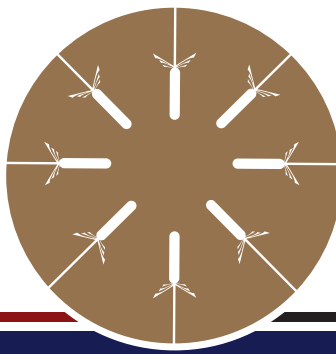




LITTLE SHELL VOICES

Official Little Shell Tribal Newsletter - September 2026

Strong Financial Stewardship for Little Shell

Boozhoo, Little Shell Family,

I'm proud to share some good news about the Tribe's finances. The Tribe has successfully completed its 2025 federal financial audit with no findings or identified weaknesses.

For our citizens, an audit is one of the most important ways we demonstrate that federal resources are being managed responsibly. Independent auditors review our financial records, federal programs, and internal processes to make sure funds are properly accounted for and that the Tribe is meeting its responsibilities.

Completing the audit without findings or weaknesses is an accomplishment worth celebrating. It reflects the strong financial and administrative systems the Tribe has continued to build as our government, programs, and federal funding have grown.

It also matters for our future. Strong audits help maintain the confidence of our federal partners and demonstrate that Little Shell has the systems necessary to manage additional programs and resources as we continue pursuing greater self-governance and self-determination.

Most importantly, this accomplishment belongs to the employees who do this work every day. I want to thank our finance team, program directors, staff, and Tribal Council for their attention to accountability and responsible management of federal resources. Good financial management takes work throughout the entire year, and this audit reflects that commitment.

We have built a lot in a short amount of time since federal recognition was restored. Accomplishments like this show that we are not only growing our government but building it on a strong foundation.

Miigwech,
Chairman Gerald Gray

INSIDE

• September Events

• Community Corner

• Wellness Corner



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

LITTLE SHELL CULTURE CLASS



Connect, Learn, Belong

The Little Shell Culture Club invites youth, families, and community members of all ages to gather, learn, and reconnect with the traditions that shape who we are. Each session offers opportunities to explore traditional dance, drumming, songs, language, and other teachings that reflect the heart of Little Shell identity.

Culture Club is a welcoming space where knowledge is shared across generations and our stories continue to grow. Whether you are beginning your cultural journey or deepening what you already know, you will find encouragement, friendship, and a sense of belonging.

Everyone is welcome. Come take part in the movement, the music, and the moments that keep our culture strong.

For updates on dates, times, and locations, please contact the Little Shell Culture Department or follow the Tribe's Facebook page.

Open Sign Up for Youth Rock Climbing team ages 13-17 | Upcoming Dates TBD

TOBACCO AND CULTURE CLUB



Tobacco and Culture Club at East Middle School offers students a meaningful space to learn, grow, and connect with cultural teachings. Through this program, students explore the difference between commercial tobacco and traditional tobacco, gaining a deeper understanding of health, respect, and the role traditional tobacco holds within our culture.

Along with learning about tobacco harm and prevention, students receive cultural teachings that enrich their education and support a stronger sense of identity and belonging. The club is designed to be engaging, supportive, and empowering for youth as they navigate their cultural and personal development.

Upcoming Dates TBD

BINGO



**September 10th and 24th
6pm to 8pm**

Come enjoy Community Bingo Nights, an uplifting way to spend time with friends, family, and fellow community members. These evenings offer more than a chance to play bingo as they create space for laughter, conversation, and meaningful connection that strengthens our Little Shell community.

People of all ages are invited to join in, enjoy light refreshments, and take part in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Prizes and plenty of good energy are always part of the experience.

Community Bingo Nights highlight the importance of gathering together and supporting one another. We hope to see you there for a night of fun and community spirit.

LAST CHANCE POW WOW



**Save the Date
September 25th and 26th**

The 27th annual Last Chance Powwow September 25th and 26th at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds in Helena, Montana

HOUSING

The Rehabilitation, Repair & Maintenance Program is not on track because of recent events. The Housing Department intends to keep this Rehab Program; however, time is needed to put the missing pieces together for a successful programmatic outcome. We will reach out to our Little Shell Tribal members when all comes together. For now and, in the interim, please feel free to reach out to Housing with questions



Expanded Housing Assistance Program



REHABILITATION, REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

- **Program Launch Date: TBD**
- Reside in **Cascade County**
- Little Shell Tribal Member Must Own or Reside in the Home **(NO AGE RESTRICTIONS!)**
- Low Income Household

Permissible Items:

Site Maintenance	Building Exterior
Roof	Windows & Doors
Interior Walls and Ceilings	Flooring
Security	Kitchen
Bathroom/Laundry	HVAC
Pest Infestations	Structural
Construction for Accessibility	Smoke Detectors/CO Detectors
Weatherization	Overcrowding
Electrical/Lighting	Plumbing
Life Safety	

Not all requested items may qualify for assistance and will be determined following a site inspection and assessment of the home's condition, **life & health and safety concerns**, guidelines, and availability of funding.

(406) 315-2400 Office

(406) 315-2401 Fax

LittleShellHousing@lstribe.org

www.montanalittleshelltribe.org

511 Central Ave W.

Great Falls, MT 59404

HOUSING

APPLIANCE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS



The Tribe is Offering Two Appliance Replacement Programs

HUD Appliance Program

- Reside in **Tribal Service Area: Cascade, Glacier Blaine or Hill Counties in Montana.**
- Little Shell Tribal Member must Own or Reside in the House **(NO AGE RESTRICTION!)**
- Low Income Household

Appliances Offered:

Stove

Hot Water Heater

Washer

Dishwasher

Refrigerator

Dryer

Pembina Appliance Program

- Reside anywhere in **Montana.**
- Little Shell Tribal Member **Elders 62 years+** or Members with a **Long-Term Disability**
- Low Income Household

Appliances Offered:

Stove

Refrigerator

Furnace

ICWA



WELCOME LILLIAN LVENAZ

The ICWA Department would like to welcome Lillian Alvenaz to our team. She is an amazing attorney and very dedicated to ICWA. We are happy to have her!

Lillian Alvernaz (Wįcáhpi Wakǫ́ Hąwí Yagá Wįya) is Dakota and Nakoda. Ms. Alvernaz graduated with honors in 2013 from the University of Montana and received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Native American Studies. In 2018, Ms. Alvernaz obtained a Juris Doctor, Indian Law Certificate, and Master of Public Administration. Ms. Alvernaz's legal career includes serving as the first-ever Indigenous Justice Legal Fellow for the ACLU of Montana, Chief Prosecutor/Presenting Officer for the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and attorney for boutique Indian and Tribal Law firms. Ms. Alvernaz's experience is driven by a passion to support and empower Native people through litigation and policy development and implementation. Her background of voting rights, education, and freedom of speech has built a strong foundation to advocate on behalf of Native people in various realms. Ms. Alvernaz's experience also includes criminal jurisdiction, housing, cannabis, TERO, tribal code development, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and policy analysis. Most recently, Ms. Alvernaz earned her most accomplished title as Iná.

ICWA



BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

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 to keep our children in our culture.

Native American children make up one third of the children in foster care in Montana even though they are only 10 percent of the population of Montana. The Little Shell ICWA Department is dedicated to decreasing this over representation.

If anyone would like more information on ICWA please feel free to call me! 406-315-2400 ext. 120
Sincerely, Edith Colman
406-315-2400, ext. 120.
ICWA Caseworker
Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana

HEALTH



IT'S FLU SEASON!!!

Flu season is around the corner! Little Shell Tribal Health Clinic offers flu and Covid shots to all ages to keep you safe this flu season. Stop by the clinic or call 406.760.2055 to schedule your flu shot appointment today!

HEALTH

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

The Little Shell Health Team would like to give a big shot out too our two newest hires.



AZA TROMBLEY

My name is Aza Trombley and I am the new Medical Records Specialist. I am enrolled in the Blackfeet Tribe. I am the youngest of 4 sisters, so I am the favorite. I've recently graduated high school and am currently working to become a Nurse Anesthetist. I like to read dramas, psychological thrillers, and romcoms. I thrift pretty much everything and I LOVE all things fashion. I also listen to music everywhere I go and have a sweet spot for baking and matcha. My favorite season is fall, which also falls under my favorite holiday, my birthday! I'm thankful for this opportunity and can't wait to grow with the Little Shell Clinic.



TANYA GONSER

My name is Tanya Gonser, Registered Nurse. I am pleased to be a part of the Little Shell Tribal Clinic. I am excited about the model of care that Little Shell has implemented to deliver high-quality care to all of the customer/owners. During my first few weeks here, I received a warm welcome and met very friendly folks.

I am a mom of three terrific boys (ages 24, 22, and 11) and a grandma to one lovely little girl (6mos). My greatest passion is watching my boys grow as men. At the moment I spend my evenings watching my youngest son play tackle football and box at Electric City Boxing Club. I enjoy camping, traveling, and spending time with my family. I am hoping to find time this fall/winter to get back into my favorite hobby of quilting.

I am excited to be a new member of the team delivering top notch care. I look forward to meeting each of you.



FOOD DISTRIBUTION



ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS MONTH

September is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

This month, we take time to recognize the challenges faced by those living with Alzheimer's disease and the families who care for them. As part of our tribal community, many of us are touched by this illness in some way — whether through a loved one, friend, or neighbor.

Caring for elders is part of our tradition, and supporting those with Alzheimer's reflects our values of compassion, respect, and community strength.

Did You Know? Nutrition Can Support Brain Health

What we eat plays a role in how our minds and bodies age. Some of the foods offered through our FDPIR program contain nutrients that may support memory and brain function, especially in our elders.

Here are some FDPIR foods that help nourish both the body and the brain:

- Beans – Packed with fiber and protein, great for heart and brain health.
- Whole grains – Oats and brown rice help regulate blood sugar and improve energy.
- Canned salmon and tuna – Omega-3 fatty acids help support brain cells.
- Fruits and vegetables – Full of antioxidants and vitamins to fight inflammation.
- Nuts (if available) – Boost brain function with healthy fats and vitamin E.

Let us know if you'd like tips or simple recipes featuring these ingredients. We're happy to help!

FOOD DISTRIBUTION



FRESH FROM OUR NEW DOD FRESH PROGRAM

We are excited to share that we are now distributing fresh produce and eggs through our new DoD Fresh program. These nutrient-rich additions are perfect for creating meals that support overall health — including brain health — and help us provide even more wholesome options to our community.

Be sure to ask about them when you pick up your box this month!



SPOTLIGHT: CARING FOR OUR ELDERS

Thank you for allowing the Little Shell Tribe FDPIR Program to serve you. Our goal is to provide nutritious foods and outstanding customer service to every family we serve. If you have questions about the program, eligibility, or food distribution, please contact our office. We are happy to help.



FDPIR REMINDERS FOR SEPTEMBER

- Pick-up Location: 1301 Stuckey Rd, Great Falls, MT
- Call Ahead for Delivery Options or Appointments: 406-315-2400 Ext. 130
- Let us know if you or a loved one needs food delivered due to mobility or memory issues — we're here to help.



TOGETHER, WE REMEMBER. TOGETHER, WE CARE.

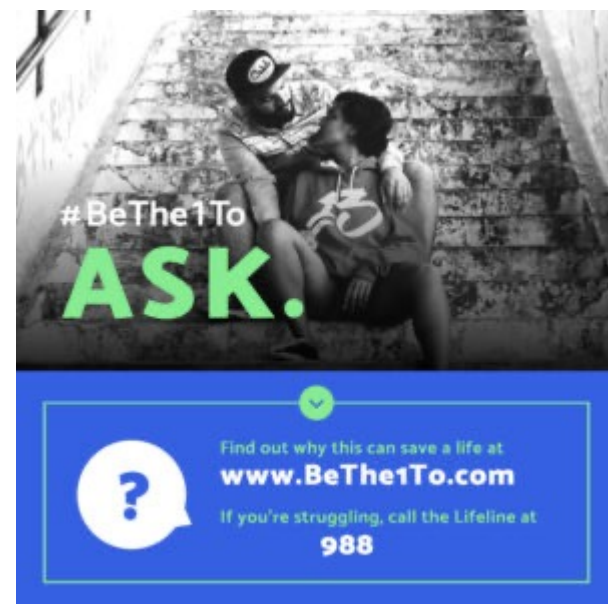
As we raise awareness this month, let's continue lifting one another up. A healthy meal, a kind word, and support for our caregivers go a long way in keeping our community strong.

Wishing you peace and health,
The Little Shell FDPIR Team

MENTAL HEALTH

HOW AND WHY THE 5 STEPS CAN HELP HOW THE 5 STEPS CAN HELP SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

The five action steps for communicating with someone who may be suicidal are supported by evidence in the field of suicide prevention.



ASK

How – Asking the question “Are you thinking about suicide?” communicates that you’re open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way. Asking in this direct, unbiased manner, can open the door for effective dialogue about their emotional pain and can allow everyone involved to see what next steps need to be taken. Other questions you can ask include, “How do you hurt?” and “How can I help?” Do not ever promise to keep their thoughts of suicide a secret.

The flip side of the “Ask” step is to “Listen.” Make sure you take their answers seriously and not to ignore them, especially if they indicate they are experiencing thoughts of suicide. Listening to their reasons for being in such emotional pain, as well as listening for any potential reasons they want to continue to stay alive, are both incredibly important when they are telling you what’s going on. Help them focus on their reasons for living and avoid trying to impose your reasons for them to stay alive.

Why – Studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts. In fact, studies suggest the opposite: findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal ideation.

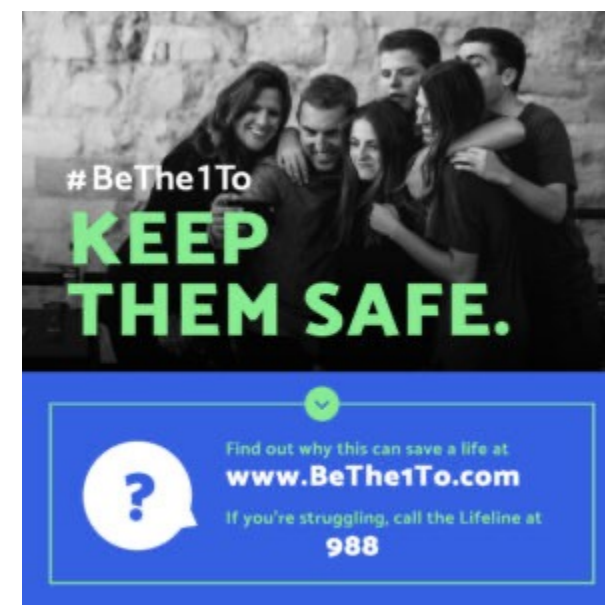
BE THERE

How – This could mean being physically present for someone, speaking with them on the phone when you can, or any other way that shows support for the person at risk. An important aspect of this step is to make sure you follow through with the ways in which you say you’ll be able to support the person – do not commit to anything you are not willing or able to accomplish. If you are unable to be physically present with someone with thoughts of suicide, talk with them to develop some ideas for others who might be able to help as well (again, only others who are willing, able, and appropriate to be there). Listening is again very important during this step – find out what and who they believe will be the most effective sources of help.



Why – Being there for someone with thoughts of suicide is life-saving. Increasing someone’s connectedness to others and limiting their isolation (both in the short and long-term) has shown to be a protective factor against suicide. Thomas Joiner’s Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide highlights connectedness as one of its main components – specifically, a low sense of belonging. When someone experiences this state, paired with perceived burdensomeness (arguably tied to “connectedness” through isolating behaviors and lack of a sense of purpose) and acquired capability (a lowered fear of death and habituated experiences of violence), their risk can become severely elevated.

In the Three-Step Theory (or more commonly known as the Ideation-to-Action Framework), David Klonsky and Alexis May also theorize that “connectedness” is a key protective factor, not only against suicide as a whole, but in terms of the escalation of thoughts of suicide to action. Their research has also shown connectedness acts as a buffer against hopelessness and psychological pain. By “being there,” we have a chance to alleviate or eliminate some of these significant factors.



HELP KEEP THEM SAFE

How – First of all, it’s good for everyone to be on the same page. After the “Ask” step, and you’ve determined suicide is indeed being talked about, it’s important to find out a few things to establish immediate safety. Have they already done anything to try to kill themselves before talking with you? Does the person experiencing thoughts of suicide know how they would kill themselves? Do they have a specific, detailed plan? What’s the timing for their plan? What sort of access do they have to their planned method?

Why – Knowing the answers to each of these questions can tell us a lot about the imminence and severity of danger the person is in. For instance, the more steps and pieces of a plan that are in place, the higher their severity of risk and their capability to enact their plan might be. Or if they have immediate access to a firearm and are very serious about attempting suicide, then extra steps (like calling for emergency help or driving them to an emergency department) might be necessary. The Lifeline can always act as a resource during these moments as well if you aren’t entirely sure what to do next.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that reducing a suicidal person’s access to highly lethal means (or chosen method for a suicide attempt) is an important part of suicide prevention. A number of studies have indicated that when lethal means are made less available or less deadly, suicide rates by that method decline, and frequently suicide rates overall decline. Research also shows that “method substitution” or choosing an alternate method when the original method is restricted, frequently does not happen. The myth “If someone really wants to kill themselves, they’ll find a way to do it” often does not hold true if appropriate safety measures are put into place. The Help Keep Them Safe step is really about showing support for someone during the times when they have thoughts of suicide by putting time and distance between the person and their chosen method, especially methods that have shown higher lethality (like firearms and medications).

WELLNESS CORNER



HELP THEM CONNECT

How – Helping someone with thoughts of suicide connect with ongoing supports (like the 988 Lifeline) can help them establish a safety net for those moments they find themselves in a crisis. Additional components of a safety net might be connecting them with supports and resources in their communities. Explore some of these possible supports with them – are they currently seeing a mental health professional? Have they in the past? Is this an option for them currently? Are there other mental health resources in the community that can effectively help?

One way to start helping them find ways to connect is to work with them to develop a safety plan. This can include ways for them identify if they start to experience significant, severe thoughts of suicide along with what to do in those crisis moments. A safety plan can also include a list of individuals to contact when a crisis occurs.

Why – Impact of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline found that individuals that called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline were

significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful by the end of calls handled by Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training-trained counselors. These improvements were linked to ASIST-related counselor interventions, including listening without judgment, exploring reasons for living and creating a network of support.



FOLLOW UP

How – After your initial contact with a person experiencing thoughts of suicide, and after you've connected them with the immediate support systems they need, make sure to follow-up with them to see how they're doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call. The follow-up step is a great time to check in with them to see if there is more you are capable of helping with or if there are things you've said you would do and haven't yet had the chance to get done for the person.

Why – This type of contact can continue to increase their feelings of connectedness and share your ongoing support. There is evidence that even a simple form of reaching out, like sending a caring postcard, can potentially reduce their risk for suicide.

Studies have shown a reduction in the number of deaths by suicide when following up was involved with high risk populations after they were discharge from acute care services.

Studies have also shown that brief, low cost intervention and supportive, ongoing contact may be an important part of suicide prevention. Please visit our Follow-Up Matters page for more.