



Aionkwatakari:teke

(A-YOU-GWA-DA-GA-RI-DE-GEH)

"For Us To Be Healthy"

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APRIL is
Cultural
Awareness
Month

in Kahnawake

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Aionkwatakari:teke

Aionkwatakari:teke is a newsletter published six times a year by Communications Services of Kahnawake Shaktiia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS). Our purpose is to provide information on health and wellness issues that affect Kahnawa'kehrónon. All community members are welcomed & encouraged to submit articles provided that they are comprehensive to the general public, informative & educational. Slanderous material will not be accepted. **Views expressed in the articles may not necessarily reflect those of KSCS.** We reserve the right to edit all articles. All questions concerning this newsletter should be directed to:

The Editor Aionkwatakari:teke

P.O. Box 1440
Kahnawake, Quebec JOL 1B0
Tel: 450-632-6880
Fax: 450-632-5116
E-mail: kscs@kscskahnawake.ca
(attention newsletter editor)

Editor/Layout/Design, Marie David
Executive Publisher, Linda Deer

Proofreading:
Bea Taylor
Carole Walker



Contributors:

CCOHS
Marie David
Chad Diabo
James Lazare
Loretta LeBorgne
Kaylia Marquis, KEPO
Kawennarò:roks McComber
Skawenniio Tsi lewennahnotákhwa
Library
Wendy Sky-Delaronde, KMHC
Kahtehrón:ni Stacey
Brian Williams

This newsletter is intended to complement, not replace the advice of your health care provider. Before starting any new health regimen, please see your doctor.



The Kahnawake Community Protection Task Force has launched a year-long campaign around respect with the hopes that respect will be filtered into all aspects of program and campaign delivery throughout the year.

On a personal level, I'm reminded of my father. He always espoused respect and when talking about conditions for Nation to Nation coexistence. Respect was paramount in the conditions he always said were required, "Above all, respect," he would say.

Respect means different things to everyone; there is no one definition and it can apply to an individual as well as a group. We may not always know what respect is but it usually is somewhat easier to know when we are being disrespected; you just know within yourself that something isn't right, that it doesn't feel right.

For example; when I was growing up the history books referred to a homogenous group of "Indians" as "savages" and "heathens". Sitting there in class, I didn't know it but I felt disrespected. I felt bad. And I felt angry too, like an injustice had been committed against me but I didn't quite understand what or why that was. I was just a little kid. I didn't know that I wasn't an "Indian" but that I was Kanien'kehá:ka. I didn't see a difference between them and me. I only learned this when I went home and told my Mom and Dad why I hated school (or at least one of the reasons I hated school at that time).

I learned that, far from being savage or heathen, I actually came from a long line of people who carried the culture with them; one that included a system of government that the United States based its own form of government on: a government by the people, for the people. It is this traditional culture that I was raised in.

The thing is, it's easy to turn how you've been treated into a reflection on how you treat others. The harder thing is to treat others not how you've been treated but how you wish to be treated.

Sken:nen,
Marie



ABOUT THE COVER: April is cultural awareness month in Kahnawake and the Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkwa is holding several activities throughout the month. Contact them at kor@kahnawake.org or at 450-638-0880.



What is Sexual Assault?

by CHAD DIABO, PROMOTION & EDUCATION

Sexual assault is an act that is sexual in nature, with or without physical contact, committed by an individual **without the consent of the victim**, or in some cases, through emotional manipulation or blackmail, especially when children are involved.

It is an act that subjects another person to the perpetrator's desires through an abuse of power and/or the use of force or coercion, accompanied by implicit or explicit threats. Sexual assault is an attack on a person's basic rights, particularly their rights to physical and psychological integrity and to personal security.

This definition applies regardless of the:

- age, sex, culture, origin, marital status, religion, or sexual orientation of the perpetrator or the victim;
- type of sexual act;
- place or living environment in which the act occurred;
- relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

We are referring to sexual assault when we use the expressions like sexual abuse, sexual offence, sexual contact, incest, child prostitution and pornography, rape. Sexual assault can take many forms. They can also vary in terms of violence and the kinds of acts that take place. However, in almost every case:

- Sexual assault has harmful consequences for the victim;

- Sexual assault is a criminal act because the **victim has not consented or is not old enough to give consent.**

The main forms of sexual assault are:

- **kissing** of a sexual nature;



- **touching** the breasts, thighs, buttocks, penis, vulva, or anus;
- **masturbation** of the victim by the perpetrator or vice-versa;
- **oral-genital contact**, cunnilingus and/or fellatio;
- **penetration** vaginal or anal with a penis, finger or object;
- **exhibitionism**, the practice of exposing one's genitals in public;

- **frottage**, the practice of rubbing against non-consenting persons in public;
- **voyeurism**, the activity of spying on individuals in a sexual nature without their consent. This can be done with the use of technology; cell phones, cameras, binoculars.

With the arrival of satellite television and the Internet, **pornography** has become more easily available in Aboriginal communities and children are more likely to be exposed to it. Parental supervision is still the best way of protecting against online perpetrators.

The human body reacts automatically to sexual stimulation. **Experiencing sexual pleasure does not equal consent.** So even if the victim has an erection or orgasm, becomes aroused, sexual assault is still unacceptable and criminal because it occurred without the person's consent.

Sexual assault when under the influence of drugs or alcohol: only one person is responsible for a sexual assault: the person who commits it. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is NEVER an invitation for sexual contact.

ALL acts or forms of sexual contact with people **under the age of 16** are considered to occur **without consent** and are thus **illegal**.

Continued on page 4



Respect the Game

by JAMES LAZARE, PREVENTION

Being a coach and a player in Kahnawake minor sports, I've had the privilege of watching and playing in multiple sports in and around Kahnawake such as hockey, lacrosse, basketball and of course golf. Over the years, I've come to notice that there is a lack of respect in and around sports.

I'm no angel when it comes to sports either. At almost every Kahnawake Condors game you can find me in the Condors corner with other enthused fans voicing our opinions with our big mouths. It's all right to cheer and encourage your team. It is not all right to encourage your child to fight with the other fans, players or referees because of their race or because of the outcome of the game.

Yes! I've seen and been in games where the officials were *one sided* and the opponents were very disrespectful. But fighting with the other team or the referees does not make it right; in fact, it stains the image of Kahnawake. No matter what end of the rink or field you're on, it all comes down to respect and respect begins at home.

Not everyone is at fault; I've seen many athletes in the community pushing themselves and making it to the next level. These are the athletes that are early for practice and are the last ones to leave and give 110 per cent of themselves day in and day out. These are the athletes who will succeed in life and in sports because they have respect for the sport and, most importantly, respect for themselves. They don't let racism get in the way of their dreams.



Photo: Peter Smithy/ flickr

Once the horn has sounded or the whistle has blown, the game is over. Whatever happened on the playing field or rink is in the past. It is easier said than done but no matter what the outcome is, we have to respect it, accept it and move forward.

In the end, it all comes down to the love and respect we have for the game. What does respect in sports mean to you? Remember, it's just a game.



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The criminal code provides an exception for **persons of 14 or 15 years of age**. A person of this age may give their consent as long as their partner is:

- not more than five years older
- not in a situation of trust or authority towards the youth
- not a person with whom the youth is in a relationship of dependency
- not in a relationship with the youth that is exploitive to the youth

12 and 13 year olds may consent if their partner is less than two years older than they are AND the preceding conditions are met as well. **Sexual assault is completely unacceptable and illegal**, regardless of the form it takes, the acts involved, the situation, the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, or the circumstances.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of a sexual assault, you can report the perpetrator(s) to the Kahnawake Peacekeepers at 450-632-6505 and if you would like help in healing from a sexual assault, you can call 450-632-6880 and a KSCS on-call (24/7) worker will assist you.

Source: *Quebec Native Women Inc (2011). My Sexuality, it's about respect: Break the Silence, Book. Gouvernement du Quebec, Orientations gouvernementales en matiere d'agression sexuelle, Quebec 2001.*



The Scoop on Food Allergies

Part I of II

by WENDY SKY-DELARONDE BSc(N), KMHC

Imagine eating a peanut butter sandwich and a few minutes later becoming very itchy, wheezing and very short of breath. This is what it can be like for someone who is allergic to peanuts or another type of food.

According to Health Canada 5-6 per cent of young children and 3-4 per cent of adults suffer from food allergies. These numbers seem to be increasing especially among children. In Kahnawake, there are approximately four to five children per school that have food allergies (mostly to peanuts).

An allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system responds aggressively to a particular protein or proteins. These proteins are found in substances such as food, insect stings, latex or medication. These proteins are known as allergens.

Most people do not react to these but allergens can trigger life-threatening reactions in people with severe allergies.

The signs and symptoms vary both in type and severity. The reactions can come on in seconds or take a while longer. The most severe reactions, anaphylaxis, can be fatal if not treated promptly. The most common things a person will feel when having an allergic reaction are:

- Swelling of the eyes, face, lips, throat and tongue;
- Trouble breathing, speaking or swallowing;
- Anxiety, distress, sense of doom, weakness, and/or fainting;
- Cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting.

The foods most commonly associated with severe allergic reactions are eggs, milk, peanuts, seafood, sesame, soy, sulphites, tree nuts and wheat.

Food allergies can be life-long

or some can go away. There is no cure for food allergies; the only way to avoid a reaction is to avoid contact with any specific allergens that can affect a person.

You should always check food labels to see if it contains the food item that you are allergic to. If foods are not labeled, you should not eat it.

A severe allergic reaction can usually be treated effectively with a prompt injection of epinephrine/adrenaline. It is very important to always have this medication on hand with you and learn how to use it properly.

The medication does expire so it's best to keep an eye on the expiry date and renew your prescription every year at your annual check-up. The medication comes in two doses for children and this is based on how much the child weighs. It is, therefore important to have them weighed every year before obtaining a new medication.

Nurses from Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre have worked diligently over the past 20 years in Kahnawake schools to address severe allergic reactions. Nurses teach all school staff how to handle severe allergic reactions at school.

A diagnosis of allergy puts a great burden on families. If one suspects that they or their child has a food allergy, it is important to see your family doctor for an assessment, confirmation of the allergy and regular follow-up.

For more information contact the Community Health Unit at 450-638-3930 or talk to your doctor or school nurse.

The signs and symptoms vary both in type and severity. The reactions can come on in seconds or take a while longer.

- Itchy red skin, hives, red and flushed face;

Wendy Sky-Delaronde is a community nurse with the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre



FASD and Respect

by BRIAN WILLIAMS, PREVENTION

What does respect mean to you? How can you show that you respect both yourself and the new life you can bring into this world?

It is often said that we are required to think about the needs of the next seven generations. We can personally help to ensure a strong future by supporting a healthy start for the next generation by limiting what we consume and expose ourselves to.

Men and women both carry the responsibility to ensure that any new life that they bring into this world has the best and healthiest start that they, as parents, can provide.

Consuming alcohol can be part of a fun social experience as long as you are mindful of how it can negatively affect other aspects of your life and your body.

Respecting yourself when it comes to alcohol means thinking about the reasons behind why and when you drink, and how much you have to drink each time.

Men can show respect to women by supporting positive alcohol choices and by seeking help with their partners in cases of alcohol abuse.

Many women already know that it is not always possible to know when they are pregnant until several weeks after the fact; it is therefore possible they could be unaware of a pregnancy and still be drinking alcohol, especially when they have not planned for it.

A woman's body is intended to be a nurturing environment for a baby to grow in before coming into this world.

If you are not planning on having a child, it's still a good idea to A) be mindful of how much alcohol you drink so that you can make responsible decisions regarding your body and B) to actively use an effective method of birth control to ensure you will only have a child when you choose to.

A partner who respects you will support your desire to be in control of your drinking and your use of effective birth control.

A woman's body is intended to be a nurturing environment for a baby to grow in before coming into this world. One way to ensure a healthy baby is to have a 12-month-pregnancy, which simply means planning ahead by spending the first three months before attempting to conceive focusing on cleansing your body of drugs, alcohol or other impurities that could bring harm to an unborn child. A partner who respects you will support your efforts on having a healthy planned pregnancy.

Children born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) also require respect. Regardless of how they came into this world, children with FASD need the same love, care and support that any other child does. A community that ensures FASD affected children feel welcome and accepted will see them grow up in a positive way.

The community as a whole can help to decide if we are going to leave a positive legacy for the next seven generations. It all depends on the amount of respect we show to ourselves, to our community, and to our future generations.



Kanien'kéha Ratiwennahní:rats

Adult Immersion Program 10th Anniversary

by KAWENNARÒ:ROKS MCCOMBER & KAHTEHRÓN:NI STACEY

The Kanien'kéha Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion program is celebrating its 10-year anniversary. The program has approximately 130 alumni.

From the beginning the program has been hosted by the Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa (KOR) Language and Cultural Centre (KORLCC). Sponsorship

from organizations such as the Kahnawake Education Center and Tewatohni'saktha, and the continued support of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake and other community organizations are imperative to the success of the program.

Funding continues to be an issue. However, through the dedication and hard work of the KORLCC,

the revitalization of the language continues to be an important way for many community members to learn our language and to pass it on to future generations.

With this in mind, a committee of Kanien'kéha Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion, alumni and participants

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Family Traditions

by LORETTA LEBORGNE, PREVENTION

Canadian Living magazine had an interesting article on their website about family traditions and the difficulty in sometimes determining what exactly defines a family tradition. As the article says “In Judith Lieberman’s book “Let’s Celebrate: Creating New Family Traditions (Putman 1984) she describes tradition as a highly personal behavior that is often handed down one generation to the next and firmly anchored in family life by the force of habit.”

The article had me wondering... sometimes a new family ritual and tradition can boost or energize a family unit, it can bridge generation gaps, and strengthen family ties. It can be as simple as sharing Sunday breakfasts or family dinners or just getting together to celebrate important milestones like birthdays or graduations. How important is a family tradition in Kahnawake? What kinds of traditions do we have that are different from other communities?

My family’s traditions

My family has a tradition of making meat pies just before the holidays. My sister travels from out of town to spend the weekend making these pies and my two sons and all their kids come to help. My sisterinlaw and brotherinlaw also come to lend a helping hand and to catch up on any news about the family.

The men in the family peel potatoes—usually 50 pounds—and the women work on cooking the meat and making the dough for the pies.

The coffee pot is running from sunrise to sunset. Lunch meats and salads are always easier to serve a large group of family members and we even have movies for the kids to

watch. When our pies are made and packed away in the freezer, then it’s time to taste the spoils of our day long work. Lots of laughter is shared and family recipes get passed down a generation or two.

That’s just one activity that we do together as a family. This activity has been passed down from my parents and grandparents.

Another tradition takes place before the holidays when we have a family reunion at a hotel in Lake George usually in early December. We meet all the other family members who live on the state side at the Comfort Inn Suites, which has a pool and a large dining room. We take over the whole second floor with aunts, uncles, cousins and mutual friends. This type of gathering has been going on for the last 10 years. It’s something that we all look forward to each year, to be able to have contact with our extended family.

What about you?

Do you have family traditions? What do family traditions mean to you? Share some of your family traditions and what they mean to you. You can send them to the Aionkwatakari:teke editor c/o kscs@kscskahnawake.ca. We’d love to hear from you!

Source: Muir, Courtney. “20 Family Traditions.” Canadian Living. n.d. Web: 28 Feb. 2012. http://www.canadianliving.com/moms/parenting/20_family_traditions.php

Continued from page 6

are planning activities to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the program. The committee plans to highlight the value of the program within the community.

The Ratiwennahní:rats program has produced numerous Kanien’kéha speakers and the committee would like to promote and celebrate the importance and significance of the program.

To validate the contributions of the program, the committee is gathering feedback and discussing activities that may assist us in celebrating this valuable cultural program.

Recently, the committee hosted a gathering of past participants to gather information and to provide a forum to use the language in an informal setting.

One of our upcoming events is a participants art display in April in conjunction with the KORLCC’s *Cultural Awareness Month* and a cornbread fundraiser.

The final activity for the year is being planned for August and will culminate in a *Kanien’kéha Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Language Immersion Program: 10th Anniversary Gala*.

Some comments were provided in a feedback questionnaire completed by participants. This is what some alumni had to say: “I loved the program. It wasn’t always easy but it was definitely worth it. It gives you a sense of pride!” and “This program is a necessity. We must revive and strengthen Onkwawén:na!”

Our language is an important part of our identity and self-esteem. For more information contact KORLCC at 450-638-0880.

Respect Campaign Posters

by BRIAN WILLIAMS, PREVENTION

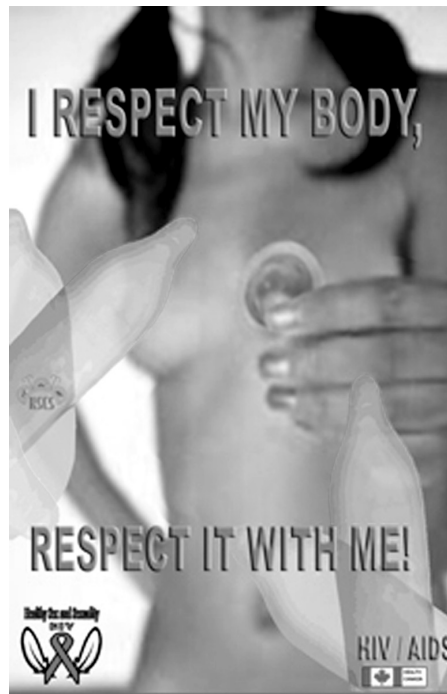
These posters are part of KSCS's on-going Respect campaign, a campaign that seeks to increase Kahnawakeh-ró:non's personal understanding of what respect is, and what respect means to people on a personal level.

Several of these posters, along with condoms, were distributed to several establishments in the community.

At KSCS, we believe that one aspect of respect is being proactive in protecting your body and that of your partner from HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. As well, respect means protecting unborn children from the effects of FASD.

The posters and condoms were put into Kahnawake establishments to help remind community members to protect themselves and future generations.

If you would like a copy of these posters or would like to comment on them, please don't hesitate to contact Kateri Oesterreich and/or Chad Diabo at 450-632-6880.



To know more...check out these books at the Skawennio Tsi Iewen-nahnotahkhwa Library in Kahnawake. For more information, call 450-633-1016.

Sexual Trauma in Children and Adolescents by Diane Sullivan Everstine and Louise Everstine, 1989.

The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One that Isn't by Robert I. Sutton, 2010.

My Health: Allergies by Laura Silverstein-Nunn, Alvin Silverstein, and Virginia Silverstein, 2001.

Save our Planet: 750 Everyday Ways You can Help Cleanup the Earth by Diane MacEarchern, 1990.

Earth Day is Every Day!

Part I of II

by KAYLIA MARQUIS, KAHNAWAKE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION OFFICE

We are supported by our Mother, the Earth, all year round. We need to show our appreciation for all that she provides every day and not just on one day a year.

We've come a long way as a community in this regard, though we still have a ways to go.

Here are a few simple things to do that can make a difference any day of the year.

Reduce Waste!

The first step to reducing how much you have to haul to the curb each week is by producing less waste to start off with.

Here are a few ideas on how to reduce "garbage":

- Consider carefully whether every purchase is necessary;
- Buy the highest quality you can afford as the item will last;
- Buy the item with the least amount of packaging. Think of the tube of toothpaste that comes in a box with extra plastic wrap;
- Use your things until it is unusable, not just until something better comes out;
- Donate usable items to a person or organization that can use them;
- Reuse what you can. Get/buy used items when you can;
- Recycle everything you can;
- Compost kitchen scraps, leaves, & cut grass.

Compost!

Why force natural things to rot and putrefy in a landfill when it can instead be turned into nutrient-rich soil like it's meant to? Compost does not smell, and does not need to be unattractive!

The Environment Protection Office has a great pamphlet on composting at home. There are also many online resources.

If you're concerned about animals or the wind scattering what you want to stay put, there are attractive outdoor compost bins that will keep everything together. If you are in the habit of raking up all your leaves each Autumn, the Transfer Depot has recently added a leaf-composting area to divert more waste from landfills.

Call the Environment Protection Office 450-632-0600 if you want to know when the next Leaf Pick Up will be. Or, if you can, bring your leaves there on your own schedule. Better yet, pile leaves in a corner of your yard. They too will turn into nutrients for the soil.



Look for more tips on what you can do for the environment in our next issue.

Animal Abuse

Part II of II

by MARIE DAVID

In last month's newsletter, we looked at how law enforcement and social service agencies in Canada and the United States are considering a link between child/domestic abuse and animal abuse.

The issue has gained such traction that the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has set up a mobile animal crime scene unit. Shelters in several states and provinces are working with law and social service agencies to document, raise awareness, and provide safe havens for families with animals in domestic abuse cases.

Why? According to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), around 40 per cent of women who are experiencing domestic violence and who own pets are reluctant to leave the situation because they don't want to leave the animal behind or because a threat has been made against the animal.

Why do abusers threaten, harm, or kill pets?

The reasons are very similar to why women, elders, and children are abused; it's an issue of power and control. According to the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS), there are several reasons abusers threaten or harm pets, including:

- to create an environment that intimidates and terrorizes their victims;
- to demonstrate power over the family;
- to use the pet as a warning to family members that *next time it could be you*;

- to punish victims for acts of independence and self determination, such as leaving;
- to prevent the victim from leaving or coerce her to return by threatening the pet's well-being;
- to degrade the victim and/or shift the responsibility of abuse through involvement in abuse;
- to force the family to keep violence a secret;
- to eliminate competition for attention.

A study conducted in 2000 by the OSPCA found that:

- Forty-four per cent of women seeking refuge from violence in women's shelters stated that their partner had previously abused or killed one or more of their pets;
- Forty-two per cent said that their partner had threatened to hurt or kill a family pet;
- Sixteen per cent confirmed that other family members had either abused or killed a family pet;
- Forty-three per cent stated that concern over a pet's welfare had prevented them from leaving the abusive situation earlier.

Who is looking out for the pets?

According to the CFHS, "Humane societies and SPCAs have taken the lead in creating greater awareness of the link between human and animal violence and in building bridges

among those who work to address violence in society, whether toward women, children, or animals."

In Ontario, the OSPCA has a Family Violence Assistance Program and works with participating women's shelters, humane societies, and SPCAs in their communities to provide safe emergency shelter for animals.

As more awareness is made of the link between animal and domestic abuse, it's hoped that humane societies, law officials, and social service agencies will no longer work in isolation of each other.

You can learn more about the human/animal violence connection by visiting cfhs.ca, ontariospca.ca, or aspc.org.

When you suspect an animal has been harmed, report it. Call the Kahnawake Peacekeepers at 450-632-6505 or Kahnawake Animal Protection at 450-632-0635. If you know someone is reluctant to leave an abusive situation because of concerns for a pet, offer to take in the pet, keep in mind the safety of yourself, the victim, and the animal(s) involved.

Source: "Animal Abuse, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence." *Canadian Veterinary Medical Association*. n.d. Web. 8 Dec. 2011.

Ontario Society for the Protection of Animals. What is Animal Cruelty? Ontario. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Siebert, Charles. "The Animal Cruelty Syndrome." *The New York Times Magazine*. 11 June 2010 web. 8 Dec. 2011.



Violence in the Workplace

Part II of III

from THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

How do I know if my workplace is at risk?

Review any history of violence in your own workplace.

- Ask employees about their experiences, and whether they are concerned for themselves or others.
- Review any incidents of violence by consulting existing incident reports, first aid records, and health and safety committee records.
- Determine whether your workplace has any of the risk factors associated with violence.
- Conduct a visual inspection of your workplace and the work being carried out. Focus on the workplace design and layout, and your administrative and work practices.

Evaluate the history of violence in similar places of employment.

- Obtain information from any umbrella organizations with which you are associated; e.g., your industry association, workers' compensation board, occupational health and safety regulators or union office.
- Seek advice from local police security experts.
- Review relevant publications.
- Collect newspaper or magazine clippings relating to violence in your industry.

Contact legislative authorities to determine if specific legislation regarding workplace violence prevention applies to your workplace.

Organize and review the information you have collected. Look for trends and identify the occupations and locations that you believe are most at risk. Record the results of your assessment. Use this document to develop a prevention program with specific recommendations for reducing the risk of violence within your workplace.

What can I do to prevent violence in my workplace?

The most important component of any workplace violence prevention program is management commitment. Management commitment is best communicated in a written policy. The policy should:

- be developed by management and employee representatives.
- apply to management, employee's, clients, independent contractors and anyone who has a relationship with your company.
- define what you mean by workplace violence in precise, concrete language.
- provide clear examples of unacceptable behaviour and working conditions.
- state in clear terms your organization's view toward workplace violence and its commitment to the prevention of workplace violence.
- precisely state the consequences of making threats or committing violent acts.
- outline the process by which preventive measures will be developed..
- encourage reporting of all incidents of violence.

- outline the confidential process by which employees can report incidents and to whom.
- assure no reprisals will be made against reporting employees.
- outline the procedures for investigating and resolving complaints.
- describe how information about potential risks of violence will be communicated to employees.
- make a commitment to provide support services to victims of violence.
- offer a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to allow employees with personal problems to seek help.
- make a commitment to fulfil the violence prevention training needs of different levels of personnel within the organization.
- make a commitment to monitor and regularly review the policy.
- state applicable regulatory requirements.

Look for part III on violence in the workplace in the next newsletter.

Source: Violence in the Workplace. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. <http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html>

The Back Page...

"We're in a giant car heading towards a brick wall and everybody is arguing over where they're going to sit."

David Takayoshi Suzuki, on the environment and global warming

In Honour of Mother Earth

by MARIE DAVID

In honour of Earth Day, here are a few tips for organic gardening. Why organic gardening? As of December 31, 2010, 171 municipalities (including the entire provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick) have placed restrictions on commercial pesticides. Besides, you really don't want to be anywhere near pesticides. Here's why.

It 1991, the town of Hudson, Quebec became the first municipality to adopt a by-law restricting the use of pesticides and, while specifically the by-law concerned commercial lawn chemicals, the move sparked progression towards safer, healthier, and greener alternatives to chemicals that end up in the earth, in the water table, in the air, on our foods...and in our bodies. Use of pesticides has been linked to some cancers, including childhood leukemia, as well as asthma.

Many people are turning to organic solutions when it comes to gardening and controlling weeds. You may think that it's complicated and involves a lot of expense...but as you'll see, it's not expensive or complicated at all. Here are just a few tips to cut down on weeds in your garden organically.

- **Mulch:** mulching helps to keep weeds away and it also helps keep the ground around the plant moist.
- **Bare spaces:** don't be stingy with the mulch otherwise the weeds will make their way through. Either put more mulch down or plant something there.

- **Location:** choose a spot for your garden where there is enough suitable light, whether it requires full sun or partial shade.

You can also companion plant different plants that can be helpful to one another; this is where the Three Sisters idea of gardening comes in. Corn stalks grow tall, so the beans—a natural climber—can use the stalks to climb, the squash stays low to the ground and spread, squashing out weeds—pun intended—for good measure.

You can do the same with other plants; for instance; marigolds are great to plant in between plants or rows to keep mosquitoes and other bugs away. Onion, garlic, or chives can deter aphids, slugs, and cabbage worms from fruit trees, tomatoes, and peppers. Basil planted with tomatoes can repel flies and mosquitoes. Pumpkin will grow well when planted near corn or radish but don't plant them with potatoes...they don't get along well.

Newspapers make great mulch. Whether you cut it up into thick strips or lay it down as a thick layer just be sure to put it down 2 or 3 sheets thick and add a half-inch of soil or mulch on top to keep it from blowing away. Newspapers will break down organically and keep weeds away. Do not use magazines or coloured inserts, they contain harmful dyes. Happy gardening and happy Earth Day!

April is...

- Cancer Awareness Month
- Oral Health Month
- 2 World Autism Awareness Day
- 6 Good Friday
- 7 World Health Day
- 9 Easter Monday
- 22 Earth Day

May is....

- Food Allergy Awareness Month
- MedicAlert Month
- Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month
- Speech and Hearing Awareness Month
- 1-7 Natl. Summer Safety Week
- 6-12 Emergency Preparedness Week
- 7-13 Natl. Mental Health Week
- 28-1 Spineweek
- 1 World Asthma Day
- 12 Canada Health Day
- 13 Mother's Day
- 21 Planting Day

Do you have questions or suggestions? Is there a topic you would like to see covered in a future issue of the newsletter? Contact us and let us know.

Aionkwatakari:teke

P.O. Box 1440
Kahnawake, Quebec JOL 1B0
Tel: 450-632-6880
Fax: 450-632-5116
E-mail: kscs@kscskahnawake.ca