IN THIS ISSUE:

A Message from the Nation Representative pg. 2

After-School Program Visits Wáhta’ pg. 3

Community Center Construction Update pgs. 4-5

Elders DinnerHonors Cherished Generation pgs. 6-7

Elders Craft Fair pg. 8

Shako:wi Craft Fair pg. 9

Member Profile: Madison Ray pgs 10-11

Meet the New Scholarship Program Coordinator pg. 11

Member Family Picnic pg. 12
A Message from the Nation Representative

Shekólih. Spring is an exciting time of year for the Oneida People as it is a time of renewal and hopefulness for the year ahead. It also is a time to be thankful for the many gifts the Creator has given us. It is with great pride that the Nation recently launched our newest venture, one that celebrates one of these special gifts and shares it with the community - Wáhta’ Maple Farm.

Just recently, Member households received a sample of the first batch of maple syrup in celebration of this historic launch. We hope you enjoyed this special sweet treat. The commemorative first-edition maple syrup also is for sale at our Shako:wi Cultural Center and SāvOn and Maple Leaf Market convenience stores, as well as as our other enterprises.

This new enterprise is special for many reasons, including its location. Maple trees along Peterboro Road, overlooking our ancestral homelands, were tapped earlier this spring. The sap was processed in what was once our Bingo Hall on Territory Road, where the foundation of our enterprises that today support our most important government programs and services began to take shape.

The hard work required to transform the Creator’s gift of maple sap into syrup is reflective of the work our People have put in for generations in the renewal of our Nation. As we celebrate this renewal, we remain excited for this next chapter in our Nation’s economic resurgence.

We are just as excited to see the daily progress on our new Community Center (see photos pages 4-5). In September, we celebrated the groundbreaking of this remarkable new building. Located between the Villages of the White Pines and Territory Road, the Community Center will play an integral part in our Oneida Neighborhoods initiative – and is the latest step in the Nation’s ongoing revitalization of its homelands and investment in the preservation of a vibrant community for generations to come.

We look forward to seeing our Members at the annual Member Family Picnic on July 16. This year we are thrilled to offer an expanded menu prepared by our award-winning culinary team at Turning Stone. The carnival theme for our picnic is sure to provide plenty of entertainment and fun for the entire family. We hope to see you there.

In the coming months ahead, we will continue to invest in our People, protect our culture and assert our sovereignty. We will rely on the resiliency that has allowed us to do so since time immemorial and continue to make the best decisions possible not just for our needs today, but to ensure an even more successful future unto the Seventh Generation.

Nà ki’ wa,
Ray Halbritter
Nation Representative
After-School Program Visits Wáhta’ Maple Farm Production Facility

Participants in the Oneida Indian Nation’s After-School Program recently visited the new Wáhta’ Maple Farm production facility located in the old Bingo Hall on Territory Road to learn about the process of making maple syrup and to get a sneak peek on production of the first batch.

Tapping trees for maple sap has been a tradition for the Haudenosaunee for generations. Each year, when the temperatures ebb and flow around the freezing point, indigenous people in the Northeast know it’s time to tap the maple trees. The maple is the first tree to awaken from the winter and signals the coming of spring.

Maple Production Manager, Brendan Schuler, and Production Supervisor, Ryan Hall, spoke about how the process has become more efficient today. Typically, the ratio of the gallons of sap needed to produce a gallon of syrup is around 43 to 1. But with today’s machinery, specifically with the use of a reverse osmosis machine and an evaporator, the ratio becomes closer to 5 to 1.

Those machines take the excess water out of the sap to get it closer to the sweet syrup. The evaporator heats the sap to around 219 degrees Fahrenheit – 7 degrees hotter than the boiling point of water – and the product is released into barrels where the sugar concentration can be measured. What normally would be an all-day process of constant boiling to filter out the water and sediment becomes just a couple of hours. This also allows more of the sap to be used so waste is cut dramatically.

Brendan and Ryan use a tool called a hydrometer to measure the density of the liquid. Utilizing the Brix scale, they can determine when the syrup has the proper density, which is at least 66% sugar. Once they hit that number, they know they are done with the evaporation. All that is left to do is filter the syrup so no sediment is left in the final product.

Brendan and Ryan did an excellent job of breaking down the process for the kids to understand and enjoy. All of the kids are looking forward to seeing the outdoor process once the weather is warmer and the fields are dry.

Wáhta’ Maple Farm syrup is available for purchase at Maple Leaf Market and SávOn convenience stores, Turning Stone Resort Casino’s General Store and Heritage, YBR Casino & Sports Book, Point Place Casino, Sylvan Beach Supply Co. at The Cove at Sylvan Beach and the Shako:wi Cultural Center.
Construction remains in full swing on the Oneida Indian Nation’s new Community Center, which is scheduled to open in 2024. When complete, the 65,000-square-foot facility will be among the largest tribal centers of its kind in the United States. Its amenities will include:

- Areas for language and cultural programming and education
- Spaces for community meals and other gatherings
- Library
- Exhibit space
- Field house for lacrosse games and cultural events
- Natatorium with an accessible pool, children’s pool, and spa
- Gymnasium
- Fitness center
- Running track
- Play area
- Conference rooms and office space
REMINDER: Share Your Photos

With progress on our new Community Center quickly moving along, we are reminding Members to share with us their own photos of family and friends from Nation events throughout the years so that we may display them in the Community Center when we welcome visitors for the first time next year.

These photos will be digitized and displayed on video boards along with the Nation’s archival images to help tell the story of the rich history of the Oneida people. Members who wish to share their photos should identify everyone in each image with first name, last name and clan if known. We ask that you also provide as much information as possible about the photos, such as when and where they were taken.

To share your photos, please send digital files to memberadvocate@oneida-nation.org with ‘Photos for Community Center’ in the subject line. Photos may also be mailed or dropped off for scanning to the attention of Derek Montroy at 579A Main Street, Oneida NY, 13421. Please be sure to include a return address so that all photos may be returned once scanned and archived. If you have any questions regarding photo submissions, please reach out to Member Outreach & Advocacy Coordinator, Derek Montroy (Turtle Clan) by calling 315-366-9327.
Elders Dinner Honors Cherished Generation on Warm, Sunny Day

On a beautiful spring day in April, the Oneida Indian Nation hosted its renowned Elders Dinner for the first time since the pandemic began. Making up for the lost time, over 250 Members and their families and guests gathered to celebrate and honor our most cherished generation.

To begin the event, the Nation’s Language Instructor Chelsea Jocko (Wolf Clan) recited the Thanksgiving Address in the Onyota’a:ká: language.

She was introduced by Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, who then spoke about how far the Oneida Indian Nation has come in such a short amount of time. Just recently, an additional 270 acres of Nation land was put into federal trust. To date, the Nation has restored more than 18,000 acres of its homelands – the most it has had recognized sovereignty over since the early 1800s.

“The foundation of our Nation is strong,” Ray stated. “It is built on a legacy of resiliency that began in time immemorial and continues today. This resiliency allows us to continue the unending work of restoring our homelands, defending our sovereignty and securing a successful future for our Nation unto the Seventh Generation.”

He also introduced the Nation’s newest enterprise, Wáhta’ Maple Farm, and announced that the Elders were getting to sample the first batch from the successful first sugaring season. Elders tried the syrup on fry bread with maple butter – a tasty appetizer to the dinner.

“It was delicious and light; not too sweet,” Oneida Elder Penny Raymond (Turtle Clan) said after tasting the syrup. “I think it’s great we’re getting into the maple business so our community can connect more with our culture.” Penny regularly attends the dinner with several of her family members and participates in the Nation’s Elders Program.

One of the items on the expansive buffet menu was traditional corn soup. Karen Pierce (Turtle Clan), who works at the Heritage store at Turning Stone where she makes numerous beaded items, assisted Turning Stone’s culinary team to prepare the soup with meat and vegetarian options.

Well-known Native blues band, Corn Bred, featuring Murray Stout (Turtle Clan) on drums, entertained everybody for the 2-hour event. As in years past, there were several door prizes and great raffles that all attendees could enter. Prizes ranged from gift cards to use at the Nation’s enterprises to rounds of golf at Shenendoah or Kaluhyat golf courses.
The Oneida Indian Nation’s Elders Program hosted its annual craft fair in April. The event helps raise funds for special programs and activities that provide the Elders an enhanced quality of life. The Elders also raffled off several large prizes, including a wooden rocking chair and gift baskets. Many Elders enjoyed coming together to share their skills and latest crafting techniques, as well as each other’s company.
Shako:wi Craft Fair Entertains

A beautiful spring day welcomed throngs of visitors to the Shako:wi Cultural Center Craft Fair held May 6. Dozens of crafters showcased their skills with intricate beadwork, jewelry, carvings, leatherwork and more. Food vendor offerings included Wes Halsey (Wolf Clan) and his Halsey House BBQ, which proved to be a favorite, along with the traditional corn soup. A tasty Fry Bread competition was held as well, with Doris Wilkins-Wilt (Wolf Clan), taking 2nd place, and several dancers competed in Smoke Dance and War Whoop Dance competitions.

DANCE COMPETITION WINNERS

Tiny Tots:
- Nora Dockstader
- Josvin Salès
- Steve Standford Jr. (Wolf Clan)

Youth Girls:
- 1st: Wiyohs Printup
- 2nd: Yaslin Salès
- 3rd: Awksanah Thomas

Women’s 18 and Over:
- 1st: Brooke Thomas (Wolf Clan)
- 2nd: Hareeta Printup
- 3rd: Jamisin Cathers (Turtle Clan)

Men’s 18 and Over:
- 1st: Tekahentake Regis
- 2nd: Frank Wesaw
- 3rd: Cam Schenandoah (Wolf Clan)

Teen Girls:
- 1st place: Yehnekiyosta Homer (Turtle Clan)
MEMBER PROFILE: Madison Ray Sets Sights on Future Education

O neida High School will hold its commencement for the class of 2023 later in June and Nation Member Madison Ray (Turtle Clan) will have a big role in the event. Madison is the salutatorian – the student that ranks second in the graduating class – and that means she’ll be giving a speech about her experience.

It’s something Madison is a bit nervous for, but ready to take on. She has a lot to look back on over her four years.

“It’s been really fun this year,” she said. “Covid was difficult, but it was nice this year to dive into a lot of projects.”

Madison is typically very busy during the week with the clubs she participates in. She said she is in National Honor Society, the Science Olympiad, Environmental Club, and Teens for a Better World – all while maintaining her part-time job at Price Chopper.

It’s a hectic schedule, but it drives her to work hard. It’s a characteristic her family, especially her mother, Maureen, instilled in her at an early age, even when she would go to the Oneida Indian Nation’s Early Learning Center.

She participated in other Nation programs as well, including the Youth Work Learn Crew, which she says was a positive experience working around the Nation community doing various tasks from cleaning, weeding exterior areas around Nation buildings, and ending with the popular cultural dig.

Now, Madison is excited to start classes at Hamilton College in nearby Clinton. It was a tough decision between Hamilton and Colgate University, but she feels Hamilton was the better fit.

“I’m just excited to finish strong and meet new people. My mom was a great role model for me and I want to continue to make her proud.”

- Madison Ray

continued on page 11
Scholarship Program Welcomes New Coordinator

Earlier this year, Matt Crary was hired as the Oneida Indian Nation’s new Scholarship Coordinator. Matt comes to the Nation from the Syracuse City School District where he taught at Frazer Middle School. He holds a bachelor’s degree from SUNY Oswego and studied history with a concentration in Native American studies. Soon after, he earned his master’s in education from SUNY Oswego as well.

After graduating from Westhill High School in 2007, Matt served four years in the Army. He worked a few different jobs after returning from the service, but wanted to get more involved in education – which ultimately led him to Oswego and his job at Frazer.

Matt’s first teaching job was an eye-opening experience for him. He realized many students simply don’t know about the opportunities that are available to them and what an education – at any level – can do for them. Outside of the curriculum, he made it a point to share how to create a career or education plan. It’s a key developmental skill that can help kids determine where they ultimately want to go once they graduate.

In his role as Scholarship Coordinator, Matt will assist Members with the application process in addition to helping Members develop potential career paths. The program provides financial assistance to students enrolled in qualified certificate programs to professional practice doctoral programs. He will also be responsible for communicating with students and the schools to provide information and support throughout the process.

“I’m excited to get started,” Matt said. “I want to help students better themselves and education is a great avenue to do that.”

With a background in education and a passion for helping students achieve their goals, Matt wants to hit the ground running. Building on the recent advances in the program, which included a new Policies and Procedures Guidebook and an online application, is a top priority for Matt. He hopes the process becomes easier for Members so more can take advantage of the popular program.

“I want to start doing outreach to the community here,” he said. “So getting to the schools in the area that we have Members at to inform them is huge. It’s about making sure they know the options they have available to them.”

Matt’s office is located at the Ray Elm Children and Elders Center and he is available Monday through Friday from 8:30am – 5:00pm. If you are interested in learning more about the Scholarship Program or other educational programs, you can contact him at (315) 829-8150 or at mcrary@oneida-nation.org.

Madison Ray

continued from page 10

“I knew I wanted a small school,” Madison explained. “When I visited, I think the vibe of it fit me and I knew I wanted to be in that community.”

She plans to continue studying science. Her favorite class this year was AP Chemistry and she has already declared a major in biochemistry.

“I like all of the sciences,” she said. “Learning more about the world around me fascinates me. I’m taking 30 college-level credits with me as well, which will give me the flexibility to try different things.”

When asked about her plans for a career, she thinks something in the pharmacy field, bio-engineering, or cytogenetics would be a good fit. It’s an ambitious plan, but one she is excited to start.

“I’m just excited to finish this year strong and meet new people,” she said. “My mom has been a great role model for me and I want to continue to make her proud.”

Madison Ray continued from page 10

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“I’m just excited to finish this year strong and meet new people,” she said. “My mom has been a great role model for me and I want to continue to make her proud.”
The Member Family Picnic is free for Oneida Members, their spouse (or one adult guest) and their children. Everyone wishing to attend MUST REGISTER and arrive with all guests.

**REMINDER: NO PARKING AT THE CAMPGROUND**

Call ahead for handicap arrangements. Everyone must park at the Turning Stone Resort Casino parking lot closest to Patrick Road (look for signs). A shuttle will provide transportation starting at 11:45am. Nation Membership Card required to gain admission.

**PRE-PAY FOR ADDITIONAL GUESTS TO AVOID THE LINE AT CHECK-IN!**

Special note: Any Nation Member employed by the Nation or its enterprises who is scheduled to work this date MUST make arrangements with their supervisor for time off. For further information contact Member Benefits at 315.829.8335.

**REMINDER: RSVP BY FRIDAY, JULY 7**

(Registration forms were mailed in May)