

## **STAY led to SAMSHA alternate appointment**

**KEITH MASSAWAY, DIRECTOR,  
UNIT III**

The appointment has been made final and my name has been added as an alternate to the Tribal Technical Advisory Board to SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). SAMSHA is a federal board who works to improve the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention, alcohol and drug addiction treatment and mental health services. I am very honored to have this opportunity to give input on these extremely important topics on a national level.

In recent years the tribe has tackled many of these problems head on. Suicide has always been prevalent in our communities and our tribe. SAMSHA awarded a \$500,000 grant for three years to the tribe. With those funds a very comprehensive plan was put into place. The tribal leaders along with community leaders, tribal and non-tribal residents and health professionals gathered to form a coalition board and produced the STAY (Sault Tribe Alive Youth) Project. The grant is administered by the tribal Education Department.

This was my introduction to SAMSHA. It became a very important objective of mine to work towards educating our people on the dangers and pitfalls in ignoring these problems we may have. In the hopes of getting more of our concerns heard on a national level the tribe endorsed my candidacy for the Technical Advisory Board. Now our tribe will be in the forefront of the fight in combating many of the problems that affect our people.

Bringing it closer to home, a tribal delegation went to the first tribal summit with Governor Snyder. Attending were Vice Chair Lana Causley, Deb Pine, Pat Rickley, Tom Miller, John Wernet and myself. Having attended summits before with Governor Granholm we watched for similarities or differences in how they conducted the meeting. The most notable difference was how Governor Snyder engaged the tribes. He encouraged a dialogue that encompassed ideas and conversation that centered on finding suitable economic stimulus to sustain growth, to develop new paths and not stand still. One instance would be how almost every tribe commented on how well the Pure Michigan campaign is working and that funding should continue. He added his agreement to that assumption but then asked how it could be better. He said we show water, sunsets and fishing but we need to show more and asked the tribes for input on what the ads were missing or how could we improve the message. That brought a burst of items that could be highlighted and should be explored. The tribes comments and information were written down and that was something that we had not seen before from our state leadership. It is not an epiphany but it was something encouraging.

Bringing it a little closer to home again, Pat Rickley and I had the pleasure of cooking for our elders at their annual picnic. We both look forward every year to this event. Talking and eating is always the best way to share ourselves with each other. We thank the elders for all their wisdom and knowledge they share with us and all the great treats they make for desert.

Thank you again for all the cards and e-mails.

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