

Free - Please Take One!

# #66

April 2024



# NorthernHealth

AHA Newsletter



[www.athabascahealth.ca](http://www.athabascahealth.ca)



[facebook.com/AthabascaHealth](https://facebook.com/AthabascaHealth)



## Wearing Pink Shirts in Uranium City - Photo by Janine Rea

Do you have a great photo? Send it to [pamela.huerto@athabascahealth.ca](mailto:pamela.huerto@athabascahealth.ca) & it might be featured on an upcoming cover! Stories, updates, events or other contributions are also welcome.



## Dene Phrase

Éłets'áts'endí

Help Each Other  
(Dene Law)

## Joke

Why did the dentist  
become a detective?

Good at filling in gaps!  
Because they were



## Fun Fact

Tooth enamel is the  
hardest substance  
in the human body,  
even stronger than  
bone!



AHA believes in a future where people & the land are healthy, where communities, families and individuals live in peace & harmony, where traditional values, concepts & health practices are maintained respected & understood in partnership with contemporary care.

## Contact

Pamela Huerto, RD

[pamela.huerto@athabascahealth.ca](mailto:pamela.huerto@athabascahealth.ca)

# Intl. Day of Pink



**On April 10, 2024 & Every Day....**

Let's celebrate visibility in all its forms - being seen, acknowledged, respected, and listened to. It's about standing tall and embracing our true selves. Because there is nothing more beautiful than being who you truly are.

Let's stand united against injustices, raising our voices for those who need them most. Wear pink, and spread the message of visibility everywhere.

[www.dayofpink.org](http://www.dayofpink.org)

## Help End Bullying

Here are five practical ways a person can help end bullying in schools, workplaces, homes, and online:

- 1. Speak Up and Report:** One of the most effective ways to combat bullying is to not remain silent. If you witness bullying, report it to the appropriate authorities—be it school administrators, workplace HR departments, or online platform moderators. Encouraging a culture where it is safe to speak out can deter potential bullies.
- 2. Education and Awareness:** Regularly engaging in discussions and training sessions about bullying and its effects can increase empathy and understanding. Participate in and promote educational programs about bullying and its consequences.
- 3. Foster Inclusive Environments:** Create welcoming spaces that value diversity and inclusivity. Creating spaces where everyone feels respected and valued.
- 4. Support and Counseling:** Providing support to both victims and perpetrators of bullying is crucial. Victims need emotional support and resources to heal, while bullies often require counseling to address the underlying issues that lead them to exhibit such behavior.
- 5. Lead by Example:** Demonstrate respect and kindness in your behavior to influence others positively. Setting a positive example through one's own behavior is a powerful way to influence others.

Implementing these strategies can significantly contribute to reducing bullying and creating safer, more inclusive spaces for everyone.



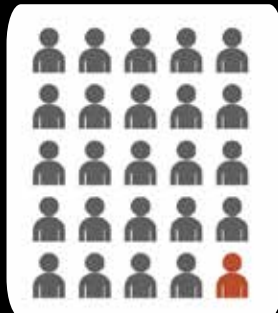
# Be the Village

Adapted from: <https://thevillagesk.ca/>

saskatchewan  
**prevention**institute  
our goal is **healthy** children

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is one of the leading causes of neurodevelopmental disorders.

**Up to 4% of  
Canadians  
have FASD  
(1 in 25)**



## How can we all be a village of support?

Preventing FASD is more than simply recommending no alcohol use in pregnancy. We all have a role to play in preventing FASD. See the ways below! #Bethevillage

## What is FASD?

- FASD is a diagnostic term that describes the lifelong impacts on the brain and body caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. FASD is often called an invisible disability.
- While it can't be cured, early and appropriate support can make a positive impact and improve outcomes for individuals with FASD.
- FASD can happen in any community or group where alcohol is used, regardless of ethnicity, culture, or socio-economic status.

## If you are a partner, family, friend, or community member:

Educate yourself and get involved

Share information

Support and advocate for pregnant people

Create alcohol free environments and events

Encourage talking to service providers

Host an educational community event

# Dene Medicine

## Dandelion

*Taraxacum officinale*

The common dandelion is well known for its yellow flower heads that turn into round balls of fluff that disperse in the wind. The plant also produces several hollow, leafless flower stems.

Adapted from: Dene Medicine: An On-the-land Healing Resource for Dene Communities

### BENEFITS

Supports immune system, liver and kidney health, treats fever, warts, congestion, replenishes minerals in diabetics



Dandelions are entirely safe to eat, and all parts of the plant, including the roots, leaves, seeds, and flowers are edible.

They are rich in vitamins and minerals. Some ways to prepare them include:

- Use flowers in salads or baking (see recipe on last page)
- Sauté the greens with aromatics like onion and garlic.
- Steep roasted roots for a hot drink.
- Seeds in muffins (fluff removed!)

### LOCATION

Grows in soil in many different areas.

### HARVESTING

In spring pick buds, flowers, young tender leaves with smooth edges and blunt tips. From spring to fall dig, wrap and hang root to dry and store small dried pieces.

### MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, improves immune system. Greens have calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron, vitamins A, B & C. Roots white sap 'inulin' supports liver

### USE

Eat fresh or cooked young leaves and unopened buds.

Make and strain tea using 1 tablespoon leaves or 1 teaspoon dried roots for 15 minutes to treat fever and congestion. Drink 3 cups a day.

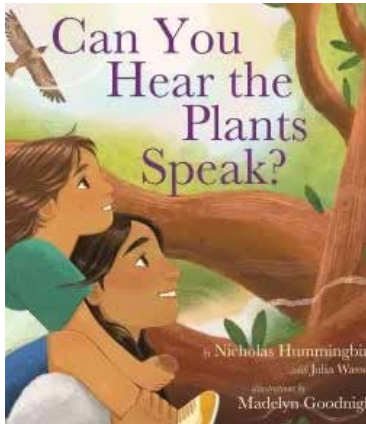
### ELDER'S TEACHINGS

We have to offer our gift to every plant. We never just pick plants like that we have to plead to it. If we are lucky we could get better with it. (Celine Eyakfow, 1993, p. 346)



# Look In a Book

**"You're never alone when you're reading a book." - Susan Wiggs**



## Can You Hear the Plants Speak?

Nicholas Hummingbird

For Young Readers

Our people believe spirit lives in everything.

Mountain, river, wind, tree.

Come, take a walk with me.

What do we learn from plants when we listen to them speaking? Indigenous plantsman Nicholas Hummingbird calls on the legacy of his great-grandparents to remember how one drop of rain, one seed, one plant can renew a cycle of hope and connection—for him and for each of us.



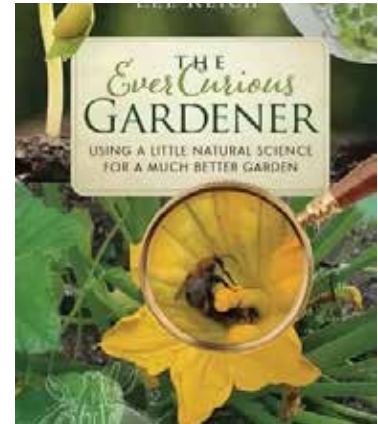
## Sheine Lende

Darcie Little Badger

Fiction

Shane works with her mother and their ghost dogs, tracking down missing persons even when their families can't afford to pay. Their own family was displaced from their traditional home years ago following a devastating flood – and the loss of Shane's father and her grandparents.

Then Shane's mother and a local boy go missing, after a strange interaction with a fairy ring. Shane, her brother, her friends, and her lone, surviving grandparent – who isn't to be trusted – set off on the road to find them. But they may not be anywhere in this world – or this place in time.



## The Ever Curious Gardener

Lee Reich

Science

Unleash your inner geek and let this irreverent romp through the wonders of the garden yield practical results.

Curious why caressing your cucumber plants will help them bear more fruit? Or why you should grow oranges from seed even if the fruit is inedible? Or why trees need to sleep and how to help them?

- How to maximize both flavor and nutrition in your garden bounty
- Helping plants thrive during drought
- Making the best use of compost
- Tips on pruning



# Keep Moving



PaRx is an initiative of the BC Parks Foundation, driven by health-care professionals who want to improve their patients' health by connecting them to nature. Featuring practical resources like quick tips and patient handouts, its goal is to make prescribing time in nature simple, fun and effective.

Each prescriber who registers with PaRx receives a nature prescription file customized with a unique provider code, and instructions for how to prescribe and log nature prescriptions. Patients can also access special offers from our proud partners to reduce their barriers to nature access across Canada.

As a Canadian, evidence-based nature prescription program PaRx fits well with AHA's "Healthy People, Healthy Land"!



## Get Outside for Your Health, Doctor's Orders!

### Spend Time in Nature

Hundreds of scientific studies over several decades show that spending more time in nature can have incredible physical and mental health benefits in several respects, regardless of age.

Spending time in nature:

- Drops your risk of chronic disease like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.
- Busts stress by reducing your cortisol levels and heart rate variability.
- Boosts your immune system.
- Reduces your risk of dementia by 36%.
- Makes you smarter, improving your memory, creativity, and focus.
- Supercharges the effects of exercise.

Increasing outdoor time for your health is so well proven that nature is being adopted worldwide as a health intervention and in Canada, healthcare providers can even write you a prescription for it with BC Parks Foundation's PaRx program. Nature is becoming the fourth pillar of health —just as important for staying healthy as good nutrition, regular exercise and sleep.

Next time you step outside, remember that it not only feels good, but it's also doing wonders for your health! Check out [www.parkprescriptions.ca](http://www.parkprescriptions.ca) to learn more.

# Lateral Kindness

**HURTING SOMEONE ELSE  
WILL NOT EASE YOUR PAIN,  
BUT BEING KIND WILL.**

## From Lateral Violence to Lateral Kindness!

Lateral kindness is an approach to address lateral violence based on Indigenous values that promote social harmony and healthy relationships. Lateral violence impacts people around the world, but it manifests in unique ways for Indigenous people because of the impacts of colonization, racism, and intergenerational trauma. Lateral kindness has the ability to impact public health in a number of ways.

## Hurt People Hurt People

"When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help." - Tich Naht Hanh

## Conflict is Not Always Bad

Functional Conflict - is considered positive, as it can increase performance, support change, and identify weaknesses or areas that need to be supported.

Dysfunctional Conflict - is harmful to people and the organization. This type of confrontation does nothing to support goals or objectives.

## DESC Communication Model

**D**escribe - the behavior

**E**xplain - the effect the behavior has on you, coworkers, patient care

**S**tate - the desired outcome

**C**onsequences - what will happen if the behaviour continues?

## Lateral Kindness

- Please be kind to each other
- Maintain respectful & responsible relationships
- Be grateful
- Be great!



# AHA - The Future

## Accreditation 2024



John Pacquette and his young drummers commenced our Accreditation Week with an engaging session of cultural education, beginning with a prayer, followed by a heartfelt song and vibrant drumming. It was greatly appreciated and a lovely way to start AHA's big week.

This survey provides an opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment to the highest standards of patient care and safety. Accreditation Canada's team will evaluate our services, systems, and processes. This includes reviewing our clinical programs, governance, and the leadership practices that guide our day-to-day operations.

This survey is not only about proving our competence but also about discovering opportunities to elevate the care we provide. We are dedicated to using the insights gained from this process to implement meaningful improvements across our organization.

Thank you to our staff for your unwavering dedication to our clients and your professions. Let's embrace this process with the same passion and commitment that we apply to our healthcare services every day. We look forward to their recommendations for improving our organization!

## Nutrition Wellness Bingo Winners



Congratulations to Julienne Martin and Trina Robillard, our winners of the Nutrition Month Wellness Challenge!

Our other winner has also been selected but has chosen to remain anonymous.

We hope that you all enjoy many tasty & nutritious meals with your new Instant Pot & cookbook.

Thanks for participating!





# AHA - The Future

## Strategic Plan Priorities

As part of the Accreditation process, AHA leadership has been reviewing the Strategic Plan put in place for 2020-2025. The organization has faced a number of challenges and setbacks over the past few years, but we are refocusing on Key Priority Areas for 2024-2025 and we'd like to share them with you!

### 2. Enhance the culture of safety and continuous improvement

Undergoing the Accreditation Canada survey is a significant step for any healthcare organization committed to enhancing its culture of safety and continuous improvement. This rigorous process involves a comprehensive review by external experts who evaluate the organization's adherence to national standards of quality and safety in healthcare. By participating in this survey, organizations like the Athabasca Health Authority can identify areas of excellence and opportunities for improvement, fostering a culture that prioritizes high standards and continuous quality enhancement. The feedback and recommendations provided through the accreditation process serve as a valuable tool for driving systematic changes, ensuring that patient safety and quality care are at the forefront of all operations.

AHA has selected additional goals for enhancing the culture of safety and continuous improvement within its facilities and the communities it serves. One of the strategic goals under this initiative is to create a Systems Navigator position within the Athabasca health facility with a social work background. This role is designed to act as a bridge between patients and the internal and external services they require. This approach not only enhances the efficiency of healthcare delivery but also ensures that patients feel supported and valued in their healthcare journey, thereby reinforcing a safe and positive environment.

A second goal is prioritizing efforts to reduce opioid use. A yearly effort by AHA practitioners has been to limit opioid and controlled/targeted substance prescribing and attempt to de-prescribe where able.

This initiative has seen improvements since 2019. Total narcotic and controlled/targeted prescriptions have decreased every year, with a 12% decrease in the number of narcotic prescriptions and a 16% decrease in controlled/targeted prescriptions in 2022 from 2019. The total patients who receive at least 1 prescription for these medications has also decreased since 2019, with reductions by 25% in patients receiving a narcotic medication and 38% in patients receiving a controlled/targeted medication. All of this demonstrates the hard work of all AHA practitioners has paid off,

Stay tuned each month and we will dive deeper into how the organization intends to improve in each of these areas!



# Team AHA

## AHA Team Updates

### Melanie Martell - Dental Therapist

"Hello Greetings. My name is Melanie Martell, I graduated from The National School of Dental Therapy in 2001. I have been practicing for 23 years as a Dental Therapist.

I have spent a majority of my career providing Dental Therapy services to the Northern communities of Fond du Lac, Black Lake, Uranium City and Hatchet Lake.

I am originally from Waterhen Lake First Nation, and I am proud to be from the North and service in the North. My passion is dental health education and I strive towards excellence for our communities.

I look forward to working in the Basin and I hope we will continue to provide excellent service. I am very happy to be back and be a part of this wonderful team."



Melanie Martell  
Dental Therapist  
Black Lake

*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together  
is progress, and working together is success."*

- Henry Ford



### Ideas on how AHA can be better?

If you have suggestions for AHA but want to submit them anonymously, we have a new "Online Suggestion Box"!

Whether you are staff, a client or a community member - we'd love to hear your thoughts!

<https://forms.office.com/r/u7ahmzL8gS>

Or scan the QR code with your phone, it's phone friendly too!

### AHA Online Suggestion Box





# Team AHA

## Happy Administrative Professionals Day!

### Celebrating Our Administrative Professionals: The Heartbeat of the Athabasca Health Authority

We want to take a moment to shine a spotlight on the incredible individuals behind the scenes—our administrative staff. This day, and every day, we recognize the indispensable role they play in the functioning of Athabasca Health Authority and the significant impact they have on improving client care.

Administrative professionals are the backbone of our organization, ensuring that every aspect of our healthcare delivery runs smoothly. It's their dedication that supports our medical professionals, allowing them to focus on providing the highest standard of care to our clients.

The efficiency and support provided by our administrative staff are vital to creating an environment that prioritizes safety and promotes a culture of continuous improvement. Their efforts do not just support the logistical aspects of healthcare but also enhance the overall patient experience, making our facilities more welcoming and operationally effective.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our administrative professionals. Your hard work and commitment do not go unnoticed, and your contributions are crucial to our mission of delivering exceptional healthcare. Your role in our organization is truly a cause for celebration, not just one day but every day.

Thank you for everything you do to keep Athabasca Health Authority thriving. We are immensely grateful to have such a dedicated team and are proud to acknowledge and celebrate your efforts this Administrative Professionals' Day.



Thank you for your hard work!



# Traditional Skills



## Safe Shelter - Making Dry Smoked Fish

Families and staff at the AHA Safe Shelter teamed up to make mouthwatering dry smoked fish using traditional Dene techniques.

It was heartwarming to witness people of all ages joining forces for this project, with skills being shared and passed down from one generation to the next.

A big thank you to Leonard & Freddie Throassie who went fishing for us!



## Enhancing Well-Being Through Traditional Workshops

Healthy People, Healthy Land



## Ribbon Skirt Making

Beautiful work done at the workshops this month!



# Bite Prevention Week

## DOG BITE STATISTICS

IN NITHA COMMUNITIES  
2019-2022



In 2022, 227 animal bites were reported  
a **38% increase** since 2019

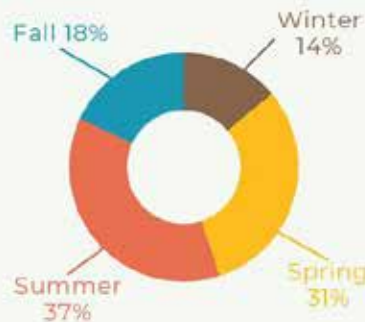


### Age Groups



41% of all bites were to children 0-19 years of age

### Seasons:



**1 in 3**

bites occurred during summer months

**50%**

of bites are avoidable  
(provoked by humans)



### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID DOG BITES

- Stay away from sick, injured, or fighting dogs
- Monitor children around dogs
- Teach children not to ride on, pull on/hurt pets
- Avoid animals with new puppies
- Don't touch an animals food
- Don't play/hug strange dogs

If you have been bitten by an animal, see your Community Health Nurse immediately.

# Crafting for Health



**Stitching Magic:**  
A Community Craft in Action







A fun week was had in Uranium City with programming and physiotherapy services, hosted by AHA's Safe Shelter Manager, Tammy Kostiuk, and Visiting Physiotherapist, Joleen Prystupa.

This included an extra enchanting evening filled with community spirit and creativity.



Since it was Volunteer Week (April 14-20, 2024), it was extra special that people made additional magic bags for those who couldn't come. It further shows the community's kindness and generosity.

We'd also like to extend a thank you to Sandra Lee Abraham and Denise Powder for volunteering their time to help put on the event.

It was truly delightful to see everyone come together, creating numerous magic bags to help ease community member aches & pains.





# National Immunization Awareness Week

April 24-30, 2024



## DANDELION PETAL COOKIES

15-20 cookies

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup large flake oats
- 1/2 cup dandelion petals\*



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Mix oil and honey. Then beat in the eggs and vanilla.
3. Stir in flour, oats, and dandelion petals.
4. Drop the batter by teaspoonfuls onto a parchment lined cookie sheet and bake for 10-15 minutes.

### TO REMOVE PETALS:

Hold flowers firmly by the green base, then pinch and pull petals to separate.

\*Be sure to pick in a clean area where no chemicals have been sprayed