



# 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

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**Aionkwatakari:teke**

Aionkwatakari:teke is a newsletter published six times a year by Communications Services of Kahnawake 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:

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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**

In late May-early June, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada submitted a summary report along with 94 recommendations regarding the Indigenous residential school experience. The recommendations, if implemented, would go a long way towards a true reconciliation between the Indigenous population and Canadian society; the key words being *if implemented*. The TRC's recommendations are not earth shattering. They are not exorbitantly expensive. They are not impossible. It's only the will of the government, provincial and federal, that would make it impossible. However, considering how the intent of the residential schools was to "erase the Indian" and to wipe out our culture and language...it seems only fair, only just, that there be dedicated funding for our language and culture. To put right what was outlawed. It's time. You can read more on the TRC recommendations and the residential school effects in this issue and on the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's](#) website.

The effects of the residential school policy have been felt culturally through the loss of Indigenous language, spiritually through the suppression of cultural ceremonies, and socially through the inter-generational effects of emotional and physical abuse and the suppression of traditional governments.

This issue also contains articles on teaching children about dental hygiene, preparing your children for school, bullying, third-hand smoke around children, as well as a few other topics. I hope you enjoy them. Don't forget, we are also running a survey about the newsletter. We know there's always room to improve. You can help us out by filling out the survey online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/KSCS\\_newsletter](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KSCS_newsletter) and be eligible to win an iPad (not sure if it's a iPad-mini yet) KSCS employees are not eligible. We appreciate your feedback.

HOUSEKEEPING NOTE: Due to spacing issues, the final installment of The Suicide Chronicles will run in the next issue of Aionkwatakari:teke.

*Ske:nen,*

*Marie*



Cover photos and design: Marie David



## Smart School Strategies

BY STEPHANIE HORNE, PREVENTION

**T**he start of the school year requires organization and family communication.

One of the most important aspects of preparation is making sure that all the proper supplies are attained prior to the school start date. Secondly, depending on the age and maturity of your child, it would be advantageous to include them in the process. They could put their names on their school items and on their gym clothes, etc. and shop for supplies.

Some tips to get the entire family working together includes having regular family meetings to discuss morning routines, lunch and meal planning, tutors, and extra-curricular activities. The family meeting is a great way to discuss any foreseeable problems and come up with solutions as a family. This is especially helpful for children who live between two homes as they then feel their needs are being met. For example, a child may prefer to do their science project at Dad's home as he has more space in his basement for the ultimate robotic experiment!

Parents play a critical role in their child's education. You can help support your child by setting up a homework station in your home. The manner in which you approach this will be different and as individual as your child.

Some children like to be close to where the parents are so they can ask questions or by knowing you are available if they need homework help. Other children prefer to have a quiet space away from the rest of the family. Some

children like to do their homework as soon as they get home; others prefer to wind down and do their homework later in the day. As parents, our role is to guide them in time management so that their schedule is harmonized with their afterschool activities such as music, sports or other leisure activities. The real trick is not to overschedule.

Make sure that the resource supports (shadow, tutor, etc.) are in place for your child early in the school year. A parent is the best advocate for their child's needs. If possible, set up a meeting with the teacher and other school staff ahead of time to go over up to date educational assessments for your child. If your assessment is not up to date, it's a good time to negotiate to have a new one scheduled and completed as soon as possible.

Parents need to address bullying issues that may affect their child. Every child has the right to a safe space and it is not their responsibility to address bullying issues. As a parent, you can be pro-active by asking about the school and bus bullying policies. KSCS has many resources to provide through our bullying prevention programs. Bullying can affect the mental wellness and the school performance of the child, so it's important to stop the bullying right away!

While I prefer the lazy days of summer, I would not be able to function or celebrate the start of a new school year without carpooling, meal plans, and a family calendar in place.

## Your Child & Dental Hygiene

BY CHRISTINE TAYLOR, COMMUNICATIONS

**F**or children, frequent dental visits, good oral hygiene and a balanced diet are key to good dental health that lasts a lifetime and helps prevent negative impacts on other parts of their lives from social or other developmental milestones like speech and eating.

It's never too early to start. With each stage of your child's life there is appropriate care and tools that you can employ that teach your child that looking after their teeth is an everyday — and even fun — way to look after themselves (with Mom and Dad's help at first).

You can clean your baby's gums with water and cloth or a special soft toothbrush. Children should brush before they go to bed at night. This removes any bacteria and germs that could cause decay while they sleep. Use a soft brush and replace every three to four months. Children under three can use a rice sized amount of toothpaste, between ages 3-6 they can use a pea sized amount. Parents should make sure the child can rinse and spit out the toothpaste.

Proper nutrition is important to dental health. When sugar comes into contact with bacteria in the mouth an acid is formed that eats away at the enamel and may cause cavities. Natural sugars in juice or even milk have as much an effect on teeth as refined sugar. It's important to limit your child's consumption of all sugar

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# Lateral Violence and Bullying

BY MARY MCCOMBER, PREVENTION

What is violence? Violence comes in many forms. It may be experienced at any age. Jens Korff runs a website called Creative Spirits about Aborigine Australian issues. He says lateral violence is violence that is “experienced from your peers” which can be physical or subtle. In young children, this may be referred to as bullying and can cause loneliness and depression.

According to Korff, lateral violence is an interesting phenomenon oftentimes seen in minority communities, such as Indigenous groups.

The term is used to describe the way “people in positions of powerlessness, covertly or overtly direct their dissatisfaction inward toward each other, toward themselves, and toward those less powerful than themselves” (Korff). This may also happen in families where there may be violence, addictions, multigenerational trauma, or mental health issues.

People often have the tendency to lash out at those closest to them. It may seem to be the easier route, rather than to actually address the core problem.

Lateral violence may include “gossip, shaming and blaming others, backstabbing and attempts to socially isolate others” (Korff).

In Kahnawake, we may see scenarios of this playing out in the community e.g., around issues of membership or other issues, and this can make its way to the playground.

As parents, it is our role and duty to teach our children to respect others. We need to role model this in our words and actions.

Discussing violence, bullying and other sensitive issues can be challenging

for parents. However, it is worth the effort to use teachable moments and review with children what type of behaviour is expected of them.

One way that parents may open up the conversation around lateral violence and bullying, is to use media as a tool for discussion.

Children and youth are increasingly aware of the variety of media, and technological sources they have at their disposal. Parents may monitor these sources for security reasons, but also to become aware of the content their children are exposed to.

“Talking to kids about violence in the media—can help them put media violence into perspective and perhaps diffuse some of its power.” (mediasmarts.ca)

## Discussion Starters (mediasmarts.ca):

- Ask youth to identify different forms of violence (yelling, put downs, threats).
- Talk about how these acts can lead to physical violence.
- Discuss the consequences of violent acts and media violence.
- Ask them how media portrays violence (is it used humorously or glorified?)

- Is there a lesson that can be learned?

Teaching young people to deal with conflict respectfully is a challenge, but this needs to be an effort by parents and teachers alike. The community teaches norms to young people about handling conflict and the use of violence.

Let’s make sure the teachings that we pass along to the next generations are positive ones.

Source: “Talking to Kids About Media Violence – Tip Sheet.” *mediasmarts.ca*. Web. Accessed June 2015.

Korff, Jens. “Bullying and Lateral Violence.” *Creative Spirits*. 24 Nov. 2014. Web. June 2015.

# Sun Safety

BY MARIE DAVID, COMMUNICATIONS

I'm a big fan of actor Hugh Jackman. He played Wolverine in the X-Men movies and he ain't too bad to look at either. Unfortunately, Jackman is battling his third bout of skin cancer.

The actor posted selfies of his bandaged nose after his first two procedures (in May and November of last year) but after his more recent bout of treatments for basal cell carcinoma, he posted an image of a piece called "Everybody's Free to Wear Sunscreen" with his message proclaiming SUNSCREEN. He's urged his fans not to be foolish like him and to use sunscreen.

Sun or no sun; UV rays affect the skin even on cloudy days and during the fall and winter. What most of us don't know is that exposure to the sun has an accumulative effect on our skin, from loss of elasticity (known as photo-aging) to sunburns and skin cancer. According to the Canadian Dermatology Association, there are three major forms of malignant skin cancer:

**Basal cell carcinoma** is the most common. It's treatable if diagnosed early. It can continue to spread and infect the surrounding skin tissue, eventually causing disfigurement. It's commonly found on the face, neck, trunk, arms and legs. Severe sunburns and exposure to UV radiation during childhood increases the risk.

**Squamous cell** skin cancer is the second most common skin cancer in Canada. It must be treated as the cancer cells continue to grow in size and damage the surrounding tissue and can spread to other areas of the body. It can

appear as red, scaly bumps or wart like growths and can look like crusted skin or an open sore and can grow quickly. It appears on sun exposed areas such as the head, neck, arms, legs, and hands – pay particular attention to the outer ear and lips as the cancer can be more aggressive in this area.

**Malignant melanoma** is less common but the most serious form of skin cancer. If detected early, the cure rate can be as high as 90 per cent. If untreated, it can spread into the blood stream and lymphatic system or other parts of the body, often causing death. Excessive sun exposure through UV rays or tanning beds increase the risk factors.

**Reduce sun exposure.** Stay out of the sun during peak hours of 10–3, wear a protective hat and clothes to minimize exposure, and wear sunscreen. For information on safe sunscreens (some sunscreens can actually cause more harm than good) check out the Environmental Working Group's "Guide to Sunscreens." Don't forget to apply the proper coverage and reapply after a few hours or after sweating or swimming. Children are especially vulnerable and need to be taught safe sun exposure techniques because sunburns increase their risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

To find out more about the risk factors and out what to look for on your skin, visit the Canadian Dermatology Association's website at [www.dermatology.ca](http://www.dermatology.ca).

Source: "Skin Cancer." *Canadian Dermatology Association*. n.d. Web. 11 Feb. 2015.

Continued from page 3

and in between meals, water is the best option for your growing child. The damage sugar causes depends on how much sugar has been ingested and how long it stays in the month.

Take your child to see the dentist within six months of his/her teeth coming in or around baby's first birthday. It's good to make a visit to the dentist a positive experience and to treat and prevent any problems early on for the best outcome. The Canadian Dental Association recommends a visit to the dentist every six months.

Parents need to help their children brush their teeth until they are developed enough to brush properly on their own. When a child can write their name (not printing) they generally have the dexterity to brush their teeth on their own.

Smaller children need parents to brush for them and parents need to supervise them to make sure they clean their teeth properly. Flossing can start as soon as teeth are touching each other or when top and bottom teeth meet.

It's important to teach your child the role that prevention, good habits and dental health plays in their overall health. These are just some very general guidelines. Consult your dentist and learn about proper techniques and care that every parent should know. The Canadian Dental Association has some great information available online.

Source: *Canadian Dental Association*



# Violence Prevention Month in Kahnawake

BY JADE MCCOMBER, PREVENTION SUMMER STUDENT

July 2015 was Kahnawake's third consecutive year of the *Violence Prevention Month* campaign. The campaign was created by Kahnawà:ke Shakotiià'takéhnhas Community Services (KSCS) with the goal of providing awareness to the community on the impacts of violence.

In 2015, the main focus was the impact of lateral violence on children, providing awareness on intimate partner violence and personal safety issues. The campaign also aims to promote respect and the use of positive communication skills, while incorporating Kanien'kehá:ka culture and Kanien'kéha throughout promotions and program activities.

KSCS promotes these causes by holding fun and wholesome family events. These educational events included the third annual *Movie in the Park* where we featured the original 1977 version of *Star Wars*. We also gave away prizes and had activities for the kids. Although some may argue that *Star Wars* is a violent film, participants were encouraged to use media as a means to discuss teachable moments with their children.

*Movie in the Park* provides a fun activity in a safe environment for all families and individuals of Kahnawake. Some messages in the movie promote violence prevention awareness for several reasons including: the encouragement of patience, sharing knowledge, believing in oneself and knowing what's right. One of the teachings brought out in

the film emphasizes that wars do not make you great and some of the *Star Wars* teachings may complement our Kanienkehá:ka teachings.

With the controversy, negative energy and pain circulating within the community in the past few months, it may be helpful to reflect on our teachings of non-violence. This is part of the reason that KSCS promotes Violence Prevention Month. Being Kanien'kehá:ka, we are expected to respect and appreciate one another. This means we should be discouraging violence and toxic attitudes in our culture.

Another reason to support violence prevention month is to promote happy, healthy lifestyles in our community and to protect our future generations. Most of the activities provided by KSCS are inclusive towards children and entire families. This supports the value of healthy lifestyles, the importance of spending quality time together, and building healthy relationships.

It's important to note that, in order for a community to have efficient prevention approaches aimed at the general public, there must be collaboration between health and social services. The main components involved in these collaborations are

- community-based cultural practices
- parenting or family programs

- violence and drug education programs in schools
- media campaigns
- policies and strategies within a community

(p 20 *Honouring Our Strengths*):

These prevention approaches promote healthy behaviors and are positive and proactive. KSCS is providing these activities towards a healthier community and brighter future for the next seven generations of Kahnawà'kehrónon.

*Source: Honouring Our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Issues Among First Nations People in Canada. Assembly of First Nations and Health Canada. 2001.PDF.*

# Parent Bullies

BY MARY MONTOUR GILBERT, PREVENTION

Parents who bully. Isn't it commonly known that it's the kids that are the bullies? Would you be surprised to see a parent losing it after watching their child mess up and have a shouting rage at the child? Name calling, demeaning language, threatening, insulting, shouting and using foul language over missing the ball, forgetting their shoes, or not sharing their toys. All of these scenarios are forms of bullying parents.

There is a difference between disciplining your child versus intimidating or threatening your child to change their behaviour. Bullying parents use emotional, physical and mental methods with words also known as manipulation and coercion. Words that can last a lifetime and cause problems in their children's lives.

It's important to consider adult behaviours around children. Behaviours such as being overbearing or controlling, setting up competitions between siblings, shouting, and using sarcasm or humiliation can create mental scars that can result in depression, failure in school, or being harmful to themselves or others.

An on-line article on parental bullying found that most kids who suffer from parental bullying will bully their own kids. These children become suspicious of others due to lack of trust and security.

Kids who suffer parental bullying have

- lower self-esteem
- problems with concentration

- learning difficulties
- lower academic achievements

Children are also less likely to take on challenges for fear of failure or they develop panic attacks (just a few of the impacts from parental bullying.)

The child may question their own value and doubt the parents love. The foundations of raising healthy children are based on three needs: safety, security, and love.

Children at every age need someone that they can trust who shows them what respect is. Parents who set their expectations at the child's age level understand that the child is learning new things every day and is going to make mistakes.

It's a parent's job to provide confidence, a sense of security (physical, social, emotional and mental), and to teach children how to be self-disciplined. Children need to have a sense of belonging and love through support such as encouragement and understanding.

Parents can build skills through communication. Through cultural teachings, Onkwheonwe had patience when speaking to a child, finding teachable moments, guiding children, and trying to stay away from aggressive tactics by using more instructional forms of discipline. There are more positive ways to get children to comply with rules and instruction.

Methods can be developed from the book *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and How to Listen So Kids Will Talk* by

Faber and Mazlish. In a recent presentation to the KSCS and Kahnawake Youth Center's summer students and KSCS' Our Gang, feedback and comments were given about what they found most helpful in the workshop that include how to:

- give children choices
- deal with children in a more respectful way
- change wording and how to say things
- cooperate with children
- deal with children's emotions

It helped me look at how I treat my siblings differently, practicing descriptive words, not to yell, and how not to evaluate but describe. Commenters found the workshop was helpful because there were "A lot of helpful reminders, not only when you work with kids, but people in general."

Parents, and people in general, can stop the bullying of children by starting with themselves; not through anger, but through respect and understanding. Taking those moments to be a teacher, not a bully.

Source: Baras, Ronit. "Bullying (23): Bully Parents." *Family Matters: Practical Parenting Blog*. 4 April 2011. Web. npag.



# When a Home is Not a Home

## Traditional Support Program

BY MERRICK KAHRONIAKETE DIABO, PREVENTION

Imagine being six-years-old, waking up and eating breakfast with your family, when there is a knock at the door. Your mother answers and outside stands a familiar face along with men dressed in uniforms. He's a man you have seen in the community and, to your best recollection, he never bears glad tidings. When he comes around, community children tend to leave with him and the men dressed in uniforms. Sometimes three to six children would leave at a time, and when those children come back, they seem out of place in the community.

When they return to the community as young women and men, they can't speak our language nor are they able to conduct the simplest of ceremonies.

They no longer know how to hunt, fish, or prepare food. They know how to read, write and keep things clean, but that doesn't really help the community. When they return to the community, they seem angry and resentful. They yell a lot, drink alcohol and get into trouble.

When they come home, they seem to suffer in silence and don't speak about what occurred while they were gone. If they come home at all! You remember your mother talking with others from the community and in just about every conversation there is someone crying about one of the kids getting sick or hurt and never coming home.

The man stands flanked by the men in uniforms. He says that you're of age now and that he has the "right" to take you and if your parents try to interfere, the uniformed men will put them in jail. Standing in front of your mother, your father shouts at the man. You cover your ears because you have never heard your father shout like that before.

The uniformed men surround your parents. The familiar man enters and grabs your hand tightly, pulling you outside towards a car door and lifting

you in. As you peer out the window, your final memory of home is seeing your father being wrestled to the ground and your mother being held back by one of the uniformed men as she reaches for you, her eyes brimming with tears.

Now that you have imagined this, the reality check is that this scenario occurred in many Indigenous, Metis and Inuit families throughout North America.

Indian Agents accompanied by Royal Canadian Mounted Police often escorted children — as young as four-years-old until the age of 16 — from their homes and into Indian Residential/Boarding/Industrial Schools.

Since the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the British Crown, and later the Canadian government, were "required" to provide education to Indigenous peoples. These decrees were built on the notion that the governments needed to civilize the Indigenous population

Kahnawake has endured the assimilation process and we continue to revive traditions that were forcibly removed from the collective. So much so that Kahnawake's collective vision statement offers the sentiment of the growth of our culture and language. Organizations like KSCS offer healing in its many forms for surviving

students and their families. We should be proud of the courage that surviving students have and ensure that they receive the needed support along their continued journey in life and that we offer a path that encourages growth and health from their experiences.

Should you be a surviving student or family member requiring assistance on this complex issue, please feel free to call Merrick Diabo at 450-638-0408.

### To Know More

Selection of titles that are available at the Skawenniio Tsi Iewennahnotahkhwa Kahnawake Library

- Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander: From Pre-School to High School— How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. William Morrow. 2009. Summers, Suzanne. *Breakthrough: Eight Steps to Wellness*. Potter/Ten Speed/Harmony. 2009.
- Royston, Angela. *Why Do I Brush My Teeth?* QEB. 2009.

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# Truth, Reconciliation, & Justice

BY MARIE DAVID, COMMUNICATIONS

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was born out of the Indian Residential School Agreement, which itself was part of a court case from residential school survivors against the Federal government.

The TRC's mandate was for five years with a budget of \$60 million; a daunting task given the advanced age of many survivors or that many had passed on and that many records have been destroyed either on purpose or through neglect.

From May 31 to June 3, 2015, the TRC presented a summary of their report (the full report is due later this year) along with 94 recommendations for the government of Canada.

The 94 recommendations are too numerous to go into here but you can find them on the TRC website. I'll highlight a few recommendations here.

There are a few common threads woven throughout the recommendations, among them: that the "federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation." Doing so would move endorsement of the document from an "aspirational" one to a true, living document from which to base meaningful reconciliation on.

Sadly, this doesn't seem to be in the cards with Stephen Harper's government.

To look at it another way, take PM Harper's close relationship with Israel. I can't help but wonder how Mr. Harper would feel if Canada had done

this to Jewish people. The following text is from the introduction in the summary report from the TRC (I've replaced Aboriginal with Jewish):

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For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Jewish policy were to eliminate Jewish governments; ignore Jewish rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Jewish peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."

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If the TRC had called on Harper to adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Jewish Peoples would he relent? Would he call the document "aspirational" or would it be adopted faster than you can say "genocide"?

Another thread woven through the fabric of the recommendations is education; education about Indigenous peoples in Canada, our histories, our treaties, our residential school experience, and our realities today.

The TRC recommends that children from kindergarten to grade 12 receive this education as a mandatory curriculum. They also recommend that public servants, social workers, the media, and those in the justice system be educated in the "history and legacy of residential schools" (TRC 3).

Other noteworthy recommendations include a call for the establishment of a national monument, for a national

holiday, and for the establishment and dedicated funding for seven years for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation where they would develop and maintain a national residential schools student death registry. They call for the Pope to issue an apology and, finally, they add their voices to calling for a public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Check out their summary report along with their calls to action on their website: [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca).

Sources: *Calls to Action. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 8 June 2015. Web.*

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On Indian Residential Schools:

- Sellars, Bev. *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School*. Talon Books. 2012.
- Jordan-Fenton, Christy. *A Stranger at Home: A True Story*. Annick Press. 2011.



# The Dangers of Third-Hand Smoke

BY KATERI OESTERREICH, PREVENTION

Over the last few years we've heard from the medical community about the dangers of second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is the lingering smoke that comes off a cigarette or is left in the air when someone exhales. Second-hand smoke can contribute to heart disease, cancer, and respiratory problems that can affect our ability to breathe... even if you've never smoked.

Research shows that children are at a higher risk than adults when it comes to second-hand smoke. Physically, a child is smaller than an adult; therefore, their body has to process more of the toxins.

The respiratory rate of a child is higher than an adult, so they are taking in more of these toxins just by breathing.

Children are often unable to leave the environment that they are in. As an adult if you don't like the smell of the smoke or being exposed to smoke, you can leave or tell the person you would rather not travel with them. Children don't have that luxury and are stuck inhaling the toxins without any escape.

Over the years, the community has become aware of the dangers of second hand smoke. Many people have made changes to help protect their children and family members. Simple changes like no longer allowing smoking in their home or car and even quitting smoking entirely.

These changes are protecting everyone but what about the toxins and residue that lingers from the smoker even when they are doing their best by not smoking in their home or around their children?

## Third Hand Smoke

"Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children [...] have coined a new term that describes yet another set of dangers associated with cigarette smoke: third-hand smoke" (Martin).

Ever notice when someone walks past you and you can smell cigarettes even though the cigarette is nowhere in sight? Recall getting into the car of a friend who is a smoker and getting out smelling like an ashtray?

When the toxins and chemicals of a long gone cigarette leave deposits on your clothing, in the furniture, the upholstery of a car, etc. this is what is referred to as third-hand smoke.

Recent research shows that these small particles of toxins, gases and residue from the cigarette smoke are just as harmful to infants and children. Imagine being in a car where smoking is done regularly; the car seats, the infant seats, the fabric that surrounds the child is contaminated. They are touching these fabrics and putting their hands in their mouths, ingesting them; they are breathing in the toxins that are embedded in the fabric and they cannot escape it. They cannot say they don't like it. They can't get away.

It's our responsibility to protect and educate our children. Share this knowledge with those who don't know and be part of the change by creating safer smoke free environments for all our children.

*Source: Martin, Terry Dr. "Third Hand Smoke – A Threat to Our Children: What is Third Hand Smoke?" about.com. 3 July 2015. Web.*

# Planting the Seed

## Reducing the Use of Tobacco

BY KATERI DELISLE, TOBACCO STRATEGY STEERING COMMITTEE

**A** Tobacco Strategy Steering Working Group has been formed to determine a plan to reduce the use of commercial tobacco among Kahnawa'kehró:non. This is a collective effort lead by Onkwata'karitáhtshera with the representation of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, Kateri Memorial Hospital Center and KSCS and the Kahnawake Fire Brigade and Ambulance Services.

Our plan will increase the number of smoke free homes, prevent more youth from starting to use commercial tobacco, provide the community with current health information on the dangers of smoking and using other tobacco products, and support those who want to quit smoking.

In this process, the group did not want to overlook any creative or candid ideas. We wanted to learn what our community is thinking about tobacco use. We wanted to self-study our present practices so that we could understand what is working and what is not working. So, it was important to ask many people who have insight their opinions and understandings about tobacco, both sacred and commercial.

We learned what are our traditional and historical attachments to tobacco are by hearing our elders and traditional leaders speak.

Our prevention workers and practitioners told us about their work and shared perceptions about tobacco attitudes

and practices. The youth contributed their enthusiastic, spontaneous beliefs and understandings.

A few themes emerged from the process. Our elder representatives told us that it was most important for us to “plant the seed” of understanding and thought with our children about tobacco misuse.

Traditional leaders spoke about how smoking cigarettes and chewing tobacco really have no connection with the Creator's original intention for tobacco use, a relationship of honour and purpose.

These original teachings, and the discrepancy between them and commercial tobacco misuse, will guide us as we plan a set of prevention tools and educational information to “plant the seed” within our children.

Protection, prevention and cessation programs are being developed to better reflect our community needs and emerging trends.

Our intention is to have a creative, successful program that will encourage our youth to be tobacco free, increase the smoke free environment around us and help people quit.

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Smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer and other forms of cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory disease, and other conditions. Smoking is an important and preventable cause of death. *World Health Organization*

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“The children are the most important...I think it is really important that you ‘plant the seed’ with them, help them understand about smoking.” *Charlie Patton*

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## The Back Page....

*"We need to keep in mind that residential schools cannot be looked at in isolation. They were part of an overall approach that government and the Canadian society were taking to the forced assimilation of Indigenous people into Canadian society."*

~ TRC Justice Murray Sinclair, Ottawa: 30 May 2015



## Practicing Wellness

BY JEAN O'CONNOR, HOME & COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

There are many ways to create health and wellness in life. Eating well, exercising, and engaging in a spiritual practice are ways that people usually seek overall health and wellness. There are many articles that discuss the benefits of healthy nutrition, exercise programs, meditation programs and therapies that encourage overall health such as yoga, massage, reflexology, acupressure, energy work and many other healing art approaches.

It is very important when developing your own wellness plan to incorporate a holistic approach (caring for the body, mind and spirit).

In this article, I would like to present the idea of community wellness. I recently attended a retreat where there was a teaching on "personal actions" and that our actions should not leave a negative residue on others. For example, if we throw our garbage out our window as we drive or needlessly run our car, we pollute our environment.

If our words or actions are hurtful, a negative residue is left on the other person. This in turn creates negativity, which has a detrimental impact on physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Being mindful in our words and actions can go a long way in creating positivity and overall wellness. How we treat one another influences overall

community wellness in that what effects one affects the whole.

There are many examples of community wellness initiatives in Kahnawake. For example, there have been many fundraisers for people in need as a result of serious health problems. Kanien'keha:ka Onkwawen:na Raotitiohkwa Language and Cultural Center creates opportunity for community wellness by promoting and encouraging culture and language.

The Kahnawake Food Bank is another example of a community wellness initiative that was started by one man who cared; one person influencing others to care, which in turn has a positive impact on the whole community.

In conclusion, it is important for us to think about our individual wellness in terms of how we care for ourselves but we must also think about wellness towards others. We must be mindful on how we treat our family, co-workers, friends, and community members. Are we speaking and acting in a way that creates an environment of wellness? What contributions can we make to positively influence a community? Those answers come only from self-reflection and a practice of compassion and generosity.

### Seskéha/August

- 1-7 World Breastfeeding Week
- 12 Intl. Youth Day
- 19 World Humanitarian Day
- 31 Intl. Overdose Awareness Day

### Seskehkó:wa/September

- Breakfast for Learning Month
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- Men's Cancer Health Awareness Month
- Natl. Arthritis Month
- Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
- Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
- Blood Cancer Awareness Month
- 12-20 AIDS Walk for Life
- 7 **Labour Day (KSCS closed)**
- 9 FASD Awareness Day
- 10 World Suicide Prevention Day
- 21 World Alzheimer's Day

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.

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