
BURT LAKE BANK OF OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS



Project Title:	Anishinaabe Bimaadizwin Naagademing (Taking Care of Our Way of Life)
Award Amount:	\$247,351
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 10 elders involved
- 10 youth involved
- \$21,610 in resources leveraged
- 31 individuals trained
- 11 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Consisting of 290 enrolled members, the Burt Lake Band (BLB) of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is a state-recognized tribe in northern Michigan. The tribal homelands are centered near Burt Lake (historically known as Cheboiganing), and a majority of tribal membership is spread into three separate service areas around Brutus (near Burt Lake), Lansing, and Grand Rapids.

Community elders and adults have long expressed a desire for more opportunities to bring membership together, concerned that cultural knowledge, in particular traditional artwork, was not being transferred between generations. This loss is attributed to lack of time and financial resources to travel between their homes and the tribal

homeland. To pass on traditional artwork knowledge and skills, tribal members needed financial assistance to attend trainings and a venue for connecting with artists.

Prior to this grant award, BLB conducted a community survey to determine interest in the art training. The survey affirmed that preserving traditional arts was a community priority. By the time the grant was awarded, a group of interested participants were ready to begin training.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project was to promote and preserve traditional arts in the BLB community. The objective was to train 12 BLB members in two traditional art forms, bringing them to a level of proficiency at which they could teach others. Project staff also planned to establish a mentorship program in the second year to pair newly trained artists with students eager to learn traditional arts. The traditional arts included, but were not limited to quill box making, black ash basketry, beadwork, leather tanning, leather mitt making, and drum making. Project staff employed master artists to conduct trainings, and provided the

students with stipends for travel costs. Thirteen students registered, received training, and attained teacher-level proficiency by the second year, as evaluated by the master artists. There was an additional group of 18 core community members that also participated regularly in the art trainings. Several students produced high-quality items, such as quill boxes, beaded jewelry, and drums, which project staff marketed by compiling biographies with photographs of their work in a portfolio folder located in the tribal administration building. Each student was equipped with a 10-page marketing pamphlet, created by a business consultant that included guidance on which stores sell native art, how to sell at powwows or art shows, and how to use social media to market products. The students also participated in three regional art shows.

Another component of the project was to establish a mentorship program for tribal members to learn from the artists who gained teacher proficiency. All 13 new artists committed to teaching mentees, and five mentees committed to learning at a pace and location convenient to them. Project staff raised funds to buy a gift basket of art tools and supplies for each mentor artist and to supply them with a monthly \$25 gas card. To sustain the program, mentors and mentees will raise funds, and community members have agreed to donate raw materials, such as sweetgrass and hides. In addition, the Tribal Council passed a resolution to implement a permanent mentorship program once tribal funding becomes available.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Adults, elders and youth were engaged at the workshops, spending several hours together, exchanging stories and encouraging each other. One young participant gained advanced skills in beadwork and taught the

art to her seventh grade class. Master artists also used the Ottawa language during the workshops and taught spiritual lessons, engaging the students in learning cultural terms.

Six of the artists have been able to supplement their incomes by selling artwork. As a result of this project, the artists now understand how to incorporate the value of their time and talent into the price of their work.

As artists work with mentees to build proficiency, the mentees in turn become proficient as teachers, ensuring that more of the community will learn traditional art skills through this sustainable model. Project staff believe that the artists have learned much more than an art form; they have learned what their ancestors knew, and are keeping that knowledge to share with future generations.

“It was community-oriented, all ages-how it's supposed to be.”

Burt Lake Band Traditional Arts
Project Staff

GRAND TRAVERSE BAND OF OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS



Project Title:	Grand Traverse Band Healthy Relationships
Award Amount:	\$512,223
Type of Grant:	SEDS - Strengthening Families
Project Period:	Sept. 2006 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 full-time equivalent job created
- 30 elders involved
- 30 youth involved
- \$14,895 in resources leveraged
- 12 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Grand Traverse Band (GTB) of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is a self-governed tribe located in the northwest section of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The tribe is composed of 3,982 members, 46 percent of whom live on the reservation or within the tribe's six-county service area.

Diabetes, obesity, depression, drug abuse and addiction, and achievement gaps in children's reading and math scores are prevalent in the GTB community. In addition, a disproportionately higher percentage of natives in GTB's service region are unmarried when compared to other races. GTB believes poor socioeconomic conditions in the community are related to a lack of stable, committed relationships in families; thus, they sought to provide healthy relationships training for tribal members.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to increase family well-being by improving the relationship skills of adults and youth in the GTB community. The first two objectives were to train GTB behavioral health clinicians in the evidence-based relationship curriculum Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills (PAIRS) for youth and adult populations. The PAIRS curriculum includes five levels of expertise. Levels one and two provide a basis of general relationship health training that allows trainers to extend the curriculum to a variety of age groups. As the levels progress, the trainers gain more precise knowledge on building intimacy within couples and are certified to teach specific curricula. By the project's third year, five clinicians completed training in levels one and two of the PAIRS curriculum and three clinicians completed levels one through five; these three clinicians maintained their certification throughout the project. In addition to PAIRS training, staff also attended a training provided by the Native Wellness Institute (NWI) on culturally appropriate relationship-building activities in native communities.

The third objective was to improve relationships among adult couples in the community. Capitalizing on the advanced training staff received, the project director created a 10-week workshop series called PAIRS for LIFE for adult couples that integrated lessons from the PAIRS and NWI curricula, culminating in a “Passion Weekend” retreat. Seven cohorts participated in the 10-week training. Project staff then held three “Passion Weekend” retreats for 155 adults, where couples made vows of commitment and participated in elements of a traditional marriage ceremony. Ninety-five percent of PAIRS for LIFE participants responded on post-workshop surveys that they learned important skills they can apply to their relationships.

The fourth objective was to teach lessons from the PAIRS curricula to youth and provide them with interpersonal skills to improve their relationships. The clinicians held six, 10-week sessions for 30 at-risk youth living in substance abuse foster homes. In addition to participating in classroom instruction, the youth took part in a ropes challenge course where they learned to rely on each other and participate in teamwork exercises. The youth also learned the native tradition of smudging, burning sage and sweet grass to bring in positivity and push out negativity, before each session.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

This project skillfully incorporated cultural practices and wisdom into a non-culturally specific evidence-based curriculum. During the “Passion Weekend,” couples participated in native traditions to solidify their commitment. They received one bowl, to signify they are a unified couple and are no longer two people, and they braided sweet grass as a symbol for braiding each others’ hair, to demonstrate trust. They also received a native Pendleton blanket, wrapped around them both, to symbolize

walking together through life. Learning about these traditions gave couples a cultural model of healthy relationships they could connect to, and non-native spouses gained a deeper appreciation for their spouses’ native identity. The PAIRS curriculum also taught them valuable skills of conflict resolution and healthy interdependency.

Several PAIRS participants indicated a desire to attend the PAIRS classes again or to come in for one-on-one counseling. GTB also secured a Substance and Mental Health Services Administration grant, which includes a funding allotment for relationship training. With community interest and financial support in place, the tribe will be able to sustain its healthy relationship program. The exposure to Ojibwe language and culture gained through this project inspired both participants and visitors to become more involved in other language activities on the reservation. The project participants became role models for language and cultural revitalization in the GTB community, and gained the skills and motivation necessary to pass their knowledge on to future generations.

“The symbolism from these events stays strong.”

PAIRS for LIFE Participant

HURON POTAWATOMI, INC.



Project Title:	Healthy Potawatomi Families
Award Amount:	\$603,274
Type of Grant:	SEDS - Strengthening Families
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 7 elders involved
- 17 youth involved
- \$77,319 in resources leveraged
- 23 individuals trained
- 2 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Huron Potawatomi, Inc., also known as the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (NHBP), is a federally recognized tribe located in southwest Michigan, with over 670 members living on the Pine Creek Indian Reservation in Fulton and in the seven counties within the tribal service area.

From 2004 to 2006, tribal social service data showed the number of cases involving issues such as conflict between couples, domestic violence, aggression, and alcohol and drug related problems was on the rise. The NHBP Planning Department believed these social issues stemmed from a breakdown in family relationships, and tribal members needed an intervention to provide skills for building strong and stable families.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project purpose was to strengthen NHBP families by providing training in relationship building and parenting. The project's first objective was to serve 40 married couples and improve marital relationship skills of 80 percent of those couples. The project director hired two project coordinators to hold group sessions for the couples at a NHBP site in northern Michigan and at a site in Fulton, where the reservation is located. Unfortunately, significant and continuous turnover occurred with the project coordinator position at the northern site. This required the Fulton site's project coordinator to manage both locations, doubling her workload.

Consequently, all northern site project activities were discontinued. Furthermore, the community at Fulton did not respond to recruitment efforts of project staff. As a result of low participation, project staff discontinued the married couples group sessions at the Fulton site as well.

However, the project coordinator did conduct one-on-one counseling sessions with 10 married couples, 70 percent of whom improved their marriage skills over the course of counseling. In addition, 12

married individuals participated at family camps organized by the tribe. Held twice during the project, the camps involved families in discussions about important character traits that strengthen relationships. Staff shared the Anishinaabe seven grandfather teachings to emphasize the importance of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Humility, and Honesty. Families engaged in discussions of the seven teachings while participating in activities promoting teamwork and togetherness, such as rock climbing, arts and crafts, and making family shields.

The second objective was to serve a minimum of 40 unmarried couples and improve the relationship skills of 80 percent of those couples. Due to low participation, project staff decided to discontinue group sessions for these couples as well, but did hold one-on-one counseling sessions with 15 unmarried couples. Sixty percent of the couples showed improved relationship skills over the course of the sessions, as assessed by the project coordinator. Thirty-eight unmarried individuals also participated in the family camps.

The third objective was to serve a minimum of 40 parent couples and improve the parenting skills of 80 percent of the couples. The project coordinator and five other Huron Potawatomi staff received training in the Nurturing Parenting curriculum from the co-founder of the Family Nurturing Center of Michigan. The project coordinator also received training in the Positive Indian Parenting curriculum from the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Drawing from these curricula, she held one six-week training session, which was consistently attended by two parents and intermittently attended by thirteen other adults. She also provided one-on-one counseling for 23 individual parents, 87 percent of whom

exhibited improved parenting skills as determined through pre-and post-evaluations. Forty-one parents also participated in family camps.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Although project staff were unable to engage the NHBP community in group sessions, they did learn an important lesson about community involvement. In future projects, NHBP will involve a cross-section of the community in planning and integrate more intergenerational and native concepts into project activities. In addition, project staff learned the community prefers the family camp format of informal learning to lecture-style learning. One-on-one counseling also proved a successful method.

As a result of this project, the community is more aware of one-on-one counseling services available and family camps deepened relationships between families and staff. Additionally, six tribal staff received training in the Positive Indian Parenting curriculum, increasing their capacity to provide vital and culturally sensitive family strengthening services to the community.

Project staff anticipate that the Tribal Council will provide funding for continuation of activities started under this project, and staff have also explored funding partnerships with the tribe's Head Start and juvenile justice programs. As the tribe remodels and expands its existing healthy families programming, it will build upon the foundation of staff capacity and strong tribal and staff relationships built through this project.