

NISQUALLY ABSCH News



Nisqually Tribal News

4820 She-Nah-Num Dr. SE Olympia, WA 98513

Phone # 360-456-5221

Volume 16, Issue 9

www.nisqually-nsn.gov

September 2026

New Public Safety Boat

By Debbie Preston, Nisqually Indian Tribe Media and Communications Services Director

The Nisqually Tribe Public Safety Department is happy to have a new, 30-foot landing-craft-style law enforcement boat.

The primary function of the vessel is to support the monitoring and enforcement of the Nisqually Tribe's exercise of its treaty-reserved rights in the Nisqually Reach and surrounding waters, including fishing and geoduck harvesting activities.

Built by Silverback Marine of Tacoma, the craft will take a three-person crew and has twin 300 HP Mercury outboard engines and is outfitted for law enforcement, including all communications gear and marine navigation electronics.

The vessel was secured through Fuel Tax Funding, providing the Nisqually Tribe with a dedicated marine platform to support treaty-rights enforcement, marine safety, patrol operations, and related public-safety functions. The cost of the vessel was \$708,707.59. There was an additional funding support from FLEET services in the amount of \$13,563.69 bringing the final delivery cost to \$722,271.28.



Special Edition Canoe Journey Publication



There will be a special edition Newsletter chronicling the Paddle to Nisqually Medicine Creek Canoe Journey Healing Through Our Waters. We look forward to giving a sample of all the joy, work and love that went into making this year's journey a successful event for thousands of visitors.

Nisqually Tribal Office Holiday Closures

Please mark them on your calendars!

Monday, September 7, 2026
Labor Day

Monday, September 28, 2026
Nisqually Day Observed

How to Contact Us

Tribal Center 360-456-5221
Health Clinic 360-459-5312
Law Enforcement 360-413-3019
Youth Center 360-455-5213
Natural Resources 360-438-8687

Nisqually Tribal News

4820 She-Nah-Num Dr. SE
Olympia, WA 98513
360-456-5221

Leslee Youckton
youckton.leslee@nisqually-nsn.gov
ext. 1252

The deadline for the newsletter is the second Monday of every month.

Nisqually Tribal Council

Vice Chair, Cheebo Frazier
Secretary, Jackie Whittington
Treasurer, Norine Wells
5th Council, Chris Olin
6th Council, Guido Levy Jr.
7th Council, Leighanna Scott

Where to Find Information:

Squalli Absch Newsletter

- Mailed, on website

Street Buzz

- Mailout, on She Nah Num

Facebook and website

Nisqually Indian Tribe Facebook

- geared toward educating the public

She Nah Num

- Private Facebook page

Website - www.nisqually-nsn.gov

In this issue:

Casino Expansion	pg. 3
Fishing	pg. 4
SPIPA 50 th	pg. 5
Nisqually State Park	pg. 8
Color Run	pg. 9
Transportation	pg. 11
IT-WebDev	pg. 12
DSHS Assistance Available	pg. 13
Announcements	pg. 15



Nisqually Red Wind Casino Expansion Groundbreaking

By Debbie Preston, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Media and Communication Services Director

The official celebration of breaking ground for the new 75,000-foot expansion of the Red Wind Casino happened Friday morning, Aug. 14.

Construction begins soon, so keep an eye out for traffic directions, etc.

In case you have not seen it, here is the link to the official release.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EgaNgyciZ/>





Chinook Fishery on a More Traditional Trajectory Compared to 2025

By Craig Smith

The chinook fishery is in full swing and is bumping along largely as expected in terms of projected hatchery catches.

Few natural chinook are being encountered, and may be holding above Clear Creek in cooler spring-fed places or in bay waiting for rains.

“Last year was a bit of an outlier, catch per effort was higher than average due to the early arrival of chalky colored water that kept nets camouflaged,” said Craig Smith, Salmon Harvest Program Manager for the Nisqually Tribe. “This year is similar to most, the water is clear and catch for the first 4 weeks of the fishery are on target” Smith said.

The staff-driven sampling trips higher up the river have found no natural chinook, but are hopeful they might be holding lower in the river above Clear Creek where springs come in, cooling the water.

“Besides normal catches in the gill net fishery we also have a couple fishermen participating in the drift gill net selective fishery (catch and release any unmarked fish). They are not encountering natural chinook and harvesting the hatchery fish. They are making money those extra days and so far there is no impact on the natural stock.”

Rain in the first week of September might change things up, but for now, it's a more of a “normal” year for fishermen, with clear water and average catches.





SPIPA Reflections at 50 years

By Joe Cushman

Fifty years can go by quickly if you're keeping busy. That is certainly the case with South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA).

I remember the day in 1976 like it was yesterday when I walked into tribal chairwoman Zelma McCloud's office and received a briefing. Zelma advised me that there was a meeting scheduled the

They were determined to think outside of the box and lay the groundwork for a different and responsive tribal-driven organization. The conversation went on for many hours and was sometimes heated. But the compact that was produced was a visionary document. The folks that created SPIPA did an incredible job of crafting a compact and by-laws that allowed the agency to grow while keeping its mission in check.

The tribes were lucky indeed to have these folks on hand at such a critical juncture. They were a once-in-a-generation assemblage of wisdom and foresight.

Bill Smith was one of my heroes and mentors and served as Skokomish chairman, and economic director. He is one of the smartest men I have ever met and has dedicated his life to improving prospects for the South Sound tribes. He was central to SPIPA's start up and also later served as executive director for two years.

Gary Peterson was a mover and shaker at Skokomish, serving many years as chairman, and



next day at the Chehalis Tribe where the possibility of forming a new intertribal organization called SPIPA was to be discussed and my job was to take notes and report back.

As a recently hired planner, I knew absolutely nothing about anything. But I was about to learn - big time.

When I arrived at Chehalis Tribe headquarters the next day all of the political heavyweights of the South Sound tribes were assembled. Gary Peterson and Bill Smith from Skokomish, Cal Peters from Squaxin, Curtis Dupuis and Mel Youckton from Chehalis. Zelma wasn't able to attend with the burgeoning calendar of those early days.

But she gave me direct and clear instructions. She would support the formation of an intertribal agency only if the tribes could maintain tight control. She would not tolerate SPIPA morphing into an empire.

Sitting in the room I was amazed at how the folks there all had the same concerns and caution. They spoke at length about how SPIPA had to avoid the pitfalls that most other intertribal organizations eventually fall into.



was a big player in SPIPA start up. He taught me a lot about tribal sovereignty. He was also SPIPA executive director for a number of years.

Curtis Dupuis was a provocateur. He was outspoken and aggressive and tended to fill up whatever room he was in. He brought an initial energy and fearlessness to SPIPA's early dealings. I learned a lot from him including how to be a little more assertive.

Continued on page 6-SPIPA



Continued from page 5-SPIPA

Cal Peters was a quiet but effective leader in both governance and economics and helped put a lot of the basic things in place for both SPIPA and Squaxin.

Mel Youckton was another quiet one who had a major impact on both SPIPA and the local tribes. He was a front-runner on economics, gaming and other

started the TANF and work force programs, successfully operated food distribution, Created Administration on Aging, Low Income Home Energy Assistance and other basic programs for over 40 years.

SPIPA accomplished much of this growth as a result of dedicated staff. SPIPA's capable executive directors over the years included Bob Saunders, Ed Binder, Gary Peterson, Joe Cushman, Amadeo Tiam, Mike Peters, Bill Smith, Whitney Jones and Kyle Rogers. Each brought their own skills to the agency and each made a difference.

There were also some long-term key staff who were instrumental and dedicated in keeping the organization on track. Including Carmen Kalama, who worked at SPIPA for more than 30 years. Also included were: Sandy Cole, Carol Cordova, Debbie Gardipee, John Simmons, Jan Bryant, and others.

SPIPA board members were also important, many serving tirelessly over the years. Among them was Dan Gleason, our long-time board chairman; Alene Whitener, who provided a needed stability during the rough times; Marie Gouley, who dedicated several years of her life as SPIPA board member; Marie McDonald, Ed Binder, Katherine Horne, Vicki Krueger, Bob Bojorcas, and Dave Whitener and many more.

The next 50 years for SPIPA can be hard to foresee, given that 50 years ago, there were no: cell phones, computers, email, AI, grants.gov, or zoom meetings. It was a different world.

But in the future, what is known is that the tribes will continue to grow into their rightful place as regional leaders and change-makers, and SPIPA will hopefully still be there, in the background, doing the necessary hands-on work on behalf of these increasingly successful communities.



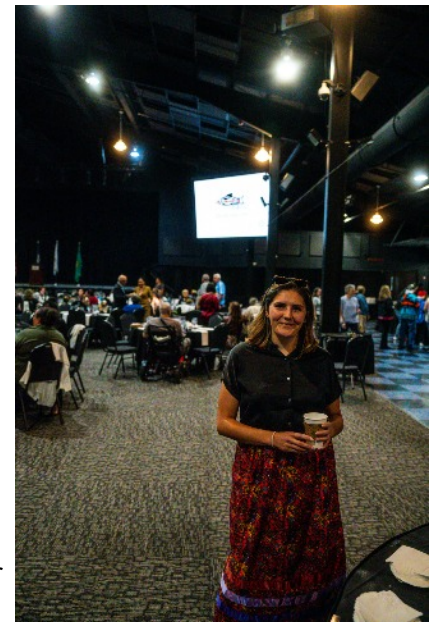
commercial endeavors, and his contributions are felt at Chehalis and elsewhere to this day.

Zelma McCloud had an ability to cut to the chase on any subject quicker and more decisively than anyone I have ever met. She did not tolerate any bs and was not afraid to call you out. I cannot imagine the local tribes being anywhere close to where they are today without her initial leadership.

When SPIPA was started and initial staff hired, the first office was a rundown trailer next to the Squaxin tribal center at Kamilche. From that small start, SPIPA grew from an agency with an annual budget of less than \$100,000, to a regional powerhouse with more than 40 programs, 80 staff, a \$28 million operating budget, no debts and a \$1 million reserve. SPIPA has had its ups and downs over the years, like any agency.

It almost went broke in 1998. Expansion into intertribal family services proved challenging, and there were issues trying to establish an intertribal health clinic, among other things. But SPIPA proved adept at doing other important services for tribes.

It started contract health services for the tribes,
launched a successful cancer program,
developed the child care program,
implemented an arts initiative,





Mary Szafranski Retirement

The Nisqually community bid a sort of farewell to Mary Szafranski, Public Health Nurse, in late August. We say “sort of” as Mary and her husband still live in the community, but now they are taking up retirement activities such as traveling and enjoying their family. So it’s not really goodbye, but thank you and enjoy your retirement, Mary!

*Wishing you a happy,
healthy and relaxing
retirement.
Thank you Mary!*



Contact Information for Home Maintenance Emergencies

Should Elders or Nisqually tribal members need assistance with emergency building issues such as air conditioning and/or heating repairs or plumbing issues, help is available.

Building works with EOC and Housing to provide 24/7 on-call service to our Elders and the community.

Members can call EOC or housing and they will notify Mike Elliott, Director of Building Department or Matt Hjelm, electrician, and they will respond immediately or contact them directly at the numbers listed below.

“Once we arrive at your home, we assess the problem and get it fixed,” said Elliott. “If we

cannot fix it ourselves, we coordinate with other departments (Public Works, EOC, etc.) to get contractors on the job as soon as possible.”

During the summer months portable A/Cs are available in the event heat pumps fail.”

Mike Elliott, Building Department Director
360-701-5399

Matt Hjelm, Electrician
360-999-9303

Richard Nieves, Housing Maintenance Super.
360-890-0639



Construction Updates from Nisqually State Park

Construction is still ongoing at Nisqually State Park. Right now Washington State Parks is building the entrance for the park as well as an ADA trail out to an overlook.

The ADA trail features a beautiful view of the Mountain out over the Mashel River canyon. The project itself was carefully designed with the Tribe so there is no harm or impact to the Mashel River from this project.

The Nisqually Parks Commission has worked closely with State Parks to design these parts of the park. The Parks Commission also worked closely with artists to create artwork for these areas. The Mashel River overlook features art from Kyle Sanchez (paddle railing.) The park entrance features art from Leighanna Scott (spindle whorl medallion) and visiting artist Taylor Krise (Welcome Figure.) The Welcome Figure at the entrance is a replica of the original Welcome Figure standing in the Tribe's Administration Building.

The Parks Commission continues to work with State Parks on planning and design projects at the park. Watch for public artist and community workshops this fall to get involved with this project.



Nisqually Land Crew with New Slides!

The Nisqually Land Crew recently updated the Muck Creek Playground with new slides.

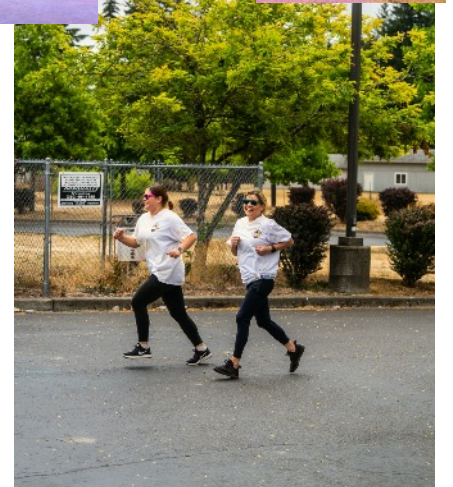
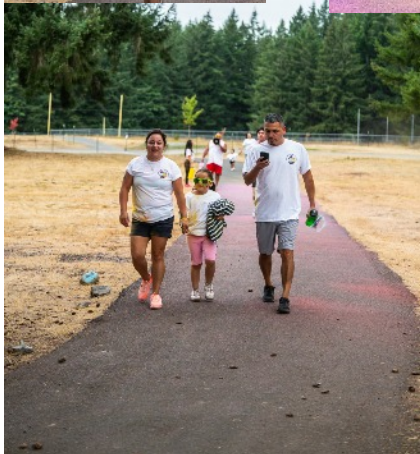
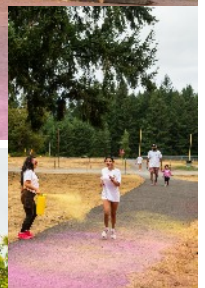
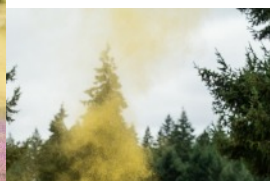
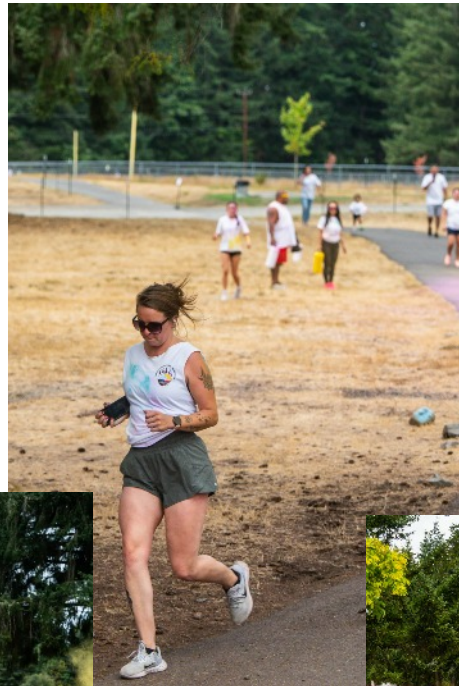




2026 Color Run!

The Nisqually Health Fitness and Nutrition department held the annual Color Run with a DJ and extra- large color cannisters for maximum dousing. Prizes were handed out for the top finishers and there were kids activities in the gym and food after the run from CJ.

-Photos Jack George





Huckleberry Camp

By Debbie Preston, Nisqually Indian Tribe Media and Communications Services Director

Even though the berry crop seemed less robust, perhaps due to a fourth straight year of drought, that didn't stop the fun at camp for participants. Kids got to use the climbing wall, weaving and sewing brought people together to talk and create and the fire always brought folks together.

Big thank you for all those who help make Huckleberry Camp happen each year including the cooks and Culture organizers.



Family Services Staff Spotlight

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Family Support Services (FSS)

Victims of Crime/Domestic Violence (VOC/DV)



Cynthia Orie
Investigator
(Tlingit)



Rafael Plenty Wolf
Caseworker
(Oglala Lakota)



Tina DeAsis-Samaniego
Manager
(Tlingit)



Lavita Tessay-Plumage
Manager
(Apache)

Krystle Badoldman
Coordinator
(Nisqually)

səsxəʔxəʔ ʔə kʷi wiwʂuʔəl (Our Children Are Sacred)



Jasmine McDonald,
MSW, LSWAIC
(Nisqually) Interim
Director/Manager



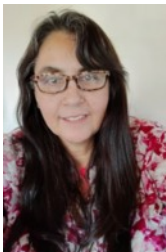
Rayne Lemaster
Interim
Manager/Caseworker
(Nisqually)



Courtney Summers
Caseworker



Roena Tapscott-
Olanipekun
Investigator/Caseworker



Teresa Munroe
Intake Specialist
(Tlingit/Haida)

Adult Protective Services and Family Support Services are located at 12565 Elders Lane SE Olympia, WA 98513. səsxəʔxəʔ ʔə kʷi wiwʂuʔəl is located at 4820 She-Nah-Num Dr. SE Olympia, WA 98513 (Billy Frank Jr. Building, 1st Floor). Victims of Crime/Domestic Violence is located at 11500 25th Ave SE Olympia, WA 98513.



Nisqually Transportation New Employee

"My name is Charles May. I am 64 years old and a proud father and grandfather. I was married to my beautiful wife for 30 years, and together we were blessed with three daughters, who have since blessed me with eight wonderful grandchildren.

I previously worked for Brothers United in Shelton for over 25 years. While raising my grandson, I recognized an opportunity with Nisqually Transportation and decided to apply. I was impressed by the company's strong management, supportive staff, professional environment, and excellent benefits.

I can see myself building a long career with Nisqually Transportation, with the goal of eventually retiring here with pride and peace of mind. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Nisqually Tribe and look forward to contributing my experience, dedication, and work ethic to the organization."



**ATTENTION
NISQUALLY
TRIBAL ELDERS!**

**BASIC VEHICLE
MAINTENANCE
•
PARTS COST
ONLY!**



Services offered:

- Replacement of worn-out tires
- Automobile Combustible engine lube, oil, and oil filter replacement.
- 12-volt battery replacement.
- Repair or replace headlights, taillights, brake lights.
- Replacement of worn-out Wipers.
- Replacement of automobile brakes
- Replacement of broken or worn-out automotive belts
- Automotive Detailing
- Lawn Mower repairs

Two vehicles allowed per year for each Elder.

Appointments must be made prior.

Please contact Benjamin Vasquez, Fleet Services Coordinator

360-456-5221 ext. 1066



Web Portal Sign Up!

Tips from the IT-WebDev Department

The Web Development Department is pleased to announce that Tribal Members can now sign up for individual accounts on the Government website (www.nisqually-nsn.gov). With a personal login, Tribal Members can access Tribal Member only content such as events, files, Council meeting minutes, resolutions and more.

STEP ONE: To get started, use any device with a web browser. This could be your phone, computer, or tablet. Then go to www.nisqually-nsn.gov on your web browser. Once on the homepage, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on “Tribal Member Login & Employee Access Instructions.”

On the next page, click the “Nisqually Tribal Member Access” button. The page will refresh and display a Sign In screen. Select “Sign Up” to begin creating an individual account.

When prompted, complete the registration. Required fields include: First name, Last name, Phone number, Nisqually Tribal Member ID number, and Email address used for signing in. A password then needs to be chosen (Tip: Use a strong password that includes length, special characters, or numbers).

STEP TWO: Please allow 72 hours for the Tribal Member verification process. Once verification is complete, the Tribal Member will receive an email confirming access. After an account is approved, Tribal Member only events, files, pages, and other content will be readily available - password resets, email changes in profiles can also be made if needed.

If there are any questions or need assistance, please use the Contact Us form located on this web page; <https://www.nisqually-nsn.gov/contact>.

Disclaimer: Nisqually Indian Tribe does not endorse, promote, review, or warrant the accuracy of the services, products or links provided.

Nisqually Indian Tribe Human Resources

Human Resources Career Announcements & How to Apply

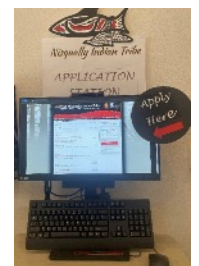
Looking for a rewarding career opportunity?

Join Our Team at the Nisqually Indian Tribe!

Apply online, on your smart phone, or onsite at the Nisqually Indian Tribe's HR Application Station!



- Discover Exciting Career Opportunities
- Convenient Onsite Application Process
- Positions Updated Weekly
- Location: Human Resources Building D (Old Clinic)
4820 She- Nah- Num Drive Se Olympia, WA 98513
- Hours: Drop in to apply at the HR Application Station
Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-3 p.m. or reach out to schedule a time!



On your smart phone camera, use the QR Code below then click the link to see NIT's latest career opportunities!



Visit us today to start your journey with the Nisqually Indian Tribe! Questions? Contact the HR front desk at (360) 486-9558.

Website URL: <https://nisquallyhr.applicantpro.com/jobs/>



DSHS Case Worker Available to Assist Tribal Members and Community

We are pleased to introduce **Brandy Sanchez**, a DSHS Case Worker with Olympia DSHS who is here to assist tribal members and community.

Brandy is available to help with applications, questions, and other needs related to programs and services provided through DSHS. Whether you need assistance navigating an application or have questions about available resources, Brandy is here to help!



When & Where

- Thursdays and Fridays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Located in an office space in the pharmacy waiting area.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to the Business Office.

We are happy to have Brandy here to support our community.
Thank you and have a wonderful day!

Lisa Wells – Business Office Manger
360-486-9599 ext. 5204

Brandy Sanchez – DSHS Case Worker
360-486-9599 ext. 5803

Get Ready for a Great School Year



As the school year approaches and you are gathering backpacks, notebooks, and other supplies, don't forget another *essential* part of preparing your kids for school - vaccinations.

Even healthy kids need vaccines! Vaccines teach our body's warrior cells - or antibodies - how to recognize and fight certain serious diseases - like cancer, measles, and polio. Without this knowledge they can't protect us.

Don't let illness slow your child's roll! Schedule a back-to-school wellness appointment. At the visit, talk to your child's health provider to learn what vaccines they need.

When our kids are vaccinated according to the recommended vaccine schedule, it's less likely that they will get sick. They are also less likely to spread illness to others who are more vulnerable - like Elders, young babies, and people with certain health conditions.

Teaching our kids to be good relatives is a lesson we can all share from home - even before they start the new school year! Skoden! Let's make this school year a great one.

For accurate childhood vaccine information that's fact checked by trusted Elders and Native health professionals, visit Native Boost's website at:
www.IndianCountryECHO.org/Boost.

New Behavioral Health SUD Clinical Supervisor Hae Man Song

Hae Man has 23 years of experience in behavioral health to include roles as a Clinic Administrator, Consultant and Trainer, Regional Director of BH Services, Supervisor of Pierce County's Human Services SUD Program, and Clinical Supervisor for several behavioral health agencies.



After attending Gonzaga University and University of Washington, he completed SUD courses through the Northwest Indian College to become a Substance Use Disorder Professional (SUDP).

He looks forward to promoting self-efficacy, holistic healing, motivational enhancement, and cultural responsiveness for the people served through the Nisqually Tribal Health & Wellness Center.



When to get the HPV Vaccine?

The HPV vaccine prevents 6 types of cancer.

It's best to vaccinate kids 9-12 years old against HPV - when their immune system is strongest. If your child is behind, they can still catch up. But don't wait!



BEST TIME!
9-12 years old
When kids' immune systems are strongest!
What's needed
2 vaccines
6-12 months apart





It's Getting LATE!
13-14 years old
What's needed
2 vaccines
6-12 months apart



It's CRITICAL!
15-26 years old
What's needed
3 vaccines (within 6 months)






Talk to your health provider to learn what vaccines they need and when!
IndianCountryECHO.org/Native-Boost



HOP to It!

Get them vaccinated for school.

Vaccines protect kids from serious illnesses by teaching their warrior cells - or antibodies - how to recognize and fight disease.






Talk to your health provider to learn what vaccines they need and when!
IndianCountryECHO.org/Native-Boost





South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency

USDA Foods Program Delivery Date

Nisqually Tribe

Wednesday, September 16th
At the Warehouse
10:00am-1:30pm



NOTE: Please stick to the monthly schedule for the USDA Commodity Food Program. Food distribution staff have other duties that they are responsible for on the days they are not issuing commodities. If you're unable to make the date, please call and schedule an appointment with appropriate staff. For USDA Food, call SPIPA at 360.426.3990. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency

Diaper Distribution

Nisqually Tribe

Wednesday, September 16th
USDA Warehouse at Nisqually
10:00am-1:30pm
Pull-ups | Diapers | Wipes | More



Need diapers? You may qualify! Households on or near Tribal lands and enrolled in programs like WIC, SNAP, or TANF may be eligible.

Call SPIPA at 360.426.3990



Announcements



September 6,
Happy Birthday Keisha,
Love Dad, Mom, Jasmine,
Samira, Nevaeh and
Rodney

Happy Birthday



Anita!

Tribal Estate and Will Planning

Estate Planning Services provided by Emily Penoyar-Rambo.
Assistance with Nisqually Tribal Member Probates by Reagyn
A. Germer.

Services offered:

- Last will and testament
- Durable power of attorney
- Healthcare directive
- Tangible personal property bequest
- Funeral/burial instructions
- Assistance with Probate matters in Nisqually Tribal Court

Estate Planning and Probate Assistance appointments will be set up for the first and third Thursday of each month.

Please call Lori Lehman in the Nisqually Tribe Legal Department at 360-456-5221 to set up an appointment.



FREE Rides

Monday through Friday

Transit available

6:00 a.m. to 6 :00 p.m.

**Open to all tribal, community
and tribal employees. We offer
rides from 6:15 a.m. to last off
rez ride at 5:00 p.m.**

**Contact Cecile Hemphill,
Motor Pool Coordinator/Dispatch**

At 360-456-5236



Rooted in Tradition, Strengthened by Community, Inspired by Hope.

Annual Health Fair

Focusing on Cancer Awareness, highlighting the importance of prevention, early detection, education, and support.

saswexwut, saswexw!(D)sli
STRONG ROOTS, STRONG SPIRITS

symbolizes the resilience that grows from our traditions, our families, and our commitment to one another.

Come learn, connect, and celebrate wellness with us. Together, we are building a healthier future.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD
11AM - 3PM | NISQUALLY YOUTH CENTER
10AM ENTRY FOR ELDER

Honoring Our Warriors (For more information, please email Jacob.Peterson@NisquallyHealth.org) If you have a loved one who is currently battling cancer, is living in remission, or has walked on after their journey with cancer, we would be honored to recognize them during our event.

Featured Activities Fun for the Whole Family!

- Informational tables from our:
 - Health & Wellness Center
 - Frequently Referred Healthcare Providers and Community Health Partners.
 - Nisqually Tribal Program(s)
 - Raffle prizes
 - Complimentary lunch

Open to NTM, Eligible Registered Patients of the NTHWC, Rezidents, NIT Employees

