



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Beverly Cook  
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Sub-Chief Shelley Jacobs  
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Sub-Chief Cheryl Jacobs

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

For immediate release:  
Onerahtohkó:wa/April 8, 2016

For more information:  
Communications Department  
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe  
Tel: (518) 358-2272

### Letter to the Editor, Indian Time: Building a Healthy Community

It is important that the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe promote, without fear of ridicule or public criticism, the acts of kindness, humility and leadership we are so fortunate to see in our youth.

Brayden “Sonny” White is promoting hope and awareness through volunteer efforts throughout Akwesasne and because he’s been nationally recognized, the spotlight of his work shines on Indian Country. The award he received from The Aspen Institute as a Champion for Change was based on his history of volunteer service, which includes serving as a National Native Youth Ambassador for The White House initiative, Generation Indigenous (Gen-I), a Haudenosaunee Student Alliance Member, his participation in discussions at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly, the Akwesasne Cultural Camp and coaching youth sports for the past five years.

We are so encouraged by Sonny’s recent work as a member of the Akwesasne Suicide Coalition. His volunteerism demonstrates his commitment to a new preventative initiative geared toward youth. To strengthen his effort, he was certified in Mental Health First Aid in Barrie, Ontario in February 2016. Sonny plans to obtain certification as a safeTALK suicide-alert helper, which will prepare him to recognize words and actions that indicate suicidal thoughts and take action by connecting that person with life-saving intervention resources.

Our community is fortunate to have people who are willing to educate and prepare themselves to shoulder important work for our next generation, especially at a time when too many of our youth are facing drug addiction and youth suicides. These inter-related outcomes are often the direct result of lateral violence, an act of bullying that may be verbal or non-verbal aggressive behavior.

As elected leaders, we keep our doors open to the community. In doing so, we hear the concerns of community members on a daily basis—some are programmatic and some are personal. We work to find solutions to problems by leveraging the expertise and resources of our division directors and program managers. Together, we can accomplish great things when we support and lift up each other.

During the month of April, we are kicking off a series of open discussions concerning drug abuse in our community and hope to develop plans that address the needs of our people who are suffering. We urge you to join us in these sessions, the first of which will be held on April 11, 2016 to discuss a detox center. In closing, we recognize and appreciate the efforts of youth working on behalf of the health, wellness and safety our community.

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council

**Helping Build A Better Tomorrow**  
**lakhienawá:se’ Sénha Aioianeréhake ne Enióhrhen’ne**

412 State Route 37  
Akwesasne, New York 13655  
[www.srmt-nsn.gov](http://www.srmt-nsn.gov)  
Phone: 518-358-2272