

Our children cannot dream if they are gone



CATHERINE HOLLOWELL,
DIRECTOR, UNIT II

Substance abuse and death in our tribal community —

Ensuring our grandchildren can dream of a better future for our people is a prayer we all hold dear, but our grandchildren can-

not dream if they are gone.

In August 2012 I wrote in my unit report about our community's substance abuse crisis. Since then, we have engaged in preliminary organizing in order to face this crisis head on. Unfortunately, the loss of our youth and young adults marches on unabated. We have an epidemic on our hands. It affects each and every one of us. We cannot move forward in a good way without facing this heartbreak in our own tribal community.

In this month's unit report, Director Causley has provided a specific update on the Tribal Action Plan (TAP) that we are assembling. As Lana states, "The plan is to be out in the communities by February and begin to gain input and recommendations from

our members on their thoughts, experiences and expectations on identifying and prioritizing challenges in each area." We need your help with this. It has to be grassroots if we hope to make a difference. For our Unit II constituency, please look for a written notice in your mailbox in the coming weeks.

Clearly our youth have to be an integral part of this effort. In fact, I hope they can lead us to the source of the pain. As well, we need to allow our young people a role in shaping our future. As elders, I believe we all pray to the creator for a natural order where our children and grandchildren do not "walk on" before us.

Restoring health care in our rural areas —

We're finally making prog-

ress on our effort to restore much needed health services in our most rural areas. In Unit II, we have identified the DeTour/Drummond Island area as being woefully under served. We've passed a "resolution of support" that creates an ad hoc committee in order to drive this effort to a successful outcome. We are scheduled to have our first committee meeting on Jan. 21 and we will be out in the community to share information and updates shortly after that date. Again, to our Unit II constituency, please look for notification in the form of a newsletter in your mailbox in the coming weeks.

Chi miigwech! —

I want to thank the chairman for organizing a full, comprehensive and vigorous agenda through

March of this year. This has been helpful in identifying our "must act" priorities as well as providing a framework for long term strategic planning.

To each and every Unit II member who contributed their time, talents and labor to making our community stronger, happier and all around better in 2012: Chi miigwech! So many new faces, as well as familiar faces, make our tribal communities thrive.

To all those who walked on 2012: We will honor you and we will not forget you.

To the Creator: Give us the strength, the courage, the compassion and the confidence to do the right thing.

Catherine Hollowell
Unit2tribal@gmail.com
(906) 484-6821