



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Ron LaFrance Jr.  
Chief Paul O. Thompson  
Chief Beverly Cook  
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Sub-Chief Eric Thompson  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Develops Traditional Support Program** *Social Services Division Hires Two Traditional Workers with Strong Ties to Elders*

**Akwesasne** – The Social Services Division of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe proudly introduces a Traditional Support Program to the community of Akwesasne. The program combines traditional healing methods and modern counseling strategies to clients seeking alternative therapies for mental health treatment. The program will provide clients and their families with the opportunity to develop mental and spiritual self-awareness through the teachings of our ancestors. The mission is *to revive traditional Kanienhkeha values through education, advocacy and guidance.*

Curriculum is being developed to provide education and training through individual counseling sessions and workshops. “The strength of the Traditional Support Program relies on the teachings shared by our elders,” states Chief Ron LaFrance.

Chief Paul Thompson is “proud to have hired our first two Traditional Support Workers, Kawenniiosta Jock and Ian Clute.” Kawenniiosta speaks with the elders in Mohawk. Both she and Ian were raised in the traditions of the Longhouse. “Our goal is to educate families about our cultural identity through teachings, workshops and various activities that go on throughout the year in the Longhouse. We want to provide our clients with the necessary tools and guidance needed to become confident and have pride in their culture,” stated Kawenniiosta. Ian shares his vision, which is to “re-open peoples’ eyes to our traditional way of life.” The Traditional Support Workers started building the program in late 2013, with plans to begin accepting clients in early 2014.

The Traditional Support Workers partner with existing community support networks on a referral basis. “Supporting the validity of our ancient healing ways is a positive step towards reinforcing the critical importance of mind/body wellness,” states Chief Beverly Cook.

Referrals to the program are received through the Division of Social Services support programs, under the guidance of the Commissioner, Amber Montour.

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

**Helping Build A Better Tomorrow**

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