



Short Biography of Helena Pagano:

I am the daughter of Mary and Ralph Pagano, a proud descendant of Angeline Hodikoff who was my Grandmother. My lineage traces back to Micheal Hodikoff and his parents, George and Anna Hodikoff. In our culture, we do not prefix 'great' before each generation; instead, I am decolonizing the narrative surrounding our families. As the eldest daughter of the oldest sibling in my lineage, I have embraced the mantle of leadership among my people. This transformative journey began two decades ago, culminating in the establishment of a long-overdue nonprofit in 2019, dedicated to representing our unrecognized Indigenous community, Saskinaâ am Alaiit. We hail from the Saskinam tanamlan region, encompassing five islands nestled near Russia and Japan. Our ancestral homelands include Anâatuâ, Atuâ, Samiya, Anvayaâ, am Alaid. This deep-seated passion for my people has always resided within me, and I am thrilled to share our stories with the world. After much introspection and bravery, I accepted the role of chieftain in 2022, known in our language as the Caretaker. My aspiration is to nurture and uplift my past, present, and future generations, crafting a legacy for our people. Our culture, once slumbering, is now awakening, and I am dedicated to reviving it from the roots up.