



# Maine-Wabanaki REACH

Newsletter  
Winter 2015-2016

## Moving Forward

It has been a busy and productive time for REACH in the months following the release of the official report of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We have been engaged in the process of identifying how REACH will best move forward, continuing the work of truth, healing and change and ensuring the TRC findings are shared and the recommendations are implemented.

A crucial part of this process includes staff self-care and space for reflection and visioning for the future.

We gathered for a weekend in October for respite, fun, team building and delicious food.

We spent time in circle exploring how historical trauma impacts our work and learning ways to facilitate and support our own healing.

One powerful exercise we completed was creating a collective poem full of our dreams and hopes for reconciliation. It is shared below.

Finally, we were blessed with the chance to participate in the release of an eagle rehabilitated by Avian Haven. We held a small ceremony and sang to the eagle before Maria lifted the top and let her out...it was magical!

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## The Great Healing

If there will be the Great Healing  
 We believe that our tribes  
 Will have ultimate self-determination  
 Together we can  
 Nurture our spirituality  
 So we can share  
 And listen  
 And move community toward  
 Healing  
 Trusting our own ability  
 And right to thrive

Someday  
 We will be of one mind and  
 Protect our Mother and her gifts

We are spiritual beings  
 Having a physical experience  
 We are called to wholeness  
 Through love and authenticity  
 Individually  
 Collectively  
 Love ourselves  
 Love others

If we live with love  
 We can create  
 Together  
 We can create positive change  
 We believe in the strength of our  
 communities  
 If we stand together

Do you wonder what the  
 Grandchildren  
 Will say about  
 How we lived the Great Healing?

We are riding a wave of  
 opportunity –  
 Now  
 We are the ones  
 We have been waiting for  
 Don't ever lose sight  
 Of our destination

~October 18, 2015

REACH Website:  
[www.mainewabanakireach.org](http://www.mainewabanakireach.org)

Facebook: MEWabanakiREACH

Twitter: @MEWabanakiREACH



Maria helping to release the eagle

## Ally Building in Maine Communities

Having completed our 2015 Fall Ally Workshop series, REACH now has a growing community of over 325 Allies!

We are currently scheduling 2016 Spring/Summer Ally Workshops. Visit our website to sign up for our email notifications and our workshop calendar. Once on the website, go to the bottom of the page and click on REACH email signup.

If you have completed the ally workshop and want to explore how to become more involved with REACH, we want to hear from you. Contact any of the Maine community organizers.

Paul Strickland is in Washington County; Susan Howe is in Cumberland County; Tom Reynolds is in Androscoggin County; and Barbara Kates is in Penobscot County. You can reach us by emailing our first names @mainewabanakireach.org.

There are now 7 ongoing Ally Groups and more starting in January. At the groups, people who have completed the workshop meet regularly to discuss and support Ally work, deepen our understanding of privileges we appreciate, and identify opportunities for leveraging our privilege personally and within our communities.

Our focus is on education in our own communities. Allies have been creative in promoting learning this past year. Sometimes learning happens through personal conversations within social circles and other times sent out to the broader community via letters to the editor or Facebook.

Allies have shown visible support at legislative public hearing and workshop sessions on issues affecting Wabanaki people and communities. They have hosted educational events viewing historically accurate movies with follow up discussion sessions.

Allies have helped their faith communities, government leaders, and work places consider their relationship with Wabanaki people.

REACH is continuing to receive many requests for educational presentations throughout the state. We are developing a new program focused on how Maine communities move forward from here. Let us know if your community organization or faith group would like to host a presentation.

Many of these public presentations will be followed by Ally Workshops in the same community. Email or call Barbara Kates at 951-4874 to discuss possibilities.



*Photo from an interfaith Thanksgiving service organized by CAMA (Capital Area Ministry Association) in Augusta to acknowledge our true, shared history.*

## Health, Wellness & Self Determination in Wabanaki Communities

The work that REACH engages in Wabanaki communities is centered on promoting wellness of and furthering the self determination of Wabanaki people. A crucial part of this

work includes facilitating the development of positive working relationships between Wabanaki governments and State government. REACH is honored to be part of reconvening the

Indian Child Welfare Workgroup, bringing together tribal and state child welfare partners. We are excited about making connections and creating a new partnership with the

agencies and organizations that comprise the criminal justice system. We are committed to bringing about truth, healing and change to the benefit of Wabanaki people

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wabanaki Wellness Gathering

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Wabanaki Wellness Gathering held at Penobscot Nation October 12 and 13 was a tremendous success as we tapped into our own vast network of knowledge to learn and laugh together. The theme for the gathering was “nurturing our connections” and dozens of Wabanaki and friends attended.

Dr. Gail Dana-Sacco (Passamaquoddy/ Sipayik) delivered a thought-provoking presentation *Reclaiming Indigenous Health: Exploring the Power and Politics of Misbehaving* where she described how our communities have experienced persistent collective health inequities rooted in the laws and policies that govern the social, political, and economic order.

Dr. Rebecca Sockbeson (Penobscot) joined us from Alberta, Canada via skype sharing a thought-provoking presentation centered on indigenous knowledge of love. “Indigenous knowledge of love and how it is transferred is intrinsic to the survival of our people,” she demonstrated throughout her keynote presentation.

Other highlights of the gathering included drumming and song as we all learned The Barter Songs with Penobscot language instructor, Gabe Paul; and a presentation by Jonah Fertig of the Cooperative Development Institute on “Feeding our Communities: Rebuilding a cooperative, Native-owned food system.” Fertig drew on examples of native food systems located in remote areas of Alaska.

Dr. Jus Crea Giammarino (Penobscot) shared her vast knowledge of building apothecaries with special emphasis on medicinal plants for birth and death practices.

On the second day of the gathering, she instructed a tea and salve-making workshop and everyone was able to take home jars of salve for themselves and for sharing.

One highlight of the gathering was the New Moon Dinner Theatre where a hilarious, staged presentation of *Indian Radio Days: An Evolving Bingo Experience* was performed by the Wabanaki Intertribal Theatre Troupe as a benefit for tribal food pantries. The performance was open to the public on the evening of Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

Teens from the Penobscot Youth Council helped efforts by collecting donations of food and money at the door, handing out programs and cleaning up after the potluck.

REACH believes that our Ancestors want us to be happy and thriving and this fun, community event exemplified our capacity to come together, laugh, and play for a worthy cause. In early 2016, REACH will be taking the show on the road, offering staged performances at Sipayik, Indian Township, and with the Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians.

*“We all deeply yearn for connection. That’s how human beings are wired. And we can make that happen for ourselves and for those around us by simply reaching out a hand.” (Unknown)*



Wabanaki Intertribal Theatre  
Troupe  
Indigenous People’s Day 2015  
Indian Island

## Teaching the Teachers – Professional Development Workshops

REACH designed and led regional Teach the Teacher Professional development workshops in Calais and Portland during November. The workshop entitled, Reconstructing Maine History: Lessons Your Teachers Never Knew taught educators about responsibility in telling truthful history, illustrated the damages caused by false stories and urged educators to dig deep to

realize their responsibility in breaking the cycle of false stories, stereotypes, and oppression. Educators received an orientation to the Maine law requiring Maine Native history and culture be taught in Maine schools; they learned about the findings and recommendations of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission; received up-to-date resources by and about the Wabanaki, and

engaged in circle discussions together. The workshop was made available to educators, pre-service educators, and individuals desiring advanced knowledge of the Wabanaki Tribes of Maine and contemporary issues that affect us all. Participants have asked for more so additional workshops are being planned for spring.



## Save the Date!

Saturday, April 30, 2016

We are planning our inaugural REACH History Run along the St. Croix River - an educational road race and fun run that will highlight and celebrate the history of Passamaquoddy territory where the race is held. An educational "speak out" will follow the run. Relay teams are encouraged in this 8.8 mile run.

## Community Education

Maine communities are learning more about the shared history of Maine and Wabanaki people. Faith communities, workplaces, schools, civic, peace, justice and political groups are all stepping up to learn the truth. Would you like to support this learning in your community? REACH can help. We can start with a conversation about what might be involved. Contact REACH Maine community organizer Barbara Kates for more information at [Barbara@mainewabanakireach.org](mailto:Barbara@mainewabanakireach.org) or 951-4874.

*Maine Wabanaki REACH (Reconciliation, Engagement, Advocacy, Change and Healing) promotes truth, healing, and change for Wabanaki and Maine communities through engagement in prisons, schools, faith communities, workplaces; and in civic, political, and peace and justice groups. We envision a future where Maine and Wabanaki people join together to acknowledge truth, and work collectively toward healing and positive change.*

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