

# Unit II youth councils meet with tribal elders



**CATHERINE HOLLOWELL,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

It's official. Spring has arrived! Time to break out the flip flops (even though we know one more snow fall may visit us before April passes by).

I would like to start by giving recognition to staff and community members who keep our communities strong and grounded in traditional teachings and support — too many to mention by name as I don't want to overlook anyone, but you know who you are and we are so grateful for your dedication to our people.

Most recently, as part of the Preserving Our Past Legacy Project being created by our grand tribal youth council, the Nbiish-be-Mwi-jwaang (Hessel youth council) and the Rudyard tribal youth council gathered on Thursday evening with a group of caring elders in Hessel to share a dinner and stories of their personal histories.

The Women's Health Fair in Newberry was held last week with a great turn out. This event, like others, gives us an opportunity to come together and share information and impart some of the cultural and traditional teachings that help us lead healthy lives. Plus, it's just a great way to come together and socialize.

The third annual Hessel Women's Health Fair is on May 21 at the Hessel Tribal Center 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Lunch provided. This is for young ladies, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers. Last year was a blast as we rocked out to aerobic Native hip hop!! Limited room so please call to RSVP: (906) 484-2298 or 484-2727.

And not to forget our community men: Newberry is having a Men's Health Fair on June 19. Please consider attending. It is a good opportunity for resource

information and fellowship. RSVP at (906) 293-8181.

Along those same lines, an interest has been expressed in starting a tribal veterans support group. If you are a veteran and desire meeting regularly with other fellow veterans, please feel free to give me a call or email. If there is enough interest we can start to move forward on securing a meeting place and time.

## Education

Applications are now available for the 2015-2016 Higher Education scholarships. They must be submitted and received no later than June 1. These are competitive scholarships that require an essay (choice of three topics). All tribal members are eligible to apply regardless of where they reside. Grandparents, please get the word out to your grandchildren. Visit our tribal website for application information and further information on the three essay topics, [www.saulttribe.com](http://www.saulttribe.com) or [BMacArthur@saulttribe.net](mailto:BMacArthur@saulttribe.net).

There is also the Higher Education Grant Program. Application is from April 1 to July 1. This is for Sault Tribe members attending a Michigan state-supported two or four-year college or university full-time (12 credit hours or more). Students must be an undergrad and have a completed FAFSA on file with their college. Grants are based on unmet financial need as determined by the individual college in which the student is enrolled. Visit our website for further information.

In order for students to take full advantage of these opportunities, including the Self Sufficiency Incentive Award Program and the Pay It Forward: Career Mentoring Program students should apply for these programs starting NOW!

## National Tribal Operations Committee with EPA

I would like to share something about the work involved in my appointment to the National Tribal Operations Committee with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). As you know, tribal governments have a trust relationship with the federal government. Defining that relationship has been a long and sad story since the treaty era. The federal government may have originally thought signing over our territories was the end of it all. But that was never the



**Nbiish-be-Mwi-jwaang (Hessel youth council) and the Rudyard tribal youth council (back row) at the Hessel Tribal Community Center with elders (front row from left) Great Wolf, Phil Andrews, Tony Grondin, Leona Litzner, Calvin Burnside and John Causley.**

deal and although Indians across the country have suffered greatly from these forced land concessions, our grandparents under duress fought to hold the federal government accountable to their end of the bargain.

There have been a few hard won victories such as the Michigan Indian Lands Claim Settlement (a 60-year battle, arriving too little and too late for those who originally fought so hard to hold the federal government accountable). And the Judge Fox decision was another high water mark for recognition of our reserved rights within the ceded territories. Federal Indian policy has been at the whim of presidential policy and congressional lawmakers. But, for the moment, policy makers have acknowledged they do indeed have a continued trust responsibility to Indian people. Not only the Department of Interior and the BIA and IHS but ALL federal agencies.

When it comes to regulatory frameworks (and delegation of authorities to the states) we bump into difficulties in Indian country because that trust responsibility was not taken into account.

The National Tribal Operations Committee works in collaboration with tribal governments at the regional level to make sure our voices are heard

when it comes to rule making, compliance, enforcement as well as capacity development, funding and guidance documents that impact our tribal lands. And not just land held in trust by tribal nations but also in protecting our treaty protected activities and rights on ceded territories.

There are some emerging developments, memorandums and court decisions that have favorable implications for our tribe, especially as it relates to the Great Lakes and our Great Lakes fisheries.

Many of these efforts began as dialog and pressure originating from the Tribal Operations Committee level. For instance a recent EPA decision favorable to the Penobscott tribe that the state of Maine's water quality

standards under the Clean Water Act failed to take into account the need for higher standards to protect Penobscott subsistent fishing and way of life. That story is not complete yet as it moves through the court system but "pushing the envelope" at the Tribal Operation Committee level played an instrumental role.

There is so much work to be done to protect our homeland. I just returned from annual regional conference. There is much information to digest and I hope to report more in my next unit report.

Until then, enjoy this time of rebirth. Hope everyone young and old can get out and enjoy the fine spring weather.

We are all stewards of the Creator's blessings.