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Maine-Wabanaki REACH

Newsletter
Autumn 2015

Meeting with Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart

To deepen our understanding of historical trauma, a delegation from REACH travelled to Smith College in North Hampton, Massachusetts to meet with and attend a presentation by Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart (Hunkpapa/ Ooglala).

Dr. Brave Heart, the leading expert in historical trauma in Indian Country defines it as “trauma experienced over generations by a specific cultural group which is cumulative and collective and still impacts them today.” In her presentation Dr. Brave Heart discussed typical responses to historical trauma found throughout Native communities today and the importance of creating space to discuss and collectively heal from the impacts of trauma.

Dr. Brave Heart, who received a PhD in Clinical Social Work from Smith College, founded the Takini Network and developed the *Historical Trauma and Unresolved Grief Intervention*, recognized as an exemplary model and tribal best practice. REACH regularly quotes Dr. Brave Heart and cites her work in educational outreach efforts about historical trauma in Wabanaki land.

“We are trauma survivors,” said Brave Heart. “Our ancestors don’t want us suffering; they want us to be happy and vital.”



Mailing Address:
Maine-Wabanaki REACH
PO Box 221
Stillwater, ME 04489

Website:
www.mainewabanakireach.org

Facebook: /MEWabanakiREACH

Twitter: @MEWabanakiREACH

Back L to R: Dr. Rebecca Sockbeson, Arla Patch, Susan Howe, Dena Joseph, Luke Joseph, Esther Attean, Wenona Lola, Krista Stevens, Roger Paul, Penthea Burns. Front L to R: Kathy Paul, Maria Girouard, Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Carol Wishcamper

Ally Building in Maine Communities

REACH has five Ally Workshops scheduled for the fall. Ally Workshops are designed for Non-Native people to learn about our shared history with Wabanaki People, the impact of that history and how we can make difference today. Nearly 250 people have participated in our Ally Workshops.

Schedule of Fall 2015 Ally Workshops:

- Presque Isle: Saturday, October 3rd
- Bangor: (Indigenous People's Day) Monday, October 12th
- Augusta: Saturday, October 24th
- Trescott: (Tentatively scheduled) October 31st
- Ellsworth: Saturday, November 7th

Thank you to the University of Maine Augusta in Bangor for hosting the July Ally Workshop. We are working closely with the University of Maine Presque Isle, Faith Linking in Action and the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Ellsworth to launch the fall workshops. Following completion of Ally Workshop, many people join ongoing Ally Groups to deepen their understanding of this shared history, our resulting privileges and actions that we can take to create a more just present day. Many allies have been eager to take actions in support of Wabanaki people.

This summer allies have taken actions on the Justice for the River issue and the proposed Juniper Ridge land fill expansion, with direction and guidance from Wabanaki people. Allies are engaged in providing support to many REACH initiatives as well. We are grateful for all they do.

REACH continues to provide and promote educational presentations around the state, including:

August 14 - November 28, 2015

Maine Historical Society, Portland

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Lecture Hall

Baskets from the Dawnland - Weaving the Past and Future Together.

Highlights of the exhibition include historical baskets from the Maine Historical Society (MHS) collection as well as modern examples by artists from all four Wabanaki nations, including award-winning basketry artists Theresa Secord, Jeremy Frey, Sarah Sockbeson, George Neptune, and Clara Neptune Keezer.

November 19 at 5:30 pm - Maine Historical Society, Portland

REACH Co-Director, Penthea Burns and Community Organizer, Tom Reynolds will deliver a presentation about our shared history and opportunities to write a new history for our grandchildren.

For more information on these and other Maine Historical Society events Visit:

https://www.mainehistory.org/programs_dawnland.shtml

Health and Wellness Coordination

REACH extends a big thanks to all who donated to our book drive for Native prisoners.

Chances are you know a family member, a friend, or other person who is in prison. Through our work in the prison system we learned that Native inmates seldom see themselves, their cultures, or traditions represented in the prison in any way.

REACH believes culture and traditions are key to healing, recovery, and healthy community. So, in an effort to fill this void, REACH asked you to help and you responded. Thanks to your generosity, we have 145 books that will be re-distributed to prisons and re-entry centers where Wabanaki men and women are currently living.



"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

- Proverbs 11:25

And speaking of generosity ~ generosity is a *core Wabanaki value* that will be highlighted in the upcoming REACH Kindness Curriculum.

In the course of our intimate work in tribal communities, REACH heard many express concerns about bullying and other forms of hostile treatment. As a result, we reached out to an organization called Hardy Girls, Healthy Women and invited them to Indian Island for a well-attended workshop called "Moving Beyond Mean Girls." The workshop had representation from all Wabanaki tribes and the suggested follow up was that we create our own culturally-based kindness curriculum for tribal youth.

An energetic and enthusiastic team has already met twice to move this curriculum forward. We are developing a written curriculum to share with all tribal schools and youth-focused organizations. We hope to have it available before the end of the Winter. The curriculum is focused on kindness (that which we hope to GROW) rather than "anti-bullying" (or focusing on/targeting the bully). Our goal? To grow kinder, gentler communities!

Finally, you will want to mark your calendars for Monday October 12 and Tuesday October 13 when REACH will host our 2nd Annual Wabanaki Wellness Gathering at the Sockalexis Arena on Indian Island. On Monday night of the gathering, Wabanaki community organizers from several tribal communities will come together to offer a staged reading of the funny and thought-provoking play "Indian Radio Days: An Evolving Bingo Experience." This staged reading is open to the public and is being offered as a fundraiser for tribal food pantries. Suggested admission to "the show" is non-perishable food items or a monetary donation.

For more information, contact Maria Girouard, Wellness Coordinator at (207) 852-2541 or maria@mainewabanakireach.org

Healing and Resiliency Building in Wabanaki Communities

It has been a very busy summer for Wabanaki Community Organizers and Corrections Organizers who are working in tribal communities and Maine prisons to educate about history, trauma and its impacts and promote strategies for healing. The themes for the coming months are wellness and connections.

Kathy Paul has joined our organizing team, working with Wenona Lola at Penobscot Nation. Kathy has been a longtime supporter and volunteer for REACH and is a member of the Penobscot Women's drum circle, Mamakehso Singers. The organizing duo at Penobscot offer peace and healing circles, outreach to community members and host monthly educational events that also invigorate the body and soul like the upcoming Dance to the Oldies.

After many months without any organizing staff in Sipayik, we are pleased to welcome an energetic pair, Tina Downing and Lauren Sabattus. Tina has served the Sipayik community for many years as a tribal council member, co-coordinator of the annual Indian Day celebration and a volunteer for just about everything, she is one of the "go to" people in the community, always willing to lend a helping hand. She is joined by Lauren Sabattus, who works with our littlest relatives at the tribal child care center while attending the local community college, studying to be an Emergency Medical Technician. They are off to a great start, offering peace and healing circles and community events like the upcoming project to construct a community sweat lodge.

Up north in Arookstook County, Krista Stevens and Dena Joseph are ready to launch a healing circle just for young people to provide them with safe space to share, listen and learn relaxation and other mindful techniques that they can use every day. They are excited to host an art and healing mask making workshop at the end of the month as well and are setting up an information table at the tribal office building.

The Corrections Organizing team has been very hard at work leading peace and healing circles in the prisons. Katie Tomer and Sandra Bassett are engaging our incarcerated female relatives at the Southern Maine Reentry Center, sharing knowledge about and opportunity to engage in cultural activities. The purpose for the circles is affectionately referred to as "feel, deal, and heal" because prisoners get the opportunity to sit together in a safe, ceremonial space to share, listen and learn specific techniques that help them in many ways outside of the circle and within the prison walls.

Sandra has teamed up with Roger Paul to co-facilitate the circles at Maine State Prison with male inmates and they are powerful together, each bringing their valuable, unique life experiences into the work. We are excited to be engaging with pipe carrier, Brian Altvater to provide him with resources to offer native prisoners a chance to participate in a sweat lodge ceremony. Brian has brought ceremony to the prisons for many years, is very well respected by prison inmates, administration and staff and we are happy to be collaborating with him.

We are still working on our pen pal initiative and hope to launch in the coming months, just in time for people to offer friendship during the holidays, which are an especially challenging time for inmates.

For more information about Wabanaki Organizing, contact Esther Attean, Co-Director at (207) 615-3189 esther@mainewabanakireach.org.