



NACS News

*A Tradition
of Caring*

November 2021
Volume 25, Issue 11

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

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National Native American Heritage Month!

submitted by George T. Ghosen, Editor

Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) has evolved from its beginnings as a week-long celebration in 1986, when President Reagan proclaimed the week of November 23-30, 1986 as "American Indian Week." Every President since 1995 has issued annual proclamations designating the month of November as the time to celebrate the culture, accomplishments, and contributions of people who were the first inhabitants of the United States.

The month is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. Heritage Month is also an opportune time to educate the general public about tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and in the present, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

History

National Native American Month started off as an effort to get a day of appreciation and acknowledgment for the unique contributions made by the first

Americans for the growth and establishment of the United States. The effort has now resulted in a whole month being celebrated for that purpose.

Dr. Arthur C. Parker was one of the first supporters of having an American Indian Day. He was a Seneca Indian and the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York. He was also the one to convince the Boy Scouts of America to create a day for the Native Americans — the Boy Scouts adopted this day for three days.

In 1915, a plan concerning American Indian Day was formally approved in the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting. The president of the American Indian Association, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, called upon the country to observe this day.

The first time American Indian Day was declared was in May 1916. In 1990, a joint resolution was approved by George H.W. Bush, which called for November to be named National American Heritage Month. Declarations

like these have been issued since 1994, such as Native American Heritage Month and National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

The National Park Service offers a plethora of events and activities that will enable you to visit the various national parks across the country and have an interactive experience about the first inhabitants of this land. For more information you can visit the NPS website at:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/npscelebrates/native-american-heritage-month.htm>

November was chosen as Native American Heritage Month because of the Thanksgiving holiday. The holiday is significant because it is a time to give thanks for what we have and who we share it with. When the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth, MA, they were tired and sickly from the long journey crossing the sea in which many died. They were aided by the Wampanoag people and a cooperative relationship was formed in which the Thanksgiving legend was born. Unfortunately, it didn't last.

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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

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The Present

Today, Native people have been successful in achieving goals that could not have been imagined during the early years of the last century. Across the U.S. and Canada there are many Native people who have become doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, artists, educators, TV personalities, politicians and many who have entered a myriad of other professions that were once considered unattainable for people with "red" skin. These accomplishments speak a lot about the resilient nature of Native people. But that can be underscored by what is still going on today.

Like other persons of color, we find ourselves still being discriminated against and still being stereotyped. There is also the issue of Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) where Native women are missing, abducted, raped, and murdered. These crimes are not reported by the media and often dismissed by authorities.

Coming to light is the Every Child Matters movement. Beginning in the 15th century, Native children were sent to schools set up by the church and/or the government for the purpose of "civilizing" them to be assimilated members of society. Today, at the site of some, not all, of the boarding schools in Canada, human remains of children were unearthed in graveyards that were part of the school's property. With the accounts of survivors of boarding schools coupled with the condition of the remains, they tell a story of how Native children were treated at the hands of their educators and caregivers.

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month is special for all the reasons stated here. I feel we must learn from what has happened up to

this point, the good, the bad and the not-so-pretty. Please take the time to really learn what NAHM is all about. Learn about the good things - the contributions, the culture, the people. But also learn about the not-so-good. It is that which has made us a strong and resilient people. That is what makes all people of different backgrounds strong and resilient.

Acknowledgements

PBS: <https://www.pbs.org/specials/native-american-heritage-month/>

NCAI:

<https://www.ncai.org/initiatives/native-american-heritage-month>

Some Resources

The First Thanksgiving:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thanksgiving-myth-and-what-we-should-be-teaching-kids-180973655/>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/what-really-happened-at-the-1st-thanksgiving/4669085.html>

MMIWG:

<https://www.niwrc.org/mmiwg-awareness>

<https://www.nativewomenswildernews.org/mmiw/>

<https://www.csvanw.org/mmiw>

Every Child Matters:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Indian_boarding_schools#New_York

http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=airc_hist_boardingschools



Through the Eyes of a 6-Year-Old Child, Orange Became a Symbol of an Indigenous Movement

submitted by Pete Hill



The orange shirt was chosen because of something that happened to Phyllis Webstad on her first day at a residential school when she was only six years old. (Photos/Courtesy of Orange Shirt Society)

By Levi Rickert & Neely Bardwell

September 30, 2021

Phyllis Webstad, a tribal citizen of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation, is a prime example of how one person can make a difference and create an Indigenous movement across North America.

Webstad is the force behind the Orange Shirt Day movement that is commemorated each year on Sept. 30th to remember Indigenous people who attended Indian residential schools in Canada and Indian boarding schools in the United States.

The color orange was chosen because of something that happened to Webstad when she was only six years old. It was Sept. 30, 1973, the first day she attended St. Joseph's Mission Residential School in British Columbia. Her grandmother had bought Webstad a brand-new shiny orange shirt to wear, adding to the young student's first-day-of-school excitement.

Unfortunately, when Webstad got to school, the orange shirt

was taken from her, and it was never given back.

"I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me, it was mine! The color orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying, and no one cared," Webstad said.

She never forgot the loss that turned into a hurt to her heart.

In 2013, Webstad was asked to return to St. Joseph's as an Indian residential school survivor. She convinced other survivors to buy orange t-shirts as a way to remember those who attended the residential schools in Canada. She formed the [Orange Shirt Society](#).

"Wearing orange shirts are a symbol of defiance against those things that undermine children's self-esteem, and of our commitment to anti-racism and anti-bullying in

general," Webstad explains. The Orange Shirt Society is not all about defiance though.

"Orange Shirt Day is also an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come," Webstad said.

September 30 was chosen as the primary day of remembrance because it is around that time of the year that Indigenous children were taken from their homes and sent to residential schools. It was also chosen because "it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year," Webstad explains.

Since 2013, the Orange Shirt Day has morphed into days of reflection throughout Canada and the United States. Orange has become a color for women jingle dress dancers.

Today's Orange Shirt Day has
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a more serious tone, following the revelation in late May that the remains of 215 children were discovered in a mass grave at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Since then, thousands of other bodies have been found at residential schools throughout Canada.

“Every child matters” has be-

come a mantra for t-shirts and rally signs.

This year, for the first time, Canada will celebrate Truth and Reconciliation Day. But to many, Sept. 30 will always be known as Orange Shirt Day because of the difference Phyllis Webstad made in the creation of an Indigenous movement.

Original article appears here:

https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/through-the-eyes-of-a-6-year-old-child-orange-became-a-symbol-of-an-indigenous-move-ment?utm_source=Native+News+Online&utm_campaign=970f424b05-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_09_30&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_dfd2540337-970f424b05-1318480784

Seneca Gaming Corporation Holds Remembrance Walk

submitted by George T. Ghosen, Editor

The Seneca Gaming Corporation held a “Remembrance Walk” on Thursday, September 30, 2021.

“SGC remembers and honors the survivors and alumni of all residential schools including the Thomas Indian School located on the Seneca Cattaraugus Territory. Join us in showing support for the continued healing of our Indigenous community.”

“Under the American Civilization Fund Act of 1819, at least 100,000 Native American children were forcefully removed from their families and homes

and placed in abusive, often deadly Boarding Schools. They were stripped of their names, language and culture. The Canadian government followed with similar “educational” systems from 1863 to 1998.

In May 2021, hundreds of Indigenous childrens’ unmarked graves were discovered at 1 residential school, with the expectation of uncovering hundreds, if not thousands, more at other school sites across the U.S. and Canada.

This walk recognizes these young victims, and hopes to

promote healing in our communities. SGC solidifies our commitment to bring awareness of these atrocities ensuring this brutal cultural destruction never happens again.”

There were hundreds of remembrance ceremonies held across the United States and Canada to honor the survivors of the residential/boarding schools and remember those who didn’t.

Below are some photos from the Remembrance Walk event held at the Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino.



Pete Hill, seen here addressing the attendees, was one of the speakers at the Remembrance Walk



Walkers gathered at Seneca Square in preparation for the Remembrance Walk



Mother and daughter participants, Valerie Maracle – Ghosen and Jessica Ghosen

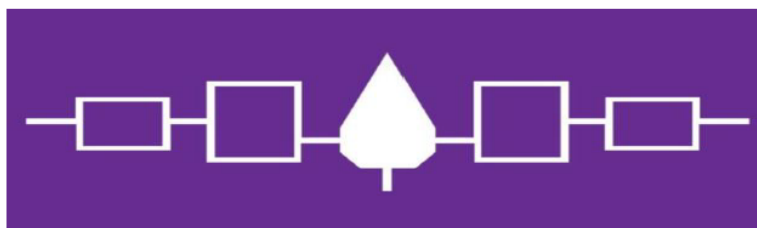
NACS is awarded a language grant to revitalize, retain, and restore Haudenosaunee languages!

NACS was awarded an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) language preservation and maintenance grant. The Supporting Education and Empowerment by Developing Language Initiatives Needed for Growth and Sustainability (SEEDLINGS) program will focus on urban youth and all six languages of the Confederacy. The program's long-term community goal is to **increase the number of children using Haudenosaunee languages**. This change will not happen overnight, and it will not happen without a community's involvement, participation, and support.

The SEEDLINGS program will honor children and ensure atmospheres conducive to learning. Laughter and play will support a natural learning environment, along with intergenerational exchanges and community infused events. Culture is the backbone for the program's scope and sequence. These connections will allow for an emotional association between words and their meaning.

The SEEDLINGS program will require the support and participation of the Haudenosaunee community, both far and wide. Can you stand behind these children as they develop their language skills? Can you be patient when they stumble with their pronunciation? They will stumble, learning is a process. Please have the heart to embrace their varying levels of language acquisition. If we can do this for the children, they can stand strong in the spot they are in and feel the pride that is inside of us all. Please support our learners as they are only children with a huge task ahead.

For questions, comments, and more information, please contact Amy Huff, Educational Achievement Coordinator at ahuff@nacswny.



NACS Staff Wear Orange to Honor Every Child Matters

submitted by Tianna Porter

Orange Shirt Day,
September 30,
2021



*Bottom row from left to right: Raven Weatherston, Melissa Schindler, Brianna Martin, Tianna Porter
Top row from left to right: Amy Huff, Cheri Nash, Jeanell Perez, Pete Hill, Colleen Casali, Joe Serenka*



The BELL Project: November Announcements

A few tips:

- Children enjoy, interact with, and learn different things from books in different ways.
- Helping children develop a love of books is important and will help them grow and develop.
- Sharing books together can help them begin to make sense of their world and learn many new things about the world and himself/herself.
- Reading together not only provides opportunities for fun and loving interactions between you and your child, but it also builds skills that are important for later success in life.

Books to consider for Native American Heritage Month

- *Baby Learns About Colors* by Beverly Blacksheep
- *Wild Berries* by Julie Fleet
- *Boozhoo: Come Play with Us* by Deanna Himango
- *Sky Sisters* by Jan Bourdeau
- *Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- *Indian Shoes* by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- *Hidden Roots* by Joseph Bruchac
- *Cradle Me* by Beddy Slier

“You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book.”

-Dr. Seuss



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*"Every accomplishment starts with
the decision to try."*

- John F Kennedy -

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

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

1005 Grant St.

Buffalo, N.Y. 14207

Colleen Casali

716-874-2797

Ext. 314

**We have offices in Buffalo,
Niagara Falls & Lockport**

A Tradition of Caring

Counties we serve:

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

Funded by the US Department of Labor

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.**

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

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YES, I'D LIKE TO HELP NACS CONTINUE ITS 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:

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