

GLITEC GAZETTE

News From the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center Summer 2023

Boozhoo! Greetings from the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC)! This summer 2023 newsletter highlights our latest news and updates. Our quarterly newsletters are posted on the [Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council \(GLITC\)](#) and [Bemidji Area Emergency Response](#) websites. To receive our newsletters and other updates in your inbox, [sign up](#) for emails on topics you care about, such as events, news alerts, reports, and funding opportunities.



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We here at GLITEC hope you all are having a wonderful summer! The months have seemed to fly by quickly. Warmer weather means more opportunities to get outside, travel, and gather together. During these summer months, GLITEC has been able to gather with Tribes through conferences, trainings, meetings, and other events. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn from, collaborate with, and support Tribal communities in all the amazing work happening. We are here to serve the Tribes and are ready to assist with public health or data needs. Please feel free to reach out to us if you need any assistance with a project.

GHWIC Communities Visit Lac du Flambeau to Engage Culturally and Advance Tribal Health

Written by: Aubrey Racz, MPH, and Jeannie Le, MPH



In April, representatives from the seven GHWIC communities, Tribal health guest speakers, and GLITEC staff gathered in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin.

From April 26 to 28, the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) grant at GLITEC hosted an in-person meeting in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. Attendees included representatives from the seven GHWIC communities, Tribal health guest speakers, and GLITEC staff. The group met to discuss progress on the four strategies of the GHWIC grant:

- 1) Obesity prevention
- 2) Commercial tobacco control and cessation
- 3) Diabetes prevention
- 4) Heart disease and stroke prevention

Meeting participants were joined by Lac du Flambeau President John Johnson, his grandchildren, and Greg Johnson, who is President Johnson's brother and a Lac du Flambeau Tribal member. Together, they led the sharing of cultural knowledge and activities to advance Tribal health.

The two-and-a-half-day event kicked off with a song and drum opening by President Johnson's grandchildren and words of welcome from President Johnson. Following this opening, Camilla Barajas, the Diabetes Director at the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, presented on the successes and challenges of their well-established Diabetes Prevention Program. A GLITEC staff member then led an Appreciative Inquiry and Motivational Interviewing Skill Builder. Afterward, the group headed to the GLITEC building to enjoy a traditional lunch provided by Mary Mitchell, a Lac du Flambeau Tribal member. In the afternoon, Greg Johnson led a tour of the George W. Brown, Jr. Ojibwe Museum and Cultural Center, sharing knowledge about the history of the Lac du Flambeau Tribe. The day finished with a tour of the building that was previously the boarding school's Boys Dormitory and that currently houses the Tribal Historic Preservation Office. *[continued page 3]*

The second day began with another song and drum opening by President Johnson's grandchildren. A GLITEC staff member then led a focused conversation centered on developing a second rendition of GLITEC's Good Food Cookbook, a compilation of traditional recipes gathered from all GHWIC communities. Partners from the Public Health Law Center, Julie Ralston Aoki and Colin Welker, then facilitated a public health policy development workshop. In the afternoon, the group was joined by Lucinda Charleston from the Indian Health Service who spoke with attendees on best practices relating to heart health. The day finished with tours of the Peter Christensen Wellness Center, Health Clinic, and Dental Clinic. President Johnson and his grandchildren returned on day three to send off participants in a good way through a final song and drum performance.

Overall, the GHWIC in-person meeting hosted in Lac du Flambeau was successful. Feedback from participants indicated that it was an engaging and informative event, with many comments of appreciation for the focus on culture. The meeting was instrumental in strengthening connections among community partners and increasing technical and cultural knowledge. A special thank-you to President Johnson and his family members for participating in our meeting and making it such a success!

GLITEC is looking forward to the next GHWIC in-person meeting that will be held in Little Traverse Bay Bands in September.

Request Membership to State Public Health Association

Are you or a co-worker interested in joining your state's public health association?

It is important to amplify Tribal/urban Indian community priorities within the wider public health community. To do this, GLITEC is offering to cover the cost for select staff at Tribes or urban Indian organizations to join or renew annual membership with their state's public health association:

- [Michigan Public Health Association](#)
- [Minnesota Public Health Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Public Health Association](#)
- [Illinois Public Health Association](#)

To check the eligibility criteria and request membership, view and submit GLITEC's [contact form](#).



GLITEC Launches E-learning About Lead Testing in Drinking Water

Written by: Jake Riemer, BS



GLITEC has launched an e-learning about lead in drinking water as part of the Lead Testing in Tribal Schools and Childcare Centers Program. During three e-learning modules, viewers can learn about the dangers of lead exposure, the sources of lead exposure, the importance of lead testing, and how to prevent lead exposure.

Intended Audience

The e-learning is made for staff of Tribal schools and childcare centers. This includes:

- staff who are interested in learning more about lead in drinking water
- staff in Minnesota and Wisconsin who are interested in having their facility's drinking water tested for lead for free
- staff in Michigan who are interested in lead testing should contact the [Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's Environmental Services Division](#) at 906-632-6896, ext. 115.

About Lead

E-learning participants learn why lead is harmful and why lead testing is important.

Lead is a naturally occurring element and metal that was used in many common products like paint, pipes, and gasoline. Lead has been banned in most of these products due to its negative health effects on the human body, but lead can still be found in old pipes and paint.

There is no safe level of lead exposure. Old lead pipes and lead-based paint still cause lead exposure. Being exposed to lead is especially harmful to children 6 years and younger and to developing fetuses. Even small amounts of lead behave as a neurotoxin in the body. Lead can cause:

- Behavioral and learning problems,
- Lower IQ and hyperactivity,
- Slowed growth,
- Hearing problems,
- Anemia,
- And other health effects

Detecting lead by testing drinking water is crucial for preventing these lifelong conditions. *[continued page 5]*

Lead Testing in Tribal Schools and Childcare Centers Program

The e-learning was developed as part of GLITEC's Lead Testing in Tribal Schools and Childcare Centers Program. This is a free program for Tribal schools and childcare centers in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The program goal is to sustain the health of Native children for future generations to come by testing for lead. There is no safe level of lead exposure, and the only way to detect lead in drinking water is through testing. Participating facilities can be awarded a monetary incentive of up to **\$1,500** for completing the e-learning, testing, and other activities.

In addition to the incentive, GLITEC is offering free PFAS and heavy metals water testing for Tribal schools and childcare centers in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Sign Up for Lead Testing

If you are interested in participating in the Lead Testing in Drinking Water Program, please fill out this [interest form](#) or scan this code:



A GLITEC employee will reach out to you with more information about the program after you complete the form. This information will include a participant link to the e-learning.

The e-learning is also freely accessible online for those not interested in participating in the Lead Testing in Tribal Schools and Childcare Centers Program. If you are interested in only taking the e-learning, feel free to take the course here: [Non-Program Participant E-learning](#). (Please note that you are not eligible for an incentive if you only take the e-learning.)

More Information

Please share this information with your Tribal education departments, childcare centers and schools in your local area. Visit GLITEC's [program overview webpage](#) for more information about this program. For further questions or information about this new program, contact us by emailing gliteclead@glitc.org or calling 715-588-1087.

2nd Annual Great Lakes Area Opioid Conference: Journeying Toward Wellness

Written by: Christina Denslinger, PhD

Recently, GLITEC hosted their 2nd Annual Great Lakes Area Opioid Conference: Journeying Toward Wellness in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The conference hosted over 20 presenters, who shared their knowledge and experiences on a wide range of topics including opioid substance use, mental health, and lived experience to promote health and wellness.

The conference was a four-day event, including two days of pre-conference training sessions. The five pre-conference training session topics were Motivational Interviewing, Zero Suicide, Fundamentals of Substance Use, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Epidemiology 101. Pre-conference training sessions allowed smaller numbers of attendees to network with each other, making it easier to build meaningful connections with other attendees and the presenters. Attendees built upon this foundation throughout the rest of the training sessions and conference to create lasting relationships with other attendees.



The conference opened with a ceremony performed by the Oneida Veterans color guard and local drum group, Young Standing Bear, followed by an opening prayer from Veteran Leander Danforth and remarks from Councilman Guzman of Oneida Nation. Briana Matrious, an enrolled member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and Tribal Community Facilitator at the University of Minnesota, delivered an inspirational keynote address about the importance of connection in the healing process. *[continued page 6]*

Following the opening ceremony, the conference proceeded with 3-4 concurrent presentations each session on various topics related to peer support, harm reduction, prevention, community, culture, and recovery. With presentations running simultaneously, attendees were able to choose which presentations they attended based on their needs and interests. Attendees came from many communities, and from different organizations within their communities, contributing to the diversity of experiences and expertise at the conference. Everyone present was engaged in the conference, showcasing the care and compassion our attendees and presenters have for recovery and healing. Overall, the conference was well received, and attendees left the conference excited to share their newfound knowledge and ideas with their fellow colleagues and community members.

We are grateful to everyone who helped to make this conference a success. First and foremost, we would like to thank the Oneida Nation for hosting us on your land. Thank you to Councilman Guzman of Oneida Nation and Council Member Davis of Gun Lake for your opening remarks each day of the conference. We would also like to extend a thank you to the team at the Radisson Hotel and all others that made this conference a success. Thank you to all who attended the conference, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



Call for Art Proposals

GLITEC has announced a call for art proposals. This opportunity asks professional and skilled amateur American Indian/Alaska Native artists to create original artwork to be used in GLITEC publications.

The purpose of this call for art proposals is to broaden the types of visuals and photographs GLITEC has access to for use in its publications. GLITEC will use the original artwork in a variety of health-related publications (reports, brochures, web products, or other similar items). Health includes spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

There is currently no deadline for this opportunity.

Read the [information sheet](#) for submission requirements, allowable media, payment, and more details.



Say Hello to Our New Team Members!

GLITEC recently welcomed two new members to our team. Please welcome Leopoldo Panganiban, Public Health Specialist, and Alex Dudek, Intern, to the Epidemiology Center!

Leopoldo Panganiban, BS – Public Health Specialist

Hey, everyone! My name is Leopoldo, but you can call me Eljay for short. I am honored to be joining GLITEC as a Public Health Specialist in the Minneapolis satellite office. Ethnically, I'm Filipino but was born and raised in Farmington, Michigan. I recently graduated from Wayne State University (WSU) with a bachelor's degree in public health. Being new to the Minneapolis area, I am excited to explore all it has to offer.

Public health wasn't my first choice in university. I spent the first part of my undergraduate career on the pre-med track, taking many biology and psychology courses. I've always had a passion for health care, but after two years, I realized that medical school wasn't what I wanted. I happened to be taking Intro to Public Health at the time as an elective, and my professor (an epidemiologist) often shared her experiences in the field. The more she shared, the more I wanted to learn. After digging deeper into vulnerable populations, the existing health inequities, and the factors that drive them, I knew that this path was for me. I switched majors and began my journey in the diverse umbrella of public health.

Since then, I've gained experience in areas such as environmental health, quality improvement, and community nutrition. Recently, I joined WSU's Global Health Research Collaborative, where I help develop its blog and curriculum. In my free time, I enjoy going to the gym, reading at Barnes and Noble, trying new food, talking about food, learning new songs on my violin, and watching reality TV.

Eventually, I plan on pursuing graduate school for epidemiology or biostatistics. For now, I am excited to work with you all, learn from you all, and support GLITEC's efforts to enhance the quality of life for all Native people.



Alex Dudek, RN, BSN, MPH student – Intern

Hi everyone! My name is Alex Dudek, and my pronouns are they/them. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to serve as a student intern with GLITEC this summer. I will graduate with my Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Medicine and Public Health in December 2023.

I was born and raised in Rochester, New York, near Lake Ontario, so the Great Lakes have always been an important part of my life. I moved to Madison, Wisconsin, in 2014 and attended the UW–Madison School of Nursing. I have been working as a Registered Nurse in Madison in a trauma/COVID intensive care unit setting throughout the pandemic. I am looking forward to a career in public health because I believe there is a lot of power in preventive health care and supporting community well-being. I am especially interested in planetary health, environmental justice, and building community climate resilience. As an intern with GLITEC this summer, I will be working out of the Madison satellite office. I am looking forward to learning from the communities that GLITEC serves while supporting the health and well-being of American Indian/Alaskan Native people and communities in the Bemidji Area.

You will often find me biking or walking to the office when the weather is nice! In my spare time, I enjoy listening to live outdoor music and working in my garden, where I'm working to manage invasive species and support native plants. I love trying new food (especially if it's vegetarian) and appreciate recommendations, so send them my way!

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Epidemiology Center

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.
PO Box 9
Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538

glitec.org/programs/epidemiology-and-education/

Our Mission

To support Tribal communities in their efforts to improve health by assisting with data needs through partnership development, community-based research, education, and technical assistance.

Wild Gitigan Salad**Ingredients:**

For the Salad:

- 4 Sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 ½ cups whole wild rice
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 cup cooked black beans (If using dried beans, 1/3 cup dried yields 1 cup cooked)
- 2 bunches (8 cups) kale
- 1 cup baby tomatoes or ground cherries, rinsed and halved
- ½ cup grated pecorino Romano cheese or parmesan cheese



For the Dressing:

- Juice of 1 lemon (2 tablespoons juice)
- 1 tablespoon fresh grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt & ground black pepper

Recipe Source: First Nations Development Institute

Cooking Instructions:

1. Cook the black beans. Either soak beans overnight or use the quick-boil method. Then, add beans to a pot of fresh water, and boil until done, about 1-2 hours. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, cook the wild rice. Rinse the rice well in a bowl of cold water and drain. Add rice, vegetable broth, and thyme to a pot and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let the rice stand in the pot, covered, for 5 minutes. Remove the thyme stems and fluff the rice with a fork. Set aside to cool.
3. Wash the kale and remove the ribs. Thinly slice the kale into ribbons. Using a salad spinner, spin until most of the water is gone.
4. In a large serving bowl, add the kale, a drizzle of olive oil, and a little salt. Massage the kale until it starts to soften and wilt, about 2 to 3 minutes. Set it aside while you make the dressing.
5. To make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, lemon zest, salt & pepper, and ¼ cup of olive oil.
6. To serve, add the wild rice, black beans, tomatoes or ground cherries, and sprinkle with cheese. Drizzle the dressing over top and toss to combine.