

New Algonquin Language program starting up this fall

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Diane Martin, the Indigenous cultural coordinator with North Hastings Children's Services sent out a media release on Sept. 28 about a new program being offered this fall. It's a free, beginners Anishinaabemowin Algonquin language program open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have an interest. It's being held Tuesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. from Oct. 11 to Dec. 13 at NHCS at 20 Hastings Heritage Way and is also available via Zoom. It will be facilitated by Martin.

In the Sept. 28 media release, Martin said they were excited to be offering this beginners' Anishinaabemowin Algonquin language program this fall to their local Indigenous community Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation, and to any non-Indigenous people who are interested as well. It runs Tuesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. from Oct. 11 to Dec. 13 at NHCS at 20 Hastings Heritage Way. It is also available via Zoom and people are asked to email register@nhcs.ca for the Zoom link or for more information. They can also call 613-332-0179 to get more details. The classes will be facilitated by Martin.

Martin says that they started up this program to continue to revive the Anishinaabemowin language, as it has been lost due to colonization in this area.

"It has taken many years for us to retain enough knowledge of the language ourselves before we could offer a beginners' program, as we had to educate ourselves with a language teacher outside our local Indigenous community," she says.

Over the summer, Martin says they had lots of interest if they were going to be offering a language program this fall and they're excited they will be able to. As for intermediate language classes, she says it would be wonderful if they get there in the future.

"That is the goal of the Algonquin Inodewizin Centre to promote healing and knowledge for our local Indigenous people moving forward in a positive way for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in our community," she says. "To even learn a little of their language is empowering and we hope it creates some positive ripples."