

Return to First Medicines



Return to First Medicines Gathering



July 27-28, 2023, Mystic Lake Event Center, Shakopee, MN



A gathering to engage in traditional foods, water, mind, body and spirit, using cultural teachings.

The Return to First Medicines Gathering began in 2012 to share cultural teachings that cultivate wellness in body mind and spirit. This year's gathering was planned by a leadership council of 7 grandmothers and 7 youth and coordinated by Suzanne Nash at Indigenous Peoples Task Force.

Speaker Bios

	<p>Nathan Berglund</p> <p>Nathan Berglund is Oglala Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, age 19. He grew up in the Twin Cities and is a part of the Indigi-baby Food farm team and is also in the Ikidowin Youth Acting Ensemble</p>
	<p>Renee Butters</p> <p>Renee Butters “Awanishbaasin-The Breath of the Spirits” owner & founder of She Heals Noojimo-Noojimo’iwe, is an Indigenous Healing Practitioner/Teacher/Guide, and is a skilled facilitator of community self-healing ceremonies and circles. She is descendant of the Ojibwe Snake Clan, and a citizen of The White Earth Nation. Renee uses cultural, holistic, and hands on approaches to teach others how to reclaim their most powerful healer, their healer within. Her life’s goal is to make a significant impact on humanity, by helping to empower others in awakening to who and all they truly are & what they came here to do.</p>



Sharon M. Day

Sharon M. Day, Ojibwe is the Executive Director and one of the founder's of the Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF), formerly known as the Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force.

She is an artist, musician, and writer. She has performed at Illusion Theater, The American History Theater, Pangea World Theater, and for performances at the Ordway, the Guthrie and the Kennedy Center. Her writings have been published in journals and anthologies. She has scripted several plays for Ikidowin Youth Theater and a recent musical theater play that had a staged reading at Pangea World Theater. As a visual artist, she has won 2nd 3rd place awards for soft sculpture for a national juried art show for urban Native American Artists at Southwest Museum. She was recently featured in Nijimoo, at All My Relations art gallery.

An environmental activist, she has led over 23 Water Walks since 2011 to offer prayers for these rivers. These rivers include the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Ohio and the James River in Virginia. She is an editor of the anthology, *Sing! Whisper! Shout! Pray! Feminist Visions for a Just World: Edgework Books, 2000*. She featured in *Drink of the Winds, Let the Waters Flow Free, Johnson Institute, 1978*.



Linda Eagle Speaker

- Dually enrolled member of Kainai (Blackfoot) First Nations, Alberta Canada and member of the Blackfeet tribe located in Montana
- Mother of two biological sons, six traditionally adopted sons and three traditional adopted daughter
- Grandmother of sixteen grandchildren
- 7th Generation Blackfeet Ceremonial Herbalist
- Resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota



Terry Maresca, M.D.

Dr. Maresca (Mohawk Tribe, Kahnawake Band) is the oldest of ten children born to a Mohawk iron worker and his wife. She has served as a family doctor for tribal, urban Indian, and IHS since 1987. She blends indigenous plant medicine work and cultural practices with Western medicine approaches to health. A clinical professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, she trains both Native and non-Native medical students and doctors to serve our Indigenous communities. Terry enjoys medicinal garden creation and remains involved in Indigenous seed saving, gardening, and tribal land and river restoration efforts. She is a grandmother of five and auntie to many.



Maria Morin McCoy

Maria Morin McCoy is a mother of 4 and a Grandmother of 8. Maria lives in and works in St Paul, Minnesota. She comes from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in North Dakota and is from the Bear Clan. She has worked at the American Indian Family Center since 2006 as Therapeutic Life Coach, Wellness Practitioner, Body Worker and Mentor using traditional healing and cultural wellness practices through the guidance of our Ancestors and holistic teachings of the Medicine Wheel to support health, wellbeing and balance of our spiritual, physical, emotional and mental parts of self so we may be filled with Biimadiziwin (living life to the fullest each day). Maria's work supports community members healing from Historical/Intergenerational trauma through preconception, beginning stages of life all the way through the elder years by connecting with our Earth Mother's Medicine by honoring and encompassing the seasonal changes of life's cycle. The last stage of life is the honoring of our Elder's life contributions to community as well as Elders generously giving back by mentoring and sharing their knowledge.



Cyndy Milda

Cyndy Milda, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Tribal Member and Cultural Outreach Coordinator



Michael Neumann

Michael Neumann has over 20 years of experience coordinating community-led agroecology, environmental restoration, and food sovereignty initiatives in the Midwest and internationally. He currently serves as the Agroecology Coordinator for the Indigenous Peoples Task Force's Indigi-Baby Food Sovereignty Project. Michael is also the Executive Director of a Pennsylvania based NGO, Partners In Progress, which collaborates with local organizations in Haiti and Uganda in inclusive and intergenerationally-led development initiatives related to agroecology, food, housing, livelihoods, and environment. He has a M.Ed. in Agriculture Education and a J.D.



Michael Perez

Hello my name is Michael I'm 12 from Leech Lake and Guatemala I have 5 siblings I'm 4'11. It's important to learn about my culture, because I want to keep it alive and it's fun and intriguing. What I like about Ikidowin is that we get to travel places and I learn more acting skills, a goal for my future is that I want to be a doctor, and rich and I want to have a lot of stamina.



Janet Sanchez

My name is Janet Sanchez, I am a member of the Leech Lake Tribe. I am 22 years old. I have participated in The Ikidowin Acting Ensemble since 2013. During my time as an ensemble member, I was able to travel and had opportunities I never thought I would. I saw the ocean for the first time. I attended my first sweat lodge. I learned how to advocate for myself and my community. And learned about my culture, how to bead, how to sew, and the history of my people. In April 2022 I took part of Indigenous Peoples Task Force's Healing Circle Internship Program for young adults. For 8 weeks I was an intern at Indigenous Lotus and in Winter 2022, I spent 8 weeks at MN Adult and Teen Challenge. I helped with vending at Pow Wows and took a few yoga classes. I also wrote about my experience with Drugs and Alcohol. And shared my story with High Schools all across the metro. I currently work in the Youth Program. I love being able to provide a safe and supporting space for Native youth. I am a big sister to my 5 younger siblings. One of my favorite cultural experiences personally with the youth was attending The Cedar River Nibi Walk.



Victoria Johnson

Victoria, Wáčhiŋhiŋ Máza Wíŋyaŋ (Iron Plume Woman), is an enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Santee affiliated, and was born and raised on her ancestral homelands in Mni Sota (Minneapolis, MN). She is the owner of Indigenous Lotus, launched in 2017, with the intention to support indigenous relatives in healing through movement practices and knowledge sharing. As a mother and community member, Victoria is also a yoga practitioner and student, Yoga of 12-Step Recovery Leader, and holds a degree in business. Recently, Victoria became a certified doula, Indigenous Lactation Counselor, and enrolled in an Ayurvedic Health Counseling program.

Prior to Indigenous Lotus, Victoria's background includes direct youth work within the community for Native American/ Indigenous non-profit organizations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul since 2010. Her work has led her to teach and speak around the nation about movement and the importance of holistic healing approaches

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