



Wabanaki Women's Coalition

December 2017 Newsletter

Kwey Relatives...

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the Wabanaki Women's Coalition and our first newsletter. We will be publishing a newsletter each quarter relating to issues that impact us all in Wabanaki territory, issues that are sensitive, yet crucial topics such as the prevention and awareness of domestic and sexual violence, stalking and human trafficking.

Our Mission

The mission of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition is to increase the capacity of tribal communities to respond to domestic and sexual violence, and influence tribal, national, and regional systems to increase awareness, safety, justice, and healing for all our relations.

Our Vision

Guide the evolution of systems and policies that reflect our Wabanaki voice on behalf of survivors of domestic and sexual violence;

Create a technical resource center that affirms Wabanaki cultural values and tribal sovereignty, and empowers tribal service providers to serve, educate, and influence their communities in an effective and uniform way;

Be recognized as the informed source for issues on Wabanaki survivors of domestic and sexual violence.



Our Staff



Jane Root
Executive Director

Jane Root is the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition, a Tribal Domestic and Sexual Violence Coalition in Maine. Prior to May 2014, Jane was the Director of the Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in Northern Maine since the program's inception in 1998. She has been an advocate for battered women and their children since 1989 having worked at the Aroostook County Domestic Violence Agency for nine years prior to founding the Maliseet program. Jane served as the Project Coordinator for the Indian Health Service (IHS)/Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) Domestic Violence Pilot Project from 2002-2009.

Jane served on the United States Attorney General's National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women from 2005-2007. She has served on the Steering Committee for the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence from 2007-2014. She is a member of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse. Jane is a trainer/presenter on issues of violence against Native women on the national, regional and local level. Jane was the April 2010 recipient of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault 'Make a Difference Award' and the December 2010 Bonnie Heavy Runner Tribal Victim Advocacy Award presented at the 2010 National Indian Nations Conference.



Donna Brown
Outreach Coordinator

Donna Brown is the Outreach Coordinator of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition. Donna earned a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Maine in 2012. Donna has an extensive background working for not only her own Tribe (Penobscot Nation) but also other tribes in areas of mental health including case management, suicide prevention and youth mental health first aid; wellness court; training; and event planning.

Donna is a multi-talented young woman who is also a traditional dancer, does bead work, and is a seamstress of regalia including shawls. Donna regularly donates her time and skills in the community, most notably as a member of the Wabanaki Spring Social Committee for the past 9 years, an annual event that is organized by Wabanaki Health and Wellness in Bangor.

As Outreach Coordinator Donna will be producing a monthly WWC newsletter, maintaining a social media presence, keeping the WWC webpage current, provide community education and assist the Wabanaki Advocacy Centers on Awareness Events to name just a few.

Serving Our Partners



Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-532-3000

24 Hour Crisis Line: 207-532-6401



Indian Township Passamaquoddy Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-796-6106

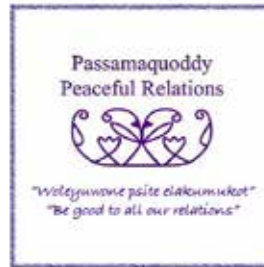
24 Hour Support Line: 207-214-1917



Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-817-3164

24 Hour Support Line: 207-817-4886



Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-853-0092/0093

24 Hour Support Line: 1-877-853-2613



Micmac Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-760-0570

24 Hour Hotline: 207-551-3639

Our Board



Julia Miller, Chair

Julia A. Miller was born and raised in Aroostook County. She is the daughter of Wesley N. Miller, a tribal leader for many years with the Aroostook Band of Micmacs (ABM). Julia has dedicated over 20 years of her professional career to her community. She served 11+ years as Tribal Clerk, successfully implemented and administered a domestic and sexual violence program/shelter for four years, and currently holds the position of Tribal Administrator. She has also worked for a children's agency for two years in between working for her community. She is one of the founding members of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition and is currently serving a second term as Chair. In 2016, she was honored by MCEDV for her work.



Angel Gilberti, Secretary

Angel Gilberti has worked within her community as an employee for over 13 years. She has also worked within all 5 Tribal communities of Maine for Wabanaki Public Health for a year before joining the Micmac Advocacy Center. Angel is currently serving her second term as the Secretary for the Wabanaki Women's Coalition Board. Angel is the mother of four children, two daughters who are in their 20's and two sons who are high school age. What inspires Angel to do the work that she does is "being a survivor of both domestic violence and sexual assault, along with a love for serving my Tribal community that I would say is the driving force behind the passion I have for this work."



Jessica Huff, Treasurer

Jessica Huff is the Program Director of the Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center. Prior to becoming the Program Director in 2016, Jessica worked as the program manager of the Maliseet Home Visiting Program. Jessica holds a bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Relations from the University of Maine and has over 12 years of experience working with women, children and families in various aspects of the social services field.



Nancy Soctomah, Member

Nancy Soctomah has been the Director of Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center since 2001. Nancy has served on the U.S. Department of Justice Task Force on Violence Against Indian Women and currently is a member of the Washington County SART and the Washington County Community Circle. Nancy has volunteered as a Sexual Assault Advocate in Washington County for many years. She is highly regarded throughout Indian Country for her work to end domestic and sexual violence.



Desiree Tyrrell, Member

Desiree Tyrrell is a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township. Since 2015, she has served as a Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocate for the Indian Township Passamaquoddy Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center and became its Director in 2017. Desiree is also a Wabanaki Women's Coalition Board Member.



Clarissa Sabattis, Member

Chief Clarissa Sabattis is a Native of Houlton, Maine. She is a Registered Nurse and has spent most of the past 7 years working in Tribal Public Health for the Wabanaki Tribes in Maine. In May of 2017, Clarissa was elected as the newest Tribal Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians. Passionate about the overall health and healing of the Wabanaki Citizens in Maine, she was honored to become a Board member of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Turned 30!

In October 1987, Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) was launched nationwide. It was created as a way to connect and unite individuals as well as organizations working on domestic violence issues. Over the last three decades, much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors, to hold abusers accountable, and to create and update legislation to further those goals.

Every year in October, each Wabanaki advocacy center participates in this annual event by organizing a variety of activities to promote awareness such as community walks, candlelight vigils, talking circles, socials, and many creative and artistic activities that are fun and educational for community members of all ages. We thank you for playing an important role in honoring the accomplishments made and showing your support for victims and survivors.



Purple Tree Lighting/Vigil
October 4, 2017
Pleasant Point (Passamaquoddy)



Walk to Raise Awareness
October 28, 2017
Pleasant Point (Passamaquoddy)



Tree Lighting Ceremony
October 4, 2017
Indian Township (Passamaquoddy)



Color Run
October 19, 2017
Indian Township (Passamaquoddy)



20th Annual DV Awareness Vigil
October 4, 2017
Houlton (Maliseet)



DV Awareness Painting Project
October 12, 2017
Houlton (Maliseet)



Tree Lighting Ceremony
October 4, 2017
Presque Isle (Micmac)



Walk to End Domestic Violence
October 6, 2017
Presque Isle (Micmac)



DV Walk and Candlelight Vigil
October 4, 2017
Indian Island (Penobscot)



Advocacy Center Open House
October 1, 2017
Indian Island (Penobscot)

In 2016 the Wabanaki Advocacy Centers reported serving 305 adult survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence.

They provided emergency shelter for 80 survivors and their children.

Nearly 1000 hotline calls were received in this same period.

2017 OVW Tribal Consultation

On October 3-4, 2017, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) held its 12th Annual Government-to-Government Violence Against Women Consultation on the reservation of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation in Fountain Hills, Arizona. The purpose of the consultation is to solicit recommendations from tribal leaders on the following three topics: 1) enhancing the safety of American Indian and Alaska Native women from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking; 2) strengthening the federal response to the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking; and 3) administering funds and programs for tribal governments established by the original Violence Against Women Act and subsequent legislation.

The Executive Director of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition provided oral testimony, a portion of which is included below:

Good morning,

My name is Jane Root. I am the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition. Today I appear before you as the Tribal Delegate of four Wabanaki Tribes of Maine; Chief Clarissa Sabattis of the Houlton Band of Maliseet, Chief Edward Peter Paul of the Aroostook Band of Micmac, Chief William Nicholas, Sr. of the Indian Township Passamaquoddy, and Chief Ralph Dana of the Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy.

In collaboration with the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court the Wabanaki Women's Coalition held a two day Maine Tribal – State VAWA Conference in September of this year. At the conference we held a Tribal Caucus to discuss the issues that the Wabanaki Tribes wanted to bring forward in testimony at this Consultation. Each of the Tribes are submitting written testimony but have delegated me to bring oral testimony as a unified voice of the Wabanaki today.

2018 Reauthorization of VAWA: The Maine Implementing Act and the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (The Acts), of 1980 have created barriers to the safety of Native women in Maine and the full application of the tribal provisions of the VAWA 2013. The full implementation of the VAWA by Indian tribes in Maine is prevented due to the interpretation of these provisions by the State. Further, these Acts articulate a jurisdictional relationship between the Tribes and the State of Maine that impede the full implementation of VAWA and prevent Indian tribes from fully safeguarding the lives of women within tribal jurisdiction. The Acts delineated a framework for the application of Federal Indian Law for the Indians, or Indian nations, tribes, or bands of Indians and created a mechanism for overriding the framework and include the following two provisions questioned by Indian tribes.

Section 1735 b of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act: The provisions of any Federal law enacted after October 10, 1980, for the benefit of Indians, Indian nations, or tribes or bands of Indians, which would affect or preempt the application of the laws of the State of Maine, including application of the laws of the State to lands owned by or held in trust for Indians, or Indian nations, tribes, or bands of Indians, as provided in this subchapter and the Maine Implementing Act, shall not apply within the State of Maine, unless such provision of such subsequently enacted Federal law is specifically made applicable within the State of Maine. We emphasize this last line as it is what the state of Maine holds up as a roadblock to the Wabanaki Tribes moving forward to implement the special provisions of VAWA2013.

Recommendations: In order to clarify the application of the VAWA 2013 and all of its provisions for the benefit and protection of all the federally recognized Wabanaki Tribes in Maine, we recommend the inclusion of the following language in the next reauthorization of VAWA: The Tribal provisions of the 2018 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, all previous Tribal provisions and all subsequent Tribal provisions shall apply within the State of Maine. Should the reauthorization be a slow moving train as it has been in the past we, we request that the Department of Justice immediately take all steps necessary to provide for the full implementation of the VAWA 2013 by Indian tribes located in the State to safeguard the lives of Indian women as stated in the findings and purposes of the VAWA 2005, Title IX, Safety for Indian Women.

Recommendation regarding murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls: We support the Senate resolution creating a National Day of Awareness. We must take this tragedy and give it visibility but there also needs to be system changes made by the Department of Justice, Interior and Health and Human Services administration to include reviewing, revision and creation of law enforcement and justice protocols to appropriately respond to the disappearance of Native Women and Girls, including inter-jurisdictional issues. There needs to be increased victim services to the families and communities of the disappeared or murdered Native woman, including services such as counseling for the children of the disappeared, burial assistance and healing ceremonies.

Public Safety Funding: According to recently released reports from the BIA there is a \$2,000,000,000.00 (2Billion) unmet need in Tribal Law Enforcement and Court. Currently they are meeting only 40% of the need in law enforcement funding and worse only 6% of the need in Tribal Courts. This does not even include the PL280 states where they don't fund Tribes. The unmet need is enormous and the need to address this is urgent.

As we work toward the next reauthorization of VAWA we implore you to 'make the fix' that will ensure that all victims in all American Indian and Alaskan Native communities have the protections and services afforded by VAWA and TLOA.

Woliwon –Thank you

Annual Survivor Retreat



The annual survivor retreat includes an opportunity for women to relax, learn, share, heal, and rejuvenate with other Wabanaki women throughout the state of Maine. Highlights of this gathering included traditional ceremonies, healing circles, drumming, dancing, and the making of medicine pouches. Participants also learned about trauma and its impact on survivors and their children.



40 Hour Sexual Assault Advocate Training



The Wabanaki Women's Coalition facilitated a 40 hour sexual assault advocate training in October. The training was attended by advocates from all five Wabanaki Advocacy Centers. It was also attended by two staff members from the Seven Dancers Coalition in New York and an advocate from the Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians in Oregon.

Attending were from the top of the stairs down:

- Sara DeWitt, Micmac Advocacy Center
- Jessica Huff, Maliseet Advocacy Center
- Donna Brown, WWC Outreach Coordinator
- Dena Joseph, Micmac Advocacy Center
- Victoria Neptune, Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Advocacy Center
- Desiree Tyrrell, Indian Township Passamaquoddy Advocacy Center
- Jane Root, WWC Executive Director
- Pat Graffam, Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center
- Tanya Raymond, Maliseet Advocacy Center
- Amanda Watson, Trainer
- Lauren Swamp, Three Dancers Coalition
- Guadalupe Lopez, Trainer
- Vanessa Adams, Three Dancers Coalition

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Conference

The Wabanaki Women's Coalition partnered with the Penobscot Nation Judicial System to host the "Weaving a Braid of Safety: A Maine Tribal-State Violence Against Women Act Training Conference" which was held on September 14-15, 2017. The conference was sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Tribal Justice and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs and Office on Violence Against Women.

Due to the small land areas of the Wabanaki reservations, communication and cooperation with local, county and state law enforcement is essential to effectively protect victims and prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence. By working across jurisdictional borders, local communities will be better able to achieve the common goals of helping to save lives, protect victims, and put an end to domestic and sexual violence.



The conference was held in Bar Harbor, Maine and included 67 individuals who attended. Participants included staff from local and tribal domestic and sexual violence advocacy centers, law enforcement, and tribal leaders. Community members and staff from all 5 Wabanaki tribes attended including the Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township, Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

The conference included local and national experts who delivered presentations on topics including recent developments in Federal and Maine domestic violence law; VAWA and TLOA Tribal Court protections in Maine; building Wabanaki trauma-informed community response teams and tribal courts; law enforcement best practices; Wabanaki domestic and sexual violence resources; the importance of exercising VAWA jurisdiction; victim services funding sources; role of the Wabanaki domestic violence advocate in Tribal and State Courts; and Maine Tribal-State data sharing.



Staff & Board Retreat



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