

# Mattagami First Nation **DRUM**



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**Volume Six  
Issue Two**

# WORDS FROM THE CHIEF



**Chief Chad  
Boissoneau  
Mattagami  
First Nation**

I am so proud of everyone in Mattagami First Nation. Although so many First Nations and communities have been ravaged by the Covid19 Pandemic we have pulled together from the very start of this threat to organize, manage and initiate safety protocols, vaccination clinics and member support. I am relieved and pleased to know that we have not had any cases of Covid19, sickness or death in the community as a result of all of us working together to stay safe.

It has not been easy to cope with this incredible threat that has hit the entire planet. Here in Mattagami First Nation we have had to deal with the stress and tension of putting in restrictions needed to keep everyone safe. This has been an ordeal for many and has caused emotional and mental stress which often became apparent in negative ways. However, through sound leadership from our Council, the establishment of a Community Control Group, dedication of our staff and cooperation from our members we have so far been very successful at continuing with operations, health care, economic development, programming and education.

The Community Control Group which draws together members from education, health, administration and leadership has been at the forefront in identifying public health protocols and putting safety controls in place to keep us all safe. At times people reacted negatively with some of the necessary restrictions this group had to install in our community but the proof is in the pudding. Our strategies have been a success as we

have no cases, sickness or death associated with Covid 19 in Mattagami First Nation. That is a very big deal. People are getting sick and dying with this virus in just about every community here in the north, in Ontario, across Canada and globally, however the efforts we have made and protocols we have put in place have been successful so far. Some of the decisions we have had to make in terms of the flow of people into and out of the community have been met with frustration but imagine for a minute just how bad we would all feel if this virus took hold here and resulted in the loss of one of our members. We owe it to our vulnerable Elders and children to cast aside any negative reaction to safety protocols to keep everyone safe.

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*The future is  
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Covid19  
pandemic*

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The tough decisions that the Community Control Group has had to make have been successful. Not all of them have been popular and our council and staff have had to deal with the stress of dealing with some negative reaction. I apologize to everyone for the fact that they have had to deal with this type of stress but I know that in the final analysis we all understand that if we all pull together and play by the rules to keep ourselves safe at some point soon we will be back to a more normal life. I have been supportive of the guidance and decisions made by the Community Control Group as

I realize very well that it only takes one breach of safety protocol to let this virus into our community. Once that happens and in particular with the new variants, this disease spreads like wildfire.

I want to make sure to thank the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and Wabun Tribal Council and all Indigenous political bodies that have been lobbying the federal and provincial governments so that our people were prioritized with receiving vaccinations and support during this pandemic. We are also thankful for the efforts of the federal and provincial governments, public health units and our health care staff. Our front line workers have risen to the challenge of this pandemic and they have done a remarkable job.

We have had to adapt and adjust to ensure that it is business as usual in terms of running our First Nation and that has included a lot of online meetings and in many cases carrying on our daily operations from home. Thankfully, we have had emergency preparedness experience through recent environmental spills and forest fires that have better prepared us.

Things are looking very good as we move ahead with all kinds of positive development for Mattagami First Nation. We have seen our young people trained for employment and starting careers in all kinds of positions over the past few years. Our Elders are being well cared for and there is continued success in housing development. There are so many opportunities for our people these days to secure employment, education and to start businesses. There are no excuses as anyone who wants to step up and take advantage of these opportunities can do so.

The future is looking good for all of us as we move forward even in dealing with this historical and terrible Covid19 pandemic. Pulling together, treating each other with respect and making short term sacrifices so that we can all stay safe is paying off. Let's stick to it.

# KEEPING IN TOUCH

We have all been dealing with this limiting Covid 19 pandemic as best we can. I want to give thanks to Chief and Council, our Elders, staff, health workers and community members for all playing their role in keeping us safe and functioning even in difficult and stressful times like this. The true sense of community has to do with how well we deal with emergencies, crisis and difficult challenges and although we have had our ups and downs in dealing with this pandemic Mattagami First Nation has endured and continues to thrive thanks to the energy, wisdom, support and encouragement from so many people.

We are fortunate in that we were better prepared than most communities to deal with this pandemic due to the experience we gained through our Emergency Management Team during the major forest fire that swept through the area a few years ago. Mattagami First Nation was evacuated because of that fire emergency and during this time we developed ways and means to cope with working remotely and ensuring that important data and information was protected. Through that emergency experience our Chief and Council, staff and community members learned to react quickly and adapt to a challenging threat. This ensured that we were in a better position to deal with the challenge of the pandemic.

It has been very difficult for so many of us who are not free to visit family and friends as much as we did in the past and of course long distance travel is not possible. We have successfully managed entry into Mattagami First Nation and also run very efficient and easy to access vac-

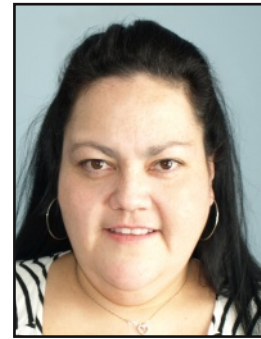
cine clinics. This has resulted in no Covid19 cases in our membership here in the community. All of us deserve credit for keeping each other safe while still functioning to a high degree. I wish to commend our Community Health Nurse Christine Dobson for contributing so much energy and care in organizing our vaccine clinics and servicing our community. Thanks to our health care workers we also have had programming to deal with the affects on our mental health during this time of limitations and isolation.

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*There was a  
76% approval  
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I am not saying that this entire experience and process has been completely smooth as we have made mistakes along the way. In struggling to adapt and manage things here in Mattagami First Nation we had to learn a lot quickly and that has its challenges. Not everyone has the same view or beliefs when it comes to dealing with this virus and the pandemic but for the most part we have been working together to follow the rules set in place by the governments, our Indigenous leadership federally, provincially, regionally and locally. Some of the decisions in terms of restrictions and limitations have been hard on people but overall most of us have understood that these things were put in place to keep us all from getting sick, ending up in a hospital on a ventilator and dying. We have done a good job at working together to keep everyone safe. In a recent survey to our community members it



**Juanita  
Luke**  
Executive  
Director

was noted that there was a 76 percent approval with our efforts in keeping everyone safe during this pandemic.

I am celebrating 25 years in my position here at Mattagami First Nation this August. I can't believe how fast the time has gone by and how many experiences I have shared with the community over the years. So many positive things have happened over the decades and we now see new housing, infrastructure, programming and resource development projects that involve our decision making. Our members are more healthy, better educated and many of us are gainfully employed and developing our own businesses.

It gives me great satisfaction to see so many of our young people returning to Mattagami First Nation to join us in employment positions in which they are assisting with our development as we move forward. Young people like Devin Naveau, Michael McKay-Nicolas, Kourtney Baulne, Gilliane Prince, Brent Boissoneau to name a few are making a difference in our First Nation and in turn their work and the guidance of our leadership and Elders provides us with great hope for the coming years. Yes this dreadful pandemic has presented us with many challenges but if you stop for a minute and think about it we are so lucky to be up here in Northern Ontario where the virus is less threatening as we have lower populations. We are so blessed to be living here in our safe and fully serviced First Nation in the wilderness and on the banks of Mattagami Lake in the heart of our ancestral lands where we enjoy living with our traditional and cultural ways. We need to remember to be thankful for all we have.

## Front Cover

*photo by Devin Naveau*

*Kourtney Baulne, Administrative  
Assistant Receptionist for  
Mattagami First Nation took part  
in a photo shoot with photographer  
Devin Naveau to bring awareness  
to Murdered and Missing  
Indigenous Women (MMIW)*

# Devin Naveau Is CFO Of Aki LP Inc



**Devin Naveau,**  
Chief Financial  
Officer,  
Aki LP Inc.

Devin Naveau is the Chief Financial Officer for the newly created Aki Limited Partnership Incorporated (Aki LP Inc). Naveau started his new duties in January 2021.

As CFO, Naveau is responsible for managing and overseeing the financial actions of the company and bookkeeping of financial records.

“A big part of my work is in communicating the financial strengths and weaknesses of the company to our board of directors and to the First Nation Chief and Council. We also provide quarterly financial reporting as well. Our big focus is in keeping the business as open and transparent as possible because we are representing the community,” said Naveau.

The name Aki is a local Ojibwe word that means ‘land’ and it represents what the new company will be involved in, namely the land or territory of Mattagami FN. Aki LP Inc along with Aki General Partnership Inc (Aki GP Inc) were created out of the Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA) established with the Coté Gold Project built by IAMGOLD near Gogama. As part of the IBA, IAMGOLD agreed to creating business partnerships with Mattagami FN as the mining project develops. Mattagami FN in turn created Aki LP Inc to manage these partnerships as an independent organization that is still owned by the First Nation. It is a business arrangement that allows Aki LP Inc, to act as an independent management firm to create and manage economic opportunities, while being owned by the First Nation and flow all benefits to the community.

Naveau works with Tim Harvey, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Aki LP Inc. The company Aki LP Inc is also led by a Board of Directors that includes Naveau who acts as Secretary, Harvey as President, Wendy Debastos, Mattagami FN Councillor as Vice President; Juanita Luke, Mattagami FN Executive Director as Treasurer and Gaetan Malette, a corporate and business veteran from Timmins that specializes in Indigenous relations, as a Director.

Although Aki LP Inc was created to directly deal with partnerships arising from the work with IAMGOLD’s Coté Gold Project, Naveau explained that they are using the opportunity to expand their development into as many areas as possible within the Mattagami First Nation territory.

“We’ve been expanding our projects and partnerships to other mining projects and we are continually reaching out for more. We want to establish something long lasting so that we can keep it sustainable far into the future. We have to build these projects and programs in such a way so that we can make our community financially self sufficient and not as dependent on outside sources like the government to maintain our First Nation. We also have to do it in a way that respects our traditions and culture,” explained Naveau.

To date Aki LP Inc has partnered with Caron Equipment in Timmins to establish a joint partnership called Aki Caron Limited Partnership (LP) to conduct civil construction and earth moving services at the Coté Gold Project. Aki LP Inc has majority 51% ownership of the partnership that is also employing many community members.

Naveau explained that it is not just about employment.

“The work we are trying to establish is not just about jobs, we also want to help our local entrepreneurs who may want to get involved by starting a new business. If any member wants to go down that route, we can help them establish themselves and find the resources and opportunities they need to succeed,” commented Naveau.

He is enjoying the challenges of his new role as he is able to understand the dynamics of resource development from a First Nation perspective. He is grateful to local leadership and to the community for their support on this new venture.

“As a First Nation person, I get to see resource development from two perspectives. Mining and resource development can be very destructive to the land and that is a difficult reality for our people since we view the land as something we have to protect for future generations. At the same time, new developments create opportunities for our members to create employment or business opportunities. The new opportunities give us a chance to become more self sufficient and independent. It is a challenging balance that we always have to be aware of,” said Naveau.

Chief Chad Boissoneau and Juanita Luke, Executive Director have expressed their satisfaction with Naveau’s successes through his work in the community.

“We do our best to encourage our young people to come back to Mattagami First Nation to help us build for the future and Devin is a great example of answering that call as he is a bright and dynamic talent,” commented Chief Boissoneau.

When his schedule allows, Naveau is involved in working with the community to photograph major happenings and volunteering his time to assist with local events. He is passionate about helping First Nation youth and hopes to establish a youth council that can allow youth to become more involved in First Nation governance. Naveau also volunteers his time as a local volunteer firefighter.



PHOTO BY DEVIN NAVEAU

**A LOGO CONTEST WAS HELD IN THE COMMUNITY FOR AKI GP INC AND AKI LP INC. FROM L-R ARE: MARC CARON, CARON EQUIPMENT; AMERIA WESLEY, MATTAGAMI FN YOUTH; AVA NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN YOUTH AND TIM HARVEY, CEO, AKI LP INC AND PRESIDENT OF AKI GP INC.**

# Tim Harvey Leads Aki LP Inc

Tim Harvey is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Aki Limited Partnership Incorporated (Aki LP Inc) and President of the Aki General Partnership Incorporated (Aki GP Inc)

“I really enjoy the work that I have been given in the community. It’s the most interesting thing I’ve done so far. It’s a dream fulfilled for me to be able to stay in the north, in a small community and apply my skills and experience to help others gain employment and in building businesses,” said Harvey.

He handles the day to day management of the business partnerships developed through Aki LP Inc together with Chief Financial Officer Devin Naveau. Harvey is active in pursuing opportunities with other mining companies in the Mattagami FN territory, expanding on current partnerships or developing new ones.

‘Aki’ is the Ojibwe word for ‘land’ and the name represents what the new company will be involved in, namely the land or territory of Mattagami FN. Aki LP Inc is an incorporated development firm that deals mainly with the mining industry. The company was created out of the Impacts and Benefit Agreement (IBA) established for the Coté Gold Project by IAMGOLD near Gogama. Initially created to accommodate the IBA, Harvey explained that Aki LP Inc will expand into other development areas with the goal of creating a variety of partnerships as

well as encouraging the growth of local business and employment opportunities.

“One of the reasons why Aki LP Inc was created was to make it more public and open for the community and provide full transparency. We work for the community and everything we do is made available for the membership to see and understand. Our work is also to help create employment opportunities and help local business startups if anyone from the community wants to do that,” said Harvey.

Aki LP Inc was incorporated shortly after the signing of a major IBA between IAMGOLD, Mattagami FN and Flying Post FN in April 2019. The company has had success in establishing its first partnership with Caron Equipment in Timmins to form Aki Caron Limited Partnership (LP) with 51% ownership by Aki LP Inc. Harvey added that they are continuing to seek out new partnerships through the Coté Gold Project but also in other areas as well.

“We are looking at long term goals with Aki LP Inc. As we get people employed or involved in these resource development projects, we have the opportunity to get them trained and to accumulate experience. All this training and work experience will mean that these individuals can then apply themselves to other areas and even start businesses as well,” said Harvey.

He explained that they hope that the



**Tim Harvey,**  
Chief Executive  
Officer,  
Aki LP Inc. /  
President  
Aki GP Inc.

partnerships and businesses created through Aki LP Inc will create a long lasting revenue stream for the community. The partnerships created by Aki LP Inc provide revenue for the community and the funds can then be used towards projects for the First Nation.

Harvey is a northerner who was born in Red Lake and grew up in Wawa, Ontario. He originally studied Business and Marketing at Nipissing University and Canadore College in North Bay before moving on to work with Cooperators Insurance Company in North Bay and Timmins over a four year period.

“My wife Tracey was the first reason why we came to Mattagami FN as a family. She took on a role as teacher and principal here and we followed. I’ve always loved being in a small community in the north and we had grown tired of living in the city so we were more than happy to make the move to Mattagami FN,” explained Harvey.

He and his wife Tracey were married in the community and they are now raising their one year old daughter Amelia in Mattagami FN. Tracey Harvey is the Principal and a teacher at the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial Elementary School in the community. They enjoy life close to the wilderness and they regularly take part in hunting, fishing and exploring the lands and waterways.

“We are so grateful to be here and to be surrounded by so many helpful neighbours and friends. We are both small town northern people and there is really no other place we would like to be,” commented Harvey.

Upon moving to Mattagami FN, Harvey took on the role of Lands and Resources Coordinator. During his involvement with this department he was appointed to the Board of Directors of Aki LP Inc and later also became the President of Aki GP Inc. Due to all his involvement in Aki LP Inc and his experience in business development, the board and leadership of Aki LP Inc selected him to become the CEO of the new and developing management firm for the First Nation.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DEVIN NAVEAU

**TAKING THE PLUNGE INTO MATTAGAMI LAKE ARE TIM HARVEY, CEO, AKI LP INC AND PRESIDENT OF AKI GP INC AND DEVIN NAVEAU CFO, AKI LP INC DURING COLD WATER TRAINING FOR THE MATTAGAMI FN FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

# Mattagami FN Pandemic Response

Mattagami First Nation Health Department has taken a lead role in ensuring the safety of the community during the Covid19 Pandemic over the past year.

The First Nation has been able to implement well designed planning and delivery of emergency protocols and management plans that had been developed and used over the past few years. Mattagami First Nation Executive Director Juanita Luke explained that due to the many emergencies that the community has had to deal with over the years, several plans had already been in place including digitizing and storing administrative documents and information on cloud storage services to virtualize their office and make it available anywhere.

“We have had to deal with several types of emergencies of various types and some as serious as evacuations due to forest fires over the years. To deal with these emergencies, we have developed plans to prepare our community. This meant that when the pandemic came upon us, our office was very well equipped to have our staff work from home and isolate themselves and keep everyone safe while also maintaining the functioning of our administration,” said Luke.

A management model was created by the First Nation that provides direction, guidelines, roles and responsibilities for all levels of leadership and staff in the community. A Community Control Group (CCG) was also established to provide development of Covid measures, develop processes related to Covid and provide direction for Covid Protocol Coordinators. The CCG consists of a group of individuals representing each sector of the community including leadership, fire department, public works, education, policing, health and administration.

Christine Dobson, Community Health Nurse for Mattagami FN explained that it has taken a lot of work by many health care workers in the community to ensure that they were able to prevent outbreaks of the Covid19 virus from occurring in the community.

“It’s been a challenge from the start for all of us because we have had to balance our day to day work in health care with the added task of preventing any infections from occurring. The start was the most difficult as we had to provide a whole education campaign to inform everyone about what a pandemic meant and the level of danger it imposed while also trying to not cause panic or distress,” said Dobson.

She added that part of the education and information campaign was to keep the com-

munity informed on the developments of the pandemic, new mandates by health organizations, government recommendations and up to date news on infection rates and outbreaks in cities and communities that First Nation members may be in contact with.

In April 2020, the First Nation Chief and Council announced a Band Council Resolution to close outside traffic and visitations to the community to non-members. The closure still allowed community members to move freely but restricted anyone outside the community from entering unless they were required to under strict protocols established by the First Nation.

In May 2020, the health team established an Assessment Centre in the community to identify and test individuals for any possible infections. The Assessment Centre was brought together through the efforts of Mattagami FN leadership and the help of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and Wabun Health. They were also able to bring in rapid testing through the help of the Ontario Ministry of Health to quickly identify any possible infections.

“We successfully advocated to have all these services in our community because it was not feasible to send our people to Sudbury and Timmins to get tested or assessed. It was safer to keep people within the community,” said Dobson.

Much of the health care services fall within the Sudbury district of health care

management but Dobson explained that most of their clients go to Timmins for their medical care. Due to these connections, the community opted to work more closely with the Porcupine Health Unit in Timmins to organize and manage the transportation and delivery of the Moderna vaccine to the First Nation.

The health team hosted or took part in vaccination clinics using the Moderna Vaccine on February 4, March 4, April 1 and May 11 to provide first and second doses to as many community members as possible.

“The vaccination of the community has been very successful with an overwhelming majority of everyone in the First Nation now having received both doses of their required vaccines,” explained Dobson.

The vaccination program included an education program where health care workers visited community members especially Elders to inform them on the safety of vaccines and information on how they are made. They also connected and communicated to community members through social media such as a dedicated Facebook page to encourage everyone to not share questionable or false information and to only use credible and verified news sources. The Mattagami FN Health department continues to encourage any of their community members who have any questions about Covid19, vaccinations or anything to do with the pandemic to contact their office or the Covid Protocol Coordinators for more information.

## The Covid Protocol Coordinators are:

**Amanda Thompson**  
[amandathompson@mjnms.com](mailto:amandathompson@mjnms.com)  
**705-923-6088**

**Cathy Naveau**  
[cathynaveau@mjnms.com](mailto:cathynaveau@mjnms.com)  
**705-690-5990**



PHOTO BY DEVIN NAVEAU

ELDER MIKE NAVEAU RECEIVING THE MODERNA VACCINE FROM CHRISTINE DOBSON, COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSE DURING A VACCINATION CLINIC HELD AT THE MATTAGAMI FN COMMUNITY COMPLEX

# Gerald Luke Dedicated To Housing



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY GERALD LUKE

## AMANDA RYAN WITH GERALD LUKE AND THEIR DAUGHTER ABIGAIL (ABBY) IN 2017

Gerald Luke is the Housing and Maintenance Manager for Mattagami First Nation. He officially took on this new title in March 2020 but he has been involved with the Housing Department in various roles for many years.

"I feel good working for my community to help everyone with maintaining their homes. It's really rewarding for me to work for my First Nation and to be able to do as much as I can to make sure that people's homes are well looked after," said Luke.

In his new role, he is responsible for all housing and maintenance management for the Mattagami Housing Department and many different properties and buildings including the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial Elementary School, First Nation administration building, gymnasium, fire hall, police station and the water treatment plant. He is also involved in any new construction, renovations and regular maintenance and he is in charge of all the Public Works employees for the community.

"My work mainly involves working with others on building maintenance issues around the community," said Luke.

Over the winter months between November 2020 to May 2021, the First Nation funded the construction

of a new housing complex that features four family units. The building was constructed and built in place using area contractors. Some exterior work and roofing was completed by local contractor William Quachegun.

"Even though we have had to deal with many changes, restrictions and recommendations due to the Covid19 pandemic, we have had a very busy winter season this past year. We saw the building of a new housing project and we were very happy with the work that was done for our community," said Luke.

He is very comfortable working in the building trades as he has been in the construction industry for the past 35 years. Over the past several years, he has worked for the Mattagami FN housing department in various roles to assist in the building, renovations and maintenance of the community's infrastructure.

"My title might have changed but my role is still the same in the community to keep everything functioning and working properly for everyone," said Luke.

His department is also involved in the upgrading of building components for local homes. They recently installed 16 new propane powered emergency electrical backup generating units for Elders in the community.

"This is an important addition for

our Elders especially when we do have instances where power can be down for a day or more. We have Elders with special medical equipment that need constant power so emergency power generation was something we were very happy to install for their homes," said Luke.

He hopes to see more added housing developed in the community to accommodate more families that wish to make their home in the First Nation. The housing department is making efforts in the near future for a new housing development in the community with plans to prepare building lots with water utilities and hydro lines.

"We want to add more housing for families in the future. However, we are also looking into providing housing solutions for single individuals because we tend to leave them out when plans for housing are considered," said Luke.

As a community member who grew up in the First Nation, he is happy with the progress and development that has occurred in Mattagami FN over the past 30 years.

"There has been so many positive things that have happened and so many buildings that have been added to our community over the years. It feels good to see all these accomplishments for our people and the sense of pride it builds in everyone, especially our young people. I'm very pleased to be part of its continued development and I look forward to seeing more as we move ahead," said Luke.

He and his partner Amanda Ryan have a four year old daughter Abigail (Abby).

"The responsibility of looking after housing is a constant part of my life due to the nature of emergencies and issues that arise with everything that has to do with housing. So between juggling calls at all hours of the day and night, I do my very best to take time to be with my family," said Luke.

He enjoys being with his family to enjoy boat riding on the lake, exploring the wilderness around the community and socializing with friends and relatives. Luke also enjoys being close to home to conduct his own renovations and in constructing his family home in the community.

# Fowler Heads Fire Department



**Curtis  
Fowler,  
Fire Chief  
Mattagami FN  
Station 5252**

Curtis Fowler, is the Fire Chief of Mattagami First Nation, Station 5252. Fowler was appointed to the position in a ceremony with the Fire Department on November 12, 2020. The previous Fire Chief was Wilbert Wesley who had served in this position for three and half years.

"I'm grateful for the support from everyone and from our Firefighting Crew to become the new Fire Chief. Although I just started this position, I've been involved in our firefighting department for over 30 years now. It's been great to see the progress we've had over the past three decades and it feels good to see the growth we continue to have," said Fowler.

The Mattagami FN Fire Department works with four different emergency services which are based in Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay and the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Services. The department is also involved with motor vehicle emergency events along Highway 144. The crew members of the volunteer firefighters take part in regular training opportunities to encourage them to acquire as many additional skills as possible. The 23 member Mattagami FN firefighting crew are first medical responders who have specialized training to deal with medical emergencies including how to handle and treat overdose events.

The department has a primary Firefighting Pumper Truck and a brand new 2019 First Response Rescue Truck which was recently outfitted with a forest fire suppression trailer. They are also equipped with a Jaws of Life unit, a hydraulic rescue tool used to extricate crash victims from severely damaged vehicles. In 2019, the volunteer firefighting crew acquired ice water rescue suits as well as specialized training in ice water rescue scenarios.

"As much as we continue to add to our supply of equipment, we are still in need of new materials and training to

keep our volunteers ready and capable," said Fowler.

He explained that when he was first involved as a volunteer firefighter in the community, there were few resources and very little if any training.

"When I first started, we didn't have much except for a couple of water pumps that we ran from the lake. It makes me feel good to see the progress and growth we've had in the community. Everything we've done over the years has made our community safer while at the same time keeping our volunteer firefighters capable, educated and secure," said Fowler.

He is also the Heavy Equipment Operator and helps manage road maintenance for Mattagami FN, a position he has held for the past five years. In this work, he operates several types of heavy equipment and machinery to perform various activities in the community including snow plowing, road grading, earth work and landscaping.

He previously worked as an Miner for Lakeshore Gold in Timmins where he achieved various levels of training and education in mining technology and in the use of heavy equipment and machinery operation.

"I've always had an interest in working with big machines and new technologies. I constantly asked about bigger machines and I wanted to learn more about them until eventually I became an operator," said Fowler.

As a child, his father was involved as

a Miner in various locations and their family moved often. It wasn't until he was 10 years of age that his family finally settled in Mattagami FN. As he grew up, Fowler always had an interest in following the traditional activities of his Elders and sought their teaching at an early age.

"I wanted to learn about our culture and when I asked for help in the community, everyone directed me to our late Elder Frank McKay. He knew my family and from the time I was about 14 years of age, he became my teacher and mentor who taught me everything about life on the land and the history of our people," said Fowler.

Elder Frank McKay passed away on April 7, 2019. Fowler was grateful for all the teachings that Elder McKay had shared with him and he honours his memory by continuing to pass on the same teachings to other youth in the community.

"Our culture is based on our older generations spending time with young people to pass on our teachings by word of mouth. It's important for us to pass on this knowledge to keep our heritage alive and to keep our young people connected to their ancestors," said Fowler.

He and his spouse Dorothy Naveau live in the community and they have a daughter Samara. Recently Samara and her boyfriend Ethaniel Wesley also joined the Mattagami FN Volunteer Fire Department.

## McKay-Nicolas Featured

Michael McKay-Nicolas is working as the Finance Clerk Trainee for Mattagami First Nation. He has been working with both Juanita Luke, Executive Director and Pam Gaudreau, Finance Manager in moving forward with his role as part of administration.

He is focused much of the time with organizing and inputting data related to financial operations for Mattagami FN.

"I am very pleased that Michael is continuing to work with us as he is someone from the community who has grown up here. He is a great addition to our staff," commented Luke.

He had started out as a summer student in the finance department and then was accepted and enrolled in an accounting program at Cambrian College in Sudbury.

The pandemic forced the college to switch to online learning and McKay-Nicolas found that was a difficult fit for him so he made the decision to return to hands on learning and employment with the Mattagami FN finance department.

"I found it difficult to learn in the online concept so I decided to make the move to actual real time learning with the continuation of employment with the finance department. It was a good decision as I am learning so much and improving my skills and knowledge," explained McKay-Nicolas.

He is a graduate of Timmins High and Vocational School and attended elementary school at the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School in Mattagami FN.

"I want to thank Chief and Council and



# Focus On Lands & Resources Coordinator

Jennifer Constant is Mattagami First Nation Lands and Resources Coordinator. She started the position on March 29, 2021. This position is through the New Relationship Fund (NRF) which is funded through Grants Ontario. Constant is also currently a First Nation Councillor for Mattagami FN.

“My role is assisting the First Nation in building fundamental consultation and engagement capacity, so they can meaningfully engage with governments and the private sector on lands and resources matters. As well I will be providing support to long-term planning related to lands and resources including economic development,” commented Constant.

The overall aim of the NRF is to address and close the socio-economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Ontario by supporting community involvement in lands and resources development. Constant will be participating in resource management in areas including forestry, mining, power development, water management and wildlife management.

Her main role is to liaise between Mattagami FN, government and industry in the areas of lands and resources through planning and community outreach, relationship building and professional development.

“I am thankful that my past experience over the years includes working in other positions in Mattagami First Nation, sitting on council and through all kinds of organizations advocating for our people. I have a vast network of Indigenous and Non-Indi-

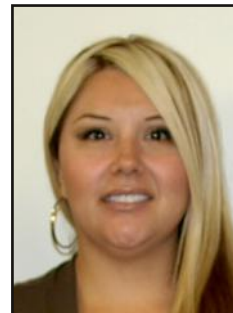
genous people in government, industry and political organizations and that opens many doors. My education and work experience has prepared me well for this new role,” explained Constant.

The position is part of a provincial government initiative that is geared to improving the interaction, relationships, communication and knowledge base regarding resource development and interests on the land.

“With so much activity in the resource sector it is difficult for many Indigenous communities to keep up with all the different files, meetings and the necessary planning, research and development to make sure our community is well represented,” commented Constant.

She explained that much of her efforts will involve providing a path forward so that leadership, members, youth, Elders, management and staff all are informed about activities and development on First Nation lands. To ensure that these efforts are successful Constant is developing a manual dedicated to outlining process and structures that deals with capacity building. The document aims to clearly involve leadership, community members, youth, Elders, management and staff participation and provide an understanding of any lands and resources development or activity.

“It is so important for us to realize that every one of our Mattagami First Nation members has the information, knowledge and opportunities to participate and have a voice in any resource developments or



**Jennifer Constant,**  
Lands &  
Resources  
Coordinator

activities on our lands. This is our ancestral, traditional and cultural land and we all deserve the right to have a voice considering that we are the stewards of these lands,” commented Constant.

She pointed out that she finds great satisfaction in working in a role where she is continually learning and adding to her skill set.

“I have so many good people to turn to for input and knowledge in the community and that helps a lot. I am very appreciative of the fact that I can turn to Tim Harvey, in economic development for his feedback and encouragement in developing my new role,” said Constant.

She expressed that one of the most important things she will be developing is capacity building and engagement with community members.

“The more members we have that are engaged and understand the process in dealing with resource developers and government when it comes to activity on our lands then the stronger we are as a community. I am very interested in developing an awareness of our lands with the youth in the community and connecting them with our Elders and knowledge keepers so that they understand the issues more clearly,” commented Constant.

She hopes that the manual being developed will be more or less a guide for all members in learning about the process involved in lands and resources issues, opportunities, negotiations and traditional and cultural connections.

“I have great expectations in community members in that the more we inform and engage everyone then more better decisions we can make when it comes to development and activity on our lands. Gone are the days where we had no voice. Now we are in a new era where government and industry must meet with us and negotiate the way forward. We need to know that we can stand up and that we have a strong voice when it comes to doing the right thing in terms of what happens on our lands,” said Constant.

Juanita and the staff at Mattagami First Nation for all of the encouragement and support they have given me. My dad, Michael and my mom Brenda always steered me in the right direction and encouraged me to seek further education. I know that my dad who has passed on would be proud of the work I am doing and my goals for the future,” commented McKay-Nicolas.

He explained that he is interested in returning to college to earn a degree in finance and improve his knowledge in this career area.

“I am so grateful for the opportunity the community has provided me and my plan is to further my education once Covid19 is managed. My goal is to come back to Mattagami First Nation on graduation and give back to my community. I believe the opportunities that our youth are given to work with administration and staff in the community results in decisions that lead to education



**Michael McKay-Nicolas,**  
Finance Clerk  
Trainee

and career goals,” noted McKay-Nicolas.

Chief Chad Boissoneau commented on the need to encourage local youth to take on the important responsibilities of building the First Nation.

“I am very happy to see our young people like Michael working at positions in our community. This gives me great hope for the future as we see our young members returning and giving back to our community with the education and skills they have learned,” commented Chief Boissoneau.

# Christine Dobson, CHN Meeting Challenges Of Pandemic



**Christine Dobson,**  
Community Health Nurse

"I enjoy providing health care directly with a community of people that I can get to know and understand the services and care needed. I come from a nursing background in working in an acute care hospital in a northern community where we treated many patients on a regular basis, but we didn't have the opportunity to get to really know people and understanding the obstacles they dealt with managing their own health care. Here in Mattagami, I can assist people on a more personal basis and understand the health care needs. This is more rewarding when you provide this care and see healthier outcomes for community members," said Christine Dobson, Community Health Nurse.

Her main duties are to provide key health care services for the community including well baby clinics, immunizations, diabetes education, foot care, palliative care, wound care, and support for adult, chronic and school age health. She is also involved in programs for mental health and addictions, communicable disease management and home care services. Although she has a busy schedule, Dobson takes the time to establish or develop new health care programs or services for the community and to add to her own training and education.

"I always want to try to make things better so that we can be more able to help people manage their own health. I am always up for change and enjoy figuring out how to make services more efficient and beneficial for everyone", said Dobson.

She also works directly with family physicians to deliver primary health care needs to community members. Dobson explained that the community currently has a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Misiway Milopemahtesewin

Community Health Centre (CHC), an indigenous health centre based in Timmins that adds to her health care management in the community.

"The MOU allows me to provide episodic care for our clients here in the community through case consultation and management over the phone so that clients don't need to travel to the city," said Dobson.

She is dedicated to her profession and in working on a professional direct level with other health care providers and clients in the community.

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***"Being involved with the community and developing that trust means a lot to my role as a community health nurse in Mattagami," - Christine Dobson***

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"I enjoy my professional work and in being able to help people. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I can work one on one with a client to reach their own health goal outcomes. I provide nursing assistance and health information as needed. Being involved with the community and developing that trust means a lot to my role as a community health nurse in Mattagami", said Dobson.

She continues to work towards providing more health care services for the community and is currently working with Lifelabs Medical Laboratory Services for community members to access on a regular basis.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, her work has been challenging and she has focused on the importance of providing education about COVID-19 and preventive measures needed to ensure community understanding and safety. Several health care services in the

community have been disrupted over the past year and Dobson explained that they have had to work at adapting in order to continue providing much needed services for the First Nation.

"As health care workers, this has been our biggest challenge to date, we must be more involved in order to keep everyone safe. At the start of the pandemic, there was a lot of uncertainty, difficulties and frustrations but with the teamwork from the emergency management group, we enhanced our pandemic plans to ensure the safety for all community members," said Dobson.

Over the past year of the COVID-19 Pandemic, she has played a critical role in the planning, management, implementation and ongoing development of pandemic protections and recommendations for the community.

She has been involved in nursing for over 30 years. Dobson attended a Nursing Program through Northern College in Moosonee and graduated in 1990. Throughout her career as a trained active nurse, she has achieved various certifications from Indigenous Services Canada, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario and through health care programs with colleges and training institutes.

After her graduation, she went on to work for 18 years for the Weeneebayko General Hospital, an indigenous acute care organization that serves the isolated First Nations on the James Bay coast. She made the decision to move her family south to Timmins to provide her six children with more opportunities in education as they grew older. Once in Timmins, Dobson was employed for seven years with Misiway CHC.

Before joining Wabun Tribal Council Health Services in May 2015, Dobson spent time to care for her elderly father Frederick Rickard. Along with other family members they were able to care for him in home as per his wishes before he passed on.

Originally from Moose Factory, she is a member of Moose Cree First Nation on the James Bay coast and has six children including Deanna, Morgan, Curtis, Tessa, Bradley and Sarah Dobson.

Dobson is also a happy grandmother to newly born grandson Jace.

# Naveau Joins Housing And Public Works

Dorothy Naveau is the Housing and Public Works Administrator. She started her position in April 2020 moving from her previous work as Administrative Receptionist which is now held by Kourtney Blaune.

"I am happy to be working for our community in this new role. It's a big learning process but I am working with a great team and we are getting a lot done," said Naveau.

She is responsible for managing the office administration of the Housing Department and the Public Works Department. The Housing Department looks after 34 rental units in the community and Naveau works directly with tenants to manage their concerns in terms of housing. Her department is also involved with home owners in the community who hold mortgages to finance their homes. She works closely with Gerald Luke who is the Housing and Public Works Director.

"The work that Gerald and I perform was originally set up for a single position. We needed someone to manage the office part which is the role I took on and Gerald, with his years of technical experience, does more hands on work with people at their homes and with the staff at the Public Works Department," explained Naveau.

The Housing and Public Works department has had their workload increase over the past few years due to a growing community with more members and more housing. Luke's position demands more field work outside the office to maintain infrastructure buildings and in training younger employees on how to share the work throughout the community.

Naveau explained that their department looks after all the band owned buildings including the main administration office, the gymnasium, the fire hall, the police station and the water treatment plant. They have been doing their best to take on much needed infrastructure work including road maintenance, better traffic control with the installation of speed bumps and road signage and in developing plans for upgraded waste disposal and possible recycling services.

The Housing Department also completed the construction of a four unit apartment building that features two floors with two units above and two units below. The building was constructed from the ground up through funds made available by Mattagami FN. The new homes were built over the winter of 2020/2021 and were ready to receive new families in May 2021. In addition to building homes, their department is also working towards rehabilitating existing homes.

opportunities are encouraging people to return home. At the same time, the realities of the pandemic and restrictions that people face outside the community has only made many families want to come home based on how safe we are here in our northern wilderness location," commented Naveau.

In her early career she was involved in health care when she achieved her training at Northern College in Timmins as a Personal Support Worker and went to work in Mattagami FN in this field. She changed careers soon after and attended post secondary education in Office Administration in Sioux Lookout, Ontario where she completed her training and raised her family. She then moved to Timmins and worked for Kuuwanimano Child & Family Services in an office administration role for five years. In 2006, she joined the Mattagami FN office as Administrative Receptionist and stayed on at the front desk until 2020.

She and her partner Curtis Fowler have a daughter Samara. Dorothy enjoys taking part in traditional activities with her family such as hunting, fishing and in exploring the land around the community.

She grew up in Mattagami FN and attended elementary school in the community and then went on to high school in Timmins.

Her father, the late Norman Naveau, who

passed in July 2017, was a First Nation leader who was involved with Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) at a regional level in northeastern Ontario in the 1970s and 1980s. Norman Naveau was also known as a talented and legendary northern musician who played old time reels and jigs on the fiddle and guitar. Dorothy Naveau's mother, the late Margaret (Sutherland) Naveau, who passed in October 2010, was a former Chief of Mattagami FN. Margaret Naveau had a Hudson Bay Cree heritage as she was originally from Winisk First Nation, the original community of what is now known as Peawanuck First Nation on the Hudson Bay coast.



PHOTO BY DEVIN NAVEAU

**DOROTHY NAVEAU (RIGHT) AND HER DAUGHTER SAMARA FOWLER POSING FOR PICTURES REMEMBERING MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN (MMIW) PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEVIN NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN.**

"As our community grows and develops and takes on new partnerships and business opportunities, more and more members are wanting to bring their families into the community to settle permanently. We are starting to see the signs of a housing crisis as we don't have enough homes available for the people who want to live here. This is why we are building homes and making plans to construct more for the future to accommodate families as well as living units for individuals," said Naveau.

She commented that their work in housing is only growing as the demand for more housing increases every year.

"The mining jobs and business

# Staff Feature Kourtney Baulne



**Kourtney  
Baulne**  
Administrative  
Assistant  
Receptionist

That friendly voice you hear when you call Mattagami First Nation belongs to Kourtney Baulne who works as the Administrative Assistant Receptionist. She is currently employed in the position and also enrolled in a one year on line Administrative Assistant Receptionist training program. She has been serving in this position for the past two years to fill in for Dorothy Naveau who had held the position for the past 14 years. When Naveau accepted another position in the community, the opportunity arose for Baulne to take over the job as Administrative Assistant Receptionist.

"I had been doing this work for some time and I really enjoyed working for our First Nation administration so when the job came up I was happy to apply for it and even happier that I was successful in getting it," explained Baulne.

The position requires a pleasant and welcoming personality who is also organized and efficient. She explained that much of her work revolves around providing a positive and professional first contact by phone or at the front desk reception when people call or visit. She provides callers with the appropriate contact and answers to questions they have. She also manages the office mail and sorts it to the proper departments and staff. In addition she also handles deliveries both incoming and outgoing.

"This job is very interesting and keeps me constantly balancing inquires and tasks from staff and those calling in

by phone or appearing at the reception desk for assistance. It is a balancing act at times when things get busy but that makes it all the more interesting. My favourite thing about this position is in solving problems and coming up with solutions for any requests or inquiries that come my way. It feels so good to know that I am working for my community," commented Baulne.

She has had much success in post secondary education with completion of a helicopter course in North Bay and process plant operator program in Timmins and Haileybury. She did very well in her studies and she is happy that those two career opportunities are still open to her if she decides to head in that direction.

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*I want to be  
part of the  
future success  
of our  
First Nation*

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"I really feel part of a team and family here in this position and I am very thankful to Juanita Luke and Dorothy Naveau for encouraging me to move ahead with this administrative type of career. I want to be part of the future success of our First Nation and this opportunity makes that possible. Personally I would love to see two projects develop here in Mattagami First Nation and they include an Elders' residence and a secondary school. These two initiatives would really help our community," said Baulne.

She has also worked in modeling and she has been involved in photo shoots with Bruno Henry, a professional photographer and fashion designer from Wikwemikong FN. She was fea-

tured in a photo shoot in honour of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women photographed by Mattagami FN member Devin Naveau. Images of this photoshoot were made available on the community's social media pages including their public Facebook page online. Baulne is learning more about her traditional and cultural roots and in a ceremony was given the name Green Thunderbird Woman.

She enjoys traditional pursuits and completed a trapping course and as well received teachings on harvesting on the land with the help of her late father Ron Jr. Baulne. Sadly, he passed away on December 19, 2020 and is survived by his daughter Kourtney, son Blake and his wife April Naveau-Baulne.

Kourtney Baulne and her fiancé Channing Graham have a son Delsin who is seven years old. She and her family enjoy being on the land and she is looking forward to continuing to work and maintain her fathers trap ground.



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