

AIONKWATAKARI:TEKE

Kahnawà:ke's Health and Wellness Newsletter

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Santa, Santa, Santa!



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Zoom with Santa

Alana Atwin, Parenting Worker

The Parenting team at the Family and Wellness Center are always on the lookout for programming and activity ideas from the community that we can offer to families. In December of 2020, that's exactly what happened!

A parent reached out to KSCS via our Facebook page and suggested a Zoom with Santa event as families were being asked to isolate as much as possible due to COVID-19. Parents were leery about taking their children out to malls, but still wanted to give their children an opportunity to engage with Santa. We offered our first Zoom with Santa last December 14, 2020, and were able to offer it again this past Christmas on December 22, 2021.

As a Parenting support worker, and with the holidays quickly coming up, I set to work to put the activity together. The first step was to get Santa on board and, amazingly, his schedule was open! Promotion was conducted to fill 23 spots for families to engage with Santa for five minutes each through Zoom in the evening. Forty-three children got to spend some time

showing Santa their Christmas trees, singing for him, telling him what kind of cookies they were going to leave out for him on Christmas eve, and of course, reminding Santa what was on their Christmas lists!

Several families returned for this second year, which we hope will become an annual tradition for them, as well as KSCS! The activity

was appreciated by parents who

couldn't participate in the Pictures with Santa activity (another Prevention activity, see page 8 for info on that event) due to COVID isolation, as well as those who wanted to stay comfy in their homes. A big niawenhkò:wa (thank you) to KSCS Traditional Support worker Tom Dearhouse who was a big help behind the scenes.





A Winning Recipe

What's for Lunch?

Frankie Massicotte, Parenting Worker

This has been a trying year for many, dealing with the constant changes in the way we are living our lives due to the global pandemic. One thing that has remained consistent is the program What's for Lunch? (WfL?) that is offered to families in the community of Kahnawà:ke.

This collaboration between KSCS and the Kateri Memorial Hospital Center (KMHC) has been going on for over a year now and has also received an award for its success. Chantal Haddad, nutritionist at KMHC, and Frankie Massicotte, Parenting support worker at the Family and Wellness Center, offer a weekly cooking show that is uploaded and recorded with the help of Alana Atwin, another Parenting support worker. The video is shared on the KSCS Facebook page and viewers can share their comments. Registered participants receive a free kit of ingredients to help prepare the recipe that is chosen each week in their own home.

WfL? launched in September, 2020 with the goal of educating families about healthy meal ideas, about using the time preparing the meal as a fun way of spending time together, and as an opportunity to check in with loved ones. The pandemic has been hard on all of us and preparing a meal together (or even together in your small family bubble or with others via Zoom, FaceTime, or with us during our Facebook Live) can help lessen the feelings of isolation for those feeling disconnected because of restrictions in the community due to COVID-19.

The program started with approximately 12 families and has grown to almost 25 who are registered; however, the videos have a range between 200 and 400 plus views.

- Scan the QR code to read the CBC story



In October 2021, the program was entered into the CRUSH Innovation contest hosted by the Order of Dieticians and Nutritionists of Quebec for the public innovation prize. The contest was open to the public and our program won!

The information can be found on the Facebook page for the Order of Dieticians and Nutritionists of Quebec or on their website (a link is at the bottom of this article). After the prize announcement, we were interviewed by CBC radio's Daybreak program and an article was published by CBC Montreal where we were given the opportunity to expand on the program and its success. We were interviewed for the local newspapers Iori:wase and The Eastern Door, as well as K103.7 FM Kahnawà:ke's local radio station.

The WfL? team tried something new during its last session before the holidays. We invited one of our regular family participants to be a part of the live recording, which turned out to be so much fun! We also had a chili cookoff with Lisa Westaway, executive director of the KMHC, and Derek Montour, executive director of KSCS on-site as judges sampling five different chili recipes submitted by community members. Let's just say, the judges had a hard time picking a winner and they left with full stomachs!

The new session of the program is scheduled to begin in February 2022 and will run for 4 weeks ending on March 2, 2022. For those interested in being part of this program, please contact frankiem@kscskahnawake.ca for more information and then tune in on the KSCS Facebook page at 11:00 a.m. to find out What's for Lunch?

- Scan to see read the prize announcement from the from Order of Dieticiens and Nutritionists of Quebec



A Harry Potter Christmas

By: Beatrice Skawennetsi Taylor, Prevention

Since the inception of the community Holiday Parade, KSCS has always participated. The Prevention and Support Services team stepped up to the task of organizing our float. The team decided on a Harry Potter Christmas as the theme and the outcome was amazing!

KSCS staff came through and pooled together costumes, artistic talent and shared items from their personal Harry Potter collections which made the float look fantastic. The *Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry* float was fully decorated with floating candles in the windows, house flags on the front and turrets on each corner. Behind it, the *Hogwarts Express* float was lit up, right next to our Christmas tree.

On the day of the parade, the weather was in our favour, even though it was a little chilly. The parade route was longer than usual — roughly 5 km — which started at the Kahnawà:ke Peacekeeper's station, then moved down the main highway, towards the tunnel, down River Road and up Blind Ladies Hill, and finally, returning to the Peacekeepers station. It was exciting to be a part of this community event to spread much needed joy and cheer to Kahnawà:ke. Our float was sandwiched between the Step



by Step Child and Family Center's *Greatest Show on Earth* float and K103 Radio's *Radio Flyer* float.

During the parade, several KSCS staff posing as Harry Potter characters handed out Bertie Bott's *Every Flavor Beans*. Over 700 bags were made and we still ran out! It was definitely a sight to behold; to see the other floats lit up and feel the excitement of everyone involved. I loved seeing the joy and appreciation on the faces in the crowd and this made all the hours/work that was put into this holiday parade worthwhile.

I truly believe that this activity lifted everyone's spirits, seeing children dance to the music and so many families made the effort

to come out to watch. The holiday parade was made possible only with the assistance of a large group of people and this is what community is all about. Niawenhkó:wa to everyone who helped and participated in the parade.

KSCS float staff: Iohserontie Rice, Donald Horne, Michael Cross, Brandon Horne, Journey Jacobs, Rebecca D'Amico, Jessica Dearhouse, Beatrice Taylor, Mary McComber, Joe Styres, Dana Stacey, Ashlan Phillips, Vandana Chaubey, Nicole Withers, Deena Sky, Candace Snook, Blair Armstrong, Jo Roy, David Martel, Hazel Mayo, Natasha Sobers.



Iota'karí:te ne Onkwatónhnhets

Spirit of Wellness 2021

Kariwaiehnhe McComber and Beatrice Skawennetsi Taylor, Prevention

The Spirit of Wellness (SOW) campaign began in 2006 stemming from National Aboriginal Addictions Week (NAAW) which takes place the third week of November every year. With growing popularity, NAAW was transformed from one week of activities to a month long, community-wide campaign promoting healthy lifestyles. As Spirit of Wellness evolved, so has the logo. For many years, the logo would change annually, until 2010, when local artist MC Snow designed one that completely brought to life the meaning of Spirit of Wellness.

Throughout the month of November, KSCS coordinates the SOW campaign. The campaign encourages, promotes, and supports healthy lifestyle changes, while validating people for their efforts. An influx of mental health related cases entered KSCS seeking support, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 Spirit of Wellness campaign was designed to address those issues as best as possible in order to support all Kahnawakehró:non through these difficult times.

The continued impact of COVID-19, made it necessary to once again, think outside the box and create activities that could be offered virtually. The Spirit of Wellness Committee consisting of Karina Peterson (lead coordinator), Kariwaiehnhe McComber and Beatrice Skawennetsi Taylor, with the help of the primary Prevention and Communication teams, utilized the KSCS Facebook page as the primary outlet for the promotion of activities. Hard copies of posters were circulated around the community. SOW promotional items were polar fleece mittens and neck warmers with the KSCS logo, which proved very popular with the recipients. To open Spirit of Wellness, KSCS staff recited the Ohén:ton

Karihwatéhkwén, live on Facebook. Throughout the month, the following activities were offered:

- Family tree
- Kindness rock painting
- Honouring our wisdom keepers and educators
- 5 km walk/run challenge
- “What is mindfulness?” workshop
- Virtual social
- Online evaluation survey

As per usual, weekly talk shows took place on K103 Radio. The following topics were discussed:

- Life promotion for youth
- COVID fatigue and parenting
- LGBTQ2S+ gender identity and pronouns
- Recovering from substance abuse

KSCS would like to acknowledge the following organizations that participated which include the Kahnawà:ke Youth Center, K103 Radio, Kahnawà:ke Schools Diabetes Prevention Project, Step by Step Child and Family Center and the Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office.

KSCS also collaborated with Tota Ma's Café, Kahnawà:ke Survival School, Lotus + Sage Holistics, the 207 Longhouse, First Nations Fiber, Skawenniiio Tsi Iewennahnotahkhwa, and The Rail restaurant. Evaluations were received and reviewed will be taken into consideration to enhance the next Spirit of Wellness. Niawenhkó:wa to all who participated.



SOW 2021 Appreciation

Community Members

HONOURING OUR WISDOM KEEPER ACTIVITY.

“My wisdom keeper is my Baba. My baba has taught me so much in my seven years of life. From the moment I was born, he held me in his arms and taught me how loving he was. He’s very special to me. I spend some time with him every day. He taught me kanien’ke:ha before I knew how to talk. He’s taught me all about gardening. He’s been so helping in teaching me the ways of life. I’ve learned how to build things using tools. The most important thing I’ve learnt is respect, I try to be respectful like my baba is. My baba is a good man. My baba is my best friend.”

“My Tota taught me about our medicines, our stories, our history and my mom taught me how to plant, can foods, cook and most important how to make the best of what you have. Tota always taught me who families were, cousins, second and third cousins, the importance of our environment. They also instilled kindness, honesty and to always tell the truth. They taught me hard work is good

for you strong women. The cultural teachings medicines and environment. Never take more than you need and always give back if you can, leave it better than when you found it. I live it and each time I am engaged with something they taught me brings me happy memories of that time I spent with them. Also, I now am teaching whatever I know [to] my nieces and whoever else wants as much as possible to pass that on especially storytelling and relationships to the earth and each other.”

“My wisdom keeper is my grandma. The most valuable lesson she taught me was about respect.”

“Everything that I learned allowed me to have a career and take care of my children. Who knows where I might have ended up in life, but I know that all the skills and knowledge that I acquired from my Father gave me the life that I have now. We have come full circle from me being a student to me becoming a teacher, just like my Dad.”

FACEBOOK GIVEAWAY: WHAT DO YOU DO FOR WELLNESS?

“I’m learning. Just realized that I need me. So far, writing down my thoughts and opening up to people.”

“Give thanks for everything and

everything, especially my family friends and community. Drink water and eat healthy, have a positive attitude towards life.”

“Take care of my mental, spiritual health, talk to family and friends and try to keep my physical health the best for right now.”

FAMILY TREE ACTIVITY

“Nice family bonding time between a mother, and a baby girl”

“Niawen KSCS and spirit of wellness coordinators! Me and my boy had fun discussing what a family is made up of.”



Inside the ILC

Cynthia McGregor, Assisted Living Services

During the fall and winter of 2021 in-house programming continued within the limits and guidelines set by Kahnawà:ke's Public Health authority.

Online activities were available for all Teen Social Club (TSC) and Young Adults Program (YAP) clients and Independent Living Center (ILC) residents. Online activities included:

- Mindfulness meditation,
- Exercise classes,
- Online cooking session
- Pet shows

To celebrate Halloween, the YAP and TSC gang carved pumpkins and dressed up for a small Halloween party for each group. The parties included a meal, treats, games, dancing, and scary stories!

At Christmas time, we had a stocking decorating contest. Each participant received a stocking kit with decorations to start them off. Participants could

then personalize it with anything they wished. A picture of their finished stocking was needed to enter the contest. Prizes were awarded to the contestants chosen by the judges.

We had a gift exchange, and parties for each group. We also had a special surprise when Santa made a special appearance!

Unfortunately, programs were suspended on December 22, 2022 until further notice. TSC and YAP staff continue to communicate with clients and parents on a weekly basis. Online Zoom activities continue.

This Valentine's Day, an online Valentines bingo is being organized for the ILC residents, and the YAP and TSC clients with many prizes to be won. So, while the pandemic has caused some disruption of our activities, it hasn't dampened our spirit. Check our photos on the following page. →

Santa Came to Town

Christine Taylor, Prevention

On Sunday, December 12, 2021, Santa Claus made a triumphant return to Kahnawà:ke and our Pictures with Santa event after having been cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event took place at the Kahnawà:ke Youth Center.

Over 180 kids attended and over 350 of their family members were treated to a photographic memory of their visit. The event was missed last year and it was so much fun to have it back! The kids — and parents — were glad to have some normalcy to their holiday.

Not surprisingly, this year Santa was extra careful and mindful of safety. Everyone — volunteers and participants — had to hand sanitize and wear masks at all

times. After signing in and upon entering the building, social distancing was the name of the game.

Our team of volunteers worked with well-oiled efficiency as the children lined up for their chance to sit in front of Santa and share words with the big man himself. Later, our elves made sure that the right photo went to the right kids — printing of the photos was done off site and mailed out a few days later — and that each child received a wrapped gift and a loot bag.

All in all, the return of *Pictures with Santa* for December 2021, albeit slightly different due to safety restrictions, brought much needed joy to hundreds of Kahnawa'keró:non.





Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Program

By: *Kawennarò:roks McComber and Karennénhtha Loft*

This year marks the fifth year of the Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Program at Kahnawà:ke Shakotia'takéhnhas Community Services (KSCS). As program coordinators, Christine Loft and I have been working to ensure that our ways are integrated in our work at KSCS. This has been challenging with all the changes we are experiencing due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

For the last two years, many of the members of the Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Committee have been involved in some capacity with the Emergency Food Basket. Since the closing of emergency services for food distribution in August 2021, we have once again been able to re-focus on our program priorities.

We have had to use virtual forums to continue promotions and ongoing discussions with KSCS staff and community members on tsi niionkwarihò:ten topics and themes. While these have been successful, there is nothing like having in person events.

We were fortunate to have a few in-person events before we had to go back to a state of emergency in December 2021.

Many people may find this pandemic quite stressful and staff at KSCS are not immune to stress. For this reason, we became involved with an internal collaboration with the Staff Wellness Activity Program (SWAP) to offer KSCS staff wellness forums and activities to encourage our mental and physical wellness.

Since April 2021, we've offered staff in-person and virtual sharing circles and, in celebration of Spirit of Wellness Month (SOW) in November, we also held a moon ceremony.

The Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Coordinators have been able to support staff and community members by offering support/sharing circles to education staff. We've also offered suicide prevention training through safeTALK

and ASIST. Fortunately, we were able to offer some of these sessions in-person, which was appreciated by those that attended.

In these trying times, it's important to be able to support each other any way we can, and collaborative work is crucial to make sure that staff are well and able to offer the best services that are humanly possible.

Below are internal staff events offered by the Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Program and Committee:

April 2021, Promotions of traditional dress days in celebration of Cultural Awareness Month. Sharing of traditional wellness videos with the Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Ratitíóhkwa Language and Culture Center. (Presenters such as: Della Adams, Geraldine, and Mike Standup.)

- **October 2021, Corn harvest event with Steven McComber.**
- **November 2021, Rock your Mocs promotion.**
- **December 2021, KSCS new staff on-boarding session.**
- **Dec 2021, Tobacco burning in honour/memory of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and the 12 Days of Action on Violence Against Women.**
- **Dec 2021, Tree identification and nature hike with David McComber.**

Niá:wen to the Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Committee members:

- **Beatrice Taylor**
- **Patricia Zachary**
- **Tom Dearhouse**
- **Codey Martin**
- **Kiersten Two-Axe Myiow**
- **Allyson Phillips**



Braiding Corn

Photos courtesy of Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten Program





February 2022

- Kahnwà:ke Winter Carnival February 7 – 18, 2022
- Men's Talking Circle at FWC 6:00 – 9:00 P.M.
 - ▶ February 1, 8, 15, 22, 2022
- Support Group for Parents of Teens via Zoom 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.
 - ▶ February 2, 9, 16, and 23, 2022
- LGBTQ2S+ Support Group via Zoom 5:00 – 6:30 P.M. (under 18), 6:30– 8:00 P.M. (adults)
 - ▶ February 7, 21, 2022
- Groundhog Day
 - ▶ February 2
- World Cancer Day
 - ▶ February 4
- Valentine's Day
 - ▶ February 14
- International Childhood Cancer Day
 - ▶ February 15
- International Mother Language Day
 - ▶ February 21
- Pink Shirt Day
 - ▶ February 23

March 2022

- National Social Work Month
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (US)
- National Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (US)
- Men's Talking Circle at FWC 6:00 – 9:00 P.M.
 - ▶ March 1, 8, 15, 22, 2022

- Support Group for Parents of Teens via Zoom 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.
 - ▶ March 2, 9, 2022
- LGBTQ2S+ Support Group at KSCS Whitehouse 5:00 – 6:30 P.M. (under 18), 6:30– 8:00 P.M. (adults)
 - ▶ March 7, 21, 2022
- International Women's Day
 - ▶ March 8
- Daylight Savings Ends
 - ▶ March 13
- St. Patrick's Day
 - ▶ March 17



April 2022

- Kahnawà:ke Cultural Awareness Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (US)
- World Health Day
 - ▶ April 7
- Good Friday
 - ▶ April 15 (KSCS closed)
- Easter Monday
 - ▶ April 18 (KSCS closed)
- Earth Day
 - ▶ April 22