am, Event Center

These Native Games sessions are opportunities for youth and their families to play Native games together. Come prepared to have a good time and learn about Native American cultures.

10:45-11:00am Break



Photo credit: Nashke Games

DAY 2 | Saturday, March 2, 2024

Series 600 | 11:00-12:00pm

601: Dibaadendiziwin: Gratitude Projects in the Classroom

Tyler Dettloff

11:00-12:00pm, Odawa Room

The presenter will share classroom applications and an assignment model for student responses to Indigenous programming or events. Designed to replace a "Thank You" letter, the gratitude project assignment allows for individual and group humility (dibaadendiziwin) in the classroom. Modified from the technical "Monetary Gift Thank You Letter" format, the gratitude project assignment aims to formalize humility in the classroom by valuing cultural expression with reciprocity. The presenter will show the process of modifying the assignment for attendees to use for their own applications.

602: Building Allies with Ecological Kinship

Jefferson Ballew

11:00-12:00pm, Ojibwe Room

Discussion on how to responsibly create Ecological Allies beyond being Indigenous. Tribal affiliation should not be a requirement in order to protect and maintain Mother Earth's resources, creating criteria for responsibilities and accountabilities for both Indigenous harvesters as well as Non Indigenous harvesters.

603: Nashke Native Games

Anthony Drews

11:00-12:00pm, Event Center

These Native Games sessions are opportunities for youth and their families to play Native games together. Come prepared to have a good time and learn about Native American cultures.

Plenary Session 6 | Lunch sponsored by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

12:15 -1:45pm, Event Center

MIEC Distinguished Service Award Presented by Frank Ettawageshik

Distinguished Service Award Acceptance Speech by IEI Staff

Closing Ceremony Prayer by Frank Ettawageshik and Travel Song by Thunder Bear

MIEC Distinguished Service Award

Each year since 2004, MIEC has selected an individual or an organization to receive an MIEC Distinguished Service Award. Recipients have included educators, community leaders, and organizations that exemplify best practices in Michigan Indian education. Award recipients are invited to provide a plenary acceptance speech during the closing ceremony at the annual conference. Recipients of this award are also entitled to a waiver of the NACIC registration fee (organizational awardees are allowed one registration waiver).

This year MIEC recognizes Michigan Department of Education Indigenous Education Initiative Staff for their outstanding work.



Pictured from left to right:
Melissa Isaac, Nate Beelen,
Jordan Shananaquet,
Jennifer Huisken-LaPointe,
Lynn LaPointe & Kriya Gaillard

Speaker Biographies

Jon Anthony, Courtney Lewis, Mary Schneider, & Tosha Otto

Jon Anthony (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians) WOCTEP Project Director, LTBB Odawa Indians

Jon Anthony is the project director of WOCTEP. He is a citizen of Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and has served his community through the Niigaandiwin Education Department for a decade in various roles. Jon grew up in the U.P. near Marquette with little connection to his people and nearly no interest in education, where he, eventually having a change of heart, earned his BFA in Drawing & Painting at Northern Michigan University. Next, he went on to complete his MFA in Painting from Michigan State University, where he had the opportunity to teach a handful of courses. After some disillusionment with the art world, Jon decided to come home to his ancestral lands to build a connection to the community he had been missing out on his entire life.



Jefferson Ballew IV (Pokagon Band of Potawatomie)

Jefferson Ballew IV, Bear Clan of The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi is a Traditional Life Ways Coordinator. Jefferson provides access to Traditional Environmental Knowledge that leads to sustainability and environmental harmony. Jefferson's background ranges from implementing federal legislation on behalf of the ancestors in protecting burial grounds and recovering intellectual properties to harvesting seasonal foods, protecting and maintaining their environments and the cultural origin stories that give sacredness to our existence.



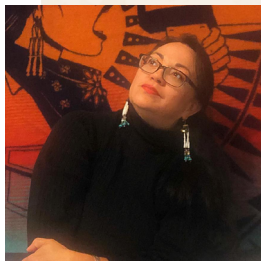
Sonja Ballew (Bay Mills/Sault Tribe Ojibwe)

Sonja Rose Ballew (Gaskin), Loon Clan of The Ojibwe Nation has a long family legacy of "Being for the People". Eldest granddaughter of Rosemary Gaskin, Sonja has carried the burden of activism, educational reform, providing access to language and cultural and feeding the masses. Currently, Sonja is teaching Anishnabemowin at Lake Superior State University and a Graduate Student at Montana State University, Bozeman in Native American Studies.

Piper Bernier

Piper Bernier is an 8th grade student at JKL Bahweting School.

Holly Bird (Perépucha (San Felipe Pueblo)/N'de Apache/Yaqui Tribe)



Holly T. Bird has a long history of environmental and Indigenous activism. In college she canvassed for PIRGIM, focusing on water contamination. She was also appointed as the Native American representative for the Michigan Council Against Domestic Assault while doing post-graduate work at MSU. While attending law school Holly created the Illinois Native American Bar Association and is credited for removing the “Redskins” mascot from a local school system. She is a published author of articles involving Native American law that are quoted regularly by the US Office of Civil Rights. In 2008, Ms. Bird was appointed as an Assoc./Acting Chief Judge for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa

Indians, where she served until 2011. In 2010, she was appointed to the Supreme Court for the NHBPI Tribe and continues in that capacity today. In 2013, Ms. Bird was awarded American Arbitration Association’s 2013 Higginbotham Fellowship and became the first Native American arbitrator in the US.

Ms. Bird served as Ground Coordinator and Co-Executive Director for the Water Protectors Legal Collective, the leading legal service at the NoDAPL camp/protest in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Currently, Ms. Bird serves as Co-Executive Director for Title Track, a Michigan nonprofit dedicated to clean water, racial equity, and youth empowerment. She is also the Equal Justice Works Fellow, Criminal Victims Access Program Attorney for Michigan Indian Legal Services. Ms. Bird also serves as a Trustee on the TCAPS School Board, as a Board Member for the Grand Traverse Area Children’s Garden, and a founding Council Member of the Northern Michigan E3, and on the Federal Task Force for Research on Violence Against American Indians. Most importantly, Ms. Bird, a descendant of the Perépucha (San Felipe Pueblo)/N'de Apache/Yaqui Tribe, is the mother of 3 amazing humans, a wife, and delights in her Indigenous Culture and the outdoors.

Ella Black

Ella Black is a 9th grade student at Sault Area High School.

Caliana Bouschor

Caliana Bouschor is an 8th grade student at JKL Bahweting Anishnaabe School.

Rowan Carter

Rowan Carter is a 7th grade student at JKL Bahweting School.

Kathleen Carty-Fisher

Instructor of Communications, Bay Mills Community College

Kathleen Carty-Fisher is an instructor of Communications at Bay Mills Community College, where she specializes in distance learning and teaches writing and composition.



Kamryn Corbiere

Kamryn Corbiere is a 10th grade student at Sault Area High School.

Speaker Biographies

Jennifer Mikinaaikwe Dale-Burton (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Editor, Win Awenen Nisitotung, The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Newspaper

Sault Tribe citizen Jennifer Mikinaaikwe Dale-Burton is a member of the Miskwaadis Dodem and lives in Gnoozhekaaning, Bay Mills Township. She is the editor of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians newspaper, Win Awenen Nisitotung, and oversees its Communications Division. She serves on her tribe's Conservation Committee as a subsistence fisher, hunter and gatherer; MMIP Tribal Community Response Plan Team; Tribal Action Plan to Combat Substance Abuse Advisory Board; and Tribal Food Sovereignty Advisory Committee. With Chloe Kaanan and Jeremy Wright-Kim, she mentors a group of Anishinaabe teens and pre-teens to facilitate their entrance and participation in Anishinaabe community and lifeways.



Dr. James DeDecker

Director, MSU-UPREC, Michigan State University



Dr. James DeDecker is Director of MSU's Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center and a Specialist in Community Food Systems with MSU Extension. He earned MS and PhD degrees in Crop Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and came to MSU in 2012 as a Field Crop Educator with MSU Extension before moving into his current position in 2019. James' participatory research and outreach work is focused on enhancing sustainable agriculture, integrated pest management and the human dimensions of agricultural systems. He has partnered with MI and WI Tribes on agriculture projects related to gardening, corn, hemp, and fruit since 2014.

Tyler Dettloff (Anishinaabe Métis)

Assistant Professor of English, Lake Superior State University

Tyler Dettloff (Anishinaabe Métis/Italian) is a poet, songwriter, and Assistant Professor of English at LSSU. He lives in Gnoozhekaning (Bay Mills, Michigan) and is the 2024-2026 Poet Laureate of Chippewa County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.




Anthony Drews (Leech Lake)

Founder of Nashke Games, Nashke Native Games



Tony is a first generation descendent from Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag (Leech Lake band of Ojibwe). His Indian name is Chi-Noodin (Big Wind) He is sturgeon clan and a lifelong student of our culture and Language. Tony has worked in the Native American community his whole professional career.



Tony worked at Ain Dah Yung as the Residential Director and oversaw operations of their Native American youth homeless emergency shelter and transitional living shelter. Tony was also Vice President of Operations for Circle of Life Anishinaabe Home Care.

Tony spent 5 years working with Anoka-Hennepin Schools as the Indian Education Advisor. He now works as a Program Coordinator, and he leads the American Indian Family Empowerment Fund at the Tiwahe Foundation, in addition to being the Founder and President of Nashke Native Games.

Tony attended the University of Minnesota and studied Sociology, American Indian Studies, and the Ojibwe Language. Tony is Happily married to his wife Kathy and has three children. Tony is a recent Finnovation Fellow and sits on the Board of Directors for the Anoka Hennepin Educational Foundation and is on the Anoka-Hennepin American Indian Education Parent Advisory Committee.

Molly Escherich

Molly Escherich is a 7th grade student at JKL Bahweting School.

Dr. Susan Faircloth (Coharie Tribe of North Carolina)



After 20 years as a professor and academic leader, Dr. Susan C. Faircloth (an enrolled member of the Coharie Tribe of North Carolina) recently stepped away from her academic appointments to form an independent education consulting group, Two Feathers Consulting, LLC. In this role, she aims to more directly engage and serve individuals, communities, schools, and organizations. Dr. Faircloth's work centers on Indigenous education, the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students with special educational needs, and the moral and ethical dimensions of school leadership. She has published widely in

such journals as Educational Administration Quarterly, Harvard Educational Review, The Journal of Special Education Leadership, International Studies in Educational Administration, Values and Ethics in Educational Administration, Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education, Rural Special Education Quarterly, and Journal of Disability Policy Studies. Dr. Faircloth is the editor of Oxford Bibliographies in Education, senior associate editor of the American Journal of Education, Associate Editor of AERA Open, and a member of the editorial board of the Journal of American Indian Education. In addition to editorial service, Dr. Faircloth has been actively involved at the national level, including serving as the Chair of the Technical Review Panel for the National Indian Education Study and as the former Vice President of AERA's Division A.

Dr. Faircloth has also had the honor of serving as a Fulbright Senior Scholar to Aotearoa (New Zealand), Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Scholar with the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA, research fellow with the American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Research Center at the University of Colorado Denver, and a William C. Friday Fellow for Human Relations. Dr. Faircloth attributes her pathway into education to her parents and her tribal elders. According to her, "they knew I was destined to be an educator long before I did".

Speaker Biographies

Paula Finrock (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

SNAP-Ed Project Director and Cultural Competence Consultant, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District



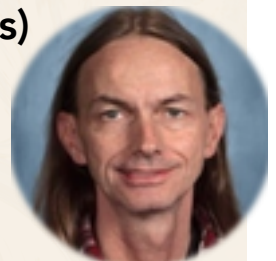
Paula Finrock zhaaganaashii-noozwin. Waabinigiishweshiins ndizhinikaaz. Migizi ndoodem. Anishinaabe kwe ndaaw. Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians ndadibendaagwaz. Bahweting ndidaa. Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District ndooninokiitage. Project Director miinwaa Cultural Competence Consultant ndoonaangzhe.

My English name is Paula Finrock and my Anishinaabe name is Little Bittern. My clan is eagle. I am an Ojibwe woman, a citizen of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. I work at the EUPISD where I am a Project Director and Cultural Competence Consultant.

As a Project Director of the LifeSPAN SNAP-Ed program, the focus is to help families gain knowledge through evidence-based culturally relevant programming and increase access to local resources that support healthy eating and physical activity. In addition, I am the Cultural Competence Consultant for our area school districts in the Eastern Upper Peninsula where I support school staff around Anishinaabek inclusion and engagement within school policies, academics, and environment to better serve our Anishinaabe youth. I have 18+ years as an educator in early childhood up to the college level in multiple areas ranging from general education, physical activity, health, special education, and Native American culture/traditions. I have a B.A. in Education from Michigan State University and an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction from Lake Superior State University. I am currently an Anishinaabemowin Pane Immersion student at Bay Mills Community College and graduate student at Western Michigan University in the tribal governance certificate program. I have spent my life learning the culture as well as educating others at schools, festivals, fairs, ect. with my family/relatives/friends and of course my wonderful parents, Lou Anne Bush and Henry Tiq-ba Bush. I am grateful for their teachings in life as I continue on with Tiq-ba's legacy while teaching my two children as well as through multiple aspects of my life. I also love to bead, sew, and eat yummy food! Mii'iw Miigwech. Thank you, that is all.

Dr. Chris Gordon (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Dr. Gordon has worked at Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishinaabe School since 1999 and served as the coordinator of Anishinaabe language and culture for 22 years before moving to the director position. He strives to instill a foundation of Respect for self and others while building knowledge in the Language and Culture of the Anishinaabe. The role of Director of Curriculum Instruction now provides an opportunity to expand and support the integration of the Anishinaabe language and culture throughout all aspects of our school. Dr. Gordon is also the drum keeper for the school drum Ogimaa-minisinoo. He was raised here in Baawiting (The Place of the Rapids - Sault Ste. Marie) and continues to live with his wife Janet and two daughters Tia and Maci.



Melissa Isaac (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan)

Current Board of Education Treasurer, Mt. Pleasant Public Schools



Melissa Isaac (Swan Woman) is sturgeon clan and a citizen of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. She is married to Nathan Isaac and they have four children. She is a woodland style dancer at pow-wows and has served as head dancer, head dance judge, arena director, and master of ceremonies at community celebrations. She was a special guest of the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden and did attend the President Biden's 2021 State of the Union Address for her work in addressing youth mental awareness in her community. Melissa serves as the Gizhwaasod: Protector of the Young for the Michigan Department of Education's Indigenous Education Initiative. Utilizing the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver, Melissa holds an Associate of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from Mid-Michigan College. She has acquired a Bachelor of Science in Education, Elementary Education from Central Michigan University (CMU). She received her Master of Science in Administration, Organizational Leadership from CMU. Melissa is currently a doctoral candidate in the PK-12 Educational Leadership program at CMU. Melissa was appointed to the Mt. Pleasant Public Schools Board of Education in October 2022 and serves as the board's Treasurer.

Jay Johnson

Jay Johnson is a 10th grade student at Sault Area High School.

Lorelai Kachur

Lorelai Kachur is an 8th grade student at Sault Area High School.

Dr. Chloe Kannan (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Assistant Professor of Education, Lake Superior State University; Director, Indigenous Education Youth Collective

Dr. Chloe Alexandra Kannan is a practitioner-scholar who is a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She is an Assistant Professor of Education at Lake Superior State University (LSSU) and the director of the Indigenous Education Youth Collective, a Native youth participatory action research team for local Anishinaabe youth focusing on issues of college access, equity, and identity. This established research-practice partnership between the University of Michigan, LSSU, and local Anishinaabe community members has helped inspire Kannan's commitment to build capacity in youth participatory action research, community partnerships, and Indigenous methodology within research and practice.

Speaker Biographies

Courtney Lewis (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)

Student Advisor, LTBB Odawa Indians

Aanii! Courtney Lewis ndizhinikaaz. Waganakising Odawa ndaaw. Alanson, Michigan ndoonjibaa. WOCTEP Student Advisor ndoonaangzhe. Niigaandiwin Education Department ndoonjinokiitaage.

Hello! My name is Courtney Lewis. I am of the Waganakising Odawak. I am from Alanson, Michigan. I am a WOCTEP Student Advisor, and I work for the Niigaandiwin Education Department.

Courtney Lewis grew up and currently resides in Alanson, Michigan. She is a member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB). She is Student Advisor for WOCTEP – Waganakising Odawa Career and Technical Education Program housed within the Niigaandiwin Education Department for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.

She is currently serving on the Board of Education for Alanson Public Schools, for which she was elected in 2020. Courtney's passion for student success and advocacy on the Board of Education have assisted in her success assisting post-secondary students in CTE with WOCTEP.

In her free time, Courtney enjoys spending time with her husband (Chris) and two daughters (Kayley and Maia). She also enjoys various hobbies such as beading earrings and hats, listening to audiobooks, watching NFL football (Go Lions!).

Kayley Lewis (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Youth)

LTBB ISTEAM Niibin/Summer 2023 Camper

Aanii! Kayley Lewis ndizhinikaaz, Alanson, Michigan Ndoonjibaa, 10 ngiinjindaadiz.

Hello! My name is Kayley Lewis, I am from Alanson, Michigan and I am 10 years old.

Kayley Lewis is a descendant of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians who lives in Alanson, Michigan with her parents, little sister, two dogs, and her cat. Kayley is in 5th grade and enjoys the many things that Northern Michigan has to offer.

Kayley fell in love with the Anishinabek teachings offered to her during the ISTEAM summer camps in 2023, where she learned about the Waganakising Odawak culture, traditional teachings, and cultural activities.

Attending these camps has offered her a confidence in her cultural knowledge that she wouldn't otherwise have, as there is always power in education.



Lisa McGeshick (Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)

Vice-President, Watersmeet Board of Education

Lisa McGeshick is an enrolled member of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians. She holds a Master's in Education, Administration & Supervision from Northern Michigan University, '20 and serves as an elected member of the Watersmeet School Board. Her work emphasizes infusing Anishinaabe culture in educational spaces and empowering youth. She is also currently the Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) & Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA) representative for her tribe. Lisa is the Treasurer for the Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments. Lisa enjoys seasonal activities such as hiking and snowshoeing in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan with her son, TC (daughter in law Tricia), son Evan and her two dogs, Chief and Pepper. Lisa loves doing beadwork and painting canvas with acrylics.



Karen Moses (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Retired SSG Army



I graduated from high school in St. Ignace, MI. I went on to attend and graduate from Northern Michigan University in Marquette MI in law enforcement. I graduated from the Police Academy at Northwestern Michigan College in Petoskey, MI. I went on to become an over the road truck driver and eventually enlisted in the MI National Guard out of Howell, MI as a transportation specialist. This National Guard enlistment led me to enlisting in the active-duty Army after my divorce in 2002. I became a transportation specialist for the United States Army until Dec 2012 when I was medically retired. After returning to MI, I used my GI Bill to return to college. I attended Bay Mills Community

College graduating from the Great Lakes Native American Studies program and started their Anishnabek Language Courses.

I returned to NMU, graduating in the Native American studies program. During this period of study at NMU I also took Social Work courses.

Since my graduation, I have enjoyed my retirement and learned to garden, gather and harvest foods, and canning and freezing foods. I have taken the time to continue learning about my Ojibwe ancestry and traditional ways. I have used my hobbies to set-up vendors tables and sell my craft wares and canning foods at various Native American events.

Speaker Biographies

Kerstine Omei (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)

Director of LTBB Niigaandiwini Education Department, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Niigaandiwini Education Department



Kerstine Omei is a Tribal Citizen of the Waganakising Odawak (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians - LTBB) and also serves as the Director of Education for her Tribal Nation. In her capacity as Director, she provides oversight of the LTBB Indigenous, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (ISTEAM) program, one of three sites that participate in an Indigenous collaborative group of researchers and educators that engage in cognitive and community co-design research to advance general knowledge, develop approaches for engaging youth in land- and water-based learning, and provide learning materials to Indigenous families. Kerstine also serves as a Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments representative as well as a member of the Bay Mills Community College's Board of Regents.

Carla Osawamick (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)



Carla Osawamick, a member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, is from the Petoskey area of northern Michigan. She is a lifelong Anishinaabemowin language learner, as well as a language teacher. Carla has an Associates degree in Anishinaabemowin Language Instruction and a 6-year diploma from the Nishnaabemwin Pane Immersion Program at Bay Mills Community College. Carla retired from her fulltime career working for Gijigowi Anishinaabemowin Language Department, and continues to teach asynchronous online Ojibwe language classes for BMCC.

Tosha Otto (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)

Student Advisor, LTBB Odawa Indians

Tosha Otto is a citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. She has spent the past 20 years working to reduce barriers and increase services for individuals and families within her tribal community. Tosha has a diverse set of work experiences within the fields of education, child welfare, and mental health. Her academic and professional journey began in a career and technical education program, WOCTEP's parent program, WOBTT (Waganakising Odawa Business Technology and Training). Having personal experience with career and technology programming taught Tosha the significance of fostering student success through advocacy and empowerment. After earning her certificate in the WOBTT program, Tosha earned a Bachelor of Social Work from Spring Arbor University and a Master's in Clinical Social Work from Michigan State University. She is grateful for the opportunity to come back full circle to the program that gave her the courage, support, and tools necessary to succeed in post-secondary education.

Dr. Veronica Pasfield (Bay Mills Indian Community in Bay Mills)



Dr. Veronica Pasfield is a citizen of Bay Mills Indian Community in Bay Mills, Michigan. Her research specialty is federal and mission Indian boarding schools and the role they play in related dispossessive projects of U.S. empire. In 2023, Dr. Pasfield completed a National Endowment for the Humanities-Oral History Association fellowship. Her project privileged the interpretive primacy of boarding school-impacted families. Her archival research uncovered new findings, including the methods by which the Dept. of the Interior captured Indian trust moneys and resources to fund boarding schools in Michigan and resulting impacts for individuals and Tribal communities. Dr. Pasfield earned a PhD in American

Studies (Native American Studies concentrator) from the University of Michigan and serves as a NAGPRA Officer for Bay Mills Indian Community. Pasfield graduated from the Anishinaabemowin Language Instructor's Institute at Bay Mills Community College in 2003. She uses those teachings to describe and promote the privileging of Anishinaabek epistemologies throughout her work.

Dr. Aaron Payment (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

As Vice President of Tribal Relations and Learning for Kauffman and Associates, Dr. Payment has the privilege of working directly with tribal communities in areas of visioning, strategic planning, government to government relations, tribal sovereignty issues, tribal education and learning and a variety of areas to help build capacity in tribal nations and tribal communities.



Dr. Payment has served for 22+ years in elective tribal government including on council (8 years) with 4 years as Vice-Chairperson and as Chairperson (14 years). Prior to being elected, Payment taught political science, public administration, Native American studies and worked for three different universities on Native American Student retention. For 30 years, he has taught an annual Federal Indian Policy training module for the Michigan Political Leadership Program.

While in elective office, Chairperson Payment served on a number of education and health related national tribal advisories including: the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (Presidential Appointment), 2016 ESSA Negotiated Rule Making Committee (Presidential Appointee), Interior Secretary BIE Implementation Ad hoc group, HHS Secretary Tribal Advisory (vice-chair), HHS Tribal Consultation Work Group, IHS Contract Support Cost Workgroup, NIH Tribal Advisory (chair), Office of Minority Health Research Advisory (chair); SAMSHA Tribal Advisory, HRSA Tribal Advisory, and the Tribal Interior Budget Council.

Dr. Payment's skills include public speaking (having testified in Congress >20x), excellent writing skills, diplomatic relations inter-tribally and with state and federal governments, quantitative and qualitative analysis, community organizing, public budgeting and appropriations, project management, and oral/traditional story telling. He holds a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and three masters' (Education Specialist, Education Administration, Public Administration). He is a subject matter expert in Education, Policy Analysis, Health Policy, Tribal Government to Government Relations including Consultation and facilitation in conducting both listening and formal consultation session. Dr. Payment has served in several tribal organizational leadership roles with the National Congress of American Indians, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereignty Tribes, United Tribes of Michigan, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, and as is a former State Charter and Bureau of Indian Education School Board President. Aaron is in his 45th year running for fitness, ran varsity cross country for college, was an Academic All American and is raising his 9-year nephew in Tribal foster care.

Speaker Biographies

Gary Peterson (Skokomish)

Member of the Faculty, The Evergreen State College

Gary Peterson, Skokomish, currently teaches a program at TESC "Thinking In Indian: Democracy, Civic Engagement, Resistance." One section is titled Reclaiming Indigenous Art - it is an opportunity for students to learn the icons and basketry techniques for the people from whom they descend. Gary has been involved with Tribal governance having served as Tribal Chairman, on the ICW and Education committees and is currently on the board of the National Indian Child Welfare Association.



Yvonne Peterson (Chehalis)

Member of the Faculty, The Evergreen State College




Yvonne Peterson, Chehalis Tribe, is a recognized master weaver teaching the art of basketry to local Tribes and Indian youth organizations. She is the sole proprietor of the Hazel Pete Institute of Chehalis Basketry, an organization started by her mother – Hazel Pete – and managed by brothers, sisters, and extended family to promote the learning of basketry as a "sit beside" art. She was a founding member of Northwest Native American Basketweavers Association and helped to organize and sponsor the first several "weavers teaching weavers" workshops. Yvonne and family weave for the Skokomish River Road Canoe Family give-aways, memorials, and namings. She sponsors young family members

and helps them to prepare to "come out" as weavers and gatherers. The young person must know how to recognize and gather and prepare basketry materials, be taught by 7 masters weavers over 3 years, weave several large baskets, make their own give away basketry items, and weave their regalia. The Native Action Network organization selected Yvonne Peterson as a Soaring Spirit Honoree in 2015. Yvonne is currently serving as a Legacy Leader for the Spirit Aligned organization. One of her baskets was featured in the Longhouse's 20th anniversary exhibition Sgwigwialt@20: Building upon the Past, Visioning into the Future.

Melissa Petoskey (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians)

Human Resources Manager, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

Melissa Petoskey, MSA SHRM-CP, was a write-in candidate for the Suttons Bay Board of Education with 292 votes, in November 2020 and elected to the School Board 2 year term December 2020 through December 31, 2022. Melissa is a tribal member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and resides in Peshawbestown, MI with her 5 beautiful children and fiancé. Melissa graduated from Flandreau Indian Boarding School, Flandreau, SD, 2001, earned her business administration degree from Ferris State University in Business Administration (2012), Master's Degree from Central Michigan University in Human Resource Administration (2017) and Society of Human Resource Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) in 2019. Melissa is a Human Resource Professional with 8 years of experience in the human resource field. Currently Melissa has two children enrolled at Suttons Bay Public Schools, Darius Lopez 11th grade and Linda Petoskey in 1st grade.



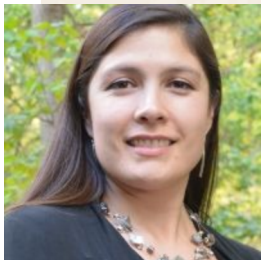
Kenny Neganigwane Pheasant (Wiikwemikoong First Nation)

Kenny was born and raised on Wiikwemikoong First Nation Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, Ontario Canada. He was Storyteller in a movie called “The Sleeping Bear”, helped develop A CD ROM language project for the Grand Rapids Public Museum, produced an Interactive language website called Anishinaabemdaa.com and has a popular facebook page nishinaabemdaa. He carries a pawaagan (pipe) for his people and a Golden Eagle language staff.



Emily Proctor (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)

Tribal Extension Educator, Michigan State University Extension



Emily Proctor, MSW, BASW, earned her degrees from Michigan State University - School of Social Work. She is a citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Harbor Springs, Michigan, and serves as a Tribal Extension Educator, Community, Food & Environment Institute for Michigan Tribal Nations, Tribal Communities, schools, community partners and various level government with her home office located in LTBB’s homelands, Emmet County, Michigan State University Extension. As the Tribal Extension Educator her projects include the development, delivery, and evaluation of educational programs in the areas of Tribal Governance, Diversity, facilitation and youth leadership. She also is the Project Manager for the Michigan Inter-Tribal Land Grant System (MILES). The MILES is the next step in building the foundation for a seamless, integrated, and intentional Land Grant System in Michigan serving all Michigan Tribal Nations Tribal Colleges, and communities. She currently sits on Tribal Council for LTBB . She has also worked as an Child Protective Services Worker, as an associate Child Welfare Commissioner and was elected three times as LTBB’s Speaker of the Annual Community Meeting. She enjoys making quilts as a way to contribute to her community.

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Martin Reinhardt (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

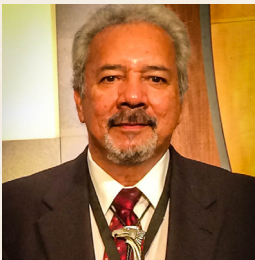
Professor of Native American Studies, Northern Michigan University, Center for Native American Studies



Dr. Martin Reinhardt is an Anishinaabe Ojibway citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians from Michigan. He is a tenured professor of Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University. He is the president of the Michigan Indian Education Council, and the lead singer and songwriter for the band Waawiyeyaa (The Circle). His current research focuses on revitalizing relationships between humans and Indigenous plants and animals of the Great Lakes Region. He has taught courses in American Indian education, tribal law and government, and sociology. He has a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from

the Pennsylvania State University, where his doctoral research focused on Indian education and the law with a special focus on treaty educational provisions. Martin serves as a panelist for the National Indian Education Study Technical Review Panel and as the primary investigator for the Decolonizing Diet Project. He has also served as Chair of the American Association for Higher Education American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus, and as an external advisor for the National Indian School Board Association. He also holds both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Sociology.

Larry Romanelli, Ogema (Little River Band of Ottawa Indians)



Larry Romanelli is the Ogema, or Chief of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. As Ogema or Chief, he is the Leader of the Tribe. Ogema Romanelli was sworn in to the elected office on June 20th 2007 and his current term runs to 2027. The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians has approximately 4,000 citizens across the United States with the two largest groups in Manistee and Muskegon.

Ogema Romanelli is a long-time Muskegon resident and business owner. His Native American name is Little Thunder (Nimkiins) and is from the Thunder Clan. Ogema

Romanelli has been married to his wife for 56 years; they have 4 children, 8 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Little River Band of Ottawa Indians are owners of several businesses which includes the popular Little River Casino and Resort in Manistee Michigan.


Additionally, Ogema Romanelli served four terms of office as Treasurer of United Tribes of Michigan and two terms of office as President of the United Tribes of Michigan. Ogema Romanelli is a Board Member of Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority which consists of 5 Michigan Tribes who collectively protect State of Michigan Natural Resources.

Alk Sabatine

Alk Sabatine is a 10th grade student at Malcolm High School.

George Solomon

George Solomon is a student in the Indigenous Youth Collective.



Leora Tadgerson (Gnoozhikaaning, Bay Mills and Wiikwemkong First Nations)

Director of Reparations and Justice with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan



Miskopwaaganikwe – Leora Tadgerson is a proud dual citizen of Gnoozhikaaning, Bay Mills and Wiikwemkong First Nations. She serves as Director of Reparations and Justice with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan. Leora's role is focusing on truth telling, racial equity through restorative justice, reconciliation research from the Native American boarding school era, and place-based community work/bridge building as a tribal liaison. Her research involves the Michigan based Indian boarding school experience and the Episcopal run schools, where she serves as Chair for the MW062, Executive Council

Committee for Indigenous Boarding Schools and Advocacy. Through Leora's research, she

hopes to aid in the healing of Native hearts. In her spare time she can be found with her partner, Tye and four boys, Quinn, Shiloh, Evan and Jack.

Amanda Weinert (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa)

Ishkaakimikwe Kinoomaagewinan (Teachings of the Earth) Coordinator, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Niigaandiwin Education Department



Boozhoo! Gitigaaneyaashikaaniing indoonjibaa, Nmebin Zaaga'igan ndodaa, Anishinaabe ndaaw, mukwa ndoodem, Waabishkamakwakwe ndizhinikaaz. kinomaagekwe ndonaangzhe.

Amanda Weinert grew up in Garden, MI, and lives in Carp Lake, MI. She's a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa and descendant of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa (LTBB). Amanda serves the LTBB Niigaandiwin Education Department as the

Ishkaakimikwe Kinoomaagewinan (Teachings of the Earth) Coordinator. They have worked

for Niigaandiwin since 2016. Her involvement in Indigenous Education began while student-working at the Center for Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University about 15 years ago. Amanda studied Art and Design (jewelry/metalsmithing emphasis) and Native Studies (Bachelor of Science, 2014).

Amanda works with educators seeking integration of land-based pedagogies and perspectives into PK-12, post-secondary, and informal educational programming. Their role supports a 5-year Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) National Science Foundation (NSF) grant in partnership with Tulalip Tribes, Western Washington University, University of Washington, Chicago Urban Indian Community, and Northwestern University. Collectively, ISTEAM develops intergenerational learning frameworks and programming co-designed for and by Natives.

Amanda's spare time is often spent with her partner (Jon) & cat (Monte), harvesting &/or observing plant relatives, binging TV, & playing video games (mostly Animal Crossing).



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