

ONEIDA

QUARTERLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2022



A Message *from the* Nation Representative

Shekólih. Until very recently, unprecedented challenges have not made it possible to come together as we always have. Suspending many of our in-person events, programs, and services for an extended period was not an easy choice. This decision was made, as all the Nation's decisions have always been, with one thing in mind: protecting the wellbeing of the Oneida People.

With summer on the horizon, we are finally ready to get together again. This will include many exciting programs for Nation Members:

- Our **Elders Program** has resumed in-person programming at the Ray Elm Children and Elders Center. While we have been fortunate to continue much of this programming via Zoom, we know gathering together in-person is a better way to strengthen the bonds within our community.
- The Nation **Member Picnic** will return this summer with a new variety of food trucks onsite during the event for everyone to enjoy on Sunday, July 17th at the Peaceful Pines campground. A sign-up form was mailed earlier in May, but you can request additional forms from the Member Benefits Office.
- We will be announcing the new schedule for **Council Meetings** very soon. Stay tuned for updates.

We are also excited to share the news about the construction of our new, state-of-the-art Community Center, scheduled to break ground later this summer as part of the next phase of our Neighborhood Project. This is a generational investment in our People and presents a unique opportunity to build onto our strong, vibrant community.

Applying the essential feedback from Members, the Community Center will include an indoor pool for year-round swimming along with a fitness center and gymnasium. An indoor field house will be available to host lacrosse games, and a multi-purpose room provides a gathering space where families and friends can come together.

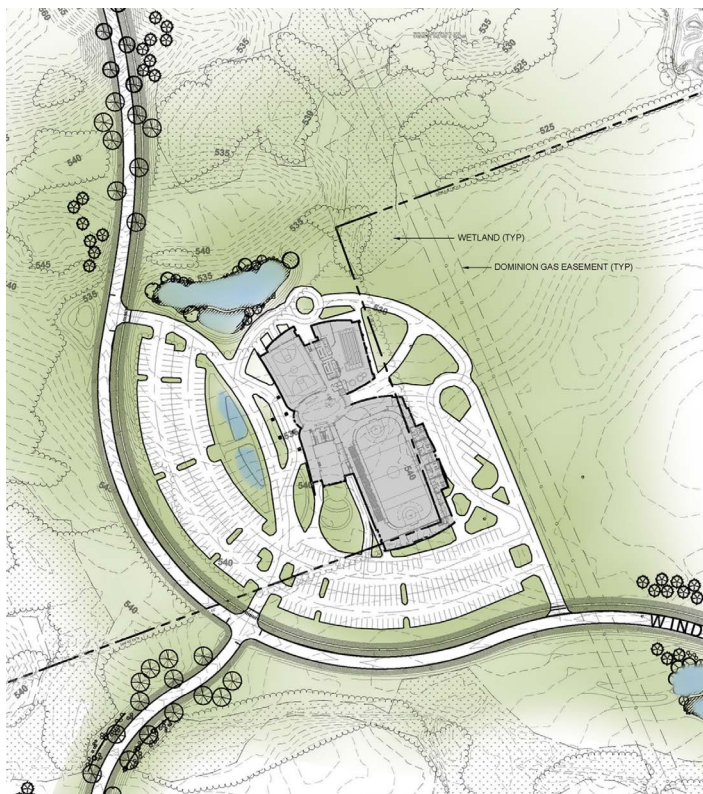
On the Community Center's lower level, visitors can also utilize a multi-use studio and classrooms. The center's atrium will feature and reflect Oneida culture, which will also serve to educate visitors of our rich heritage.

ONYOTA'A:KÁ:

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NOTE: Council meetings are not being held at this time for health and safety concerns for our Members during the Covid-19 pandemic. Contact: The Oneida Indian Nation, P.O. Box 1, Vernon, NY 13476 or use the Member App.



The Community Center will be set in a natural environment in the new Oneida Neighborhoods. See pgs. 6-7 for more renderings.

Outside, the Community Center has been designed in harmony with the natural environment, ensuring roads provide easy access without interrupting open fields and wooded hedgerows. When complete, the Community Center will be the heart of our neighborhood, welcoming all Nation Members to our ancestral homelands.

The first phase of our Neighborhood Project was completed with the construction of a connector road that links the Village of the White Pines to Territory Road, and the installation of water lines and additional roadways in preparation for new housing to be constructed, including additional Elders housing.

More updates will be available soon. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to Member Benefits with any questions.

Na ki' wa,
Ray Halbritter
Nation Representative



Nation Participates in Revolutionary War Marker Dedication

Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter participated in the Oneida Chapter DAR America 250 Marker Dedication at the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site in May. Halbritter joined DAR President General Denise Doring VanBuren and several local representatives and elected officials at the dedication.

The Battle of Oriskany was a pivotal battle in the Revolutionary War and is known as one of the bloodiest of the war. The Oneidas were the only Haudenosaunee nation to side with the Americans and it is that famous battle that cemented their legacy as America's First Allies.

"We have an obligation, both to our ancestors and to the faces yet unknown, to preserve the lessons history has taught us about perseverance and loyalty," said Halbritter during the dedication. "This marker will serve as a reminder of that history, a history shared with those whom we are proud to call our friends and partners today."

The Patriot Marker has the America 250 symbol on it in honor of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War and birth of the United States. It is only the second marker like it to be placed in New York State. ❖

Member Takes On New Role at C&E Center

At the Ray Elm Children and Elders Center, Kris Wilkins (Wolf Clan) works to ensure the building is safe, clean and inviting. He is the new Building Superintendent and is in charge of maintenance inside and outside of the center.

Kris started working at the Oneida Indian Nation back in 2013 in the old cigarette manufacturing facility on Territory Road and transitioned to the Nation Facilities Department as a laborer shortly thereafter. Toward the end of last year, now-retired Bill Kaulback (Turtle Clan), approached Kris about the Building Superintendent role and he jumped on the opportunity.

"I worked my way up, which has been very rewarding. There's no shortage of projects, but I look forward to taking them on."

- Kris Wilkins

Projects have included replacing HVAC filters, protecting the piping for the new fire suppression system, and removing snow from the copper roof. Snow build up on the roof can be dangerous and requires constant attention from the facilities department.



Kris Wilkins is the new Building Superintendent at the Ray Elm Children & Elders Center.

Facilities is planning a larger project that will allow for better drainage when the snow melts or rain falls. The changes will improve visitor and employee safety, and also beautify the exterior.

"We are going to be extending the sidewalks around the center with more green space underneath where the water falls from the roof," he said. "Then visitors can avoid those areas all together."

The excess water that falls from the roof will be much better utilized. Railings will also line the new green spaces to give people additional support when walking in and out of the center during the winter months.

From time to time, Kris also finds solutions to problems in the center's woodshop. He built the boxes that now protect the fire suppression piping on both the Elders Center wing and Early Learning Center wing, and also built a stand for a new display in front of the Nation's library. The display showcases the Nation's newest language-learning books that tell the stories of popular Haudenosaunee legends.

Kris has handed down some of his woodworking abilities to his son, Logan Edwards (Wolf Clan), too. Logan is a senior at Oneida High School and was recently named to the high honor roll. Kris said Logan is looking at trade schools for botany or wood-working to get certification.

"He's learning from me, but he also wants the certification," Kris said. "He helped me build a crib for my youngest son, Lucian Sequin. I'm very proud of that piece and spent a lot of time on it."

Kris' meticulous attention to detail will serve him well in his new role. The center is in good hands. ❖



Member Delivers Commencement Speech

Kandice Watson (Wolf Clan), Cazenovia College alumna '86, delivered the Commencement Speech May 14 at her alma mater. Read the story and her speech at OneidaIndianNation.com.

Heritage to Showcase Member Art and Books

In its new location at Turning Stone Resort Casino, Heritage, the former Oneida Heritage Sales and Rentals in Sherrill, is now open for business. The new store location will be easily accessible to Turning Stone's guests to explore the beautiful craftsmanship of hand-made Oneida and other American Indian arts and crafts. Heritage is conveniently located in the first floor retail corridor between Mr. Shop and The Parlor.

"When guests come in, they will see us creating our pieces right in the store," said Ron Patterson (Wolf Clan), who advises on merchandise offerings at Heritage. "That's the draw. They want to see Haudenosaunee goods and how they are made."

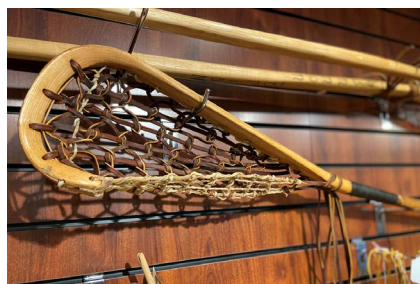
The store is open seven days a week from 11am to 8pm.

Ron is the manager of the Shako:wi Cultural Center and will provide the store with custom-made, hand-carved wooden lacrosse sticks for sale. Karen Pierce (Turtle Clan), an Oneida artist who worked at the previous location, will be the lead sales associate. She will be beading at the desk



The new Heritage store is located at Turning Stone Resort Casino.

set up next to a print of Don Troiani's famed "The Oneidas at the Battle of Oriskany" painting. Karen is excited to show guests the process that goes into beading.



Custom lacrosse sticks are available at the new Heritage location.

"I'm hoping it will be really busy," she said. "Being able to bead and share our culture with everyone is wonderful."

Visitors will be able to see her technique and artistry up close. Ron will also use the desk area to do his leatherworking.

The wooden lacrosse sticks, leather moccasins and pouches, beaded jewelry, along with other made-to-order goods from Oneida artisans are displayed prominently throughout the store. Requests can also be made for custom orders.

The store will also supply the Oneida Indian Nation's new language-learning children's books based on popular Haudenosaunee legends. The series of books was produced in collaboration with Madison-Oneida BOCES to introduce the Oneida language to a broader audience and provide readers with the opportunity to learn a few Oneida words or phrases by the end of the story. The award-winning animated films – "My Home" and "Raccoon and Crawfish" – are also available.

Visit Heritage the next time you stop into Turning Stone. ❖



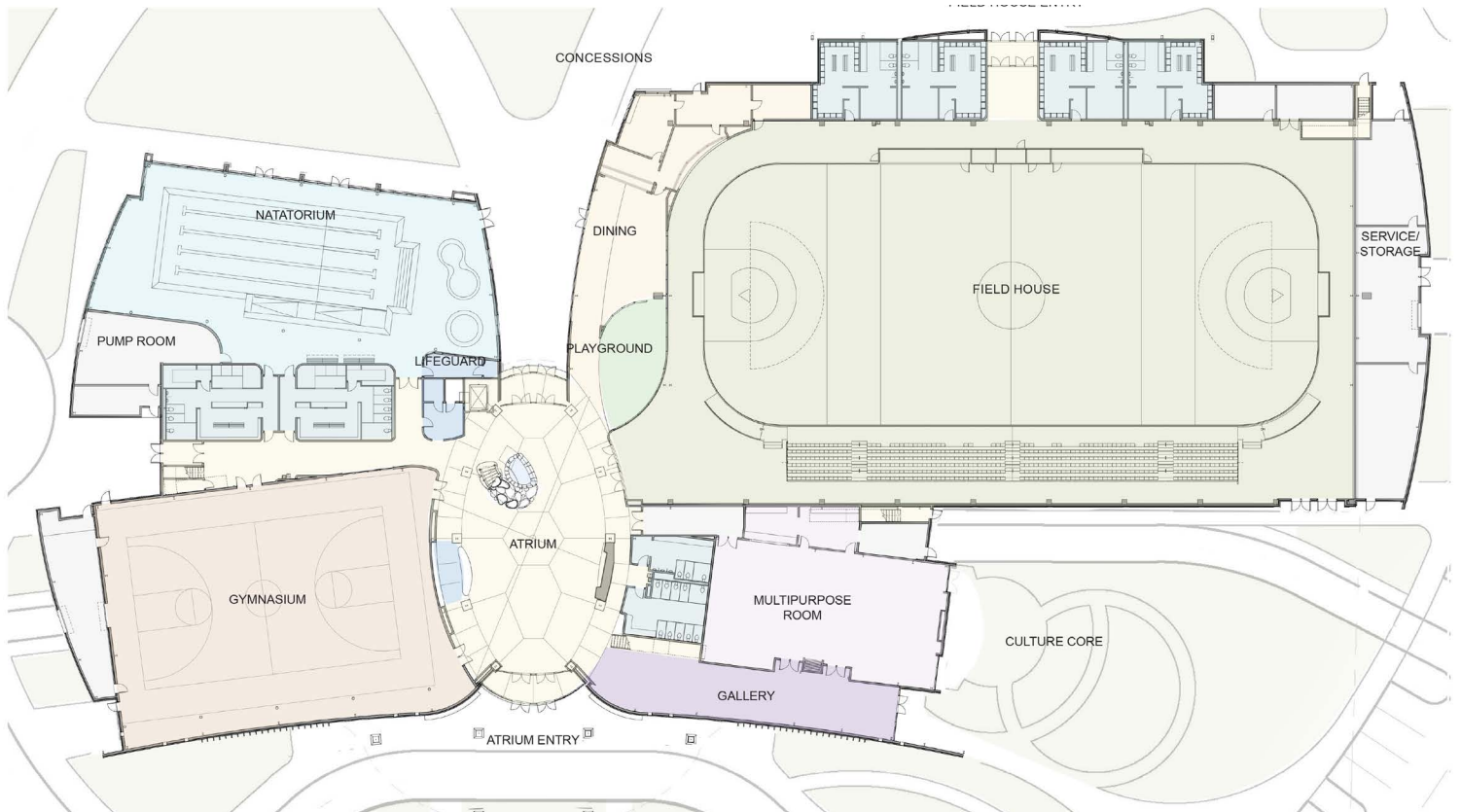
Ron Patterson and Karen Pierce are excited to be in a new location that will showcase Oneida artistry and culture to visitors at Turning Stone Resort Casino.



Oneida Indian Nation Neighborhoods Project: **New Community Center**

In 2021, the Oneida Indian Nation launched the Oneida Neighborhood Project to continue the revitalization of its homelands with new housing opportunities, infrastructure enhancements, and other resources for Nation Members. The project will include additional affordable housing for Nation Members with an all-new community center to serve as the heart of the Nation's cultural and social programming.





- The Community Center will serve as a central hub for Nation community activities.
- Easy access with modern design and infrastructure, and a warm, inviting atrium.
- Oneida culture and tradition will be reflected throughout the property.
- An Indoor pool will allow for year-round swimming.
- A gymnasium and fitness center are included in the design.
- The Center will include a field house for hosting lacrosse games and other activities, a multi-purpose room for family gatherings and a multi-use studio and classrooms.



Oneida Indian Nation Visits New York Historical Society for Cultural Showcase

On Saturday, May 14, Nation Members traveled to New York City for a program showcasing Oneida and Haudenosaunee culture to teachers and their families for the New-York Historical Society's Teacher Appreciation Day. It was the first time the two organizations collaborated to offer educators a more in-depth look at the heritage and shared history of the Oneida People.

A special social dancing presentation featuring Oneida Members Heath Hill (Wolf Clan), Jamisin Cathers (Turtle Clan) and Brooke Thomas (Wolf Clan), as well as other Haudenosaunee dancers, was met with enthusiasm from all attendees, including the staff at the museum. The 45-minute exhibition, which also included more in-depth explanations of the significance of Haudenosaunee regalia and the meaning of different dances, was the culmination of a day filled with unique learning opportunities covering the Onyota' a:ka: language, Haudenosaunee legends and our legacy as the United States' First Allies.

The core of the program was a screening of the Nation's documentary, "People of the Standing Stone: the Oneida Indian Nation, the War for Independence and the Making of America." The film documents the Oneidas' role in aiding the fledgling United States in its battle for independence, including at the historic Battle of Oriskany – one of the bloodiest of the war – which pitted brothers and sisters of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy against one another to protect Fort Stanwix from a British siege.

After the screening, audience members had an opportunity to ask questions in a Q&A with the Nation's Member Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator, Derek Montroy (Turtle Clan). The engaged audience of teachers were eager to learn more about this critical story that is often forgotten in American History education.

"Events like this provide a tremendous opportunity for educators, and their children, to learn more about our people," Derek said. "Raising awareness of our legacy as America's first allies with local and regional partners helps us tell the more complete story of America's founding."

Earlier in the morning, Brooke and Derek participated in a story time presentation for children to introduce two Haudenosaunee legends that were adapted into Oneida language-learning books: "The Tale of Two Teams" and





“The Legend of How the Bear Lost His Tail.” Brooke read them aloud, which included three Oneida words (ohkwa:lí “bear” | skahnáksá “fox” | kutilyo’shúha “animals”) that the kids learned to say at the end. With the illustrations, phonetics, spelling and repetition of the words throughout the story, the language can be learned by anyone that picks up the books.

The Oneida Indian Nation participates in community events throughout the region to bring greater awareness to the Oneidas’ role in the formation of the United States. Organizations and educators are helping amplify untold or under-told stories that are too often missing from history textbooks.

Our story is memorialized so future generations won’t forget our contributions to this country. You can take a look at two significant contributions the Nation made to the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia and the Smithsonian’s Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. at <https://www.oneidaindiannation.com/our-story-memorialized/> ♦



The social dance presentation was a popular part of the New York State Historical Society Teacher Appreciation Day events.

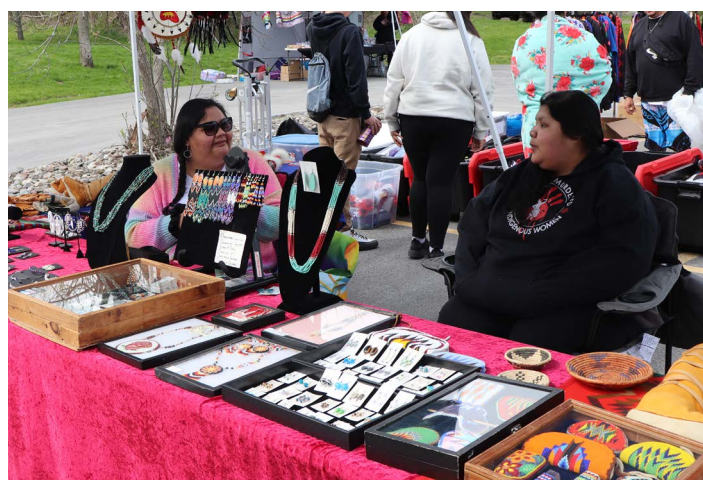


Shako:wi Craft Fair Brings Community Together

The Oneida Indian Nation's Shako:wi Cultural Center recently hosted a Craft Fair for the local community on Saturday, May 7. For many, it was the first time they could come together in-person for an outdoor community event. Members and their friends and families reiterated how much fun it was to enjoy each other's company on a nice spring day.

Thank you to all that attended and those that participated in the Fry Bread or Smoke Dance competitions. Jenn Wilt took home the hand-made cradleboard as the winner of the Fry Bread competition and many Nation Members placed in the Smoke Dance competition.

1st place for the youth girls went to Azelyn Bucktooth. Wava Homer (Turtle Clan) was the winner of the teen girls division. And to close out the competition, Jamison Cathers (Turtle Clan) won the adult women's division and Heath Hill (Wolf Clan) won the adult men's division. Congrats to all of the dancers that competed. ❖





Smoke Dance Competition

MC/Singer:

- Chris Thomas

Dancers:

Toddlers

- Heath Hill Jr
- Steven Stanford Jr. (Wolf Clan)
- Trevin Zephier (Wolf Clan)

Youth Girls 5y-12y

- 1st Azelyn Bucktooth
- 2nd Awksanah Thomas
- 3rd Nalani Hill (Turtle Clan)

Teen Girls 13y-17y

- 1st Wava Homer (Turtle Clan)

Adult Men's 18y+

- 1st Heath Hill
- 2nd Cameron Shenandoah
- 3rd Wesley Halsey

Adult Women's 18y+

- 1st Jamison Cathers (Turtle Clan)
- 2nd Nicole Hill
- 3rd Brooke Thomas (Wolf Clan)



Oneida Language Story Walk on Display at Shako:wi

A recent Story Walk project created in a cooperative partnership between the Oneida Indian Nation and Colgate University's Longyear Museum of Anthropology and the Picker Art Gallery is now on display at the Shako:wi Cultural Center. The large outdoor presentation panels, known as a Story Walk, feature one of the Nation's language-learning children's books, "The Legend of How the Bear Lost His Tail." The Story Walk will be on display through June.

Designed for elementary students, the Story Walk is intended to promote reading and physical activity in young children. Each page from the book has been made into a temporary sign that serves as a 'stop and read' station to encourage children to keep reading by walking to the next station. Readers will be able to read the story and learn to pronounce several Onyota' a:ká: words by completing the Story Walk.

"The Legend of How the Bear Lost His Tail" is part of a series of books for Oneida language learning and preservation produced in collaboration with Madison-Oneida BOCES. Through this partnership, the Oneida Indian Nation has been able to make learning materials about Oneida culture and heritage available for the greater community. The books are available at several local libraries and are also for sale at the Oneida Indian Nation Heritage store located at Turning Stone Resort Casino and at the Shako:wi Cultural Center Gift Shop.



Pages from the book were creatively crafted into panels to engage readers as they make their way through the Story Walk.



This Story Walk project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Science (IMLS) as part of the Museum Association of New York (MANY) Building Capacity Project.

The Oneida Indian Nation's Shako:wi Cultural Center is located at 5 Territory Road, Oneida, NY. The Center is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (315) 829-8801. ♦