

# the council

Vol. 45, No. 6

A REPORT TO THE MEMBER TRIBES OF TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

June 2020

## Returning to a *New Normal*



After closing down many of our services in mid-March, Tanana Chiefs Conference began re-opening services starting on May 18th, 2020. However, the opening of services will occur over several weeks as we work to ensure that both staff and patients are able to adequately social distance in our facilities.

All TCC employees were required to undergo antibody testing prior to returning to work. This tests detects

antibodies in the bloodstream that fight COVID-19. Employees who tested positive had to undergo nasal swab testing to determine if they had an active infection.

Please expect changes when receiving services at our facilities as we transition into our new normal. Changes to services include:

Services will be by appointment-only (even Urgent Care which will be by same-day appt only).

People without scheduled patient visits or guardians/parents accompanying someone who has a visit will be the only people allowed into the clinic. (No extended family accompanying patients.)

All visitors will be required to wear a mask at all times while in our facilities. Due to PPE shortages across the nation, we are encouraging you to bring your own mask/cloth face covering if possible.

## Class of 2020 We want to Celebrate You!

We know that you won't be able to celebrate your special day in the traditional way this year. TCC wants to help honor and recognize you! Send us your photos to feature in a special edition of our newsletter as well as a 2020 Graduates honoring video.

**Deadline to Submit is Friday, June 5th, 2020 at 5:00pm**

SUBMIT ONLINE AT: <https://www.tananachiefs.org/2020-graduate-submission-form/>



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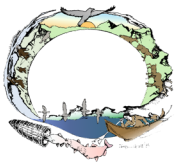


## MISSION STATEMENT

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

## VISION

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

## TCC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Donald Honea Sr./Ruby  
*1st Traditional Chief*

Trimble Gilbert/Arctic Village  
*2nd Traditional Chief*

Victor Joseph/ Tanana  
*Chief/Chairman*

Julie Roberts-Hyslop/Tanana  
*Vice President*

Jerry Isaac/Tanacross  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

William "Chaaiy" Albert/Northway  
*Upper Tanana*

Nick Alexia Sr./Nikolai  
*Upper Kuskokwim*

Nancy James/Fort Yukon  
*Yukon Flats*

Eugene Paul/Holy Cross  
*Lower Yukon*

Frank Thompson/ Evansville  
*Yukon Tanana*

Norman 'Carl' Burgett/ Huslia  
*Yukon Koyukuk*

Peter Demoski/Nulato  
*Elder Advisor*

Jolie Murray/Beaver  
*Youth Advisor*

## CHIEF'S REPORT

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,



The past few months have proven to be a trying times for many of us as we adjust to our new way of life. Although Alaska has fewer COVID-19 cases than other states in the U.S., it is important that we continue forward with caution. Historically, Alaska Natives understand the devastating effects a pandemic can have on our people. We are not in the clear until there is a vaccine available for this virus, and even when a vaccine is available it will take time to get enough surplus for everyone to get vaccinated.

Last month TCC began to re-open services and bring employees who have been working from home back to the office. All employees were required to undergo antibody testing prior to returning to work. This test is conducted via blood draw and it checks for the presence of a particular antibody our bodies makes when it's fighting the virus. These antibodies appear in our bloodstream after being infected. Employees who tested positive have been required to take another test to determine if they had an active infection. This testing process was done to help ensure we do not subject our employees or those we serve to a potential infection.

Although services at our facilities have begun to open up again, it's important to understand that the process for receiving these services will look different than it has in the past. In order to ensure the health and safety of both our patients and our employees, there will be several changes to how services are offered at the clinic. All services (including Urgent Care) will be by appointment only. Upon entering our facilities patients will be required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth, answer screening questions, and sanitize their hands consistently throughout their visit and when asked. Please bring your own face mask if possible as these are currently in short supply.

Moving forward, I would like to remind everyone that the reason our COVID-19 cases are so low in Alaska is because we successfully implemented precautionary measures right away. I am thankful that from the beginning, our tribal leadership took the threat of this virus seriously, and pushed our organization to implement strong safety measures to help prevent spreading in our communities. As services open up it's important that we continue to practice social distancing and proper hygiene in order to ensure there is not another spike in cases; this includes staying 6 feet apart, washing our hands, and wearing masks in all public settings.

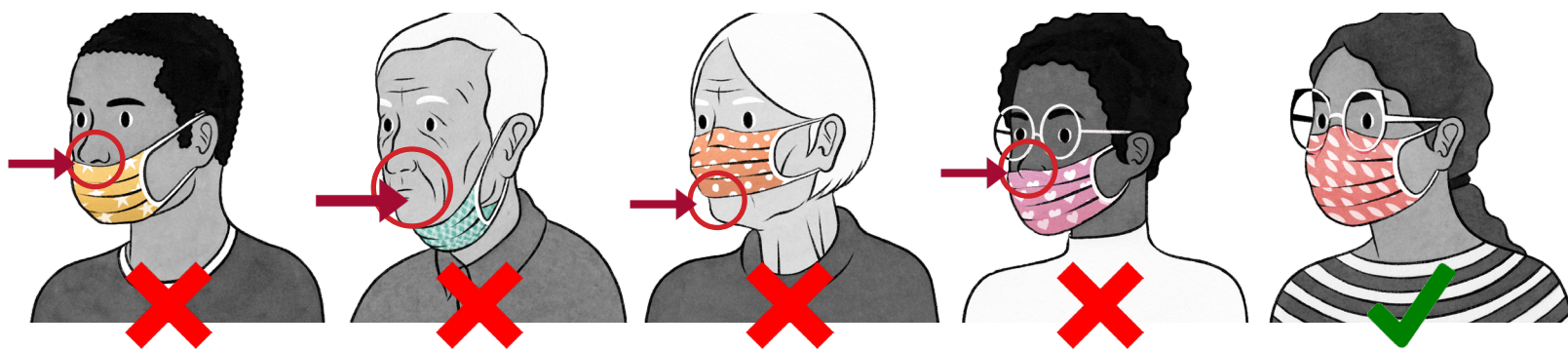
This year the break-up season in the interior went fairly smoothly – despite two of our communities experiencing some flooding and significant bank erosion. We are grateful there was no major flooding in our communities and TCC was able to assist communities that experienced home or property damage. Funds in the amount of \$1,000 was available to households affected by flooding and/or erosion.

On May 20th, TCC's Full Board of Directors held an online meeting to discuss how to proceed with our elections, which were postponed in March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The tribes voted to postpone our elections until October 2020. I will continue to serve as your Chief/Chairman until elections are held. We will be providing more information once details are available.

In closing, would like to recognize the graduating class of 2020 and commend you all for your hard work and dedication to your education and want you to be properly recognized for your academic accomplishments. Next month we will have a special issue of our newsletter to recognize the class of 2020 (more information on the front page). My thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this time. I know that together – we will make it through and come out stronger than ever.

Ana Bassee,  
Victor Joseph  
Chief/Chairman

## How to Wear a Face Mask Properly



A face mask won't help you if it is not worn properly. The face mask should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric, and allow for breathing without restriction.

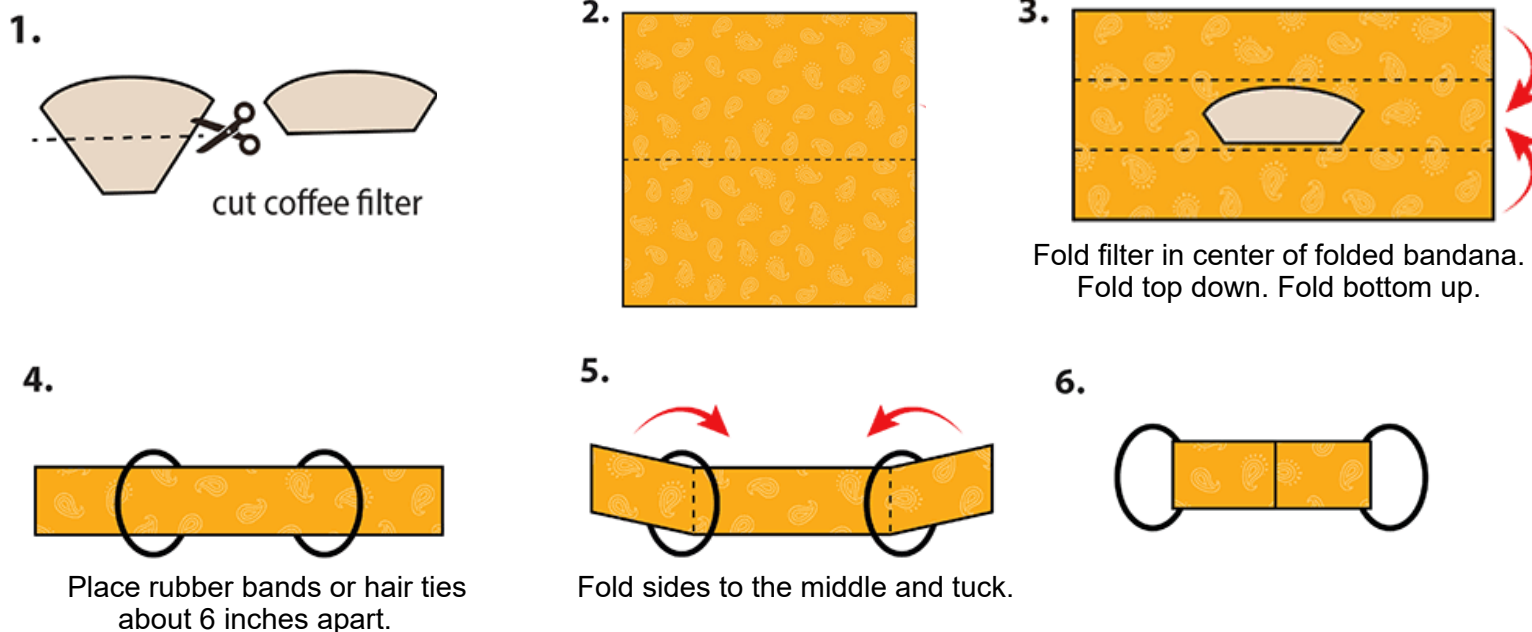
## When to Wear a Face Mask

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

- The Grocery Store
- The Pharmacy
- Laundromat/Washeteria
- The Post Office
- The Hospital/Clinic
- The Gas Station
- When visiting those from other households.

## How to make a Homemade Face Mask

**MATERIALS:** Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20") • Coffee filter • Rubber bands (or hair ties) • Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)



The final piece should be easily worn by looping the rubber bands around your ears.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.



## Practical Tips when *Returning to the Village*

As COVID-19 is spreading through Alaska, exposure to the virus is possible. As you prepare to travel to a village with no known cases of COVID19, it is important that you do not come into contact with others for the next 2 weeks as it can take 14 days for symptoms to show.

This means that you are to remain in your home the whole time. In addition, you should limit time with household members and no visitors are allowed during this time. After 2 weeks, continue to practice social distancing and sheltering in place.

It is important to review the tribal mandates set in place by your village as they may vary.



### **WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS**

Such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, diarrhea, cold and flu like symptoms



### **WASH YOUR HANDS**

20 seconds with warm water and soap



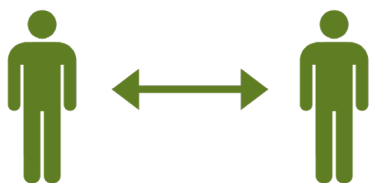
### **WEAR A MASK**

Avoid touching face: especially eyes, nose, and mouth. (Still keep 6ft from others)



### **DON'T SHARE ITEMS**

OR clean after each use (desks, keys, keyboards, utensils)



### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

No visitors • Stay in your own room • Call family and friends on the phone • Send letters/emails



### **STAY HOME**

Ask for help with errands and only leave for medical care



### **CLEAN AREAS**

Perform routine cleaning and disinfection: door knobs, desks, counters

## Radiology Consultants Inc. *for Interior Alaska's Imaging Needs*

Radiology Consultants Inc., (RCI) have provided Interior Alaskans with diagnostic and interventional radiology services since 1967. RCI provides services at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Tanana Valley Clinic and Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC). Services include a broad spectrum of diagnostic services, including dedicated expertise in the imaging diagnosis of breast, musculoskeletal, and neurologic disease. RCI also provides image guided diagnostic and therapeutic services such as biopsies. The group strives to provide Fairbanks-area residents the highest level of care, allowing community members to remain close to home for imaging, interpretation and interventional procedures.

Modern medicine increasingly relies upon sophisticated imaging technology for accurate diagnosis and assessing effect of therapy.

Recognizing this important role, the private, independent physicians of RCI work closely with TCC Health Services to provide timely interpretation of Digital Radiography, Ultrasound, 3D Mammography, and Bone Densitometry examinations in the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. RCI also interprets all imaging studies done at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and Tanana Valley Clinic.

Utilizing the TCC Picture Archiving System, RCI is also providing an exceptional service to our Fairbanks-based and rural village sites that perform x-ray imaging. In the village setting, images are taken at the site and digitally transferred to computer imaging systems. The x-ray is interpreted by RCI Physicians with a report posted in the medical record and provider consultations within a few minutes if needed.

Another huge benefit to having the Radiologist at CAIHC is that all village



travel patients can have their imaging studies reviewed before a patient has a return flight. Any additional imaging can be completed on the spot saving excess return travel.

Radiology Consultants Inc. provides services at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with routine outpatient services available at Fairbanks Imaging Center 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and CAIHC M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with weekend and afterhours reading services.



# COVID-19 Pandemic *What History Tells Us...*

In 1918, the world was devastated by the influenza pandemic, which went on to kill about 50 million – 675,000 of those deaths in the United States. One-third of the world's population (about half a billion people) had been infected.

As we face the current COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most vital tools in our arsenal for battling a large outbreak is a simple one – history. Looking back on how previous pandemics spread throughout our country can give us insight into what we can do to ensure another widespread outbreak doesn't happen.

## Looking Back

During first signs of the 1918 Flu in the United State occurred in March of that year, and was mentioned in the Public Health report that April. Not understanding the impacts that the virus could have, people moved forward as normal, with soldiers continuing to be deployed during World War I. In September, a second wave of flu emerged at Camp Devens, a United States Army training camp just outside of Boston. By the end of September, more than 14,000 flu cases are reported at Camp Devens—equaling about one-quarter of the total

camp, resulting in 757 deaths.

The 1918 flu pandemic virus kills an estimated 195,000 Americans during October alone. Despite the spikes in cases, Americans gathered together to celebrate the end of World War I in November - resulting in another resurgence.

It was only then that state began to close schools and businesses, prohibit public gathering, require the use of masks for anyone serving the public, and quarantining those who fell ill. From the winter of 1918 to the spring of 1919 a third wave hit the U.S., killing many before subsiding in the summer of 1919.

Though the epidemic began in early 1918 in the rest of the world, the virus took a long time to reach Alaska. Historians believe it was likely carried by steamships and barges from Seattle and other ports. The first cases appeared in October in Juneau, and as ships and barges made their way around the state in the fall of 1918. The Alaska Office of Vital Statistics reports nearly 3,000 deaths between 1918 and 1919 in the territory. Per capita, more people died in Alaska of the Spanish flu than anywhere else in the world other than Samoa.

## What This Teaches Us

Alaska prides itself on being the last frontier – a remote territory unlike the rest of the United States. However,

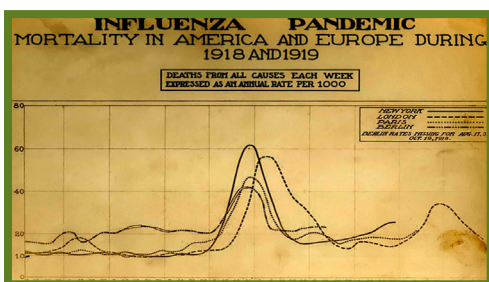


it's important to remember that Alaska was far more remote in 1918 – with limited modes of transportation into the state and between villages. But that did not stop the flu from having devastating effects. COVID-19 has already reached communities in Alaska and as the State begins to re-open services, there is a possibility that we will experience a second or third wave of cases.

Looking back on the 1918 flu pandemic, we can see how quickly cases can spike when we loosen our social distancing measures.

As our state and communities move to open back up for business, we want to remind everyone the importance of continued social distancing and to continue to follow CDC guidelines to protect yourself:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact
- Cover your mouth and nose with a face cover when around others
- Clean and disinfect



## Patient Experience *Week* April 21st-May 1st, 2020

Patient Experience Week is an annual event to celebrate healthcare staff impacting patient experience everyday.

From nurses, physical therapists, behavioral health professionals, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physicians, to support staff and executive professionals, to patients, families and communities served, the Beryl Institute hopes to bring together healthcare organizations across the globe to observe PX Week.

TCC held a coloring/selfie contest during PX Week for both TCC Employees and the public to participate in. Participants had to print out the PX Week coloring page, color it, and send in a photo of themselves with their art to TCC'S Patient Experience team. The winner of the coloring challenge was Tori Wilson-Cronk, UTHC (Tok) Clinical Support Staff / Medical Assistant.





# Want to Grow More Food This Summer?

## *First Make a Plan!*

By Heidi Rader, Tribes Extension Educator  
for Tanana Chiefs Conference

This summer, many people are thinking about ramping up their food production. It's a healthy activity you can do at home while social distancing. It can give you a sense of security and control at a time when you may feel like you don't have any. Judging by demand for seeds and other agriculture supplies, people are planning on growing big gardens. If you're hoping to ramp up your production to make a bona fide contribution to your diet, first make a plan.

I created a completely customizable Google Sheet to help you do this, at [bit.ly/3cCwuKz](https://bit.ly/3cCwuKz). Based on the size of your family and preferences for various vegetables and berries, the sheet will help you calculate how much row and square footage you'll need to grow enough food to reach your desired goals.

In the Google Sheet, yields per square foot are very roughly based on vegetable variety trials at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm ([afesresearch.uaf.edu/publications](https://afesresearch.uaf.edu/publications)) as well as other sources. Yields vary significantly depending on variety so you should peruse past variety trial reports to select top performers. I also added 25% more square feet to hedge against less productive gardens, unexpected weather and, well, all kinds of other things like moose.

A few crops listed in the Google Sheet, including tomatoes and cucumbers, should be grown in a greenhouse to maximize their production. Other crops like winter

squash, basil, zucchini and corn need some type of soil warming and/or air warming contraption, such as plastic mulch to warm the soil or a hoop house to warm the air and soil.

Here are some season extension ideas at [youtu.be/qzx7Vvise4I](https://youtu.be/qzx7Vvise4I). I'm planning on copying the simple hoop house Emily describes and shows us in the video. She estimates that it only cost her about \$200 or \$300 to make. Although some crops all but require some type of warming boost, many other cool-season crops will certainly benefit from the warmth as well. I wouldn't plant things like spinach, swiss chard, or cilantro, to name a few, that tend to bolt in a hoop house or greenhouse, though.

Another important aspect of scaling up is planting seeds. While not an absolute must, if you're expanding your production and have the time at home like most of us do right now, it can offer a huge cost savings. This is a nice calculator for figuring out when you should start what: [bit.ly/2VlhOCJ](https://bit.ly/2VlhOCJ). It's not perfect for Alaska, but it's a start. For instance, some crops listed in the calculator, like melons, watermelon and pumpkins, simply won't mature in our short season in Alaska unless you start them much earlier



and/or plant them in a greenhouse or a hoop house. It's already too late to start some things, but prime time to start many others. If demand for seeds and seed potatoes is indicative of demand for plants, there is a real chance that greenhouses will sell out this spring.

For more information on gardening, be sure to check out UAF Extension's publications on the topic at [bit.ly/2w14F3Y](https://bit.ly/2w14F3Y). If you're a beginner, start with "16 Easy Steps to Gardening." If you're new to seed starting, be sure to download "Seed Starting and Transplanting."

Terry Reichardt and her family have shown it is entirely possible to grow, hunt, fish and gather nearly all of your food in Fairbanks, Alaska. See [bit.ly/3czJbWl](https://bit.ly/3czJbWl). With nowhere to go and nothing but time, it might be more achievable for the rest of us.

Questions about gardening or the Tribes Extension Program? Visit [www.uaf.edu/ces/TCC](https://www.uaf.edu/ces/TCC) Contact Heidi at [hbrader@alaska.edu](mailto:hbrader@alaska.edu) or 474-6620. For more articles like this, go to: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>



*This project was supported by the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA Grant # 2017-41580-26928. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

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**Captions--all photos by Heidi Rader.**

**Berries:** Raspberries, strawberries, saskatoons, currants and rhubarb all grow very well in Alaska.

**Salad:** Baby salad greens are one of the first crops to mature in the spring. Simply cut the lettuce with scissors a few inches above the ground and they will continue to grow.

**Rows of beans and potatoes:** From left, peppers (grown with plastic mulch), beans and potatoes grow in rows.



## Ready, Set, Grow a Garden

Whether it's your first time gardening or you've been at it a long time, this handy garden calendar will help you get started. For information about the Tribes Extension Program go to: [www.uaf.edu/ces/tcc](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/tcc)

**May 1:** Start your Leaf Lettuce, Swiss chard, Squash, Sunflowers, Sweet Allysum, Zucchini, and Zinnias.

**May 4:** Order Alaska's Sustainable Gardening Handbook here <https://bit.ly/2z8hXaZ> This is a comprehensive guide to gardening in Alaska!

**May 6:** Watch one of my YouTube videos on how to grow a garden in Alaska: Go to: <http://bit.ly/2y3uabV> or Google, "In the Alaska Garden with Heidi Rader" Watch for new videos this summer!

**May 8:** Get answers to your garden questions at my blog: It Grows in Alaska: (<https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>)

**May 12:** Start hardening off your transplants by bringing them outside on sunny days for longer and longer periods of time. Don't bring them outside if it's cold or windy and bring them in at night for starters.

**May 14:** Rototill and mix fertilizer in your garden whenever the snow melts and the soil is somewhat dry. It is dry enough if, when you take a handful of soil in your hand and squeeze, it crumbles.

**June 1:** Plant Carrots, Potatoes, Radishes, Lettuce, Spinach, Turnips, and Peas, Poppies, Bachelor Buttons, Nasturtiums directly in your garden.

**June 4:** Transplant your plants outdoors starting with your cool season vegetables first.

**July 10:** Add additional fertilizer to your garden, if needed.

**August 1:** It's Harvest Time!!! Think about how you'll preserve your food

By Heidi Rader, Tribes Extension Educator for Tanana Chiefs Conference

for the winter. Do you have a pantry, a freezer, or a pressure canner? Find information on food preservation here: <https://bit.ly/3cjjF7A>

**August 6:** Hold a Community Harvest Fair. Save your highest quality vegetables and flowers to win the blue ribbon, or grow the biggest turnip or head of cabbage!

**September 3:** How was your gardening season? Write down the plants that did well and what didn't do so well, so you can improve next year.

**September 10:** Clean up your garden site, dig potatoes, and compost extra garden materials.

**November 1:** Miss gardening? It's never too early to plan for next year! Organize a Harvest Fair or Community Garden committee.

**November 24:** Get out your jams, jellies, canned and frozen vegetables, it's Thanksgiving!

*This project was supported by the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA Grant # 2017-41580-26928. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

## Volunteers Protecting Our Healthcare Workers

Once the threat of COVID-19 reached the United States, a nationwide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortage began. In an effort to ensure that providers at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center were able to safely treat patients, TCC began producing PPE - particularly face masks - in house.

The effort was mainly comprised of TCC employees whose regular work had been put on hold due to the pandemic. Employees were trained on how to properly create the masks and could volunteer by tracing and cutting out designs, cutting elastic and wires, or sewing the masks together.

"We've had 19 TCC employees working on this project, some only a few hours, and others who have helped us from the start," explained Jennifer Probert, TCC Fitness Center

Attendant and Outreach Coordinator, "We have also had three community volunteers helping us."

Volunteers came from a wide array of TCC programs including; Dental, Diabetes, Patient Experience, Health, Cafe staff, Environmental Health and Cultural programs.

Once created, the masks are thoroughly inspected by Dr. Max Jensen with Dental for quality insurance before being distributed. Mask design and task force communication for the project was led by Dr. Michael Costa with Dental.

To date, the group has produced upwards of 600 masks. While the team began producing masks for providers, they are also creating masks for employees and ones for patients as well.



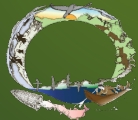
# THE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Letters to the Editor, other written contributions and photo submissions are welcome. However, space is limited and program-oriented news has priority. We reserve the right to edit or reject material. Letters and opinions are not necessarily the opinions of Tanana Chiefs Conference.



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference



## Find Your Purpose

Join Our Team: [www.tananachiefs.org](http://www.tananachiefs.org)

### Village Vacancies

- Community Health Aide (Kaltag, Koyukuk)
- Community Health Representative (Allakaket, Stevens Village)
- Elder Nutrition Cook (Allakaket, Bettles Field, Chalkyitsik, Hughes, McGrath, Nikolai)
- Family Visitor (Allakaket, Hughes, McGrath, Tanacross)
- Home Care Provider (Arctic Village, Eagle, Fort Yukon, Beaver, McGrath, Nikolai, Shageluk)
- Physicians Assistant - Upper Tanana Health Center (Tok)
- Preschool Assistant Teacher (Fort Yukon)
- Preschool Lead Teacher (Fort Yukon, Tanacross)
- Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook (Allakaket, Arctic Village, Chalkyitsik, Holy Cross, Huslia, McGrath, Venetie)
- Tok Subregional Primary Care Physician
- Tribal Workforce Development Specialist (Holy Cross)
- VPSO (Anvik, Chalkyitsik, Grayling, Huslia, McGrath, Northway, Nulato, Ruby, Tetlin, Venetie)
- Patient Registration and Admissions Specialist (Nenana)

### Fairbanks Vacancies

- IT Administrative Assistant
- Physician Assistant - Primary Care
- Nurse Practitioner - Primary Care
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Tribal Administrator
- Program Assistant - Dental
- Accounts Payable Technician
- Infection Control Specialist
- Behavioral Health Administrative Assistant

### Region- Wide Vacancies

- Community Health Aide/Practitioner - Itinerant

JOBS LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF MAY 12TH, 2020

## METHAMPHETAMINE IS *Toxic* TO THE HUMAN BODY

If you know someone  
that needs help with drug  
addiction please call  
**1-800-662-HELP**

For more information on Health & Safety please contact:

*Division of Wellness & Prevention*

*Health & Safety Program*

907-452-8251 ext.3089

1-800-478-6822



## Patient Advocate

Kristy works closely with the medical teams at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) to ensure TCC patients receive clear communication about their care, experience safe discharges and can access support if concerns arise while at ANMC.

Please call Kristy if you need assistance with anything at all. Out of respect for patient privacy, Kristy does not automatically contact patients in Anchorage for care unless the patient or a healthcare provider calls requesting assistance.



For more information, contact  
**Kristy Supsook**

**TCC Patient Advocate at ANMC**

907-687-9193

Toll Free 1-800-478-6682 ext. 3604

[kristy.supsook@tananachiefs.org](mailto:kristy.supsook@tananachiefs.org)