



NACS News

*A Tradition
of Caring*

May 2022
Volume 26, Issue 5

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
- 76 West Avenue, Lockport, New York, 14094, (716) 302-3035, Fax (716) 302-3037

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

submitted by George T. Ghosen, Editor

Mental health is wealth, especially during Mental Health Awareness Month, which is celebrated in May. The stigma around mental health and treatment has long existed, even though this has started to change. Still, people hesitate to seek help or even talk about it with their loved ones for fear of being judged and facing unnecessary backlash. Simple logic dictates that if we are hurt anywhere, we must seek treatment to get better. This applies to both our mental- and physical well-being. While Mental Health Awareness Month is celebrated in the U.S., a more universal day is also celebrated by the World Health Organization (WHO) on October 10, and it is known as [World Mental Health Day](#).

History

Mental Health Awareness Month was first celebrated in 1949. It was commemorated by the Mental Health America organization, which was then known as the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and then later as the National Mental Health Association before it got its current name. The association was founded by Clifford Whittingham Beers. Beers,

who was born in 1876 in Connecticut, was one of five children in his family who all suffered from mental illness and psychological distress. All of them also went on to spend time at mental institutions and it was from his hospital admittance that he discovered that the mental health field had a notorious reputation for malpractice, maltreatment, and immense bias.

Beers went on to author "A Mind That Found Itself", which is a bestseller even today. Gaining popularity and support from medical professionals, Beers founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Beers and his colleagues at the association wanted to find ways to make sure that mental health patients not only received the right care but also did not feel alone in their fight against mental diseases.

Mental Health Awareness Month FAQs

What are some mental health helpline numbers?

You can call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text 'MHA' to 741741. You can also visit the following websites for more information:

1. Mental Health America: <https://mhanational.org/get-involved/contact-us>
2. Suicide Crisis Lines: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_suicide_crisis_lines
3. Suicide Prevention Lines: <https://suicidepreventionline.org/talk-to-someone-now/>

What are types of mental illness?

According to MedlinePlus some types of mental disorders are:

- "Anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobias.
- Depression, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders.
- Eating disorders.
- Personality disorders.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia."

What is the color of Mental Health Awareness Month?

Mental health awareness is represented by a green ribbon.

(Continued on page 2)

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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. Send an email to Newsletter Editor:

gghosen@nacswny.org

(Continued from page 1)

How to Observe Mental Health Awareness Month

1. Take care of yourself

Life has numerous ups and downs. Some are solvable but others not so much. When your mental health acts up, seek the right treatment and make yourself better because, after all, life has much more to offer than just pain and suffering.

2. Take care of your loved ones

Check up on your friends and family. Many times, all people need is a shoulder to cry on and/or an ear to listen. Support and encourage them if they are being treated for any mental problems.

3. Talk about mental health

One of the best ways to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month is by talking about it with your peers. The more you talk about it, the more normalized it will become. This is one of the aims of the month as the stigma attached to mental health has led to countless delays in treatment AND research on the matter.

5 Facts About Anxiety Disorder That Will Blow Your Mind

1. Anxiety most common

In the U.S., anxiety disorder is the most common form of mental illness.

2. Very few people seek treatment

Anxiety disorder is treatable in many cases but only about 36% of people opt to get help.

3. Multiple factors cause anxiety

From brain activities to genetics to life events, a host of factors can lead to a person developing an anxiety disorder.

4. Anxiety from a young age

The National Institute of Mental Health states that 8% of American teenagers already have an

anxiety disorder.

5. Exercise to fight anxiety

Many studies have proven that a little boost of energy from exercise can help lessen the effects of anxiety disorder.

Why We Love Mental Health Awareness Month

1. It's a celebration of mental health

The only way to enjoy life to the fullest and experience all its wonders is if we take care of ourselves, mentally and physically. Don't shy away from talking about what's plaguing you because it might not be your fault, no matter how much society tells you otherwise.

2. It's a celebration of changing attitudes

We have come a long way from the times when mental patients were treated as outcasts, not only by their loved ones but also by medical professionals. Times have started changing and more and more people are changing their outlook on mental illnesses. However, we still have a long way to go.

3. It's a celebration of humans

We humans are a set of meticulously-put-together details. Our minds (and bodies) work in harmony to bring us amazing feats in technology, science, humanities, literature, etc. Our mental power, therefore, needs to be taken care of for a better tomorrow for the coming generations.

Some Recent Laws Enacted Related to Mental Health

- [Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 P.L. 116-171, Enacted 10/17/2020](#), This public law makes updates related to Department of Veter-

(Continued on page 3)

ans Affairs (VA) transition assistance, mental health care, care for women veterans, and telehealth care.

- [National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 P.L. 116-172, Enacted 10/17/2020](#), This public law requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.
- [Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020, P.L. 116-214, Enacted 12/5/2020](#), This public law implements programs, policies, and reports related to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) transition assistance, suicide care, mental health education and treatment, health care, and women veteran care.
- [Crisis Stabilization and Community Reentry Act of 2020, P.L. 116-281, Enacted](#)

[ed 12/31/2020](#), This public law authorizes the Department of Justice to award grants for states, Native American tribes, local governments, and community-based non-profit organizations to provide clinical services for people with serious mental illness and substance use disorders who need mental health services upon release from a correctional facility.

- [Advancing Research to Prevent Suicide Act, P.L. 116-339, Enacted 1/13/2021](#), This public law directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to award competitive, merit-reviewed grants to institutions of higher education (or their consortia) to support multidisciplinary, fundamental research with potential relevance to suicide, in-

cluding potential relevance to prevention and treatment.

Mental Health Month gives all of us a valuable opportunity to celebrate the tremendous strides this Nation has made in promoting mental health and increasing the public's knowledge that effective services and support are available.

Resources:

- <https://nationaltoday.com/mental-health-awareness-month/>
- <https://www.govinfo.gov/features/mental-health-awareness-month-2021>
- <https://youth.gov/feature-article/may-national-mental-health-month>



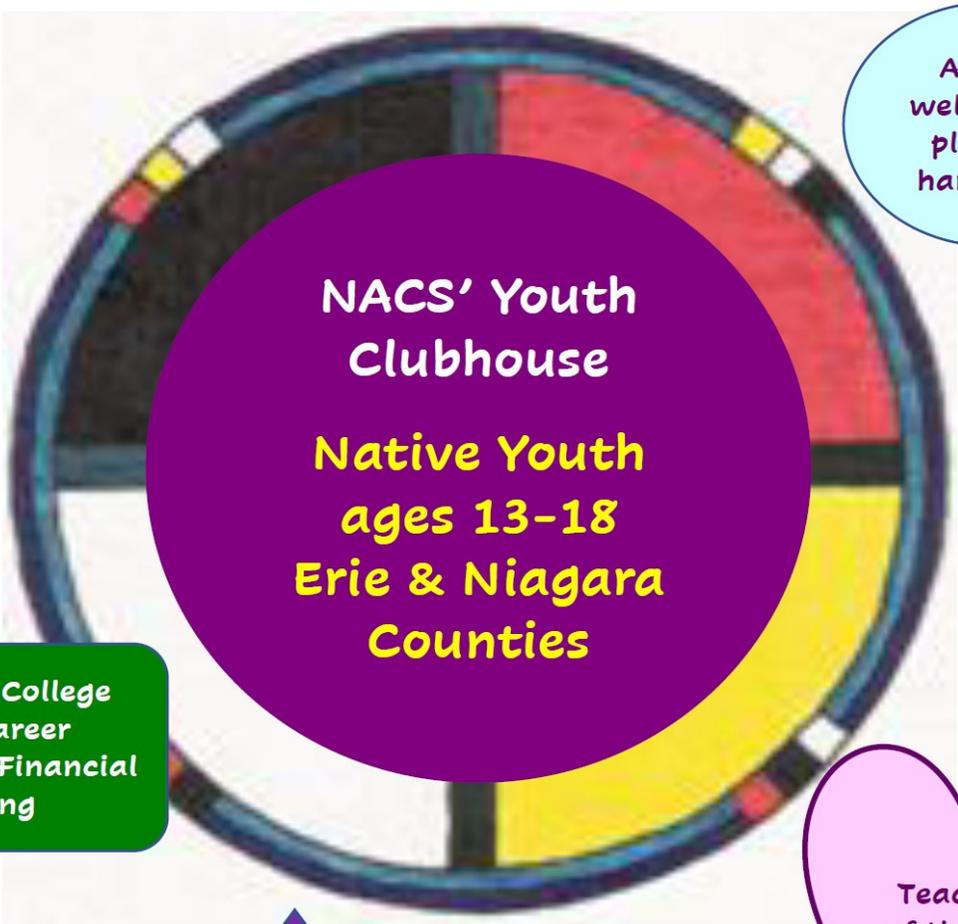
Meet 2 New Team Members at NACS

Greetings! My name is [Becky Waterman](#), I am Beaver Clan of the Onondaga Nation where I also reside. I am the new Workforce Development Specialist (WDS) in the Syracuse area. I will be assisting the eligible Native American population in the CNY region, covering the counties of Onondaga, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, Cayuga, and Cortland. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2002 at Buffalo State College (BSC), majoring in Criminal Justice. I have a 14-year-old daughter Mykala and a 11-year-old cat Ahzee. I began my college journey in 1993 to 1996 at BSC wherein that time I worked part time at NACS as a Youth Program Worker. I returned to Buffalo in 2002 to finish the last semester I needed to earn my degree. Upon earning my degree, I was again employed by NACS as a WDS until I returned home to the Onondaga Nation in 2004. Since returning home I have worked as a Case Manager at the Onondaga Nation Healing Center and Child & Family Protective Services until health issues made it difficult to effectively do my job. I have worked hard on my health recovery since and I am excited once again to be given the opportunity to be gainfully employed and am especially honored once again to be part of the NACS team!

Hello all! My name is [Laura Gugliuzza](#) and I am a new Health Educator and Peer Mentor in the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program. I am from Buffalo, NY and I earned a bachelor's degree in Art and a minor in Art Therapy at Buffalo State College. After graduation, I worked with youth and adults with autism through different agencies around WNY. I have also has spent time working towards my master's degree in Art Therapy at Nazareth College. I am so excited about teaching health education in schools across the region as well as working with our Peer Educators to help promote the importance of health education.



Van transportation available!



NACS' Youth Clubhouse
Native Youth ages 13-18
Erie & Niagara Counties

A safe, welcoming place to hang out!

Pool table, dart board, fun & games!

Field Trips, College Visits, Career Exploration, Financial Planning

Teachings of the Good Mind



Native Cultural Teachings, Activities & Traditional Arts



Instagram @nacs_clubhouse

For more information, please contact Pete Hill, Youth Services Coordinator at (716) 874-2797, ext. 342 or phill@nacswny.org

We are hiring! Buffalo & Niagara Falls locations!

Funded by the New York State Office of Addiction Services & Supports, along with foundations, business, and caring individuals like you! Nyah-weh!

SEEDLINGS Language Project

The **SEEDLINGS Language Project** is searching for individuals to voluntarily serve on a Haudenosaunee Language Advisory Committee under the recent grant received from the Administration for Native Americans. This group will meet four times per year for the next two years. Meetings and attendance can be virtual if necessary. Participants should possess a love for children, have an interest in motivating Haudenosaunee to learn their language, and have the experience to guide a language program on a path toward fluency. Meetings will range between sixty and ninety minutes. The Committee will receive the meeting agenda before the meeting so they can have the time to think about agenda items, confer with elders, talk amongst family and friends. Doing so will allow the Committee to come prepared and move the meeting from discussion to action.

The Committee will be representative of all Haudenosaunee languages and will be comprised of no more than twelve members who can make the two-year commitment. However, the meetings remain open to community are likely to exceed the twelve required seats. We will turn no one away from attending meetings, you are welcome to listen and participate. Twelve seems small to be representative of all our Haudenosaunee nations. We have considered listing alternates, increasing the twelve seats to fifteen, or to as many seats as we need.

Informational Sessions will occur remotely on Monday, June 13th at 11 AM and at 6 PM.

Info Session: Language Advisory Committee

Mon, Jun 13, 2022, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/987249789>

You can also dial in using your phone.

(For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

United States: +1 (571) 317-3122

One-touch: <tel:+15713173122,,987249789#>

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Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Info Session (PM)

Mon, Jun 13, 2022, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/984700669>

You can also dial in using your phone.

(For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

United States: +1 (872) 240-3212

One-touch: <tel:+18722403212,,984700669#>

Access Code: 984-700-669

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

If you have further questions, please contact Amy Huff, ahuff@nacswny.org



Ride for Roswell – Team Skoden, Indigenous Teams, and Native Riders

It is that time of year again! Teams and individuals are raising funds for the Ride for Roswell.

This year members of the Center for Indigenous Cancer Research and the new Center for Indigenous Cancer Services have joined efforts by creating, Team Skoden! Our team is comprised of Indigenous employees at Roswell Park along with friends and family members. We will be riding the 10-mile route on June 25th, 2022.

Our goal is to raise \$10,000!

Donations made to Team Skoden will go directly to the Center for Indigenous Cancer Research and the Center for Indigenous Cancer Services at Roswell Park.

Making a donation is easy. Just follow or click the link below to safely and easily donate online.

Check the link here:

https://give.roswellpark.org/site/TR/SpecialEvents/General?fr_id=1750&pg=team&team_id=8591

Checks can also be made out to “The Ride for Roswell” with “Team Skoden” in the memo line and collected by a “Team Skoden” member.

If you are a member on another team or organized a team, there is an option to designate your team’s support to the Center for Indigenous Cancer Research and Services Fund at Roswell Park. By doing so, the support helps fund internship opportunities, outreach, research, and cancer care services—among, with, and for Indigenous communities.

Please email whitneyann.henry@roswellpark.org who will reply with a Fund Designation Application.

You are an important member of our team in the fight against cancer and we hope that you’ll consider supporting us and other Indigenous teams throughout our Territories, Native urban landscapes, and across NY.

Together, we can make a difference!

Nya:weh!



**CENTER FOR INDIGENOUS
CANCER SERVICES**



**CENTER FOR INDIGENOUS
CANCER RESEARCH**

**Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS)
Equal Opportunity Employer**

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Position: Youth Clubhouse Site Manager(s)
Posting Date: March 2022
Type: Full-time (40 hours) / Hourly / Non-Exempt
Hours: Non-Traditional (daytime, with evenings and weekends required)
Salary: \$19.23 hourly
Location: Erie & Niagara Counties (one Site Manager for each county)

Summary

Under the guidance of the Youth Services Coordinator, the Site Managers will conduct a Youth Clubhouse for self-identified Native American youth and young adults ages 13-18. This program empowers youth to work with and support each other to achieve personal and common goals related to Native culture and free from alcohol and drugs. The Site Manager will assist in the oversight of activities, cultural programming, and staffing for the Youth Clubhouse. Site Managers must be able to exhibit and provide strong leadership and have proven sound decision-making skills.

Duties / Tasks include (but are not limited to):

- Have knowledge & understanding of substance abuse and prevention efforts
- Implement a Youth Clubhouse Program
- Monitor staff and provide constructive feedback
- Oversee workshops and activities
- Maintain a productive & interesting environment
- Coordinate scheduling of Youth Leaders & others
- Organize & assist with safe transportation for members
- Adhere to data collection, reporting, and performance measurement requirements
- Raise awareness in community regarding the Clubhouse and substance use

***Qualifications include (but are not limited to):**

- Bachelor's Degree
- Supervisory experience or relevant role
- Experience w/ at-risk youth
- Computer skills & Microsoft savvy
- Familiarity with & sensitivity toward the Native American community, cultures & teachings
- Effective oral, written, and social media skills
- Able to abide by a smoke-free policy
- Capable of lifting at least 35 lbs. and able to stand for at least 2 hours
- Clean valid NYS driver's license w/ own transportation & auto insurance liability coverage 100/300k minimum
- Acceptable outcome of background investigations

For the full posting, please visit:

<https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=native%20american%20community%20services%20youth&l=Buffalo%20NY&vjk=54b9eb91228fb001>



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● Rochester Office: TBA

Equal Opportunity Employer

Posted Position: Foster Care Director

Type: Salaried / Exempt

Salary / Range: \$52,000 Annual

Offices: Erie & Niagara Counties (Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Lockport)

Summary: Incumbent is responsible for overseeing the coordination of the day-to-day operations of the Foster Care casework and homefinding programs and ensuring quality of service provision by the respective staff. Incumbent will be flexible to evening and weekend schedules. All efforts will be performed with understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES: This position description is not intended to be all-inclusive but to give a general outline of duties to be performed.

1. Develops, implements, and achieves component goals and objectives for foster care services.
2. Ensures compliance with all regulatory requirements under NYS OCFS.
3. Continually keeps informed of foster care service developments and issues as well as changes to contractual obligations.
4. Consults regularly with the Clinical Services and Managed Care Services Directors, to ensure the needs of foster care children are met through the 29-I and Health Homes programs, respectively.
5. Consults regularly with the Clinical Advisor to ensure accurate documentation and appropriate service provision is maintained for foster and biological families.
6. Oversees Group Presentation (MAPP) and Deciding Together classes for foster families.
7. Develops and maintains an on-call schedule to ensure client availability 24 hours, 7 days a week.
8. Maintains accurate records of all fiscal transactions, including monitoring expenditures to ensure appropriate budget management.
9. Responsible for ensuring continued funding streams (e.g. grant, contract, billing) through effective and efficient management, and seeking additional funds as necessary to fiscally support foster care.
10. Prepares necessary documentation to present for audit requirements.
11. Ensures all NACS' policy and procedures are adhered to by all staff during completion of job duties.
12. Maintains an effective support network for provision of referrals and other supports for clients.
13. Develops a comprehensive component policy and procedures handbook to provide for staff.
14. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to remain qualified for their position.
15. Works effectively across a broad spectrum of cultural, ethnic, and racial communities.
16. Oversees the coordination of work schedules for all staff to ensure continuity of services.
17. Consults regularly with the Senior Foster Care Caseworker regarding all foster care cases and provides necessary guidance.
18. Reviews and approves all data entered by Foster Care staff into the reporting software systems.
19. Maintains necessary documentation and ensures the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping.
20. Other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: Direct supervision and management of Foster Care staff. Required to continually evaluate staff and conduct regular job performance evaluations, providing feedback leading to improvements in service provision.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED: Bachelor's degree in human service or related field of study, with experience in child welfare including supervision and program management required. Master's degree preferred. Knowledge of ICWA, ASFA, Federal and State regulations, as well as mandated reporting requirements. Effective program solving, organization, time management, and communication skills. Knowledge of local Native American communities. Ability to work flexible hours including evenings and/or weekends. Computer skills and working knowledge of Microsoft Office and other state computer systems required. Ability to become certified in CPR and First Aid. Must maintain a clean and valid driver's license and required insurance liability coverage.

For Consideration: Send Cover & Resume to: humanresources@nacswny.org



NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES OF ERIE & NIAGARA COUNTIES, INC.

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76 West Avenue ● Lockport, NY 14094 ● (716) 302-3035 ● Fax (716) 302-3037
● Rochester Office: TBA

Equal Opportunity Employer

Posted Position: Foster Care Caseworker

Type: Hourly / Non-Exempt

Salary/ Range: \$17.30 hourly

Offices: Erie & Niagara Counties (Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Lockport)

Summary: Incumbent is responsible for day-to-day Foster Care casework and ensuring the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 is followed when placement of Native American children into foster care is indicated. Incumbent will be flexible to evening and weekend schedules. All efforts will be performed with understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES: This position description is not intended to be all-inclusive but to give a general outline of duties to be performed.

1. Responsible for providing, under general supervision, all aspects or elements of casework services method to an assigned full caseload.
2. Makes detailed and complete case studies, recommending and defining short and long-term social needs and goals of children and families.
3. Assists in the development of an efficient and effective foster parent outreach plan to Native American and other families in collaboration with the Foster Care Homefinder and Foster Care Director.
4. Ensures timely completion of all necessary paperwork related to individual requests for foster care information and entries into the NYS OCFS Connections system.
5. Responsible for the accurate and timely completion of all reports related to foster care families.
6. Assists in Group Preparation (MAPP) or Deciding Together classes.
7. Responsible for case planning with children in foster care and their families in order to achieve a positive and safe permanency plan.
8. Participates in the interpretation and implementation of ICWA as well as new/current social service laws and regulations.
9. Assists all foster parents in attaining training requirements specific to foster care certification when the Foster Care Director is not available.
10. Refers children in foster care and their families to community resources and/or other agencies as needed.
11. Attends meetings/coalitions related to foster parenting/retention and advocates for issues in the Native American community.
12. Other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: No direct supervision.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED: Bachelor's degree in human service or related field of study, with experience in child welfare required. Master's degree preferred. Knowledge of ICWA, ASFA, Federal and State regulations, as well as mandated reporting requirements. Effective program solving, organization, time management, and communication skills. Knowledge of local Native American communities. Ability to work flexible hours including evenings and/or weekends. Computer skills and working knowledge of Microsoft Office and other state computer systems required. Ability to become certified in CPR and First Aid. Must maintain a clean and valid driver's license and required insurance liability coverage.

For Consideration: Send Cover & Resume to: humanresources@nacswny.org

May is National Foster Care Awareness Month

This month was designated as a time to raise awareness of foster care in the United States and to celebrate foster parents and families who work every day to provide permanency, a safe home, and love to children in need. It was first proclaimed as a national awareness month in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan, and Tribal Nations and states followed with their own proclamations throughout the years.

There are over 407,000 children and youth in foster care. 32% were placed in kinship or relative foster homes. Nearly half (42%) of the children in

youth in foster care are in nonrelative foster homes. Approximately 17,000 children are currently placed in foster care in New York State.

Our Foster Care Program is looking for people who are interested in becoming foster parents. Foster parents provide a temporary home to children in need. Foster parents provide a safe and stable home and supports are met. Most importantly, foster parents help children feel safe, valued, and loved. If this interests you, becoming a foster parent might be a

good fit. If you would like to learn more about our foster care program and the process to become a foster parent, please contact our Foster Care Homefinder, Amy Pierce at apierce@nacswny.org or 716.544.0292.

At Native American Community Services, we are honored to work alongside our foster parents to help children in need in Erie and Niagara Counties. Please consider becoming a foster parent with Native American Community Services and call or email us today!



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Beulah Sowden Educational Fund

Qualified candidates must:

- Have a cumulative of 3.0 or higher
- Be enrolled full time (12 or more credit hours)
- Be enrolled as a member of a federally recognized Native American nation in the United States or indigenous nation in Canada or a first generation descent of an enrolled member of a federally recognized Native American nation in the United States or indigenous nation in Canada.
- Special consideration may be given to candidates who have volunteer experience in Native American public service agencies, community groups, and other entities serving Native American communities; and/or who have hardship due to personal illness, or other emergencies such as family illness, or death.

Apply this this and other scholarships at <https://buffalostate.academicworks.com>

Educational Achievement News

articles submitted by Amy Huff, Educational Achievement Director

During the Spring Break, four participants completed the American Red Cross Babysitting certification course, *Safe Sitter*. This course prepares youth, ages 11 – 17 years old, to supervise infants, toddlers, and school-age children independently. The course addresses safety, child development, how to respond in an emergency, adequate means to redirect behaviors and other useful tips for babysitters. This course also covers rescue choking for infants and children. *Safe Sitter* is taught by a certified in-



structor. NACS has two certified *Safe Sitter* instructors, Amy Huff and Chelsea Martin.

Congratulations to the participants for earning their American Red Cross Babysitting certification!

Pictured are Amy Huff, instructor, and Jalisa John, participant.

For more information on how to request a *Safe Sitter* course, please contact Amy Huff at ahuff@nacswny.org.

Afterschool Professionals Week, April 25 – 29th

I'd like to express a heartfelt *nya:wəh* to the 2022 Educational Achievement staff at NACS. Afterschool professionals have the competencies and compassion to guide children's behaviors, motivate student growth, and maintain a level of professionalism through their conduct and dialogue. *Nya:wəh!!*

1. Chelsea Martin
2. Brianna Martin
3. Matilda Martin
4. Catherine Donahue
5. Eddie Mas
6. Aimee Pytlick
7. Diane Scheuneman
8. Abbi Tallchief

"A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, or what sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because **I was important in the life of a [child]**."
- Forest Witcraft, excerpt from "Within My Power" -

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April was National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Check out NACS staff standing up for children!



Brianna Martin



Pictured Left to right:
Michael Martin,
Chelsea Martin,
Shannon Hill,
Chelsea Ditto,
Tracy Zachariah,
Sierra Scott



SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a process of collecting information. Assessment of learning can happen all kinds of ways, like when teachers ask a question in class, send home report cards, or set up parent-teacher conferences.

Screening is a type of assessment that helps teachers identify students who are at risk for not meeting grade level learning goals.



Screening assessments in the classroom are like health screenings at a doctor's office.

They check for warning signs to see if you might be at risk. For example, if you can't read the chart then the doctor is likely to give you contact lenses or glasses so that you can see more clearly. If you can read the chart, then the doctor will send you on your way until your next eye screening.

Screening can provide valuable information to teachers to help struggling readers or those who are likely to struggle in the future.

Parents and caregivers: Talk with teachers about the screening process in your child's school to learn more. If you have questions about your child's progress or results, ask to have them explained to you.



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MOVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH **WALK** **& RUN**



Move For Mental Health is a first ever family fun walk and run hosted by Pinnacle Community Services to raise awareness for mental health in our community.

Saturday, May 21st
10am-2pm
Hyde Park
Niagara Falls, NY

Vendors/
Providers!

Family
Fun
Activities!

Food
Trucks!

Giveaways!

Register online:
www.pinnaclecs.org/move
\$25 registration fee

Proceeds will support Pinnacle Community Services as it makes a difference in the lives of the people it serves. Pinnacle has served the Niagara region for over 126 years with programs for families and children.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



Services we provide:

- ⇒ Case management/career counseling
- ⇒ Job search and placement assistance
- ⇒ Assistance in identifying employment barriers
- ⇒ Occupational skills training/skills upgrade
- ⇒ Interview preparation
- ⇒ Resume writing assistance
- ⇒ Educational resources and information
- ⇒ Resources for entrepreneurs
- ⇒ Referrals and Linkages to other services
- ⇒ Status card/Tribal documentation assistance

Counties we serve:

Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee,
Wyoming, Monroe, Livingston,
Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Seneca,
Cayuga, Oswego, Onondaga,
Cortland, Oneida, Madison

Funding Available to Eligible Native Americans for:

- * Work Experience Positions
- * On-the-job Training
- * Tuition/Books/Educational Support
- * Work Clothes/Tools
- * Training/Certification Programs
- * Other Supportive Services

For more information and/or
to make an appointment, contact:
Native American Community Services

Tianna Porter
716-574-9731

Katina Simmons
585-514-3984

We have offices in
Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Lockport and
Rochester

A Tradition of Caring

Funded by the US Department of Labor

Workforce Development Services

Submitted by Colleen Casali – Economic Empowerment Services Coordinator

Native American Community Services has a workforce development program that offers employment and education services to the Native American community in 17 Counties in New York State. The following is a list of services that are available to eligible participants which includes limited financial assistance.

Services provided to eligible participants:

- Case Management related to workforce activities
- Assistance in identifying barriers to employment
- Career counseling/exploration
- Job search and placement assistance
- 6-week Work Experience program
- Interviewing preparation
- Occupational skills training/Skills upgrade
- On-the-job training
- Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) classes— Formally GED
- Educational resources and information
- Tuition/Book Assistance
- Entrepreneurial/small business technical assistance training information
- Follow-up services
- Referral and linkage services
- Status Card/Tribal documentation assistance

The following are requirements needed to qualify as an eligible participant:

- ❖ 18 years of age or older
- ❖ Reside off the reservation
- ❖ Reside in one of the 17 counties we serve
- ❖ Native American, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
- ❖ Tribal documentation of enrollment in a federal or state recognized tribe
- ❖ Unemployed or under-employed
- ❖ Laid-off, furloughed or dislocated workers
- ❖ Veteran or Spouse of a Veteran
- ❖ Meet all WIOA eligibility guidelines

If you live in one for these counties:

Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Livingston, Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Seneca, Cayuga, Oswego, Onondaga, Cortland, Oneida, Madison - You may qualify for services.

To make an appointment for an initial assessment call Tianna Porter at (716) 574-9731 or Katina Simmons at (585) 514-3984. Office hours **Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm.**

If you prefer email you can reach Tianna at tporter@nacswny.org or Katina at ksimmons@nacswny.org.

Native American Community Services

FOOD PANTRY

1005 Grant St
Buffalo NY, 14207

Hours: 10:00AM-1:00PM
Tuesdays & Wednesdays



We are committed to providing nutritious food for our community, especially in times of crisis.

If you or your family are eligible based on the following criteria, please visit us during our food pantry hours.

You are eligible for food assistance if you live in zipcodes [14207](#) or [14216](#), and if you meet one of the following criteria:

Household Size	Annual Income
1	\$25,520
2	\$34,480
3	\$43,440
4	\$52,400
5	\$61,360
6	\$70,320
7	\$79,280
8	\$88,240
Each Additional	\$8,960

- **Your family income lies within these guidelines, including if you have recently become unemployed.**
- **You or someone in your household participates in SNAP, WIC, TANF, Unemployment, Disability, SSI, or Free/Reduced lunch program.**
- **You are experiencing food insecurity and/or having trouble making ends meet.**

May is Time to Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month!

submitted by Star Wheeler, Health & Wellness Director

Mental health is linked to your physical health which is one reason mental health so important. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), people with depression have a:

- 40% higher chance of experiencing cardiovascular and metabolic diseases than the general population.
- So how prevalent are mental health issues in the US?
- Statistics show that 1 in 5 adults in the US experience mental illness each year, about 52.9 million people.
- 1 in 20 adults in the US experience serious mental illness each year.
- 50% of lifetime mental illness begins by age 14 and 75% by age 24.
- 1 in 6 US youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.

The mental health problem is so prevalent that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34. The good news, suicides are preventable! Here are 4 things you can do:

1. **Learn the warning signs**- such as talking about wanting to die or kill oneself; seeking a means to kill oneself; reckless behavior; talking about feeling trapped, being in unbearable pain; or being a burden to others.
2. **Open the door to discussion**- When you see warning signs, it's important to ask the person "Are you thinking of hurting yourself?" Show them you are there to talk about what they are going through and be there in the future if they need someone to listen.
3. **Don't wait to seek help**- risk factors for suicide include a previous suicide attempt, depression, substance misuse, social isolation, access to lethal means, chronic disease and disability, and lack of access to behavioral health services. Precipitating factors can include the loss of a job, the end of a marriage or relationship, arrest, and financial troubles. See below for resources.
4. **Reach out to others in need**- The COVID-19 crisis has created a new reality marked by stress, isolation, and uncertainty-making everyday life a challenge for so many. One of the protective factors for preventing suicide is social connectedness. We can make sure our family, friends, and others who may be struggling know they are not alone. Check in with one another.

Look out for signs that you or someone you know may be experiencing mental health issues. While we all experience worry, fear, or sadness from time to time, excessive negative feelings can be a sign of something more. Inability to concentrate and confused thoughts and feelings can be another sign. Changes in mood in either direction (extreme lows, or highs) can be another important sign, as well as changes in sleeping, eating, and sex drive. Mental health disorders can often present as extreme anger and irritability. People experiencing mental health disorders may find it difficult to relate to other people, maybe even perceiving reality, which can cause a person to distance themselves from friends and activities that they usually enjoy. A person experiencing a new or increased substance use disorder may be attempting to self-medicate or escape from their reality.

What can we do to fix the mental health problem in the US? While so much can feel out of our control it is important to know that as individuals, we can make a difference in ourselves and our communities. Here are the 8 dimensions of wellness to help you on your wellness journey!

Continued on page 18



Start with incorporating one thing from each component of wellness into your daily routine. Try to use as many dimensions as you can to give yourself balance, starting wherever you need it the most. Remember, you can't pour from an empty cup! Once you have "filled your cup", you can begin helping others in your social circle and community. Talk about your feelings. Remember, 1 in 5 adults experience mental health problems each year, you are not alone! Keep in touch with friends and family – humans are social beings. Check in with each other and ask for help when it is needed – it takes a village! Take time to "just be" a 5-minute break from cleaning, a 30-minute uninterrupted lunch break at work, or a weekend away, stepping back for a just a short while will help you recharge. Taking time for hobbies you enjoy and are good at can help boost confidence. At the end of the day, accept who you are and where you are at, we are all different and we all have our own struggles. We all have a lot on our plates, some of our plates are ceramic, while others are made of paper. Be kind to others. We may see some of what's on their plate, but we don't know what their plates are made of or what they had to do to fill it.

Our bodies are our vehicle, our brains are the engine. If you wait until something is wrong with your car to take it in for maintenance, you may end up with a costly repair! Only about half of the people with mental illness received treatment in 2020. The average delay between the first onset of symptoms and receiving treatment is 11 years. End the stigma and make therapy a part of your regular wellness visits. Many factors can cause mental health issues. Genetics and brain imbalances can help you know your risk, but it can happen to anyone. Maintaining healthy habits (eat, sleep, activity) and removing drugs and alcohol can help decrease your risks. Stressful environments such as poverty and abuse put you at an increased risk for mental health disorders. Trauma and other stressful events can trigger mental health disorders. Negative thoughts can keep us in a cycle of depression and anxiety. #TogetherForMentalHealth we can make a change! 😊

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Erie County 24 Crisis Services 24-hour hotline: 716-834-3131

Mental Health Advocates: www.mhawny.org

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

Please share this newsletter with family, friends and co-workers. If you know of anyone who would like to receive NACS News monthly by email, please have them send their first and last name and current email address to:

gghosen@nacswny.org

You can also look for our newsletter on our website:
http://www.nacswny.org/news_and_events.html

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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

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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; Erie County Youth Bureau; New York State Office of Children & Family Services; New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services; NYS DOH/Family Health; NYS OASAS; Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo; Niagara County Department of Social Services, Niagara County Office of the Aging; US Department of Labor; Administration for Native Americans (ANA); Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation; The Cullen Foundation; The Tower Foundation, The Oishei Foundation as well as businesses, foundations and caring individuals.