

American Indian Health and Family Services



Project Title:	Gda' Minobinmaddzimi – Culturally Healthy Families Project
Award Amount:	\$150,000
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 5 Native American consultants hired
- 54 elders involved
- 6 youth involved
- \$4,983 in resources leveraged
- 3 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

American Indian Health and Family Services (AIHFS) of Southern Michigan is a nonprofit organization serving Native Americans in the seven-county greater Detroit area. AIHFS' purpose is to provide health and human services to 34,000 Native Americans from over 100 tribal affiliations. In addition to providing medical and dental care, AIHFS provides health education, alcohol and drug prevention services, social work services, and family counseling services.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to reduce the negative impacts of unmarried childbirth and single parenting for Native American

children and to facilitate healthy marriage and positive co-parenting for Native families in AIHFS' service area by developing a community plan and culturally appropriate educational resources for low-income Native American single parents.

The project's first objective was to develop a community plan for implementing a healthy marriage and positive co-parenting initiative. Project researchers, including partners from AIHFS, Michigan State University (MSU), and the University of Michigan, began this process by conducting a review of academic literature on child-rearing in Native American communities and the role of traditional marriage on couple relationships and co-parenting. When they found very few articles on these topics specific to urban Native American families, they expanded the review to include other groups, being mindful of family issues specific to Native Americans.

Next, the research team conducted 6 focus groups, reaching 45 parents (including 23 men and 22 women) and 16 human service providers. Participants identified: services needed to help improve the well-being of native parents and children; attributes native

parents should possess in order to develop strong families; barriers to developing strong families; unique aspects of raising children for Detroit Native American families; and community strengths that could help heal emotional and behavioral stress in native youth and families.

After analyzing data from focus groups, the team wrote a research report summarizing their findings and a community action plan recommending programs, policies, and practices to be implemented by AIHFS. The plan focused on relationship and co-parenting skills training for parents and included an evaluation plan for assessing program efficacy in facilitating improved skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors among participants.

The project's second objective was to modify MSU Extension's "Together We Can" co-parenting relationships curriculum to form a co-parenting course culturally appropriate for urban Native American communities. The team made various revisions to the original curriculum, creating a 12-hour training course on how Native American families could strengthen their family circle through relationship and co-parenting skill building. The new curriculum recognized how native values, beliefs, and kinship systems influence the way Native Americans understand family relationships and parenting, and included issues identified by Native American parents in the focus groups, such as coping with stress, anxiety, depression, and unemployment. The project team added new exercises deemed culturally more accessible to Native Americans, using practices such as storytelling and talking circles. The curriculum also had new sections on accessing and mobilizing resources, mental and behavioral health strategies, and domestic violence education.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Focus group participants involved in the project expressed satisfaction that their wishes and voices had been heard by AIHFS, the project team, and the other participants. They learned that others in their community shared their problems, vowed to continue learning from one another, forged new bonds with AIHFS, and accessed more AIHFS services.

AIHFS has a higher community profile and has seen an increase in participation in all of its programs. The organization has increased its capacity to address the negative impacts of unmarried childbirth, single parenting, unhealthy family relationships, and other issues brought forward by the community, improving understanding of these problems and learning new ways to address the problems. AIHFS staff and academic partners feel that the tools developed by this project, particularly the modified "Together We Can" curriculum, will be very useful to AIHFS staff and native and non-native community educators working in other urban Indian communities.

The community plan and resource materials developed by AIHFS and its project partners are tools that will help the organization to provide relationship and co-parenting skill training for married, unmarried, new, expectant, and absentee parents. AIHFS staff intends to use these tools, in particular, to meet the unique needs of Native American low-income single parents. They feel that when implemented, this initiative could improve the health and well-being of 4,200 Native American children living in single parent homes in the AIHFS service area, and the lives of children from other families facing problems such as poverty, unemployment, anxiety, and depression.

Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians



Project Title:	Ottawa Bmaadiziwin - The Ottawa Way of Sustainable Life
Award Amount:	\$194,283
Type of Grant:	Environmental
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 10 Native American consultants hired
- 25 elders involved
- 15 youth involved
- \$36,798 in resources leveraged
- 8 individuals trained
- 10 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is located in the northern portion of Michigan's lower peninsula and secured status as a nonprofit organization in 1980. It is a state-recognized tribe with a 20.5 acre land base and approximately 320 enrolled members.

Due to the tribe's limited land base and access to resources, much of its membership has migrated away from traditional homelands in search of better opportunities. This development has led to a decreased level of intergenerational knowledge sharing, and has limited the capacity of tribal staff to engage in the land's environmental protection.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to foster connections between traditional Ottawa ecological knowledge and scientific ecological knowledge to build a network of environmental protection partners which will jointly address the environmental issues facing the Burt Lake Band.

The project's first objective was to develop an experiential environmental training program which incorporated a traditional teaching and learning model as well as modern environmental science information and techniques. To complete the objective, project staff held meetings to procure community input on workshop topics. Staff finalized objectives for nine workshop sessions: Maple Sugaring, Native Plants and Gardens, Forest Resources, Water, Land Resources, Ice Fishing, Fish Farming, Cattail Mats, and Local Biodiversity. Staff then identified apposite western science and traditional science experts to ensure each topic would be presented from both viewpoints. Over the course of the project's two-year timeframe, a total of 387 Burt Lake community members attended the workshops. To document the content

presented, staff recorded each session and then transferred the video to DVD format. Staff compiled all course content and resources into a manual, which they then published to the Tribe’s website.

The project’s second objective was to form the Burt Lake Band Tribal Environmental Protection Advisory Board (TEPAB) to represent the tribe in local environmental issues and resource management. To complete the objective, project staff recruited workshop attendees to fill available positions. The board consists of seven community members and one tribal staff member. The Burt Lake Band Tribal Council passed a resolution to recognize TEPAB as the tribe’s voice on environmental issues and to empower the board to continue project activities past the grant timeframe. Prior to the completion of the project, board members set an annual calendar for monthly meetings and participated in training on indigenous environmental law and policy.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The 318 members of the Burt Lake community that participated in project activities increased their knowledge on a broad range of environmental topics, which included information from traditional Ottawa and western scientific perspectives. Twenty-five tribal elders shared their wisdom as the project’s traditional environmental science experts, which served to strengthen their position as keepers of knowledge within the community. Fifteen youth also attended the environmental workshops, and gained the understanding that neither a scientific nor a traditional environmental perspective is more valid or reliable than the other, but merely two ways to better understand their surroundings.

Burt Lake tribal staff also broadened their knowledge on local environmental issues. Staff created a network of key partnerships

which improved their knowledge of state environmental regulations, and deepened their relationship with the state of Michigan which, staff envision, will lead to mutual collaboration on land issues.

Grand Traverse Bay Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians



Project Title:	Electronic Medical Records Project
Award Amount:	\$392,914
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2005 – March 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 2 elders involved
- \$3,300 in resources leveraged
- 24 individuals trained
- 12 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is located in the northwest region of Michigan's lower peninsula and counts approximately 4,000 enrolled tribal members. The tribe was federally recognized in 1980 and has a federal land base of 2,370 acres. In 1992, the tribe became one of the nation's first self-governance tribes.

In a partnership with Indian Health Service (IHS), the tribe operates a comprehensive health care delivery system through a clinic and behavioral health unit. To manage their health clinics, the tribe utilizes the Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) software, the mandated health management software distributed by IHS to its health partners. To better meet the needs of its

clients, staff, and health partners, the tribe desired to improve the current patient data and financial management system by integrating an electronic health record (EHR) system with the current RPMS system.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to implement a comprehensive and cost-effective electronic medical records system.

The project's first objective was to create a steering committee and conduct an EHR needs and resource assesment. To complete the objective, the tribe hired a project coordinator to oversee the implementation of the work plan. To provide guidance and project oversight, the coordinator convened the steering committee, which included staff from the clerical, clinical, and managerial divisions of the tribe's health department and clinics. Finally, the coordinator conducted two talking circles to procure input from health department staff and community members on the implementation, use, and content of the EHR. From these discussion groups, the coordinator developed a five-year vision for the EHR.

The project's second objective was to prepare for the implementation of the EHR system. In collaboration with the tribe's IT department, the coordinator confirmed the tribe's technology infrastructure was capable of supporting the EHR system. The coordinator then developed a policies and procedures manual for clinic staff use of the EHR, including the documentation of patient visits and outcomes, billing procedures, and patient follow-up. Finally, the coordinator created an implementation timeline for the EHR system, complete with expected deliverables, benchmarks, and responsible parties.

The project's third objective was to implement and launch the EHR system in the tribe's clinics. To complete the implementation process, the project coordinator received training from the IHS to learn the EHR programming functions and interface capabilities in order to fully configure and customize the software for the tribe's clinics. Additionally, the 23 staffmembers of the tribe's clinics received EHR system training and subsequently input and updated over 5,000 patient files into the system. On June 23, 2008, the tribe launched the EHR system in their clinics and clinic staff have utilized it exclusively since. During the six-month project extension period, staff interfaced the EHR system with the local hospital to allow for referral information, such as scans, x-rays, and lab results, to be shared between the organizations.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Overall, the implementation and launch of the tribe's electronic health record system has provided a greater level of security for confidential health information, has improved patient care and safety by reducing medical information errors, and has eliminated reliance on paper records. Furthermore, improved recordkeeping and

accuracy in the billing process, including a mandated 24-hour turnaround, has tripled third-party revenue generation.

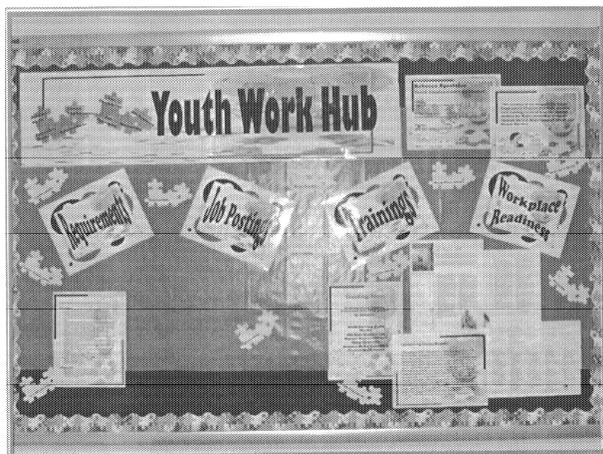
For the Grand Traverse Band, project implementation has resulted in a comprehensive, low-cost, and effective health management system. The decision to only utilize internal staff and tribal members during implementation indicates that the tribe possesses the capacity needed to operate and maintain the system. The IHS has accredited the tribe's EHR system, signifying a strengthened relationship between the two partners. Indeed, the tribe's improved recordkeeping and reporting has led to increased funding from the IHS.

For Grand Traverse clinic patients, the improved and standardized policies and procedures ensure accurate documentation of their prescriptions, lab orders, allergies, clinic visits, and follow-up care, thereby improving their care and safety.

For health clinic staff, participation in the EHR needs assessment provided an opportunity to give guidance on the type of health management system they would like implemented. Formal training on the EHR system ensures they are competent, confident, and efficient in its use, and established policies and procedures will be carried out consistently.

Finally, health department staff shared that other tribes have begun to contact the Grand Traverse Band to become informed about the EHR development process. As the IHS may mandate the use of the EHR software, the tribe has committed to offering technical assistance to interested tribes.

Hannahville Indian Community



Project Title:	Youth Employment Development Project
Award Amount:	\$85,985
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 9 jobs created
- 6 elders involved
- 35 youth involved
- \$63,306 in resources leveraged
- 37 individuals trained
- 19 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Hannahville Indian Community is a Potawatomi tribe that resides on a 5,800 acre reservation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The tribe counts approximately 800 enrolled members, 600 of whom live within the reservation boundaries.

The tribe's employment database indicates a 40% unemployment rate for youth aged 19-25. The tribe allocates \$50,000 annually to an employment fund to provide wages to youth for summer jobs, the majority of which are manual labor positions. In its recent comprehensive plan, the tribe identified the need to develop an employment program to assist and train youth in the job skills necessary to attain and retain productive and sustainable work.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to create a Youth Employment Program to address the tribe's escalating problem of unemployed and underemployed youth.

The project's first objective was to create the framework for the Youth Employment Program. To complete the objective, the Tribe hired and trained a program coordinator to implement all project activities. The coordinator formed focus groups and collaborated with the Tribe's Human Resources Department to develop the Youth Employment Handbook, which outlines all policies and procedures governing the program.

The project's second objective was to develop the capacity of the Youth Employment Program to partner with at least 10 worksites where at least 20 tribal youth would engage in positive work experiences pertinent to their career interests. The coordinator created a public relations plan and advertised the program via the local radio station, articles in the tribal newsletter, tribal listserv, and ads in the local newspaper. The coordinator then developed a "Work Hub" bulletin board at

the tribal high school and added a youth employment section to the tribe's website to post all employment opportunities, training dates, and pertinent forms. By the conclusion of the project's timeframe, the coordinator collaborated with identified partners to craft 12 job descriptions, with 36 tribal youth successfully attaining part-time employment. The employed youth were a balanced group of males and females, and ranged in age from 14 to 19 years old. In compliance with program policies, each youth was required to maintain a C average and attend classes on a regular basis. Finally, the coordinator developed an evaluation to survey all employed youth and their employers at the end of the project in order to gain insight on the program's strengths and weaknesses.

The project's third objective was to identify the necessary training content for each job description to produce youth with the skills necessary to be successful employees. For each job position posted, the project coordinator collaborated with the prospective employer to identify the skills necessary to perform the job functions. Training modules were completed for six job descriptions, including such positions as Custodial Aide, Daycare Center Aide, and Fitness Center Aide. Training content included classroom sessions on customer service, CPR/First Aid training, and on-site job training. The remaining six training modules will be completed after the conclusion of the project timeframe.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The 36 tribal youth involved with the Youth Employment Program gained meaningful part-time employment in positions in which they expressed interest. Along with the financial benefits of a job, each youth received training relevant to their position to ensure success. Furthermore, the program held the youth responsible for their

schoolwork and attendance. Indeed, the program coordinator removed one youth from their job due to declining grades, and placed this student in the school's tutoring program. Subsequent academic improvement allowed the youth to return to work.

To sustain project momentum, the Hannahville Tribal Council will retain the program coordinator to manage the Youth Employment Program. The program coordinator will continue to maintain the Work Hub bulletin board and youth employment section of the tribe's website. During project implementation, all youth employment positions were on-reservation jobs, but the coordinator plans to build partnerships with local off-reservation employers expressing interest due to the success of the program. Finally, due to the encouraging outcomes of the project, staff from the tribe's Adult Employment Assistance Program has requested the assistance of Youth Employment Program staff to incorporate training modules and an accountability framework into their operations plan.

Hannahville Indian Community



Project Title:	Ensuring the Survival of the Potawatomi Language - Digital Connections Language Project
Award Amount:	\$298,882
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2006 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 7 jobs created
- 4 elders involved
- 141 youth involved
- \$97,536 in resources leveraged
- 4 individuals trained
- 8 partnerships formed
- 5,307 native language classes held
- 161 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 30 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

The Hannahville Indian Community resides on a 5,800 acre reservation in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. The tribe counts approximately 800 enrolled members, 600 of whom live within reservation boundaries.

The tribe has traditionally spoken Potawatomi, a language within the Anishinaabe language family. In 2003, the tribe conducted a language survey of all Potawatomi-speaking tribes and discovered

that only 27 fluent speakers remained and 90% of these speakers were over 60 years of age. The tribe also learned that only one fluent speaker remained within the Hannahville Indian Community.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project’s purpose was to develop and implement an interactive digital language learning system for the Hannahville Culture Center and the Tribe’s K-12 school.

The project’s first set of objectives was to install and launch a digital language learning system at the Tribe’s K-12 school. To complete the objectives and oversee project implementation, the tribe hired a project coordinator. The coordinator purchased the language software along with 25 microphone headsets and, in collaboration with the tribe’s IT department, installed the learning system on 19 desktop computers and 6 laptops at the tribal school. Training materials developed by the manufacturer were included with the system, and included a CD tutorial and manual which the coordinator distributed to the school’s language staff. The project coordinator also presented a series of hands-on workshops to

language staff on the use of the system, the lesson plan authoring software tool, course management program, and self-assessment tools. The language staff then developed a comprehensive K-12 curriculum that integrated videos, audio clips, interactive games, and quizzes. During the second semester of the project's first year, the digital language learning system was launched in one classroom with one language class per week. At the end of the school year, language staff administered a survey to gauge the efficacy of, and support for, the new system. Positive feedback led school administration to purchase 8 new laptops and to expand the language system into 2 classrooms with classes held 5 days per week for 161 students. Over the course of the project, language staff taught 5,307 Potawatomi language classes utilizing the digital language learning system.

The project's second set of objectives was to install and launch a digital language learning system at the Hannahville Culture Center. Following the same set of activities implemented during the first set of objectives, the project coordinator, in collaboration with the tribe's IT department, installed the language software and microphone headsets on six computers in the Hannahville Culture Center. All language-learning modules and resources available at the tribal school were made available at the Culture Center. To promote the language lab, language staff developed flyers, tribal newsletter articles, and emails inviting community members to attend an open house to experiment with the language learning system. Additionally, language staff created a language workbook and DVD and mailed them with an invitation to all community members. Staff counted 160 attendees, and each participant was given a system tutorial and encouraged to sign up for formal language classes at the Center or to utilize the resources on an informal basis.

The project's third set of objectives was to expand the online language course and curriculum offered to community members at the Culture Center. To complete the objectives, language staff strengthened their partnerships with five Potawatomi bands to obtain language resources which were incorporated into existing curriculum modules. Staff also encouraged these partners to extend invitations to their community members to join Hannahville's online language learning community. Staff created four nine-week language modules which were then built into a comprehensive 36-week online course. The expanded online course commenced in the fall of 2009 with 30 Potawatomi tribal members committed to classes twice per week.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Through collaboration with their partners and community, the tribe has launched a multimedia language learning system that is available to all community members, thereby reversing a trend of ongoing language loss. By utilizing current technology and varied resources, Hannahville's youth embraced the opportunity to learn their native language. The tribal school's language teachers have benefitted from hands-on training and access to additional teaching resources and methods. For tribal families, the availability of web-based language tools, as well as language workbooks and DVDs, signifies that learning Potawatomi has become an inter-generational activity, thereby strengthening family bonds through culture.

To sustain project progress, the Tribal Council committed funds to finance an IT and a language staff position to maintain the language learning system and to continue providing online Potawatomi classes at the Culture Center. Online Potawatomi classes at the tribal school have become part of the school's standard curriculum.

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community



Project Title:	Anishinaabe Anokii: Strengthening the Economy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Award Amount:	\$538,776
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2005 – Jun. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 21 jobs created
- 8 businesses created
- 7 Native American consultants hired
- 24 elders involved
- 107 youth involved
- \$19,590 in resources leveraged
- 159 individuals trained
- 19 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is a federally-recognized Indian tribe located in Baraga County, on the north central portion of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Communities located in this area face severe isolation due to the harsh winter climate and a lack of connecting highway infrastructure. When combined, these factors often contribute to unstable economies and high levels of poverty and unemployment.

KBIC has an enrollment of approximately 3,305 (2005 data) members, with over 40 percent living on or near the L’Anse Reservation. The unemployment rate is estimated at 28 percent for those members living on the reservation, much higher than the 11 percent reported for Baraga County (2004 data). Though many tribal members express interest in small business development, most find it difficult to successfully overcome the economic challenges in their community.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to create a small business development center to provide culturally appropriate services for new and existing native business owners.

The project’s first objective was to establish the *Anishinaabe Anokii*, or “First People’s”, center and provide services to a minimum of 35 tribal members, including tribal youth and traditional artists, in the first project year. Due to a six-month late start, the center did not open until March 2006. Project staff created and distributed promotional materials such as flyers and

brochures for upcoming trainings and events. The project director and services coordinator completed business counseling training. Services available during the first project year included a copy center and computer lab with QuickBooks software installed. Trainings conducted the first year included courses on QuickBooks, marketing a small business, and the Small Business Administration's HUB Zone program. The center partnered with the National Tribal Development Association's summer youth program and the American Indian Economic Development Fund's (AIEDF) Indianpreneur program to provide activities and training to tribal members. In addition, the center worked with local native artists to host an outdoor artisan's market during the summer months. The center created a Native American-Owned Business Directory for distribution via website, as well as a print version. By the end of the project's first year, over 70 individuals utilized services provided by the *Anishinaabe Anokii* center.

The second objective was to expand the center's services to 50 tribal members during the project's second year. The center continued to offer trainings and copy center services, the services coordinator updated the business directory, and advertising for trainings and services continued. The center's youth director established an entrepreneurship program which included sessions on banking and budgeting for tribal youth. Challenges arose surrounding AIEDF's Indianpreneur program. While AIEDF conducted the training necessary for their culturally appropriate entrepreneurship program, gap funding was not available for participants to establish their businesses. Project staff also found it difficult to garner interest amongst local native artists in utilizing the center's services.

In year three, the project's objective was to expand services to 75 tribal members. As a

result of the problems with AIEDF, project staff began conducting trainings with Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College. Over the course of the project, 159 individuals participated in trainings through the center and over 200 utilized the center's services. The project continued to experience challenges promoting their services to local native artists, though they continued to host an artisan's market.

The project received a nine-month no-cost extension to continue conducting small business trainings, provide counseling, update the center's website, implement the youth entrepreneurship program, and conduct two events to showcase tribal artists.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Existing native business owners benefited from additional training opportunities that allowed for business expansion. Training in financial software means business owners can now perform basic accounting themselves rather than spending funds on hiring an accountant.

The center's services helped new and future native business owners discover the economic feasibility of their businesses, bringing them closer to financial success and stability. Eight new business owners received their licenses during the project, with more expected within the next months.

Tribal youth have increased financial responsibility and general financial skills due to participation in the youth entrepreneurship program. Project director Gregg Nominelli states, the program "provides confidence and independence for potentially being a business owner. [It] changed their mindset and their attitude."

The center continues to provide small business and entrepreneurship trainings.

Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan



Project Title:	Gda-Saswin-nah Training and Development Project
Award Amount:	\$260,684
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 6 Native American consultants hired
- 8 elders involved
- 8 youth involved
- \$17,200 in resources leveraged
- 96 individuals trained
- 7 partnerships formed
- 4 language teachers trained
- 74 native language classes held (adults)
- 135 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 20 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan (SCIT) is a 3,239 member tribe in central Michigan, the majority of whom live on or near the tribe's Isabella Reservation. Findings from the SCIT's 2005 survey on language preservation and revitalization indicated that the Ojibwe language is nearly extinct within the tribe; only 1 of 638 survey respondents self-identified as a fluent speaker. To address this problem and

reverse the rate of Ojibwe language loss on the reservation, the Tribe has begun a language nest at the Saginaw Chippewa Academy (SCA) for over 130 toddlers, pre-primary, and kindergarten children.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to build curricula, train pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers at the SCA language nest, and encourage parents to use Ojibwe outside of the classroom. The project had three principal objectives. The first objective was for the project team to identify and translate 100% of the toddler, pre-primary, and kindergarten classroom core curricula, support materials, and activities into Ojibwe "Enkaazang Gidiwinan Enso-Giizhigag" ("Words We Use Every Day"). In year one, despite being unable to hire a curriculum development specialist, the team developed a comprehensive toddler curriculum with 13 lesson plans and over 150 support activities. The curriculum addressed day-to-day life and language, the five senses, and mathematics; support activities included games, songs, finger puppet plays, and circle time activities. The team was able to build the curriculum through the efforts of the project director, six consultants, eight elder volunteers, and

seven youth volunteers. In year two and in a three month no-cost extension period at the end of the project, the team enhanced the curriculum, adding resources and learning aids appropriate for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students.

The second objective was for the SCA toddler, pre-primary, and kindergarten program staff to have reached 50% proficiency in speaking and understanding a selected set of Ojibwe “words we use every day” by the end of year one, and 60% proficiency in speaking and teaching by the end of year two. To achieve this, 16 teachers took part in 70 language training sessions over 2 years, 40 teachers and staff members took part in four 2-hour in-service trainings, and 5 staff members attended 2 immersion education workshops and an Anishinaabek language conference. The project employed fluent elder volunteers and consultants to observe and critique speaking and pronunciation of trainees, and utilized recordings to allow them to hear their own speaking and to recognize ways to improve. Eighteen teachers used journals as self-assessment tools and completed individual language acquisition plans, which set standards for achievement and outlined what they could and should do to personally learn the language. These teachers were then assessed using a proficiency matrix analyzing six areas of language acquisition and language teaching. Through these methods, trainees learned over 500 new vocabulary words, various beginning level grammatical structures and language functions, and active language techniques useful with young children.

The third objective was to develop and carry out a plan encouraging parents and the community to use the Ojibwe language in the home and community, supporting the classroom language learning activities of the tribe’s children. To achieve this, project staff began by working with the SCIT

newspaper to elevate the profile of the language, placing Ojibwe vocabulary, language exercises, and personal reflections on the importance of language in the newspaper. The project team also planned and hosted various events and meetings, partnering with various tribal departments and publicizing all events in the SCA newsletter. Activities and events included parent nights, culture camps, workshops, multi-generational activities, and senior program visits. The largest event of the year was a language recital featuring all toddler through kindergarten students. Over 200 parents, grandparents, and extended family members attended the event.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Through this project, the tribe improved its capacity to provide language nest training to young tribal members, and promoted the long term sustainability of the nest program by educating and involving parents and the community. Project staff developed comprehensive curricula and learning tools for young children in the SCA; and 20 SCA staff members, including 18 teachers, increased their ability to understand, speak, and teach the Ojibwe language.

According to the project director, “The project really supported our goal of revitalizing the language and creating fluent speakers. The children are picking up the language very quickly, and parents like it because it makes language and culture part of the everyday life of their kids.” Project staff members believe providing language nest training to young children will enable the community to increasingly identify with Ojibwe language and culture, and result in more advanced levels of Ojibwe instruction being taught in the upper grade levels of the Saginaw Chippewa Academy.