

# Sorenson testifies at Head Start consultation



**BRIDGETT SORENSON,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

I would like to take the time to thank DJ Malloy, Deb Pine and Joan Carr Anderson for serving our members for the last four years. I have gotten to know these ladies very well in the last two years and will miss them. Joanie was like a grandmother to me and was my roommate on our travels.

I would also like to congratulate DJ Hoffman, Kim Gravelle and Rita Glyptis for winning in their units. I am personally glad that the election is over and the incumbents made it through all the political nonsense. Now is the time to come together and

get this tribe moving in the right direction.

In June, I traveled with our Head Start staff to Minnesota for the National Indian Head Start Directors Association Management training conference. I was asked by our director to testify for the Office of Head Start for the Tribal Consultation. Both of my kids were Early Head Start and Head Start participants. During that time I had served as the chairperson for the Parent Committee and on our policy council. After I read the testimony prepared by our director, Acting Director of the Office of Head Start Ann Linehan said it was the best delivered testimony she has ever heard. The staff and I were very proud of that statement. There were members of other tribes that had asked for a copy of the testimony to take with them the following week to D.C.

The opening session included a presentation titled, *You Cannot Give Away What You Do Not Have: Compassion Fatigue* by Theda New Breast. Theda is a Montana-born Blackfeet Indian, and she is one of the pioneers in the Native training field in addition to being one of the orig-

inal committee members for the Men's and Women's Wellness gatherings. Compassion for Native families and children comes with a responsibility of self-care and dedication to wellness. Theda uses humor, storytelling, and exploration of deep cultural values to remind us that we can only take people as far as we have come.

I attended trainings on ERSEA (eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance), *Building Successful Teams within Your Head Start Program*, *Supporting Staff in Establishing and Maintaining Professional Boundaries* and a tribal leader forum for empowering your program.

Nationally, about 35,575 American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children and their families are served by Head Start. Just over half of the children and families are served by 146 Region XI AI/AN programs. There is an abundance of information available on the other 10 regions but not much in region XI. Beginning in the fall of 2015, there will be a representative sample survey conducted called FACES (Family and Child Experiences Survey) in which we will be involved in as a program in region XI. The goals will be to provide information about region XI programs, classrooms, teachers, families and children — with a particular focus on changes in children's cognitive, social-emotional and school readiness skills over the course of one Head Start year. This data will form the national picture of Head Start and can be used in policy and practice decisions.

Our programs this year will serve 123 children with Head Start classrooms in St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie. The Sault also has center-based Early Head

Start with home-based available in other areas. I want to thank our Head Start staff for their dedication to improving the lives of our children. Their jobs are not always easy, but have a major impact on a child's readiness for their formal education.

We have recently changed the sick leave policy to allow team members to be able to accept donations from other companies besides the one you work for such as; a casino employee can now accept donations from a governmental team member. A team member needs to be on approved leave and must exhaust all of their leave time prior to receiving donations. I am very pleased with the change in this policy because it will help many more team members have access to accepting donations in their time of need. I currently attend the Policy Review Committee meetings to be involved in changing and improving our current policies. I feel that I bring something to the table having worked for the enterprise, government and casino.

My youngest son has been involved in the Circle of Life program this summer under the leadership of our YEA staff. The children go camping, learn how to eat balanced meals, make crafts, garden and will be making regalia for the Youth Empowerment Powwow that will be held in Rexton on Aug. 2. This has been a great experience for my son and the staff is awesome with the kids.

This year's junior police academy will be held August 4-8. Sault tribe members 11-15 years of age may attend. This is a free program and registration is limited. If interested please contact law enforcement at 635-6065

The St. Ignace Rendezvous Powwow will be held on Aug. 23 and 24.

I attended the Monster Truck Throw Down during the St. Ignace Car Show weekend. The show was well attended but the weather was not the best. The casino will be having a demolition derby on Aug. 2 and a Rodeo on Aug. 29, 30 and 31 in the grandstand area.



**Michaela Miller (with Sorenson, right)** of St. Ignace was the recipient of my \$1,000 scholarship for high school seniors. Michaela will be attending North Central Michigan College preparing for a career in radiography.

The installation of the new board was held on Tuesday, July 8. The chairman had called a special meeting for the election of officers to be held between the oath of office and the reception. I was not happy about that because this was supposed to be a night of celebration with family, friends and members. Two years ago we had the installation the day before the meeting for the election of officers. The planning needs to be better because many people's families did not attend due to a meeting being held. The election of officers was held with Denise Chase remaining the vice chair, Dennis McKelvie remaining the treasurer and I will be the secretary.

Any questions or concerns please contact me at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, (906) 430-0536 or (906) 643-2123.

Please take the time to enjoy the rest of your summer and attend the powwows.



**HEAD START NATIONAL MEETING — Ann Linehan-Acting Director of the Office of Head Start, myself, Captain Robert Bialas-Region XI Program Manager for the Office of Head Start, Joan Christnot-HS/EHS Director for Oneida and David Jordan Oneida Tribe Councilman.**