



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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Chief Ron LaFrance Jr.  
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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:  
Enniskó:wa/March 3, 2015

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### **Akwesasne Youth Benefit from Room Occupancy Fee**

**Akwesasne, NY** – Members of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council were pleased to be on hand for the delivery of a new Nissan van for the Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club on February 20, 2015. Tribal Council donated the funds to pay for the vehicle through the Tribe's Hotel Occupancy Fee. To show their appreciation, Club staff and youth presented a signed banner to Tribal Council that is on display in the Community Building lobby.

"We're proud that the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe has been able to find ways to support the youth of Akwesasne," said Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. He added, "They represent the future of our community and we want to ensure that they have the means to succeed—both in school and in life."

In 2013, the Tribe implemented the Hotel Occupancy Fee Ordinance to financially support the increasing number of recreation, education and tourism programs for tribal members. The regulation entails the assessment of \$10 per room for each day of occupancy. The Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort began collecting the fee in September 2013, while the Comfort Inn was added in the spring of 2014. It has averaged \$68,000 per month in revenue.

"The Room Occupancy Fee is one more measure that Tribal Council has implemented to help generate needed funds to support the well-being of tribal members," stated Tribal Chief Paul Thompson. He noted, "It's used to provide the greatest benefit to the community in areas that typically don't get funded or are underfunded."

The Tribal Council provided a check for \$38,000 in December 2014 for the Club to purchase a vehicle to safely transport youth to extracurricular activities and after-school programs. The new van will replace a 2003 Ford van that has been used to provide daily transportation due to overcrowding from the St. Regis Mohawk School to the Club. The new vehicle will also enable the Club to expand its services and be used to transport youth from the Akwesasne Freedom School.

According to Tribal Chief Beverly Cook, "The Tribe is proud that the Boys and Girls Club continues to be at the forefront in the positive development of Akwesasne's youth. Through the Room Occupancy Fee, Tribal Council is able to support the Club's and other community organization's efforts to open doors and provide opportunities for tribal members that didn't previously exist."

Along with the Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club; the Room Occupancy Fee has benefited the Early Childhood Development Program in purchasing a Head Start bus and the Salmon River Central School in establishing a welding program. This has allowed the two former-Head Start buses to be donated to the Mohawk Indian Housing Corporation and the American Legion Post #1479.

*(Continued)*

**Helping Build A Better Tomorrow**

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“The Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club youth extend a sincere thank you to Tribal Sub-Chief Michael Conners for his work to get the van donated to the Club utilizing the hotel occupancy fee! Our old van was becoming more maintenance than it was worth, so Christmas came in February for many of the youth that ride in the van daily! *Niá:wen* again to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Tribal Chiefs,” stated Jessica Cree Jock, Executive Director of the Akwesasne Boys & Girls Club.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.