



NACS NEWS

*A Tradition
of Caring!*

Gala 2017
Special Edition

Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc.

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NACS TO HOLD 8TH ANNUAL GALA - "GIVING THANKS - HONORING THE PLANTS"

submitted by Michael Martin, Executive Director

You are cordially invited to join Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS) at our 8th Annual Gala as we celebrate 42 years in a 'Tradition of Caring'.

The Gala will be held at the new DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Niagara Falls, NY on Thursday, October 5, 2017.

To honor our Native American culture, each year our Annual Gala theme follows the verses of the traditional Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, so this year the theme is "Giving Thanks - Honoring The Plants."

Our guest, celebrity MC for the evening is former Buffalo Sabre, Cody McCormick. A veteran of 405 NHL games, McCormick is from Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, located in Southwestern, Ontario, near London, Ontario.

Our night begins at 5:30 pm with a reception with basket raffles and silent auction items available to bid on. Our formal

program begins at 6:30 pm with a welcome and traditional Thanksgiving Address. Dinner will be served by 6:45 pm. The event will also include the presentation of our "Bundled Arrows Awards" which will recognize individuals or organizations who help to strengthen our community.

NACS Executive Director, Michael Martin, said "The Gala not only serves as our largest fundraiser of the year which allows us to make critical investments in meeting the short and long-term needs of the lives we touch, but it also offers an opportunity to give thanks and honor some of the wonderful contributors that impact the community and help NACS in meeting its mission."

Tickets for the 2017 Gala are \$100 per person, but please note that ticket prices will increase to \$125 on September 26th! In addition to the price increase, there will only be a limited number of tickets available after this date. Tickets can be purchased

online through the following site:

[www.brownpapertickets.com/
event/3057372](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3057372)

It is also not too late to be a sponsor, buy a program Ad or donate an item for the large basket raffle or special raffle items. Individuals or businesses interested in becoming a sponsor or purchasing an Ad in the program book can call our main office at 716.874.4460 to receive a sponsorship form or to get more information.

As Martin states, "We hope the community will come out and help us give thanks and celebrate the work of our organization and our community, while also providing us assistance in moving important initiatives forward. We appreciate everyone's support, whether they buy a ticket, become a sponsor, purchase an Ad, or make a donation. It should be a fabulous night and it means a lot to us to see so many people come out and enjoy it with us!"

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Former Buffalo Sabre Cody McCormick to be this year's Celebrity Gala Master of Ceremonies!!!



NACS is excited to announce that our celebrity Emcee for this year's Gala is former NHL forward Cody McCormick.

McCormick is from Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, located in Southwestern, Ontario, near London, Ontario. Before the NHL, McCormick played Junior hockey in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) where he was a left winger for the [Belleville, Ontario](#) based team for all four years of his junior career, from 1999-2003. During McCormick's four-year stint as a Bull, he accumulated a total of 56 goals, where 36 of them came from his 2002-2003 season. That season led to him being drafted by the Colorado Avalanche in the 5th Round, 144th overall, of the 2001 NHL Draft. McCormick went on to play 405 NHL games with the Colorado Avalanche, Minnesota Wild and Buffalo Sabres before retiring in 2016. McCormick had missed more than a full season of action due to blood clots that spread to his lungs, and the Buffalo Sabres winger has decided to call it a career. McCormick, 34, played a role as a

grinder and energy player, who added toughness to each game he played, while recording 65 points and 550 penalty minutes in his career. McCormick is married with two daughters and a son and they reside in Clarence Center, New York. His

wife is Alyssa Paiement, the daughter of former NHLer and Sabre Wilf Paiement.

McCormick also participated in an event coordinated by the "I Love First Peoples" Foundation along with the Buffalo Sabres, The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, and NACS held at the North Park Theater to present *Secret Path*, an animated short film released by Tragically Hip lead singer Gord Downie. *Secret Path* told the story of Chanie Wenjack, a 12-year-old Native boy who ran away from his residential school in 1966 and died six days later on the side of the railroad tracks as he was trying to follow them home. Cody talked about his own path in life and to the NHL and some of the challenges he faced. The event raised awareness of the intergenerational impact of residential/boarding schools in Native communities.

With the hockey season starting, we're honored that Cody took time away from his busy schedule to join us and be part of making this year's Gala a wonderful event.

NACS announces 2017 “Bundled Arrows” Award Winners!

NACS is very happy to announce that our Bundled Arrows honorees for this year's Gala are:

- **Sakokwenionkwas Tom Porter** – Mohawk spiritual leader
- **Noreen Hill** – Project Director of the Indian Education Program for the Niagara Falls School District
- **Dr. Bruce Coles** – Recently retired from New York State Department of Health

The Bundled Arrows awards are in recognition of their contributions and commitment to the strengthening of our local Native American community. Our awards are inspired by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's Great Law of Peace in which the Peacemaker on his journey to unite the confederacy gave the strongest warrior in the village one arrow and told him to break it and the warrior easily did. He then bundled five arrows together to signify the original five nations to accept the Great Law and asked the same warrior to break it and he couldn't. This simple act showed that we are stronger working together than we are separate.

Mr. Porter is a man who

really needs no introduction, but Thomas R. Porter (Sakokwenionkwas -“The One Who Wins”) has been the founder, spokesperson and spiritual leader of the Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke (Ga na jo ha lay gay) located in the Mohawk Valley near Fonda, New York since 1993. He is a member of the Bear Clan of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne. He is married to Alice Joe Porter who is Choctaw, and has six children.

Mr. Porter has held the position of sub-chief for the Tehanakarine Chieftainship title, one of the nine chief titles of the Mohawk Nation, for 21 years (1971-1992). Chiefs are considered to be spiritual as well as political leaders. Some of the duties of that position were: officiating at marriage ceremonies, death ceremonies and numerous other traditional ceremonies held throughout the year.

He was the director of and, a teacher at the Akwesasne Freedom School and taught at the Kahnawake Survival School. He taught Mohawk language, philosophy and history at both

schools as well as carpentry at Kahnawake. The purpose of both schools is to teach all of the usual subject matter, but within a traditional Mohawk worldview and with emphasis on keeping the Mohawk language alive and vital. It is said that with the loss of language, there also is the loss of at least 50% of a people's culture and identity.

Mr. Porter worked as Secretary for the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs for 8 years and as an interpreter for 11 years. He is still called on to help out as needed, when his schedule allows. Mr. Porter organized the “White Roots of Peace”, a traveling multi-media communications group designed to revitalize Native traditions and beliefs in North America. He was the main speaker and lectured for the group at various universities and colleges all over the United States and Canada.

Mr. Porter previously worked as the Native American consultant for the New York State Penitentiary System and as Chaplain for all of the Native inmates in the New York State Penal System, where he traveled all over the state to meet with Native inmates.

Mr. Porter has authored various books and pamphlets, all of which teach about Mohawk traditions and spirituality. As NACS Executive Director states, "Tom is one who truly emulates the teachings of a Good Mind. He is generous in sharing his time, wisdom and spirit with all. He has long been a champion of our people and our ways. As a gifted story (and joke) teller, Tom amuses, enlightens and inspires. He is very deserving of any honor and we are thankful and happy to be able to recognize him for his lifetime of accomplishments and contributions."

Noreen Hill is Project Director of the Indian Education Program for the Niagara Falls School District. In addition to being active in local Native American issues, she also was a stalwart for Native rights and involved with the Indian Defense League of America for many years. She also had worked for NACS earlier in her career. Michael Martin notes "Noreen has always been a defender of our people and holds the bar high whether externally or internally focused. She is dedicated and committed to achieving the best representation and results for our Native community, especial-

ly our youth."

Bruce Coles, DO, recently retired from a long distinguished career as a Public Health Physician at NYS Department of Health. He has made many contributions to NACS' work and on issues affecting Native people across the state. He worked as the Medical Director for Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention. In his role, he was critical to getting funds established for Native communities from across NYS to gather and develop (or renew) more holistic models for Native American health and well-being. Mr. Martin states "Dr. Coles contributions were often behind the scenes, almost a silent partner, but he is a man of vision and persistence when he sees needs that must be met. Although a man of Jewish faith, we have found a kindred spirit for our Native causes and a good friend of our people and a representation of our Good Mind teachings. His support and dedication will have ripple effects for generations to come."

In addition to the above, NACS will also honor a local Native youth with our "Elder In Training" award

which is given to a youth who is already on a good path and has demonstrated care and concern for the community. It's the only award done through community nomination and it's not too late to nominate a deserving youth for consideration. For a nomination form or more information, please contact Norine Borkowski at 716.874.4460, extension 304.

NACS congratulates all honorees and looks forward to giving thanks and celebrating their accomplishments and achievements at the 2017 Gala!



Native American Community Services

*Cordially invites you to our
8th Annual Gala*

Giving Thanks, Honoring the Plants

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel

401 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14303

*Commemorating our 42nd anniversary of service
In a Tradition of Caring*

Thursday, October 5, 2017

5:30 PM Reception

6:30 PM Welcome

6:45 PM Dinner

Dinner Selections:

Flank Steak

Lemon Chicken

Salmon

Guest Emcee: Cody McCormick, former Buffalo Sabre

Tickets are \$100 each

Available at: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3057372

NACS 1005 Grant St., Buffalo, NY 14207 ATTN: GALA
(716) 874-2797 ext. 333 / (716) 874-4460 (main line)
gala@nacswny.org

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of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc.
1005 Grant Street
Buffalo, New York, 14207**

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