

MINNESOTA INDIAN WOMEN'S SEXUAL ASSAULT COALITION'S

RESTORING THE SACRED TRAILS OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS

19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

GROWING OUR GARDEN



TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

April 21-23, 2026
BLACK BEAR CASINO, FDL | CARLTON, MN



This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-24-GG-01604-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.



MIWSAC

Minnesota Indian Women's
Sexual Assault Coalition

**Creating Safety
and Justice for
Native Women
Through the
Teachings of Our
Grandmothers**

The Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC) is a statewide Tribal coalition and national Tribal technical assistance provider. MIWSAC has worked since 2001 to end gender-based violence and enhance Tribal, state, and federal responses to sexual violence and sex trafficking.

MIWSAC uses culturally based training, technical assistance, strategies, resources, tools, and a wide range of events and activities to engage and support survivors of sexual violence, advocates, service providers, community, and allies that are working to end sexual violence and sex trafficking across Minnesota's 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations, urban Native bases, and Tribal communities across the country.

42

**Membership
Programs in
Minnesota**

75

**Individual
Coalition
Members**

**40-Hour
Native-Focused
Sexual Assault
Advocacy
Training**

- Annual Statewide Conference & Pow-Wow Honoring Survivors
- Annual Aligning Our Vision Gatherings
- Sustaining our Advocacy Advocate Retreats
- Annual Membership and Quarterly Coalition Meetings
- Native Mens' Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit
- Solidarity Shawl Project
- Annual February 14th MMIWR March
- National MMIWG/R Day every May 5th
- MIWSAC Sacred Sisters Tea Blend
- Webinars, Trainings, and Virtual Gatherings
- Culturally-specific Public Service Announcements
- Publicly available culturally meaningful resources
- Collaboration and Engagement with communities



**NEWSLETTER
SIGNUP**

WWW.MIWSAC.ORG



MEMBERSHIP@MIWSAC.ORG

**570 N. Asbury St.
St Paul, MN 55104
651-646-4800
1-877-995-4800**



MIWSAC

CIRCLE KEEPERS

**Kimberly Bollig
Jolene Crosswhite
Kaitlyn Rutledge**

**Anne Haines Holy Eagle
Kateri O’Keefe
Jena Skalisky**

Circle Keeper Responsibilities:

Embody and Cultivate the Matriarchy:

Uphold the highest standard of attendance, timeliness, and adherence to tribally grounded decision making, where each voice matters, is heard and respected.

Circle Keeper Leadership and Development:

Support and engage in decolonizing strategies and liberatory practices to end gender-based violence. Participate in planning and approving long-range plans with Staff and Membership.

Hiring and Supervision of the Executive Director:

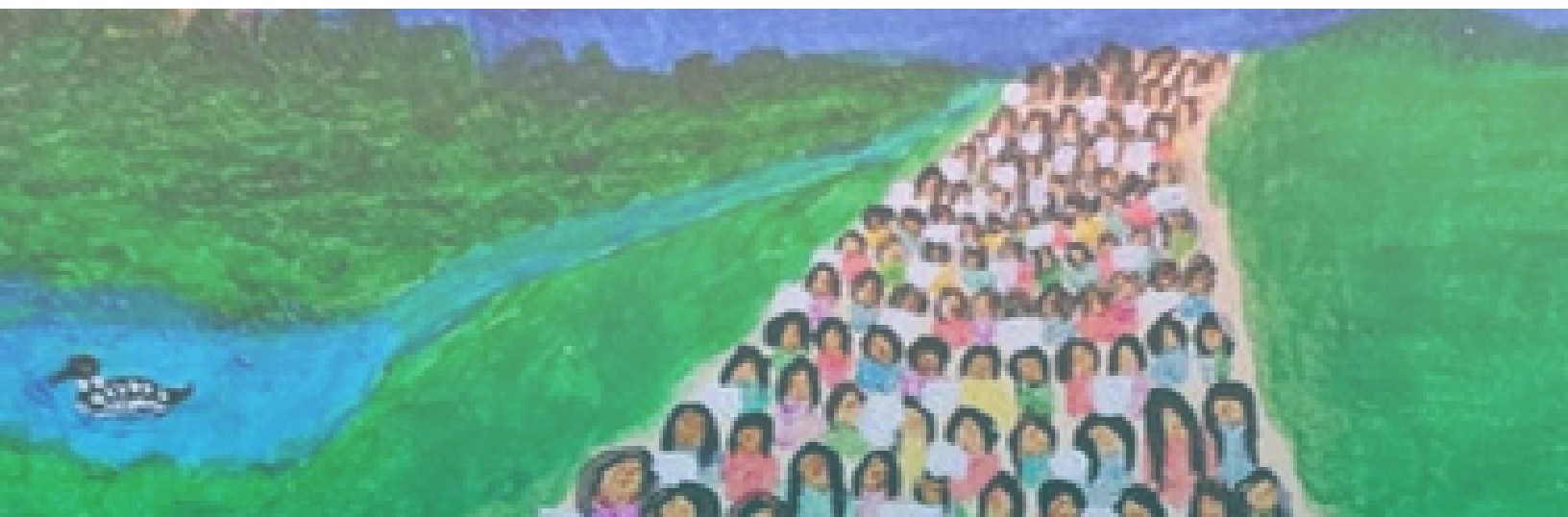
Hire the Executive Director. Evaluate their performance annually. Support the Director in maintaining a healthy organization.

Financial Oversight, Care and Compliance:

Work with staff to prepare financial reports, budgets, and ensure sound fiscal oversight, adherence to tribal, state and federal laws, and responsibility to MIWSAC.

Culturally Honoring Ambassadorship:

Represent MIWSAC as a Native woman-led, survivor-centered organization in the community, with funders, tribal leadership, and other stakeholders.





MIWSAC

STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Nicole Matthews | Chief Executive Officer

Linda Thompson | Chief Operations Officer

Sandra Bender | Finance Director

Jennifer Scoggin | Operations Coordinator

Morgan Hawes | Data, Grants, & Knowledge Coordinator

Annabel Young | Marketing & Communications Director

STATE TRIBAL COALITION

Cristine Davidson | Prevention & Education Director

Lisa Iyotte | Membership & Program Services Coordinator

NATIONAL TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Becki Jordan | National Projects Director

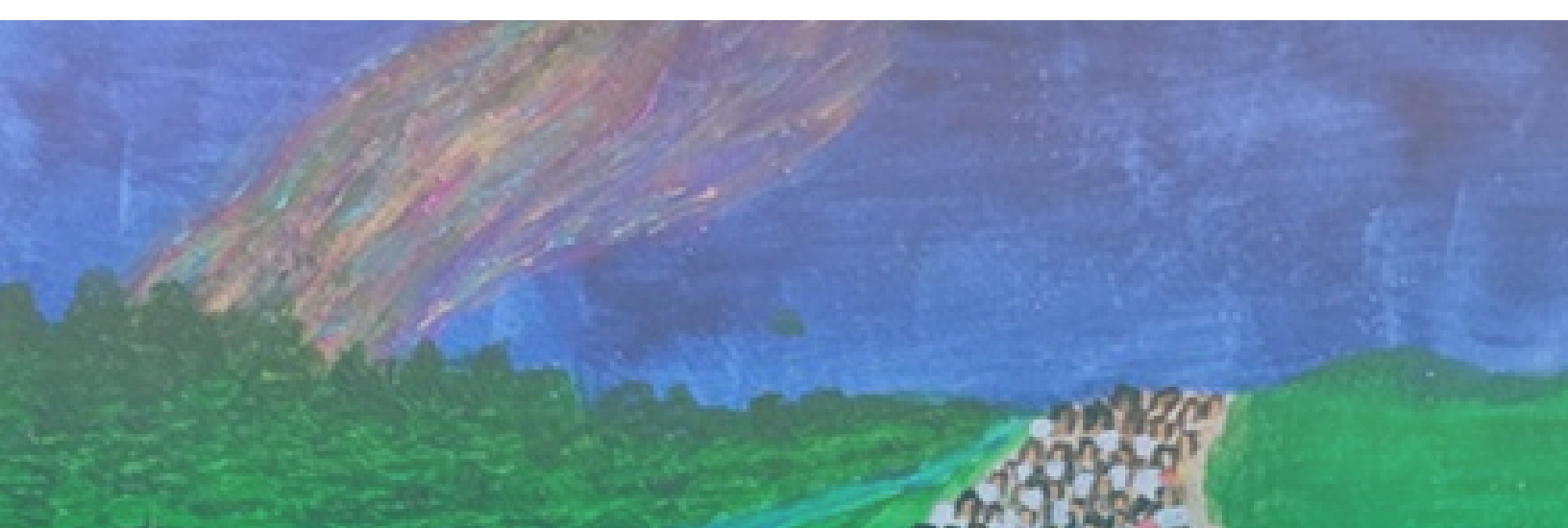
Kimberly Ross-Toledo | T/TA Coordinator

Stephanie Bridwell | T/TA Coordinator

Deb Bush | T/TA Coordinator

April Russell | T/TA Coordinator

Melissa Skeet | MMIP Project Coordinator





CONFERENCE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Check-In and Registration

Attendees can check-in at the registration table outside the Otter Creek Hall to receive name badges and other materials on **Monday, April 20, from 6pm-8pm**, or **Tuesday, April 21 from 7am-8:30am**. MIWSAC Staff and Conference volunteers will be available at the registration table throughout the conference for additional questions or needs for assistance that may come up.

Safe Persons

The topics addressed and the content shared during this conference may activate unexpected emotional responses. Safe persons have been identified and will be available to assist throughout the conference. ***If you want to talk with a safe person please seek out individuals with a GOLD RIBBON on their nametag and they will meet with you privately and confidentially.***

Conference Evaluations & Door Prizes

Please complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of each workshop and/or keynote presentation and give them to the room moderator or leave them on your table. We sincerely appreciate your feedback as it helps us in our planning for future conferences and events. Each participant will be given a ticket on the last day when they turn in their Overall Evaluation, and there will be drawings for various donated items. You must be present to win.

Cell Phones

As a courtesy to presenters and conference attendees, please turn your cell phones to vibrate or silent for the duration of the conference.

Vendors

Vendor booths are located inside of the Otter Creek Hall and will be open throughout the conference.

Self-Care Carnival

There will be a "FLOWER POWER!" themed Self-Care Carnival in the Otter Creek hall on Tuesday evening from 7pm-10pm. There will be a costume contest by age group! Dress to win!

Pow Wow

There will be a Pow Wow to Honor Survivors in the Otter Creek Hall on Wednesday evening from 7pm to 10pm. Registration will begin at 6pm. We will have an Honor Song for Native victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence, victims of trafficking, and Murdered and Missing Indigenous Relatives. Limber up for the Potato Dance Special! All are welcome!

Photos & Media

We will be taking photos and video throughout the conference. You should have signed a media release when registering. If you did NOT sign the media waiver, and do not wish to be in photos or video, please notify MIWSAC staff.



POLICY ON CREATING A SAFE & SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR THOSE GATHERING AND/OR WORKING TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This policy is grounded in the mission and philosophy of MIWSAC and is guided by the diverse tribal traditions and voices represented in the coalition. It provides a guideline on how to respond when known or suspected harm-doers are identified at MIWSAC events.

MIWSAC understands that most sexual violence is perpetrated against women, children, and other targeted groups such as our Two Spirit/LGBTQIA+ relatives, and folks with visible or invisible disabilities.

Perpetrators of sexual harm can be anyone; law enforcement, tribal council members, spiritual practitioners, or other professionals. Perpetrators can also be our sons, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, fathers, or cousins. They can be strangers, or neighbors, or someone we know. Less frequently, they can be women relatives or other females. Harm-doers can also be someone the community holds in high regard, and it can be difficult to believe they would cause harm, particularly because they do not hurt every person around them. They tend to blame the victim, deny that a sexual assault occurred, claim it was consensual, or attempt to discredit the victim(s) and their supporters. MIWSAC does not support this.

Regardless of who they are, committing an act of sexual harm is a crime, an act of violence upon our community, and it is the philosophy of MIWSAC to always believe the victim.

MIWSAC recognizes that harm-doers can be everywhere, and we cannot know the background of every individual that attends our events. We will however, make good faith efforts to protect victim safety at all MIWSAC events.

Policy Steps:

1. MIWSAC will include language in conference or event materials that states: “MIWSAC reserves the right, due to victim safety, to ask somebody to leave.”
2. A response team of three people (Staff, Circle Keeper, and/or coalition member) will be identified to respond if a situation arises. One alternative will also be identified.
3. The team will talk with the hotel/event staff prior to any event to inform them of our policy in the event that security is needed.
4. If a known or identified offender/perpetrator/harm-doer attends or attempts to attend a MIWSAC event, they will be immediately asked to leave by the team.
5. If they are unwilling to leave, security and/or law enforcement will be called to assist.
6. If the harm-doer is a relative of one of the members of the identified team, they will be replaced with the alternative team member.
7. The incident will be documented, adhering to confidentiality of the victim(s).
8. A debrief will be held afterward to review how the process can be improved.
9. MIWSAC places high value on transparency with the event participants and community, and we welcome all feedback.



RESTORING THE SACRED TRAILS OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS

ORIGINAL DREAM & VISION BY:
ARLENE DOWNWIND-WHITE

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY:
JUANITA BLACKHAWK

2007

IN SEARCH OF SAFETY
FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2008

COMMUNITIES HEALING
FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2009

COMMUNITIES DEMANDING JUSTICE
FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2012

STRENGTHENING OUR CIRCLE
TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2013

SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2017

BUILDING A LEGACY OF STRATEGIC
ACTIVISM



2018

PATHWAYS TO ENDING GENDER BASED
VIOLENCE





HERSTORY OF OUR CONFERENCE THEME & ARTWORK

2010

COMMUNITIES MOBILIZING AGAINST
SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2011

RETURNING TO OUR TRADITIONS TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2014

OPPRESSION INFORMED STRATEGIES TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2015

IGNITING THE COMMUNITY FIRE TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2016

FEEDING THE 10 YEAR FIRE TO END
SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2019

WEAVING OUR WISDOM TO END GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE



2023

EMERGING WITH NEW VISIONS TO END
SEXUAL VIOLENCE



2024

RAISING OUR VOICES TO END SEXUAL
VIOLENCE



2020 & 2021 CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC
2022 - TENDING TO OUR ROOTS (VIRTUAL)



ABOUT THE ARTIST



JUANITA BLACKHAWK

Juanita Steenerson Blackhawk was born in the Ada Hospital in Ada Minnesota. She is one of four children—two sisters and 1 brother—and she is the youngest of the four. Juanita and her siblings were separated and raised in different homes. Juanita was in Halstad, MN up until the age of 4- she was adopted and moved to Washington State with her adoptive parents at the age of 14. Juanita left them at the age of 15 and lived in 3 foster homes. She kept in contact with the 3rd set of foster parents all these years.

When she was 18, Juanita moved back to Minnesota and would alternate her living between Washington state and Minnesota for many years. In 1985, she overcame a heroin addiction and in 1990 she let go of alcohol. She has been involved in the Midewiwin lodge and has made spiritual life apart of her everyday being. Juanita has been an active AIM member since she was a young woman and remains active today.

A survivor of family violence, the foster care system and adoption and sexual violence she has used her survival and healing to support and help many other people. She has been an advocate before there was organized and funded programming and services. On April 28th 2003, she participated in the “Vagina Monologues” and has been a part of the Minnesota Indian Womens Sexual Assault Coalition since 2003!

Juanita uses her artistic talent as a way of healing expression- her work has been displayed throughout Indian Country. Her pride and joy is her children as she is the proud mother to one son, and her bonus children include two more sons, and two daughters- she is also the grandmother to eleven grandchildren and the beloved cherished auntie to many people.



FLOWER POWER SELF-CARE CARNIVAL



TUESDAY APRIL 21, 2026

2PM-10PM

**GAMES, PRIZES, SNACKS,
CRAFTS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!!**

OPEN TO ALL AGES!

COSTUME CONTEST AGE GROUPS:

0-3YR

4-10YR

11-17YR

18-29YR

30-50YR

51-70YR

71-99+



MEN AS PEACEMAKERS

19th Annual Statewide MIWSAC Restoring the Sacred Trails of Our Grandmothers Conference

HONORING SURVIVORS TRADITIONAL POW-WOW

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026
BLACK BEAR CASINO, FDL, CARLTON, MN

6:00pm: Registration
7:00pm: Grand Entry
10:00pm: Traveling Song

*THIS IS A SAFE SPACE
HONORING SURVIVORS
OF VIOLENCE. ALL ARE
WELCOME TO ATTEND.*

HOST DRUM: MIKE MUNNELL
EMCEE: LES GIBBS
ARENA DIRECTOR: JAMIE PETITE
HONOR GUARD: FDL
SPIRITUAL ADVISOR: RICKY DEFOE

Featuring Red Solidarity Shawls with purple and teal fringe to honor survivors of domestic and sexual violence, folks who have been trafficked or used in prostitution, and those who are missing and murdered across Turtle Island.

DANCE SPECIALS

**POWWOW
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL**

POTATO DANCE:
1ST PLACE \$40
2ND PLACE \$20
3RD PLACE GETS POTATOES



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CONFERENCE AGENDA

AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM/LOCATION
3pm	Participants can check in to hotel rooms	
6pm-8pm	Early Conference Registration	Otter Creek Hall

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM/LOCATION
7am	Conference Registration	Otter Creek Hall
8:30am	Traditional Opening: Patty Dupuis	Otter Creek Hall
8:45am	Welcome: MIWSAC, MSH, MAP	Otter Creek Hall
9:15am	Opening Plenary	Otter Creek Hall
10:45am	BREAK	
11am	Morning Workshops	Rooms vary by workshop. See full conference agenda

Raising Our Voices



CONFERENCE AGENDA

AT A GLANCE

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 | CONTINUED

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM/LOCATION
12:30pm	LUNCH Provided Otter Creek Hall	
2pm	Afternoon Workshops	Rooms vary by workshop. See full conference agenda
3:30pm	BREAK!	
3:45pm	Afternoon Plenary	Otter Creek Hall
5pm	DINNER (on your own)	
7pm	Self-Care Carnival!	Otter Creek Hall





CONFERENCE AGENDA

AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM/LOCATION
9am	Morning Plenary	Otter Creek Hall
10:45am	BREAK!	
11am	Morning Workshops	Rooms vary by workshop. See full conference agenda
12:30pm	LUNCH Provided Otter Creek Hall	
2pm	Afternoon Workshops	Rooms vary by workshop. See full conference agenda
3:30pm	BREAK!	
3:45pm	Afternoon Plenary	Otter Creek Hall
5pm	DINNER (on your own)	
7pm	Honoring Survivors Pow-Wow	Otter Creek Hall





CONFERENCE AGENDA AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM/LOCATION
9am	Closing Plenary	Otter Creek Hall
	Return Evaluations/Door Prizes	Otter Creek Hall
11am	Traveling Song and Conference Closing	Otter Creek Hall

****PARTICIPANTS MUST CHECK OUT OF HOTEL BY 11AM****

SAFE JOURNEYS AND THANK YOU ALL FOR JOINING US!





FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY ONE	TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026
7am - 8am	Conference Check-In & Vendor Booths Open
8:30am - 9:15am Otter Creek Hall	<p>Traditional Welcome with Patty Dupuis Fond du Lac</p> <p>Conference Opening and Welcome</p> <p>Nicole Matthews (Anishinaabe), <i>MIWSAC</i> Sarah Curtiss (Anishinaabe), <i>Men As Peacemakers</i> Natasha Kingbird (Anishinaabe), <i>Mending the Sacred Hoop</i> Andrea McKeon (Anishinaabe), <i>Fond du Lac Social Services</i></p>
9:15am - 10:45am	Opening Plenary: Growing Our Garden to End Sexual Violence
<p><i>MIWSAC: Growing Our Garden to End Sexual Violence</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews, Linda Thompson, Lisa Iyotte, Cristine Davidson, April Russell MIWSAC</p> <p>Whether you are planting seeds to grow a new advocacy program, a coalition, or a community group; there are important things to consider. Together we will contemplate questions like.... is the soil ready and rich with the necessary nutrients? If not, who will prepare the soil and get it ready for planting? What plants will work best given the climate? Have we considered companion planting? Who will tend to the garden? This panel will share tips and ideas on growing a successful garden of grassroots advocacy.</p>
10:45am - 11am	BREAK
11am - 12:30pm	MORNING WORKSHOP SESSIONS - DAY ONE
<p><i>Red Tent: Reclaiming Care for Our Wombs</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Ava Krmpotich Mama Mission</p> <p>This workshop explores menstrual health—from maiden to crone—along with toxic-free alternatives and ways to honor the body’s natural cycles. Participants will deepen body awareness, learn sustainable menstrual care, and gain practical tools for comfort, empowerment, and reclaiming connection to their bodies.</p>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

MORNING WORKSHOP OPTIONS - DAY ONE

Self-Advocacy for People with Disabilities

St. Louis River Hall I

Sindy Mau | Aging Options, LLC.

More than 90% of people with disabilities will experience sexual assault (NOW, 2020). Minnesota Disability Services has funded a workbook titled Taking Care of Me: Building Confidence and Assertiveness Skills. The workbook promotes self-advocacy and self-determination, analyzing how ableism has reinforced the vulnerability of people with disabilities through a reliance on a "protection" model instead of building a foundation self-advocacy and empowerment.

Implementing Prevention Best Practices In Indigenous Youth Programming

St. Louis River Hall II

Anne LaFrinier-Ritchie | Someplace Safe

This session will educate attendees on youth prevention programming best practices, including trauma responsiveness in action. The presenter will share tips and tools on implementing best practices into youth groups, and will share examples of activities that are trauma informed and culturally responsive.

From Crisis Response to Community Healing: A Public Health and Social Work Framework for Ending Sexual Violence in Rural and Tribal Communities

St. Louis River Hall III

Monique Doward, Margaret Paro | Public Health Institute

This interactive workshop uses a garden framework and case-based small-group discussion to help participants identify survivor needs, service barriers, and policy solutions. Attendees will leave with practical tools for trauma-informed advocacy, cross-sector collaboration, and community-based systems change.

Capacity Building Track: State Policy Advocacy

St. Louis River Hall IV

Jess Palyan | Violence Free Minnesota

Activism for Advocates is a Capacity Building, State Public Policy workshop to prepare advocates to advocate for crime victim services. Whether you are brand new to issue advocacy and policy work or have been doing it for years, we hope to prepare you on what you can and can't do to take action and influence policy as an advocate; how we can mobilize together; how to be a resource for lawmakers.



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

<p>12:30pm - 2pm</p>	<p>LUNCH Provided Otter Creek Hall</p>
<p>2pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP OPTIONS - DAY ONE</p>
<p><i>Grounding Ourselves and Our Work Through Gardening Practices and Principles</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Marcia Kitto</p> <p>Through traditional gardening practices and principles, storytelling and educating each other, group participation in activities and discussion, incorporating Ojibwe language and culture, the presenter will guide workshop participants in grounding themselves and learning by observation of the natural world to walk the good path (minomiikana), and to use the wisdom gained from life experience to help others.</p>
<p><i>Demystifying Victim Manipulation/Grooming</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall I</p>	<p>Carly Siveny First Witness Child Advocacy Center</p> <p>This presentation will define the intentional process that is Victim Manipulation, formally known as Grooming. Additionally, this lecture will detail the deliberate process through which an offender chooses and abuses the victim through the defined 6 stages of Victim Manipulation. The presenter will explain why this process is often missed in all facets of a child's life and during the early phases of an investigation. This presentation will cover the intentional manipulation and desensitization that is happening between the offender and the victim. The presenter will explore reasons this process may go undiscovered and reasons as to why a child may not disclose this abuse. Lastly, this presentation will end with tools and ideas designed for professionals to use in their work aimed at decreasing the rates of Victim Manipulation.</p>
<p><i>Sharing May Not Be Caring: Confidentiality, Self-Disclosure, and Practicing Healthy Boundaries in Advocacy</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall II</p>	<p>Angela Barnes MIWRC</p> <p>The presenter will cover confidentiality, when self-disclosure of trauma may harm survivors, and the importance of building and maintaining healthy boundaries in the advocacy field.</p>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

Seniors Experience Sexual Assault, Too

St. Louis River Hall III

Sam Madsen, Alisha Blazevic | PAVSA (Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault)

Join us to delve into Minnesota's Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention and Response Network (HTEPRN). Discover the roles of Safe Harbor Regional Navigators, supportive services, shelter/housing options, and effective collaboration strategies to raise awareness and enhance prevention efforts.

Capacity Building Track: Tribal Policy Advocacy

St. Louis River Hall IV

Lisa Marie Iyotte | Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition

My goal is to ensure at least one person from every MIWSAC organizational member and tribe in Minnesota receives training on how to engage with local, county, state and national legislators and Tribal leaders. This training will cover educating and advocating for their vital work on behalf of survivors, and how to talk about and provide testimony at Tribal Consultation.

3:30pm - 3:45pm

BREAK

3:45 - 5pm

Afternoon Plenary: Strengthening Community Safety Through Prevention, Advocacy, and Partnership

Afternoon Plenary: Strengthening Community Safety Through Prevention, Advocacy, and Partnership

Otter Creek Hall

FDL Social Services

FDL Advocacy Services has shifted from a reactive model to a proactive, community centered approach by increasing community presence, raising awareness of sexual assault, domestic violence, teen dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking, and strengthening collaboration with FDL Tribal Police. Through education, outreach, and relationship building, the program works to identify harm earlier, reduce stigma, and connect survivors to advocacy and resources in a culturally responsive and survivor centered way.

5pm - 7pm

DINNER BREAK (on your own)

7pm - 10pm

Otter Creek Hall

FLOWER POWER SELF CARE CARNIVAL!

Please join us for an evening of fun, laughter, and self-care. Come dressed in the flower power theme, or what makes you feel like your best self! Costume Contest by age group! Dress to win!



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY TWO	WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22 2024
9am - 10:45am	Morning Plenary: Tilling the Earth to Create Soft Ground for Survivors
<p><i>Tilling the Earth to Create Soft Ground for Survivors</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Sarah Curtiss Men As Peacemakers</p> <p>Community is the heartbeat of our work and key to healing survivors of sexual violence. During this interactive keynote, participants will learn what it takes to create an environment that welcomes survivors as they are, and how we all have responsibility to ensure our spaces are safe and accessible.</p>
10:45am	BREAK
11am - 12:30pm	MORNING WORKSHOP OPTIONS - DAY TWO
<p><i>Cultivating Safe Futures: Engaging Native Youth in Culturally Guided Prevention</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Alyssa Cherry Indian Health Board of Minneapolis, Inc.</p> <p>This session explores culturally guided approaches to help Native youth prevent violence, strengthen healthy relationships, and support physical and emotional wellbeing. Participants will learn community-based strategies grounded in tradition, youth leadership, and whole-person wellness to help future generations reduce risk and build resilient paths forward.</p>
<p><i>Keeping Them Safe</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall I</p>	<p>Aubree Derksen, Nikki Crowe University of Minnesota Extension</p> <p>When sexual abuse happens people wonder: ‘why did no one say anything?’ It’s because of grooming. Adults get groomed just like children do, yet we don’t talk about it. Interventions focus on the child saying no rather than the adult intervening to stop it from happening in the first place.</p>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

<p><i>Starting the Conversation: Caring for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall II</p>	<p>Becki Jordan MIWSAC</p> <p>This interactive session will be an opportunity to explore current efforts to care for adult survivors of child sexual abuse. Participants will have space to share, listen, and learn together about the realities facing adult survivors, while helping to shape development of future resources and supports. We will also share about SurvivorSpace, an online space built for and by adult survivors of child sexual abuse.</p>
<p><i>Cultural Arts & Cultural Community Engagement as a Preventative Measure</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall III</p>	<p>Airlea DeFoe</p> <p>This session will cover risk factors for Indigenous populations in Minnesota and applying interventions from a collaborative community arts perspective.</p>
<p><i>Capacity Building Track: Federal Policy Advocacy</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall IV</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews, Lisa Marie Iyotte MIWSAC</p> <p>This workshop will provide information on the process to engage and educate legislators on Capitol Hill in Washington DC.</p>
<p>12:30 - 2pm LUNCH Provided Otter Creek Hall</p>	
<p>2pm - 3:30pm AFTERNOON BREAKOUT OPTIONS</p>	
<p><i>Niigaane Asema</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Esther Humphrey UMICAD</p> <p>Everything we do starts with Asema. Asema leads and guides us into each day and through life. We will learn how to make knicanic as well as how to start tobacco seeds and how to tend them. Each participant will leave this workshop with a tobacco starter plant.</p>
<p><i>Building Capacity and Strengthening Collaboration: Minnesota's Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention and Response Network</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall I</p>	<p>Mel Alvar, Mary Cowen Bantle PASVA</p> <p>Join us to delve into Minnesota's Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention and Response Network (HTEPRN). Discover the roles of Safe Harbor Regional Navigators, supportive services, shelter/housing options, and effective collaboration strategies to raise awareness and enhance prevention efforts.</p>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

<p><i>Why Is It Important to Understand ASL Interpreters?</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall II</p>	<p>Cindi Martin</p> <p>Intake & Shelter Staff Law Enforcement Hospitals & Medical Providers Courts & Legal Systems Communication Access Saves Lives In domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) situations, Survivors require interpreters to: Accessible to service in shelters, Protect the Survivor's Emotional Safety, Prevent Forced Eye Contact, Create a Safe, Supportive Environment Mitigate the Risk of Miscommunication, Reduce Harm</p>
<p><i>Hand Work Support Group: Planting the Seeds of Working with Handwork in a Support Group</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall III</p>	<p>Natasha Kingbird MSH</p> <p>Participants will learn how to lead a support group, and implement hand work with Survivors.</p>
<p><i>Capacity Building Track: Tribal Policy Advocacy</i></p> <p>St. Louis River Hall IV</p>	<p>Lisa Marie Iyotte MIWSAC</p> <p>This workshop will help advocates research and gather MN tribal communication structures with local tribal programs. Educate and train member programs on how to engage their tribal representatives.</p>
<p>3:45pm</p>	<p>BREAK!</p>
<p>3:45pm</p>	<p>Afternoon Plenary: Collaborative Community Work: The Importance of Organizing in a Good Way</p>
<p><i>Afternoon Plenary: Collaborative Community Work: The Importance of Organizing in a Good Way</i></p> <p>Otter Creek Hall</p>	<p>Tamika-Jo Andy, Audrianna Goodwin MMIW 218</p> <p>This session will share information about how MMIW 218 engages communities that are affected by gender based violence specifically our Missing & Murdered Indigenous Relatives. Presenters will share their organizing model in how we create meaningful events for the community.</p>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

5:00pm	DINNER (on your own)
7pm - 10pm Otter Creek Hall	TRADITIONAL POW-WOW HONORING SURVIVORS <i>Please join us for our annual Pow Wow. We will have the red, purple, and teal Solidarity Shawls and an Honor Song for Survivors of domestic and sexual violence, for survivors of trafficking, and for missing and murdered indigenous community members.</i>



FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY THREE	THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026
9am - 11am	CLOSING PLENARY: Watering Ourselves to Sustain the Garden
<i>Watering Ourselves to Sustain the Garden</i> Otter Creek Hall	Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition Advocates are an important part of the ecosystem of advocacy, and we oftentimes forget to water ourselves. Together we will talk about the importance of watering ourselves, so we can continue to thrive and provide the critical services in community.
	RAFFLE
11am	TRAVELING SONG & CONFERENCE CLOSING
St. Louis Hall	Closing Raffle Remember to turn in your Overall Conference Evaluations for a raffle ticket! Must be present to win prizes! Conference Closing & Travel Song <i>*Participants must be checked out of rooms by 11:00am</i> Safe journeys and thank you all for joining us!



CONFERENCE

PRESENTERS

Airlea DeFoe is currently an Anishinaabe MSW student with a specialized focus on the intersection of Ojibwe specific cultural arts and mental well being. DeFoe currently teaches culturally specific art mediums to diverse groups of people and has experience in community event planning.

Alyssa Cherry (Chickasaw and Tlingit) is a Community Health Educator at the Indian Health Board of Minneapolis focused on domestic violence prevention. She holds an MS in Education and develops culturally grounded programming that supports youth safety, healing, and strong futures in Native communities.

Angela Barnes is a descendant of White Earth Nation and from the crane clan. Angela has over 14 years of experience providing direct services.

Anne LaFrinier-Ritchie has been working in anti-trafficking as a regional navigator in Minnesota and North Dakota since 2016. She is a graduate of NHTTAC's Human Trafficking Leadership Academy. She has partnered with tribal communities for the past decade in various roles. Anne is a member of local and state tribal boards and committees.

April Clairmont, Training and TA Coordinator, MIWSAC (Ho-Chunk Nation & Sicangu Lakota): A recent graduate of Augsburg University's Master of Social Work program, April specializes in anti-oppressive macro practice and has a deep commitment to culturally specific advocacy. Her work includes developing training materials, conducting needs assessments, and providing technical assistance to tribal programs.

Aubree Derksen is a bilingual Family Resiliency Extension Educator at the University of Minnesota. She has Masters' Degrees in Early Childhood Education and Parent and Family Education. She's worked in home visiting, community education, child-welfare, and children's mental health.

Ava Krmpotich is a mother, activist, educator, and fiber artist reclaiming body and land. Founder of Mama Mission, she educates about toxic menstrual products and distributes eco-friendly alternatives to those in need. A survivor and advocate, she invites others to reclaim their power and live in sacred relationship with land and self.

Becki Jordan is the National Projects Director at the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, helping to build the organization's capacity through training, technical assistance, and programmatic work. Becki's experience and expertise centers around sexual and domestic violence advocacy and anti-trafficking work, youth-centered/informed services, coordinated community team development and technical support, law enforcement training and education, and strategic marketing and communications. A mother of two, Becki's family is enrolled in the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate in northeastern South Dakota.



CONFERENCE

PRESENTERS

Carla Drumbeater is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, an Army Veteran, child sexual abuse survivor, a 500 hour registered yoga teacher, lightyear leadership ambassador, certified Ayurveda wellness coach and alternative healer.

Carly Siveny works as a Family Advocate and Trainer at First Witness CAC. In her role, Carly is deeply invested in making a positive impact on the lives of others. As an advocate, Carly supports caregivers through their self-identified needs, while often navigating complex dynamics and crisis. As a trainer, Carly provides professional in-person or virtual trainings to advocates and other professionals as an Advocacy Trainer in First Witness' national training program. Overall, Carly is deeply invested in supporting and elevating caregivers and human service professionals.

Cindi Martin (she/her/ikwe) is an Anishinaabe Deaf woman from the Red Lake Nation, and from the Bear clan. She was born and raised in south Minneapolis. She is a free-lance motivational speaker, storyteller, Indigenous deaf consultant, Indigenous deaf interpreter, teacher, actress, and poet.

Cristine Davidson, (Anishinaabe) is the Prevention & Education Director, with MIWSAC since 2007, and maintains an enduring commitment to cultivating space where each of us can find an entry point into the essential work of preventing and ending sexual violence. She grew up in Red Lake, Minnesota, served four years in the Marine Corps, and now resides on her home reservation in White Earth with her cat-kids Kitty Boots, Button, Toots- and her precious Momma! Find her at www.miwsac.org | c davidson@miwsac.org

Originally from Mexico, **Erika Resendiz Alonso** moved to Minnesota in 2008, and continued to carry and develop generations of knowledge of working the land as a leader in sustainable agriculture in communities across Minnesota. She works as an Agriculture Outreach Coordinator through Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Esther Humphrey has been growing asema for 12 years. She has started and gifted well over 500 plants in an effort to get more people to grow tobacco and save/share seeds.

Fond du Lac Advocacy Services is a survivor-centered program dedicated to supporting individuals and families impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, and sex trafficking. The program provides confidential advocacy, 24/7 crisis response, safety planning, and systems support. Besides our direct services, FDL Advocacy services has shifted toward a proactive, prevention-focused approach by increasing community presence, education, and awareness. Through collaboration with FDL Tribal Police and community partners, the program works to strengthen early intervention, promoting safety, healing, and accountability within the community.



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Jess Palyan is the policy program manager at Violence Free Minnesota. He has a background as a legal aid attorney representing people who are facing eviction, and as a court clerk. Jess's specialty area is domestic violence legislation at the state level. He also loves board games.

Linda Thompson is a member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa in northern Minnesota, she also is a lineal descendent to both Leech Lake & Mille Lacs Lake Tribes. She is committed to social justice, social change work and ending all forms of violence, with a specialized focus on ending gender-based violence. With proven leadership in developing and leading a Tribal domestic violence-sexual assault program and co creating a Tribal Coalition Linda has gained great understanding of the challenges and realities of service providers that are leading and working in a Tribal advocacy program. She has worked side by side with her sisters in this work and has gained experience with policy and legislative efforts on Tribal, state and national levels, as well as extensive experience serving rural, reservation and urban areas. Working within these different positions has also given her experience administering federal, state, and local grants. Linda has specialized knowledge and both programmatic and personal experience with LGBTQ, Indigenous, trauma-informed and survivor work, including labor and sex trafficking and MMIR, as well as serving on the ND AG Fatality Review Team.

Lisa Marie Iyotte (Cochran) Hau, Ta Wacinyan Waste Win, Her Good Plume Women, in Lakota, and in English, her name is Lisa Marie Iyotte. Lisa Marie Iyotte (Cochran) grew up on the Sicangu Makoce, the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota where her late mother, Roseanne Cochran (Packard), is an enrolled tribal member. Lisa is an enrolled tribal member as A'aniih of the Fort Belknap Gros Ventre tribe in Montana where her father, Ruben Cochran, is from. Lisa has two daughters and a son, and is an Unci (grandmother) to 6 Takoja (grandchildren). Lisa has advocated for ending violence against Indigenous Women for over 22 years. She applies her personal experience and knowledge of healing through spirituality to provide culturally responsive services to individuals, tribes, and nonprofits. She has volunteered and worked for a number of nonprofits serving rural and urban Indigenous cultures across the Upper Midwest. Lisa has received several awards including the 2010 Bonnie Heavy Runner Victim Advocacy Award; 12th Annual National Indian Nations Conference: Justice for Victims of Crime and spoken nationally, including the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) signing ceremony where Lisa shared her story and introduced President Barack Obama at the White House, to advance the rights of Indigenous Women and their children.



CONFERENCE

PRESENTERS

Marcia Kitto (Waabishkaanakwadikwe) is now retired from 23 years as the Sexual Assault Advocate for Fond du Lac. Beyond her BA degree and American Studies major, more recently she earned a Certificate in Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy for Complex Trauma and Indigenous Tools for Living from the University of Vancouver, and has studied ACES, Mind Body Medicine, and Trauma Informed Care. Marcia has always loved spending time outdoors, and her gardening experience began in childhood and continues at her home with participation for 30 years in the Gitigaan and Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Programs at Fond du Lac. She grows food for her family, and especially berries and medicines, which she also gathers from the land she calls home. She has been an active member of MIWSAC from the beginning and served as a Circle Keeper for 12 years. Marcia participates with her extended family in cultural events, camping and dancing in traditional powwows.

Mel Alvar works as the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator at PAVSA in Duluth. In this role, she is connected with folks across NE MN who are paving the way for a better future for succeeding generations to live healthy, safe and equitable lives, free from violence and exploitation.

Monique Doward is a public health professional, social worker, and doctoral scholar focused on health equity, trauma-informed systems, and rural community wellbeing. She works across community advocacy, public health, and social services, bringing experience in systems barriers, survivor-centered support, and policy-informed approaches to healing and prevention.

Natasha Kingbird is an enrolled Band member of the Red Lake Nation Band of Ojibwe. Her Indian name is Ginewikwe which means Golden Eagle Woman. She graduated from Leech Lake Tribal College with Indigenous Leadership Degree and is currently attending Bemidji State University to obtain her bachelor's degree. She is a mother, grandmother, aunt who is the matriarch for her family. She is currently working at Mending the Sacred Hoop as the Program Engagement Director, she is dedicated to helping in areas needed for MSH. She has knowledge on domestic violence advocacy, sexual assault advocacy, leadership, facilitation, culture, and organizing. She attends and facilitates traditional healing ceremonies that help those who are impacted by DV/SA and other related crimes pertaining to IPV. While working with MSH she has demonstrated leadership by being kind, showing compassion and understanding that it is important to meet advocates and survivors where they are on their journey. Having lived experience has helped her create and implement programming that is useful for other Indigenous communities within the movement of DV/SA.



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Nick Zeimet is a Professor in Bethel University's Department of Social Work. He is completing his 5th year there as the Director of Practicum Education. The practicum program has been recognized nationally for its excellence in innovation and he has been recognized by Bethel as a leader in inclusive excellence.

Nicole Matthews is a descendent of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, and is the Chief Executive Officer for MIWSAC. Nicole serves as the Chair for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Reward Fund Board; she served on the Tri-lateral Working Group on Violence Against Women; she served on the State of Minnesota Attorney General's Work Group on Sexual Assault; and she is a National and International Speaker on sexual violence and sex trafficking. Nicole's most important role is being a mother, grandmother, sister, auntie, and matriarch.

Roberta Mastin has almost 20 years experience in child protection and ICWA. Roberta's experience working with tribes MN has shaped the way I do practice. I am currently with Tribal Training Certification Partnership training how to follow guidelines of ICWA. I have come full circle in protecting children like me who didn't have a voice.

Sam Madsen, MSW, LISW is a licensed social worker who serves as the Program Coordinator for the SANE Program at PAVSA. Sam co-leads a team of 15 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) with her colleague, Alisha. She provides administrative support to the program and serves as the point of contact for clinicians, advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors for anything related to medical forensic examinations.

Sarah Curtiss serves as Men As Peacemakers Executive Director and has worked in the anti-violence field for 20 years. Sarah has spent 12 years serving as a Circle Keeper for MIWSAC. Sarah began her career as a women's advocate for the Dabinoo'lgan shelter, and prior to MAP, served as the director of the Sacred Hoop Coalition through Mending the Sacred Hoop.

Sindy Mau has taught Women's Empowerment Self-Defense for over 30 years to people of all backgrounds and ages. She received a grant from Minnesota Disability Services Division to create a workbook titled Taking Care of Me: Building Confidence and Assertiveness Skills. Sindy received her MA.I.S. in Women Studies.



CONFERENCE

PRESENTERS

Tamika-Jo Andy is a member of Mishkosiminiziibiing (Big Grassy River First Nation) of Ontario, Canada. She is a mother to 5 beautiful daughters and is raising them to be strong indigenous matriarchs. Tamika-Jo and her family reside in Northwestern Minnesota, in Redby, Minnesota. She has experience of being a community organizer for MMIW 218, a former sexual health educator and a former domestic violence advocate at a women's shelter in Bemidji. Tamika-Jo has an A.A. of Indigenous Leadership from Leech Lake Tribal College. She has a passion for strategizing and working with others to implement a plan of action.

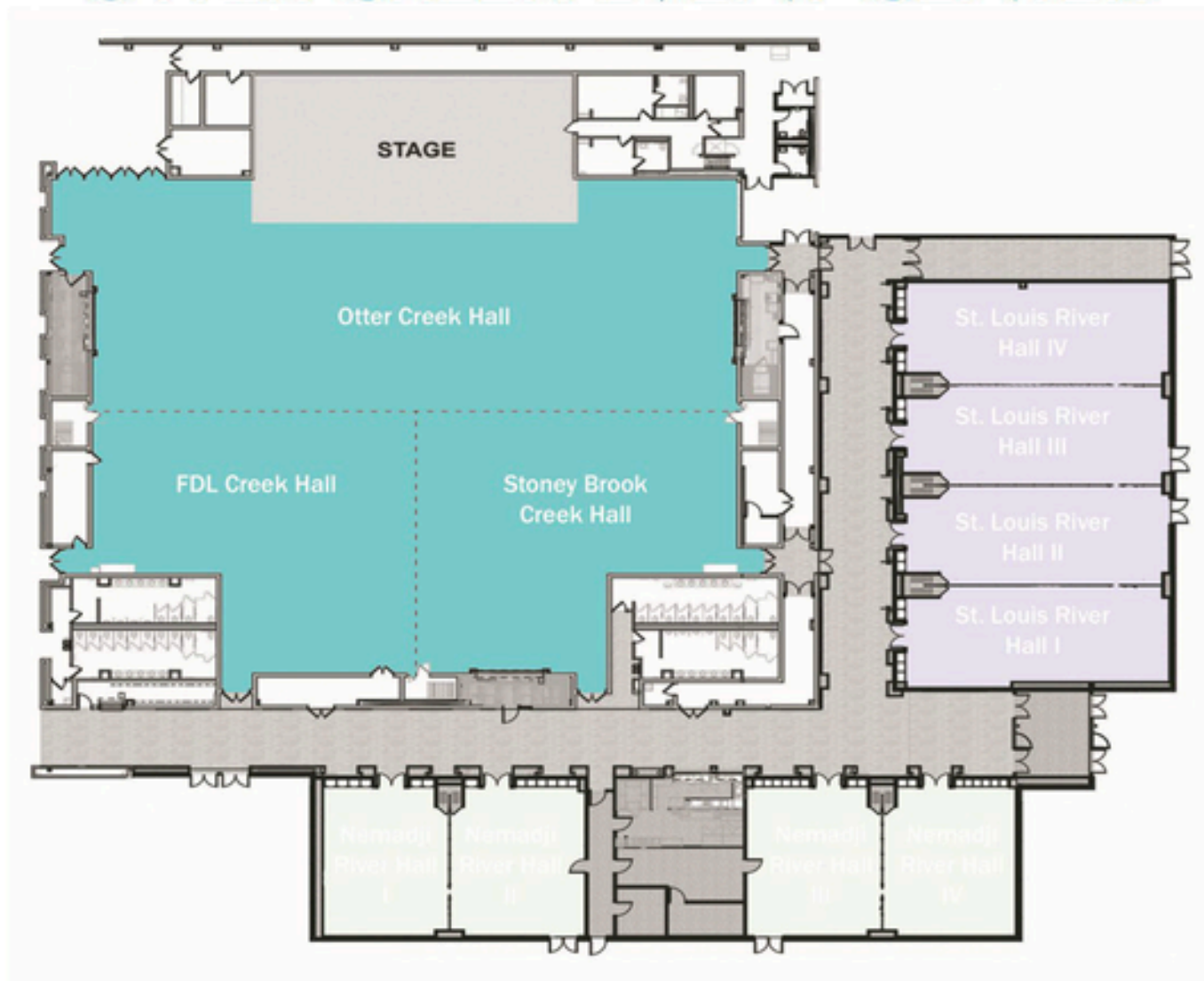
Tia Thornhill was born and raised in St. Paul MN, she has been an active member in the Twin Cities native community since birth. she has over 15 years of experience volunteering, working and being an active community member. Tia currently resides in Nagaajiwanaang (Fond Du Lac) and has recently joined Planned Parenthood North Central States as a Community Health Educator of Indigenous Programs- Duluth.



BLACK BEAR CASINO

MAP & INFO

OTTER CREEK EVENT CENTER



DINING AT BLACK BEAR CASINO & HOTEL:

- Buffet at the Bear
- Golf Course Bar & Grill
- Sage Deli
- Seven Fires Steakhouse



RIBBON COLOR

KEY CODE

Name Badge | Ribbon Colors

MIWSAC Staff | Red with gold lettering

Keynote Speakers | Black with gold lettering

Presenters | Blue with gold lettering

Volunteers | Purple with gold lettering

Session Monitors | Teal with gold lettering

Vendors | Green with gold lettering

Safe Person | Gold



CONFERENCE EVALUATION

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent
How satisfied were you with the overall conference? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
FLOWER POWER! Self Care Carnival? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
Honoring Survivors Traditional Pow-wow?	1	2	3	4	5
My favorite session/workshop was:					
How has this gathering helped you better understand your own role in ending sexual violence?					
What was the most valuable portion of this conference?					
What would you like to see differently next time?					
Any additional comments/information you would like us to know about the conference:					
Miigwech! Pidamaya! Pilamaya! Pinigigi! Thank you for your feedback!					

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SESSION EVALUATION

I am evaluating session _____

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent
How satisfied were you with the presenter(s) expertise?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel your understanding of the topic was increased?	1	2	3	4	5
How satisfied were you with the materials/resources presented?	1	2	3	4	5
How well did the presenters hold your interest?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the session overall?	1	2	3	4	5
Please identify the information you found most useful and how you will use it in your work:					
Any additional comments or information you would like to share:					

Miigwech! Pidamaya! Pilamaya! Pinigigi! Thank you for your feedback!



CONFERENCE

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