

## NEWSLETTER



# Ganohkwásra'

Family Assault Support Services

Winter 2014

### Vision

"With Ganohkwásra (love among us), we bury our weapons of violence to create a safe and caring community for all generations."

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### 25 Years of Service for Ganohkwásra

2013 marked 25 years of providing programs and services to individuals who have experienced the hurt, pain and trauma related to violence and abuse.

25 years ago was when the very first community counsellor was hired. However, the beginning footsteps began 2 years before that in 1986.

For some years, members of our community had been sheltering women and children who fled from violence in their homes. From this experience, they came to understand the fear and life-threatening danger in confronting an abusive spouse; and they came to understand how services outside our community often compound the fear and isolation of our women and children who were being abused.

After proposals, community consultations and countless hours of planning, it was determined that there

was an immediate need for a counselling service. This is when Gina Vanevery was hired and began working out of the building formerly known as the Nurses Residences and later known as the Needs Building. Then May 8, 1988 marked the official grand opening of Ganohkwásra.

Ganohkwásra has grown great strides over the past 25 years. From 1 worker to a staff of 46 fulltime and relief staff. Members of the Board of Directors and management continue to progressively guide the team, with a good mind and a good heart. From the initial baby steps to where we are today, the team at Ganohkwásra continue to utilize values that reflect caring, sharing and respect.

The programs and services continue to be built on the Onkwehonwe philosophy that have guided our people for generations

which includes using a Ganikwiyo (Good mind), being compassionate and caring. A philosophy which respects the individual, family and community. The founding board members hoped to empower women, children and men to take control of their lives and create healthy environments for those yet to come.

Since the day the first individual was seen to today, Ganohkwásra has had the privilege of helping approximately 10,000 women, children and men to be safe, and to assist them on their healing and wellness journey.

We commend the women, men and children for the courage it takes to make that first step and walk through the front door. We understand it can be a scary process but our staff will continue to be there to guide you and encourage you.

Ganohkwásra' is a phrase in the Cayuga language meaning "Love Among Us."

Ganohkwásra' was chosen as the name for a family violence program for our community because it is the goal we seek for all families. It is through "love among us" that we, as a community, will put an end to family violence.

## **Ganohkwásra' Staff**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

- Executive Director
- Manager of Therapeutic Services
- Manager of Residential Services
- Office Manager
- Executive Assistant
- Community Educator
- Receptionist
- Administrative and Technical Support Worker
- 2 Maintenance Workers

### **COMMUNITY COUNSELLING**

- Community Counselling Supervisor
- 3 Women Community Counsellors
- Men's Community Counsellor

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT**

- 1 Sexual Assault Counsellor

### **SHELTER**

- Shelter Supervisor
- 5 Shelter Counsellors
- Child & Youth Counsellor
- Relief Staff
- Gayenawahsra Counsellor

### **YOUTH LODGE**

- Youth Lodge Supervisor
- P/T Administrative Assistant
- 5 Child & Youth Counsellors
- Teacher
- Relief Staff

### **OUTREACH SERVICES**

- Outreach Services Supervisor
- Intake Worker
- Transitional Support Worker
- 3 Child & Youth Counsellors

## **GFASS 25th Anniversary Week**

During the week of November 25 to November 29, Ganohkwásra held events to celebrate 25 years since the inception of our service. A week of events was planned to celebrate our existence, our growth and our resiliency as we acknowledge the transformation of a healing journey from trauma and abuse to love, peace and awareness.

Monday evening was the kickoff for the week's events where we honoured our beginnings. Community members were fortunate to learn the history of Ganohkwásra from Reva Bomberly, the former Director. The current Director, Sandra Montour thanked Reva for building the incredible foundation of our organization.

Afterwards Traditional Knowledge Keepers Jock Hill and Elva Jamieson spoke of the resiliency of our people and how we have survived many hundreds of years of oppression.

Tuesday night we had traditional teachings with Tom Porter. Tom who is an extremely warm, caring, humorous, well respected Mohawk Elder, shared many teachings and lessons to a packed community hall. Tom spoke about how we have lost our traditional values and how we can get back to our traditional values using our teachings.

Wednesday was the opportunity for Ganohkwásra to give back to the community. Twenty-five past clients were invited to participate in energy based modalities, spirit painting and hypnosis sessions to continue supporting them in their wellness journey. As part of the week's activities we wanted to cel-

ebrate by revitalizing their energy, strength and love.

Thursday night a social was planned, however was cancelled due to the many losses in our community over a short period of time. The social is rescheduled for the new year.

Friday night we held an Acknowledgement night at the Community Hall. We invited community members to submit nominations for individuals who promote peace, caring and kindness in the family environment and community. We had aspired to acknowledge 25 individuals in keeping with our 25 year anniversary theme. We believe it is important to acknowledge the good work people are doing to promote "love among us" and the continued health and well being of our community. Recipients enjoyed a wonderful dinner and entertainment Lacey Hill and Sandi Jamieson-Bomberly. It was truly a special evening for all who attended and for the staff who participated in celebrating and honouring our beautiful community of Six Nations.

We would like to thank Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada for providing funds for this initiative.

### **Tom Porter & Ganohkwásra Staff**



## Pink Shirt Day

The last Wednesday in February is Pink Shirt Day; it is a time to raise awareness. Pink Shirt Day started in 2007 after two high school students in Nova Scotia stood up for another student who was being bullied. The grade 9 student was being bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. As a show of support, the two students went out and bought 50 pink shirts which they wore and rallied other students to also wear. The next day a sea of pink shirts was visible at their local high school. On the last Wednesday of February communities across Canada wear something pink to symbolize that as a society we will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

Instead of putting it out to the universe about ending bullying maybe we need to change the focus to positive and gear it around promoting respect. When we speak to anti-bullying initiatives, are we inviting negative behaviour? The words anti and bullying have a negative connotation. Shouldn't we be focusing our efforts on utilizing language that invites positive behaviour? Let's be proactive and preventive by teaching and modelling respect, love and kindness to our children. Schools can consider a theme for their Pink Shirt Day that promotes respect and kindness as opposed to "end bullying". Let's talk about the behaviours we want to encourage and promote them as an everyday part of school life. Let's show respect and caring through

our actions; show Ganohkwasra through our actions every day. Let the pink shirt stand as a reminder that promoting peace, love and respect is important to us.

Last year Ganohkwasra took part in Pink Shirt Day activities at IL Thomas School. It was an awesome sight to see many of the students and teachers sporting a pink shirt. Ganohkwasra staff will once again wear their pink shirts and we hope to encourage people in our community, our schools, our organizations and businesses to wear a pink shirt and promote respect and kindness.

The theme we have chosen to use for our Pink Shirt Day is Love Among Us - "Live it" so that we can encourage and promote kindness, caring, sharing, respect, peace and a good mind everyday. We will be visiting some of the area schools to do a presentation for the grade 4 and 5 students to promote Love Among Us "Live It".



## Bullying

Have you ever been bullied? Do you remember experiencing bullying as a child or youth in school? Have you ever used bullying behaviours?

We've probably all been on both sides of it at some time in our lives. This is speaking from a somewhat older person's, dare I say middle age person or perhaps I will stick with a mature person's point of view. I recall an incident as a young girl in which another person in my neighbourhood started a fight with me. It began over a rumour. It was scary for me as I had never been in a fight and I did not want to fight. Needless to say, whether it's once or repeatedly, it isn't nice to be bullied.

There aren't many bullying incidents that stick out for me growing up other than that one. Had I been continuously bullied it would have stuck out for me more. However, even if we aren't experiencing or witnessing it, we have a responsibility to educate our families about bullying.

I had an experience with my child being bullied in school. When I learned of the bullying I met with the appropriate school personnel to better understand what was going on and to advocate for my child. There are no better advocates for a child than a parent or guardian who has their best interest in mind and does not want their child to face ongoing torment. School personnel and parents can work together. There are also agencies including Ganohkwasra who are available to provide support to youth and parents.



## NEWSLETTER

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### Mission Statement

"To provide, through a non-profit charitable organization, for the stabilization, maintenance, revitalization and enhancement of the family structure in a culturally sensitive manner."

## Board of Directors

### Chairperson

Mary Monture

### Vice Chairperson

Rebecca Harrison

### Treasurer

Alice Bomberly

### Board Members

Barb Harris

Michelle Davey

Chad Garlow

Sandra Hill-Bomberly

Janet Hill

Constance Jamieson

### Six Nations Council Representative

Melba Thomas

### New Credit Council Representative

Cecil Sault

## Ganohkwasa Acknowledgement Night

On Friday November 29<sup>th</sup>, Ganohkwasa acknowledged 20 community members as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. A call was sent out in late October asking community to nominate individuals from the community that promote peace, caring and kindness in the family environment and within the community. Nominators were encouraged to send in a one-page letter describing this person and how they promote "Love Among Us". The response was outstanding. During the Acknowledgement Night presentations, the recipients were able to hear the letters for the first time. It was a true display of love among us. Please see below an alphabetical list of the 2013 recipients.

George Annett

Patty Doxtator-Hill

Alouise "Spanky" Hill

Wendy Hill

Christa Lee Jonathan

Dolly Miller

Bertha Skye

Christina Bomberly

Sarah "Sally" English

Blanche Hill-Easton

Isabel Jacobs

Ellie Joseph

Frank Miller

Ron Thomas Jr.

Frances Burning

Melanie Fraser Johns

Sheri-lyn Hill

Elva Jamieson

Lottie Keye

Bill Montour

Pictured below are just some of the individuals who were honoured.

