Esther Attean

Esther Attean is a Passamaquoddy Tribal citizen and holds an MSW from the University of Maine. She came to the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine ten years ago to work with young people in their transition out of foster care. For seven years prior, she worked for the Penobscot Nation Department of Human Services, providing family support and community program development services.

She was part of the Indian Child Welfare Act Training Workgroup and helped create and convene the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth & Reconciliation Commission. She now helps direct community organizing for Maine-Wabanaki REACH.

Denise Altvater

Denise Altvater serves as Coordinator as the Wabanaki Youth Program in Maine. She has created a supportive web of connection and communication in a region where Native Communities have been isolated and often powerless for decades. Under her 16 years of leadership, the American Friends Service Committee’s Wabanaki Program (Maine) has grown to become a vital hub of activity for the rights of all indigenous people as she works across vast geographic distances.

Denise was instrumental in organizing tribal governments and state officials to establish the Maine-Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth & Reconciliation Commission. The Commission’s mandate was to uncover the truth about Wabanaki families affected by the taking of Wabanaki children away from their families and placing them in non-native foster care homes. She has been interviewed by the Associated Press, Portland (ME) Press and WABI-TV Ch. 5. For more visit www.mainetribaltrc.org