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# Kawennì-ìos

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# Akwesasne Counts

## American Community Survey vs. 2020 U.S. Census

*By Brendan White, Director of Communications*

In March 2020, Akwesane households will begin receiving notices and questionnaires about the U.S. Census. Whether it arrives in the mail or delivered in-person, we encourage you to please complete the questionnaire, as an accurate count of our population is needed to determine how much federal funding is allocated to support many of our essential community programs and services.

Over the coming months, more information will be shared on the importance of participating in the 2020 Census and the type of questions that will be posed. In the meantime, the U.S. Census Bureau is conducting a separate survey that requires further explanation: the American Community Survey (ACS). The purpose of this article is to share the differences, similarities and the importance to participate in both.

Each year, the U.S. Census Bureau randomly selects 3.5 million households to complete the American Community Survey – compared to the Census that is sent to each household across the country every 10 years. As a result, data from the ACS is combined with previous surveys and other demographic and economic data to determine three-year, five-year or other long-term measurements.

The American Community Survey provides information about the changing social and economic needs of our community. The questionnaire is much lengthier than the Census and shows how people actually live – their education and employment, type of housing and much more. Due to

the number and type of questions, individuals who receive the ACS may feel reluctant to share personal information – compared to the Census that only serves to provide a count of our community's population.

Another key difference between the ACS and the Census is the timeframe that they are conducted. The majority of census activity will take place beginning in March 2020, with some census enumerators doing community canvassing in May through July to households that have not completed a questionnaire. On the contrary, the American Community Survey is conducted randomly throughout the entire calendar year.

One similarity to note however, is that if your household was selected for the American Community Survey, you must complete the questionnaire in addition to the 2020 U.S. Census. Your response is important, as the information gathered from both are used to determine how more than \$675 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

So, if you received the ACS, and certainly when you get the 2020 U.S. Census, please do your part and complete the questionnaires to ensure our community counts and keeps growing into the future.

For more information about the American Community Survey or the 2020 U.S. Census, please visit the Census Bureau's website at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) to learn more. ♦





# Good Words of Welcome



*Shé:kon Sewakwé:kon,*

Greetings *Akwesashro:non*. I extend my sincere gratitude and thanks for being elected to the Sub-Chief position this past *Ohia:hal* June, 2019. It has been an exciting and interesting time. As the Environment Division Director for many years, my focus was mainly on the protection of our environment but, in the Sub-Chief position, my focus has widened considerably. Part of that wider focus includes visiting many of the Tribal departments and programs that I was somewhat familiar with but wanted to learn more about. I can say wholeheartedly that I was very impressed with all of the great work our committed staff are doing and finding new and innovative ways to make our community better for us all.

As we move into the fall harvest season, activities shift from enjoying the river boating and swimming to preparing for the cold weather ahead. Our agriculture program is busy finishing their harvest of white corn and root vegetables from their bountiful gardens. Some of this produce was sold to the casino for their restaurants, and some was produced for the farmer's market this summer. I was excited about receiving a ½ pig from the agriculture program and am enjoying the delicious, healthy pork products now. Wally and his staff have done a tremendous job growing the program into a valuable asset for the community.

One of the first meetings I attended was a Tribal Climate Change Summit put on by United Southern and Eastern Tribes (USET) at Turning Stone Casino, Oneida Nation Territory. The Summit brought together leadership and technical people from member tribes. I had the honor of presenting the key note address on the opening day. I spoke about our tribal programs and our experiences with climate change. I told them about the flooding we experienced in 2017 and the emergency response to this unusual event. We were all reminded of the power of water and Mother Nature especially the residents who first hand experienced the flooding of their homes and land. While this was a difficult time for many, our emergency response team did an exceptional job in coordinating a response from many programs and individuals.

I also spoke of the need to prepare as these unusual extreme events become more usual. The Environment Division received Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funding to work with Emergency Planning, Planning and Infrastructure, Social Services, Akwesasne Housing Authority, the Office of the Executive Director and others to develop a climate change resiliency plan to help us prepare for these extreme events in the future.

Another exciting development is the acquisition of 290 acres of land across from Truck Stop #9. This property was purchased for future community development in housing and education among other uses. An assessment of the property will help determine the best use of the land for the future. There are some areas of old growth forest and possible archeological sites that would need to be protected. There are wetlands and other features that will be protected as well. A comprehensive land use plan will be developed for this property before we develop it.

Presently, a wetlands restoration project is taking place on part of the tribal property purchased last year. It will be a valuable teaching resource since wetlands medicine plants and other features will be added to this property.

My first few months as Tribal Sub-Chief have been enlightening and encouraging. I have seen a dedicated and skilled Tribal Council deal with difficult situations making careful decisions every day. I am appreciative of the Tribal Council administrative support team on their help with orientation to this position. As I embark on this second "career," I am excited and optimistic about the future of Akwesasne.

*Niawen:kówa*

Tribal Sub-Chief Kenneth Jock

# Is Vaping Really Safer? Think Again.

*Submitted by A/CDP*

We teach our youth not to hit family members, not to hit our pets and now, not to hit a JUUL. A seemingly harmless new phenomenon, vaping is proving to be incredibly dangerous, contributing to 33 deaths and more than 450 cases of severe respiratory illnesses across the country.

Vaping is defined as the action or practice of inhaling and exhaling the vapor produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device. E-cigarettes (e-cigs) do not produce tobacco smoke, but rather an aerosol consisting of particles containing varying amounts of toxic chemicals. These chemicals include: nicotine, flavorings, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, lithium, aluminum, formaldehyde, rubidium, arsenic, diacetyl, cadmium, and benzaldehyde. Vaping devices include not just e-cigarettes, but also vape pens and advanced personal vaporizers.

Popular vaping brands available in Akwesasne include JUUL, Ripstick/Riptide, and G-Pen. The most popular vaping product is the JUUL, a small, sleek device that resembles a computer USB flash drive. Its subtle design makes it easy to hide, which helps explain why it has become so popular among middle and high school students.

JUUL now accounts for about 72 percent of the market share of vaping products in the United States. It comes in several enticing flavors like crème brûlée, mango and fruit medley. Every JUUL product contains a high dose of nicotine, with one “pod”, or flavor cartridge, containing about the same amount of nicotine as a whole pack of cigarettes (<https://www.centeronaddiction.org/e-cigarettes/recreational-vaping/what-vaping>).

A vape consists of a mouthpiece, battery, cartridge for containing the e-liquid or e-juice, and a heating component for the device that is powered by a battery. The battery heats up the heating component, which turns the contents of the e-liquid into an aerosol that is inhaled into the lungs and then exhaled. Some people use these devices to vape THC, which is the chemical responsible for most of marijuana’s mind-altering effects.

Youth and young adults – the group with whom e-cigs are most popular – cite a variety of reasons for using e-cigarettes.

These includes observing a friend or family member use them, taste (an assortment of flavors), curiosity, and the belief that e-cigarettes are less harmful than other tobacco products. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, e-cigarette use increased 78 percent among high school students and increased 48 percent among middle school students from 2017 to 2018. Among middle and high school students, 3.62 million were current users of e-cigarettes in 2018.

Youth nicotine exposure affects part of the brain responsible for decision-making and impulse control, which is not fully developed until age 25. Because young people are more likely to take risks with their health and safety, including use of nicotine and other drugs, youth and young adults are uniquely at risk for long-term, long-lasting effects of exposing their developing brains to nicotine. These risks include nicotine addiction, mood disorders and permanent lowering of impulse control.





Nicotine changes the way synapses are formed, which can harm the parts of the brain that control attention and learning (<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html>).

“Adolescents don’t think they will get addicted to nicotine, but when they do want to stop, they find it’s very difficult,” says Yale neuroscientist Marina Picciotto, PhD, who has studied the basic science behind nicotine addiction for decades (March, 2019).

On August 18, 2019, The New York State Department of Health released a health advisory to inform health care professionals of an emergency threat of severe pulmonary disease associated with the use of vape products. At least 38 cases of severe pulmonary disease have been reported from various areas of New York State. Some patients have required endotracheal intubation. Cases have reported various symptoms including: cough, pleuritic chest pain, shortness of breath, fever, headache, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, anorexia and weight loss. All cases have been consistently reporting regular use of vape products. At this time all reported NYS cases have required hospitalization.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Director Robert Redfield stated, “Vaping exposes users to many different substances for which we have little information about related harms -- including flavorings, nicotine, cannabinoids and solvents. The CDC has been warning about the identified and potential dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping since these devices first appeared. E-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.” (<https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20190827vapingillness.html>)

What can you do? Educate yourself on the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks, talk to your family and friends about the risks of vaping, and set a positive example and educate others on the risks. Protect yourself. Don’t vape.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about vaping, you can reach out to the A/CDP Prevention Program at (518) 358-2967 or visit <https://www.thetruth.com/>, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>, or <http://www.fda.gov/>. ♦



In response to public health concerns associated with vaping and e-cigarette products, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is proposing to increase the purchase age for these and related products to 21 years-old. The Tribe is also proposing to prohibit the retail sale of all flavored vaping and similar devices through Tribal Council Resolution (TCR) being presented during a 30-day public comment period concluding on Thursday, *Kentenhkó:wa*/November 28, 2019.

The proposed TCR is available at [www.srmt-nsn.gov](http://www.srmt-nsn.gov), at the Compliance office or at Ionkwakiohkwaró:non reception. Any comments may be mailed or delivered in person to the Compliance Department at 28 Okwarine Road, Akwesasne, NY 13655.



# Native Seed Collection for Restoration and Conservation

*Submitted by James Costello, Environment Division Nursery Manager*

On *Seskehkó:wa*/September 25, 2019, the Native Plants Restoration and Capacity Building (NPRCB) Project under the Environment Division Forestry Resources Program hosted a Seed Collection Workshop in the Ionkwakiohkwaró:ron Tribal Administration Building. Through a partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Seed Bank (MARSB); a conservation program established by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the workshop was conducted by Molly Marquand; a Projects' Communications Manager with MARSB in Staten Island, NY.

The workshop began with a PowerPoint presentation detailing several aspects of seed collection and storage, including:

1. the importance of collecting seeds in order to provide insurance against threats to the survival of a plant species;
2. the significance of seed banks and how they can act as both a source of plant material research and serve as a repository for cultural, economic, and ecological resources; and

3. how the genetic variation and adaptive potential among plant species can have an effect on the health and biodiversity of an ecosystem.

The workshop presentation also explained the overall process of how MARSB conducts seed collection, as well as the differences between short-term (active) and long-term (conservation) methods for seed storage.

Following a brief Q-and-A session, the workshop participants made their way outdoors; where they had the opportunity to learn more about collecting seeds from a variety of plants, shrubs, and trees located along the Tewathahita Walking Trail. In conclusion, my initial reaction to both the participants and presenter's feedback was a very positive

one and I look forward to hosting additional seed collection workshops in the future.

For more information on seed collection and storage, or an update on the status of future seed collection workshops, contact James Costello of the SRMT Environment Division Forestry Resources Program at (518) 358-5937 ext. 138, or email [james.costello@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:james.costello@srmt-nsn.gov). ♦





# Experience Akwesasne:

## *Ionkwatsi'tsiaiénthon - We Planted a Flower Garden*

*Submitted By Akwesasne Tourism Team*

On *Seskéha*/August 21, 2019, the Akwesasne Tourism team, community members and participants celebrated the unveiling of - *Ionkwatsi'tsiaiénthon* "We Planted a Flower Garden" at the Travis Solomon Memorial Lacrosse Box in Generations Park. Participants were presented with certificates and a gift offering.

The response from *Akwesasbró:non* on this project has been overwhelming. We surpassed our initial goal of collecting 80 beaded flowers with over 130 flowers and a few embellishments from seasoned and novice beaders. In all, 115 beaders planted in our garden, our eldest participant was 87 years old and our youngest was seven. The blooming garden is truly, visually stunning. *Ionkwatsitsienthon* has inspired, memorialized and grown a whole new community of beaders.

*Ionkwatsi'tsiaiénthon* was another exciting project that followed the success of *Onkwátherékó:wa*, "Our Big Basket". That enthusiasm inspired the creation of *Ionkwatsi'tsiaiénthon*. It began as an idea motivated by the renewed interest in beadwork and by the "old school" velvet frame beadwork displayed in our museum. Community members were encouraged to bring in their beaded flower to be "planted" in the garden. The project kicked off at the 18th Annual Akwesasne International Powwow. Over the next nine months, the



garden traveled throughout the community at various events, to allow as many *Akwesasbró:non* to participate and attach their own beaded flower. In addition, the Tourism team partnered with local artists Marlana Thompson-Baker and Laura Thompson to host beading classes to create a flower for the garden.

This unique piece of art, like *Onkwátherékó:wa* "Our Big Basket", will be proudly displayed along with the story of how it came together, in various locations across our community. The future Akwesasne Heritage Complex will eventually be its final home. *Ionkwatsi'tsiaiénthon* is currently on display at the newly renovated Akwesasne Cultural Center Museum.

On behalf of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Akwesasne Tourism team, it has been an honor to coordinate and participate in such a unique and inspirational project. We honor and thank everyone who participated, helped and lent a hand in completing this project. We send out special acknowledgments to Laura Thompson, Marlana Thompson, Abby Mitchell, Chelsea Thompson and Alexandra David for volunteering to embellish and complete the final touches on the garden. Special thanks to Sydney Jacobs of *Kenniwa'a'* for once again allowing us to use her graphics for the project logo. ◇





## ***Tribal Council Resolutions (TCRs) – Seskehkó:wa/September 15 – Kenténha/October 9, 2019***

*Tribal Council Resolutions are the recorded decisions of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council on matters requiring a formal expression of such decisions. (Source: Tribal Procedures Act, adopted by referendum, Ohiari:ha/June 1, 2013.)*

TCR 2019-39 Amend Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council Resolution (TCR 2018-04) to Apply to the Secretary of the Interior to Place Land Into Trust Status Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 5108 and to Proclaim such Land Reservation Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. §5110

TCR 2019-40 Amend Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council Resolution (TCR 2018-48) to Apply to the Secretary of the Interior to Place Land Into Trust Status Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 5108 and to Proclaim such Land Reservation Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. §5110

TCR 2019-41 Renew National Indian Gaming Association Membership for 2019

TCR 2019-42 Request Funding from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families - Office of Community Services for Low Income Energy Assistance Program

TCR 2019-43 Referendum on Tribal Medical Marijuana Ordinance

TCR 2019-44 Referendum on Adult Use (Recreational) Marijuana Regulation

TCR 2019-45 Approve the Akwesasne Housing Authority (AHA) 2020 Indian Housing Plan

TCR 2019-46 Adopt the Tribally Determined Prevailing Age Rates for the Akwesasne Housing Authority

TCR 2019-47 Reappoint Ronald P. Cook to Akwesasne Housing Authority (AHA) Board of Commissioners.

TCR 2019-48 Renew National Congress of American Indians Membership for 2019-2020

TCR 2019-49 Approve Amendment to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Family Support Act

TCR 2019-50 Establish Akwesasne Tribal Complete Count Committee for 2020 Census. ♦

## ***Akwesasne Recovery Center Holds Soft Opening***

The Alcohol/Chemical Dependency Program invited community members to join them for the soft opening of the new Akwesasne Recovery Center on *Kentenhkó:wal* November 4, 2019. Located in the lower level of the Akwesasne Housing Authority Administration Building at 378 State Route 37; the Center offers a safe and welcoming space for individuals to gather in a social setting without the use of alcohol or drugs.

The Akwesasne Recovery Center offers a variety of amenities such as; a professional grade pool table, a Mondo pad, computer lab and a full kitchen. More importantly, the facility provides programing and activities for adults ages 18-years old and up by providing support, learning opportunities and referrals to those affected by an addiction, as well as for their family members by facilitating services such as skill building, wellness awareness and promotion, educational, vocational, recreational, and culturally based activities.

Activities and programming hours are from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesdays through Sundays. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To learn more, stop by the Center or call (518) 333-0456 to speak with Akwesasne Recovery Supervisor Chantelle Beeson. Look for the date and time of our official grand opening in the very near future. ♦





# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Annual Report Now Available

*By Tsiorasa Barreiro, Executive Director*

As a key part of our commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of Tribal government, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe provides an Annual Report to highlight the yearly accomplishments of Tribal Council and all component units of the organization as they work together today to build a better tomorrow.

We're proud to present the 2018 Annual Report to our community, partners and neighbors. This second edition highlights the thoughtful development of Tribal programs, services and infrastructure that took place over the previous year. The Tribal Council section features their leadership in protecting our rights and interests, increasing transparency, and enhancing the effectiveness of our Tribal government.

The exciting transformation of Margaret Memorial Terrance Memorial Way (MTMW) took shape throughout 2018, ending with the highly anticipated completion of the our safe and energy efficient Tribal Administration Building. As Tribal Council and staff transitioned their offices last winter, Ionkwakiohkwaróron (gathering place of the people) came to life as the new seat of our Tribal government.

The report also features the extensive safety improvements supporting MTMW, Generations Park and public roads throughout the community.

The dramatic changes taking place now at Health Services began in summer of 2018. When the 17,000-square-foot expansion project is complete next year, the facility will have more space to respond to

the meeting needs of our growing population. The Annual Report includes an appreciation of the Mohawk and Native tradespeople who played a role in these major infrastructure projects.



The story of 2018 would not be complete without an appreciation of the outstanding efforts of our 1,550-member staff, especially those who went above and beyond in service to the community.

Just weeks after the Unified Incident Command formed, a sudden February thaw caused the St. Regis River to rise to unprecedented levels. The unit, led by three SRMT employees and an HAVFD officer, expertly coordinated dozens of safety evacuations while continually monitoring flood conditions. A dramatic drone image featured in the report shows the impact of the flood around St. Regis Road.

The Tribe, through its various revenue streams, continues to benefit our growing community with employment opportunities and needed programs and services. The report breaks down the various funds devoted to supporting health, education, culture, language and social endeavors throughout Akwesasne.

We are proud to highlight this transformative work to show just how far the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe has come, and how far we continue to reach as we care for our 16,000 plus tribal members and our community at large.

An electronic version is accessible on the SRMT website at [www.srmt-nsn.gov](http://www.srmt-nsn.gov). Printed copies can be requested by sending an email to [communications@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:communications@srmt-nsn.gov), as well as in person at the Ionkwakiohkwaróron Tribal Administration Building. ♦



# Another Successful Spooky Season Hosted by Akwesasne Programs

*By Denita Ireland, Communications Specialist*

Creepy costumes, candy corn and pumpkin carvings! October is a month of spooky excitement and Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) Alcohol/Chemical Dependency Prevention (A/CDP) Program and Akwesasne Coalition for Community Empowerment (ACCE) hosted two safe and successful trick-or-treating events. Trunk-or-Treat showcases the creativity of local organizations, and Halloween Road allows for the little tikes to take their time participating in the spooky festivities.

Trunk-or-Treat is an exponentially growing Halloween party that is fun for both the volunteers and the trick-or-treaters. Organizations and families throughout the North Country are invited each year to decorate their trunks as elaborately as they please, then pass out candy and treats to families as they meander between set-ups.

This year, Trunk-or-Treat took place at Mohawk International Raceway (MIR) in Frogtown. The event seen almost 1,500 costumed participants as Addams Family's, Targaryens and Robots smiled with open pillow cases and plastic jack-o-lanterns to collect the goods. The elaborate trunk set-ups varied from Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory and alien invasions to



Andy's Toy Story bedroom!

Families also stopped for bites like mini donuts and pizza from the vendors located outside of the haunting area.

Halloween Road is a newer addition to A/CDP trick-or-treating extravaganza. Hosted on the Tewathahitha Walking Trail, Halloween Road is a slowed-down treat for the tiny tots in our community.

SRMT and MCA Programs donned their best costumes once again in the afternoon to greet babies and toddlers with toys and snacks – Halloween Road has a no-candy rule! Instead, trick-or-treat baskets were filled with stuffed animals, dental hygiene products, coloring books and gummy snacks.

Participants took their time walking, or being held, through Frozen tundras, Pokemon forests and even a photobooth, then were treated to pizza by the SRMT Social Services Division. A big hit at both events, Rex hosted dance-offs and aliens handed out Forky toys.





Trunks were sponsored by: MCA Wholistic Health and Wellness Program & Iakwashtatse Youth Fitness, SRMT A/CDP Prevention Program, SRMT Early Learning Center, SRMT Let's Get Healthy, SRMT Ronthahiiosta:ke Akwesasne Clubhouse, Tribal Gaming Commission, Mohawk Networks/Akwesasne TV, SRMT Executive Director's Office, SRMT Child Support Enforcement Unit, SRMT Family Support, SRMT Tribal Police, Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club, Big Boys, Massena Drug Free Community Coalition, Tarbell Management Group, SRMT Environment Division, Indian Time Newspaper/Northern Landscapes/Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, Healthy Families NY, SRMT Social Services Division/ICWA, Akwesasne Child and Family Services, SRMT Three Sisters Program, SRMT Office of Family Advocates, Divalissa, Akwesasne Zero2Six, Mohawk Indian Housing Corp, Akwesasne Mohawk Police, Akwesasne Youth Coalition, Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance, Swamps Performance, Diversity Cornwall, Brass Horse Pizzeria, SRCS High School Band, Trinity Catholic School, CKON, Mental Health, Ista's Little Helpers Daycare and the HAVFD. ♦





# Me Want, Me Want, Me Want!

*By Angela Benedict, Environment- Air Quality Program Manager*

Did you ever just say to yourself why can't I just get what I want? I do all the time. I want to change service on my cable or shut off a phone line, so I call and then comes the 'Well, why do you want to do this? Maybe this would work better or how about this?' No, no, no! Why, just why, can't they ever just say sure, no problem. Here you go it's cancelled, anything else? LOL, but we all know that will never happen.

Ok, so now you're 30 seconds in and wondering why is she talking about this. Well, because I want to make your life easier. Tell me what you want, what you really, really want? The Air Program has so many things we can do and things we can give you to make your life a little easier. We love to give things away and it's great that grants help us purchase the things we buy for YOU! Since I have been doing this I have given away tire gauges, magnetic picture frames, temperature/relative humidity gauges, car washes, seeds, Swiffer kits, carbon monoxide detectors, paper straws and so much more. I actually get harassed in the office because I have so much stuff to give away that it's piled around my office; I almost have hoarder status (not good for an airhead). Too much stuff = no airflow = bad indoor air quality.

Back to "Me Want" So, what do you want? We can come to your house. Maybe you need more ventilation or it's too dry or too moist or that you need a new stove because yours

is emitting carbon monoxide. Well, I can't get those things for you. I wish I could but I may know people who can.

We can also investigate mold growth from water infiltration or test to see if there is any "Meth" toxin contamination, test for radon and check the flows of fans and vents.



Who wants new smoke detectors? Did you know if you don't have smoke detectors in your house, you can call the American Red Cross and they will send people to your house with smoke detectors and install them for you? There is no reason why homes/apartments/shelters should not have a working smoke detector. Call me. I got the hook up with the Red Cross. Have a child or parent with asthma

and want to make your home safer for them? Call me. I got the hook up with the American Lung Association. There are tons of programs out there. It's just a matter finding the right one that will work for what you need. And if I don't have the hook up, I am sure I can find it.

So for now and for the next seven generations, contact me and let's see what we can help you with to make your life a little better. Phone: (518) 358-5937 ext.129, text: (315) 250-1028 or email: [angela.benedict@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:angela.benedict@srmt-nsn.gov) or [airqualityprogram@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:airqualityprogram@srmt-nsn.gov). ♦



# Program Snapshot:

## What Can Food Distribution & LIHEAP Do For You?

*By Denita Ireland, Communications Specialist*

What's for dinner? Bison spaghetti sauce, wild rice soup, or maybe grilled catfish? For families in and around Akwesasne, providing healthy and culturally relevant foods may not always be easy. Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) Food Distribution can help.

"The SRMT Food Distribution Program is an alternative to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits," explains Program Manager Melanie Conners. "We are able to provide a month supply of food which may exceed what someone may qualify for in food stamps."

Food Distribution services are available to qualified applicants of households in the southern portion of Akwesasne, and approved areas around the territory of Akwesasne, which house at least one member of a federally-recognized tribe.

Applicants will meet with Melanie to discuss their finances, expenses and household needs. Proof of income and residence is necessary, and can be obtained through pay stubs, utility bills and landlord statements. All applications received by the program will be processed within seven days (excluding weekends & holidays) of the date received.

Once approved, food distribution amounts are based on household size and participants may select from over 70 name brand products including frozen ground beef, beef roast, pastas, cereals and dairy products.

Service plans are created in three, six or 24 month increments. Although plans are not eligible in combination with SNAP benefits, WIC participants are eligible for the program.

"The food has changed a lot over the last twenty years," describes Melanie. "The food we are able to provide now is appropriate for the health and culture of native peoples. It's low in sodium and less processed, things that you can be happy feeding your family."

With more community participation, expansive services become available. Access to fresh produce increases for programs with higher demonstrated client base, as well as the potential for food delivery services. The goal of SRMT Food Distribution Program is to move to a grocery store model, where food is shelved and stored in a "shoppable" store.

In the case of emergency need, issuance can be made available to applicants sometimes as soon as same-day. Melanie and Lucy accommodate most situations and can complete applications by mail, phone, or the main offices located next to SRMT Health Services.



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) applications are also processed in the Food Distribution Office. A federal program, LIHEAP is available to residents in the southern portion of Akwesasne and is separate from the SRMT fuel assistance program.

"Sharon has done a tremendous job for our community over the last 36 years," says Melanie of Sharon Thompson, recent retiree of SRMT Food Distribution office. "I have some large shoes to fill, and I am very excited to assist *Akwesashró:non* in the future."

For any questions on Food Distribution and LIHEAP, please contact Program Manager Melanie Conners at (518) 358-2272 or [melanie.conners@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:melanie.conners@srmt-nsn.gov). ◇



# The Let's Get Healthy Program - Tsitewatakari:tat Announcements

*By Heather Garrow, Program Coordinator*

November is Diabetes Month! We will have community screenings, a fitness challenge, and many activities and events throughout the month. Check out our program newsletter on the Tribe's website at [www.srmt-nsn.gov](http://www.srmt-nsn.gov) in the publications section for more information. Follow us on Facebook for the latest news and announcements.

Heather Pontius, RD and Pamela McDonald-LaChance, PhD, RN became certified Lifestyle Coaches for the National Diabetes Prevention Program through the Centers for Disease Control. A new Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Program will begin in April 2020.

In June, Cherie Bisnett, RN became a Certified Diabetes Educator®. A Certified Diabetes Educator® is a health professional who possesses comprehensive knowledge of and experience in diabetes prevention, prediabetes, and diabetes management.

Our youth fitness program has evolved to a healthy lifestyle program for families. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to stay and exercise in our fitness facility while the younger ones work with our health promotion staff! Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 to 6:15 p.m. Registration and assessments are required prior to joining class.

The Let's Get Healthy Program has partnered with the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health -

Colorado School of Public Health and the University of Pittsburgh to implement a National Institute of Health "Stopping Gestational Diabetes" Research Study. Out of 5 Tribal sites across the country, we were the first and only site to reach our target goal of 30 Mother/Daughter teams enrolled in the study. We thank the community and the participants for their willingness and support to implement this research and improve the health of our community. Stay tuned for the results and educational toolkits within the next year.

We are also in the first year of another research project, with grant funding from the American Diabetes Association and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the Let's Get Healthy Program and the University of Colorado are "Culturally Tailoring a Diabetes Nutrition Education Program for Tribal and Urban American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities". Heather Garrow

was a co-presenter on this research study at this year's Special Diabetes for Indians Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Heather Pontius co-presented this work at the Fourth Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition in Prior Lake, Minnesota.

For more information, if you have any questions or you would like to start receiving our newsletter, please call the Tsitewatakari:tat - Let's Get Healthy Program at the Diabetes Center for Excellence, (518) 358-9667. ♦



*LGHP's Heather Pontius, RD presenting in Minnesota with co-researchers, from left; Sarah Stotz, PhD, MS, RD, CDE, LD and Dr. Kelly Moore*



# Employee Spotlight:

## Theresa Gardner

*Health Services Outreach/Chronic Care Department Supervisor/Family Nurse Practitioner*

*(Years of Service: 30 years)*

*By Brendan White, Communications Director*

*The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is proud to highlight Theresa Gardner as this month's long-term service employee and share all the exceptional work she is doing on behalf of the Akwesasne community.*

There is a saying that time flies by when you truly enjoy your work. For Theresa Gardner it is obvious that she takes immense enjoyment in what she does, as 30 years with Saint Regis Mohawk Health Services has flown by in the blink of an eye.

Thirty years ago this month, Theresa first started employment with Health Service's medical clinic as one of only three medical providers on staff. Located in the upstairs of the old white medical building that once stood in the current parking lot, the facility was busy and space was limited. With only four exams rooms, the facility strained to accommodate 7,276 registered patients when it relocated in 1991.

During her first 20 years with the clinic, Theresa worked as a medical practitioner before transitioning to the Outreach Department — where she continues to this day. She notes that what keeps her determined to provide the best quality care for her patients is the enjoyment she continues to receive from helping patients develop a personal 'day-to-day' care plan.

"When they are doing well, this make me happy," shared Theresa when reflecting back on the help she has provided to patients on their path to recovery. She added that her satisfaction

comes from, "helping them understand the disease process, from diagnosis to a successful outcome, is always one of my most memorable moments."



Throughout her time with the medical clinic, Theresa has continually strived to improve the overall health of community members, including the quality and type of services provided by the clinic itself — having started a Wound Care Program. For those hard-to-heal wounds, she has put forth tremendous effort at the Outreach Department in helping patients avoid amputations by conducting a thorough evaluation and development of a treatment plan.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Theresa shared the recognition her staff received for their hard work and dedication to improving the health of community members. She notes it is another one of her most cherished memories since joining the medical clinic 30 years ago.

For anyone looking to embark on a new career, she offered that, "The Tribe has been a great place to work. They have always been understanding and allowed me to grow and develop by providing me with education and experience to become a better Family Nurse Practitioner."

*Niawen:kówa*/Thank you Theresa for all your years of untiring devotion to providing professional and compassionate healthcare to the community of Akwesasne. ◇



# Tribal Monthly Meetings

*Seskehkó:wa/September 7, 2019*  
**Chairperson: Tribal Chief Beverly Cook**

## *Agenda*

1. Review of previous action items:
  - a. Request to look into starting a carpentry/electrical class held out of the IGA Building that would assist with renovations.  
**In Progress.** Tribal Council is awaiting information from the Director of Education. A response will be provided when completed.
2. 10:00 am | New Business
3. 10:45 am | Verbal Violence Awareness Campaign by Jim Munoa, Munoa Training & Development, Inc.
4. 11:05 am | Health Services Update by Michael Cook
5. 11:20 am | Compliance Department Updates by Elliott Lazore
  - a. Tribal Cigarette Allocation
  - b. Tribal Heating Assistance Program
6. 12:30 pm | Announcements
  - a. EPA Grasse River Remediation Project Informational Session on September 11th at 6:00 pm at Hawkins Point
  - b. Tribal Fall Heating Assistance Changes Deadline is September 12th (September 16 Distribution Commences)
  - c. Great Akwesasne River Cleanup September 15th
  - d. Mother Earth Pig Pilot Project Order Deadline is September 23rd, contact Environment at (518) 358-5937
  - e. At the September 25th Work Session Tribal Council will be signing Resolutions to approve referendum questions on the Medical Marijuana Ordinance and Adult Use Regulation and set referendum date on December 14, 2019. Public Meeting dates will be on September 25th, October 17th, and November 13th at 5:00pm at Ionkwakiohkwaró:ron.

*Kenténha | October 5, 2019*  
**Chairperson: Tribal Chief Eric Thompson**

## *Agenda*

1. Review of previous action items:
  - a. Request to look into starting a carpentry/electrical class held out of the IGA building that would assist with renovations.  
**In Progress.** Tribal Council is awaiting information from the Director of Education. A response will be provided when complete.
  - b. Motion was made by Andria Cooke, that “we return to the original 62 years of age for seniors to the money allotted to seniors;” it was seconded by Ruth Bell. In favor 13, Against – 6, Abstentions – 11. **In Progress.** Compliance and Finance are gathering data for Tribal Council and Administration to review. A response will be provided when complete.
2. 10:05 am | New Business
3. 10:50 am | Presentation on Vaping by Megan Bushey and Nichelle Loran, ACDP
4. 11:10 am | Domestic Violence Awareness Presentation by Debra Bush and Vicki Wood, Three Sisters
5. 11:30 am | Office for the Aging Presentation by Lorelee Lafrance
6. 11:50 am | Environment Update by Tony David
  - a. Proposed amendment to the Tribal Water Quality Standards
  - b. PCB sampling
  - c. Grasse River Remediation
4. 12:10 pm | Announcement:  
Referendums: Medical Marijuana Ordinance and Adult Use Regulation Public Meetings on October 17th and November 13th at 5:00 pm at Ionkwakiohkwaró:ron. ♦

# Donations

Funerals - \$ 7,000

Community Development - \$ 250

Sports - \$ 1,500



# Calendar

## *Kentenhkó:wa/November 2019*

2 - Tribal Monthly Meeting - 10:00 a.m. - Lobby  
11 - Veteran's Day holiday - Tribe closed  
12 - Social Security - 12:45 to 2:45 p.m. - Tribal Clerk's Office  
28 - Thanksgiving - Tribe closed  
29 - American Indian Heritage Day - Tribe closed

## *Tsiothóhrha/December 2019*

7 - Tribal Monthly Meeting - 10:00 a.m. - Lobby  
10 - Social Security - 12:45 to 2:45 p.m. - Tribal Clerk's Office  
25 - Christmas Day - Tribe closed  
Wednesdays - Tribal Council Work Sessions - 9:00 a.m. Executive Boardroom - 3rd floor

# New Faces

James N Brothers	Environment	Refuse Route Driver
Ashley D Brown	Accounting	Program Manager
Ashli Buddenhagen	Health Services	Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner
Courtney R Collette	Early Learning Center	Substitute
Wilfred F David	Generations Park	Laborer
Tracy L Durant	Outreach	Registered Nurse
Remy M Feeley	Accounting	Program Accountant
William L Gibson	Environment	Forestry Laborer
Trisha L Gray	Accounting	Program Accountant
Paul Howard	CSHIG	Residence Supervisor
Joshua J Jacobs	Facilities	Laborer
Reese D Jacobs	CSHIG	Direct Support Professional
Tieara M Lafrance	Partridge House	Resident Aide
Danielle L Patnode	Early Learning Center	Teacher Aide
Julissa M Perez	Health Services	Receptionist
Ashley N Phillips	Early Learning Center	Teacher Aide
Young-Joe Rourke	Environment	Forestry Laborer
Henry Roy	Executive Director's	Office Chief Financial Officer
Larri-Lee Skidders	Tribal Clerk's	Administrative Assistant
Kyla DM Stonefish	Mental Health	RN/Behavioral Healthcare Coordinator
Chase T Sunday	Facilities	Laborer
Renee D Sunday	Accounting	Accounts Receivable Clerk
John P Terrance	Early Learning Center	Language & Culture Provider
Presley G Thompson	Facilities	Custodians
Kyra L Thompson-Douglas	Outreach	Home Health Aide

# Retirees

Donald J Comins-Generations Park

Thomas Jock-Facilities

Marion Adams-Health Services, Outreach



## Car Seat Safety Matters

Did you know the Saint Regis Mohawk Health Services has a car seat safety program? The Outreach Chronic Care Nursing Department has three Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. They can assist parents, totas and guardians about proper car seat installation and answer questions on car seat safety.

Outreach can also assist with obtaining a car seat. Two types of are offered: rear/forward-facing convertibles and high back booster seats. Unfortunately, infant carriers are not available.

### Guidelines for Service:

- Child or parent must be registered with the Saint Regis Mohawk Health Services; must have a chart number established
- Child and parent must be present at the time of appointment
- One car seat per family
- Must be low income; proof is needed
- You are eligible if you are on WIC, SNAP, SSI, Public or Temporary Assistance; proof must be brought with you to your appointment
- Must reside on the U.S. side of the reservation

To make an appointment, call the Outreach Office at (518) 358-4877. Car seat appointments are available on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.



## Small Business Saturday – Akwesasne!

Small Business Saturday is a national day to celebrate the small businesses that make our communities unique. This year, Small Business Saturday is on November 30, 2019.

Businesses and organizations across the country are hosting *#ShopSmall* events that include store discounts, customer appreciation, and giveaways.

If you are a business or organization in Akwesasne hosting an event on November 30th you can submit your information and we will help promote it. We will promote events online and throughout the community.

For questions, please contact the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Office of Economic Development at (518) 358-2385.



*Kawennì:ios "Good Words"* is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are available in print or digital versions.

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*Connect with us...*



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Alyson Thompson, Communications Officer  
Denita Ireland, Communications Specialist



# They Are Making Their Minds Good

by Denita Ireland, Communications Specialist

Since their opening in July of 2018, the mission of *Ronthahiihsthá:ke* Clubhouse has been to empower Akwesasne youth. Through skill-building and fostering friendships, Clubhouse workers encourage members to maintain a drug/alcohol-free lifestyle and strengthen recovery.

Open to ages 15 to 20, *Ronthahiihsthá:ke* Clubhouse provides at-risk youth a positive environment where they can learn, relax and access an abundance resources. Some of these resources are computers with internet access for homework and job hunting, trips to places they may have never been or simply mentorship by trusted staff.

In their first year, the Clubhouse was able to facilitate multiple trips to activities like tubing at Titus Mountain, Division I lacrosse games, college visits, apple picking and bowling. Most activities have a cultural approach, including a Tota & Me series inviting grandparents to spend time with members while practicing traditional skills like beadwork and fanmaking.

Each class and activity is an opportunity to learn. Clubhouse staff provide presentations on topics from suicide prevention to vaping addiction. In the Tota & Me series, elders are supported with information they may not regularly access; like safe drug storage and how to discuss alcohol and drug use with youth.

Expanding services is the goal for the next year and beyond, for Anastasia Benedict, Alcohol/Chemical Dependency Prevention Clubhouse Supervisor. Plans include cooking demos, tutoring and college mentorships and collaborations with programs like Akwesasne Coalition for Community Empowerment.

“We want to support our members so that they have a good mind and make good decisions,” Anastasia explains. Clubhouse staff collaborate with various programs throughout not only Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe but the entire Akwesasne territory.

“We refer them to services such as Akwesasne Food Bank, SRMT Mental Health Services, SRMT Alcohol/Chemical Dependency Prevention Program, and more so that we can help them transition into adulthood and so that they know they’re not alone,” continues Anastasia, “If we can change the stigma and be there to guide them on the right path, they can share that and pass it on for the next generations.”



Ending cycles of abuse and promoting a positive path forward is at the core of *Ronthahiihsthá:ke* activities. This summer, club members learned about gardening and worked together to plant lettuce, tomato and peppers in front of the Diabetes Center for Excellence building. They also planted *Three Sisters* plants corn, beans and squash in a hands-on

activity about our traditional foods.

*Ronthahiihsthá:ke* Clubhouse is the first of the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Youth Organizations to be on native territory. Other programs under OASAS funding are located throughout NYS, including Horizons Clubhouse in Massena, NY. *Ronthahiihsthá:ke* Clubhouse members recently collaborated with Horizons members and are planning to do more activities together in the near future.

For more information, contact Anastasia Benedict at [anastasia.benedict@srmt-nsn.gov](mailto:anastasia.benedict@srmt-nsn.gov) or (518) 333-0221. ◇



# NOTICE OF REFERENDUM

*Pursuant to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Election and Referendum Ordinance; membership is being notified that a tribal referendum will be held on Saturday, Tsiothóhrha/December 14, 2019. The tribal referendum will include two questions for tribal voters to decide by majority vote – Medical Marijuana Ordinance and Adult Use (Recreational) Marijuana Regulation.*

## Question #1:

*Do you support the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council adopting the Medical Marijuana Ordinance?*

**Walk-In Voting:** Tuesday and Wednesday, Tsiothóhrha/December 10 and 11, 2019 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Ionkwakiohkwaróron Tribal Administration Building.

**Home Voting:** Friday, Tsiothóhrha/December 13, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please contact Tribal Clerk's Office to make arrangements for home visits at (518) 358-2272.

**Absentee Ballots:** Available starting Monday, Kentenhkó:wa/ November 18, 2019. To request your absentee ballots, please contact the Tribal Clerks Office at (518) 358-2272. The deadline for the absentee ballots is Wednesday, Tsiothóhrha/December 4, at 12:00 p.m.

## Question #2:

*Do you approve the Tribe legalizing Adult Use (Recreational) Marijuana through adoption of regulations that would control use, sale, processing, cultivation on the territory?*

**Referendum Date:** Saturday, Tsiothóhrha/December 14, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Ionkwakiohkwaróron Tribal Administration Building located at 71 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way 37 in Akwesasne, NY.

To request your absentee ballots or to schedule home voting, please contact the Tribal Clerk's Office at (518)358-2272. For information on the proposed ordinance and/or regulation, please contact SRMT Office of the General Counsel at (518) 358-2272. ♦



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe  
71 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way  
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*On the Cover: Camryn Cook (galaxy skeleton), Noah Back (fireman), Katie Boots (Mario), Adalynn Back (puppy) and Amelia Lazore (narwhal) joined thousands of youth at the Tewathabitha Walking Trail for Halloween Road and at the Mohawk International Raceway for the annual Trunk-or-Treat; events that provide a safe trick-or-treating experience coordinated by the SRMT Alcohol/Chemical Dependency Program and the Akwesasne Coalition for Community Empowerment.*