



# **Oneida Indian Nation 2020 Annual Report**

*Unto the Seventh Generation*



## Oneida Indian Nation 2020 Annual Report

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## Our Commitment to the Seventh Generation

The People and the leadership of the Oneida Indian Nation have identified three principal long-range goals to guide the community and economic development activities of the Nation and the administration and the leadership of the Nation. The adopted long-range goals of the Oneida Indian Nation are as follows:

Help our Members achieve their highest potential in education, physical and mental health, and economic development;

Implement the legal and administrative structure for the stability and protection of Nation sovereignty, treaty rights, and government-to-government relationships; and

Acquire, develop, and secure resources to achieve economic and social empowerment and self-sufficiency for the Oneida Indian Nation.

These long-range goals have been adopted by the Nation as a guide toward the accomplishment of a progressive dream. Simultaneously, the Nation plans to use the economic incentives available to a sovereign nation to inject new wealth and create jobs for the Oneida community and, significantly, the surrounding communities.



## A Message from the Nation Representative and Oneida Nation Enterprises CEO

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**S**hekólih, greetings. The Oneida people have a long history of perseverance in the face of struggles dating back to the times of the Revolutionary War, when our ancestors suffered the consequences of siding with the American colonies in their fight for liberty. Our Oneida ancestors remained strong and persistent when they determined, in the face of relentless pressure, to stay here on our sacred homelands while others left to start their own government to escape the greed, scorn and inequity of the overreaching federal and state governments at the time. And, more recently, we overcame years of intense strife and turmoil, fighting against state and county efforts to seize our lands and shutdown our businesses.

Resiliency is among the hallmarks of our People. United in purpose, and with strong leadership, we have always remained spirited in getting through these challenges. Today, the state and counties recognize our sovereignty, and look to us as the economic engine for the entire region.

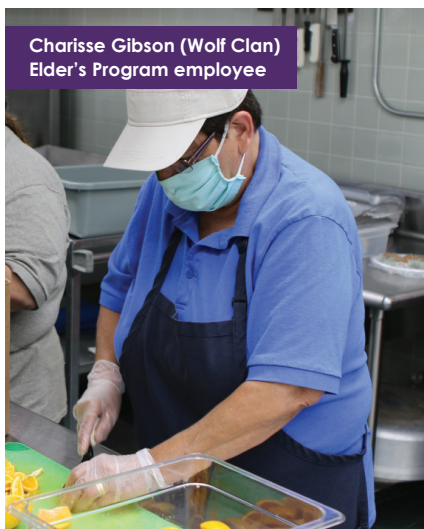
### Determined to Serve

There is a Cheyenne saying - “*a danger foreseen is half-avoided.*” The work we have done together as a Nation, and the steps we have taken as leaders to secure a better life for our People, have given us a solid foundation on which we can withstand a crisis such as the one we are currently experiencing.

The wellbeing of Members is – and remains – our highest priority. In the beginning of the pandemic, we acted quickly to take a number of actions to support our People.

Our first focus was on our Elders and those especially vulnerable to the virus. Our Health Services facility never closed. Our health facility was the first to bring rapid coronavirus testing to the region for our Members and Health Services clients. The Nation was also able to acquire the “Abbot ID NOW” analyzer test for Covid-19 because of the longstanding credibility of our Health Services and the measures already in place to support our Members in response to the pandemic.

The selection of the Nation Health Services for distribution of the limited supply of Covid-19



Charisse Gibson (Wolf Clan)  
Elder's Program employee

During the pandemic, food donated from our businesses helped support the continuation of a daily lunch program for our Elders, distributing **10,000** healthy meals.



Jessica Dowdy (Bear Clan)  
Executive Office employee

vaccines speaks to the world-class capabilities provided through our medical facilities, and the stellar reputation of our skilled employees who have done a remarkable job before and throughout the pandemic.

We have provided nearly 10,000 healthy meals to our Elders since the beginning of the pandemic. And our Member Benefits Office remained open as well, and continues to assist when and where they can.

## Getting Back to Work

Our businesses support the programs and services for our Members, so it was imperative to reopen all of our operations as quickly and safely as possible. Our enterprise leadership team began working as soon as we closed with local and state agencies on a plan for reopening. Soon after, we instituted a comprehensive health and safety plan that has been extremely effective in ensuring that,

when we reopened in June, we did so safely and in a way that will be sustainable to see us through this crisis.

We have been through many troubled times as a People. But together, we have overcome them all. We can take comfort in the fact that our Nation, through preparedness, due diligence and difficult decision making, has felt less of an impact from the pandemic than the community at-large.

We understand how challenging this time has been for you, your families, and for all of us. While the pandemic is still with us, things continue to improve. We will continue to stand together and take care of one another and make decisions based on their impact to future generations.

Na ki' wa,

Ray Halbritter

## A Message from the Oneida Indian Nation Council

**S**hehéólih. As we move forward from a year that was like no other, we do so acknowledging that while it was as difficult and challenging as any, it also was a year that underscored our collective resilience. The spirit and determination of our People, having been tried and tested for generations, remains as strong as ever.

### Turtle Clan



Dale Rood



Clint Hill

Navigating the obstacles placed before us by the pandemic has been demanding for sure. With positive news on the horizon through vaccine development and administration across the country, we can reflect humbly on the accomplishments our Members and our Nation have made over the last year. We do so with pride and certitude that the future remains bright for generations to come.

### Wolf Clan



Ray Halbritter  
Nation  
Representative



Keller George



Chuck Fougner

What we have built together for our community over the past few decades has enabled us to remain firmly focused on our mission – to provide the best educational and career opportunities, and cultural enrichment and health care services, that allow our People to live their lives to the fullest potential just as the Creator intended.



Kim Jacobs  
Nation Clerk

There are many exciting endeavors we will be moving forward with in the coming months, and years, ahead. The success of our enterprises has put our Nation in control of its own destiny, which means providing Members with more programs and services that not only preserve our heritage and culture for future generations, but build on an economic foundation that will ensure our future success.

### Bear Clan



Brian Patterson



Pete John

We're eager to move forward as a People, beyond this pandemic, into a new era that will be just the beginning of many bright things to come – unto the seventh generation.

NΛ ki' wa,  
Oneida Indian Nation Council

## Providing Resources for Members of all Generations



### Safety from the Start

The Nation's Early Learning Center re-opened its doors on June 10, 2020 to families of Members and employees. Adhering to social distancing guidelines, the center took all necessary precautions to ensure a healthy and happy learning environment.

Tricia Narolis, manager of the Early Learning Center, and assistant manager Tina Fox, put together a plan in preparation for the reopening.

The guidelines stressed previous policies and procedures, but also added new precautions to ensure a healthy and safe learning environment for the children.

The staff says the parents have done a wonderful job of educating their children about the importance of sanitizing and washing hands.

"We are doing everything we can to keep the kids safe and healthy when they're here, while also maintaining a fun, collaborative environment," Tricia said.

### Assistance for Families

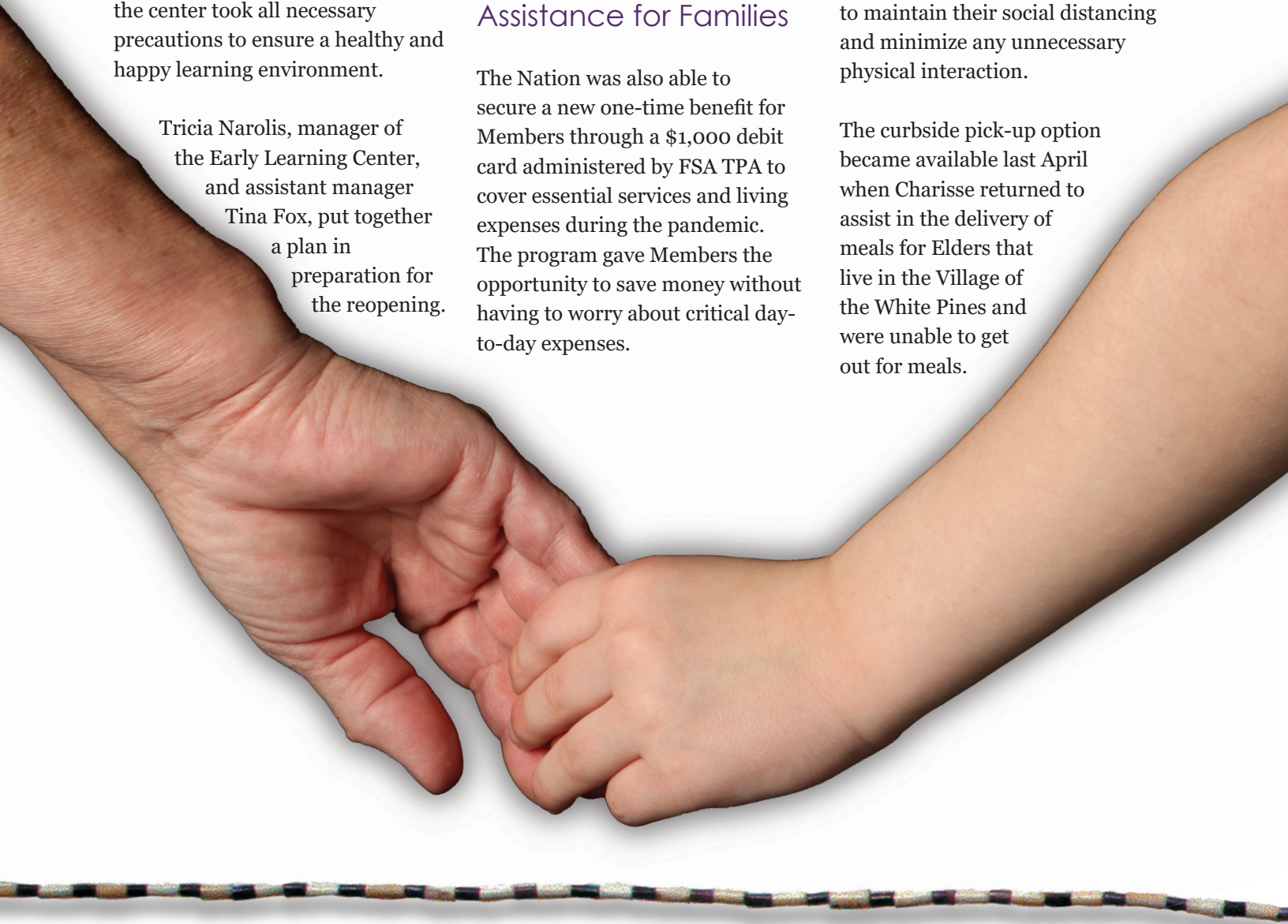
The Nation was also able to secure a new one-time benefit for Members through a \$1,000 debit card administered by FSA TPA to cover essential services and living expenses during the pandemic. The program gave Members the opportunity to save money without having to worry about critical day-to-day expenses.

### Taking Care of Elders

The Nation has maintained its commitment to providing Elders with as many resources as possible during the pandemic. One of those resources is the daily lunch served by Elder's Center staff, Charisse Gibson (Wolf Clan), Nancy Stratton and Brenda Hicks.

Between 40 and 50 Nation Members, as well as other American Indians age 55+ in the local area, came to pick up their lunches daily at the Center. With curbside pick-up, Elders were able to maintain their social distancing and minimize any unnecessary physical interaction.

The curbside pick-up option became available last April when Charisse returned to assist in the delivery of meals for Elders that live in the Village of the White Pines and were unable to get out for meals.





**Olivia Bigtree** (Turtle Clan) is studying fine art at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore on a full scholarship. Her acceptance to the elite art school is the culmination of a lot of hard work and unique experiences from all over the country.

Last year, Olivia received a National Gold Medal and a Special Achievement Civic Expression Award from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

As Olivia wraps up her first year in Baltimore, she is grateful for her experiences at Manlius Pebble Hill and for the Oneida Indian Nation's dedication to educational opportunities. Manlius Pebble Hill inspires students to think critically and strives to help them discover their true passions that will drive them to be better people.

"The art program has been a huge contribution to my personal growth and educational career," she said. "Without MPH or the art program, I don't believe that I would have received so many regional and national recognitions over the past two years."

## Scholarship Program Offers Opportunities for Students

College graduates, High School graduates, GED and Certificate programs, honor rolls. These are the kinds of educational achievements a number of Nation Members have accomplished this year.

This has been a difficult year, indeed; one that has required these graduates to balance family, jobs and classes while dealing with the threat of the coronavirus. But all of them were determined to see it through and will soon reap the rewards made possible by their hard work and dedication.

Education is the foundation on which all of life's accomplishments are built. This is why Nation leadership has made educational programming a priority for Members. The Nation's scholarship and incentive program was one of the first programs established when its enterprises began to realize sustainable economic success just

a few decades ago. These programs are an investment in the future just as much as any growth and expansion of the enterprises.

Education will help ensure Nation Members will have the skills, training and knowledge necessary to build on the success the Nation has achieved so far, and to protect and preserve what the Nation has built unto the seventh generation.

### Certificates/degrees processed in 2020:

- **8** High School/GED
- **3** Vocational/Certificate Programs
- **2** Bachelor's Degrees
- **2** Master's Degrees

**44** students were enrolled in higher education programs.

**76** students received incentive awards for high academic achievements.





## Children's Books Preserve Language, Teach Valuable Life Lessons

In an unprecedented year without field trips to the Shako:wi Cultural Center, Nation leadership and the Nation's Language Department looked for new ways to expand the outreach of Oneida culture to younger generations. The release of two new language preservation books depicting one version of popular Haudenosaunee legends introduces Oneida culture in a fun and inviting way.

Many months in the making, *The Robin Legend*, the second book in a series collaboration between the Language Department and Madison-Oneida BOCES, is illustrated by Nation Member Chelsea Jocko (Wolf Clan). Her illustrations depict the story of how the Robin got its signature red chest.

The first book in the series, *The Legend of How the Bear Lost His Tail*, is illustrated by William Burns (Lakota Sioux), a graphic

designer working in the Nation's communications department. The story is also recorded in Oneida by Language Instructor Mary Blau (Turtle Clan) and in English by Nation Member Brooke Thomas (Wolf Clan), and are now available on the Nation's YouTube channel and website.

These first two books were distributed to local public libraries and elementary schools so students would have easy access and teachers could introduce them into their lesson plans – extending Oneida culture to the entire community.

Several more titles are in the works and will be released at later dates. These books will ensure the continued survival and preservation of Oneida heritage, language and culture.

**Chelsea Jocko** (Wolf Clan) illustrated *The Robin Legend*, her first official publication. Now she's busy working on illustrating and translating three other stories for the department.

"I've been drawing since as long as I can remember," Chelsea said. "I thought I had a talent for it, and now it's been fun training with Photoshop to digitize them."

Chelsea is translating the Haudenosaunee legends "Thunder Boy" and "Spring Defeats Winter" while illustrating "How the Chipmunk Got Its Stripes." There's no shortage of work to be done, but she's tackling it all head on.

"Once I came back from maternity leave I really had to get my mind in gear," she said. "I don't like to leave things incomplete so I have a lot of unfinished business."

Chelsea went out on maternity leave for four weeks to care for her now two-month-old son, Trevin (Wolf Clan). It's been quite a transition she said, but she's loving every minute.

During the pandemic shutdown, Chelsea also worked virtually for a few hours a day with an Oneida language group led by Delphine Antone. She said it's been a great experience – even if the group jokes about her Mohawk accents coming out every now and then.

"It's been enjoyable being in those classes," Chelsea said. "You have to keep working at it, which I love doing."

## Retaining Our Oneida Heritage

Native Americans' contributions to the formation of the United States of America are often minimized, and frequently omitted, from school textbooks. Having a month dedicated to learning about the current and historical contributions of not only the Oneida People, but all Native people, gives a clearer, truer picture of our collective history – and an opportunity to teach new generations of Americans about Native heritage and customs.

Since many local students were not able to take field trips to the Shako:wi Cultural Center this school year, the Nation decided to bring parts of the center to them with a four-part video series during Native American Heritage Month. The innovative series, now available on the Nation's YouTube channel, introduced viewers to the Cultural Center and highlighted several Nation Members explaining



aspects of Oneida culture, and Haudenosaunee culture as a whole. A new video premiered each week in November culminating in a recitation of the Oneida Thanksgiving Address. The other videos covered topics from the Oneidas' role as first allies to the United States to traditional Oneida artistry, social dance and storytelling. The first featured an in-depth virtual tour of the Shako:wi Cultural Center with

special narration from Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and the center's manager, **Ron Patterson (Wolf Clan)**.

"These videos enable our People to tell a portion of our own story, which is often minimized in today's mainstream educational system," said Ron. "Bringing the Cultural Center and Oneida culture directly to students in our area is one small way to keep that line of communication open, even in this unprecedented year."

Other Nation Members appearing in the videos include Mary Blau (Turtle Clan), Levi Confer (Turtle Clan), Wava Homer (Turtle Clan), Brooke Thomas (Wolf Clan) and Rose Tompkins (Wolf Clan). Rose, an Oneida Elder, showcases her beadwork and sewing abilities – explaining her creative process and how she goes about certain projects. Levi explains how he picked up traditional singing and dancing – and the significance of his regalia, which was crafted by Oneida Elder Mary Blau.

## Creation Story Comes to Life

Early last year the Nation installed a set of three large murals by artist William Ashby McCloy, which depict a version of the Oneida Creation Story, in the Ray Elm Children and Elders Center atrium. The Nation acquired the murals in 2017 and commissioned conservation work and framing with West Lake Conservators in Skaneateles.

A display sign has been placed below the murals with more details about the artist and his interpretation of the Creation Story.

Visitors will instantly recognize Sky Woman's descent onto Turtle Island in the center panel, the battle between the Good and Evil Spirits in the right panel, and the creation of Earth and restoration of land from flood waters in the left.



## Film Featuring Oneida Reenactors Makes Debut

Over the past two years, the Nation has been working in partnership with the National Park Service on a short film project for the Valley Forge National History Park. *Determined to Persevere: The Valley Forge Encampment*, is a brand new orientation film for the Park that tells the story of the winter of 1777-1778 where Gen. George Washington's Continental Army was stationed. Released on YouTube, the film features a group of Oneida reenactors who portrayed several significant figures as part of the Oneida involvement in the encampment.

Dakota Bluewolf (Wolf Clan), Seb Schenandoah (Wolf Clan) and Dean Lyons (Turtle Clan), along with Oneida Elder Sheri Beglen (Wolf Clan), were part of a group of Haudenosaunee reenactors that traveled to Valley Forge in 2019 for the filming.

The short film depicts how several Oneida warriors aided a grossly outnumbered battalion of colonial scouts at the Battle of Barren Hill, a critical victory that stopped the impending push of British forces.

If not for the Oneida and American scouts bravely engaging the British, nearly a fifth of the American army could have been lost. Many believe the entire course of the war would have been different if this trap had been evaded by the British army.

Oneida woman Polly Cooper, depicted by Sheri, was also a key figure in the American Revolution, helping to transport and cook bushels of corn for the famished soldiers camped at Valley Forge and boosting morale.

The National Park Service commissioned the new video to be showcased at Valley Forge's new Welcome Center, which was delayed due to the pandemic.

## Ancestors Return Home

During the summer of 2020, the Nation and Colgate University announced the return of ancestral remains of at least six individuals. Bone fragments were found within the collection of the University's Longyear Museum of Anthropology, where they had been held after being recovered from archaeological sites decades ago.

"We are grateful for the return of these remains, and truly appreciate Colgate University for coming forward with this discovery so that our ancestors may receive a proper re-internment at our burial grounds," said Nation Representative Ray Halbritter.



The remains were originally recovered by avocational archaeologists working with the New York State Archaeological Association – Chenango Chapter, at various sites throughout ancestral Oneida homelands sometime during the twentieth century.

The Nation and Colgate University have worked cooperatively for years in recognizing and preserving the Oneida ties to our ancestral homelands.



## Oneida Nation Enterprises Provides Stability for Members, Community During Challenging Year

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During a challenging year dominated by the social and economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, Oneida Nation Enterprises provided stability and revenue for the Central New York region.

The revenue generated by the Nation's enterprises not only helps provide benefits and services for its Members, but much-needed job and economic support for the community as well – an impact made clear early on during the pandemic.

Despite the economic slowdown, the Nation spent more than \$75 million with vendors within the 3-county area of Oneida, Madison and Onondaga – an increase of \$11 million over 2019 spending.

The Nation continues to reinvest 100 percent of its gaming revenues into the community - helping to support the region during these unprecedented times.

## Strong Protocols Developed for the Safety of All

After temporarily closing in March 2020, and following months of extensive planning and coordination with neighboring municipalities, the Oneida Indian Nation's gaming properties began a phased reopening in June.

Under the comprehensive Health and Safety reopening plan Safer Together, the Nation implemented several new safety protocols, enhanced cleaning policies and precautionary measures to help keep Oneida Members, employees, guests and the community safe.

The health and safety plan, rigorously monitored and reevaluated to adapt to the changing circumstances, was developed with a regional approach and in direct consultation with neighboring County Officials and public health experts. The plan also incorporated input from discussions with the National Indian Gaming Commission and the New York State Gaming Commission.



Sadie Schenandoah-Stanford (Wolf Clan)  
SävOn employee



Deb Ninham (Turtle Clan)  
SävOn employee

## Local Business Partners Support Nation's Reopening

There are hundreds of other businesses in Central New York — and their employees — that rely on the successful operation of Oneida Nation Enterprises. That is why the reopening of the Nation's properties and grand opening of new venues was vital to the entire community in 2020.

Prior to the reopening, the Nation worked with several local businesses to provide a range of products and services to support the Safer Together plan.

"The Oneida Indian Nation made a significant investment by providing every employee with multiple face coverings — and as one of the largest employers in our region, it's evident the safety of their employees is important," said Nick Goodell, of The Image Press, a Cicero company that developed

and sourced nearly 20,000 face coverings for the Nation.

"We are grateful for the Oneida Indian Nation's partnership and commitment to supporting so many businesses right here in Upstate New York."

Other local companies that were paramount to the Nation safely reopening its properties included:

- Victory Sign of Canastota, who provided printing of health and safety protocol signs to saturate all of the Nation's properties and office spaces; and
- Northland Communications of Utica, who developed new technological solutions and infrastructure imperative to communicating important safety updates and protocols with employees and guests.



## David Ernenwein

(Turtle Clan) knows education and service have been two vital pillars for his success. Through his experiences serving in the U.S. Air Force and utilizing the Oneida Indian Nation's scholarship program to continue his studies while working full-time, David brings a unique perspective to his role as Operations Manager at the YBR Casino & Sports Book.

"I worked at Turning Stone when we first opened the doors in 1993," David said. "I started in table games and worked my way up, which has been a great experience."

Before making his way to Turning Stone Resort Casino, David enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He was put on reserves right before the beginning of the Gulf War. He lived in Florida for three years when he left the service in 1990 and eventually transferred to the State University of New York at Buffalo in January of 1993.

David's father encouraged him to return home because the Oneida Indian Nation was getting ready to open Turning Stone. So he heeded his advice and hasn't looked back, while also returning to complete his education as full-time employee.

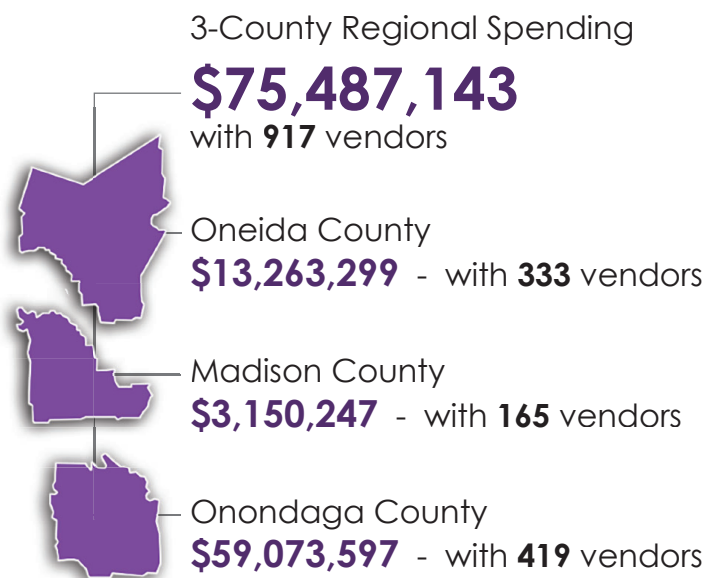
## Nation's Vendor Spending Provides Boost to Region

With gaming and hospitality businesses, convenience store and retail operations, marinas and other recreation properties, and technology services, Oneida Nation Enterprises relies on thousands of vendors, ranging from food and beverage providers to cleaning, health and beauty products.

In 2020, the Oneida Indian Nation paid more than \$166 million to more than 1,400 vendors in New York State, which includes more than \$75 million to vendors in Oneida, Madison and Onondaga counties.

The Nation also paid more than \$140 million to employees.

## Oneida Indian Nation FY 20 Vendor Spending



Total vendor spending in NYS  
**\$166,810,928** - with **1,431** vendors

Total vendor spending in FY 2020 was **\$278,594,930** with **2,869** vendors, including **\$41,268,681** in capital project spending



## Grand Opening Event Benefits Local Initiatives

The Oneida Indian Nation celebrated the completion of a major multi-million dollar expansion at the YBR Casino & Sports Book at the beginning of 2020.

The official grand opening event featured a fundraiser for The Good Life CNY and Generation Next, two CenterState CEO initiatives that directly align with the Nation's commitment to promoting Central New York as a vibrant and diverse place to live, work, visit and play.

## Project Brings Jobs, Tourism to Sylvan Beach Area

In July, the Nation celebrated the grand opening of The Lake House, a multi-million dollar redevelopment project in the Oneida Lake resort community that created 150 construction jobs and more than 60 permanent jobs.

The Oneida Indian Nation's investment in the Sylvan Beach project continues its legacy of partnerships with, and investments in, local communities.



## Investments in Safety for Members, Guests

In December, the Nation completed an upgrade of the air filtration systems at all 16 SāvOn and Maple Leaf Market stores. The new state-of-the-art air filtration systems remove 99.4% of all viruses and bacteria from the air after just 30 minutes of being activated.

The new air purifiers units were sourced from Healthway Products, a local Central New York company.

Members have first access to jobs with the Nation's Enterprises, and many have worked for the Nation since before Turning Stone Resort Casino was built. In recent years, some have returned home from working in other areas, too.

**Karen Brill** (Wolf Clan) is a Supervisor for Player Services at Turning Stone. The Rewards Desk creates new accounts and prints rewards cards as well as taking care of many other issues that arise throughout the day. She's still a relative newcomer, having only served in the role for just shy of two years, but it's been a great experience, she says.

"When I came back up to New York to be closer to my mom and sisters, I needed a job," Karen recalls. "I applied for anything that sounded interesting and they were looking for a supervisor at the Rewards desk." Her mother is Oneida Elder, Ramona Beglen (Wolf Clan).

Karen grew up in West Virginia and has been a Licensed Land Surveyor for over 30 years. Her first true passion was land preservation and sustainable land development, so Karen hopes she can find a role for that in the future. She's proud to see how the Nation has been an excellent steward for their lands while also keeping land preservation and conservation in mind – something that remains at the heart of all of the Nation's enterprise operations.



## Providing Critical Jobs, Opportunities

With hundreds of hospitality positions available within its award-winning enterprises, the Oneida Indian Nation partnered with Oneida County to launch a recruitment campaign to support the region's recovery from the impacts of the pandemic and growth in the year ahead. The "New Year, New Career" campaign, funded entirely by the Nation, supplements the Nation's ongoing hiring efforts in Upstate New York as well as targets laid-off hospitality workers in other areas of the country.

Initial efforts of the campaign resulted in several dozen new recruits joining the Nation team from areas such as Orlando, Florida, where layoffs have been in the thousands. In addition, the Nation held a virtual "New Year, New Career" recruitment event on Facebook Live to begin the year, letting job seekers hear directly

from team leaders currently hiring in areas such as hotel, gaming, food and beverage and more.

"Time and again, the Oneida Indian Nation reaffirms its unwavering commitment to make our region among the most elite destinations in the country, and this investment to get many of our residents back to work, and also attract new people to our county is just the latest example."

- Oneida County Executive  
Anthony Picente Jr.

Oneida County, through its department of workforce development, is working with the Nation to assist locally based job candidates — and those looking to relocate to Oneida County — find the resources necessary to become employed, including daycare needs and local employment opportunities for traveling family members.



## Awards and Accolades 2020

Year after year, Oneida Nation Enterprises strives to provide the best in service and hospitality to the millions of guests who visit its properties. The awards and honors its operations receive set them apart as an industry leader in the region, and highlight the dedication of their employees.

In 2020, even with the disruption of the pandemic, Oneida Nation Enterprises shined with continued superior amenities and guest service. Turning Stone Resort Casino, its premiere destination resort, was once again named

**#1 Best Overall Gaming Resort by Casino Player Magazine in its 2020 list of “Best of Gaming Awards.”**

Turning Stone also was recognized with a record high of **27** total industry awards from the magazine.

The magazine’s annual Best of Gaming award-winners are hand-selected by casino visitors themselves. In addition to being named the #1 Best Overall Gaming Resort in New York for the fifth straight year, Turning Stone was recognized across the board for its outstanding games, luxury accommodations, exciting sports book, exceptional golf, and expert staff, earning **17** first-place awards.



Recognitions for Turning Stone in 2020 also included:

- Three Best in Golf Awards from Northeast Golf Magazine: Best Travel Resorts & Destinations, Best Public Golf Courses for Atunyote and Shenendoah and PGA Teaching Professional Marty Nowicki was named among Best Instructors in New York. Golfweek named all three 18-hole course among the top in the country.
- Forbes Travel Guide awarded the resort with four of its Four Star awards. TS Steakhouse is the newest venue at the resort to earn the prestigious award, joining Wildflowers, The Lodge and Ska:na: Spa.
- Spas of America named Ska:na: as the No. 1 spa in New York State and among the tops spas in all of North America.
- AAA awarded Turning Stone three Four Diamond Awards, and TS Steakhouse, Wildflowers and Pino Bianco received Wine Spectator's highly-respected Awards of Excellence.

Oneida Nation Enterprises also was recognized as a '2020 Economic Champion' by CenterState CEO, the region's leading economic development organization. As the largest employer in the Mohawk Valley area and a diverse organization with various brands in hospitality, gaming, retail industries and more, the Oneida Indian Nation's success is tied directly to the success of the region. This recognition highlights the Nation's ability to work with partners for the benefit of the entire Central New York community.



## Nation Remains Committed to Community, Supporting Neighbors

The Oneida Indian Nation's support for the US military remains as steadfast now as during the days of the Revolutionary War, when the Oneidas became known as America's first allies. Having contributed in solidarity in every conflict since, the Nation seeks to honor veterans and current members of the armed services with initiatives such as job recruitment outreach and partnerships with veteran organizations.

Continuing this legacy, the Nation hosted the inaugural Desmond Doss Memorial Golf Tournament in September at the Atunyote Golf Club. Organized by the Desmond Doss Foundation, and working in partnership with local veterans support organization, Clear Path for Veterans, and PGA Hope, the golf tournament raised funds for the Foundation as well as honored the memories of Desmond Doss and other service members who have put their lives on the line in defense of the United States. The Foundation invited local veterans to participate.

"We are proud to partner with the Oneida Indian Nation on our inaugural event," said Gabe Videla, Chairman, Desmond Doss Foundation. "We hope to use this event as a way to support and express our commitment to our veterans, and to continue promoting the values embodied by Desmond Doss."



## Shared History as Allies Recognized

Early in 2020, the Nation was honored by the Madison County War Veterans Committee for its contributions to the Madison County War Veterans Memorial. The Nation had previously donated funds to help build a permanent monument dedicated to those lost in the War on Terror from Madison County: Lance Corporal Jeremy S. Lasher, United States Marine Corp; and Sergeant Edward H. Bolen, U.S. Army. The monument now stands outside the Madison County Courthouse.

“Monuments such as these are reminders of our collective commitment in service to this great country,” said Oneida Indian Nation Representative and Oneida Nation Enterprises CEO Ray Halbritter. “Since the founding of the United States, the Oneida Indian Nation has been an ally to America’s military forces. As the country’s First Allies, we continue to support the values of freedom and liberty, which is why we were honored to support this important effort.”

### PICTURED:

Ray Halbritter, Oneida Indian Nation Representative and Nation Enterprises CEO; Brian Patterson, Oneida Indian Nation Bear Clan Council Member; and Members from the Madison County War Veterans Committee.



## ONE Partnerships Help Raise Funds for Local Charities

Throughout the month of October, the Oneida Indian Nation once again partnered with the YWCA of the Mohawk Valley to help raise funds during their Purple Ribbon Campaign for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Donations totaling \$8,242.00 were collected from guests of the Nation’s SāvOn and Maple Leaf Market convenience stores, and benefit both the YWCA Mohawk Valley and Help Restore Hope – Liberty Resources of Madison County.

- The Nation's retail stores also contributed to the fundraising for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, collecting \$8,444.00 during their summer campaign; and helped raise \$11,832.00 for the Make-A-Wish Central New York Stars for Wishes campaign.
- Employees of Oneida Nation Enterprises helped brighten the holidays for 36 families with more than 100 children through the annual Adopt-a-Family program and contributed more than 1,700 pounds of food to the CNY Food Bank, more than three times the amount of the average donations in previous years.



# The Guswenta

## Two Row Wampum Belt: Symbol of Sovereignty

This belt symbolizes the agreement and conditions under which the Haudenosaunee welcomed the newcomers to this land.

“You say that you are our father and I am your son.”

We say, ‘We will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers’.

This wampum belt confirms our words. These two rows will symbolize two paths or two vessels, traveling down the same river together.

One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian People, their laws, their customs and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will make compulsory laws or interfere in the internal affairs of the other.

Neither of us will try to steer the other’s vessel.

From a 1614 agreement between the Haudenosaunee and representatives of the Dutch government, declaring peaceful coexistence  
The agreement has been kept by the Haudenosaunee to this date.



*Replica two-row  
wampum belt*