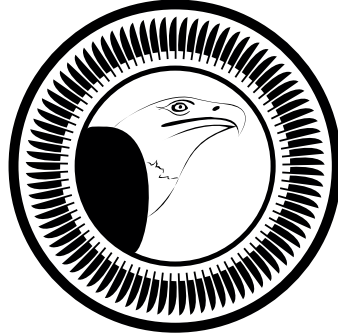




HONORING NATIONS

Celebrating Excellence in Tribal Governance

The HARVARD PROJECT on
American Indian Economic Development



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 136 Contributions that demonstrate excellence and innovation, while addressing critical concerns and challenges facing the 573 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 the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School, and is a proud member of a worldwide family of "governmental best practices programs."

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HONORING NATIONS



HELLO & WELCOME

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, and 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.

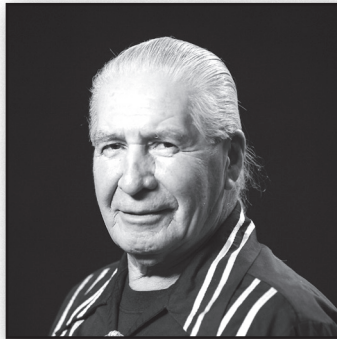
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Regis Pecos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Regis Pecos, *Cochiti*
Chairman of the Board of Governors, Honoring Nations

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MEET THE 2018 AWARDEES



Environmental Program

Native Village of Kotzebue

The Native Village of Kotzebue Environmental Program advances Village research priorities that meld Iñupiat traditional knowledge with western science, influences state and federal policy, and fully participates in the management of natural resources critical to protecting and sustaining their cultural, nutritional, and spiritual lifeways.



Health Aide Training Programs

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Celebrating over 50 years of services to Alaska Native villages, the ANTHC Health Aide Training Programs form the backbone of the Alaska Native health care system. Trained in community health, dental health, and behavioral health, the aides are an indispensable part of health care delivery and now practice in over 170 communities in rural Alaska and in cities across the state.



Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki Program

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

The Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki Program (the Miami Awakening) reincorporates Myaamia culture and language into the community through curricula, youth summer camps, cultural gatherings, publications, mobile cultural workshops, and other educational programming. The Program focuses on communal ties and inclusivity to engage every citizen.

MEET THE 2018 AWARDEES



Quapaw Nation Agricultural Programs

Quapaw Nation

The Quapaw Nation Agricultural Programs are a farm-to-table initiative that houses the first USDA certified meat processing plant in Indian Country. Promoting healthy diets and job creation, the Agricultural Programs focus on sustainable and humane methods of breeding, raising, and processing livestock as well as planting and harvesting crops for the community.



Sitka ICWA Partnership

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Rooted in respect, communication, and an abiding commitment to the health and safety of children, the Sitka Tribe and the state of Alaska have reimagined conventional approaches to ICWA implementation through proactive engagement. Through systematic cross-pollination and joint case management, the Tribe and the state work together to heal and empower families.



Wellness Programming

Yurok Tribe

Grounded in Yurok village values of reciprocal responsibility, the Yurok tribal court's Wellness Programming is reclaiming its people—and its future. Operating in a PL-280 state, the court practices concurrent jurisdiction with the state of California and infuses traditional tribal values into contemporary jurisprudence to serve tribal citizens in culturally appropriate ways.

HONORING NATIONS



Environmental Program

Native Village of Kotzebue

The Native Village of Kotzebue is the tribal government for the Iñupiaq people of Kotzebue, Alaska. Located on the coast in northwest Alaska, 30 miles north of the Arctic Circle, Kotzebue often hosts research teams eager to study the region's ecology. For years, researchers lacked accountability to the local people; they did not consider them as equal partners in research and rarely credited the Indigenous knowledge shared. In the late 1990s, the Village government launched its Environmental Program to advance science-based research, driven by tribal priorities and rooted in long-held Iñupiaq values. Through this approach, the tribe is now a full research partner in the majority of projects concerning its land and waters, benefiting its citizens, and producing Best Available Science through the integration of Indigenous knowledge with western science.

TRIBAL CONCERNS IGNORED

The Native Village of Kotzebue's tribal government serves 3,300 tribal citizens living in Kotzebue and in the surrounding Qikiqtaġruṅmiut (people of Kotzebue) homeland. The community is located on the Kotzebue Sound, a bay of the Chukchi Sea, and is accessible only by air or water. The community of Kotzebue is a regional center and has a long history as a trading hub for nearby settlements. As they have for thousands of years, tribal citizens depend on the area's fish, marine mammals, wildlife, berries, and plants for their cultural, nutritional, and spiritual needs.

Researchers investigating everything from archaeology to marine mammals have long used Kotzebue as a base for operations. For years, their practices were problematic—rarely would they contact the tribe to discuss the purpose or scope of their activities. Some researchers would invite community members to participate in projects without providing adequate compensation. Others would fail to give credit to tribal citizens who provided key information or played significant roles in

research projects. Once researchers left the community, most would not inform the tribe of their progress or results, even though their findings were of interest and relevant to the tribal citizens and wholly, or in part, based on local Indigenous knowledge.

Policymaking by outside governments' raised another set of concerns. State and federal policies related to the Kotzebue Sound were made without adequate tribal consultation. In addition, conservation strategies did not accommodate traditional uses and practices, interfering with subsistence activities and alienating the tribe.

By the late 1990s, concerns about new threats to the vitality of the Sound—including, shipping activity, oil exploration, and climate change—rose to the fore. The need to address researchers' and governments' problematic practices, and to protect the tribe's natural resources, had become a priority for the Village. The tribal council resolved to take action.

HONORING NATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

In 1997, the Native Village of Kotzebue used funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency's Indian General Assistance Program to initiate an environmental presence, which has developed into a robust Environmental Program with the mission of increasing the tribe's influence over regional environmental policy.

In order to ground its work in tribal priorities, the Environmental Program's first action was to conduct a tribal citizen survey. The dominant theme emerging from survey responses was the need to preserve the health of Kotzebue Sound. More specific community concerns emerged relating to improving water quality, reducing contaminants, and protecting marine life. Guided by this feedback, the Program developed a Tribal Environmental Action Plan, which is updated as new concerns and priorities arise.

The tribe regularly publicizes its activities and progress through presentations at local gatherings, community newsletters, and even through posters designed to hang on doors in fish camps. The Program also actively informs universities, federal and state agencies, and non-governmental organizations of its environmental priorities and uses the Action Plan to guide and coordinate their efforts in the region.

A second key aspect of the tribe's Environmental Program is a research protocol that governs scientific activity in the region. This protocol, adopted by Tribal Ordinance in 1999, requires all third-party researchers to submit a formal request to the Native Village of Kotzebue before undertaking projects that use tribal resources or is conducted with tribal citizens. The tribe reviews all proposed research efforts to





assess the value and relevance to tribal priorities and provides feedback to the researchers. For projects meeting the approval of the tribe, the Environmental Program works collaboratively with the researchers to identify opportunities for tribal citizen involvement. Importantly, the protocol stipulates that the data and research conclusions be shared in non-technical language with the tribe and ensures that tribal citizens are properly credited for their contributions in all published materials, including peer-reviewed journals.

Since the launch of the Environmental Program, the tribe has participated in more than 30 major research and environmental projects with a wide range of partners.

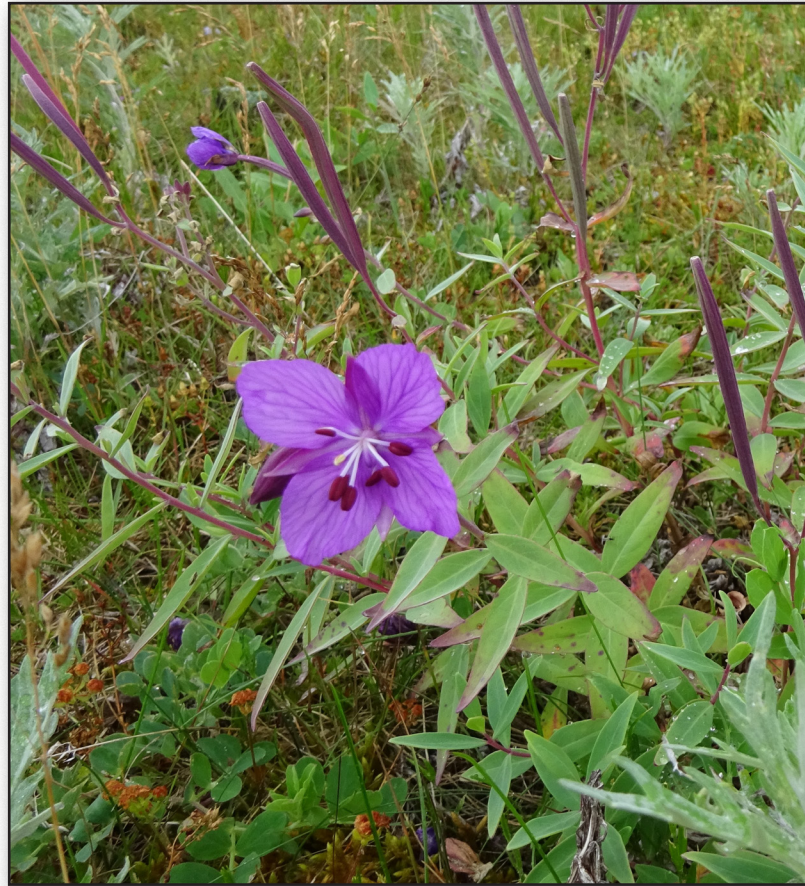
A core team of tribal citizens work on most projects and over 120 community members have participated in research efforts. The Program has secured over \$4.7 million in external funding through awards and grants. Research participation has become a significant economic force in the community, supplementing the income of elders and other tribal citizens. Most importantly, the Environmental Program has caused a paradigm shift by promoting an Indigenous-western science collaborative approach to research, thereby making it standard practice for university researchers, federal agencies, the state of Alaska, and companies to work with the Village on environmental issues and scientific research.

HONORING NATIONS

RECOGNIZING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

The Native Village of Kotzebue has taken a significant leadership role in resource management. The Environmental Action Plan has proven to be a particularly powerful tool for creating valuable partnerships for addressing issues of importance to the tribe. As a result, the Environmental Program is involved in a wide variety of initiatives, from working with the local government to reducing sewage discharge into Kotzebue Sound to coordinating the cleanup of an open dump site. The program also worked with the state of Alaska to make seal oil safe from foodborne pathogens so that this well-loved traditional food staple can be served to elders in Medicare/Medicaid-certified care facilities. The tribe also uses its Action Plan to leverage funding for its environmental priorities from government agencies and major multinationals. For example, the Environmental Program received a National Park Service grant to document elders' observations about environmental changes, which contributed to the 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and support from the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge to monitor the health of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Similarly, when Shell Oil Company launched a research funding program in parallel with its exploration work in the Chukchi Sea, the tribe responded quickly with the implementation of a number of Kotzebue Sound ecological and physical research projects from its Plan-based wish list. In other words, the Environmental Program helps the tribe identify relevant projects, recruits willing partners, and secures funding—giving it real choice over the environmental research conducted on its waters and lands.

The Environmental Program has also changed the way its citizens' Indigenous knowledge is recognized in scientific research. Indigenous knowledge is now a key component of all the research carried out and the tribal citizens holding this knowledge are formally acknowledged and compensated for the expertise they contribute. Before the tribe put its research protocol in place, project investigators had a tendency to dismiss Indigenous knowledge as anecdotal and unreliable. Yet as the tribe's Environmental Director points out, tribal citizens' unique perspectives provide "more depth, nuance, and cultural relevance, resulting in otherwise unobtainable research findings." In one noteworthy example, the tribe collaborated



with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Mammal Lab to better understand the habitat use and seasonal movement of ringed and bearded seals. This ten-year project broke new ground by permitting tribal citizen researchers to undertake fieldwork in the absence of a supervising scientist. This resulted in the first ever successful capture, satellite tagging, and release of bearded seals. Many of the research results reinforce environmental observations made by tribal citizens, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge is transmitted to scientists and to younger generations. Commenting on the seal behavior research program, two of the elders involved noted that the project's conclusions on site fidelity

“proved what we knew. The seals always go back to where they were born.” The tribe's research protocol underlines the prominent and credible role of tribal citizens by requiring that these knowledge keepers be recognized as equal partners.

Guided by the Action Plan and research expertise, the tribe is in a strong position to advocate for its interests with federal agencies, the state of Alaska, and multinational corporations. The tribe monitors development and management proposals from other entities and actively participates in inter-governmental initiatives such as the Kotzebue Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee. Former Tribal Chairman Pete Schaeffer explains, “Banging mukluks on the table didn't get us anywhere. Now we have a voice and respect.” The Environmental Director works closely with regulators to adjust wildlife management plans to accommodate tribal needs and resolve conflicts. For example, the tribe successfully pushed for a tribal citizen musk-oxen hunt on federal land and for rule changes to permit the use of snowmobiles for caribou, wolf, and wolverine hunting. Through their ongoing cooperation with the tribe, researchers and policy makers increasingly appreciate that Indigenous knowledge is a crucial element in obtaining and documenting the Best Available Science for species conservation and resource management. Once research results are published in peer-reviewed journals, tribal wisdom becomes part of the scientific record, which is then used as evidence to issue permits, determine mitigation requirements, and make future policy decisions. Traditional values are integrated into the process of shaping environmental protection measures in the region, leading to more informed strategies and better actions.



HONORING NATIONS



LESSONS

Tribal citizens have managed the land and resources in the Kotzebue Sound area since time immemorial. Through its Environmental Program, the Native Village of Kotzebue works in partnership with other governments to address important concerns using tribal perspectives and experience. The community enriches research results by cooperating with scientists from all over the world. As the tribe combines ancient knowledge with new technology and the latest scientific research methods, it is reasserting its ability to preserve the natural environment and the Qikiqtagruṅmiut way of life.



When a tribe exercises authority over environmental research, it helps ensure that its natural resources are managed in ways that align with tribal values and that tribal priorities are addressed in research plans.



Training community members to conduct world-class research can support the tribal economy and solidify the nation's leadership on a host of policy and regulatory issues.



When Indigenous knowledge is recognized as valid and credible evidence, it informs both better decisions and better policy making, while building bridges between western managers and tribal citizens.

HONORING NATIONS



Health Aide Training Programs

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

The opportunity to see a medical professional when needed is something that many people living in the United States take for granted. For those living in rural Alaska however, visiting a medical professional is rarely easy. Communities are isolated, medical needs are significant, and patients' cultural and linguistic backgrounds can affect diagnoses and treatments. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium has taken on these challenges by educating village residents to serve as the primary medical providers within the state's tribal health care system.

A NEED FOR BETTER MEDICAL CARE

In the 1950s, a report commissioned by the US Department of the Interior found that Alaska Native people had one of the highest rates of tuberculosis infection in the world, as well as high levels of infant mortality and accidental deaths. Currently, Alaska Natives have some of the highest per capita rates of oral disease, tobacco use, cancer, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicide in the country. In recent decades, chronic disease management and mental health also have become prominent public health concerns.

Despite these significant needs, cost and distance limit access to routine health care. Rural Alaska has a high percentage of individuals living in poverty. Alaskan villages are typically small in population and spread out geographically. Over 70% of the state's villages can only be reached by small plane or boat. Medical professionals visit isolated communities a few times a year. As a result, patients are often flown out of the villages to the nearest regional center to consult with a doctor. Such travel is disruptive and costly for the patient and the patient's family.

Further complicating health care delivery, the Indigenous people from each region of Alaska have distinct languages and traditions. Cultural misunderstandings can make it difficult for providers trained in Western medicine to properly treat Native patients—providers well versed in one set of Native traditions may not have the cultural awareness to properly engage with patients from other Native traditions. These challenges can further discourage families from accessing medical care or cause them to struggle to understand medical treatments.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium recognized that the well-being and sustainability of their communities was compromised due to a lack of access to health care. Over the past few decades, tribal health organizations and Alaska Native villages have worked together to develop innovative education programs that address the unique needs of their people.

HONORING NATIONS

RURAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

In the 1960s, as part of a public health effort to reduce the spread of tuberculosis, the federal government launched a program that trained non-professional aides to deliver a specific set of health care services in the state's Alaska Native villages. The first class of Community Health Aides graduated in 1968. Over time, as Alaska Native people gained control of health care delivery for their citizens, tribal health organizations and village governments have expanded the range of medical services in remote areas. Today, health aide education is a central feature of the statewide, tribally managed health care system for Alaska Native people.

Community Health Aides are the sole full-time health practitioners in many rural communities. Tribal villages or regional tribal health organizations select and employ local residents as health aides. Trainees attend

sessions consisting of several weeks of standardized instruction at one of four regional centers operated by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the Norton Sound Health Corporation. Between their classroom sessions, health aides work in village clinics acquiring specific skills. The education provides students with the knowledge and experience necessary to provide a variety of health services in their home villages, from well-child visits and vaccinations to emergency first aid after an accident. Community Health Aides earn certification at several levels of proficiency depending on the extent of their education. They are further guided in their practices through the use of an electronic Community Health Aide/Practitioner manual that provides consistent treatment





guidelines for each type of patient encounter and through consultations with referral physicians in the regional centers.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, Alaskan Native leaders worked to expand health aide education to address more medical needs. In 2004, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium introduced a program designed to address the lack of oral care in the villages. Dental Health Aide Therapists complete an Associate of Dental Health Therapy over a two-year time period, learning how to perform routine dental procedures, maintain and repair dental equipment, and identify serious dental issues. In 2009, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and other tribal health organizations launched a certified Behavioral Health Aide educational program to provide counseling services in rural communities. Students are educated in prevention and intervention methods for a range of behavioral health issues, including sexual assault, domestic violence, depression, and addiction.

It is difficult to imagine life in rural Alaska without the Health Aide Training Programs. The original village health care aide program met and surpassed its goal of reducing tuberculosis infection rates, and has been instrumental in decreasing infant mortality rates and increasing vaccination rates in the rural areas. Today, a workforce of over 500 Community Health Aides provides health care to 170 villages, serves more than 158,000 Alaska Native people, and logs over 300,000 patient encounters yearly. Seventy-five remote villages now utilize dental health aides, giving more than 40,000 Alaska Native people access to regular dental care, greatly reducing the need for emergency dental services. In its first decade, the Behavioral Health Aide program graduated more than 100 individuals who currently serve as counselors and health educators within the Alaska health care system. Together, the three disciplines of community health aides play a key role in every health initiative throughout the state.

HONORING NATIONS

HIGH-QUALITY VILLAGE HEALTH CARE

The Alaska Health Aide Training Programs represent a large-scale investment in the human capital of remote and isolated villages—an investment that also brings financial capital to rural Alaska. Community Health Aide positions offer long-term and well-paid work in areas where unemployment is high and jobs are often seasonal. High school completion is the only academic prerequisite, which makes the Training Programs accessible to a larger number of community residents. Crucially, once health aides are certified, they can bill third party insurance like Medicaid and/or Medicare for the services they provide. This means that health care dollars spent by the state and federal governments can now flow directly to the community rather than to outside providers. One recent analysis found that the Dental Health Aide program brings more than \$9 million of yearly spending into rural Alaskan communities. Each health aide education program offers several levels of certification and ongoing education, so individuals can progress in their careers. Health aides can also use their training as a stepping off point to a career in other medical professions, such as nursing or dentistry.

The availability of health aides addresses the difficult problem of delivering quality health care to underserved populations in rural areas. Health aide education prepares local community members to offer a wide range of services that otherwise would be unavailable. For example, Community Health Aides deliver services that in an urban center would be carried out by several distinct medical providers, including public health officials, EMTs, nurses, primary care physicians, and administrators. Dental Health Aide Therapists carry out some types of restorative dental procedures normally only provided by dentists. In the absence

of professional therapists, Behavioral Health Aides are the only trained counselors available in the villages for substance abuse and mental health issues. This broad model of care is particularly successful in the villages since health aides develop an ongoing relationship with their patients, unlike outside specialists who see patients for limited time periods and for specific medical issues. As one dental health aide points out, “I can remind people about their checkups at the grocery store.” Since they live locally, health aides continuously identify trends and emerging challenges in the villages. This feedback is then used to revise the Community Health Aide manual and state-wide training courses to better reflect the skills required to make aides effective. Health aides are supported in their work by



close collaborations with physicians in the regional centers, who give advice via video when cases are complicated.

While health aides are educated to state-wide standards, the Programs' high degree of local autonomy means that their care is well adapted to the state's culturally diverse communities. The specific role of a health aide in each village varies according to patient needs, the aide's skills, other resources available in the community, and local customs. Health aides are chosen and hired by a tribal government or tribal health organization before they begin their training, so students are always trained for a designated job in a specific community. This reduces the undesirable employee turnover that occurs when new graduates spend only

a short time in a community before leaving for better opportunities elsewhere. Health aides communicate in ways that patients understand and use culturally appropriate approaches, often integrating care plans with traditional healing methods. As an example, some Behavioral Health Aides have prescribed berry picking and beach combing as mindfulness therapy. When patients must travel outside the community for treatment or when specialist providers visit the village, health aides provide guidance on what to expect from the Western medical system. Health aides also contribute to the success of medical interventions by ensuring that treatment follow-up occurs within the village in ways that are compatible with the community's lifestyle.

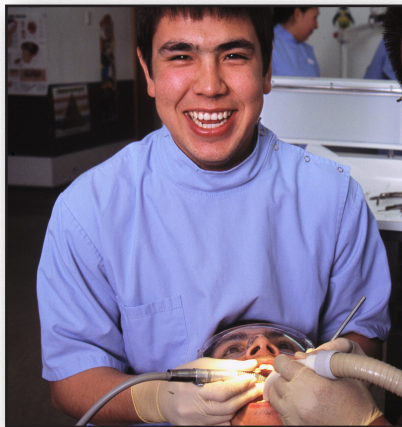


HONORING NATIONS



LESSONS

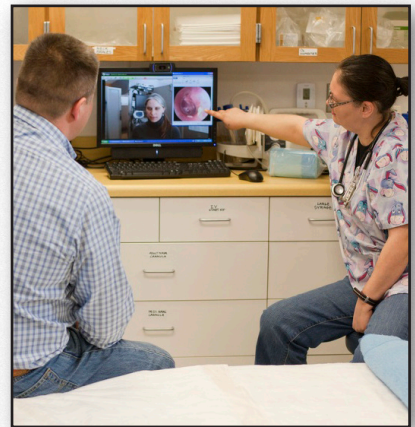
Alaska’s Health Aide Training Programs recently celebrated 50 years of indispensable service to the state’s rural communities. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium has an ambitious goal to ensure that “Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.” With their skill-based education, patient relationships, and local knowledge, health aides provide the care that helps keep Alaska Native people healthy in their home villages.



Health aide training programs are a direct investment in local human capital—which when put to work, can increase the financial capital available in local communities.



Health aides play a crucial role as health care providers, ambassadors, and translators because they understand western medicine, traditional practices, and community needs.



Telemedicine is an invaluable component of all three health aide training programs and doctor-aide-patient collaborations, because it reduces costs and increases access to education and medical care.

HONORING NATIONS



Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki Program

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

The United States has a shameful history of displacing its original inhabitants from their homelands and attempting to wipe out their cultures. Such actions had a devastating effect on the Miami people, who, by the 1990s, became scattered across the country, resulting in an ongoing struggle to maintain their cultural identity. In response, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma created the Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki (the Miami Awakening) program. Rooted in strengthening their kinship ties to one another within a strategic educational framework, Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki helps citizens reconnect to their Indigenous knowledge and value system. And, as tribal citizens reconnect with the knowledge of their ancestors, they are creating a new understanding of what it means to be Myaamia.

A NATION UNDER THREAT

At the time of European contact, over 20,000 Myaamiaki lived in what are now the states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. In the mid-1800s, many Myaamia families living in the Great Lakes region were forcibly relocated to present day Kansas. Two decades later, tribal citizens were forced to move again, this time to Indian Territory in present day Oklahoma. These repeated removals decimated the Myaamia. By the late 1800s, the Tribe—now known as the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma—consisted of fewer than 100 adults. Allotment, a US government policy that isolated tribal citizens on small parcels of land, further undermined the Tribe's ability to thrive.

Severe population decline, loss of land, and aggressive attempts by the federal government to assimilate tribal citizens fractured the Miami Tribe. Citizens were living in small settlements in Oklahoma and elsewhere in the country. Many struggled in extreme poverty. Under these difficult circumstances, the Myaamia language and tribal cultural

practices slid into dormancy. By 1900, more than 60% of the Tribe's citizens already used English as their first language. By the mid-20th century, the Myaamia language was no longer spoken fluently, and only a few tribal elders remembered what it was like to grow up hearing the language and participating in the cultural traditions of their communities.

Compounding the problem, the Miami tribal government was unable to fund cultural programming. As one tribal citizen described the situation for the Miami Tribe in the early 1990s, "There was no sign of perpetuation of language and culture within the community, and the Tribe possessed no resources to affect change. The language was silent. There were no stories, no games, no dancing. The end to Myaamia cultural identity was looming." In recognition of and concern for the decline, tribal leaders applied for and received a grant from the Administration for Native Americans (part of the US Department of Health and Human Services) to examine what could be done to reverse centuries of damage.

HONORING NATIONS

REVIVING THE PAST

The Miami Tribe used the grant funds to bring together community members and academic experts to explore ways to reclaim the nation's heritage. Through these efforts, the Tribe learned of the vast historical resources held in archives throughout Canada and the United States that would become central to the revitalization effort. Two linguistics students, tribal citizen Daryl Baldwin at the University of Montana and PhD candidate David Costa at the University of California at Berkeley, were both researching the Myaamia language and eager to assist the Tribe. These connections provided the basis for the launch of an ambitious initiative to revitalize the Tribe's ancestral language and customs. The Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki aims to rebuild identity through the use of language and cultural practices at gatherings, summer camps, heritage courses, cultural workshops, and widely disseminated publications.

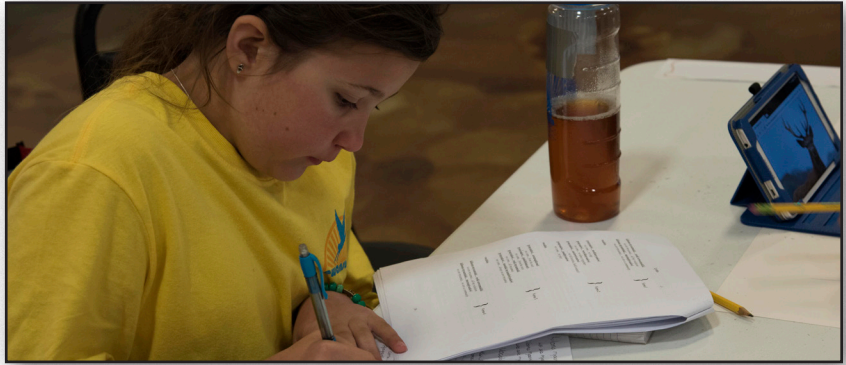
To develop educational content, the Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki program relies heavily on both oral interviews and archival resources

primarily derived from the research efforts of the Myaamia Center at Miami University of Ohio. Housed in a stand-alone building on campus, the Myaamia Center is jointly funded by the University and the Miami Tribe under a Memorandum of Understanding formalized in 2008. As an interdisciplinary research center, the Myaamia Center is directed by the Miami Tribe and tasked with assisting the nation with the revitalization of Myaamia language, culture, and historical knowledge. For the past 15 years, Myaamia students enrolled at the University have participated in the Myaamia Heritage Program, which integrates Myaamia language and traditional knowledge into their studies. The Center also serves as a gathering point for tribal students.

The Miami Tribe's Cultural Resources Office coordinates Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki with strong support from tribal leadership. Extensive educational content is distributed to every tribal household free of charge. Beginning with a Myaamia dictionary published in the late 1990s, program materials



2018 Awardees



have covered a wide range of topics including Myaamia history, ecology, traditional stories, ribbonwork, and activities for children. In 2005, the Tribe launched a week-long Myaamia summer education program for youth aged 10 to 16. In 2014, programming was expanded to include an introductory program for children aged 6 to 9. The Cultural Resources Office organizes numerous cultural events to bring citizens together throughout the year, such as an annual powwow, lacrosse games, Family Day, Language Day, and stomp dances. While attending these events, community members can also choose to participate in classes and workshops, such as language learning and skirt making. To further reach citizens living outside Oklahoma, the Tribe purchased property in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where it hosts events and offers classes through an on-site tribal Cultural Resources Extension Office. Like the program at Miami University in Ohio, the center in Fort Wayne promotes Myaamia culture and re-establishes the Tribe's presence in its traditional homeland.

By reviving language and cultural practices that were in danger of being lost forever, the Miami Tribe has redefined—in just two decades—what it means to be Myaamia. Tribal citizens are once again taking part in lacrosse games and traditional dances. The tribal government now takes all of its votes by responding *iihia* (yes) or *moohci* (no) in Myaamia. The language is visible in signs on tribal buildings and Myaamia vocabulary is used strategically in tribal offices including the courts, social service programs, and child care. The youth camps have grown significantly to more than 100 total participants across sessions held in both Miami, Oklahoma and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Over 30 tribal students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are currently enrolled in the Myaamia Heritage Program at Miami University of Ohio. Most importantly, Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki rebuilds community by creating a sense of belonging. In the words of one citizen, “When I greet another Miami in our language, I feel a connection between our hearts.”

HONORING NATIONS

RECONNECTING THE NATION

Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki aims to provide every tribal citizen with information about their Myaamia heritage, regardless of where they live and how much contact they have with the Tribe. Other tribes' language and culture programs have successfully strengthened existing Indigenous language and cultural practices within cohesive communities, but the Miami Tribe's circumstances required a different approach. As Cultural Resources Officer Julie Olds explains, "As forcefully as we were removed, we had to forcefully go back and reclaim our language and culture." In order to engage each of the Tribe's more than 5,000 citizens, Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki offers a wide range of activities and materials that appeal to various ages, levels of commitment, and interests. Some families take part in formal classroom learning while others watch performances, participate in sports, or simply follow community blog postings. Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki has helped rebuild a sense of identity within a dispersed population by encouraging all tribal citizens to learn about their ancestral language and lifeways. Participants note that before the program, they felt Myaamia based only on ancestry, but now they consciously understand the shared cultural bonds of the Myaamia community.

In the absence of fluent speaking community elders, the Tribe's partnership with Miami University of Ohio plays a crucial role in creating program content. The Tribe had long-standing links with the University, which is located on Myaamia ancestral lands. Tribal leaders were able to build upon these connections to launch the Myaamia Center research initiative. Although academic institutions have valuable resources that can help find and interpret materials relating to Indigenous peoples and their customs, outsider-led research on these materials rarely serves tribal interests. The innovative

Memorandum of Understanding between the Miami Tribe and Miami University for the Myaamia Center benefits both parties without jeopardizing the Miami Tribe's control over the use of its intellectual and cultural heritage. Notably, the agreement stipulates that the Tribe must initiate and approve all Myaamia Center research and educational activities in order to ensure that they meet tribal objectives. The Tribe also owns the copyright for all publications and materials produced by the Center, allowing it to supervise the distribution of its ancestral knowledge.



While Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki's overt objective is to revive Myaamia language and traditions, the program's most profound effect has been to reconstruct a sense of nationhood. As citizens have embraced language and cultural practices, Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki has sparked a political reawakening. The Tribe has experienced a dramatic upswing in the number of citizens who vote in tribal elections. There has been a fourfold increase in participation in the annual General Council meeting, the Tribe's ultimate governing body, which is open to all citizens above the age of 18. From the beginning of the initiative, tribal leaders

made personal commitments to take part in Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki programming, publicly reinforcing the importance of this initiative to the nation's future. The Tribe's Akima (Chief) Douglas Lankford has observed that language and cultural knowledge has "not only affected us and our personal identity as Myaamia citizens, but it has enhanced our capability to perform our duty and service to our community." Within a difficult context, Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki has greatly enhanced community engagement and tribal solidarity. Tribal citizens are now better equipped to contribute to the nation's future.



HONORING NATIONS



LESSONS

A loss of identity threatens the very survival of a tribal nation. For the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the strategic use of historical research for language and cultural revival charted the path forward. At the launch of the Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki program, there were only small pockets of Myaamia cultural bearers and no fluent Myaamia language speakers. Today, through the Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki Program, the Tribe is successfully reviving a dormant language, restoring cultural traditions, overcoming centuries of displacement and assimilation, and demonstrating the resilience of the Myaamia people.



Native nations can achieve widespread cultural and community revival by engaging every citizen, no matter their age, location, or previous knowledge.



Partnerships between Native nations and institutions of higher education can result in innovative and integrated programming that builds human and cultural capital.



Programs that renew tribal culture can rebuild community and re-engage tribal citizens—and in so doing, strengthen tribal sovereignty through political renewal.



Quapaw Nation Agricultural Programs

Quapaw Nation

Like many Native nations, the Quapaw Nation relies on gaming income to fund government operations and to create employment opportunities for tribal citizens. But tribal leaders are also committed to diversifying the economy and limiting dependence on casino revenues. Drawing on its people's farming heritage, the Nation has built an array of businesses that reduce reliance on external food sources and provide tribal citizens and their neighbors with healthy, locally raised food—a win for Quapaw economic development and for Indigenous food sovereignty.

A DISAPPEARING AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Prior to their removal in the 19th century, the ancestors of today's Quapaw Nation lived in agricultural settlements near the Mississippi River in what is now Arkansas. Today, more than half of the Nation's 5,289 citizens live within a 57,000-acre jurisdictional area in northeastern Oklahoma. Although the territory includes large areas of fertile grasslands, the Nation had reached a point in the early 2000s where few of its citizens were engaged in agriculture and farming traditions were being lost.

At the same time, the Quapaw Nation had developed two successful casinos that brought jobs and wealth to the area. These facilities were an important economic engine for the Nation, but citizens had few employment opportunities outside of the gaming industry—generating concern that the local economy was becoming overly dependent on casino revenue.

As Quapaw tribal leaders considered the question of how to diversify their economy, the idea of tapping into and reviving the Nation's agricultural heritage began to take hold. In the absence of local agriculture, Quapaw families had difficulty buying fresh, affordable food. They no longer prepared traditional dishes because ingredients were hard to find. The loss of ancestral knowledge about nutrition contributed to chronic health problems, and limited food choices led to increasingly unhealthy diets. Since the food that Quapaw families ate came from elsewhere, the Nation had no control over its quality. Similarly, it was impossible to know whether farming methods used to produce "imported" foods supported tribal values such as the protection of the environment and animal welfare. Reflecting on all these concerns, tribal leaders wondered—what if the Nation worked toward the dual goal of developing profitable agricultural enterprises and increasing food sovereignty?

HONORING NATIONS

THE QUAPAW FARM-TO-TABLE INITIATIVE

The Nation launched the Quapaw Agricultural Programs in 2010 with a modest purchase of eight American Bison. Since then, the Agricultural Programs have become a thriving farm-to-table initiative. Following its bison purchase, the Nation launched the Quapaw Horticultural Program and built five large commercial greenhouses to grow fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The Program also acquired 75 beehives to produce honey and pollinate the Nation's greenhouse plants. The Quapaw Cattle Company began a breeding program to expand the bison herd and added Black Angus cattle and goats to its operations. To reduce dependence on commercial feed for its animals, the Nation began farming corn, soybeans, wheat, canola, and hay to use as fodder. The Nation subsequently built its own silage pits, commodity barns, and hay barns for crop storage.

Over the next few years, the Agricultural Programs began to pursue additional commercial opportunities. Since 2016, the Quapaw Mercantile Store has sold agricultural products to tribal citizens, local residents, and visitors. The Nation also operates a 2,500-square-foot coffee roasting facility which imports beans from a variety of foreign countries to create blends for its O-Gah-Pah coffee brand. The Nation's most recent business initiative is the launch of the Downstream Craft Brewing Company, which produces several types of beer brewed in 250-gallon tanks located in one of the Quapaw casino restaurants.

In 2017, building on the success of its cattle operation, the Quapaw Nation invested a total of \$5 million in tribal and grant funds to open a meat processing plant. The Quapaw





Cattle Company's facility is the first tribally owned US Department of Agriculture certified meat processing plant. It also employs the first federal meat grade inspector of Native heritage. The facility slaughters, packages, and labels meat from beef, lamb, bison, elk, pork, and goat. Products from the plant meet national standards and can be shipped to customers anywhere in the country. With its state-of-the-art technology and full-service approach, the plant has quickly gained a reputation as the state's leading artisanal meat packing operation.

Today, the Nation's agricultural operations are governed by the Quapaw Nation's Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition, which employs more than 80 community members, approximately half of

which are Quapaw citizens. The Quapaw herd has grown to number over 200 bison and 1,200 Black Angus cattle. The Nation's crop operation oversees almost 3,000 acres of tribally owned and leased land. The Agricultural Programs supply food at low cost to various community initiatives, including school lunches and Title VI nutritional programs for seniors. Rekindling ancestral practices, each family attending the annual Quapaw Powwow receives a ration of fresh produce and bison cuts to honor their participation in the event. One tribal citizen notes, "It has taken hard work and dedication to make what was once a dream a reality for our Quapaw people—we have made tremendous progress."

HONORING NATIONS

FINDING STRENGTH BY FEEDING A NATION

To diversify its economy, the Quapaw Nation took advantage of the markets created by existing tribal enterprises. Because the Nation's casino operations had been using outside vendors to supply food products, the profits from these purchases were flowing out of the community. The Nation's agricultural operation managers identified opportunities to capture more of this supply chain. Their businesses expanded incrementally by building on each success and developing expertise within the community. The Quapaw Nation Agricultural Programs now provide all of the flowers, beef, and coffee for the Nation's hotel resort guest rooms and casino restaurants.

The Nation's emphasis on retaining economic benefits within the community extends to all aspects of agricultural production. For example, rather than simply grazing cattle to sell to outsiders who then add value, the Quapaw Cattle Company breeds, raises, and processes livestock and then sells the end products itself. In this way, the funds used to purchase supplies stay within the community and the enterprises create a diverse range of desirable jobs, from seasonal work on tribal lands to highly specialized production and marketing positions. The Nation's Agriculture Director explains, "We strive to find the absolute best employees and give them high quality training to help our Nation's agricultural endeavors continue to prosper."

The Quapaw Nation is also reinforcing its self-determination and tribal authority as it renews its traditions of farming expertise.

Tribal land holdings in the area have grown by over 5,000 acres, driven by the need for more space to graze livestock and grow crops. By running its own Agricultural Programs, the Nation independently controls the quality of the food available to its citizens and to visitors. All Quapaw meats are hormone free. The greenhouses produce fresh produce, giving families access to healthy food that previously had been unavailable in the area. The fact that the Nation creates its own agricultural products means that it supervises exactly how these items are developed. The agricultural operations emphasize land management and farming techniques that protect the environment, animal well-being, and public health.



For example, since intensive agriculture can have a damaging effect on ground and surface water, the Nation only uses rainwater for their crops and invests in efficient automatic livestock watering systems. The Nation's holding and feeding facilities are designed to minimize stress for animals before they are led to slaughter. The Quapaw Cattle Company coordinates with the Nation's food service operations to plan slaughter dates that will match demand for products so that its cuts are as fresh as possible and there is minimal waste of unused meat. The Nation has also chosen to produce foods that are culturally important for its citizens, including Native corn and tobacco for use

in ceremonies. With the reintroduction of bison meat, community members can once again prepare the traditional dishes that are part of the Nation's heritage. In the words of Chairman John Berrey, the mission of the Programs is "to enhance our Nation's sovereignty by creating renewable and sustainable natural food sources."

As a result of the success of the Quapaw Nation Agricultural Programs, the Nation's economic and social influence is growing and taking an increased leadership role in the region. The Agricultural Programs lease hundreds of acres from non-tribal landowners, contributing much-needed revenue to the area's economy. Area farmers benefit from the Nation's investment in the Quapaw Cattle Company Feeding Facility and meat processing plant since they can process their animals locally rather than bearing the cost of transport to more distant facilities. The Nation provides food donations to social service programs throughout the area, regardless of whether the recipients have a tribal affiliation. Tribal program managers share expertise on agricultural research and training with Oklahoma State University, Northeastern Oklahoma University, Missouri State University, and the University of Arkansas. The Quapaw Cattle Company actively participates in state environmental and conservation stewardship initiatives. These positive interactions help counteract the enduring prejudices that exist in a state with a long history of hostility towards tribal sovereignty.



HONORING NATIONS



LESSONS

The Quapaw Nation's Agricultural Programs retain dollars in the local economy through the creative use of tribal land and human resources. By focusing on humane and sustainable farming methods, the Programs help the Nation reclaim agricultural traditions, create new jobs for community members, and make high quality, healthy food products newly available to tribal citizens and their neighbors.



Tribal business diversification benefits both Native and non-Native economies through job creation and the expansion of regional economic opportunities.



Strategic investments in vertical integration and sustainable food sources have the potential to increase tribal authority over both food production and food quality standards.



Economic development ventures that simultaneously strengthen a Native nation's culture and meet citizens' contemporary needs also strengthen tribal sovereignty.

HONORING NATIONS



Sitka ICWA Partnership

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

The safety and well-being of children is vital to a Native nation's future. For years, tribal and state agencies in Alaska have taken different approaches to the needs of vulnerable families, leading to large numbers of children being adopted outside their home communities. With the goal of securing better outcomes for tribal families, the Sitka Tribe reached out to its state child protection counterparts to build more collaborative relationships to benefit tribal families. The Sitka ICWA Partnership is breaking new ground through brave communication, joint case management, and cooperative staff training.

TRIBAL CHILDREN AT RISK

Located in southeastern Alaska approximately 95 miles from Juneau by air or water, the Baranof Island is home to the 4,400 citizens of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Beginning in the mid-18th century, Russians and Euro-Americans intent on trading and settling on the island disrupted the Tlingit people's way of life. Disruption over land and resources was followed by repeated tuberculosis and influenza epidemics, decimating the local tribal population. Assimilationist colonial policies aimed at destroying language and culture, focused particularly on the removal of tribal children from the community, spiriting them away to boarding schools and creating further generational harms.

Today, the legacy of this trauma is significant; many tribal families struggle with anti-social behaviors and potential child protection concerns. State child protection authorities remove Sitka Tribal children at a rate that is 410 percent greater than their population demographic. For many years, it was routine for Native children removed from their families to be adopted into non-tribal homes. State welfare officials justified these placements as being in the children's best interest even

though most adoptees were raised without connection to their tribal identities and family relations. For the Sitka Tribe as a whole, child removal often meant the real and permanent loss of future leaders, artists, and teachers.

In 1978, the US Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to improve the handling of Native American child protection cases by mandating the involvement of tribal governments in certain proceedings. Despite this federal mandate, the Sitka Tribe remained dissatisfied with the handling of its children in the Alaska state child protection system. Time and again, the Tribe was put in the position of reacting to state child welfare decisions rather than having the opportunity to address issues proactively. The situation was made worse by decades of child protection disputes and sovereignty litigation that created an adversarial relationship between tribal and state child protection workers. Put bluntly, tribal social service workers did not trust state officials, particularly in light of the history of placing tribal children in non-tribal homes, outside of the community.



HONORING NATIONS

PARTNERS IN CHILD PROTECTION

In 2001, the *For Our Grandchildren* committee of Sitka tribal elders urged tribal leaders to focus on the rights of children. As one of the Tribe's social workers notes, "the elders charged the entire Tribe with the responsibility to raise healthy and successful generations—by all means necessary." These teachings prompted the Tribe's Department of Social Services to rethink the adversarial approach to child welfare cases. The Tribe resolved to move beyond historical grievances and to actively engage with the state child protection system. The Sitka ICWA Partnership represents a commitment by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the state of Alaska to work together, instead of against each other, to protect vulnerable children and assist families.

To build their collaborative approach, the Tribe's Social Service Department and the local Sitka Field Office of the state's Office of Child Services participate in extensive cross-training, workshops, and meetings.

Tribal caseworkers enroll alongside new state caseworkers in a three-week program at the Alaska Child Welfare Academy to become familiar with non-tribal perspectives on child protection. Together state employees and their tribal counterparts attend the Tribe's ICWA-related trainings, which include the "Motherhood/Fatherhood is Sacred," "Native Motivational Interviewing," "ICWA Qualified Expert Witness," and "Children in Need of Aid" curricula. The Tribe routinely invites Alaska child protection staff to important cultural events and celebrations in the community. Tribal and state employees engage in a local truth and reconciliation process, respectfully reviewing the state's Office of Child Services Tribal Survey to identify areas for improvement.

Now, child welfare cases involving tribal citizens are handled cooperatively from the outset. The state of Alaska and the Tribe have signed a confidentiality agreement



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which allows information to be shared freely and quickly between their agencies. State and tribal case managers visit homes together to conduct initial assessments in response to reports of neglect or potential harm. Caseworkers from both offices meet bi-weekly to review family situations and brainstorm ways to create safe environments for children. With the goal of reducing trauma, the partners use the resources of both the tribal and state systems to work with families to avoid reactionary removals and when necessary, find appropriate placements. The Tribe invests in two full-time ICWA caseworkers and legal counsel with ICWA expertise. In the words of one tribal employee, “We bring the noise for every kid. We go after them wherever they are. We are relentless.”

The partnership between the Sitka Tribe and the state child welfare system is making a serious difference in what are otherwise daunting statistics throughout Alaska and the United States: The Sitka Tribe intervenes in 100% of cases involving a tribal child. The Sitka ICWA

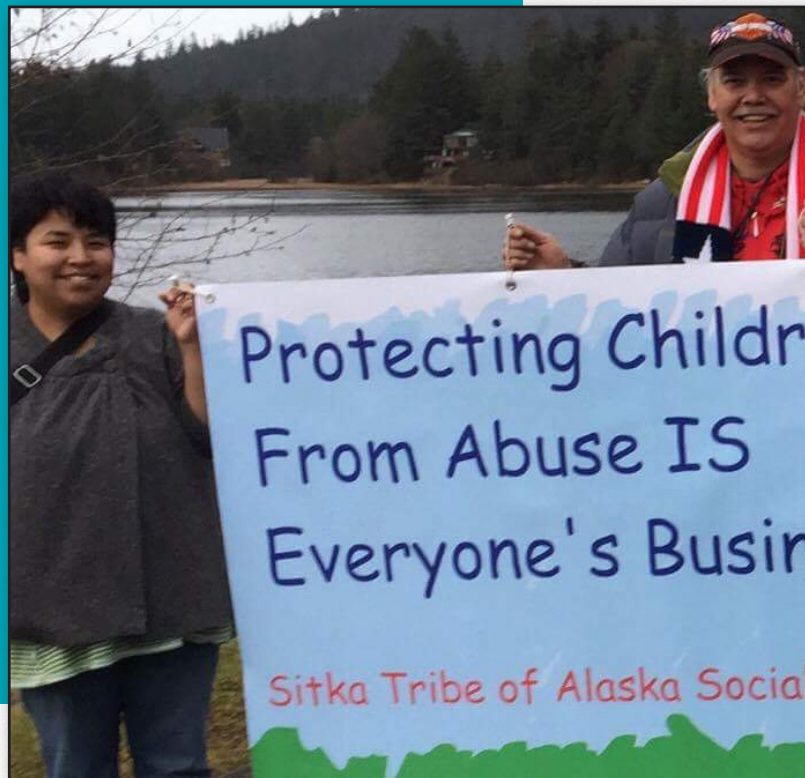
Partnership reduces “screened-in” reports of harm from becoming actual removals; building one of the lowest removal rates in all of Alaska. In situations that require an out-of-home placement, the Sitka ICWA Partnership presents a 95% ICWA compliant placement rate—children in need of aid are cared for by extended family and tribal citizens. The best interest of each child is carefully weighed on a case-by-case basis; in those special circumstances where a non-ICWA placement is warranted, caregivers are required to sign a cultural connection agreement to secure the Tribe’s blessing going forward. These agreements insure that all children, regardless of placement, are entitled to know who they are, have the opportunity to engage with healthy extended family, and to remain connected to the Sitka Tribe as valuable and productive citizens. Through a careful process of truth, reconciliation, and forgiveness, the Sitka ICWA Partnership gives life to the *For Our Grandchildren* committee’s vision that “the ultimate future of our people is considered in each action taken from this day forward.”

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

The Sitka ICWA Partnership places children before interpersonal politics. Tribal leaders recognize that the Alaska Office of Child Services and state judiciary have a very real and ongoing role in tribal child protection. The painful history impacting tribal families is undeniable, and there are plenty of reasons for reluctance and distrust. However, tribal partnering with the Alaska child protection system is generating new approaches to a system that can impact tribal citizens for generations to come. By attending state training, the Tribe's ICWA team cross-pollinates with the state's social workers and learn the very regulations, terminology, and policies that are practiced by their counterparts in the state system. One tribal official notes that with a more in-depth knowledge of the state system, tribal employees are "given the skills to operate on multiple sheets of music." The benefits of this cross-training partnership flow both ways: now, when faced with difficult situations, the ICWA team has a better understanding of their Alaska counterparts' intentions and constraints, while state child protection employees have a greater appreciation of the Indian Child Welfare Act, Indigenous values, and traditional medicine to heal families struggling with severe distress.

Focusing on the shared goal of safety and permanency for each child has helped the Sitka Tribe and the state's Office of Child Services Sitka Field Office move beyond their contentious past. Disagreements can be handled constructively within a commitment to respect and to learn from each

other. State and tribal caseworkers voluntarily participate as a cohort in the Tribe's course, "Healthy Relationships," which is referred to client families to boost communication and conflict resolution skills. Tribal staff report that face-to-face time as a child protection system creates an atmosphere that is safe and respectful to have difficult conversations. The candid, brave discussions can be uncomfortable in the short-term, but, in the long-term, provide critical ingredients for trust. A state employee recalls, "We were suspicious of each other, but we kept coming to the table. That was the key... we kept coming to the table, in formal and informal ways." The connection is now so



strong that the Sitka Field Office recently invited the Tribe's Director of Social Services to be involved in the screening and hiring of Sitka's new state caseworker.

Although the Sitka ICWA Partnership is a working arrangement and not a formal change to the state's child protection system, in practice, it has led to the incorporation of tribal solutions at all stages of the child protection process. As an example, while state guidelines call for child placement permanency within 16 months, the partnership enables families to extend, oftentimes, rigid time frames needed to complete their recovery. Since the Tribe is actively involved at the beginning

of a child protection case, there is an earlier opportunity to divert cases from the state child welfare system into tribal court or tribal services. Because of the relationships built through the Sitka ICWA Partnership, the Office of Child Services and the state court system now accept the need for a connection to the Tribe and culturally-based services as an essential part of the recovery and reunification process. As the two child protection systems continue to work more effectively together, resources can be focused on strengthening families and not wasted on discord.

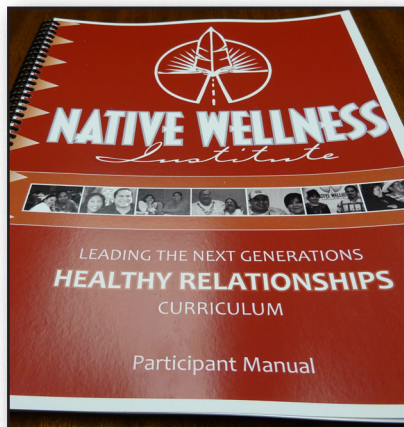


HONORING NATIONS



LESSONS

The Indian Child Welfare Act is intended to protect and promote tribal children, however faithful implementation continues to evade many states. The Sitka ICWA Partnership turns this historically contentious relationship around, so that states and tribes are working cooperatively and more expansively toward family healing. The Partnership connects tribal children to their family and community, carrying forward the Grandparents' intention of laying the groundwork for a healthy and productive future.



By building trust, constructive lines of communication, and joint problem-solving approaches, a tribal nation and the state can arrive at a common understanding of child welfare and better ensure the safety and success of Native children and families.

A joint confidentiality agreement that permits child welfare information to be quickly and easily shared is a critical step in assisting tribal and state service providers to work well together.

Investing in a systematic practice of cross-training, cross-staffing, and relationship building creates an integrated tribal-state system that is better able to protect Native children and empower Native families.

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Wellness Programming

Yurok Tribe

Across the US, alcohol and opioid abuse has seriously disrupted countless lives. The Yurok reservation and its surrounding area are no exception—intergenerational poverty, high incarceration rates, and failed treatment attempts combine to create a cycle of violence and despair. In response, the Yurok Tribe is purposefully using its tribal justice system to improve outcomes for offenders with substance abuse problems. By infusing traditional Yurok values into the tribal court's structure and proceedings, the Tribe's Wellness Programming is building better futures for all community members.

POVERTY AND INCARCERATION

With over 6,000 citizens, the Yurok Tribe is the largest tribe in California. In the 1850s, a period known as “the invasion” to tribal leaders, the arrival of Gold Rush settlers decimated the population and destroyed many Yurok villages. The Tribe's current day reservation is located along the Klamath River on a small portion of Yurok ancestral territory in northern California. These tribal lands are rugged and remote, stretching one mile on both sides of the river for 44 miles inland from the Pacific Coast.

Fish play a central role in the tribal members' diets, ceremonies, and employment opportunities. Over the years, dam construction, silt from logging operations, and water diversion for agriculture have led to a sharp decline in water quality. Since 2015, tribal officials have been forced to suspend the commercial and subsistence fishery due to low fish counts.

Although three-quarters of adults living on-reservation are employed, many jobs are seasonal. Tribal administrators estimate that winter unemployment is close to 80 percent. Over half of the area's children live below the poverty line, and many homes lack electricity.

The Yurok reservation experiences persistently high rates of child removal to foster care, domestic abuse, crime, and suicide. In 2016, a tribal researcher found that the Yurok incarceration rate was six times the rate among California residents and more than 10 times the national rate. Worse, many tribal citizens are jailed simply for failing to complete court-ordered alcohol and drug treatment programs.

Tribal leaders recognized that incarceration was not addressing their community's underlying problems. Elsewhere in the country, there were powerful examples of tribal governments creating restorative justice programs—but the Yurok Tribe's options to do likewise were limited by its location in a PL-280 state. Under this structure, tribal courts are eligible to receive limited federal funding and have very little authority. Yet the acute need for change drove tribal leadership to push jurisdictional boundaries: they reformed the tribal court and began working with neighboring counties to make wellness the primary focus of the tribal justice system.

HONORING NATIONS

A NEW MODEL FOR TRIBAL COURTS

In 1993, the Yurok Tribe ratified a written constitution that established guidelines for a tribal court in the town of Klamath. In its early years, the court mostly heard cases concerning fishing disputes between tribal citizens. In 2007, the Tribe hired Abby Abinanti as Chief Judge. A Yurok citizen, Judge Abinanti was the first Native American judge appointed to the bench in California and had more than a decade of experience in the state's family court. In consultation with attorneys, elders, community leaders, and tribal leaders, Judge Abinanti began to remold the tribal court to reflect traditional Yurok values and to meet the community's contemporary needs. The court began to adjudicate a wider range of conflicts and its caseload increased.

Because many of the cases were drug offenses, the tribal court launched the Yurok Wellness Court in 2009. Over the years, the court

expanded its Wellness Programming, adding group healing for batterers, aid for domestic abuse victims, elder advocacy, child support services, and re-entry assistance for former inmates. As the tribal court transitioned away from the western model, Yurok customs became the basis for new procedures. Historically, disputes were resolved by Yurok community members in their villages. Now, this traditional model of community activism is reflected in procedures concerning drug offenses. Tribal court staff engage with offenders in the way a Yurok aunt or uncle would, with an emphasis on community members' responsibilities to and for one another. Instead of wearing robes seated behind a raised desk, court personnel dress informally and meet with defendants around conference tables, that, when pushed together, visually recreate the culturally significant Klamath Watershed.





To reach Yurok citizens who are in trouble with the law, the tribal court has forged formal ties with the state courts located in the Tribe's ancestral territory. A ground-breaking 2012 Memorandum of Agreement with Del Norte County directs county officials to assess whether offenders are tribal citizens. If the case is non-violent and involves substance abuse, the county and Tribe can agree for the case to be handled in tribal court. Some cases are diverted to the tribal court before trial, while others are referred for sentencing or probation violations. Neighboring Humboldt County also sends Yurok citizens to tribal court on a case-by-case basis. Recently, the Tribe partnered with Humboldt County to establish a joint-jurisdiction Family Wellness Court for child abuse and neglect cases. Humboldt County Superior Court Judge Joyce Hinrichs and Yurok Chief Judge Abinanti

preside together to help families and connect them with support services in the two jurisdictions. That approach has expanded into Del Norte County which now also features a Family Wellness Court for Yurok families.

Today, the Yurok Tribal Court employs over 20 Yurok citizens, including mediators, paralegals, attorneys, grant writers, probation officers, advocate/mentors, and a bailiff. Its Wellness Programming is making headway reaching tribal offenders. County judges and officials refer an increasing number of cases to the tribal system. And, as Yurok offenders have become aware of the tribal court's culturally grounded approaches, they increasingly have requested that their cases be heard at home. By 2018, over 2,000 tribal citizens had participated in the Tribe's Wellness Programming.

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SHARED JURISDICTION AND BETTER OUTCOMES

In many US states, tribal courts have jurisdiction over cases involving tribal citizens. In California, a PL-280 state, all jurisdiction is concurrent. In practice, this often means that state courts hear all cases involving tribal members since there are no formal mechanisms for sharing or transferring jurisdiction. The Yurok Tribe realized that the only way it could meet its justice objectives was to partner effectively with state courts while building the capacity of its tribal court. The Tribe has developed a strong relationship with both Humboldt and Del Norte court officials by prioritizing a common objective of ending the cycle of repeat offending. In the words of the Tribe's Memorandum of Agreement with Del Norte County, "The parties wish to collaborate in developing culturally appropriate interventions for offenders to ensure offender accountability while restoring safety and healing to our communities." State officials are willing to collaborate because they respect the tribal court's professionalism and its outcomes. Ongoing relationships with the state courts have created the opportunity to develop innovative strategies that support tribal families in the judicial system. Notably, the Tribe's Family Wellness Court with Humboldt County is the first joint-jurisdiction court in California, and the parties are now planning to use the same approach for youth truancy cases.

Similar to initiatives elsewhere in the country, the Yurok Tribe's Wellness Programming shows there are strong benefits to incorporating cultural practices into the justice system. With a small budget provided mostly by grant money, the court has completely changed the way in which it operates. In place of the model in which judges recuse themselves if they have a connection to the defendant, Chief Judge Abinanti and court staff draw heavily on their personal knowledge of offenders and community

relationships. Court personnel help remove barriers to compliance, such as providing transportation for offenders to and from Klamath for court appearances. Many times, defendants are given staff members' phone numbers and are told to "call before there is a problem." This approach reflects traditional village justice as community members work together to restore harmony and help offenders make amends for harmful actions. The court emphasizes non-monetary "fines" that reflect the importance of personal responsibility to the Yurok community. Examples of sentences include providing fish to elders, accompanying children to ceremonies, and learning traditional Yurok crafts. Those harmed by a crime are asked for their input on what can be done to settle a situation. Through these cultural adaptations, the



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Yurok Tribal Court is better able to meet the needs of both offenders and other residents of the community.

Since it operates under different guidelines than the state court system, the Yurok Tribal Court can address circumstances beyond the resolution of a specific case. The court's extensive Wellness Programming grew out of a recognition that many defendants needed help to overcome the addictions that were the root cause of their encounters with the judicial system. The court process supports offenders as they learn from their mistakes and do the hard work of modifying unhealthy behavior patterns. Tribal court staff are compassionate, well-trained in substance abuse issues, and dedicated to healing the community. Incarceration is

used only as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted. The Tribe's Wellness Programming has a long-term goal of rehabilitating offenders so that they can honor their commitments as Yurok, helping rebuild the relationship between citizens and their community. As an example, in situations of domestic violence, the tribal court's education program includes talking to an elder, learning cultural practices, and developing a family tree. Many perpetrators actually choose to remain in the program past their mandated time in order to deepen their cultural connections. Reflecting on the tribal court's focus on restorative justice, one tribal council member comments, "Our court doesn't focus on punishment, it focuses on our people. It makes us whole."



HONORING NATIONS

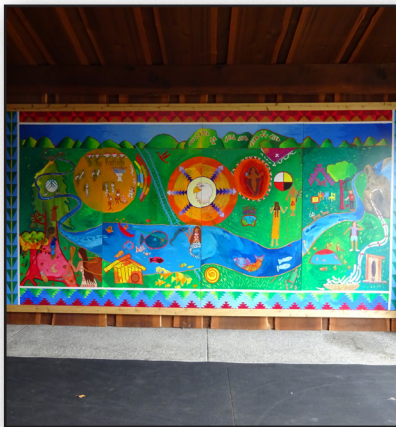


LESSONS

In partnership with the state courts in neighboring counties, the Yurok Tribe is reclaiming its ability to adjudicate offenses committed by its citizens. Drawing on Yurok cultural traditions, the tribal court has moved away from the model of impartial justice and is actively involved in rehabilitating defendants. Despite significant challenges and limited resources, the Yurok Tribal Court has created a range of Wellness Programming to help offenders make lasting improvements in their lives.



By finding ways to practice concurrent jurisdiction with state counterparts, tribes in PL-280 states can actively infuse traditional values into contemporary jurisprudence and serve tribal citizens in culturally appropriate ways.



By addressing the root causes of individual crimes and by allowing creative approaches to restitution, tribal courts can significantly reduce recidivism.



By prioritizing community needs, tribal court programming can evolve to better serve individual tribal citizens and the Native nation as a whole.



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 see 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; resource management; government reform; justice; intergovernmental relations; and economic, social, and cultural programs. 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 136 exemplary tribal government programs, from over 80 tribal nations, and held five tribal government symposia.

ABOUT THE HARVARD PROJECT

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 Harvard Kennedy School.

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, Honoring Nations. 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 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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We thank **Megan Minoka Hill** for administering the awards program and extend endless gratitude to **Nicole Grenier, Moana HoChing, Eliza Bemis, Valerie O’Kane, and Tanya Dall** for their tireless work during the awards season. The Harvard Project’s co-directors, **Joe Kalt** and **Steve Cornell**, and research director, **Miriam Jorgensen**, deserve 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 student interns, **Sina Aumoeualogo, Atheena Arasoo, and Brian Hough** for investing in our efforts while maintaining busy class schedules.

Site visitors play a key role in the evaluation process. Appreciation to the 2018 site visitors: **Amber Annis, Amy Besaw Medford, Sean Buffington, Amanda Cobb-Greetham, Catherine Curtis, Karen Diver, Eric Henson, Megan Hill, Moana HoChing, Miriam Jorgensen, Sarah Kastelic, Michael Lipsky, Robin McLay, Dennis Norman, Wilson Pipestem, Olivia Smith, Joan Timeche, Jonathan Taylor, and Laura Taylor.**

Most importantly, thanks to all of the **program representatives and tribal leaders** of the honorees for Honoring Nations 2018. Their vision, determination, and extraordinary triumphs give Indian Country and the rest of the world remarkable inspiration!

Cover photo take at the Sitka National Historical Park in Sitka, Alaska.
Other photos provided by awarded programs and Honoring Nations site visitors.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

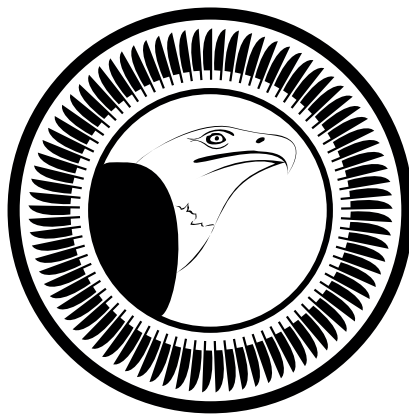
The 2018 awardees received a beautiful stone carving from acclaimed artist, Cyril Henry, who created a stunning interpretation of the Harvard Project logo.

Cyril Henry

Iroquois Nation: Onondaga, Deer Clan

Cyril has been carving since he was 11 years old. He learned the practice from his mother, Eunice Henry, and his father, Vince Bomberry, a renowned carver with artworks in many leading museums and institutions. Cyril's work is known throughout eastern Canada and the US, with many pieces held in private collections. He can be contacted at cmore_8430@yahoo.com.





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