



NACS NEWS

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Celebrate Black History Month 2025

Honoring Invisible Changemakers of Industry and Community Building
From [The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)

[Carter G. Woodson](#) developed the idea for Negro History Week to promote the history, culture and achievements of African Americans and other people of color worldwide. Woodson, the son of former slaves who became the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, recognized the importance of establishing an initiative that could be celebrated annually and on a national scale.

Designed to coincide with Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass' celebratory birthdays, Woodson launched Negro History Week in February of 1926 as a coordinated effort to develop lessons and encourage the teaching of Black history across the nation's communities and public schools.

"Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."

--**Carter G. Woodson**, *Historian and Founder of Black History Month*--

Since the mid-1970s, U.S. presidents have issued proclamations supporting the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's [themes](#) to celebrate African Americans' many achievements, culture and history. In 2025, Black History Month will highlight the profound ways that work and working of all kinds intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.

Though the first Negro History Week found little cooperation and tiny audiences among school administrations and community organizers, Woodson recognized the

initial efforts of Negro History Week as "fortunate steps" that established and powerfully proclaimed the importance of African American history in our nation's segregated public. Following those initial years, Negro History Week gradually gained national support as public intellectuals, church, and civic organizations, the black press, politicians and historians alike continued to promote and celebrate the initiative.

And by the 1960s, as the national discourse on race and identity continued to evolve, so did the design and parameters of Negro History Week as the initiative formally changed into what would become Black History Month by 1976 to more fully represent the scope and experience of black history, life and culture.

"Because it helps us to remember, there is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history. And there is no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering."

--**Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III**, *Smithsonian Institution*--

Knowing the Past Opens the Door to the Future: The Continuing Importance of Black History Month

From **Lonnie Bunch**, *Founding Director*, [The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)

No one has played a greater role in helping all Americans know the black past than [Carter G. Woodson](#), the individual who created Negro History Week in Washington, D.C., in February

1926. Woodson was the second black American to receive a PhD in



Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

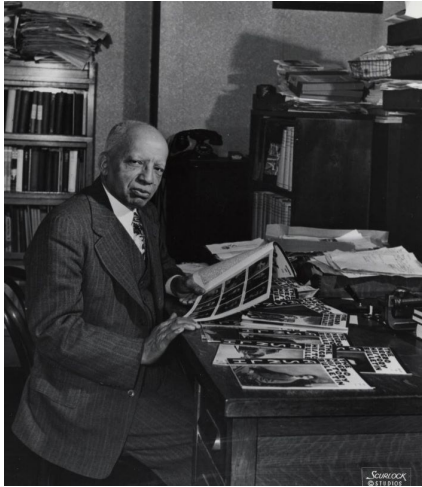
history from Harvard—following W.E.B. Du Bois by a few years. To Woodson, the black experience was too important simply to be left to a small group of academics. Woodson believed that his role was to use black history and culture as a weapon in the struggle for racial uplift. By 1916, Woodson had moved to DC and established the "Association for the Study of Negro Life and Culture," an organization whose goal was to make black history accessible to a wider audience. Woodson was a strange and driven man whose only passion was history, and he expected everyone to share his passion.

This impatience led Woodson to create Negro History Week in 1926, to ensure that school children be exposed to black history. Woodson chose the second week of February in order to celebrate the birthday of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. It is important to realize that Negro History Week was not born in a

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vacuum. The 1920s saw the rise in interest in African American culture that was represented by the



Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Harlem Renaissance where writers like Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglass Johnson, Claude McKay, wrote about the joys and sorrows of blackness, and musicians like Louie Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunceford captured the new rhythms of the cities created in part by the thousands of southern blacks who migrated to urban centers like Chicago. And artists like Aaron Douglass, Richmond Barthé, and Lois Jones created images that celebrated blackness and provided more positive images of the African American experience.

Woodson hoped to build upon this creativity and further stimulate interest through Negro History Week. Woodson had two goals. One was to use history to prove to white America that blacks had played important roles in the creation of America and thereby deserve to be treated equally as citizens. In essence, Woodson - by celebrating heroic black figures - be they inventors, entertainers, or

soldiers - hoped to prove our worth, and by proving our worth - he believed that equality would soon follow. His other goal was to increase the visibility of black life and history, at a time when few newspapers, books, and universities took notice of the black community, except to dwell upon the negative. Ultimately Woodson believed Negro History Week - which became Black History Month in 1976 - would be a vehicle for racial transformation forever.

The question that faces us today is whether or not Black History Month is still relevant? Is it still a vehicle for change? Or has it simply become one more school assignment that has limited meaning for children. Has Black History Month become a time when television and the media stack their black material? Or is it a useful concept whose goals have been achieved? After all, few - except the most ardent rednecks - could deny the presence and importance of African Americans to American society or as my then-14 year old daughter Sarah put it, "I see Colin Powell everyday on TV, all my friends - black and white - are immersed in black culture through music and television. And America has changed dramatically since 1926. Is not it time to retire Black History Month as we have eliminated white and colored signs on drinking fountains?" I will spare you the three hour lesson I gave her.

I would like to suggest that despite the profound change in race relations that has occurred in our lives, Carter G. Woodson's

vision for black history as a means of transformation and change is still quite relevant and quite useful. African American history month, with a bit of tweaking, is still a beacon of change and hope that is still surely needed in this world. The chains of slavery are gone but, we are all not yet free. The great diversity within the black community needs the glue of the African American past to remind us of not just how far we have traveled but lo, how far there is to go.

While there are many reasons and examples that I could point towards, let me raise five concerns or challenges that African Americans - in fact, all Americans - face that black history can help address:

The Challenge of Forgetting

You can tell a great deal about a country and a people by what they deem important enough to remember, to create moments for - what they put in their museum and what they celebrate. In Scandinavia - there are monuments to the Vikings as a symbol of freedom and the spirit of exploration. In Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, the Nazis celebrated their supposed Aryan supremacy through monument and song. While America traditionally revels in either Civil War battles or founding fathers. Yet I would suggest that we learn even more about a country by what it chooses to forget - its mistakes, its disappointments, and its embarrassments. In some ways, African American History month is a clarion call to remember. Yet it is a call that is often unheeded.

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Let's take the example of one of the great unmentionables in American history - slavery. For nearly 250 years slavery not only existed but it was one of the dominant forces in American life. Political clout and economic fortune depended on the labor of slaves. And the presence of this peculiar institution generated an array of books, publications, and stories that demonstrate how deeply it touched America. And while we can discuss basic information such as the fact that in 1860 - 4 million blacks were enslaved, and that a prime field hand cost \$1,000, while a female, with her childbearing capability, brought \$1,500, we find few moments to discuss the impact, legacy, and contemporary meaning of slavery.

In 1988, the Smithsonian Institution, about to open an exhibition that included slavery, decided to survey 10,000 Americans. The results were fascinating - 92% of white respondents felt slavery had little meaning to them - these respondents often said "my family did not arrive until after the end of slavery." Even more disturbing was the fact that 79% of African Americans expressed no interest or some embarrassment about slavery. It is my hope that with greater focus and collaboration Black History Month can stimulate discussion about a subject that both divides and embarrasses.

As a historian, I have always felt that slavery is an African American success story because we found ways to survive, to preserve our culture and our families. Slavery is also ripe with heroes, such as slaves who ran away or rebelled,

like Harriet Tubman or Denmark Vessey, but equally important are the forgotten slave fathers and mothers who raised families and kept a people alive. I am not embarrassed by my slave ancestors; I am in awe of their strength and their humanity. I would love to see the African American community rethink its connection to our slave past. I also think of something told to me by a Mr. Johnson, who was a former sharecropper I interviewed in Georgetown, SC:

"Though the slaves were bought, they were also brave. Though they were sold, they were also strong."

The Challenge of Preserving a People's Culture

While the African American community is no longer invisible, I am unsure that as a community we are taking the appropriate steps to ensure the preservation of African American cultural patrimony in appropriate institutions. Whether we like it or not, museums, archives, and libraries not only preserves culture they legitimize it. Therefore, it is incumbent of African Americans to work with cultural institutions to preserve their family photography, documents, and objects. While African Americans have few traditions of giving material to museums, it is crucial that more of the black past make it into American cultural repositories.

A good example is the Smithsonian, when the National Museum of American History wanted to mount an exhibition on slavery, it found it did not have any objects that described slavery. That is partially a response to a lack of

giving by the African American Community. This lack of involvement also affects the preservation of black historic sites. Though there has been more attention paid to these sites, too much of our history has been paved over, gone through urban renewal, gentrified, or unidentified, or unacknowledged. Hopefully a renewed Black History Month can focus attention on the importance of preserving African American culture.

"There is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history. And there is no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering."

The Challenge of Maintaining a Community

As the African American Community diversifies and splinters, it is crucial to find mechanisms and opportunities to maintain our sense of community. As some families lose the connection with their southern roots, it is imperative that we understand our common heritage and history. The communal nature of black life has provided substance, guidance, and comfort for generations. And though our communities are quite diverse, it is our common heritage that continues to hold us together.

The Power of Inspiration

One thing has not changed. That is the need to draw inspiration and guidance from the past. And through that inspiration, people will find tools and paths that will help them live their lives. Who could not help but be inspired by Martin Luther King's oratory, commitment to racial justice, and his

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ultimate sacrifice. Or by the arguments of William and Ellen Craft or Henry “Box” Brown who used great guile to escape from slavery. Who could not draw substance from the creativity of Madame CJ Walker or the audacity and courage of prize fighter Jack Johnson. Or who could not continue to struggle after listening to the mother of Emmitt Till share her story of sadness and perseverance. I know that when life is tough, I take solace in the poetry of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Nikki Giovanni, or Gwendolyn Brooks. And I find comfort in the rhythms of Louie Armstrong, Sam Cooke or Dinah Washington. And I draw inspiration from the

anonymous slave who persevered so that the culture could continue.

Let me conclude by re-emphasizing that Black History Month continues to serve us well. In part because Woodson’s creation is as much about today as it is about the past. Experiencing Black History Month every year reminds us that history is not dead or distant from our lives.

Rather, I see the African American past in the way my daughter’s laugh reminds me of my grandmother. I experience the African American past when I think of my grandfather choos-

ing to leave the South rather than continue to experience share cropping and segregation. Or when I remember sitting in the back yard listening to old men tell stories. Ultimately, African American History - and its celebration throughout February - is just as vibrant today as it was when Woodson created it 85 years ago. Because it helps us to remember there is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history. And there is no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering.

For more information, history and stories, visit [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

Our American Story - Juneteenth

From [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

As more Americans celebrate Juneteenth with family and community, it is vital to share the important historical legacy behind Juneteenth and recognize the long struggle to make it an officially recognized holiday. It is an opportunity to honor our country’s second Independence Day and reflect on our shared history and future.

The origins of Juneteenth date to June 1865. Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and the Confederate army surrendered to the Union army in April 1865, enslaved people in Texas - the westernmost Confederate state - could not exercise their freedom until June 19, 1865. On that date, Union General Gordon Granger led some 2,000 Union troops, many of whom were Black, into Galveston Bay, where they announced that the more than

250,000 enslaved Black people in the state were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as “Juneteenth,” deriving its name from combining “June” and “nineteenth.”

Formerly enslaved people immediately sought to reunify families, establish schools, run for political office, and even sue slaveholders for compensation.

Despite more than 200 years of enslavement, they demonstrated extraordinary courage and resilience as they transformed both their lives and their country. Supporting this transition from slavery to freedom was the Freedmen’s Bureau (formally the United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands), which Congress had established on March 3, 1865, just three months before Juneteenth.

The Bureau provided people with food, clothing, medical care, and legal representation; promoted education; helped legalize marriages; and assisted African American soldiers and sailors in securing back pay, enlistment bounties, and pensions.

The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865 abolished slavery and ushered in major changes in the United States. However, people born into slavery were not granted citizenship, including the right to own property, until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, and African American men did not receive the right to vote until the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. The ability of formerly enslaved people to secure true freedom remained elusive, even as celebrations of Juneteenth began to develop.

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Initially, Juneteenth was celebrated in family- and church-centered gatherings. Over time, the informal holiday evolved into annual pilgrimages to Galveston Bay by formerly enslaved individuals and their families. The celebrations spread across the South and became more commercialized in the 1920s and 1930s, often centering on food festivals.

Over the decades, many advocated the establishment of Juneteenth as a national holiday. Perhaps no two people promoted the commemoration more vigorously than activist and founder of the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, Rev. Ronald V. Myers Sr., M.D. (1956–2018), and 96-year-old Texan and community leader Opal Lee, whom many consider the “Grandmother of Juneteenth.”

Dr. Myers worked tirelessly to bolster the national movement to have Juneteenth declared a national holiday. Friends and family recall that Dr. Myers travelled to Washington, D.C. for more than 20 years, lobbying lawmakers to insist they recognize Juneteenth on both state and national levels. Even though Dr. Myers passed away in 2018, his organizing on the state level proved invaluable to the process of establishing a national observance of Juneteenth.

The Grandmother of Juneteenth, Opal Lee, also was a driving force in this movement. Lee knew the country needed—and wanted—the unity that a national celebration of the abolition of slavery would bring. So, in 2016, at the age of 89, she began a walk from her

home in Fort Worth to Washington, D.C., to bring awareness to this important cause.

Lee trekked two and a half miles each morning and afternoon, a representation of the two and a half years Black Texans remained enslaved after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. It didn’t take long for word to spread and soon countless others joined Lee on her march. The 1,400-mile walk concluded with a press conference that put Juneteenth on the nation’s radar. Lee continued to walk two and a half miles each Juneteenth to collect signatures and gather support nationwide for national recognition of Juneteenth.

And yet, June 19 remained an unrecognized federal holiday.

In 2020, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black Americans at the hands of police sparked a new social justice movement and renewed national interest in racial equity. Amid this wave of social and political activism, Lee held her annual walk, and the signatures on her petition to make Juneteenth a national holiday totaled over 1.5 million. The next year, in 2021, President Biden finally designated June 19 as a federal holiday. Juneteenth was no longer a whisper in history.

The first national recognition of Juneteenth sparked an outpouring of joy and unity across this country. From coast to coast, Americans of all backgrounds enjoyed parties, attended soulful concerts, and shared communal

feasts in a triumphant reminder of the rich tapestry of African American culture we celebrate today.

Juneteenth has always been more than a holiday. The day stands as a testament to and celebration of the unyielding spirit of a people. It is a day for introspection, a platform for education, and a tribute to the monumental contributions of African Americans to the history of this nation. Each year, as Juneteenth grows in popularity, there are festivals, parades, activist rallies, commemorative murals, vitally important discussions about race, and so much more. By celebrating Juneteenth, we foster connections, healing, and revitalization. And we pay tribute to the ongoing fight for social justice and racial equity.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is a vibrant community where the hope and resilience inspired by Juneteenth lives on - a space where historical events like Juneteenth are shared. A space where history is made and new stories are told.



Opal Lee (center) urges elected officials to make Juneteenth an annual, paid federal holiday. Photo: Unity Unlimited, Inc.

Emmett Till

The brutal abduction and murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till on August 28, 1955, galvanized the emerging civil rights movement.

By [Biography.com Editors](#), Updated: Jan 24, 2024, 11:50 AM EST

Who Was Emmett Till?

Emmett Till was born in Chicago and grew up in a middle-class Black neighborhood. Till was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, in 1955 when the fourteen-year-old was accused of whistling at Carolyn Bryant, a white woman who was a cashier at a grocery store.

Four days later, Bryant's husband Roy and his half-brother J.W. Milam kidnapped Till, beat him and shot him in the head. The men were tried for murder, but an all-white, male jury acquitted them.

Till's murder and open casket funeral galvanized the emerging [civil rights movement](#). More than six decades later, in January 2017, Timothy Tyson, author of [The Blood of Emmett Till](#) and a senior research scholar at Duke University, revealed that in a 2007 interview Carolyn admitted to him that she had lied about Till making advances toward her.

In 2018, the Justice Department said that it had received "new information" about Till's death, and the FBI reopened an investigation into his murder.

Mother and Father

Till was the only child of Louis and Mamie Till. Till's mother was, by all accounts, an extraordinary woman. Defying the social constraints and discrimination she faced as an African American woman growing up in the 1920s and '30s, Mamie excelled both academically and professionally.

She was only the fourth Black stu-

dent to graduate from suburban Chicago's predominantly white Argo Community High School, and the first Black student to make the school's "A" Honor Roll. While raising Till as a single mother, she worked long hours for the Air Force as a clerk in charge of confidential files.



Photo: Courtesy Library of Congress/Getty Images

Till never knew his father, a private in the United States Army during World War II. Till was born in 1941; his parents separated in 1942. Three years later, Mamie received word from the Army that Louis had been executed for "willful misconduct" while serving in Italy.

Childhood

Till, who went by the nickname Bobo, was born on July 25, 1941, in Chicago. He grew up in a thriving, middle-class Black neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. The neighborhood was a haven for Black-owned businesses, and the streets he roamed as a child were lined with Black-owned insurance

companies, pharmacies and beauty salons as well as nightclubs that drew the likes of Duke Ellington and Sarah Vaughan.

Those who knew Till best described him as a responsible, funny and infectiously high-spirited child. He was stricken with polio at the age of 5. He managed to make a full recovery, save a slight stutter that remained with him for the rest of his life.

With his mother often working more than 12-hour days, Till took on his full share of domestic responsibilities from a very young age. "Emmett had all the house responsibility," his mother later recalled. "I mean everything was really on his shoulders, and Emmett took it upon himself. He told me if I would work, and make the money, he would take care of everything else. He cleaned, and he cooked quite a bit. And he even took over the laundry."

Till attended the all-Black McCosh Grammar School. His classmate and childhood pal, Richard Heard, later recalled, "Emmett was a funny guy all the time. He had a suitcase of jokes that he liked to tell. He loved to make people laugh. He was a chubby kid; most of the guys were skinny, but he didn't let that stand in his way. He made a lot of friends at McCosh."

In August 1955, Till's great uncle, Moses Wright, came up from Mississippi to visit the family in Chicago.

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go. At the end of his stay, Wright was planning to take Till's cousin, Wheeler Parker, back to Mississippi with him to visit relatives down South, and when Till, who was just 14 years old at the time, learned of these plans, he begged his mother to let him go along.

Initially, Till's mother was opposed to the idea. She wanted to take a road trip to Omaha, Nebraska, and tried to convince her son to join her with the promise of open-road driving lessons.

But Till desperately wanted to spend time with his cousins in Mississippi, and in a fateful decision that would have grave impact on their lives and the course of American history, Till's mother relented and let him go.

Death

On August 28, 1955, Till was murdered for being accused of offending a white woman working in her family's grocery store.

On August 19, 1955—the day before Till left his home in Chicago with his uncle and cousin for Mississippi—Mamie Till gave her son his late father's signet ring, engraved with the initials "L.T."

The next day she drove her son to the 63rd Street station in Chicago. They kissed goodbye, and Till boarded a southbound train headed for Mississippi. It was the last time they ever saw each other.

Three days after arriving in Money, Mississippi - on August 24, 1955 - Till and a group of teenagers entered Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market to buy refreshments after a

long day picking cotton in the hot afternoon sun.

What exactly transpired inside the grocery store that afternoon will never be known. Till purchased bubble gum, and in later accounts he was accused of either whistling at, flirting with or touching the hand of the store's white female clerk - and wife of the owner - Carolyn Bryant.

Four days later, at approximately 2:30 a.m., Roy Bryant, Carolyn's husband, and his half-brother J.W. Milam, kidnapped Till from Moses Wright's home. They then beat the teenager brutally, dragged him to the bank of the Tallahatchie River, shot him in the head, tied him with barbed wire to a large metal fan and shoved his mutilated body into the water.

Moses Wright reported Till's disappearance to the local authorities, and three days later, his corpse was pulled out of the river. Till's face was mutilated beyond recognition, and Wright only managed to positively identify him by the ring on his finger, engraved with his father's initials—"L.T."

Open-Casket Funeral

Till's body was shipped to Chicago, where his mother opted to have an open-casket funeral with Till's body on display for five days. Thousands of people came to the Roberts Temple Church of God to see the evidence of this brutal hate crime.

Till's mother said that, despite the enormous pain it caused her to see her son's dead body on

display, she opted for an open-casket funeral in an effort to "let the world see what has happened, because there is no way I could describe this. And I needed somebody to help me tell what it was like."

Till's casket is now on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

Photos of Till's Body

In the weeks that passed between Till's burial and the murder and kidnapping trial of Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, two Black publications, *Jet* magazine and the *Chicago Defender*, published graphic photos of Till's corpse.

By the time the 1955 trial for Till's killing began, his murder had become a source of outrage and indignation throughout the country.

Murder Trial

The trial against Till's killers began on September 19, 1955. Because Black people and women were barred from serving jury duty, Bryant and Milam were tried before an all-white, all-male jury.

In an act of extraordinary bravery, Moses Wright took the stand and identified Bryant and Milam as Till's kidnapers and killers. At the time, it was almost unheard of for Black people to openly accuse white people in court. By doing so, Wright put his own life in grave danger.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the defendants' guilt and widespread pleas for justice from outside Mississippi, on September

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23, the panel of white male jurors acquitted Bryant and Milam of all charges. Their deliberations lasted a mere 67 minutes.

Killers

In January 1956, Roy Bryant, the husband of Till's accuser Carolyn, and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, admitted to committing the murder of Till. Protected by double jeopardy laws, they told the whole story of how they kidnapped and killed Till to *Look* magazine for \$4,000.

"J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant died with Emmett Till's blood on their hands," Simeon Wright, Till's cousin and an eyewitness to his kidnapping (he was with Till the night he was kidnapped by Milam and Bryant), later stated. "And it looks like everyone else who was involved is going to do the same. They had a chance to come clean. They will die with Emmett Till's blood on their hands."

Impact on Civil Rights

"I thought about Emmett Till, and I couldn't go back [to the back of the bus]." — [Rosa Parks](#)

Coming only one year after the Supreme Court's landmark decision in [Brown v. Board of Education](#) mandated the end of racial segregation in public schools, Till's death provided an important catalyst for the American civil rights movement.

One hundred days after Till's murder, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on an Alabama city bus, sparking the yearlong [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#). Nine years later, Congress passed the [Civil Rights](#)

[Act of 1964](#), outlawing many forms of racial discrimination and segregation. In 1965, the [Voting Rights Act](#), outlawing discriminatory voting practices, was passed.

"[Emmett Till's murder was] one of the most brutal and inhuman crimes of the 20th century." — [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

Though she never stopped feeling the pain of her son's death, Mamie Till (who died of heart failure in 2003) also recognized that what happened to her son helped open Americans' eyes to the racial hatred plaguing the country, and in doing so helped spark a massive protest movement for racial equality and justice.

"People really didn't know that things this horrible could take place," Mamie Till said in an interview with Devery S. Anderson, author of *Emmett Till: The Murder That Shocked the World and Propelled the Civil Rights Movement*, in December 1996. "And the fact that it happened to a child, that make all the difference in the world."

Accuser

In a 2007 interview, Till's accuser, Carolyn Bryant Donham (she had divorced and remarried), admitted that she had lied about Till making advances toward her.

"That part's not true," she told Timothy Tyson, a senior researcher at Duke University. The interview was reported in a 2017 [Vanity Fair](#) article upon the publishing of Tyson's book, *The Blood of Emmett Till*.

Bryant Donham also told Tyson, "Nothing that boy did could ever justify what happened to him," and admitted she "felt tender sorrow" for his mother.

In the summer of 2018, the Justice Department reportedly reopened the investigation into Till's death with the "discovery of new information."

It was unclear whether the government would bring forth new charges, though recent federal efforts to reexamine racially motivated crimes from the past had occasionally produced results, including the 2010 conviction of a former Alabama state trooper charged with killing activist Jimmie Lee Jackson in 1965.

Documentaries and Movies

Decades after Till's death, several [documentaries and movies](#) have been produced about his life and death. Among the most well-known are the 2003 PBS investigatory documentary *The Murder of Emmett Till* and the 2005 documentary *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till* by civil rights filmmaker Keith A. Beauchamp.

Upcoming productions include *Till*, directed by *Grey's Anatomy* star Jesse Williams and based on a screenplay by Beauchamp and Michael Reilly; *The Face of Emmett Till*; and an HBO miniseries produced by [Jay-Z](#), [Will Smith](#) and Aaron Kaplan.

Resource:

[Biography.com](#)



February 2025 - Heart Disease Awareness Month

Submitted by Bonnie D. LaForme, IHAWP Facilitator



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives. They have a higher prevalence of CVD than other racial and ethnic groups.

Risk factors:

- ♥ **Diabetes:** A major contributor to CVD in American Indians and Alaska Natives
- ♥ **Hypertension:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Obesity:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Smoking:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Hyperlipidemia:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Renal disease:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Age:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Sex:** A risk factor for CVD
- ♥ **Exposure to toxic metals:** A risk factor for some subpopulations

Contributing factors:

- ♥ **Stress, trauma, and racism:** These factors occur at high rates in Indigenous communities
- ♥ **Colonization and U.S. policies:** These have contributed to health disparities in American Indian and Alaska Native populations
- ♥ **Low socioeconomic status:** A quarter of American Indians live below the federal poverty line

Solutions:

- ♥ **Community-based interventions:** These can reduce CVD risk
- ♥ **Culturally safe and appropriate programs:** These can be developed to prevent and treat tobacco use, promote healthy

body weight, and address other risk factors

- ♥ **Effective health communication:** This can raise awareness about health disorders and decrease misperceptions about risks
- ♥ **Communication With American Indians and Alaska Natives:** Dec 17, 2020 - Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native populations

[Heart Disease and American Indians/Alaska Natives](#)

- ♥ In 2023, American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 60% less likely to be diagnosed with coronary heart disease than non-Hispanic white adults.¹
- ♥ American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 20% more likely to be current cigarette smokers than non-Hispanic white adults in 2023.²
- ♥ In 2023, American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 10 percent less likely to have high blood pressure than non-Hispanic white adults.³

¹ CDC. National Center for Health Statistics. [Interactive Summary Health Statistics for Adults](#). Percentage of coronary heart disease for adults aged 18 and over, United States, 2023.

² CDC. National Center for Health Statistics. [Interactive Summary Health Statistics for Adults](#) Percentage of current cigarette smoking for adults aged 18 and over, United States, 2023.

³ CDC. National Center for Health Statistics. [Interactive Summary Health Statistics for Adults](#). Percentage of diagnosed

hypertension for adults aged 18 and over, United States, 2023.

American Indian Adults May Face Higher Rates of Heart Failure

By [American Heart Association News](#), August 21, 2024

Heart failure rates may be two to three times higher among American Indian populations than studies have found for Black, Hispanic or white adults, according to a new analysis, one of the first to focus on a group that has been largely underrepresented in research on this condition.

The study, published Wednesday in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#), used a newly proposed risk prediction tool developed specifically for American Indian people. The analysis found smoking, body mass index, kidney damage and whether Type 2 diabetes was well-controlled were major factors in determining heart failure risk for this population.

The prediction tool used in the study can better assess risk and be used to develop preventive strategies to reduce heart failure events and deaths among American Indians, lead study author Dr. Irene Martinez-Morata said in [a news release](#). She is a researcher at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in New York City.

Heart failure occurs when the heart doesn't pump as well as it should, so it's unable to send enough oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body. It is a leading cause of death among people with Type 2 diabetes, which occurs at

(Continued on page 12)

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disproportionately higher rates among American Indians.

About 1 in 4 people who self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native have Type 2 diabetes, a rate three times higher than their white peers. Prior studies have found Type 2 diabetes to be the biggest risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which includes heart failure, among American Indians. According to a 2020 [American Heart Association scientific statement](#), cardiovascular disease has been rising in this group over the past 50 years.

Because Type 2 diabetes can play a role in the development of heart failure, the risk prediction equation used in the new research included measures of diabetes control and kidney damage. Researchers analyzed medical data from the Strong Heart Study for 3,059 adults ages 45 to 74 from American Indian tribes in North and South Dakota, Oklahoma and Arizona. Participants enrolled in the study, the largest to examine heart disease in American Indian adults, from 1989 to 1992 and were followed through the end of 2019.

Overall, 16.5% of people in the study developed heart failure, a rate two to three times higher than

other studies have found for Black, Hispanic and white adults. The highest rates were found among people with Type 2 diabetes at the time of enrollment and high levels of albumin in their urine, an indicator of kidney damage related to Type 2 diabetes.

Having Type 2 diabetes was linked to a 74% higher risk for heart failure within 10 years, while having albumin in the urine suggested an eightfold higher risk for heart failure within five years. Among participants with Type 2 diabetes, those whose blood sugar remained high for a sustained period of time had a 23% higher risk for heart failure, suggesting that blood sugar control played an important role in the development of this condition.

Participants who smoked had double the heart failure risk over both five and 10 years. Having had a heart attack raised the risk for heart failure nearly seven times over five years. Older age also increased the risk for heart failure by roughly 80% over five years and 70% over 10 years.

Having Type 2 diabetes alone – independent of other risk factors – was a major risk factor for

heart failure. Martinez-Morata said many factors can contribute to the development of Type 2 diabetes, including an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and exposure to environmental toxins, such as arsenic and lead.

The 2020 AHA scientific statement notes limited access to care and longstanding, complex social determinants of health have played a role in the health of American Indians. These historical events include being forced to move from their native lands to areas with limited care; unethical research practices; infectious disease; and unfulfilled agreements that collectively have resulted in distrust of the U.S. government and the medical community.

Martinez-Morata said the high rates of Type 2 diabetes among American Indians can be attributed to more than individual behaviors. The lack of representation in research also has led to an underreporting of disease burden, she said.

"American Indian communities have suffered historical injustices in exposure to contaminants, health care accessibility and other sociodemographic factors resulting in a long history of health disparities," she said.

National Cancer Prevention Month – February 2025

From [National Today](#)

National Cancer Prevention Month marked every February is upon us, ushering in yet another opportunity to spread the word and take action in order to live better, healthier, and happier lives. Cancer, said to be the world's leading cause of death, caused nearly 10 million deaths in 2020. Throughout the history of mankind, cancer has been in existence. Although not

much was known about the human body, the earliest evidence was recorded via papyrus that can be traced back to ancient Egypt in 1500 B.C. when tumors were found on the breast. Over the years, although no cure has been found, with landmark achievements recorded, we are closer than ever.

History of National Cancer Prevention Month

The human body comprises several cells that grow and divide, giving room for new cells when the need occurs. An invasion of this normal process is what leads to cancer.

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From time immemorial, cancer has been with humanity, affecting people across the world regardless of their race, age, sex, or status. Its saddening grip caused an upscale over the recent decades due to modern lifestyle adoptions. Smoking, a poor diet, and the lack of exercise have contributed to its rise.

Given most narratives, evidence of cancer was first found in fossilized bone tumors of mummies in ancient Egypt. However, the word 'cancer' finds its origins in Greek. In 460 B.C. - 370 B.C., ancient Greek Physician, Hippocrates, the 'Father of Medicine,' referenced in his Hippocratic Corpus, comprising about 60 medical works, the name 'cancer,' 'karkinoma - 'crab' in Greek, because the appearance of a tumor was likened to a crab.

1500 B.C. saw the first-ever recorded case of breast cancer in ancient Egypt. By the late 19th century, Edwin Smith and George Ebers' "Papyrus," with descriptions from the 1600 B.C., drawings from early sources, contained an overview of the earliest descriptions of cancer, including surgery and treatments ranging from pharmacological and mechanical, to magical. This led to differentiating between benign and malignant tumors.

There are more than 100 types of cancer, with some more popular than others. Examples are: lung (2.21 million cases), breast (2.26 million cases), rectum and colon (1.93 million cases), skin (non-melanoma) (1.20 million cases), stomach (1.09 million cases), and prostate (1.41 million cases) are the top five most common, according to the World Health Organization.

National Cancer Prevention Month timeline

1600 B.C.: The Earliest Record of Breast Cancer

The Edwin Smith papyrus shines the light on breast tumors in ancient Egypt.

460 B.C. - 370 B.C.: The Origin of the Word 'Cancer'

Credited to Greek Physician Hippocrates, it originates from the Greek word 'καρκίνοσ,' or 'karkinos,' translated as 'crab' or 'crayfish,' owing to the appearance of the tumor.

1500 A.D.: The First Recorded Case of Cancer

Advancement in the understanding of cancer has been witnessed, and by this time, the first documented case is documented — eight tumors occurring on the breast.

1761: The Foundation For Oncology Is Laid

Italian anatomist Giovanni Morgagni lays the foundation for scientific oncology, the study of cancer.

1882: The World's First Radical Mastectomy Is Performed

U.S surgeon William Halsted pulls off the first-ever radical mastectomy involving the removal of the breast, muscles, and axillary lymph nodes.

1895: The First X-ray Is Taken

On November 8, German scientist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays and this groundbreaking discovery has benefited various fields since.

2020: A Revolutionary Lung Drug Is Made Available

The antimalarial drug Sotorasib is made available by the N.H.S., and patients in England first benefit from the revolutionary new drug that can halt the growth of tumors.

National Cancer Prevention Month FAQs

Is cancer always terminal?

Any type of cancer can become

terminal when it can't be cured and refuses to respond to treatment, leading to death. This is also called end-stage cancer.

Why does cancer happen?

It results from changes in D.N.A. When abnormal cells become uncontrollable in any part of the body and invade other tissues, cancer happens.

What is National Cancer Prevention Month?

Held annually every February, the initiative aims to raise awareness about cancer and spread awareness about the importance of early detection, which is paramount to its prevention.

How to Observe National Cancer Prevention Month

1. Donate

Your donations can help make a world of difference. They boost research, subsidize the cost of treatment, and spread the word about cancer.

2. Go out and spread the word

Don't just arm yourself with information. Spread the word, and empower others with vital information, prevention tips, and risk factors, e.t.c.

3. Cut the statistics

One-third of cancers can be prevented. Take action by embracing healthy living: avoid tobacco, cut down on alcohol, maintain a healthy weight and exercise, limit your radiation exposure, and get vaccinated.

5 Important Facts About Cancer

1. Early detection and screening is key

Cancer is deadly, but the good news is thousands of cancer cases, and deaths can be prevented through early detection and screening.

2. Cancer is a leading cause of death

In 2019, cancer was said to be the world's second leading

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cause of death, with breast (2.26 million cases) and lung (2.21 million cases) being the most common types of cancer, according to the WHO.

3. Cancer research has decreased death rates

More effective cancer treatment has decreased the death rate according to the American Cancer Society and, more specifically, lung cancer.

4. Smoking increases your risk of lung cancer

The most effective preventative measure against the disease is to stop smoking. The more cigarettes you smoke, the higher your risk.

5. February 4 marks World Cancer Day

Founded in 2000 and led by the Union for International Cancer Control (U.I.C.C.), the day aims to increase global awareness about cancer and save many from suffering and death

Why National Cancer Prevention Month is Important

A. Prevention is key

It reminds us to make healthy choices, note risk factors, and decrease the chances of the disease by maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Our lifestyle choices go a long way.

B. Stay on a top progress report

The day reminds us to stay up to date with cancer updates, research, progress reports, and new developments. Cancer, directly and indirectly, affects us all.

C. It reminds us to value ourselves

Amid the hustle and bustle, National Cancer Prevention Month reminds us that health is wealth. We do need to take our health seriously to stay alive.

International Childhood Cancer Day

On February 15th: International Childhood Cancer Day is a global collaborative campaign to raise awareness about childhood cancer, and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors and their families.

Every year, more than 400,000 children and adolescents below 20, are diagnosed with cancer. The rate of survival depends on the region, with 80% survival in most High-Income Countries but as low as 20% only in Low and Middle-Income Countries.

The Target Goal of the WHO Global Childhood Cancer Initiative is to eliminate all pain and suffering of children fighting cancer and achieve at least 60% survival for all children diagnosed with cancer around the world by 2030.

This represents an approximate doubling of the current cure rate and will save an additional one million children's lives over the next decade.

What is ICCD?

International Childhood Cancer Day is a global collaborative campaign to raise awareness and promote an increased appreciation and deeper understanding of the challenges faced by children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors and their families. ICCD spotlights the need for more equitable access to treatment and care for all children with cancer, everywhere.

[Read More](#)

The UN Rights of the Child states:

Children have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.

What is CCI?

Childhood Cancer International (CCI) is the largest organization of its kind representing families of children with cancer. CCI wants to see a world where the issues faced by children with cancer and their families, both in the short and long-term, are understood by families, healthcare professionals and the wider community to ensure that children receive the best possible care wherever they are in the world at the time of diagnosis and beyond.

CCI's vision is to advance cure, transform care and instill hope for children and families who are affected by childhood cancer regardless of where they live in the world. João de Bragança is the president of the CCI Board of Trustees.

www.childhoodcancerinternational.org

Every 3 Minutes, A child dies of cancer. Think about it!

On International Childhood Cancer Day, we stand united to make childhood cancer a national and global child health priority in support of the WHO Global Childhood Cancer Target Goals.

[Read More](#)

International Childhood Cancer Day FAQs

Is childhood cancer curable?

Fortunately, childhood cancer is curable. The majority of children who receive treatment are cured.

What are the common types of childhood cancer?

(Continued on page 15)

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The three major childhood cancer types are lymphoblastic lymphoma, mature B-cell lymphoma, and anaplastic large cell lymphoma. Blood, brain, and nervous system-based cancers are most common among children.

How common is childhood cancer?

Cancer is fairly uncommon among children. It is a rare disease, according to the U.S. Rare Diseases Act of 2002, as it affects less than 200,000 people each year.

How to Observe International Childhood Cancer Day

1. Reach out to children with cancer

Childhood cancer is a difficult disease to experience. Reach out to children with cancer and offer them comfort on this day.

2. Spread information about childhood cancer

Make pamphlets, flyers, or websites, to spread information about childhood cancer. This is a great opportunity to ensure that people who need the information about treatments receive it.

3. Be part of the tree of life campaign

Childhood Cancer International works with the International Society of Paediatric Oncology on a campaign for cancer advo-

cacy. Volunteer with these organizations to help amplify the message of hope and life-saving medication as part of the tree of life campaign.

5 Facts About Childhood Cancer That You Probably Didn't Know

1. Cancer is uncommon among children

99% of cancers are found in adults, and only one in 285 children actually develops cancer.

2. There is no known cause for cancer

Although cancer develops when cells change and start growing out of control, there is no known cause for this, especially in childhood cancers.

3. Leukemia accounts for 29% of childhood cancer

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia and Acute myeloid leukemia are two of the most common types of cancer diagnosed among children under 15.

4. The spotlight is on cures

The Global Initiative on Childhood Cancer also focuses on developing permanent cures for childhood cancer.

5. Cancer is expensive

1.16 Trillion U.S.D. is the estimate of the total annual costs of cancer and its treatment as of 2010.

Why International Childhood Cancer Day is Important

A. We feel for children

Cancer is a difficult disease to live with. We respect the children who are enduring the pain and want to express our sympathy for them.

B. It's easier to share information

We want to make sure that people who need information about treatments receive them. We also want to spread hope and the possibility of full recovery so kids can keep fighting.

C. Helps in the fight against cancer

The best way to address childhood cancer is to raise awareness, raise funds for research, and make sure that children with cancer have access to treatment. We want to contribute and do our bit towards fighting cancer.

Resources:

[ICCD](#)

[National Today](#)

Leonard Peltier to Leave Prison After 50 Years as Biden Grants Commutation

By Brian Edwards, [Native News Online](#), January 20, 2025

President Biden announced today he will commute Leonard Peltier's life sentence to home confinement, marking a major victory for tribal nations and advocates who have long fought for the Native American activist's release.

Peltier, 80, has spent nearly 50 years in federal prison after being convicted for the 1975 deaths of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Indian Res-

ervation. He has maintained his innocence throughout his imprisonment.

A White House statement cited Peltier's advanced age, deteriorating health, and the extensive support for his release from tribal nations, Nobel Peace laureates, former law enforcement officials, and human rights organizations.

"This commutation will enable Mr. Peltier to spend his remaining days in home confinement but will not pardon him for his underlying crimes," according to the White House statement.

The decision comes after decades of campaigns by Native American leaders and organizations who have questioned the fairness of Peltier's

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trial and conviction. Even the former U.S. Attorney whose office handled Peltier's prosecution and appeal supported granting clemency.

The White House noted Peltier's "close ties to and leadership in the Native American community" as a factor in the decision.

The commutation of Peltier's sentence comes after increased advocacy from tribal leaders, congressional members, human rights advocates and even former prosecutors who were involved in the case.

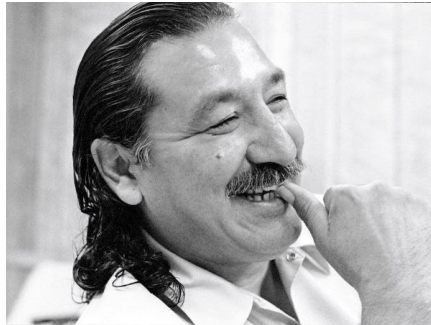
Last week, more than 120 tribal leaders, including National Congress of American Indians President Mark Macarro (Chairman of the Pechanga Band of Indians) and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, signed a [letter urging Biden to grant clemency](#). In December, Macarro raised Peltier's case directly with Biden during a flight on Air Force One, highlighting that Peltier was among the oldest surviving Indian boarding school survivors.

Peltier, an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, spent three years at the Wahpeton Indian School in North Dakota as a child — a [story he shared with Native News Online](#) in 2022.

In a [post on X](#) (formerly Twitter), outgoing Interior Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) wrote: "I am beyond words about the commutation of Leonard Peltier. His release from prison signifies a measure of justice that has long evaded so many Native Americans for so many decades. I am grateful that Leonard can now go home to his family. I applaud President Biden for this action and understanding what this means to Indian Country."

In her Tweet, she linked to the Biden

administration's [release in White House press room](#), but the post had been removed during the presidential transition and was not included on the [Biden White House archive](#).



Leonard Peltier, 80, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, will transition to home confinement after serving nearly 50 years of a life sentence. (Photo: AmnestyUSA)

Kevin Sharp, former Chief U.S. District Court judge and Peltier's attorney, called Biden's decision "an enormous step toward healing and reconciliation with the Native American people in this country." Sharp, who filed Peltier's original clemency petition in 2019, said Biden's "act of mercy" will allow Peltier to return to his reservation and live out his remaining days.

The case has drawn international attention over the decades, with supporters like Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Pope Francis advocating for Peltier's release. Sharp represented Peltier for five years before NDN Collective took the lead on clemency efforts.

"Leonard Peltier's freedom today is the result of 50 years of intergenerational resistance, organizing, and advocacy," Nick Tilsen, NDN Collective Founder and CEO, said in a statement. "Leonard Peltier's liberation is our liberation — we will honor him by bringing him back to his homelands to live out the rest of his days surround-

ed by loved ones, healing, and re-connecting with his land and culture.

"Today's decision shows the combined power of grassroots organizing and advocacy at the highest levels of government. We are grateful to President Biden and the leadership of Secretary Deb Haaland," Holly Cook Macarro, government affairs or NDN Collective, said. "All of us here today stand on the shoulders of three generations of activists who have fought for justice for Leonard Peltier. Today is a monumental victory — the day that Leonard Peltier finally goes home."

Judith LeBlanc (Caddo), executive director of the Native Organizers Alliance released a statement as well, saying: "Our hearts are full for Leonard Peltier, his family, and all of Indian Country as he finally gets to go home after nearly 50 years behind bars. Leonard's incarceration came to symbolize the injustices Native peoples face in defending our lands and civil and inherent rights. His resilience has stood as a testament to the enduring strength of Native peoples in the face of systemic racism and oppression.

U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i), vice chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, released the following statement: "If there were ever a case that merited compassionate release, Leonard Peltier's was it," said Schatz. "President Biden did the right thing by showing this aging man in poor health mercy and allowing him to return home to spend whatever days he has remaining with his loved ones. I thank President Biden and the countless advocates who've worked tirelessly over the years to secure Peltier's release."

Neely Bardwell provided reporting on this story.





WORKSHOPS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN PARENTS

ASU Global Center for
Applied Health Research
Arizona State University

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ten weekly classes
- Qualifying families may receive up to \$300 in gift cards
- Participation in a parenting and health research study
- Healthy food provided
- Childcare services available
- Transportation assistance provided

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ **Self-Identify as Native American**
- ✓ **Lives in urban area of Erie & Niagara County**
- ✓ **Primary Caregiver of Native American youth 12-17 years old**

Workshops begin Winter 2025



Scan QR Code
or Click Link
to Register

<https://forms.gle/Q3ROM7VSWbFHeiT67>



716-339-1831 or 716-874-4460



pjacobs@nacswny.org

CLUBHOUSE CORNER



FEBRUARY EDITION

"The secret of our success is that we never,, never give up"- Wilma Mankiller (Cherokee)



We hope everyone is having a healthy and well start to 2025! And don't forget to check out our Instagram page for the latest news and updates in the Clubhouse!
Hope to see you soon!

To join us for Clubhouse or event, please contact:
NACS Clubhouse (Erie County) Manager, El
716-449-6472
NACS Clubhouse (Niagara County) Hotline:
716-449-6405

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES!

ICE SKATING

GALENTINES

BOWLING

MUSEUM VISIT

STAY UPDATED ON OUR CLUBHOUSE EVENTS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA!



In Memoriam...Remembering Shelly Schintzius

(As of this writing, some information was not readily available.)

A longtime member of our NACS family, Shelly Schintzius, has passed away, January 22, 2025. In her honor, some NACS employees who worked with Shelly remember her in their own words:

“Shelly was here at NACS when I first started back in 1992, and we had some very meaningful efforts, projects, discussions, and friendship throughout the years. Shelly Schintzius worked at NACS in many different roles, including the Elders Program, Crime Victims Advocacy, food pantry, and with the fiscal office. She was very dedicated to serving the Native Community and had high expectations for herself as well as the people she worked with. At the same time, she demonstrated her care, kindness, concern, and respect for everybody and would do all she could to help with various fundraisers, programs, food pantry, and so much more.

After her retirement, Shelly continued to support the community through her church involvement and many more efforts. It was an honor to spend time with her, enjoy some good laughs, to be able to call her a friend, and be a friend of hers. She will be missed!”

Pete Hill, Special Initiatives Coordinator

“Condolences to her family and friends. I had the pleasure to help her out during Covid. Even though she was going through her own health issues, she still wanted to help NACS and the community with her donations for Elders door prizes and other small trinkets for give aways.

She would always ask how things were going at NACS and even though she didn't want to ask for the help, she was very appreciative



of it. She will be missed and remembered for all her work and dedication to the Native American Communities in Buffalo and Niagara Falls.”

Colleen Casali, ROOTS Coordinator

“Let us not focus on the loss of Shelly but rather on the life she lived and the legacy at NACS she leaves behind. Many will only remember her as a stern matriarch but I knew her from my first days at NACS in the early 1990s as a person of deep conviction, passion and humor, yes humor. She was generous and kind and worked tirelessly to help this organization provide for all the Native community members who came to the programs. Looking back gives me comfort. I will cherish my memories of working and laughing with her to make those early events the best they could be and hope she will be remembered for the kind and caring person she was.”

Norine Borkowski, Corporate Compliance Officer

“I met Shelly Schintzius during my first time as an employee of NACS

back in 1991. I was hired as Youth Development Specialist coming out of high school and she was working as a bookkeeper in the finance office. It was quickly made clear to me that she was a stickler for following the rules and holding people accountable. She set high standards for herself and others, but it was based on ensuring that we were doing the best to serve the community she so dearly loved. I left after a couple of years and eventually left the area for a corporate career following college. Shelly stayed and continued working in different positions, including working with our Elders and Crime Victims programs before her retirement. She was still working when I returned in 2002 as a consultant and then as Executive Director.

During her retirement she would call from time to time to check on things or if she needed some assistance, she knew she could call on us. I had the opportunity to help her during the pandemic when NACS was doing deliveries for our elders and had other more recent opportunities to assist, and she was always grateful. In fact, the last time I assisted her and brought something to her apartment for her, she had me take three prints off her wall and she donated them to NACS. Even in her last days, I visited her in a nursing facility where she was trying to rehab and get back home and she was still asking me about NACS. She will be missed, but I will always remember lessons from her, like we can never have too high standards when it comes to serving our community. May she rest in peace knowing the legacy she left through those she met. I share my heartfelt condolences to her friends and family.”

Michael Martin, Executive Director

“I remember Shelly as a very dili-
(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)
gent, meticulous and empathetic person. In her work with the community, she always had a smile and kind words to share with whomever she met. At my first meeting with her, I thought she was that stern matriarchal person. But, soon after-

wards, I saw her gentler side. The stern part was her business archetype.

During social gatherings at NACS, Shelly was always in charge, in the kitchen, on the floor, and greeting people. I always noticed her hustle

and some sweat on her brow as she bustled through the crowd to ensure everything went well. I have kind memories of Shelly Schintzius and my wife and I will hold her in our hearts, always. Rest in Peace..."

George T. Ghosen, Newsletter Editor



Indigenous Health & Wellness
Promotion (IHAWP) Program

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Overall Agenda

Welcome & Opening
Diversities of Native People
Expanding Trauma-Informed Care to Include Historical Traumas
Efforts to Strengthen Native Health & Vitality
Land Acknowledgements & being a Good Ally

17 MARCH
2025

In-Person

09:30am-4:30pm
Monday
1005 Grant St.
Buffalo, NY 14207

Please register by
March 12th, 2025

<https://bit.ly/4groexh>



26 MARCH
2025

Virtual

09:30am-4:30pm
Wednesday
Zoom

Please Register by
March 21st, 2025

<https://bit.ly/40JayrJ>



Both training sessions will include a screening of two very powerful documentaries on historical traumas impacting Indigenous peoples. On **Monday, March 17, we will show the “Doctrine of Discovery”** documentary which provides an Indigenous perspective of world and US history. On **Wednesday, March 26, we will show the “Unseen Tears”** about residential boarding schools. Both documentaries provide very impactful, stark examples of trauma, violence, and loss of life. Understanding how these traumas continue to impact Native peoples can help us all develop more effective methods, approaches, and programs to support Native health and wellbeing. Self-care and debriefing activities will be held in both sessions.

Who should attend?

All are welcome, including healthcare personnel, social workers, program developers, Native and Non-Native community members, human services, directors, administrative staff, educators, social justice advocates, and allies.

This training is provided by NACS’ Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Promotion (IHAWP) Program, which is funded by the New York State Department of Health / AIDS Institute.

For more info, please contact Pete Hill at phill@nacswny.org or 716-574-8981

Nyah-weh! Thank you!

Veterans Crisis Line

Signed into law in 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. As part of the law, all telephone service providers in the U.S. had to activate the number no later than July 16, 2022.



If you're in crisis, call the new Veterans Crisis Line number:
Dial 988 then Press 1.

Veterans can use this new option by dialing 988 and pressing 1 to contact the Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans may still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the previous phone number—[1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255) and [Press 1](tel:1-800-273-8255)—by text ([838255](tel:838255)), and through chat ([VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat)).

How It Works

The Veterans Crisis Line is free and confidential. When you call, chat, or text, a qualified responder will listen and help. You decide how much information to share. Support doesn't end with your conversation. Our responders can connect you with the resources you need.

When to Call

Veterans and service members in crisis aren't alone. If you're thinking about hurting yourself, having thoughts of suicide, or becoming self-destructive, we're ready to help.

Contact us immediately if you or the Veteran or service member in your life is showing signs of crisis, such as:

- Talking about feeling hopeless
- Experiencing anxiety or agitation
- Increasing risky behaviors or substance use

For all the information, visit: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

How to Apply for VA Health Care

Find out how to apply for VA health care benefits as a Veteran or service member.

You can apply online right now: [Apply for health care benefits](#)

How do I prepare before I start my application?

[Find out if you're eligible for VA health care benefits](#)

Gather the information listed here that you'll need to fill out an Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ)

You'll need this information:

- Social Security numbers for you, your spouse, and your qualified dependents.
- Your military discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents), military service history information, and details about exposure to any toxins or other hazards.
- Insurance card information for all insurance companies that cover you, including any coverage provided through a spouse or significant other. This includes Medicare, private insurance, or insurance from your employer.
- Gross household income from the previous calendar year for you, your spouse, and your dependents. This includes income from a job and any other sources. Gross household income is your income before taxes and any other deductions.
- Your deductible expenses for the past year. These include certain health care and education costs.

Note: You don't have to tell us about your income and expenses when you apply. But if you're not eligible based on other factors, we'll need this information to decide on your application.

For all the information, visit: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>

Employment Opportunity



www.nacswny.org

Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc.

MICHAEL N. MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1005 Grant St. Buffalo, NY 14207 • Phone: 716-874-4460 • Fax: 716-874-1874
 1522 Main St. Niagara Falls, NY 14305 • Phone: 716-299-0914 • Fax: 716-299-0903
 76 West Ave. Lockport, NY 14094 • Phone: 716-302-3035 • Fax: 716-302-3037
 100 College Ave. Suite 200, Rochester, NY 14607 • Phone: 585-514-3984 • Fax: TBD
 960 James St. Syracuse, NY 13203 • Phone: 315-322-8754 • Fax: TBD

Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Workforce Development Specialist

Type: Full-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Salary/Range: \$17.00-\$19.50 / hour

Office: 1005 Grant Street, Buffalo, NY 14207 – travel required

SUMMARY:

The Workforce Development Specialist assists in planning and implementing goals and objectives of the Workforce Development Component as well as ensuring quality of service provision to clients. Incumbent will be flexible to evening and weekend schedules as needed. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Conducts initial intake and comprehensive testing to determine client eligibility and needs.
- Develops an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with client.
- Develops and provides workshops to clients in such areas of academic, life skills, and technical areas.
- Keeps abreast of current trends in the local job market.
- Establishes an effective support network and provides referrals for clients.
- Attends and participates in weekly component staff and other required meetings.
- Maintains necessary documentation and ensures the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping.
- Develops an outreach action plan to successfully recruit and retain participants and employers in the program.
- Conducts outreach to academic entities, unions, coalitions, service providers, and other individuals/agencies to promote services, develop linkages, build network opportunities and advocate for issues in the Native American community.
- Develops and nurtures relationships with employers for on-the-job training agreements and work experience opportunities for clients.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree in human services or related field of study preferred, with three (3) years' experience in workforce development including supervision and program management.
- Work experience may replace some of the education requirements at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Knowledge of local area service providers.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Intermediate computer skills and understanding of office applications including MS Office Suite.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements including a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Paid Time Off (PTO) | • Health & Dental Insurance |
| • Life Insurance | • Employee Assistance Program |
| • Flexible Spending Account (FSA) | • 403 (b) Retirement Plan |

For consideration send resume to: humanresources@nacswny.org

Employment Opportunity



www.nacswny.org

Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc.

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Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Family Preservation & Strengthening Caseworker- Erie County

Type: Full-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Salary/Range: \$18.23-\$19.23 / hour

Office: 1005 Grant Street, Buffalo, NY 14207

SUMMARY:

The Family Preservation & Strengthening Caseworker works in conjunction with the Local County Department of Social Services (LCDSS/DSS) and is responsible for providing prevention services to families referred from DSS. Incumbent helps children remain safely in their homes and prevent placement outside of their home. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide effective and efficient case management for assigned families.
- Make use of appropriate counseling, parent training, home management, support and advocacy services.
- Work collaboratively with referral sources, community service providers, and family members to meet goals.
- Produce accurate, thorough, and timely progress notes in CONNECTIONS.
- Ensure all court mandated or recommended services are applied and supported.
- Provide transportation for meetings, services, and appointments in a safe, reliable vehicle as necessary.
- Maintain strong communication with the family working toward stabilizing and strengthening the family unit, with regular face-to-face contact.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree in human services or related field of study required with experience in child welfare.
- Knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Federal and State regulations, as well as mandated reporting requirements.
- Intermediate computer skills and understanding of office applications including MS Office Suite.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must have a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
- 403 (B) Retirement Plan
- Life Insurance
- Health and Dental Insurance

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 960 James St. Syracuse, NY 13203 • Phone: 315-322-8754 • Fax: TBD

Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Family Preservation & Strengthening Caseworker- Niagara County

Type: Full-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Salary/Range: \$18.23-\$19.23 / hour

Office: 76 West Ave., Lockport, NY 14094

SUMMARY:

The Family Preservation & Strengthening Caseworker works in conjunction with the Local County Department of Social Services (LCDSS/DSS) and is responsible for providing prevention services to families referred from DSS. Incumbent helps children remain safely in their homes and prevent placement outside of their home. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

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- Work collaboratively with referral sources, community service providers, and family members to meet goals.
- Produce accurate, thorough, and timely progress notes in CONNECTIONS.
- Ensure all court mandated or recommended services are applied and supported.
- Provide transportation for meetings, services, and appointments in a safe, reliable vehicle as necessary.
- Maintain strong communication with the family working toward stabilizing and strengthening the family unit, with regular face-to-face contact.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree in human services or related field of study required with experience in child welfare.
- Knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Federal and State regulations, as well as mandated reporting requirements.
- Intermediate computer skills and understanding of office applications including MS Office Suite.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must have a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
- 403 (B) Retirement Plan
- Life Insurance
- Health and Dental Insurance

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Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Erie County Clubhouse Youth Leader- 3 openings

Type: Part-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Hours: 20 hours per week. Non-traditional (must be available for day, evening, and weekend hours)

Salary/Range: \$17.00- \$18.50 / hour

Office: 1005 Grant Street, Buffalo, NY 14207

SUMMARY:

The Clubhouse Youth Leaders assist the Clubhouse Manager in providing a safe, supportive, culturally appropriate, alcohol and drug free environment for all members. The Clubhouse welcomes self-identified Native American youth and young adults ages 12-17 years old. Clubhouse programming includes recreation & pro-social, education, evidence-based / best practices, skill building, wellness, and cultural activities. Leaders will provide transportation, supervision, and leadership. Recruitment through outreach, attending and participating in weekly staff meetings will also be required. Leaders must be available for non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). The Clubhouse is open 25 hours per week. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Supervise, provide leadership, and be a positive role model for youth.
- Deliver workshops and activities in a confident and organized manner.
- Ensure youth programming utilizes a percentage of evidence-based prevention models.
- Provide safe transportation and/or supervision of youth to and from clubhouse activities.
- Recruit youth through local outreach efforts.
- Adhere to data collection and performance measurement requirements determined by SAMHSA and OASAS.
- Maintain necessary documentation and ensure the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping.
- Ensure Clubhouse maintenance, cleanliness, and safety is maintained.
- Other duties as assigned.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's or Associates degree in human services or related field of study preferred.
- Experience working with community and group settings. Work experience may replace some of the education requirements at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Knowledge and understanding of substance use, and experience with at-risk youth.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must have a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Holiday Pay (if scheduled)

For consideration send resume to: humanresources@nacswny.org

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Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Niagara County Clubhouse Youth Leader- 2 openings

Type: Part-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Hours: 20 hours per week. Non-traditional (must be available for day, evening, and weekend hours)

Salary/Range: \$17.00 - \$18.50/ hour

Office: 1522 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

SUMMARY:

The Clubhouse Youth Leaders assist the Clubhouse Manager in providing a safe, supportive, culturally appropriate, alcohol and drug free environment for all members. The Clubhouse welcomes self-identified Native American youth and young adults ages 12-17 years old. Clubhouse programming includes recreation & pro-social, education, evidence-based/ best practices, skill building, wellness, and cultural activities. Leaders will provide transportation, supervision, and leadership. Recruitment through outreach, attending and participating in weekly staff meetings will also be required. Leaders must be available for non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). The Clubhouse is open 25 hours per week. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Supervise, provide leadership, and be a positive role model for youth.
- Deliver workshops and activities in a confident and organized manner.
- Ensure youth programming utilizes a percentage of evidence-based prevention models.
- Provide safe transportation and/or supervision of youth to and from clubhouse activities.
- Recruit youth through local outreach efforts.
- Adhere to data collection and performance measurement requirements determined by SAMHSA and OASAS.
- Maintain necessary documentation and ensure the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping.
- Ensure Clubhouse maintenance, cleanliness, and safety is maintained.
- Other duties as assigned.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's or Associates degree in human services or related field of study preferred.
- Experience working with community and group settings. Work experience may replace some of the education requirements at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Knowledge and understanding of substance use, and experience working with at-risk youth.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must have a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Holiday Pay (if scheduled)

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Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Niagara County Youth Clubhouse Site Manager

Type: Full-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Salary/Range: \$19.00-\$20.00 / hour

Office: 1522 Main St, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

SUMMARY:

Under the guidance of the Health & Wellness Director, the Youth Clubhouse Manager is responsible for assisting and leading in the performance of day-to-day duties in delivering and providing a safe, supportive, culturally appropriate, alcohol and drug free environment for all Native American youth and young adults ages 12-17 years old. This position will lead in the oversight of activities, cultural programming, and supervise youth leaders. Incumbent must be available for non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). The Clubhouses are open 25 hours per week. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Implement, plan, and lead program activities, field trips, and workshops in accordance with contractual obligations both virtually and in-person.
- Have knowledge and understanding of substance use and ensure youth programming utilizes a percentage of research and evidence-based and best practices prevention models.
- Serve as a facilitator and member of the Youth Advisory Council.
- Coordinates scheduling of the Clubhouse Youth Leaders.
- Organize, supervise, and provide safe transportation for youth clubhouse members.
- Ensure Clubhouse maintenance, cleanliness, and safety is maintained.
- Recruit participants for the clubhouse program through outreach events and materials.
- Maintain necessary documentation and ensures the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping, including the utilization of database systems.
- Ensures the program remains compliant with all contractual obligations and requirements.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree from accredited institution with supervisory experience or relevant role.
- Experience working with at-risk youth, community and group settings. Work experience may replace some of the education requirements at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Knowledge and understanding of substance use.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Computer skills: ability to use Microsoft Office Suite.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements including a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Life Insurance
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
- Health & Dental Insurance
- Employee Assistance Program
- 403 (b) Retirement Plan

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 960 James St. Syracuse, NY 13203 • Phone: 315-322-8754 • Fax: TBD

Equal Opportunity Employer

Position: Clubhouse Youth Advocate

Type: Full-time/ hourly/ non-exempt

Salary/Range: \$19.00-\$20.00

Office: 1005 Grant Street, Buffalo, NY 14207 and 1522 Main St, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

SUMMARY:

Incumbent will assist the Healthy & Wellness Director and the Youth Clubhouse Managers in providing a safe, supportive, culturally appropriate, alcohol and drug free environment for all members. The Youth Advocate will ensure to serve any Native American youth ages 12-17 years old in Erie & Niagara Counties, who are in recovery from or at-risk of developing a substance use disorder. Incumbent will be responsible for ensuring youth receive resources, needs, services, supports, and/or activities to ensure overall good health. Incumbent must be available for non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). The Clubhouses are open 25 hours per week. All efforts will be performed with the understanding of and in accordance with Good Mind principles, while also adhering to the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Recruit youth participants through outreach efforts at community events, local schools, etc.
- Meet with youth one-on-one and in group settings and develop individualized advocacy plans with youth.
- Establish and expand a network of referral resources and linkages to provide relevant, appropriate services and/or supports as identified by the youth.
- Have knowledge and understanding of substance use and ensure youth programming utilizes a percentage of research and evidence-based, and best practices prevention models.
- Assist both Erie & Niagara County Clubhouses by implementing programming through delivery of workshops, recreational, and cultural activities in accordance with contractual obligations both virtually and in person.
- Continually keep informed of new developments relevant to the provision of services to youth.
- Ensure Clubhouse maintenance, cleanliness, and safety is maintained.
- Recruit participants for the clubhouse program through outreach events and materials.
- Maintain necessary documentation and ensures the timely completion of all necessary recordkeeping, including the utilization of database systems.
- Ensures the program remains compliant with all contractual obligations and requirements.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree from accredited institution with supervisory experience or relevant role.
- Experience working with at-risk youth, community and group settings. Work experience may replace some of the education requirements at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Knowledge and understanding of substance use.
- Effective problem solving, organization, time management, and communication skills.
- Computer skills: ability to use Microsoft Office Suite.
- Familiarity with and sensitivity toward local Native American communities.
- Must be flexible to evening and weekend hours as needed.
- Must pass all background checks and pre-hire requirements including a clean and valid NYS driver's license and carry minimum auto liability coverage of \$100k/\$300k.

BENEFITS:

- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Life Insurance
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
- Health & Dental Insurance
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- 403 (b) Retirement Plan

For consideration send resume to: humanresources@nacswny.org

Nya:wëh, Thanks for reading!

Please share this newsletter with family, friends, and coworkers. If you know of anyone who would like to receive the month NACS News by email, please have them send their first name, last name, and current email address to: gghosen@nacswny.org

You can also look for our newsletter on our [website](#).

FUNDED BY: Erie County Department of Social Services; New York State Office of Children & Family Services; New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services; Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo; National Urban Indian Family Coalition; Niagara County Department of Social Services, Niagara County Office of the Aging; United Way of Niagara, US Department of Labor; Administration for Native Americans (ANA); Indigenous Justice Circle; Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation; Erie County Department of Mental Health; NYS Research Foundation for Mental Health; NYS Medicaid Program 29-I; Western New York Foundation; New York State Department of Health/AIDS Institute, as well as businesses, foundations and caring individuals.

I'd like to help NACS continue it's Tradition of Caring...

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