



NACS NEWS

A Tradition of Caring

Nov./Dec. 2015
Volume 19, Issue 6

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

- 1005 Grant Street, Buffalo, New York, 14207, (716) 874-4460, Fax (716) 874-1874
- 1522 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, 14305, (716) 299-0914, Fax (716) 299-0903

Keep Your Money for the Holidays

submitted by: Carmen Brown, Economic Self-Sufficiency Specialist

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

HEAP is a federally funded assistance with home heating costs and energy conservation for eligible households. The Program includes benefit assistance for heat and electricity, furnace repair or replacement, weatherization referral, and cooling assistance (based on medical necessity in the summer months).

- HEAP Heating Equipment (Furnace) Repair and Replacement opens **November 9, 2015**
- HEAP Regular Benefit, for main source of household's heat, opens **November 16, 2015**
- HEAP Emergency Benefits for main source of heat and heat-related electricity opens **January 4, 2016**

HEAP Income Guidelines 2015 – 2016

(Monthly Household Gross Income Cannot Exceed)

Regular HEAP Benefit Amounts:

- **\$350 base benefit** – Natural Gas or Electric Heat
- **\$575 base benefit** – Deliverable fuel (oil, propane,

kerosene)

- **\$500 base benefit** – Deliverable fuel (wood, coal, pellets, corn)
- **Add on \$25** – Add an additional \$25 to base benefit if Household has Tier 1 income
- **Add on \$25** – Add an additional \$25 to base benefit if there is a child age 5 or under OR an adult over the age of 60 OR disabled individual in Household

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,244
2	\$2,935
3	\$3,625
4	\$4,316
5	\$5006
6	\$5697
7	\$5,826
8	\$5,956
9	\$6,085
10	\$6,215

Renter's Benefit for Heat Included in Rent:

If heat costs are included in Rent (NON SUBSIDIZED RENT ONLY), benefit amount is based on household income:

- \$35 benefit if income is Tier I
- \$30 if income is Tier II

If heat is included in rent, and rent is subsidized, household is not eligible for Regular HEAP.

You can apply for HEAP by either *mail, online, or in person.*

1. Apply by mail by first calling the HEAP Application Request Line at **858-1969**. An application packet will be mailed to you to mail back, or drop off in person.
2. Apply online at mybenefits.ny.gov.
3. Apply in person at either:
478 Main Street, Buffalo (8am – 4pm) All households receiving TA or SNAP, and heads of household under 60 years of age, non disabled

OR

(Continued on page 2)

**NATIVE AMERICAN
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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**MOVING/CHANGE
OF ADDRESS?**

If you are planning on moving or changing your address, please contact NACS so we may update our mailing list. Call (716) 874-2797, ext. 378 or send an email to: gghosen@nacswny.org

(Continued from page 1)

291 Pearl Street, Buffalo (8am – 4pm) Heads of household 60 or older, or under 60 and disabled (not receiving TA or SNAP)

If HEAP is not the route you would like to go because you do not qualify or for any other reason, there are other options like signing up for a Budget Plan with National Fuel.

National Fuel's Budget Plan lets you stabilize your entire monthly bill for up to one year. The plan divides your estimated annual bill by 12 (or by the number of months you want your budget plan to be in effect).

Budget Plan participants' average bill amounts are based on a combination of the cost of gas and weather conditions, plus historic and current gas usage. Since these factors can change, National Fuel may adjust your Budget Plan amount periodically to ensure that it remains accurate.

You can now sign up for the Budget

Plan online at:

nationalfuelgas.com/

OnlineAccountServices.aspx,

or call them at (716) 686-6123, or stop by their office at:

409 Main St.

Buffalo, NY 14203

(8:15am – 4:30pm) Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).

There is also a great deal of agencies in the area able and willing to weatherize your homes or apartments:

PUSH Green (456 Massachusetts Avenue Buffalo, NY 14213 716-886-1780)

or

Supportive Services Weatherization Program (245 Elmwood Avenue Buffalo, NY 14222 716-685-6252).

If you have any questions, need help with the application process, contacting agencies, or budget plans – stop in and see us here in the Economic Self Sufficiency component at NACS.

Elders Get Together for the Holidays!

The elders pictured here are at a post-Christmas gathering that was held earlier this year. They went to the Cheesecake Factory at the Walden Galleria Mall for dinner and to share their camaraderie. From left to right are Eileen Jaeckle, Vivian Bradley—(Elders Program Manager), Sarah Haas, Sandy Pardy, Cindy Williams and Gwen Montes.





Annual Niagara Falls

Native American Community Holiday Party

Saturday, December 12, 2015, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

1010 Michigan Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14301

IMPORTANT: *To register for children's gifts or to attend, please call*

Linda @ (716) 282-2615

Deadline to Register: Friday, December 4, 2015

PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE AT OUR ALCOHOL-FREE AND DRUG-FREE EVENT

Supported by the Niagara Native American Coalition, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS), and several local, caring individuals and businesses.

Seasons Greetings

NACS is funded by: Erie Co. Dept. of Social Services; NC Dept. of Social Services; NC Office of the Aging; NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services; New York State Office of Children & Family Services; NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities; US Dept. of Labor; United Way of Buffalo & Erie County; NYSDOH/Family Health; NYS Education; US Dept. of Health & Human Services/Administration for Native Americans; Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc.; NYS Department of Education as well as businesses, foundations, and caring individuals.



Tips for the Upcoming Flu Season

submitted by Erie County Dept. of Health

It is influenza (flu) season once again and everyone should start thinking about receiving their yearly vaccination against influenza. Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next. Although coverage was poor against the flu strains prevalent last year, this year's vaccine is expected to provide much better protection.

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

Some populations are more susceptible to developing these complications including the very young (children under 2 years of age) and older adults (65 years and older), and American Indians seem to be at higher

risk.

If you are one of those individuals who have questions or concerns regarding the safety or need for vaccination, please note that there are 226,000 hospitalizations annually and upwards of 49,000 deaths every year from this easily preventable disease, and there were 146 pediatric deaths last season (6 in NY State).

It is important that we dispel some myths that still remain:

You can get the disease from receiving the vaccine.....Wrong, it takes up to 2 weeks for the vaccine to take full effect. In the meantime, you may come in contact with the virus and develop the flu. All the more reason to secure a vaccination before flu season kicks into high gear!

You only need a flu vaccine once.....Wrong, you need to receive a vaccine every year as the flu strains may change year to year, and your protection may decline over time as well.

I am (my child is) afraid of needles....the flu vaccine is available via a nasal spray for healthy individuals 2 to 49 years of age or via intradermal form which is only skin deep (superficial).

Please utilize the CDC's website for more information -

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/>

[misconceptions.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm)

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm>

Provided by: Immunization Action Plan/Erie Co. Dept. of Health (858-2373)

To All Our Readers!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Staff of Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, we would like to wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year!



SIGNS & RED FLAGS

The following signs may indicate a problem with alcohol or other drugs, some also are natural changes or “growing pains” for kids as they grow and mature. However, experts believe that a drinking problem is more likely if you notice several of these changes at the same time or if they occur suddenly, and if some of them are extreme in nature. If you notice some of the following changes with your child, it's a time to start a conversation.



Physical

- **Alcohol presence:** finding it in your child's room or backpack or smelling alcohol on his or her breath.
- **Bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils**
- **Changes or slurred speech**
- **Memory lapses**
- **Poor concentration or inability to focus** as they once did
- **Sleeping in extra late**
- **Feeling ill after spending time with friends**



Social Life

- **Persistent or intense about going out with friends**
- **Friend changes:** switching friends or hanging out with new friends and reluctance to letting you meet them
- **Not checking in with you** as they once did
- **Breaking curfew**
- **Frequently attending parties** or group hangouts
- **Discussing alcohol or drug use on social media**



School Life

- **Grades dropping**
- **Lack of interest** in sports or extracurricular activities they were once involved in
- **Poor attendance**
- **Recent disciplinary action**



Personality

- **Feelings of stress or added stress**
- **Mood changes:** flare-ups of temper, irritability, and defensiveness
- **Rebellion against family rules**
- **Lack of energy** or lack of involvement in former interests,
- **Sloppy appearance-change** in commitment to getting ready

Other “Red Flags”



Household items missing such as:

- **Money**
- **Alcohol**
- **Prescription drugs**



Personal Items

- **Eye drops**
- **Breath mints & mint tins** or other small containers
- **Interest in apparel that promotes alcohol or drug use**
- **Red cups** being used as décor or to store items in their rooms

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov
Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

Meet Our Newest Additions to the NACS Family

Danielle Bernas

Graduated from University at Buffalo with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Medical Anthropology. Currently completing a certificate in Trauma-Informed Care and Counseling and anticipates returning to school for an MSW/MPH in Spring 2016. Came from Journey's End Refugee Services as an Intensive Case Manager, working with newly arrived refugees who required assistance with mental or physical health care, life skills training, parenting, and/or LGBTQ needs.



Hello to Barbara Clawson-Cole

Barbara Clawson Cole joined the staff of NACS on October 19, 2015 as Director of Family Services. She comes to NACS after a brief time in retirement from Erie County Department of Social Services as Administrative Director of Child Protection, Children's Services, Adoption and Homefinding since 1995.

Barbara began her career in child welfare as a Child Care Worker at Witham Cottage, Gateway Longview after receiving her Bachelor's degree in social work in 1972. It was there she met and 3 years later married her husband, Harold Cole. The Erie County Office for the Aging was the next career stop. Barbara's territory was the southern tier for 5 years doing rural outreach with the 60+ population as a Community Resource Technician.

In 1979, she joined the newly developed Foster Care and Adoption Department at Child and Family Services (CFS) where she remained for 17 years. It was at CFS that her passion for Special Needs Adoption flourished and adoptions at CFS blossomed across New York State. Along with the Adoption Specialist from Erie County DSS, the Coalition of Adoption Services in Erie County (CASEC) was formed, it is now known as the Coalition of Adoption and Foster Family Agencies. (CAFFA).

Barbara is the proud parent of three grown children and one adored granddaughter, Giselle. Barbara and her husband of 41 years enjoy traveling, entertaining and gardening together. Barbara is an active member of Northgate Community Church where mentoring students from UB is a special focus.

Barbara's vision for the Family Services Department includes the overall improvement of all family services delivered by NACS with specific emphasis on the expansion of the Foster Care Program. Stay tuned, there is already a vigorous recruitment and retention plan for 2016 on the schedule. Barbara along with her staff are committed to providing quality child welfare services to the children and families at NACS.



Welcome Valeria Keys

I, Valeria Keys, like to be called Val. My background is in healthcare and human services. I attended Buffalo State and have my BSW. I have always had a passion for working with youth and am proud to be a Senior Youth Empowerment Worker here at NACS.



Welcome to New NACS Family Members (Continued)

Welcome Amelia Lobo

My name is Amelia Lobo, and I am excited to be joining the Health and Wellness team! I am originally from Colorado but have lived with my husband in Tonawanda for the past three years. I graduated with a B.S. in Psychology and recently completed my Master of Social Work degree at the University at Buffalo. I had internships and volunteer experiences with the North Tonawanda School District, United Way, and Crisis Services before joining the Achieving Our Dreams program, and I look forward to working in prevention with Native American Community Services.



Welcome Jennifer Loft

Jennifer Loft (Six Nations Mohawk) is a Ph.D. candidate at the University at Buffalo in Global Gender Studies, where she focuses on sexual violence against Native American women, trauma and healing, dance and performance, and body positivity. She received her Masters in Global Gender Studies and Bachelors in Psychology at UB. She will soon be a licensed Zumba instructor, hoping to teach classes around Western New York and inspire people to be healthy and active individuals!

With a few years of teaching experience at UB under her belt and a passion for women's reproductive health, she comes to her new position as Senior Youth Empowerment Worker with the readiness to promote body positivity and healthy sexual relationships among youth. She comes to this field with a desire to make a lasting impact on the lives of youth and help guide them in their journeys to becoming adults.



Welcome Christina Petito

My name is Christina Petito and I am a newcomer to the Stages of Life Empowerment Program (S.O.L.E) here at Native American Community Services (NACS). I am very excited for this opportunity at NACS and look forward to learning new ways to help those in the community as a Youth Empowerment Worker. Prior to working with NACS I was employed with People Inc. working in several different departments, ranging from in-home care to Licensed Home Health, to Medicaid Service Coordination. My undergraduate degree was completed at Buffalo State College in Social Work and Psychology. I am near completion of my Masters of Psychology degree from Medaille College.



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1005 Grant Street
Buffalo, New York, 14207**

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YES, I'D LIKE TO HELP NACS TO CONTINUE IT'S TRADITION OF CARING!!

Please accept my contribution of:

- \$5 \$10 \$25 \$50
 \$100 Other: _____

I'd like to volunteer my time. I can...

Name

Address

City / State / Zip Code

Phone

Please add me to your mailing list!

Please detach and return to:

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

FUNDED BY: Erie County Department of Social Services; New York State Office of Children & Family Services; New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services; NYS DOH/Family Health; NYS Education Dept.; NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities; Niagara County Department of Social Services, Niagara County Office of the Aging; US Department of Labor; United Way of Buffalo & Erie County; U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services/Administration for Native Americans; Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc., as well as businesses, foundations and caring individuals.

