



# GLITC Resiliency

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. Newsletter



Shekoli swakwekhe  
(Greetings everyone),

I pray this message finds you and your families safe, healthy, and happy. Dealing with this pandemic for more than a year and a half has been difficult for us individually and worldwide. I am thankful to the many tribal leaders, staff, and individuals who have stepped up and led the hard discussions to keep our communities safe during this time of hardship. The losses we have suffered due to COVID-19 and the opioid epidemic during this tumultuous time have been great.

Indigenous nations have endured so much throughout our histories. Today, like in the past, we will get through it standing together, leaning on each other's experience, knowledge, and culture.

Yaw^ko  
Chairman Tehassi Hill  
Oneida Nation

## From GLITC Leadership

October 2021

When the COVID-19 pandemic started and the U.S. began shutting down in March 2020, our tribal leaders took an aggressive approach to keeping their communities safe. They rose to the challenge and did what they felt necessary to protect their most valuable and vulnerable resources – their members. Safer-at-home orders were put in place. Mask mandates were instituted. Casinos and tribal businesses were closed. Travel to and within tribal communities was limited and halted in some cases. Events were canceled, postponed, or moved to virtual platforms.

While it has not been easy, we also rose to that challenge. Our staff members found creative ways to serve tribal members, run our programs, and provide the support our communities needed. We, too, put people first. Zoom, Webex, and conference calls became the "norm" for reaching our program participants. WIC services transitioned to a telehealth platform. Several programs – Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion, Vocational Rehabilitation, Aging and Disability, SNAP-Ed, WIC, Native American Research Center for Health (NARCH), and Wisconsin Initiative for Student Empowerment (WISE) – worked together to fill and deliver Elder care bags to all tribal sites. The bags' purpose was to foster connectivity to combat isolation and to provide educational materials and things to do while staying inside and staying safe.

While COVID-19 is still on the horizon, with the delta variant taking hold, we are taking the lessons we've learned from it and will build upon them. We will continue to be creative and find new, innovative ways to serve our tribal communities. Now more than ever, as we return to working in the communities, we need to put people first. That is, after all, what we are all about – enhancing the quality of life for all Native people.

Therese Safford, Deputy Administrator/Compliance Officer

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## Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life for all Native people



# GLITC Aging Addresses Elder Isolation via Virtual Platform

## Aging & Disability Highlight

Isolation and loneliness among Elders during the pandemic is an ongoing issue. Many Elders are not confident with technology. As a result, some means of conversation and connection used by others while sheltering at home were not available to them.

### GrandPads

In 2020, GLITC Aging was granted COVID-19 CARES Act funding and was able to lease 100 GrandPads in a partnership with the GLITC Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)/Senior Companion Program (SCP). These GrandPads were created to be easily used by older adults. This made them the perfect means of connection for Elders who were not technologically confident. The GrandPads also crossed an additional barrier by coming equipped with internet.

### Evidence-Based Health Promotion Workshops

With the GrandPads in the hands of Elders, there was an opportunity to expand the reach of evidence-based health promotion. GLITC Aging is a Health Promotions Program Provider, and in 2021, it set out to offer six virtual health promotion workshops to tribal Elders throughout Wisconsin. A workshop schedule was put out to all 11 tribal communities, Elders signed up, materials were purchased and sent to the Elders, and the classes began.

These workshops have had incredible feedback from Elders. Many of the participants are FGP/SCP volunteers, but Elders outside the program have signed up as well. These Elders are learning how to self-manage their chronic conditions such as diabetes, how to manage the challenges of being a caregiver to an aging family member, how to prevent falls, and so much more.

This program will hopefully grow past the pandemic, as there is so much value in health promotion. Currently, GLITC staff members Mary Wolf, Carol Hamblin, and Kassy Heard are trained facilitators in evidence-based health promotion workshops, and Amanda Thompson is trained in Stand Up and Move. GLITC Aging's continued collaboration with tribal communities in providing these health promotion workshops to tribal Elders is an objective in the coming years.



- ▲ Tribal Elders used GrandPads to attend five virtual workshops: Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Healthy Living With Chronic Pain, Living Well With Chronic Conditions, and Healthy Living With Diabetes. The last 2021 workshop, called Stepping On: Fall Prevention, will occur in October and November.



# American Indians With Disabilities (AIWD)

## Vocational Rehabilitation Highlight

Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans (VRNA) has several service areas throughout Wisconsin and the Lac Vieux Desert Tribe of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. VRNA's mission is to help Native Americans with disabilities gain, maintain, or advance in employment. Through both the state American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) grant and the federal American Indians With Disabilities (AIWD) grant, VRNA is able to provide culturally relevant supplies and services to many group community activities in our service areas, with an emphasis on serving Native Americans with disabilities.

### Garden Projects

#### Lac du Flambeau Garden

The VRNA program started a garden project in spring 2019 with the Lac du Flambeau garden behind the GLITC main building. Working with SNAP-Ed at that time, VRNA purchased a greenhouse and raised garden beds. Since these items were not delivered to GLITC until the fall, VRNA was unable to find help putting the greenhouse and garden beds together before the snow started. Then COVID-19 hit before the spring 2020 thaw. In 2021, the construction of garden items has continued. VRNA is looking ahead to 2022, when the garden will be ready for full use by community members.

#### St. Croix Gardens

Karen Johnson, a VRNA counselor, has been working closely with St. Croix Tribal members and found the need for gardens and centralized locations for them. Karen worked hard to pull together the community members to make these gardens happen. With help from local youth, a past successful VRNA consumer has been putting together the greenhouses, garden beds, picnic tables, and other structures to make these gardens accessible for all community members. The gardens' construction has been slow and continues today. Although the growing season was missed in 2021, the gardens will be ready for community use for an excellent 2022 growing season. The greenhouses should be available for winter growing.

These projects will allow all community members to grow traditional herbs along with vegetables to supplement food shortages and price spikes, especially in these uncertain times with COVID-19. VRNA hopes to bring these gardens to the other tribal communities in the service areas.



▲ St. Croix youth assemble raised garden beds.



# Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Programs and Grants

## Aging and Disability

Aging and Disability Resource Specialist (ADRS)  
 Dementia Care Specialist (DCS)  
 Disability Benefit Specialist (DBS)  
 Elder Benefit Specialist (EBS)  
 Healthy Living With Diabetes  
 Medicaid Improvements for Patients and Providers  
 Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)  
 State Health Insurance Information Program  
 State Pharmaceutical Assistance (SPA)  
 Together Strong Dementia  
 Tribal Technical Assistance Center (TTAC)  
 Vaccination Hesitancy Outreach (VHO)

## Economic Development

Small Business Technical Assistance Program  
 (American Indian Economic Development Grant)  
 CARES Act Tourism Recovery  
 Economic Development  
 Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW)

## Education, Health, and Research

Great Lakes Native American Research Center for Health  
 (Great Lakes NARCH)  
 Wisconsin Native American Tobacco Network (WNATN)

## Elders

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)  
 Senior Companion Program (SCP)  
 VISTA AmeriCorps Initiative  
 Youth and Elder Community Empowerment

## Epidemiology

Coronavirus Preparedness and Response (CPAR)  
 Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC)  
 IHS Epidemiology Program Cooperative  
 Increasing Vaccine Coverage in AI/AN Adults (iVAC)  
 Tribal EPI Center Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI)  
 Tribal Public Health Capacity Building (UMB)

## Family Health

Cooperative American Indian Health  
 Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV)  
 Lincoln Hills Program  
 Native Breastfeeding Coalition of Wisconsin  
 Rural Infant Health  
 Sexual Risk Avoidance Education  
 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed)  
 Tribal Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)  
 Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

## Vocational Rehabilitation

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation  
 American Indians With Disabilities

## Our Heartfelt Gratitude

GLITC extends a special note of thanks to acknowledge all the federal, state, and private funders, donors, and foundations that support our programs and mission.