

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN TRIBAL GOVERNANCE



HONORING NATIONS

THE HARVARD PROJECT ON AMERICAN INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2015



HONORING NATIONS 2015 – CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN TRIBAL GOVERNANCE

Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations (Honoring Nations) identifies, celebrates, and shares outstanding examples of tribal governance. Created in 1998, the program has awarded 124 Contributions that demonstrate excellence and innovation, while addressing critical concerns and challenges facing the more than 567 Indian nations and their citizens.

Shining a bright light on success, Honoring Nations helps expand the capacities of Native nation builders by enabling them to learn from each others' successes. Honorees serve as sources of knowledge and inspiration throughout Indian Country and far beyond. Honoring Nations is administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (Harvard Project) at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and is a proud member of a worldwide family of governmental best practices programs.



HONORING NATIONS 2015
Celebrating Excellence in Tribal Governance

FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

From one generation to the next, the maintenance of our way of life as gifted to us by the Creator has endured. It was foretold that along our journey we would encounter many challenges. The adherence to that gifted way of life is a testament to our deep love for our languages, our beliefs, our values, our governance, our families, our communities, our relatives who inhabit this universe with us and the places from where we draw our spirituality, places that define us and gift us our personalities.

The profound question today is, “what will future generations inherit from us?” It is our honor and privilege here at Honoring Nations to share the remarkable and resilient ways that indigenous peoples from across the same lands that our forefathers walked upon, prayed upon and where they left behind their stories that we are connected to are responding. They are a testament of our collective perseverance that our way of life will continue to endure and flourish. They are planting the seeds of knowledge.

Will they inherit the “Original Instructions” gifted to us by our Creator at the time of our beginning? The prescribed pathway in those instructions, as we are taught, is the fulfillment of our sacred trust in the maintenance of balance of all living beings in the universe. We must ask, are the decisions we are making strengthening our core values or are they taking us further away from our core values? The maintenance of a healthy mind, body, spirit, and soul enables us to fulfill our sacred trust and purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Regis Pecos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Regis Pecos (Cochiti)
Chairman of the Board of Governors, Honoring Nations



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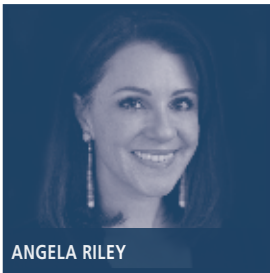
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HONORS

ACADEMIC READINESS EFFORT
SANTA YNEZ BAND OF CHUMASH INDIANS



Grounded in the concept of *amuyich*, or generosity, the Santa Ynez Academic Readiness Effort tackles the Native nation's once-major educational achievement gap head-on by providing comprehensive support for Santa Ynez Chumash students at every step of their educational journeys—from birth through adulthood. Last year, an incredible 97% of Chumash students graduated high school—and the tribe is poised to reach 100%. Graduates and students alike are role models for the next generation and are equipped to serve as leaders and key decision makers for the nation. By providing students with mentorship, tutoring, and support, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is creating a brighter tribal future.

A Pressing Need for Education

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is a small tribe located in California's Santa Ynez Valley. Approximately 1,800 people are affiliated with the Band; 129 are enrolled citizens, the rest are lineal descendants. Less than one-fifth of the population lives on tribal land. Young tribal citizens are educated in off-reservation schools where they grapple with racism, low expectations, and misunderstandings of tribal sovereignty.

Education has long been problematic for Californians of American Indian heritage. Federal policies forced the parents and grandparents of today's students to attend boarding schools or to enroll in training programs for jobs as maids or laborers. Today, Native students attend schools in the state system. Nearly 19% of tribally affiliated students in California leave high school without graduating, compared to only 13% of the general population. Even among high school graduates, only 25% of Native students meet the state university system's entrance requirements, as compared to 38% of all California high school graduates. Without culturally appropriate intervention, Santa Ynez Chumash students are at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential.

At the same time, the last few decades have seen the creation of exciting career opportunities for Santa Ynez citizens and their descendants. The tribe operates a health clinic, two hotels in the neighboring town of Solvang, a gas station, and a vineyard. In 2006, the tribe opened the Chumash Casino Resort, which now has more than 1,600 employees. Chumash students need to be well educated in order to fill these jobs in their community.

Addressing Academic Barriers

For the past 10 years, the Academic Readiness Effort has systematically removed barriers to academic participation and success for Chumash students. To meet the program's goal of a 100% high school graduation and a 100% post-secondary enrollment rate, the tribe has designed a range of specialized services including support for learning disabilities, one-on-one academic tutoring, cultural activities, and financial aid. The tribe's Education Director, who works closely with local school officials, manages the program, and a seven-member committee of elected officials oversees it. Santa Ynez finances the Academic Readiness Effort through an Education Fund endowment and with federal funding sources such as Title VII grants (from the US Department of Education under PL 107-110) and Community Development Block grants (from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development).

The Academic Readiness Effort is guided by a belief that support at all stages of life is important for long-term academic achievement. This life-cycle engagement, which is individually tailored for each Chumash student, begins with outreach to Chumash toddlers, who are screened for early intervention before their formal schooling begins. As needed throughout the children's primary and secondary school careers, program staff work with each student's school to advocate for special services, including learning accommodations and support for gifted and talented students. The Academic Readiness Effort also helps high school students draft post-secondary school applications, arrange college visits, and evaluate career options. Chumash adults are encouraged to go to back to school, obtain vocational certification, or pursue professional development opportunities regardless of their age or previous academic attainment.

Academic services are provided in a supportive environment and through programming that engages participation from families and the wider community. The tribe's 5,000 square foot learning center, which opened in 2012, is the focal space for the Academic Readiness Effort. Any Santa Ynez community member from preschool through college is eligible for one-on-one tutoring by credentialed teachers. Tutors set and regularly update clear goals for each student and share these with the student's family. An "honor wall" within the learning center celebrates student achievements such as acquiring a new concept or doing well on a test. Students can participate in skill-building workshops, twice weekly Chumash language courses, talking circles run by the tribal health clinic, and various cultural outings.





To reduce the economic barriers to education, the Academic Readiness Effort coordinates financial aid for Chumash families. More than 130 Santa Ynez Chumash students have received preschool tuition assistance in the past five years. High school graduates and mature students receive financial aid to attend college and continuing education programs. Critically, this support is not a “blank check:” the Education Director meets with every college-bound student to make a plan that includes academic goals, grade expectations, and a timeline for finishing their degree. To reinforce the importance of education, the Academic Readiness Effort also coordinates incentives for school and degree completion. There is financial accountability for dropping out and monetary awards for reaching milestones. Students receive \$100 for completing 8th grade, and doctoral candidates receive \$3,000 for earning their degree.

Santa Ynez’s strategic investment in educational support has had dramatic results. Fewer Santa Ynez Chumash students are being held back a grade in their early primary years. Now, 97% graduate high school in four years, surpassing the state’s 81% graduation rate. One-fifth of Santa Ynez adults who had not previously earned a degree or certification are currently enrolled in post-secondary education. Twenty seven Santa Ynez adults have earned a master’s or doctorate degree. Most importantly, many graduates are working for the nation, and students understand that staying in school prepares them for meaningful career opportunities at home.

Education as a Nation Building Tool

Santa Ynez is prioritizing educational achievement as a way to strengthen tribal sovereignty. By making an investment in human capital at all ages, the Band is ensuring that community members are able to obtain the training they need to make valuable contributions to their nation. Once Santa Ynez Chumash students graduate, they are qualified to fill key leadership and other positions within the Band and its enterprises. This helps ensure that decisions are made using contemporary best practices while respecting Chumash cultural values. Today, Santa Ynez college and vocational graduates work for the tribe in diverse capacities—as environmental technicians, behavioral health professionals, and restaurant managers, among other roles. In the words of one program administrator, “Santa Ynez is building a nation led by community members who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose positive change.”

Beyond creating an educated workforce, the tribe's investment in academics is bringing about a renewed sense of cultural identity. The Academic Readiness Effort emphasizes *amuyich*, the Chumash concept of generosity, by encouraging all students to give back to each other, the tribe, and local communities. The well-attended intergenerational activities at the learning center have made it a gathering place for the community and a resource for sharing traditional teachings. The close involvement of tutors, families, and the wider community in education helps Chumash students withstand the ignorance and racism that they experience in mainstream institutions. By mentoring students within a strong cultural context, the Academic Readiness Effort reinforces pride in being Chumash and helps them honor their cultural heritage within non-tribal educational systems.

The Academic Readiness Effort is fundamentally changing Santa Ynez community members' academic opportunities. It has established crucial connections among tribal staff and local school officials, which in turn lead to cooperation on behalf of Chumash student success. It has shifted family-school communication away from a sole focus on academic or behavioral "problems" toward discussions about the development of student potential. The Education Director has even been appointed by the Governor to serve a second term on the State Board of Education, giving the tribe a voice in the state's education policy-making. These changed relationships encourage tribal citizens and descendants to work through problems caused by complicated requirements or a lack of sensitivity to cultural practices rather than being discouraged by them. Ultimately, the Academic Readiness Effort is helping the Santa Ynez Chumash move beyond the frustration and shame of past school experiences and reclaim education as a tool that furthers tribal goals.

Conclusion

When tribal community members drop out of school, human capital that their nations may need to govern, manage programs, and grow their economies remains undeveloped. To overcome the barriers that have prevented community members from taking advantage of educational opportunities and to encourage academic achievement, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians takes a comprehensive approach to academic readiness. From one-on-one tutoring support to family engagement, from cultural activities to working with local school boards, and from testing preschoolers for learning disabilities to financial support for adults who decide to go back to school, the Academic Readiness Effort helps Chumash students succeed.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 When a nation reclaims their educational system, they reclaim their future.
- 2 Investments in education at all ages is critical for long-term academic success.
- 3 A successful education program must be built upon a nation's core values.



HONORS

HO-CHUNK VILLAGE
WINNEBAGO TRIBE OF NEBRASKA



Like many other Native nations, the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska grapples with a lack of housing for its people, especially for the Tribe's rapidly growing middle class. In response, community leaders developed Ho-Chunk Village, a 40 acre master planned community that is transforming the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska by purposefully providing home-ownership opportunities, integrated rentals for elders, and space for businesses in a walkable community. In developing Ho-Chunk Village, the Winnebago Tribe is showcasing how a tribal government, a nonprofit, and a tribal enterprise can work together in creative ways.

Moving Off-Reservation

By the late 1990s, the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska had successfully leveraged the earnings from its small casino operation into a diverse and thriving tribal economy. Nonetheless, residential development lagged behind business and enterprise development. In the words of one community member, the reservation's main town, Winnebago, consisted of "substandard private housing and drab uniform tracts of identical government housing." Worse, much of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded housing had been developed absent land-use planning, resulting in a haphazard and disconnected physical layout at odds with the way in which close-knit Ho-Chunk villages were traditionally organized. The town also lacked appropriate street lighting and sidewalks, which discouraged residents from walking to visit family and friends.

Beyond the fact that many reservation dwellings were unappealing, Winnebago lacked a well-functioning housing market. For years, and in part due to community members' relative poverty, the reservation's housing stock consisted primarily of "tribal housing," the HUD funded rental units intended for low-income residents. The low inventory of private homes was also a result of local banks' reluctance to lend on trust land—or at least their limited familiarity with such lending. Yet as the Winnebago Tribe's economy grew, a growing number of tribal citizens earned incomes that made them ineligible for tribal housing. Without other housing options, individuals and families with higher incomes were effectively forced off tribal land, a situation that damaged the Tribe's cohesiveness.

At the same time, Ho-Chunk, Inc. (HCI), the Tribe's for-profit enterprise, was finding it difficult to expand its presence on the reservation. Over 1,000 employees worked for HCI in more than 30 subsidiaries, with business interests as varied as construction, distribution, marketing, and retail. These economic development efforts were hampered by the lack of available reservation land and poor infrastructure. Many HCI projects were delayed and several subsidiaries reluctantly located off-reservation.

In response, tribal government, business, and community leaders began to envision a planned development offering a mix of housing and commercial property that would entice more tribal citizens to live on the reservation and ease the constraints on business development.

Housing for All Income Levels

In 2003, the Tribe developed a master plan for 40 acres of land on the northern edge of the existing village of Winnebago. The development was intentionally located on a parcel of land not held in trust, so that banks, homeowners, and commercial operators could rely on usual and well-understood financing mechanisms. Design discussions engaged a range of community members, from the tribal council and leaders of HCI to community development specialists and Winnebago residents. The large scale of the proposed project offered an unparalleled opportunity to meet a broad set of objectives, including increased homeownership, access to jobs, and the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles.

Ho-Chunk Village closely follows the planning principles of "New Urbanism," which emphasize thoughtful mixed development in a compact area. Its layout echoes that of a traditional Ho-Chunk village, in which the activities of community life occurred in specific but interconnected places. The focal point of the new development is a statue garden that features figures representing the twelve clans of the Winnebago Tribe. The picnic tables and children's playground in the adjacent park create a spot for neighbors to gather. The Village's residential sector includes private single-family detached homes, market-rate and income-eligible rental apartments, and a senior housing complex. The commercial sector consists of seven retail, office, and light industrial buildings, totaling approximately 90,000 square feet.





The Village was thoughtfully and deliberately designed to encourage physical activity intended to positively impact the health of its residents and reduce the effects of obesity and diabetes. The entire development is laid out in a pedestrian-friendly way, with sidewalks and well-lit streets. It is also connected to a network of walking trails that give residents easy access to the local school, powwow grounds, and other residential areas in the town of Winnebago.

The Ho-Chunk Village development has met and exceeded expectations. Every rental property has a waiting list. Additional rental units are under construction, and Little Priest Tribal College is building a student dormitory within the Village. Almost 30 private homes have been built, the majority of which are owned by tribal citizens who are first time homebuyers. Over 90% of the commercial space is leased to an array of tenants—including a law firm, restaurant, beauty salon, artists' cooperative, warehouse, manufacturing facility, Native-themed stores, and several tribal company offices—that increase the vibrancy of the community. The development also has led to the hoped-for change in attitude about the desirability of living on the reservation. One community member reflects, "We can have pride in our homes. Pride in our community. Pride in how far we have come in a difficult environment."

Cooperation Builds a Community

Ho-Chunk Village resulted from close cooperation among several tribal entities. These partners worked together as a "three-legged stool," each carrying out the portions of the master plan that best fit its comparative advantages. The Winnebago Tribe purchased the land and authorized tax revenue and corporate dividend spending on the project. Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation, the Tribe's non-profit entity, used its 501(c)3 status to pursue grant funding for many programs that supported the Village's growth. HCI located several of its subsidiaries within the development's commercial space, providing walking-distance job opportunities to its residents. It also took the lead on construction of the Village. Ultimately, this role led to HCI's purchase of a modular housing company, which improved both the quality and affordability of homes in the Village. By coordinating their actions, the Tribe, Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation, and HCI accomplished more than they could have single-handedly.

The tribal partners spearheaded several creative solutions to expand the homeownership market on the reservation, a key component of the master plan's vision to offer housing at various income levels. To get around the fact that many tribal citizens with good jobs could not afford homes due to their lack of savings, Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation coordinates a down payment assistance program that is available to all citizens. HCI bought an interest in a local bank, which allows the Tribe to promote increased access to banking services for tribal citizens and build understanding within the financial institution of the unique aspects of doing business on the reservation. HCI also started a used car company, "Rez Cars," which offers car loans to tribal citizens who might otherwise be considered high-risk borrowers. Rez Cars loans help residents build credit so that they might eventually be able to secure a home mortgage. Together, these initiatives help lay the financial foundation for a tradition of reservation-based homeownership.

The Ho-Chunk Village master plan addresses many elements that make a desirable place to live: beautiful new homes and apartments, easy access to jobs, and a sense of community. Its successful implementation has helped strengthen the economic, political, and cultural revival of the Winnebago Tribe. Critically, the development has reversed the migration of the Tribe's most economically successful citizens off the reservation. Now families are choosing to stay and contribute their talents to the community. Furthermore, because the Tribe's constitution specifies that only residents are eligible to vote in tribal elections, citizens who move away from the reservation lose their ability to participate politically in the nation. By offering a mix of housing options to accommodate an increasing population, the Winnebago Tribe is ensuring that more of its citizens can choose to live on the reservation and have the opportunity to be politically active on behalf of the nation's future.

Bringing the Lessons Home

Many reservations lack the choice of housing that is available in neighboring towns, so tribal citizens with higher incomes often have to leave to find an alternative living arrangement. Once they move away, they lose their daily connection to family, friends, and their tribal government. The Winnebago Tribe developed Ho-Chunk Village in order to offer housing options across a range of income levels in a planned community designed to have broad appeal. Ho-Chunk Village's mixed community of private homes, rental apartments, commercial space, and pedestrian areas has created an area on the reservation that tribal citizens proudly call home.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 Providing homes to a nation's growing middle class strengthens sovereignty.
- 2 Investments in mixed development thickens the economy by providing both homes and jobs.
- 3 Successful community development requires creative synergies between multiple tribal agencies.

Ho-Chunk Village | Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
PO Box 390, Winnebago, NE 68071
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HONORS

KENAITZE TRIBAL COURT
KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE



Recognizing that creating and maintaining a justice system is vital to a strong society, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe of Alaska developed its own tribal court in 1986 – despite the fact that in Alaska, few if any tribes had taken this step before. Since then, the Kenaitze Tribal Court has worked diligently to expand its jurisdiction over a range of issues. Its leadership in child advocacy has been especially pioneering. By collaborating with state, tribal, local, and nonprofit agencies, the court helps ensure that Native children are protected and kept safe – and reinforces the Tribe’s assertion of jurisdiction over young tribal citizens. Today, nearly 100% of children in the tribal court system are placed with family or other tribal members. The Kenaitze Tribal Court gives tribes everywhere compelling proof that quality Native justice systems are foundational to effective governance and to the defense of sovereignty.

A Hard Problem to Solve

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s traditional homelands encompass most of the Kenai Peninsula, an area approximately 100 miles southwest of Anchorage, Alaska. As a result of its prime location, the Tribe has a long tradition of welcoming outsiders and encouraging their participation in the community. While the Tribe’s 1,600 citizens are of Dena’ina Athabascan heritage, upwards of 5,000 people of various backgrounds now live within its service area. The City of Kenai, in particular, is a popular destination for Alaska Natives who want to live in a city that is smaller than Anchorage.

Across Alaska, colonial policies and the disruption of traditional lifeways have had a devastating effect on Alaska Native communities and families. Deep-seated social and health problems such as alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, and child neglect are especially prevalent. Alaska Natives account for only 19% of the state population, but more than half of reported female rape victims are Native. In fact, Alaska Native women are seven times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than other women in the state. More than 60% of the children in Alaska who are removed from their homes are Native. In the Kenai Peninsula alone, there were 148 Native children with abuse and neglect cases in the courts in 2015. Of additional concern, when the state is in charge, Native children are less likely to receive culturally appropriate placements and culturally sensitive care.

These are grim statistics, and unfortunately, most Alaska Native tribes have limited judicial tools with which to address them. Because only a small amount of land in Alaska is recognized as Indian Country, tribal courts generally lack territorial jurisdiction. Through the application of Public Law 83-280 (PL 280),

the state of Alaska enforces all criminal law, even in Alaska Native villages. There are nearly 100 tribal courts in Alaska, but funding constraints limit their capacities. On top of these issues, state government officials have been reluctant to acknowledge tribal sovereignty.

A Tribal Court for All Residents

Undaunted by these difficulties, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe established a tribal court in 1986. A tribal statute recognizes the court's jurisdiction over "all lands and waters customarily and traditionally used by the Dena'ina people" and over all people or entities whose activities have an impact on the Tribe or its members. Based on this broad mandate, the Kenaitze Tribal Court seeks to deliver justice to all residents of its service area in the Kenai Peninsula and to play a central role in fulfilling the Tribe's mission "to assure Kahthuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever."

The court is staffed by six judges elected by the tribal council. The judges are not required to have formal legal training. Instead, they rely on experience, lay training in topics such as child protection and family law, and their knowledge of tribal code, history, and traditions. The majority of cases before the court concern intimate family issues, including child custody, adoption, juvenile delinquency, and protection orders. Anyone in the service area, Native or non-Native, can petition the tribal court. The judges determine whether the court will accept a case and whether it will be heard by a western-style panel or in the Traditional Conflict Resolution Program. The latter operates like a justice circle, involving community members in the deliberations and outcome.

In 2005, the Tribe launched Alaska's first Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program to better meet the needs of the children in the tribal court system. A national program, CASA volunteers are assigned to a child during neglect and abuse cases. The volunteers serve one child at a time, and in so doing, provide a supportive and consistent adult presence during case proceedings. In 2011, through a groundbreaking agreement with the state of Alaska, the Tribe's CASA program expanded to operate throughout the entire Kenai Peninsula. CASA volunteers in this region are trained in both tribal and state court proceedings and can assist in a case in either venue. It is the only CASA program in the US that operates as a direct tribal-state partnership.





The tribal court has gained wide respect for its decisions and authority through its professionalism and extraordinary leadership. In fact, many of the cases the court hears involve a non-Native party who agrees to be subject to the court's jurisdiction. The circle justice program has a low recidivism rate and has led to lasting changes in relationships. Since the inception of the CASA program, child placement outcomes have also improved. Nearly 100% of children in tribal custody are successfully placed in tribal homes and many are reunited with family.

Reclaiming Tribal Justice

The expansion of the tribal court is a key part of the Tribe's efforts to increase its ability to deal with social problems within the community. Before its role was supplanted by the state of Alaska, the Tribe had always maintained peace within its traditional territory. Until it was able to develop its own court, village elders expressed frustration at the Tribe's lack of authority and resources to deal with the challenges facing its families, observing that "we have become lost in our own country." By passing a tribal ordinance with a broad view of jurisdiction, the Tribe signaled its interest in regaining judicial authority within its traditional territory. Although its jurisdiction is restricted by the US legal system, the Kenaitze Tribal Court is pushing the existing boundaries by relentlessly pursuing the goal of better outcomes for everyone involved in the court process. Observing the tribal court's growing authority and success in dealing with some of the underlying causes of the social problems facing tribal citizens, one elder notes, "the tide is coming back in."

To effectively expand its ability to serve tribal citizens and the surrounding community, the Kenaitze Tribal Court has pursued far-reaching partnerships with state, tribal, local, and non-profit agencies. The Tribe has signed agreements with an impressive list of organizations including local law enforcement agencies, the Kenai District Court, the Kenai Peninsula Youth Court, and the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice. The joint tribal-state CASA program is an outstanding example of how the tribal court led a cooperative effort around a shared goal. Initially limited to tribal members, the CASA program now serves all children in need of advocacy throughout the Kenai Peninsula. The result is that CASA volunteers stay with children even if the case is transferred from tribal to state court, providing consistency during a stressful time. Building on

this model, the tribal court's latest initiative is an agreement with the state of Alaska to create a joint-jurisdiction court to deal with substance abuse cases. Tribal and state judges will sit side-by-side and the docket will include criminal matters, another groundbreaking development in Alaska.

Kenaitze Tribal Court is also reclaiming the Tribe's authority to apply cultural understanding and experience to the delivery of justice. The court's approach upholds traditional Athabascan laws, and customs for the benefit of all of the region's residents in keeping with the Tribe's inclusive culture. Proceedings focus on solutions to restore community harmony and healing rather than punishment. In panel hearings, participants are allowed to communicate directly with the judiciary and are encouraged to "speak from the heart with honesty and respect." Under the Traditional Conflict Resolution Program, the circle process helps build relationships between the offender and the community to address the source of the harmful behavior. Through its actions, the court is reaffirming that the Tribe's longstanding practices are still central to successfully maintaining peace within its territory.

Bringing the Lessons Home

The lack of tribal court jurisdiction in Alaska severely limits tribes' ability to deal with the underlying causes of disruptive civil and criminal behavior. Through its innovative partnerships and its use of cultural knowledge to inform the judicial process, the Kenaitze Tribal Court is helping reassert the Tribe's ability to deliver justice to everyone living within its territory. The court's dedication to making progress on the root causes of social distress has improved the administration of justice for the entire community, giving tribal citizens and their neighbors a new sense of possibility—and giving the world a powerful demonstration of the effects of tribal sovereignty.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 A tribal court is most effective when it is a resource for all residents, Native and non-Native alike.
- 2 The integration of cultural knowledge to the judicial process improves justice outcomes.
- 3 Expanding tribal jurisdiction depends on strong relationships with federal, state, and local agencies.



HIGH HONORS

NEZ PERCE TRIBE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
NEZ PERCE TRIBE



Disagreements between tribes and their neighbors over natural resource management are common throughout the US. Local misunderstandings and differences of opinion can lead to strained and even hostile relationships. The Nez Perce Tribe founded its Fisheries Department in exactly such an environment. Declining fish stocks led to resource competition and increased pressure on treaty rights. Today, the Department works cooperatively with neighboring jurisdictions to monitor fish numbers, manage fish hatcheries, and promote habitat restoration throughout the Tribe's traditional lands.

Declining Fish Populations

Historically, the Nimiipuu traveled seasonally throughout their traditional territory, a geography that includes parts of the modern-day states of Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington. Known today as the Nez Perce Tribe, the nation consists of approximately 3,500 citizens with a reservation of 750,000 acres in north-central Idaho along the Clearwater River in the Columbia River watershed. Fish have always been central to the Nimiipuu culture and traditional diet. In 1855, the Nez Perce Tribe signed a treaty with the US government that specifically retained the tribal right to fish within the boundaries of a 13.4 million acre area as well as in "usual and accustomed places" beyond these limits. One estimate suggests that in the 19th century, the Tribe's annual fish harvest ranged from 300 to 564 pounds per person. To this day, salmon is served as the first dish of a ceremonial meal.

Over the years, increasing numbers of non-Nimiipuu moved into the region to exploit its abundant resources. The natural environment changed drastically, disrupting the life-cycle of fish in the Columbia River Basin. A series of dams built along the Columbia River and its tributaries to produce low-cost energy and irrigate farmlands blocked the passage of salmon traveling upstream from the ocean to spawn. Still other human activities in the area led to fish habitat destruction. Mining and farming altered stream beds and increased temperatures and silt in the rivers, making them less hospitable to fish. Clear-cut logging and the practice of channeling streams also degraded waterway conditions.

The effect on fish populations was dramatic. A series of court cases from the 1960s through the 1980s reaffirmed Nez Perce treaty rights to fish in the Columbia River and its tributaries, but the runs were significantly reduced. By the mid-1980s, not a single coho salmon could be found in the entire

Clearwater River Basin. By the early 1990s, every salmon and steelhead run on the Columbia River's largest tributary, the Snake River, was either listed under the Endangered Species Act or had been depleted. Without healthy fish stocks, the Tribe's treaty rights were meaningless.

A Tribal Fisheries Department

In the early 1980s, the Nez Perce Tribe established its Fisheries Department, entrusting it with the mission to protect and restore aquatic resources according to Nez Perce beliefs. From a small and underfunded beginning, the Fisheries Department has grown to become a highly respected leader and partner in fisheries management throughout the Nez Perce ancestral homeland.

The Nez Perce Tribe manages a state-of-the-art tribal fish hatchery, a federal hatchery, and co-manages a second federal fish hatchery, one that is among the largest in the country. The Department also runs nine acclimation sites to encourage natural fish spawning. Taken together, these Nez Perce operations release approximately 10 million salmon and steelhead annually. The Department also works to counter habitat degradation and recreates conditions that are beneficial to fish. Staff identify areas throughout the watershed that can be improved and protect delicate habitat areas with fencing. In a typical year, the Department's habitat restoration program helps decommission more than 70 miles of logging roads, removes more than 68,000 yards of mine tailings, and reintroduces over 27,000 native plants. The Nez Perce Tribe also employs its own enforcement officers to enforce tribal fishing and hunting regulations and protect tribal lands from trespassing and timber theft.

To support its operations, the Fisheries Department primarily uses funding that is available for fish and wildlife mitigation through the Pacific Northwest Power Act. The Department competes with state and federal counterparts, non-profit organizations, and private firms to win dollars for specific remediation projects. The Fisheries Department employs over 190 people, over half of whom are tribal citizens, and is well known throughout the region for its professionalism. The Tribe hosts resource management conferences and participates in policy setting meetings for fish management in the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia River Basin. It is also an active member of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

In part because of the Tribe's unwavering commitment to the fish, the recovery of aquatic resources in the Nez Perce treaty area has been a stunning success. For example, the harvest of Snake River Fall Chinook resumed in 2009 after being closed for 35 years, with fish returns rising from 300 to 80,000 fish.





The Clearwater River Coho Salmon run also has bounced back, rising from no fish counted in the river in 2009 to over 18,000 in 2014. For the first time in living memory, tribal citizens can harvest a variety of fish species throughout the region.

A Leader in Resource Management

The Nez Perce Tribe's Fisheries Department is noteworthy for its extensive operations on ceded lands. The Tribe has pursued a variety of approaches to assert resource management authority and, when needed, has resorted to litigation. But the Department's remarkable progress has come primarily through its cooperative work with neighboring jurisdictions. Department employees collaborate closely with state fish and game officials and other tribes to co-manage the harvest, deciding together on the limits for tribal and non-tribal fishing.

The Tribe has also developed a remarkable partnership with the US Forest Service, which controls much of the forested land in the watershed. Under existing US law, the Tribe needs authorization to implement its work on these federal lands. Thus, the Forest Service and the Tribe use project agreements to describe what needs to be done and what the role of tribal staff will be. Effectively, the agreements create a co-management regime for off-reservation lands that are of interest to the Nez Perce. Initiatives such as these promote mutually beneficial relationships around shared goals. Through these partnerships, the Tribe meets its resource management objectives in a way that would be impossible if constrained by the boundaries of the reservation. The Fisheries Department currently employs 51 full-time and 21 seasonal staff whose work is based off-reservation but within the Tribe's traditional territory.

The Nez Perce Tribe is recognized as a leader in the region because of its reputation for scientific and management excellence. The Department has built up its well-qualified workforce over time, developing a wide range of competencies in different areas such as environmental law, policy, litigation, tribal history, and funding mechanisms. State fish and game staff respect the Nez Perce Tribe's biological research, statistical sampling, harvest cut-off decisions, and on-the-river fisheries policing. The Tribe's capabilities help it affirm its sovereignty over resources in its traditional territory since it can determine its own objectives and enforce harvest limits on its own citizens without interference from non-tribal agencies.

Impressively, the Department's success has led to new career opportunities for tribal citizens and powerfully motivates young tribal students to pursue college-level studies. The Department currently employs 14 Nez Perce citizens with Bachelor's or Master's degrees, a remarkable achievement in a Tribe with

a small population. Non-tribal employees are equally devoted to resource management and treated as an integral part of the team. In the words of one employee, non-tribal staff members “quickly align themselves to the Tribe’s resource-oriented history and goals.”

The Nez Perce Fisheries Department also brings a unique perspective to conventional resource management operations. Federal mandates focus on preventing species extinction, while state fish and game management agencies aim for sufficient fish to allow harvesting. In contrast, the Nez Perce Tribe’s actions are driven by the goal of fully restoring fish runs to their natural abundance in accordance with Nimiipuu values and knowledge. The Tribe has also conducted extensive research on how to successfully supplement wild spawning and has gone beyond regular fish hatchery practices to build special areas that acclimate fish to natural stream conditions. The Department pursued the re-introduction of coho salmon in the Clearwater River over strong opposition from the state of Idaho which was concerned this native species would displace other fish and reduce harvest revenues. Nez Perce persevered, and the project was so successful that the state now sells permits to fish for local coho.

Clearly, by broadening the goals of regional resource management, the Nez Perce Fisheries Department benefits all area residents. In the words of one program employee, “When the majority non-tribal public sees better fishing, better habitat, and management on par with their own state or federal agencies, it serves to erase years of prejudice and replace it with a new paradigm.”

Bringing the Lessons Home

Because the resource was depleted by factors outside of its control, the Nez Perce Tribe’s court-protected treaty right to harvest fish throughout its traditional territory had lost its practical meaning. The Tribe has responded by creating and continuously strengthening a Fisheries Department that is known for its far-reaching vision and expertise in restoring fish stocks in accordance with Nimiipuu cultural values. Working with its federal, state, and tribal counterparts, the Fisheries Department is protecting Nez Perce treaty rights by reclaiming a leadership role in managing natural resources throughout the Columbia River Basin.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 Protecting a nation's natural resources protects its culture.
- 2 Building internal capacity by investing in the academic achievement of its citizens fortifies the effective exercise of treaty rights.
- 3 Cooperation and co-management with tribal, state, and federal partners is fundamental to protecting natural resources.



HIGH HONORS

OHERO:KON "UNDER THE HUSK" RITES OF PASSAGE
HAUDENOSAUNEE CONFEDERACY



The teenage years are an exciting but challenging phase of life. For Native youth, racism and mixed messages about identity can make the transition to adulthood particularly fraught, and may even lead to risky or self-destructive behavior. Within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, a groundbreaking initiative to restore rites of passage for youth has engaged the entire community. The Ohero:kon ceremonial rite guides youth through Mohawk practices and teachings in the modern context, strengthening their cultural knowledge, self-confidence, and leadership skills.

A Loss of Connection

Located along the Saint Lawrence River, Akwesasne is home to approximately 13,000 Mohawks. A complex mix of governments exercise jurisdiction over its territory. The international border between the United States and Canada bisects Akwesasne lands, and the community shares a geography with two Canadian provinces (Ontario and Quebec) and one US state (New York). Within the community, there are two externally recognized governments—the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, recognized by the US government, and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, recognized by the Canadian government—and two longhouse (traditional) governments. Additionally, the Mohawk people are part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which has a rich presence throughout the region.

Incompatibility between the robust governance institutions and the policies of the colonizing governments has led to intense and, at times, violent political polarization within the community. Because of these schisms, the Mohawk people have found it difficult to resolve or even address many pressing social and governmental issues. The proliferation of contradicting laws, moral codes, and standards of behavior is another result, which fuels further divisions. For example, disagreements over core values have caused serious rifts in family relationships.

These divisions had a particularly negative effect on the youth. In the face of racism, many teenagers reported feelings of shame, misunderstanding, and a lack of connection to their Haudenosaunee heritage. Because the breakdown of the matrilineal village system disrupted the traditional ways that marked the transition from childhood to adulthood, young people had few options for guidance during this crucial life stage. Instead, they adopted the rites of passage of mainstream society, resulting in risky sexual behavior and illicit drug and alcohol use. Truancy, addiction, teen pregnancy, and suicide were compromising both the health of young citizens and the future of the Confederacy.

In responding to this crisis, early organizers (mothers) identified this political complexity as a crucial barrier to adolescent health and wellbeing. Characterized by individual and group empowerment, Ohero:kon builds on the social ties of the Mohawk community and creates opportunities for synergy and balance. The program uses a purposeful, socially-constructed model of community-held governance to provide a safe space for creative self-expression, the development of leadership, and the growth of the kinship network.

New Rites of Passage

Ten years ago, searching for a way to address these problems, Bear Clan Mother Wakerakatste Louise Herne led a group of seven boys in a fast on top of a mountain in nearby Kanesatake. From this modest beginning, Ohero:kon has developed into a seven-year, rite of passage initiative for all community youth. Ohero:kon, which means “Under the Husk” in the Mohawk language, refers to the layers of social and cultural protection of children in their transition to adulthood through programming informed by ancient ceremonies, rituals, and teachings. Participation is open to any Haudenosaunee girl or boy who has entered puberty.

The initiates, known as “nieces” and “nephews,” are each paired with several adult mentors of their choosing, known as “uncles” and “aunties,” who guide them throughout the program. Ohero:kon notably mobilizes a diverse group of adults—including culture-bearers, fire-keepers, basket makers, farmers, fishermen, government leaders, sexual health educators, health professionals, police officers, singers, and artists—to help prepare youth for their adult roles. During the first four years of Ohero:kon, participants commit to a full day of activities and workshops every weekend from January to May. The curriculum covers a broad range of topics relevant to teenagers. Many are driven by current issues, such as sexting and Internet exploitation. The Ohero:kon curriculum also puts special emphasis on the transmission of Mohawk language, culture, and teachings. As a way to learn about their bodies and how to conduct themselves with respect in relation to one another, the youth prepare and grow Mother Earth Gardens, in which plantings of tobacco, strawberries, corn, beans, and squash represent the body of Sky Woman’s daughter. Families are encouraged to work together to build fasting lodges, initiates are required to take part in sweat lodges, and young women are invited to attend full moon ceremonies. The youth are also encouraged to attend longhouse ceremonies. At





the conclusion of these four years, the nieces and nephews undertake a ritual fast, from which they return by canoe to a community feast that celebrates their journey and accomplishments. The final three years of Ohero:kon are self-directed, with each participant working toward his or her personal goals.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe funds approximately half of Ohero:kon's budget through an annual set-aside of its Community Partnership Fund. The Tribe and Mohawk Council of Akwesasne also donate staff time and the use of resources such as vehicles, which help Ohero:kon provide transportation to its activities. In fact, these and other in-kind contributions help keep the entire program low-cost and sustainable.

The community's response to Ohero:kon has been overwhelmingly positive. While early cohorts were encouraged by parents and other adult relatives to attend, youth now hear about it from their peers or on social media and ask to join. The program has grown every year, with a record high of 81 participants in 2015. That same year, more than 600 community members attended the daylong feast to celebrate the return of the young fasters. The program's success is also evident in the ongoing engagement of past initiates, who are returning to assist with ceremonies, evaluation, and curriculum development. As one community member attested, "Ohero:kon is a continual series of answered prayers of generations of ancestors."

The Power of Tradition

The revitalization of rites of passage is having a profound impact on the way youth experience adolescence. Mohawk children face assimilation into mainstream culture and many are bullied at school, while others have the additional trauma of an unstable home life or abuse. Ohero:kon provides participating youth with a safe and supportive environment to work through these serious issues. They have an opportunity to increase self-awareness through cultural activities with adult guidance—and a real alternative to partying as a means to deal with feelings of social dislocation and alienation. Because of Ohero:kon, teens are better equipped to take on personal challenges, drawing strength from meaningful relationships with their culture, their mentors, and their peers. In the words of one grateful father, "Ohero:kon has provided assistance to me in guiding my daughter to a good path and the red path. It is true that it takes a village to raise a child."

Ohero:kon strengthens sovereignty by laying the groundwork for today's teens to move into leadership roles as adults. The program's content emphasizes the importance of Mohawk identity to the community's ongoing survival. As Wakerakatste points out, "What we are doing, you can't buy at Walmart." Ohero:kon's activities are structured to promote critical thinking and consensus building so that teens are able to make their own contributions going forward. The teens are also expected to volunteer in the community outside of the time they spend in Ohero:kon activities. Many take advantage of opportunities to travel beyond tribal lands to present their stories to other communities, university events, or to participate in gatherings such as the Tribal Youth Conference in Washington, DC. Through these experiences, Ohero:kon youth gain the cultural knowledge and leadership skills they need to help build the Haudenosaunee Confederacy for generations to come.

The strong support for Ohero:kon from various community groups and organizations speaks to the initiative's fundamental importance to the Mohawk people. Within a fragmented political context, Ohero:kon has brought the community together by focusing on the needs of youth. The program emphasizes inclusiveness and respect; any Haudenosaunee teen can participate in Ohero:kon regardless of religious, family, or political affiliation. Whatever their views on the issues facing the tribe, community members recognize the importance of passing along Mohawk teachings to the next generation and have rallied around this objective. Indeed, many of the adult mentors have found that their work with the youth deepens their own cultural understanding and pride. Adults speak emotionally about being an "uncle" or "auntie" as well as their personal healing that comes from learning and sharing cultural knowledge through practice. In bringing the community together to mentor youth, Ohero:kon restores hope for the future.

Bringing the Lessons Home

As cultural traditions are lost, Native youth often struggle to develop a strong identity. Ohero:kon addresses this concern by reviving ancient coming of age rituals, providing mentorship to youth through their formative years, and adapting them to modern realities. Impressively, the program invites the entire community to become involved in the transfer of knowledge across generations.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 A nation has a responsibility to assist its youth transition into adulthood.
- 2 By restoring traditional mentorship practices, youth have a safe structure to grow and develop.
- 3 A nation's future rests in the success of its youth.

Human Body: Anterior

Human Body: Posterior



HONORS

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS
FORT PECK ASSINIBOINE AND SIOUX TRIBES

Situated in the “most unhealthy county in the state of Montana” and confronting staggering indicators of poor health among their people, the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation decided their children deserved better. The Tribes made a bold move that is as simple as it is logical: they established and staffed full service health clinics in the schools on their reservation. Financed largely through Medicaid reimbursement, the high quality healthcare now available to tribal youth includes dental care, mental health services, nutrition counseling, and medical care. The School-Based Health Centers are not only an outstanding example of self-determination but are also a powerful reminder that having healthy citizens is critical for building strong nations.

Unmet Medical Needs

The two million acre Fort Peck Indian Reservation shares a geography with northeastern Montana and is home to approximately 12,000 citizens of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. The area has a high poverty rate, and a majority of its American Indian residents are eligible for Medicaid. Over 30% of the community’s high school students drop out without graduating. The unemployment rate on the reservation is over 50%.

The community’s economic conditions have a profoundly negative effect on reservation residents’ health. In 2012, male tribal members of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes had a life expectancy of 50 years, compared to 75 years for white males in Montana. Women showed a comparable disparity, with a life expectancy 22 years less than that of their non-Indian counterparts. High rates of smoking, alcohol use, exposure to violence, trauma, and suicide prevail among tribal youth. Almost 50% of children in the reservation’s schools are overweight or obese, and more than 60% have had untreated tooth decay. Such statistics led the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to designate Roosevelt County, which overlaps a large portion of the reservation, “the most unhealthy county in Montana.”

Limited access to healthcare has been one reason for the high prevalence of health problems. The physician-to-person ratio on the reservation is 1-to-4,010, significantly lower than the US average. The federal Indian Health Service (IHS) operates a clinic for tribal members on the reservation, but it is short staffed and underfunded. The clinic has such long waiting lists that only the most acute cases are seen, leading one tribal member to quip, “If you aren’t going to die

or lose a limb, you won't get treated." The nearest off-reservation clinic that provides primary care to low income patients is a two-and-a-half hour drive away. Many children living on the reservation grow up without ever seeing a doctor for routine check-ups.

Clinics in the Schools

The Fort Peck Tribes were concerned that youth were not getting the care they needed to do well in school and develop healthy lifetime habits. In 2007, the tribal Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Program adopted the novel approach of setting up health centers in space donated by local public schools. The School-Based Health Centers are now located in 75% of the reservation's school districts. The clinics are open to all students in the schools, whether or not they are tribal citizens, and regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

The School-Based Health Centers offer a broad range of services, including evaluation and treatment for common health problems, immunizations, nutrition counseling, sports physicals, reproductive health care, individual and group therapy, and medication management. In 2012, based on its success addressing medical needs, the program expanded to include dental care; students receive preventative services every three months, including cleanings, fluoride rinses, sealants, and dental exams. The School-Based Health Centers employ more than 15 staff members, including a nutritionist, a suicide prevention counselor, dental hygienists, and several nurse practitioners. The providers use evidence-based medical best practices while respecting the local culture and traditions of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. The program also has three medical consultants — two physicians and a pedodontist — who serve as advisors to the program and help arrange for care that cannot be provided in the clinics, such as restorative dental work.

Funding for the School-Based Health Centers comes primarily from Medicaid reimbursement, supplemented with modest amounts of grant funding, other third-party payments, and an annually renewed IHS contract for community-based medical and dental services. Critically, the contract makes the Tribes eligible to bill Medicaid at the same all-inclusive outpatient visit reimbursement rate that IHS receives from the federal government. Although the reimbursement applies only to Medicaid-eligible tribal citizens, the large number of qualified patients generates sufficient funding to cover the additional services that the clinic offers, including coverage for uninsured non-citizens. The contract also





provides liability insurance coverage for the Tribes' providers. To further use resources efficiently, the program partners with universities and faith-based organizations for specific extra and short-term services, such as nursing student visits, summer medical assistance, and an exercise video featuring traditional dances.

The School-Based Health Centers are transforming the delivery of healthcare for children living on the Fort Peck Reservation. Operating with an annual budget of approximately \$3 million, they currently provide services to over 1,100 children. In the smallest two reservation school districts, more than 95% of students use the clinics. In a third, larger district almost 75% of students are enrolled, and the tribes now are working to expand the program into the last and largest school district on the reservation.

Community-Based Healthcare

A major accomplishment of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes' School-Based Health Centers is the "de-siloing" of healthcare—an approach that holds lessons for primary health care everywhere. Their service provision is resolutely student-centered, so that youth have a single point of access for all of their healthcare needs. Whether a student needs a dental checkup or mental health support, the service is available through the Centers. The fact that the medical disciplines are integrated in one location also reinforces the idea that an individual's health is multi-faceted and holistic. Providers coordinate their efforts and support each other, which further contributes to seamless and holistic care. Students and their families come to know and trust the providers in the Centers, making it easier for them to ask for help with health issues.

The School-Based Health Centers also serve as a national model for their focus on preventative care. By offering these services in a location that is already part of children's daily lives, the clinics have succeeded in making preventative care readily available to students regardless of their economic status or place of residence. By including health education, the programming helps establish life-long healthy habits, a crucial component of preventable medical care since many of today's major chronic health problems are caused by nutrition and lifestyle choices. Vaccinations and routine medical check-ups minimize the chances that these young patients will eventually develop more serious

health issues. In sum, the Tribes' school clinic approach turns the dominant healthcare delivery method—which expects families to take the lead in arranging for services and which is particularly challenging in low-income or remote communities—on its head.

Significantly, the School-Based Health Centers are a cost-effective means of achieving these healthcare access and health education goals. IHS continues to manage the on-reservation health clinic, so the School-Based Health Centers complement rather than replace these services. Costs are contained and services are expanded through the strategic use of PL 638 contracting and Medicaid reimbursement and by avoiding the need to invest in additional health-delivery infrastructure. Looking forward, the clinics also represent an opportunity to build capacity should the Fort Peck Tribes determine, at some point in the future, that they wish to manage additional federal programs. A final benefit is that unlike federal programming, services at Fort Peck's school clinics are designed by tribal citizens and reflect local values and perspectives.

Bringing the Lessons Home

The Fort Peck Indian Reservation is geographically remote and the majority of its residents live in poverty, two factors which complicate access to quality medical services. The Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes' School-Based Health Centers make healthcare available to students in a convenient location, so that preventative and routine medical care can be provided regardless of residence or income level. With this initiative, the Tribes are building a healthier future for their youth and are developing a model of integrated and accessible care that holds promise for medically underserved communities nationwide.



LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

- 1 School-based health centers provide essential healthcare while facilitating academic achievement for students.
- 2 Effective healthcare is student-centered with a single point of access for all healthcare needs.
- 3 Healthy citizens are critical for building strong nations.



ABOUT HONORING NATIONS



Established in 1998 by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Honoring Nations highlights tribal government success by celebrating, documenting, and disseminating the stories of outstanding programs in self-governance.

At the heart of Honoring Nations is the principle that tribes themselves hold the key to social, political, cultural, and economic prosperity—and that self-governance plays a crucial role in building and sustaining strong, healthy Indian nations. Honoring Nations helps shift the focus from what does not work to what does, fostering confidence and pride in American Indian governments as critical contributors to the well-being of their communities and citizens.

Honored programs serve as important sources of knowledge and inspiration for communities throughout Indian Country and far beyond. As honorees share their innovative ideas and effective governing approaches, Honoring Nations helps Native nation builders learn from each other and seed promising practices. The high public visibility and news coverage of Honoring Nations also permit non-Native policymakers, the media, and the general public to learn what Native nations are actually doing in the drive for self-determination.

Honoring Nations invites applications from American Indian governments across a broad range of subject areas: education, health care, natural resource management, government reform, justice, intergovernmental relations, culture, and economic development. The Honoring Nations Board of Governors—distinguished individuals from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—guides the evaluation process. At each stage of the selection process, programs are evaluated on the basis of significance to sovereignty, effectiveness, cultural relevance, transferability, and sustainability.

Honorees receive national recognition to share their success story with others. Together with its partner organization, the Native Nations Institute (NNI) at the University of Arizona, the Harvard Project produces reports, case studies, and other curricular materials that are disseminated to tribal leaders, public servants, the media, scholars, students, and others interested in promoting and fostering excellence in governance.

To date, Honoring Nations has recognized 124 exemplary tribal government programs, three All-Stars, and held five tribal government symposia.

ABOUT THE HARVARD PROJECT ON AMERICAN INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

From Indian Country to Congress to international arenas, the Harvard Project is recognized as the premier producer of world class, practical tools for Indigenous nation building. Founded by Professors Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt at Harvard University in 1987, the Harvard Project is housed at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Through applied research and service, the Harvard Project aims to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations. The Harvard Project's core activities include research, advisory services, executive education, and the administration of a tribal governance awards program. In all of its activities, the Harvard Project collaborates with the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona.

At the heart of the Harvard Project is the systematic, comparative study of social and economic development on American Indian reservations. What works, where, and why? Among the key research findings:

- **Sovereignty Matters.** When Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers—on matters as diverse as law enforcement, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision.
- **Institutions Matter.** Assertions of sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of self-governance. A nation does this as it adopts a stable rule of law—a rule of its own law—and then protects that with fair and independent mechanisms for dispute resolution, efficient administration, and systems that separate politics from day-to-day business and program management.
- **Culture Matters.** Successful nations stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally-grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture.
- **Leadership Matters.** Nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change. Such leaders—whether elected, community, or spiritual—convince people that things can be different and inspire them to take action.

For almost three decades, the Harvard Project has undertaken hundreds of research studies and advisory projects. Results of Harvard Project research are published widely. Summary treatments are provided in “Reloading the Dice: Improving the Chances of Economic Development on American Indian Reservations” (Cornell and Kalt) and “Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development Challenge in Indian Country Today” (Cornell and Kalt). For more information, please visit the Harvard Project's website: www.hpaied.org.

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Colophon: This report was set in Frutiger and Saban and designed by Amy Besaw Medford (Brothertown).



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We thank **Megan Minoka Hill** for administrating the awards program and extend endless gratitude to **Nicole Grenier, Moana HoChing,** and **Valerie O’Kane** for their tireless work during the awards season. The Harvard Project’s co-director, **Joe Kalt,** and research director, **Miriam Jorgensen,** deserves enormous praise for their countless contributions and insights. Special thanks to **Catherine Curtis** for writing the honoree profiles contained in this report and to **Amy Besaw Medford** for creating the report layout and design... and for always stepping in to lend a hand. Gratitude also goes to Harvard student **Damon Clark** for investing in our efforts while maintaining a busy class schedule. The beautiful clay works of art given to the honorees were created by Haudenosaunee artist, **Peter B. Jones.**

Site visitors play a key role in the evaluation process. Appreciation to the 2015 site visitors: **Amber Annis, Sherry Salway Black, Catherine Curtis, Dave Gipp, Brian Henderson, Eric Henson, Megan Minoka Hill, Jennifer Hill-Kelley, Miriam Jorgensen, Heather Kendall-Miller, Andrew Lee, Jessica Packineau, Jonathan Taylor,** and **Joan Timeche.**

Most importantly, thank you to all of the **program representatives and tribal leaders** of the honorees for Honoring Nations 2015. Their vision, determination, and extraordinary triumphs give Indian Country and the rest of the world remarkable inspiration!



The work of the Harvard Project is made possible through the generous support and partnership with the:

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The Bush Foundation’s mission is to be a catalyst for the courageous leadership necessary to create sustainable solutions to tough public problems and ensure community vitality. Established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, the Foundation works in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. Specific to Native nations, the Foundation is supporting their self-determined nation building strategies.

The Endeavor Foundation

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ABOUT THE ARTIST



Peter B. Jones, Potter/Sculptor

Born on Seneca's Cattaraugus Indian Reservation to an Onondaga mother and a Seneca father, Pete's childhood experience was in an era of transition. It was a period of hearing the adults speak only in Seneca and one where children were encouraged to speak English. At fifteen, Pete decided to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM where he studied under master Hopi artist, Otellie Loloma. This led to his life's work as an artist and spokesperson for Indigenous people.

Pete now enjoys over 40 years of living as an artist, working in mediums of both pottery and sculpture. The National Museum of the American Indian; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Institute of American Indian Arts; The Heard Museum; Museum of Anthropology, Berlin, Germany; and the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, among many others, include his works in their collections. Pete is often invited to participate in the prestigious Indian Market at the Eiteljorg Museum as well as many other special exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. He hopes his works of art prompt us all to remember that the pottery tradition of Iroquois people is still alive and well.

Hailing from the Beaver Clan, Pete often bases his creations on traditional Iroquois pottery designs. The special curation for the Honoring Nations Awards are thus inspired. We wish Pete and his family all the best and offer sincere appreciation for his invaluable contributions to Honoring Nations.

Pete can be contacted by email at pbjones@dishmail.net.

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