
Two Rivers Circle of Mendota

no. 4

June 2026

Mendota Dakota Friendship Group

Phone number 651-870-7034



Dedication on Wakan Tipi Center

Several of our members attended the Opening Ceremony for the new Dakota cultural center in St. Paul. This

'Dwelling place of the sacred' came into being through the efforts of individuals, community groups, tribes, federal grants, foundations, visionary leadership, and the \$14.4 million it took to build the 7500 square foot facility on the 27 acres of conservation land. Wakan Tipi Center will host exhibits and events rooted in Dakota culture, along with housing Native art and a teaching garden and ceremonial spaces.

The project began as the Lower Phalen Creek Project, reclamation of railroad land and protection of the sacred cave underneath Dayton's Bluff and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. Dan McGuiness, head of the Phalen Creek Project, began a collaboration with Kate Beane, director of Native American Initiatives at the MN Historical Society. Beane recommended more Native voices on the board of the conservation group and brought Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, an East Side environmental stewardship nonprofit centered in Dakota values into the work, and they had a Land Back project.

The next step was hiring Maggie Lorenz, who is Dakota and Anishinaabe, to lead fundraising and planning as the executive director. Funds were raised, staff was hired, and a complex cast of public and railroad officials had to be convinced that Wakan Tipi could become a reality. The speakers at the dedication had each played a role in making the land reclamation and cultural center a reality. Between prayers and drumming, Ramsey County District 6 Mai Xiong, City Council member Shaniqua Johnson, Kate Beane and Maggie Lorenz, Mayor Kaohly Her, State Senator Her, Prairie Island Tribal Chair, MET councilman Robert Milligan, etc. explained how the vision needed systems and narrative change to manifest this Center. Milligan called it "legacy work, changing the system and how Native people carry out their lifeways." Kate

Native drummers and singers, including Lakota Elder Jerry Dearly, seated right, performed a welcoming song during the grand opening of the Wakan Tipi Center in St. Paul on Friday, May 29, 2026. (John Autey / Pioneer Press)

Beane and Jerry Dearly (spiritual advisor) were honored with star quits and a buffalo robe for Jerry. The 250 well-wishers were then invited to explore Wakan Tipi Center and to enjoy the food.

Sarah Sivright thought it was moving to see so many Native people together, all generations, many in Native dress, speaking their language, and celebrating something they had accomplished. Several dancers in regalia added their spirit to the ceremony, and the Native food trucks provided the feast.

Along with being an inspiration for how to build a new Native community site, Wakan Tipi Center is of interest to our group because they have a conference room, large hall, and kitchen which can be rented for meetings.

Featuring Samantha Walker Introducing Our New Chair

Two Rivers Circle of Mendota is pleased to welcome Samantha Walker as our new Chair.

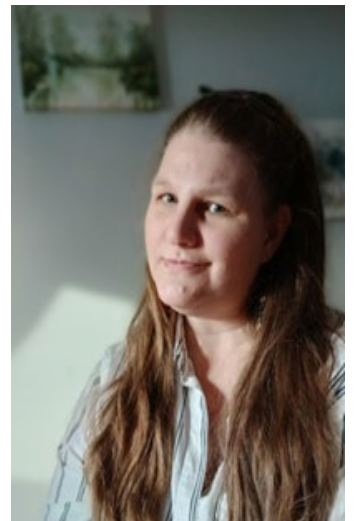
Sam is a Dakota, Mohawk, and mixed European woman, community advocate, counselor, educator, author, and entrepreneur whose work has focused on healing, cultural preservation, and service to others. She is deeply committed to strengthening Native communities while building bridges of understanding between Native and non-Native people.

Professionally, Sam works in the field of substance use disorder treatment and behavioral health, helping individuals and families navigate recovery, resilience, and personal growth. Her educational background includes studies in Indigenous People's Law, Human Behavior, and addiction counseling, reflecting her commitment to understanding both historical and contemporary issues affecting Native communities.

In addition to her professional work, Sam is an ordained minister, Reiki Master, certified Death Doula, author, researcher, and community advocate. These diverse experiences reflect her lifelong commitment to service, education, healing, and helping individuals and families better understand their stories, their connections, and their place within the larger community.

Samantha's connection to Dakota history, culture, and community is central to her work. She has devoted significant time to researching tribal history, advocating for Native rights, and supporting efforts that honor the traditions, stories, and experiences of Indigenous peoples. She believes that preserving culture, sharing knowledge, and fostering respectful dialogue are important responsibilities that strengthen future generations.

As Chair, Samantha hopes to help the gathering group continue to grow as a welcoming space where members can learn from one another, celebrate Native culture, preserve community connections, and engage in meaningful conversations about history, identity, and community. She believes that strong communities are built through respect, service, education, and a willingness to listen and learn from one another.



When not working or volunteering, Samantha enjoys spending time with family, writing, researching history, and pursuing projects that promote healing, education, and community development.

Please join us in welcoming Samantha Walker as Chair and supporting her vision for the future of our gathering group.

Community News

Birthdays: May birthdays: Sorry if we missed your birthday.

Prayers: Prayers and get well wishes for Sharon.

Congratulations: Congratulations to **Sister Katherine Storms** for her 60th year Jubilee. Sister Katherine joined her order on July 17, 1966, got her teaching credentials and a master's degree and began her teaching career in Mankato, from 1976 – 1982; then became director of vocations for the Archdiocese, from 1982 – 1989. Next came directorship of Center for Earth Spirituality in Mankato, director of Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat in Iowa, a year in Rome, and more recent Laudato Si' Movement Chapter of Minnesota and Land Justice Futures which included care for Creation and indigenous peoples.

Sister Kathleen Storms has been a School Sister of Notre Dame for 60 years - please join us to celebrate! Sister Kathleen is a member of the LCCC Social Justice Committee, valued for her friendship, commitment to justice and care of creation.

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 3 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: LCCC outside between church and school

Hot dogs, hamburgers, cake & drinks will be provided.

Please bring a side dish to share.

If you would like to contribute to the group gift fund, please drop off cash or check to:

*Margaret George - 1606 Saunders Ave. or
Venmo @Margaret-George-20*

Please RSVP to Jackie Petersen by 5/25

Jacqueline51449@gmail.com

Cell : 612-306-0150



Congratulations to Janet Van Slown for her retirement from the City of Minnetonka, and to **Pat Darling**, for her retirement from Metropolitan State University after 40 years.

Summer Solstice coming up: June 20 for those who celebrate. This past week with the 80-90 degrees has felt like summer.

Father's Day: Honoring all the fathers, stepfathers, and grandfathers and great-grandfathers and those who father in some way.

Save the date: Pat Darling & Roger Grabowski 50th wedding anniversary at St. Peters, June 21, 2:00-5:00. You are invited.

Please come and celebrate!



50 Years of Marriage and Life Lived for

Pat Darling and Roger Grabowski

at Church of St. Peter's Gathering Space

1405 Highway 13, Mendota, MN

Sunday, June 21 (Father's Day) 2 – 5 p.m.

No Presents, Just Presence

RSVP: pat.darling@hotmail.com

rfggrabowski@gmail.com

612 – 400 – 5456 Rog 651 – 387 – 1624 Pat

Please tell us if you are coming so we know how much food to serve.

Ceremonies:

Full Moon Walk for

June, the Strawberry Moon, at Fort Snelling Park. Gather at the National Park entrance, 7pm. Park on the Hwy 55 access road. For more information, please contact Susu at SUSUJEFFREY@msn.com

June Drumming on June 12 and June 26, Friday nights. Drumming **starts at 6:30** with food and socializing. Community Room of the Sanctuary at West St. Paul, 1746 Oakdale Ave., West St. Paul, MN 55118, Joseph Bestor's apartment building.

June Inipi date is June 20 at the Dupuis house, 1357 Sibley Memorial HW, Joseph Bester presiding.

Next 2 Rivers Meeting:

June 7, 2 p.m. at Rita Chamberlain's, 3328 Roll LN, Eagan. Printed copies of the agenda will be handed out at the meeting. If there's anything else you want to add before we meet, feel free to send it through to Samantha Walker.

We are looking at other sites to meet. If anyone has suggestions for free places where we can serve food, please let Sam or Rita know! So far, we have Evolve, a cooperative working space, Joseph's community room, possible public library spaces and public parks in summer.

Land Back News

[Walz signs legislation paving way for return of 3,400 acres to Fond du Lac Band | MPR News](#)

Land, Water And Power: Gov. Walz signed legislation on May 27, clearing the way to return 3,400 acres of Cloquet Forestry Center land to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, through a provision in the state bonding bill. Near Duluth, federal, state, Tribal and local partners marked the completion of all eight sediment cleanups on the Minnesota side of the St. Louis River, after more than a century of industrial pollution. And MPR reported that Minnesota tribal nations are building larger solar projects aimed at energy independence, including a planned array at Red Lake Nation. By Sean Snow

Land Back in Minneapolis: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis transferred ownership of a property to the Indigenous Protector Movement on Friday afternoon, in an act the church called reparation. Congregation president Samantha Heaton, lead pastor Martha Bardwell, and IPM CEO Rachel Dionne-Thunder signed the documents in front of the community. The Indigenous Protector Movement

formed in the winter of 2022-2023 during the Roof Depot occupation and now runs cultural, youth, and community safety programs across the Dakota homelands.

BLUEBERRIES

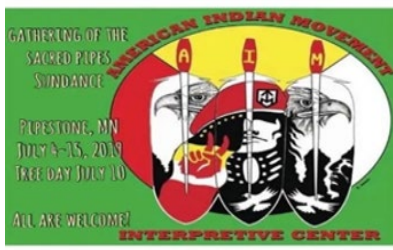
by [Diane Lockward](#)

Deep-blue hue of the body, silvery bloom
on its skin. Undersized runt of a fruit,
like something that failed to thrive, dented top
a fontanel. Lopsided globe. A temperate zone.
Tiny paradox, tart and sweet, homely
but elegant afloat in sugar and cream,
baked in a pie, a cobbler, a muffin.

The power of blue. Number one antioxidant fruit,
bantam-weight champ in the fight against
urinary tract infections, best supporting actor
in a fruit salad. No peeling, coring or cutting.
Lay them out on a counter, strands of blue pearls.
Pop one at a time, like M&M's, into your mouth.

Be a glutton and stuff in a handful, your tongue,
lips, chin dyed blue, as if feasting on indigo.
Fruit of the state of New Jersey.
Favorite fruit of my mother.
Sundays she scooped them into pancake batter,
poured circles onto the hot greased griddle, sizzled
them gold and blue, doused with maple syrup.

This is what I want to remember: my mother
and me, our quilted robes, hair in curlers,
that kitchen, that table,
plates stacked with pancakes, blueberries sparkling
like gemstones, blue stars in a gold sky,
the universe in reverse,
the two of us eating blueberry pancakes



2025 poster

Still looking for this year's information. We think the Sun Dance is June 24 – 27. We will send out an email when we have the information.



"People of the Sun" The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe will mark the 10th anniversary of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests this fall with a major multi-day event featuring music, speakers, cultural programming and appearances from well-known artists and public figures., including Lisa Bellanger.



Sundance Resources:

[sun-dance.pdf](#) How to behave at a Sundance

Lisa Bellanger comments from 2025
[Sundance held at Pipestone National Monument - Pipestone County Star](#)



SHAKOPEE 2026 WACIPI SCHEDULE

Friday, August 14, 2026

7pm — Grand Entry

Saturday, August 15, 2026

- 1pm — Grand Entry
- 7pm — Grand Entry

Sunday, August 16, 2026

- 1pm — Grand Entry

Popular Minnesota Pow Wows

- [SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON SIOUX COMMUNITY WACIPI](#)
August
Shakopee, Minnesota
- [MAHKATO ANNUAL TRADITIONAL POW WOW](#)
September
Mankato, Minnesota
- [WHITE EARTH TREATY DAY CELEBRATION & POW WOW](#)
June
White Earth, Minnesota
- [PRAIRIE ISLAND WANIYETU WACIPI](#)
February
Welch, Minnesota
- [MENDOTA MDEWAKANTON TRADITIONAL WACIPI POW WOW](#)
September
Mendota, Minnesota
- [MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE TRADITIONAL POW WOW](#)
August
Onamia, Minnesota

