

OLDER INDIANS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021



CELEBRATING AND HONORING NATIVE MOTHERHOOD

by Sonya Begay, Program Specialist, ACL

Mother: Shima' (Navajo/Dine'); Nąñį (Ho-Chunk/Hocąk); Maamaa/Gashi (Sokaogon Chippewa)

Motherhood starts at the first time we as Native women hear our child's heartbeat and our child hears our heartbeat within the womb. To have this blessing of being the "giver of life", we sustain a responsibility of being compassionate, sacred and keepers of wisdom. The Native grandmothers watch our daughters carry this symbolism of life and continue to nurture them for motherhood. But as a grandmother, we have the privilege to watch our children from the day they are handed to us at birth until the day Creator calls them back.

Within the month of May, we celebrate Mother's Day...a commemorative day for gifts, flowers, and other celebratory festivities.

As we celebrate this annual event, it is instrumental to honor the mothers within our family and communities for we are connectors to what is sacred to our present lives and to the future. Our way of life encompasses everything around us as sacred and precious. Our families are sacred, the earth we stand on is sacred, and with that, all our being is interconnected as a paradigm or the sacred hoop. But, within this circle of love, our mothers, grandmothers, daughters, aunties, clan mothers, and whoever we reach out to as mothers are powerful, beautiful, protectors and are always grounded to our foundation of Mother Earth with Father Sky looking upon us. Without our motherhood within our Native ways, there will be no hope, culture, language, and traditions to sustain our lives.



The essence of Motherhood within Indian Country has many challenges with socioeconomic problems and barriers. We are plagued with addictions, disjointed families, abuse, trauma and lack of problematic barriers. But we, as Native women, continue to flourish, preserve and remain vigilant to support our own. As a Dine' woman, I have lived this life but have realized my responsibility to my family and to the children I have raised. As a single mother of 3 sons and single grandmother of 3 grandchildren who lost their father to homicide, our family could have been far worse off than the circumstances we encountered. My love for all of them and the respect they have for me made us flourish and grow into the people we are today. A strong family who can endure anything that life throws at us. I see my great grandmother, my grandmother's smiling face, and mother looking at us with pride, admiration and content that will bring them pride as mothers to their grandchildren and to their future children. The strength of motherhood has relinquished an essence of our tenacity to conquer our own struggles for our family and revere the love of what our traditions stand for – beauty and sacredness for all of motherhood.



Upcoming Title VI Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
June 9, 2021	Title VI Webinar: n4a Livable Communities Initiative and the engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults Project	Webinar - 2:00pm ET Webex Link Passcode: 1234 Audio conference: 415-527-5035 Access code: 199 340 5905
July 14, 2021	Title VI Webinar: What We Learned – Findings from the Title VI Evaluation	Webinar - 2:00pm ET Webex Link Passcode: 1234 Audio conference: 415-527-5035 Access code: 199 398 6251

Title VI Afternoon Chats

Join our weekly Title VI Afternoon Chats during which we explore and discuss a variety of topics that affect the Title VI community.

Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET via Webex

Dial-in details change weekly, check our ACL/AoA Weekly Update email blast or <https://olderindians.acl.gov> for details each week

National Title VI Training & Technical Assistance Conference

We are planning to host our National Title VI Conference in person in early spring of 2022. Keep an eye out for Title VI email blasts for details.

For more information on Upcoming Events, visit <https://olderindians.acl.gov/> or contact contact Melissa Szasz at Melissa.Szasz@teyaservices.com

Tribe of the Quarter

Ho-Chunk Nation

The Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Aging Division's purpose is to provide quality services to enhance the quality of life to our Tribal Elders in a timely fashion. We believe Ho-Chunk Elders deserve respect, advocacy and assistance with their daily needs. Their precious and valuable experience provides needed guidance for current and future tribal leadership so that their knowledge and wisdom is protected and preserved for those yet unborn.

2021 has us still under the Tribe's Emergency Declaration in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. While other departments worked remotely, the Tribal Aging Division staff showed up to work every day to assist our Tribal Elders. The pandemic has provided obstacles including staff quarantines, and sadly the loss of two of our employees. Through it all the Tribal Aging Divisions five locations in Black River Falls, Nekoosa, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells and Wittenberg have remained committed to providing quality services to our Elders.

At the core of our programming is the nutrition program. From April 1st of 2020 to March 31st of 2021 the Tribal Aging Division provided 40,701 home delivered meals to 331 Tribal Elders. Additionally, each Elder on the Home Delivered Meal routes received a package of 5 non-perishable meals to be used in the event meals could not be provided. Tribal CARES Act funding also allowed the Division to purchase and distribute Christmas hams to all of our Elders on our routes which was greatly appreciated.

The Tribal Aging Division has also been used by various departments as a means to distribute valuable information to our Elders. From information on the availability of the vaccine, to rental and housing assistance programs, to snow removal applications, the Tribal Aging Division has proven to be the only means of disseminating this information to homebound Elders.

While working through the pandemic our Division has still maintained services, while limited, including the home delivered meals, snow removal and lawn care, minor home repairs, medical transportation, information and assistance, and chore services.

We know that our Elders are anxious for things to get back to normal. In the meantime we have tried activities like home delivered meal bingo which they seemed to enjoy. The Elders also received "goodie bags" provided to the Wisconsin tribes by Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. Vaccine efforts by the Ho-Chunk Nation have been outstanding and currently 59% of tribal members in Jackson County, our most populous location, have received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. 49% of tribal members in our second largest community in Sauk County have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Until the time comes when our Emergency Order is lifted, the Tribal Aging Division will continue to provide services to our Elders and like the rest of our Tribal partners, hope for better days ahead.

