MCNAA TurtleTalk – September-December 2020

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING AT MCNAA

The MCNAA office remains closed to the public during the pandemic, but we are still working tirelessly, keeping daily operations going. Here is an update on some of the work we have done over the last four months.

- Continued the telephone chain to keep in touch with our elders to check on their well-being and needs.
- Assisted needy Native families and elders – mailed out food gift cards, paid utility bills and other unexpected home repairs (furnace, hot water heater, flooded basement, etc.)
- Picked up another great collection of Native American books and other donated items from MCNAA friends.
- Attended fundraising webinars, grant info sessions, etc.
- Worked on a Holiday Greeting Card campaign and mailed cards to our Elders.
- Worked on our annual giving appeal and solicited year-end donations for our programs.
- Worked on daily administrative tasks (memberships, bookkeeping, grant applications, responded to e-mail inquiries, updated our social media platforms, etc.).

UPDATE ON VISITING MCNAA

Since March 2020 when Governor Baker issued an emergency order requiring businesses and organizations to close to non-essential workers, we began working remotely from home with a staggered presence at the office. Having a person in the office a few days a week has made it convenient for members and others to stop by outside to quickly drop off items or pick up materials from us.

If you plan to stop by, please call ahead or e-mail to let us know. This way we will make sure someone is here to meet you outside. In the meantime, we will continue this practice until it is physically safe and healthy for all of us to work in the office together and to receive visitors.
MCNAA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP FOR FALL 2020

We are delighted to announce that (16) of our up-and-coming leaders were selected by the MCNAA Board of Directors to receive a scholarship for the 2020 Fall Semester. Awards ranged from $1,000 to $1,500 each.

Congratulations are extended to these incredible students:
Ayri Ayala (Chappaquiddick Wampanoag), Bridgewater State University
Elijah Costa (Mashpee Wampanoag), Bridgewater State University
Aaron Creech (Chappaquiddick Wampanoag), Bristol Community College
Assata Evans (Nipmuc), Fitchburg State University
Olivia Harris (Ponkapoag), U Mass/Boston
Christian Hendricks (Mashpee Wampanoag), Bridgewater State University
Dominique Libera (Nipmuc), U Mass/Amherst
Andrew McKinney (Mashpee Wampanoag), Bridgewater State University
Emma Nunes (Mashpee Wampanoag), Fitchburg State University
Kaylee Oliver (MA/Ponkapoag), U Mass/Dartmouth
Shai R. Parasram (Chappaquiddic Band of Wampanoag), Bunker Hill Community College
Pedro Rosa (Wampanoag), U Mass/Dartmouth
Taylor Rose (Mashpee Wampanoag), U Mass/Boston
Antonio Santana (Nipmuck), U Mass/Amherst
Melissa Skan (Tlingit/Alaskan), Salem State University
Tiara Williams-Price (Nipmuc), U Mass/Lowell

With the rise in college tuition, fees and the need to pay for books, room & board, and new equipment for on-line learning, we are happy to be in a position to help this promising group of Native college students….our future leaders.

We wish them, and all of our other students, the very best of luck with their studies and look forward to seeing them sometime in 2021 when we can safely gather again.

PARTNERS IN TRANSPORTATION AT MASSDOT HONORS MCNAA FOR COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

For years, the Partners In Transportation at MassDOT have celebrated diversity and raised awareness within their organization. This year, the Partners Committee selected the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness to honor for their Community Recognition Award. The award was presented for our dedication and all that we do for the Native American Community. "Resilient and Enduring, We are Native People" was their theme and they felt it coincided perfectly with our achievements. The celebration was held via zoom on Monday, November 23, 2020.
MCNAA HOLDS SHARING CIRCLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE ALLIES
by Board Member Anthony SkyHawk with information provided by Burne Stanley

On October 5, 2020, MCNAA’s Leadership hosted an exciting and highly successful virtual Sharing Circle with a number of Native members, friends, and allies who are working on on-going social change/justice initiatives throughout Massachusetts. Board member Claudia Fox Tree, the consummate moderator, made this a powerful experience with her wisdom and compassion. We all wish we had her talent. The event was coordinated by Board member Burne Stanley.

The following is a list of the incredible allies and their local and statewide initiatives, along with updates since their presentation:

**Judy Matthews of Haverhill, MA** is a retired public relations professional. She has worked at public TV station WGBH Boston for more than 30 years. She also is a past president of the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation, WGBH’s independent employees’ union, now Communications Workers of America local 13. Current initiatives include working to raise awareness and the removal of the racist and colonialist origins of the 17th-century legend of Puritan Haverhill settler Hannah Duston and the statue erected in her honor in 1879, which stands in a Haverhill public park.

**Update:** Shortly after her presentation that evening, Judy was contacted by two people; one was a woman who wants to start an Anti-racist Alliance, and the other was the President of her local Chamber of Commerce. They want to start working together for racial justice in the City.
including the statue. We feel that the energy that was put out into the universe during the presentation must have been potent as there’s definitely an awakening happening here.

A day later, Judy received word that the Haverhill City Council’s sub-committee on Public Property, would be meeting to discuss the Hannah Duston statue. She asked if we and some of our members who joined the panel discussion would call or send an e-mail to the Chairman of the Committee indicating our support for the removal of the statue. MCNAA’s Board, collectively as well as individually, immediately sent/emailed letters strongly advocating for the removal or relocation of the offensive statue of Hannah Duston. We are all hopeful that this will happen without further protest.

Elizabeth Hylton of Shrewsbury, MA is a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, and Drama therapy student. She is the president and founder of the non-profit organization Jamaican American’s for a Better Jamaica. Current initiatives include advocating for the new way-finder signs that the Town is proposing, to include and show respect to the Native Tribe that was displaced from their land in order for the town to be incorporated. Elizabeth has since been appointed to the Town’s Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee which will put her in a better position to push for the new signs to include and pay homage to the Nipmuc Tribe.

David Detmold is the founding editor of the weekly newspaper Montague Reporter. He was active in the successful struggle to change the Native sports mascot at the Turner Falls High School in 2016-17. In the summer of 2017, he rode his bicycle from the Mashpee powwow to Standing Rock in South Dakota, and then on the Black Hills. He is the coordinator of the website changethemassflag.com. Current initiatives include advocating on a bill to change the Massachusetts state flag and seal. S.1877/H.2776.

A day later, a call to action was sent out for allies to write letters to their legislators in support for the bill.

Rhonda Anderson, Iñupiaq - Athabascan from Alaska, living in Colrain, MA is currently the Western Massachusetts Commissioner on Indian Affairs, a member of the Mass. Mascot Steering Committee, a classically trained Herbalist, Silversmith, and an activist. She works as an educator within area schools and the 5 colleges near her home in Massachusetts. Current initiatives include advocating for the removal of mascots, images, and logos in Massachusetts schools.
Dr. Matthew Janger of Arlington, MA is the Principal at Arlington High School (AHS). He has worked hard on issues of equity and inclusion. Current and future initiatives include changing the school seal, examining the symbolism of Cyrus Dallin’s work in our town, engaging student leaders with the work to honor Indigenous People’s Day, reviewing school curriculum around local Indigenous People, and an ongoing student/staff Anti-Racism Working Group.

Maggie Day of Maynard, MA began her teaching career as an elementary teacher at a tribal school on the Yankton Sioux Reservation in SD. After she moved back to MA, she got a degree in Special Education. She retired from teaching special education in Westboro in 2014. Now she mostly identifies as grandma (Namma) and is working to reduce the harm her Lakota grandson will experience when he begins school. Maggie is a member of the Maynard Anti Racism Alliance (MARA). Current initiatives include trying to lift the visibility of indigenous peoples and advocate for changes in the schools. (Through the efforts of MARA, in the summer of 2020, the Town changed Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day.)

Nicole Day, Hunkpapa Lakota (Standing Rock), of Maynard, MA works in the healthcare field and is a member of the Maynard Anti-Racism Alliance (MARA). She is working to ensure a more inclusive environment and diverse curriculum in the Maynard school system so that her three-and-a-half-year-old son can hopefully have a better experience than she did while at the same time, pushing for important and necessary changes on the state and federal levels. Current initiatives include trying to lift the visibility of indigenous peoples and advocate for changes in the schools. (Through the efforts of MARA, in the summer of 2020, the Town changed Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day.)

We thank our panelist, our Board and Advisory Council members as well as MCNAA members, friends and allies who joined the discussion and who wanted to listen, learn and take future action in their community and support the efforts of some of the panelist.

Despite starting at 6:00 pm and ending after 8:00 pm nearly everyone stayed to the end as it was exciting to hear about how passionate the presenters were about what they were doing and inspired by their commitment to helping to make the world more just.

MCNAA will continue to support these initiatives and we invite members and friends, who are inspired, to also reach out in support of these individuals who are spearheading these efforts.
MCNAA PARTICIPATES IN BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY’S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DAY TEACH-IN

On Monday and Tuesday, October 12-13, 2020 Brandeis University’s Intercultural Center held its annual Indigenous Peoples Day Teach-In. For this year’s 2-day event, several associates from MCNAA participated. They included: Board Member Claudia Fox Tree; Board Member Dawn Duncan who hosted the virtual “MCNAA Information Booth”; Advisory Council Member Eva Blake; and MCNAA Member Deborah Spears-Moorehead.

Presentations included:

- **10:00-11:00 AM** - Indigenous Perspectives on Settler Colonial Monuments, Statues, and Mascots *Claudia Fox Tree* (Arawak/Yurumein)
- **12:00-1:00 PM** - Indigenous Language Reclamation, *Eva Blake* (Assonet Wampanoag)
- **2-3:00 PM** - Finding Balance: The Genealogy of Massasoit’s People and the Oral and Written History of the Seaconke Pokanoket Wampanoag Tribal Nation, *Deborah Spears Moorehead* (Seaconke Pokanoket Wampanoag)

The best way to have celebrated Indigenous People’s Day was with these wonderful presentations. They were informative, moving and personal. Also courageous …to speak up. We extend our thanks to the hosts - Brandeis University’s Intercultural Center.

THE NEWEST VOICE TO THE MCNAA ADVISORY COUNCIL

We are excited to announce that in November 2020 we added another committed and gifted person to the MCNAA Advisory Council – Erin McCormack. She is among a great group of advisors who eagerly share their insights, energy and efforts with MCNAA. You have seen Erin volunteering at our pow-wows, attending our wild edible walks, dances, anniversary celebrations, and college & university events that we co-sponsor. She also has written post-event reports with suggested tips on what we might do to improve them, newsletter articles, and so much more. Erin is currently working with Board Members Burne and Claudia on our first-ever virtual book discussion on “Braiding Sweetgrass” that we will host on Monday, February 15, 2021. Below, please read a little about this newest voice and join me in welcoming Erin.
“Erin L. McCormack is a writer, teacher and antiracism activist. She has written three novels, Spanish Soap Operas (Telenovelas) (2011); Blue Eyes in Black Wonderland (2015); and most recently, In Regalia (2019), involving a Native American family in contemporary New England. She earned a B.A. in theater and literature at UC/Santa Cruz, CA and a Masters in Education at Harvard. For many years, she taught English and writing for college level and adult students in the Boston area. In addition to writing and teaching, Erin volunteers at the Bedford VA Hospital, at a performing arts organization in Lexington, and for MCNAA events. She and her husband raised two sons west of Boston and spent many summers in Falmouth, MA, attending and learning about native culture at the annual Mashpee Wampanoag pow wows. Erin is a long-time member and supporter of the MCNAA.”

UPCOMING BOOK DISCUSSION “BRAIDING SWEETGRASS”

On Monday, February 15, 2021, MCNAA will host a virtual book discussion on “Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants” by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The discussion will be led by Claudia Fox Tree and Erin McCormack. SAVE THE DATE!

An inspired weaving of indigenous knowledge, plant science, and personal narrative from a distinguished professor of science and a Native American whose previous book, Gathering Moss, was awarded the John Burroughs Medal for outstanding nature writing.

As a botanist and professor of plant ecology, Robin Wall Kimmerer has spent a career learning how to ask questions of nature using the tools of science. As a Potawatomi woman, she learned from elders, family, and history that the Potawatomi, as well as a majority of other cultures indigenous to this land, consider plants and animals to be our oldest teachers. In Braiding Sweetgrass, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowing together to reveal what it means to see humans as “the younger brothers of creation.”

The February date will give you time to purchase and read the book. You can acquire the book from any of the following:
1. Amazon.com – at $15.99 paperback; also Kindle and Audible versions.
4. Erin has copies available at $18 at dkkelm@aol.com, including shipping. If cost is a factor, please inquire at MCNAA for donated books.

If interested in taking part in the virtual discussion, please RSVP by e-mailing mcnaa@aol.com so that a Zoom link can be sent to you in February.