

# LITTLE SHELL VOICES

Official Little Shell Tribal Newsletter - March 2026

Aanii (Hello),

On Saturday, February 28, 2026, the Little Shell Tribe proudly celebrated the grand opening of our new Ceremonial Center, marking a meaningful and historic milestone for our community. Tribal Council, tribal citizens, elders, families, and honored guests gathered to celebrate the completion of a space that will serve our people for generations to come.

The grand opening ceremony was filled with excitement, reflection, and pride as we welcomed our community into this new gathering place. The event provided an opportunity for tribal citizens to walk through the building, share stories, and celebrate the vision that brought this important project to life. It was truly special to see so many individuals come together in unity to recognize what this center represents for our Tribe.

This Ceremonial Center was created with our community in mind. It will provide a welcoming and meaningful space for ceremonies, cultural events, community meetings, celebrations, and family gatherings. For many of our tribal citizens, we have long hoped for a place dedicated to honoring our traditions and bringing people together. This center represents not only a building, but a place where our culture, history, and connections to one another can continue to grow.

The Tribal Council is deeply grateful to everyone who helped make this project possible – from the many tribal citizens who shared their support and encouragement, to the tribal government staff, contractors and partners who worked hard to bring this vision to completion.

As we look ahead, we are excited to see this center filled with life with the hosting of gatherings, celebrations, ceremonies, and important moments for our tribal citizens. This space was built for our people, and the Tribal Council looks forward to seeing it become a place where our community and culture continue to thrive.

Miigwech (Thank you),  
Chairman Gerald Gray



**INSIDE** • March Events • Wellness Corner • Cultural Corner • Community Corner



# MARCH EVENTS

# COMMUNITY CORNER

## LITTLE SHELL CULTURE CLUB



March 11th & 25th | 6pm-8pm  
Elders Center

### Connect, Learn, Belong

We host culture class every other Wednesday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 p.m. Culture class includes traditional and non-traditional drumming, dance and storytelling. Teaching the kids that attend the basics to start, and will be progressing their knowledge as their attendance continues.

We also offer crafting classes when a storyteller isn't available. In January we made scented ornaments and in February we are making dream catchers. We are also working on teaching traditions involving respect for Elder's and hope to continue with increasing knowledge of protocols for ceremonies, celebrations and Pow Wows.

## BINGO



March 5th & 19th | 6pm-8pm

### Game, Prizes, Fun!

include encouragement of health & wellness of self, spirit, and family. Bingo is offered every other Thursday from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and we try to create an atmosphere of fun, culture and family. Encouraging respect for Elder's and Unity.

Bingo attendance has increased in attendance, and we hope others will come join in the fun and sense of community within our tribal community and beyond.

The old bingo system (machine and sound system) had become unreliable. We welcomed a new bingo system with display and sound system, which has been well received by participants and Elder's.

Sponsored by Tobacco Education Department and the LS Community Health & Cultural Department

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION

### CELEBRATING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

March is National Nutrition Month, a time to focus on healthy eating and celebrating the role food plays in building strong communities. At FDPIR, we're proud to provide nutritious food to support tribal citizens and promote wellness. This month, we're highlighting seasonal foods, reducing food waste, and sharing a recipe that brings together tradition and health.

### SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT: CABBAGE, CARROTS, AND POTATOES

March is the perfect time to enjoy fresh, seasonal vegetables like cabbage, carrots, and potatoes. These versatile and budget-friendly ingredients are staples in many FDPIR food boxes. They're rich in vitamins, fiber, and flavor—perfect for hearty, healthy meals.



### RECIPE Corned Beef and Cabbage

#### INGREDIENTS

- Corned beef brisket (3-4 pounds)
- Cabbage (1 large head)
- Red potatoes (6-8)
- Carrots (4-5)
- Onion (1, quartered)
- Garlic (3 cloves, minced)
- Bay leaves (2-3)



#### DIRECTIONS

1. Place corned beef, garlic, onion, bay leaves, and water in a large pot. Simmer for 2.5-3 hours.
2. Add potatoes and carrots; cook for 15-20 minutes.
3. Add cabbage wedges; cook until tender (about 10-15 minutes).
4. Rest beef for 10 minutes, slice, and serve with vegetables.

Optional: Pair with fry bread or whole-grain bread for a cultural touch.



### FDPIR TIP: REDUCING FOOD WASTE

We encourage all our participants to make the most of their FDPIR food box. Here are a few tips to reduce waste:

- Plan Ahead: Use meal planning to maximize your ingredients.
- Get Creative: Turn leftovers into soups, stews, or casseroles.
- Freeze Wisely: Many vegetables and cooked dishes freeze well for future use.

### FDPIR UPDATES

Food Box Distribution: FDPIR food boxes include staples like cheese, meat, and pantry items.

Contact us if you'd like to know what's available.

Meat and Greet Event: Don't miss our next Meat and Greet, where you can pick up a extra meals for your family and learn about resources we offer.

### CONTACT US

Have questions about FDPIR or want to sign up? Contact Little Shell Food Distribution.

406-315-2400 Ext 130. We're here to support you with food resources and guidance.

Let's make March a month of health, community, and good food!

## ICWA



WISHING EVERYONE WELL, FROM THE ICWA DEPARTMENT!!

The ICWA Department is a busy office! We currently have 20 open cases in different stages of the process. These cases are mostly in Montana but a few are in Washington State. We help where ever there are LST Citizens.

We would like to extend an invitation to reach out if you think you may be in a situation in which Child Welfare may be looking at you. The sooner we know the better we can help.

As always, the ICWA Department is looking to assist Little Shell Citizens in becoming licensed foster parents so our children can stay within their culture. There is such a need for foster parents that can help the native children stay within their culture! Currently there are no Little Shell foster families for Little Shell Children to go to if need be. Please reach out if you are interested.

Please contact the ICWA Department to help us understand the barriers so we can work on getting them out of the way!

If anyone would like more information on ICWA please feel free to call me! 406-315-2400 ext. 120,

## HOW IS INDIAN CUSTODIAN DEFINED?

### According to the ICWA law:

“an Indian person (18+) who has legal or temporary physical custody of an Indian child under tribal law, custom, or state law, often designated by a parent to handle day-to-day care”

### Basically:

Under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), they hold special rights in child welfare proceedings, similar to a parent.

## HOUSING



### APPLIANCE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS

### The Tribe is Offering Two Appliance Replacement Programs

#### HUD Appliance Program

- Open to those **living in Cascade County**
- Little Shell Tribal Member **Elders 62 years+**
- Appliances replaced if not energy efficient
- Low Income Household
- Funding for program is not limited

#### Appliances Offered:



#### Pembina Appliance Program

- Open to those **living in Montana**
- Little Shell Tribal Member **Elders 62 years+** or Members with **long-term disability**
- Appliances replaced only if not working or member does not have the appliance
- Low Income Household
- Funding for program is limited

#### Appliances Offered:



#### GET IN TOUCH

(406) 315-2400 Office  
(406) 315-2401 Fax

LittleShellHousing@lstribe.org  
www.montanalittleshelltribe.org

511 Central Ave. W.  
Great Falls, MT 59404

## CHRONIC DISEASE AWARENESS

### HEART HEALTH IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES: AWARENESS, CULTURE & PREVENTION

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native adults — a serious concern that impacts families and communities across Indian Country. While the risks are real, so are the solutions — especially when grounded in culture, connection, and prevention.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Native communities face heart disease at younger ages and with higher mortality rates than other groups in the U.S. Several factors contribute to this health gap, including:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Smoking (commercial tobacco use)
- Limited access to healthy foods and healthcare

These risk factors are compounded by historical and social challenges like colonization, loss of land and traditional foodways, poverty, and generational trauma. But Native resilience is strong — and healing is rooted in awareness and cultural strength.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

While we can't control everything, there's a lot we can do to protect our heart health and support one another:

Prevention Starts with Awareness:

- Get regular checkups for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar
- Stay active — even walking 30 minutes a day can lower your risk
- Choose heart-healthy meals when possible, using traditional foods in nourishing ways
- Avoid commercial tobacco — it's harmful to heart health (separate from ceremonial tobacco)
- Manage stress and mental health — chronic stress also impacts your heart

#### COMMUNITY AND CULTURE MATTER

Heart health isn't just about the body — it's also about spirit, family, and connection. Participating in cultural activities, gathering with loved ones, and maintaining strong social support all contribute to overall wellness. Many Native people find strength and healing through traditional knowledge, ceremonies, and reconnecting with the land and ancestors.

*"Our culture is medicine. The path to better health includes honoring who we are."*

Learn More & Take Action:

CDC: Heart Disease and American Indians/Alaska Natives

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

## March is National Kidney Month

Get to know your hard working kidneys

### 6 WAYS KIDNEYS KEEP YOU HEALTHY



- Regulate fluid levels
- Activate Vitamin D for healthy bones
- Filter wastes from the blood
- Directs production of red blood cells
- Regulate blood pressure
- Keep blood minerals in balance

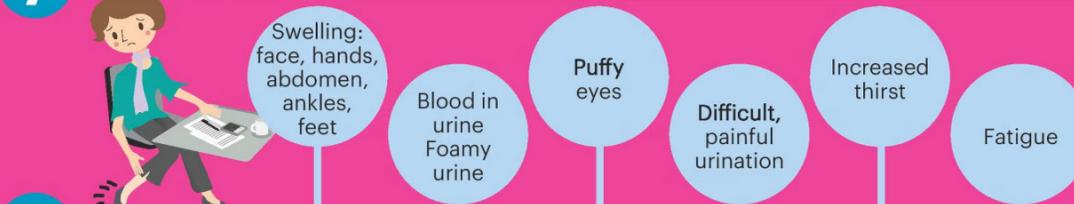
### 8 PROBLEMS KIDNEY DISEASE CAN CAUSE



### 4 RISK FACTORS



### 7 SYMPTOMS



### 2 TESTS YOU CAN TAKE (BLOOD AND URINE)



**Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio** estimates the amount of a type of protein, albumin, that you excrete in your urine.

**Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)** tells how well your kidneys are working to remove wastes from your blood. It is the best way to check kidney function. Doctors measure blood creatinine (waste build up) levels and perform a calculation based on race, age and gender.



Learn more at [kidney.org](https://www.kidney.org)



## MENTAL HEALTH



### UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Mental health affects every community, but Native people often face unique challenges that are important to understand. These include historical trauma, forced relocation, loss of language and culture, and continued discrimination — all of which can deeply affect emotional and spiritual well-being.

#### KEY FACTS:

- Native people experience higher rates of psychological distress than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native youth ages 10–24.
- Many tribal communities lack access to culturally appropriate care, and stigma often prevents people from seeking help.

#### WHAT HELPS?

Mental health services that honor Native traditions, beliefs, and identity are essential. Healing can take many forms, including:

- Talking circles and traditional ceremonies
- Connection to elders, language, and land
- Community-based programs that include cultural values
- Peer support and storytelling that builds strength through shared experience

Healing is not just about treating symptoms — it's about restoring balance in mind, body, spirit, and community.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Talk openly about mental health — help reduce the stigma
- Support youth with cultural identity and belonging
- Learn the signs of anxiety, depression, and stress
- Encourage connection to culture, elders, and tradition
- Reach out — you don't have to carry the weight alone

#### RESOURCES:

Mental Health America:  
[mhanational.org/issues/native-and-indigenous-communities-and-mental-health](https://mhanational.org/issues/native-and-indigenous-communities-and-mental-health)

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Call or text 988 anytime, 24/7

Source: Mental Health America – Native and Indigenous Communities

## HARM AND REDUCTION



At Little Shell Tribal Health, we believe everyone deserves the chance to stay safe, informed, and supported — without shame or stigma. That's why we continue to provide free, confidential access to harm reduction tools for anyone who may need them.

Harm reduction isn't about judgment — it's about meeting people where they are and giving them the resources to reduce risk and protect life.

#### AVAILABLE SUPPLIES INCLUDE:

- Fentanyl test strips
- Naloxone (Narcan) to reverse opioid overdose
- Other harm reduction materials that support safer practices

Whether you're seeking supplies for yourself, a loved one, or your workplace, these tools are here to help — quietly, respectfully, and with care.

Taking action to protect yourself or others is a powerful step toward community safety and wellness.

For materials or more info on overdose prevention, contact Kasey at [k.schindele@lstclinic.org](mailto:k.schindele@lstclinic.org) or Trica at [t.russette@lstclinic.org](mailto:t.russette@lstclinic.org)