

Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation Healing & Wellness

Newsletter

January/February 2026

Boozhoo everyone! We hope the new year has begun on a positive note for you and your loved ones. As we move into 2026, we look forward to the possibilities that come with a new season and a fresh start. This year brings opportunities to reconnect, learn, and care for ourselves and one another as we continue forward together. In this edition, you'll find helpful winter safety information, details about upcoming events, community contests, and a few resource inserts we hope you find informative and useful. Be sure to watch for our next newsletter, where we'll be sharing information about March Break activities, virtual cultural workshops, and additional programs and opportunities. We look forward to another meaningful year ahead.

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Three symbols make up the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy logo. The turtle represents Turtle Island. This is Mother Earth. The people are holding hands. This means they will help each other with their problems.

They are standing in a circle. This is the circle of life. The people are our friends, families and strangers — people who need our help or who are helping us.

Winter Wellness & Safety

Winter brings its own rhythm and beauty, but it also calls for extra awareness and preparation. Shorter daylight hours, colder temperatures, and changing conditions can impact both our safety and wellbeing. Taking a few extra steps can help ensure you and your family stay safe, comfortable, and confident throughout the season.

Be Prepared for Shorter Days

With fewer daylight hours, visibility can be reduced both on the road and outdoors. Plan errands and travel with daylight in mind whenever possible, wear reflective clothing or accessories when walking, and ensure vehicle lights are clean and working properly.

Protect Your Body from the Cold

Cold temperatures and wind chill can affect the body quickly. Cover exposed skin, protect your hands and face, and take regular breaks indoors to warm up. Pay attention to signs of cold stress such as numbness, shivering, or fatigue, especially for children and Elders.

Move Safely Outdoors

Snow and ice can create hazardous walking conditions. Walk slowly, take shorter steps, and use handrails when available. Keep walkways and entrances clear of snow and ice to reduce the risk of slips and falls.

Plan Ahead When Travelling

Whether heading out for a short drive or a longer trip, let someone know your plans and expected return time. Carry a charged phone, snacks, and water, and allow extra time to reach your destination so you're not rushed.

Stay Active and Connected

Winter is a good time to find safe ways to stay active, whether indoors or outdoors. Gentle movement helps maintain physical health and can support mood and energy levels during the colder months. Staying connected with family, friends, and community activities also plays an important role in overall wellness.

Know When to Stay In

Sometimes the safest choice is to stay home. Extreme cold, poor visibility, or icy conditions can increase the risk of injury. Listening to weather warnings and choosing rest over risk is an important part of winter safety.

Winter can be a time of reflection, rest, and connection. By staying prepared and mindful, we can enjoy the season while keeping ourselves and one another safe.

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Fort William Historical Park's VOYAGEUR WINTER CARNIVAL

February 14 & 15, 2026

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

The weekend of February 14 & 15, we are heading to the Voyageur Winter Carnival at Fort William Historical Park. Winter fun awaits the whole family at the Voyageur Winter Carnival this Family Day weekend. Come out and enjoy the giant snow maze, tubing hills, skating, winter games and activities, carnival games and contests, live indoor and outdoor entertainment, and much more! This event has been a huge hit in previous years and is a great way to spend part of your Family Day weekend.

Activities Include

~Large Tubing Hill	~Mini Sliding Hill	~Skating (Bring Skates)
~Outdoor Carnival Games	~Snowshoeing	~Zorb Ball
~Curling	~Historic Site	~Scavenger Hunt
~Snow Snake		

AND MORE.....

If you and your family would like to attend this wonderful family event, please contact our office and speak with Honey Chicago prior to **February 9, 2026** at 3:00 PM. Please provide the following when registering:

- ~ Date requested (February 14 or 15)
- ~ Names of participants
- ~ Age categories of all participants

Child (5 & Under)

Youth/Student (6-17)

Adult (18+)

Your tickets will be emailed to you prior to the date of event.

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IHWS Coordinator

Phone: (807)622-9835 Ext 231

mignace@lacadesmillelacs.ca

Kayla Milani

Family Wellbeing Worker

Phone: (807)622-9835 Ext 259

kmilani@lacadesmillelacs.ca

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Valentine's Date Night 2026

Snowed in Comedy Tour at Thunder Bay Community Auditorium

Date: February 14, 2026

Start Time: 7:30 PM

Are you and your partner looking for something special to do this Valentine's Day? We are excited to share that we have secured a limited number of tickets to a comedy show at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium on February 14, 2026. This event is offered in support of couples who are in healthy, long-term relationships. Please join us for an evening of fun, laughter and connection.

To register, please contact Mike Ignace by **Thursday, February 5, 2026**. Tickets are limited, so early registration is encouraged.

Phone: (807) 622-9835 Ext 231

Email: mignace@lacadesmillelacs.ca

Tickets will be provided at the doors to the auditorium on the night of the event. Please keep in mind that the show starts at 7:30 PM, please arrive early to get your tickets, and find your seats. Our staff will be at the front doors from 6:30-7:15 PM.



The Snowed In Comedy Tour has turned into a Canadian success story, celebrating its seventeenth year. It has now grown to become the biggest comedy tour in Canada. Playing in 70 cities this year, coast to coast. Four international comedians come together to create one amazing show with each bringing a unique and hilarious take providing something for everyone.

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Community Cosmic Bowling 2026

We are excited to kick off our 2026 cosmic bowling season! Cosmic bowling puts a fun and energetic spin on traditional bowling, featuring glowing lanes, neon lights, and music that creates a lively atmosphere for all ages. These evenings are a great opportunity to get together with friends, family, and community members for a night of fun and connection. Join us for two hours of all you can bowl, with pizza and beverages provided. Please see details below for March-May 2026, dates for the remaining months of the year will be announced as they become available.

Saturday March 28, 2026	7:00-9:00 PM
Saturday April 18, 2026	7:00-9:00 PM
Saturday May 30, 2026	7:00-9:00 PM

To register, please contact Mike Ignace - IHWS Coordinator. When registering please identify the dates you will be attending, participant names and your group's preference on 5 or 10 pin bowling. We will try our very best to accommodate everyone's preference. See you at our next outing!

Community Drum Nights 2026

Rhythm connects us to one another and to the world around us. Our Community Drum Nights are a chance to come together, strengthen community connections, embrace the culture and share in healing. These gatherings take place once a month at I.R. Churchill Elementary (2040 Walsh St. E). Light snacks and refreshments will be provided. Everyone is welcome and those who carry drums are encouraged to bring them out and share your voices. See below for upcoming event details, more dates to be provided as they are secured.

Wednesday February 18, 2026	6:00-8:30 PM
Wednesday March 25, 2026	6:00-8:30 PM

We look forward to seeing you there!

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Family Day Winter Fun Contest

Open to families with children/youth aged 0-17

Celebrate Family Day 2026 with us! Winter is the perfect season to get outside and enjoy some quality time with your family. Show us how your household is making the most of the season by snapping a photo while doing any outdoor winter activity. Share your picture with us for a chance to win one of five exciting prizes (details below).

Some fun winter activities include:

- ~ Snowball Fight ~ Go Sledding ~ Snowshoeing
- ~ Ice Skating ~ Winter Hike ~ Build Snow Fort
- ~ Ice Fishing ~ Make Snow Angels ~ Skiing

There's no limit to the fun—just step outside and soak in the magic of winter

1st Place

Ice fishing rods for each members of the household, and a 6 inch manual ice auger.

2nd Place

Snowshoes for each member of the household

3rd Place

\$250.00 in Chapters/Indigo Bookstore Gift Cards
(Can be used to order from their website)

4th Place

\$200.00 in Chapters/Indigo Gift Cards
(Can be used to order from their website)

5th Place

Board game bundle (5 board games)

Contest Details

- ~ Perform a fun filled outdoor activity with the members of your household
- ~ Take a picture of you/your family performing the activity
- ~ Send the picture to Mike Ignace (mignace@lacadesmillelacs.ca)
- ~ Deadline to send submissions is: **February 27, 2026**
- ~ When submitting, include names and ages of all household members

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We're excited to bring together our love of bingo and our commitment to supporting food security with a Community Meat Bingo! Join us for an evening packed with fun, laughter, and plenty of chances to win a variety of high-quality meat packages. This event is a wonderful way to connect while enjoying a lively, interactive game. Light snacks and beverages will be available throughout the night to keep everyone energized. Whether you're a bingo enthusiast or just looking for a fun way to spend an evening, there's something for everyone at our Community Meat Bingo—so come out, play, and share in the fun!

Who: Band and Community Members Aged 18+

Where: Seventh Fire Junior High (1250 Balmoral St.)

When: Wednesday February 25, 2026 6:30-8:30 PM

Why: Promoting Food Security and Community Connection

Note: We are working within our budgets therefore this event is for band and community members 18+. Our aim is to create a relaxing, enjoyable atmosphere where adults can unwind, connect, and share some laughs.

Please register for this event by contacting Mike Ignace, registrations will be open until **Thursday February 19, 2026**.

Status Card Clinic

Are you in need of an updated Status Card? We are pleased to announce that we will be offering a Status Card Clinic at our Meat Bingo for those who require status cards. This clinic will take place on Wednesday February 25, 2026 at Seventh Fire Junior High (1250 Balmoral St.) from 6:30-8:30 PM. Please call Honey Chicago at the Administration Office to register or for more information.

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Ojibwe Word List

As mentioned in our previous newsletters, we will be including a list of words and phrases in the Ojibwe language with every edition of the newsletter. It is important to note that dialects differ from community to community and even from family to family.

It is winter - Biboon

Last winter - Biboonong

It is windy - Noodin

It snows - Zoogipon

Stops snowing - Boonaagonagise

It is slippery - Ozhaashaa

Outside - Agwajjig

Moon is shining - Giizhigaate

Kettle - Akik

Heats up a house - Gizhizige

Firewood - Mishi

Gets firewood - Naadinise

Fire - Ishkode

Toboggan - Odaabaanaak

It is cold - Gisinaa

Has a cold - Agigokaa

Blanket - Waaboowaan

In the winter - Biboong

Next winter - Ge-biboong

It is very windy - Gitchi noodin

Starts snowing - Maadaagonagise

Slips on ice - Ozhaashkoshin

Skates - Zhooshkwaada'e

Nothern lights - Waawaate

Mitt - Minjikaawan

Ice - Mikomiig

Footprints are seen - Bimikawe

Builds a fire - Boodawe

Brings in firewood - Biindigenise

Wigwam - Wiigiwaam

Tea - Anisidedii

Is freezing cold - Gawaji

Catches a cold - Dakaji

Sled - Odaabaanaak

Here are a few links to assist you in learning the language.

<http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language>

<http://www.native-languages.org/ojibwe.thm>

<http://nativetech.org/shinob/ojibwelanguag>



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

Your health and
safety... our priority.

Votre santé et votre
sécurité... notre priorité.

Extreme cold

IT'S YOUR HEALTH



Extreme cold

THE ISSUE

Canada has one of the most severe **winter climates** of any country in the world. Canadians across the country may face severe cold weather conditions that can affect their health. However, being active and enjoying winter activities and sports is a great way to stay healthy. Learn how to adjust to cold conditions so you can enjoy the winter weather.



ABOUT EXTREME COLD

Extreme cold is measured differently in different parts of the country. Whenever temperatures drop dramatically below normal, staying warm and safe can become challenging. In general, your risk of health effects like windburn and frostbite increase at **wind chill values** below -27.

The wind can make cold temperatures feel even colder. The **wind chill index** measures what the temperature feels like on exposed skin based on the speed of the wind.

A **wind chill** can cause your body to lose heat faster and your skin to freeze very quickly. Wind chills below -70 have been recorded in some northern Canadian communities.

WHO IS AT RISK?

While anyone who isn't dressed warmly is at risk in cold weather conditions, some are at greater risk than others for frost bite and hypothermia:

- homeless people
- outdoor workers
- people living in homes that are poorly insulated (with no heat or no power)
- people with certain medical conditions such as diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, and diseases affecting the blood vessels
- people taking certain medications including beta-blockers
- winter sport enthusiasts
- infants (under 1 year)
- seniors (65 years or older)

Health risks of extreme cold

A normal body temperature is approximately 37°C (99°F). When your core body temperature drops by 1 or 2°C (1.8 or 3.6°F), or your body is exposed to severe cold it increases your risk of harmful effects.

Canada

What is Windburn

Windburn occurs when cold wind removes the top layer of oil from the skin causing:

- excessive dryness
- redness
- soreness
- itchiness

Although windburn is different than [sunburn](#), people often confuse the two because the symptoms are similar.

What is Frostbite

When the temperature drops below 0°C (32°F), blood vessels close to the skin constrict to protect the core body temperature. When your body is exposed to the cold for a long period of time, blood flow to your hands, feet, nose, and ears can be severely restricted. The combination of poor circulation and extreme cold can lead to frostbite.

[Frostbite](#) generally occurs in body parts furthest from the heart:

- hands
- feet
- nose
- ears

Mild frostbite (frostnip) makes your skin look yellowish or white but it is still soft to the touch. Your skin might turn red during the warming process, but normal colour returns once the area is warmed.

Severe frostbite can cause permanent damage to body tissue if it is not treated immediately. Nerve damage occurs and frostbitten skin becomes discoloured and turns black. After some time, nerve damage becomes so severe that you will lose feeling in the affected area and blisters will occur. If the skin is broken and becomes infected, gangrene can set in which can result in loss of limbs.

What is Hypothermia

There are three stages of hypothermia:

- **Stage 1:** When your body temperature drops by 1 or 2°C (1.8 or 3.6°F), you start shivering, get goose bumps on your skin, and your hands become numb. Your breath can become quick and shallow, and you may feel tired and/or sick to your stomach. You may also experience a warm sensation, which means your body is entering stage 2 of hypothermia.



Here's an easy test to check if you have stage 2 hypothermia:

Try touching your thumb to your little finger. If you can't, your muscles are not working properly and you're experiencing stage 2 hypothermia.

- **Stage 2:** Your body temperature has dropped by 2–4°C (3.8–7.6°F) and your shivering is strong. Muscles are uncoordinated and movements are slow and laboured. You may suffer mild confusion, become pale, and your lips, ears, fingers, and toes may turn blue.
- **Stage 3:** If your body temperature drops below 32°C (89.6°F), the shivering will stop but you'll have trouble speaking, thinking, and walking. You may even develop amnesia. When your body temperature drops below 30°C (86.0°F), exposed skin becomes blue and puffy, it will

be hard to move your muscles and your behaviour becomes irrational. Your heart may be beating quickly but your pulse and breathing will decrease. At this stage you are at risk of dying.

TREATMENTS FOR EXTREME COLD CONDITIONS

Windburn

Do not scratch or rub the affected area—it can damage the skin.

- Apply a protective skin care product (e.g. therapeutic moisturizers) to the affected area(s) as needed to help relieve the symptoms of windburn.
- Use a protective lip balm to treat lips.

Frostbite

Mild frostbite (frostnip) can be treated in two ways:

- **Passive warming**—move to a warm room, wrap yourself in blankets or reheat your body by skin-to-skin contact with another person.
- **Active warming**—this can be done along with passive warming. Add heat directly to the frostbitten area. The idea is to thaw the injured skin as quickly as possible without burning yourself. Thawing frostbitten skin is very painful so the injured skin should be placed in water that is just above body temperature. Do not rub, massage or shake the injured skin because that can cause more damage.

Severe frostbite requires immediate medical attention. While you are waiting for help to arrive begin treating it with passive and active warming.

Hypothermia

Severe cases of hypothermia (such as stages 2 and 3) require immediate medical attention. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.

The following treatment options should be followed for [stage 1 hypothermia](#), or while waiting for help to arrive for more severe hypothermia:

- find shelter
- keep your muscles moving
- dry and (gradually) warm your body
- wrap yourself in blankets/dry clothing or reheat your body by skin-to-skin contact with another person
- drink warm, sweet liquids
- don't fight shivering, this is one of the ways your body increases its core temperature
- if the person is unconscious lay them down and avoid shaking them or handling them roughly as they may have an arrhythmia (irregular heart beat)

REDUCE YOUR RISK

Protect yourself from extreme cold conditions by following these tips:

Wear appropriate clothing

- Always wear clothing appropriate for the weather. Synthetic and wool fabrics provide better insulation. Some synthetic fabrics are designed to keep perspiration away from your body which keep you dry and further reduce your risk.
- Dress in layers with a wind resistant outer layer. You can remove layers if you get too warm (before you start sweating) or add a layer if you get cold.
- Wear warm socks, gloves, a hat and scarf in cold weather. Be sure to put a scarf over your nose to protect it.
- If you get wet, change into dry clothing as soon as possible. You lose heat faster when you're wet.



Protect yourself

- On sunny days wear sun glasses, lip balm and sunscreen to protect your skin from UV rays and keep it moisturized to help prevent windburn.
- Wear a face mask and goggles if you are participating in winter activities such as skiing, snowmobiling and skating to protect your face from frostbite and windburn.
- Keep moving (especially your hands and feet) to keep your blood flowing and maintain your body heat.

Know the weather conditions

- Pay attention to weather alerts in your area. Special weather statements and warnings are issued when extreme weather is possible in your area.
- Environment Canada issues wind chill alerts to warn you of conditions that will cause frostbite to exposed skin.

Find shelter and keep moving

- If you are caught in a severe snowstorm, or outside in extreme cold conditions, look for shelter. If there are no buildings around, a small cave, ditch, hollow tree or a vehicle can help reduce your chances of frostbite or hypothermia.
- Even if you find shelter, keep moving to maintain your body heat.

Winterize your home

- Prepare your home for cold winter temperatures by doing regular

maintenance. Make sure your heating system is working efficiently and seal all cracks and drafts to [keep the heat in](#).

Avoid alcohol

- Consuming alcohol before you go out in the cold may increase your risk of hypothermia because it increases blood flow to the extremities of the body. You may actually feel warm even though you are losing heat.

Know your health risks

- Talk to your health care professional to see if you are at an increased risk from extreme cold due to a medical condition.
- If you have health problems such as a heart condition you may wish to avoid strenuous activities like shovelling snow.

Government of Canada's role

[Health Canada](#) and the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) are committed to maintaining and improving the health of Canadians. They are working with their partners to better understand the impacts of extreme cold on the health of Canadians, particularly those at greatest risk, and to promote efforts to reduce these risks.

[Environment Canada's Meteorological Service](#) gives Canadians as much advance notice as possible about potentially hazardous weather and provides tips on how to report and prepare for it. By issuing warnings, watches, and special statements, the [Public Alerting Program](#) helps people take steps to protect themselves and their property from harm. In addition to public alerts, Environment Canada issues special mariner alerts to warn mariners when hazardous marine weather, ice conditions or icebergs could threaten their safety.



Seasonal Affective Disorder

From the **NATIONAL INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH**

What is seasonal affective disorder?

Many people go through short periods when they feel sad or unlike their usual selves. Sometimes, these mood changes begin and end when the seasons change. Many people feel “down” or have the “winter blues” when the days get shorter in the fall and winter and feel better in the spring when longer daylight hours return.

Sometimes, these mood changes are more serious and can affect how a person feels, thinks, and behaves. If you have noticed significant changes in your mood and behavior when the seasons change, you may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

In most cases, SAD symptoms start in the late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer, known as winter-pattern SAD or winter depression. Other people experience depressive symptoms during the spring and summer months, known as summer-pattern SAD or summer depression. Summer-pattern SAD is less common.

What are the signs and symptoms of SAD?

SAD is a type of depression characterized by a recurrent seasonal pattern, with symptoms lasting about 4–5 months out of the year. The signs and symptoms of SAD include those associated with depression as well as disorder-specific symptoms that differ for winter-pattern versus summer-pattern SAD.

Not every person with SAD experiences all the symptoms listed below. Learn more about signs and symptoms of depression at www.nimh.nih.gov/depression.

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood most of the day, nearly every day, for at least 2 weeks
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling slowed down

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Changes in sleep or appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Physical aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not have a clear physical cause and do not go away with treatment
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts

For winter-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:

- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates, leading to weight gain
- Social withdrawal (feeling like “hibernating”)

For summer-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:

- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Poor appetite, leading to weight loss
- Restlessness and agitation
- Anxiety
- Violent or aggressive behavior

Winter-pattern SAD should not be confused with “holiday blues”—feelings of sadness or anxiety brought on by stresses at certain times of the year. The depression associated with SAD is related to changes in daylight hours, not the calendar, so stresses associated with the holidays or predictable seasonal changes in work or school schedules, family visits, and so forth are not the same as SAD.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has information on ways to get help and find a health care provider or access treatment at www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

If you or someone you know is struggling or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org. In life-threatening situations, call **911**.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has an online tool to help you find mental health services in your area at <https://findtreatment.gov>.

Can SAD be prevented?

Because the onset of SAD is so predictable, people with a history of the disorder might benefit from starting the treatments mentioned above before the fall (for winter-pattern SAD) or spring (for summer-pattern SAD) to help prevent or reduce depression symptoms. To date, few studies have investigated whether SAD can be prevented.

It is helpful to discuss a personalized treatment plan with a health care provider. A provider can help you decide not only the best treatment option but the best timing to help prevent SAD depressive episodes.

What are clinical trials and why are they important?

Clinical trials are research studies that look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat diseases and conditions. These studies help researchers determine if a new treatment is safe and effective in people. The main purpose of a clinical trial is to gain new scientific knowledge so that others may be better helped in the future.

People volunteer for clinical trials for many reasons. Some people join clinical trials to help doctors and researchers learn more about a disease and improve health care. Other people, such as those with health conditions, join to try new or advanced treatments that aren't widely available.

NIMH supports clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health campus in Bethesda, Maryland, and across the United States. Talk to a health care provider about clinical trials, their benefits and risks, and whether one is right for you. For more information, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/clinicaltrials.



For more information

MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine)

<https://medlineplus.gov>

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish>

(en español)

ClinicalTrials.gov

www.clinicaltrials.gov

<https://salud.nih.gov/investigacion-clinica> (en español)

National Institute of Mental Health

Office of Science Policy, Planning, and Communications

6001 Executive Boulevard, MSC 9663

Bethesda, MD 20892-9663

Toll-free: 1-866-615-6464

Email: nimhinfo@nih.gov

Website: www.nimh.nih.gov

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