



## **NACS LAUNCHES “ALL OUR RELATIONS” PROJECT TO IMPROVE NATIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND HEALTH IN BUFFALO**

**Project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

**Buffalo, New York**—The Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties (NACS) is proud to announce the launch of the “All Our Relations” Project (AOR), funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The three-year, \$848,345 grant is a ground-breaking initiative that seeks to improve relationships between the Native and non-Native service providers, community groups and policy makers in the Buffalo/Niagara region. The project will include three key areas: Case management, cultural programming and cultural competency training.

“Many people are not aware of the underlying causes that impact the health and wellness of Native Americans, many of whom have experienced generational trauma and dynamics that are unique to our communities,” said Michael N. Martin, executive director of NACS. “The lack of understanding can prevent Natives from successfully accessing much-needed health and human services that are critical to the health of our people. These factors often result in a lack of trust, cross-cultural conflicts and continued disproportional health and social problems within the Native American community.”

The AOR Project will offer human services to the Native American community in both Erie and Niagara Counties by providing voluntary case management services to assist persons who are struggling with mental, physical and spiritual challenges to their well-being. Individualized Service Plans are developed in collaboration with our clients so that all services, referrals, supports and related efforts strive to meet their needs.

Additionally, the project will contribute to the vitality and health of the Native community and its friends through a series of Native cultural programs in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. These community events will feature traditional cultural teachings, Native arts and crafts, and other activities designed to foster a healthy community. Plans include language preservation classes, social dance instruction, and a speaker series with the goal of breaking down barriers to accessing and engaging successfully in services.

The AOR Project will also provide cultural competency trainings to service providers, organizations, and others that work with Native Americans as a way to encourage and promote wellness through culturally-appropriate programs and services that are sensitive to the indigenous communities in the region. These trainings can also be tailored for organizations and groups and presented on-site at their offices.

“NACS is focused on nurturing positive, meaningful improvements in the lives of the people we serve, rather than simply placing band-aids on deep and profound wounds that are often multi-generational in their origins,” said Martin. “The more information and knowledge people have about our cultures and underlying factors, the more effective service providers can be in working with our communities.”

### **About Native American Community Services**

NACS is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 to provide quality health and social services for the Native American community and friends. Serving segments of the general community, NACS has developed innovative approaches that are intended to significantly improve the lives of those who engage in our programs and services.

**About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast pioneer Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).