



# Aionkwatakari:teke

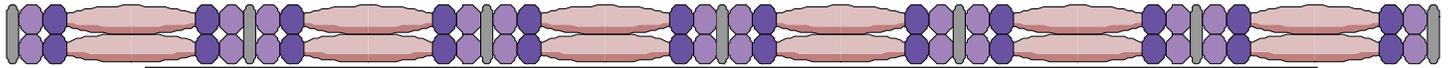
(A-YOU-GWA-DA-GA-RI-DE-GEH)

"For us to be healthy"

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Kahnawake's Only Health and Wellness Newsletter

Ennisika / February 2016



Not Just Surviving by Owisokon P. Labache

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**Aionkwatakari:teke**

Aionkwatakari:teke is a newsletter published six times a year by Communications Services of Kahnawà:ke Shakotia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS). Our purpose is to provide information on health and wellness issues that affect Kahnawa'kehró:non. All community members are welcomed and encouraged to submit articles provided that they are comprehensive to the general public, informative and educational. Slanderous material will not be accepted. Views expressed in the articles may not necessarily reflect those of KSCS. We reserve the right to edit all articles. All questions concerning this newsletter should be directed to:

**The Editor**  
**Aionkwatakari:teke**

P.O. Box 1440  
 Kahnawà:ke, Quebec JOL 1B0  
 Tél: 450-632-6880  
 Fax: 450-632-5116  
 Email: [kscs@kscskahnawake.ca](mailto:kscs@kscskahnawake.ca)  
 (Attention: newsletter editor)

Editor/Layout/Design, Marie David  
 Executive Publisher, Derek Montour

Proofreading:  
 Dana Stacey  
 Beatrice Taylor

**Contributors:**

Marie David  
 Merrick Diabo  
 Mary McComber  
 Terry McComber  
 Tyson Phillips  
 Patrick Ragaz, KEPO  
 Angel Robertson

This newsletter is intended to complement, not replace, the advice of your health care provider. Before starting any new health regimen, please see your doctor.

**Editor's Notebook**

Welcome to the first KSCS newsletter for 2016. I guess this feeling of blah that I know I feel after coming back from the holidays and enduring months of darkness and cold...is not new. After all, our ancestors definitely knew enough about winter to call what is known as February, or Enníska, as the "time of sluggishness." It's the time of low energy, not just for us but for the earth as well. It's just something we have to endure. Unless, of course, you're one of those lucky people who get to fly away to tropical locale and enjoy the warmth and sunshine. And take heart, spring is just around the corner and this winter hasn't been all that bad thanks to El Nino. Thanks climate change. Not really.

Onto the newsletter: The cover features the new painting that was commissioned to commemorate and honour the residential school survivors from Kahnawà:ke. The painting is called *Not Just Surviving* and was done by Owisokon P. Lahache. Check out Merrick Diabo's article on page 7.

Mary McComber wrote a great article on her visit to the *Walking with Our Sisters* exhibit in Akwesasne recently. We want to thank Jessica Sargent of Kahentanoron Photo for the use of the photographs that accompany the article.

We also have a great poem by Angel Robertson, a touching tribute to her brother Joey. Thanks for the submission Angel! By the way, if you would like to submit an article, poem, or artwork, contact us at [kscs@kscskahnawake.ca](mailto:kscs@kscskahnawake.ca). We also have articles from the Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office and much more! Please check them out. And when you're done with the newsletter, please recycle it.

*Sken:nen,*

*Marie*





## Walking With Our Sisters

BY MARY MCCOMBER, PREVENTION

THIS PAST NOVEMBER, my partner and I attended the Walking With Our Sisters installation at the Kawenhnó:ke Community Center in Akwesasne. It was a beautiful memorial to the over one thousand missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon has affected our communities; both Kahnawà:ke and Akwesasne had representation in this exhibition. Many families are still suffering due to the losses that they have had experienced. Grief is a strong force, and it may take many years to heal especially if families haven't had closure and are left with many unanswered questions.

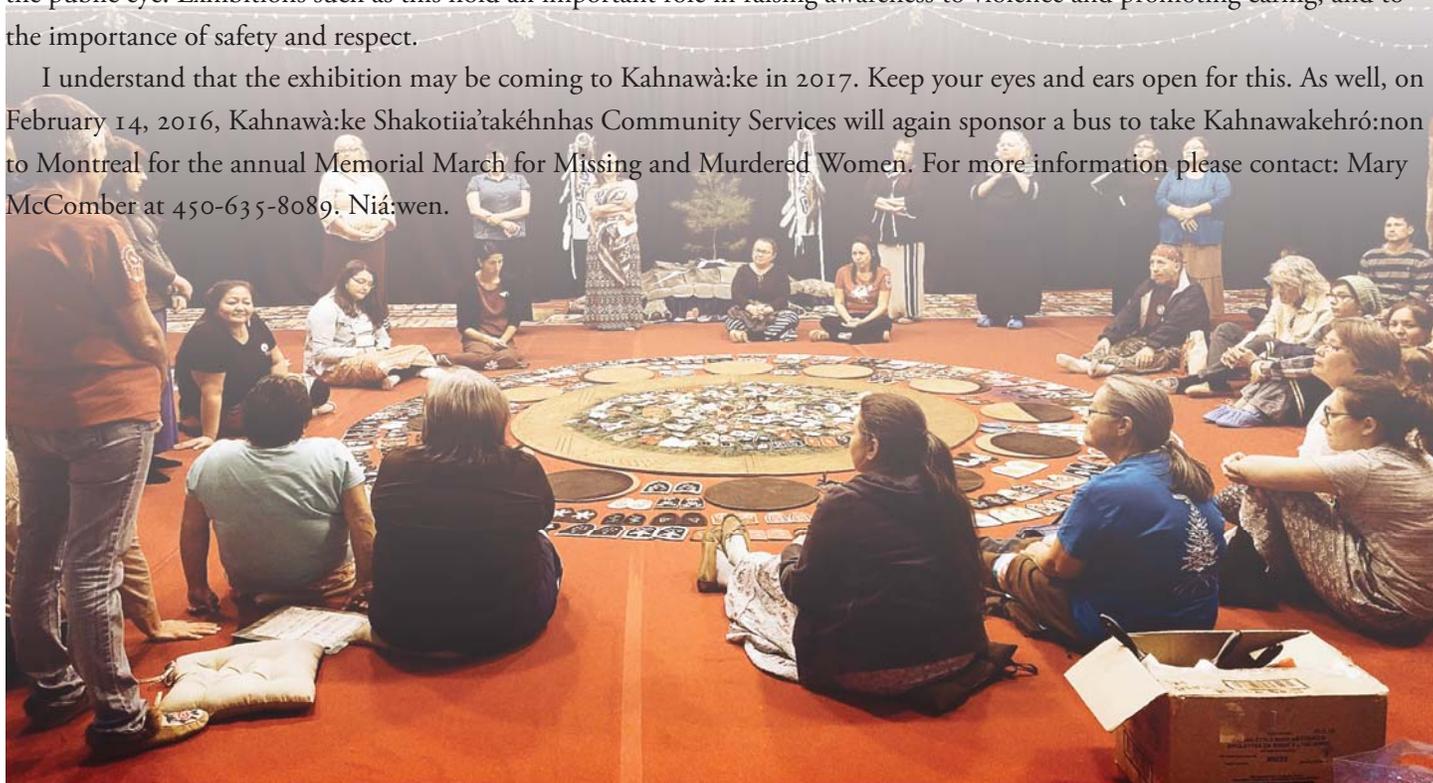
The exhibition was a creative and spiritual experience. As you entered, you were asked to cover your shoes or to take them off. Women wore skirts upon entering the room; as well, we were sprayed with white pine water and given a tobacco bundle and a tissue.

The vamps were beautifully displayed on the floor and visitors were asked to view them in a counter clockwise direction. At the center, there was a turtle with more vamps created by families and friends of the victims. The tobacco ties and tissues were then deposited into baskets before we left the exhibition.

Many thoughts crossed my mind as I walked through the exhibition. I wondered how strong a family must be to endure the torture of not really knowing what has happened to these women and why does this even have to happen? It's distressing to know that women can't be totally safe in our societies.

Violence is such a terrible issue in our communities, on and off reserves, no one is immune from it. I left the exhibition feeling helpless. I did however, find some hope in knowing that these issues are being discussed and becoming more visible in the public eye. Exhibitions such as this hold an important role in raising awareness to violence and promoting caring, and to the importance of safety and respect.

I understand that the exhibition may be coming to Kahnawà:ke in 2017. Keep your eyes and ears open for this. As well, on February 14, 2016, Kahnawà:ke Shakotia'takéhnhas Community Services will again sponsor a bus to take Kahnawakehró:non to Montreal for the annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women. For more information please contact: Mary McComber at 450-635-8089. Niá:wen.



# His Laughter Makes the Thunder Jealous

BY ANGLE ROBERTSON, COMMUNITY MEMBER



*My brother Joey was born on December 31, 2000.  
My family's present for the new year.  
He was so special for us  
It turns out special was one of the labels he got stuck with.  
My brother was born with autism  
His disability prevents him from speaking his mind.  
I stepped up as his sister to take care of him.*



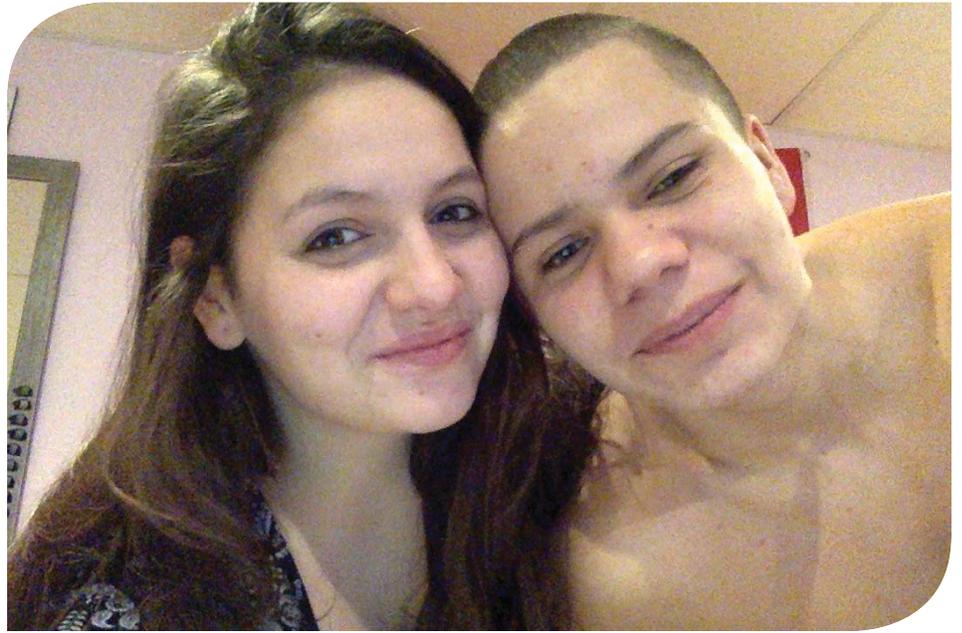
*My mother wasn't in the picture so it was all up to me.  
My brother would throw tantrums by throwing himself on the floor hitting his head  
every time.  
I was ten years old  
My arms were his only restraints when he would throw himself*

*My brother gave me a concussion  
Though my head was  
When I hugged him, he  
He didn't like to eat anything, his ribs  
  
Today I watch him  
Matching colours faster  
I smile when he  
Because even if it's for  
  
There's a magical moment when  
While he says it  
I accept his fake*



*Like I accepted that he would never be able to  
  
I try to teach him  
Sentences like "I am smart," "I  
All the things I v  
I want it ingrained into his  
  
Many people don't understand  
He is a normal kid, just because he can't*

vision when I was in the fifth grade  
s aching I still loved him  
his bones would poke at me  
were as vivid as speedbumps on the road  
im play Candy Crush  
than anyone I have ever seen  
e laughs at himself  
forced I know he is happy  
a he tries to tell me that he loves me  
he points to his heart  
e kisses on my cheek



pronounce his name properly without struggling  
how to say the truth  
am strong,” and “I am handsome.”  
want him to believe in  
s head so he could never forget.  
d why I treat him like a normal kid  
not speak doesn't mean that he cannot listen

*Don't assume that he doesn't notice the way that people look at him.  
He listens and understands that he is different  
But that does not mean that he is not a person  
A smile gets painted across my face every time I think of him  
Sometimes I wonder if I'm the one helping him  
Or if he's helping me  
Somehow he senses that I am sad  
And tries everything to make me smile  
He likes to put his hands up fists clenched like he wants to fight me just to make me  
laugh*

*He may not be able to speak but his silence speaks louder than words can  
His smile makes the sun shine brighter in the morning  
His laugh makes the thunders jealous because his laugh shakes the house  
The thunder can't compare  
I may never get to know the sound of his voice  
But I can feel his love when he looks at me.*

*He is smart, strong and handsome  
But more importantly  
He is my little brother  
Born December 31, 2000  
A New Year's present to my family and me*

*Angel Robertson*

# Online Harrassment

BY MARIE DAVID, COMMUNICATIONS

**H**ave you ever been harassed online? Do you know or know of someone who has? It's not a pleasant experience and, for some (women in particular), it can be downright dangerous.

One of the most prominent examples of online harassment came to light with "gamergate." Gamergate was succinctly described in the Guardian as "an online movement that purported to be about journalistic ethics, but which actually focuses on attacking and harassing women such as [Anita] Sarkeesian."

Gamergate was aimed at women who spoke out against problematic representations of the female in video game culture or who worked in the gaming industry itself, including media critic Anita Sarkeesian (Feminist Frequency), and two video game developers, Zoë Quinn and Brianna Wu. Initially, the whole thing began when Quinn's ex-boyfriend penned a poisoned-pen blog post, leading others to accuse her of using her relationship with a journalist to garner favourable media coverage.

What should have ended as a case of sour grapes snowballed into a coordinated campaign of harassment, threats of rape and death threats, and doxing (researching and exposing personal and identifiable information about someone e.g. home and work address, telephone number, social media information, and can include publishing the names of your friends and family).

These women endured months and months of harassment and threats. It was

ugly and frightening and even extended offline, when an event Sarkeesian was speaking at was threatened with violence.

Sarkeesian has joined forces with Women, Action, and Media founder Jacklyn Friedman, and reproductive justice advocate Renee Bracee Sherman, to produce a guide to protecting yourself from online harassment. "Speak Up/Stay Safe(r): A Guide to Protecting Yourself from Online Harassment."

In their blog post launching the guide, they point to the failure of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, 4Chan, and Reddit to prevent and deal with the harassment of their more "marginalized users" (Feminist Frequency) and say this puts undue strain, both personal and financial, on the victims. They also caution that a person could still be targeted despite implementing the strategies they outline because no plan is foolproof.

The guide is for anyone who faces online harassment including women, people of colour, LGBT/trans people, and others who voice their opinion or challenge the status quo or long-held sexist, racist, or misogynistic views or stereotypes.

An article in the Guardian pointed out that women are far more likely to face abuse online and that abuse is likely to be more sexually violent. A 2006 study found that a username that appears feminine is 25 times more likely to face harassment (the Guardian).

The guide is only available online and not in PDF form but it is user friendly. Topics include how to prevent doxing,

password best practices, website security, social media safety, and other guidelines.

It's hoped you never have to face the vitriol that these women and countless others have faced but if you do, the guidelines may be a big help. You can access the guide by typing in "Speak up & Stay Safe(r)" in Google or by typing this URL in the address bar (or clicking on the link in the online version of the newsletter): <https://onlinesafety.feminist-frequency.com/en/>.

*Source: Uberti, David. "Why Some SPJ Leaders are Engaging Gamergate." Columbia Journalism Review 23 Nov. 2015. n.pag. Web. Dec. 2015.*

*Speak Up and Stay Safe(r): A Guide to Protecting Yourself from Online Harassment. 8 Dec. 2015. Web. Dec. 2015.*

*Valenti, Jessica. "Anita Sarkeesian Interview: The Word 'Troll' Feels Too Childish This is abuse." Guardian. 29 Aug. 2015. n.pag. Web. Dec. 2015.*

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## Slow But Steady

BY MERRICK DIABO INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS RESOLUTION HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

**K**ahnawà:ke's Indian Residential School Support Program (IRSRHSP), the first of its kind here in Kahnawà:ke, is kicking into a new gear. Since the inception of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission back in June of 2008, support programs flooded every province Canada-wide, with the objective of attaining statements of the Indian residential school survivors and providing support. Kahnawà:ke is no exception, as the (IRSRHSP) was implemented in April of 2015.

The program offers three main services to the Indian residential school survivors, their family, and the community at large. The services consist of cultural/emotional support and professional counselling. In addition to the main services, the IRSRHSP raises public awareness on the topics surrounding Indian residential schools.

Kahnawà:ke is a unique community rich with personal stories and knowledge regarding the residential school system. However; as a whole, Kahnawà:ke has remained generally silent on the issue in comparison with our sisters and brothers to the west.

The priority of the IRSRHSP in Kahnawà:ke has been to provide awareness and activities for the community to encourage surviving students and family members to share their stories before they are lost. The IRSRHSP donated money to purchase T-shirts for the grassroots movement "Orange Shirt Day" held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



*Merrick Diabo at the unveiling of the painting Not Just Surviving by Owisokon P. Lahache.  
Photo by Marie David*

The IRSRHSP recognized that there was more communal discussion about the residential school experience that came out of "Orange Shirt Day" and seized the momentum by providing a commemorative event during Spirit of Wellness campaign held on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015.

This came in the form of commissioning local artist Owisokon P. Lahache to capture on canvas the essence the residential school experience through one simple word; resiliency. The result was the painting Not Just Surviving.

The painting reveals the faces representing the children subject to the Indian residential school system in the background, while the foreground shows children embraced by elders, representing the transition from the past and the

resiliency of our people coming into the present and future.

Words don't capture the full nature of the painting, it's best if you view it in the near future and in person at its permanent home at the Kanien'keháka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkwa Language and Cultural Center.

A slow and steady discussion is building within Kahnawà:ke on the Indian residential school system. We encourage the surviving students to stand up and share their stories. The Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program services are safe, confidential, respectful, and non-judgmental. If you would like more information, call Merrick Diabo at 450-638-0408.

# Bullying Prevention Program



Photo by Diego Grez/Wikimedia Common.

BY TERRY KARIWAIEHNHE MCCOMBER, PREVENTION

**W**hat is bullying? The Second Step Bullying Prevention Unit states: “Bullying is aggressive behaviour that a) is usually repeated over time, b) occurs when there is a power imbalance and c) is intended to cause harm or distress and/or has serious harmful or distressing effect on the target (victim).”

Bullying happens. It happens in schools, on the playground, on the bus, and even outside of school settings. In an effort to empower children, the KSCS in-school Prevention team, along with the KMHC’s child injury

## Not in My Back Yard

BY PATRICK RAGAZ, ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISOR, KAHNAWÀ:KE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION OFFICE

**O**n November 11, 2015, the city of Montreal began dumping raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. In total 4.9 billion litres of sewage was released at 25 outlets over the course of four days. The actions of the city drew outrage, including from the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. Local students and other community members participated in demonstrations and camped alongside the highway in protest.

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke met with the city, the province and Canada to demand an explanation for the release and relate the concerns of the community surrounding health impacts, detriment to wildlife populations and the lack of consultation regarding potential impacts on Indigenous rights and interests.

The city of Montreal justified the release as necessary to allow for emergency repairs and to install a new snow dumping location. The rationale was that a planned release could be timed to coincide with a period of low impact to the river and would minimize the amount of sewage being released.

Environment Canada ultimately authorized the release while requiring enhanced monitoring including of water and sediment quality before, during and after the release; visual monitoring and clean-up of any accumulated floating garbage in the river; and the requirement that the city participate in a dialogue post-release with Environment Canada and nearby Indigenous communities, including Kahnawà:ke. The purpose of these dialogues is to further understand why the release was required and develop strategies to prevent the need for future releases.

The impacts of the release are largely unknown. Monitoring that occurred before, during and after the dump is still being analyzed. The St. Lawrence River is a large water system and does therefore have the power to dilute a lot of waste. But even if test results show a limited measurable impact of the sewage dump, it is important to remember that sampling strategies are not perfect and that

prevention worker, has been delivering anti-bullying programming at Kateri School since November 2015. There are currently two teams going into two classes at a time delivering lessons to the students. Our goal is to deliver the six-lesson program to every grade from grade 1 through 5/6 by the end of this school year.

The program's goal is to teach students to recognize, report and refuse bullying. The children first learn about what respectful behaviour is and what responsible behaviour is. From there, the children are made aware of the difference between

bullying and conflict, keeping in mind that bullying is something that happens over and over, whereas conflict happens, but is usually a one-time occurrence.

We then look at the three R's of bullying: recognize, report and refuse. We also look at bystander power and responsibility as well as cyberbullying. What is great, is that the team goes directly into the classrooms and the teachers have been sitting in on the lessons, so they too are learning along with their students.

At the end of each lesson the children take home a page of homework. The

purpose of the homework is to have the parents/guardians in the children's lives included in what is being taught. Our hope is that discussion around bullying prevention is happening in the home, and that in itself helps to reinforce the messages we teach.

If you would like more information on the Second Step program's Bullying Prevention Unit for schools, give us a call at 450-635-8089 and one of us can assist you.

*Source: Second Step, Bullying Prevention Unit*

the garbage released during the dump, including plastics, are not subject to dilution.

Unfortunately releases from sewage plants and distribution networks are not uncommon. In Montreal, a combined sewer system means that large storms can overwhelm infrastructure resulting in discharges of raw sewage.

Sewage that does make it to the treatment facility is currently treated to 'primary' standard only, meaning that pathogens, heavy metals and emerging pollutants such as pharmaceuticals are released to the St. Lawrence on an on-going basis.

While the city is promising improvements through installation of an ozonation system, this work is currently behind schedule and the track record is not enviable with treatment of any kind only beginning in the 1980s after many delays.

The silver lining of this discharge is that it brought the issue of sewage treatment to the attention of the public. There now exists an opportunity to maintain pressure on the city

(and other actors) to make important improvements to the collection system and treatment facility.

On an individual level, the sewage dump raises awareness about the shortcomings of sewage treatment generally.

Harmful chemicals and non-biodegradable items should not be put in the toilet or down drains as they cannot be effectively removed before release into the environment and may even cause damage to the waste treatment equipment. Street drains often go directly to the river, so dumping oil, detergents or litter, including cigarette butts directly impacts water quality and wildlife.

Working together and individually, we can all help to further restore the health of the vital St. Lawrence River. For more information, please contact the Kahnawake Environment Protection Office at 450-635-0600 or [Environment.Protection@mck.ca](mailto:Environment.Protection@mck.ca).

*Photo: FreeImages.com/Akiernan*



# Get Up and Moving!

PHOTOS BY TYSON PHILLIPS, COMMUNICATIONS

These exercises can be done using a chair or table for balance and you can use filled water bottles as weights. If you can, do 3-5 repetitions to begin and gradually increase your repetitions. Consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. If you feel any pain or dizziness, stop immediately.

## Squat

- Stand straight with feet hip-width apart.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Lower down, as if sitting (you can use a chair as a guide and stop lowering just when your butt grazes the chair.) You can hold your arms out in front of you for balance. Alternatively, you could raise your arms above your head for balance. You could also use weights to exercise your arms.
- Rise up and repeat movement.



## Toe Touch

- Stand straight with your arms at your side.
- Bend



forward at the waist towards the floor.

- Extend your arms to your toes, only go as far as you can. For a further stretch, you can touch the right hand to the left toes and repeat on the other side.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.

## Toe Touch Version 2

- Stand straight with your arms at your sides.
- Bend forward, but this time twist and touch your left ankle (or as far as you can go) with your right hand.
- Stand up and twist the other way.



## Leg Raises

- Stand straight.
- Lift leg straight forward, hold for 5 seconds.
- Lower leg and lift leg backwards.
- Can use the back of a chair or a table edge for balance.
- Repeat.



## Arm Circles

- Stand and extend your arms straight out to your sides.
- Slowly start to make circles of about 1 foot in diameter with each outstretched arm.
- Continue the circular motion of the outstretched arm for about ten seconds.
- This exercise can be done with hand weights or small filled water bottles for extra resistance.

We want to thank Susan Light at Mohawk Women's Fitness for her assistance and Dorothy Montour for demonstrating the exercises. Kahnawake is fortunate to have several gyms in the community where people can take up or continue an exercise program, including the Kahnawake Youth Center, Total Fitness, and Mohawk Warrior Fitness and more. If you liked this feature and would like to see more or have other suggestions, let us know at [kscskahnawake.ca](mailto:kscskahnawake.ca), attention: newsletter editor.



## Profile: Jackie Leclaire

BY TYSON PHILLIPS, COMMUNICATIONS

This past September, Jackie Leclaire became the new principal at the Kahnawà:ke Survival School (KSS). Quite an accomplishment for someone who didn't think she would end up working in education.

Jackie is originally from Conne River, Newfoundland and is a Micmac. "In 1981, I got my BA in engineering. I was going to continue my education to become a doctor, however, I ran the medical center in my community instead." She stopped working in 1986 after she married Keith Leclaire and moved to Kahnawà:ke.

Jackie and Keith have two children, Sandra Lynn and Gordon. When their kids attended Step by Step school, Jackie volunteered at the school. "I was a teaching assistant to children with special needs. I did this for a few years and then in 1995, Survival School was looking for a teaching assistant." She got the job.

Jackie returned to school and received an inclusive certificate in education in 1999, a Bachelor of Arts in education in 2001 from McGill University, then a Master's in education from the University of Montreal in 2009. "I taught math and science to grades 7 and 8 for many years. I really enjoyed teaching young teens." In 2010, she became the associate principal.

Jackie's leaving her mark on KSS with the introduction of house leagues, each house includes students from all five grades. "It's been very positive for the school," she said. "There is a grade seven student who is very shy. A grade 11 student, who's in the same house league, told the shy student that he could go to him for anything; if someone was bothering him, for help with school work, etc," she explained. "I was so happy to hear this. The older student is acting as a big brother to a younger student who needs a bit of guidance. It seems like the overall attitude of the students has changed." She continues "I saw a teen was alone during recess and a group was playing a sport. The group invited him to play, and he said he didn't know how to play. The group told him they would teach him and he joined in," she explained. "This never happened when I first came here in 1995."

As principal, Jackie has an open door policy for students. "They know they can come and talk to me about anything. A few students were worried a friend might be using drugs, so they came to me for guidance," she explained. "I am not the type of principal to only interact with students when they are in trouble."

Jackie also goes into the classrooms and speaks to the students. "The

students tell me it is like one big family, everyone cares for each other. The teachers are very dedicated to their students and will go out of their way to help them in their school work. I've seen teachers stay into the evening hours giving extra help to their students."

Jackie knows KSS has a negative image but hopes to change that. She wants the students to have pride in their school and ignore the negativity and focus on the positive, such as learning the culture and language, which is not available at high schools outside of Kahnawà:ke.

"It's essential for the students to know who they are. We put great importance that the Mohawk history, traditions, and language is taught. I am not saying we are perfect," she explains "We face challenges and make mistakes but we learn from our mistakes to make it a better school. As the students say, we are like one big family. It makes us feel good to hear that," she said. "We are helping them to succeed."

## The Back Page....

*"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*

~ Lao Tzu

# Talking About Sensitive Subjects

BY MARY MCCOMBER PREVENTION

Parenting can be a challenge to say the least. Additional stresses can occur when there are community issues and family concerns to deal with. As a parent, it may be difficult to know how much information is too much information for your child.

You may feel like they are hearing too much information, whether it's from overhearing adult conversations at the dinner table or listening to the news. It's vital to take into consideration the age and maturity level of the child.

When speaking to children it's important to use words that they understand and to only give them information they can process. It's especially important to speak well of others and to not "bash" people in front of children.

Consequences of not doing that can show up later on as bullying in the school yards. For example, if a child overheard others calling people down because of membership issues, or possibly that they overheard gossip about someone who "came out" as homosexual, if the conversations were negative and hurtful, the child may understand that it is okay to call people down and issues can occur among their peers. What they hear may upset them but they may not tell you this and you may never know that they are worried or stressed.

### Some tips:

If they overheard information on a heavy topic: Ask them what they heard and give them the basic facts. Don't overload them, as it may cause more stress.

Model positive behaviours: Don't "bash" or "trash" talk about people especially if it's someone they care about.

Don't shield children from the world: but you can put issues into context for them and reassure them.

Use age appropriate language: Give information in small pieces, follow their lead and answer questions that they may have.

Inform yourself: It is important to know what you are talking about.

Oftentimes, parents worry that too much information will rob children of their innocence; however, if you don't tell them they may hear it from their friends or the media. It is better to give them appropriate information and to teach them to value respect of others.

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*Griffin, R. Morgan. "Express Yourself: Your Mouth, Your, life" Tips for Parents: Talking around the Kids." WebMD. 2012. n.p. <http://www.webmd.com/balance/express-yourslef-13/talking-around-the-kids>.*

### Enniska/February 2016

- Heart Month
- Psychology Month
- 1-7 Eating Disorders Awareness Week
- 1-7 White Cane Week
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 4 World Cancer Day
- 14 Valentines Day
- 14 Sexual & Reproductive Health Awareness Day
- 24 Pink Shirt Day (Bullying Awareness)

### Enniskó:wa/March

- Liver Disease Month
- Natl. Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- Natl. Kidney Month
- Natl. Nutrition Month
- 6-12 World Glaucoma Week
- 20-26 Poison Prevention Wk
- 8 Intl. Women's Day
- 22 World Water Day
- 24 World Tuberculosis Day
- 25 Good Friday (KSCS closed)**
- 27 Easter Sunday
- 28 Easter Monday (KSCS closed)**

Do you have questions or suggestions? Is there a topic you would like to see covered in a future issue of the newsletter? Contact us and let us know.

#### Aionkwatakari:teke

P.O. Box 1440  
Kahnawà:ke, Quebec JOL 1B0  
Tel: 450-632-6880  
Fax: 450-632-5116  
Email: [kscs@kscskahnawake.ca](mailto:kscs@kscskahnawake.ca)