

MARCH 2025

NEWSLETTER



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March Recap!



Prevention Specialist Malesia Follman (Allegany Prevention Unit) leading a game of "Around the World" with Lakeshore High School Students. Students competed in a trivia game, answering questions on harmful substances, mental health, and culture. Winners of the games won 2 movie passes and a \$10 concessions card to Regal Cinemas!

The Cattaraugus Prevention Department has been busy visiting 2 of the schools in the tri-districts serving Indigenous students. Lakeshore High School has welcomed the Prevention Unit to visit their students since October, 2024, and have recently added more groups to participate. After many attempts to coordinate a schedule accommodating both the school and the unit, prevention specialists are now visiting Silver Creek Middle School students! Prevention Specialists Malesia Follman and Mary Mohawk-Jensen, and Community Outreach Supervisor Ray Woodin lead activities that focus on basic prevention topics such as substance abuse and awareness, suicide, bullying, and healthy relationships. Cultural elements and topics are always included in each activity.

There are many changes happening in the Prevention Unit! Staff additions are anticipated soon, as well as a possible relocation of the Seneca Native Connections Clubhouse, which is currently located at the Saylor Building. The Prevention Unit will update the community of any and all changes. For questions and concerns regarding the prevention unit and clubhouse, please call 716-532-8223 x 5688 or 5076.

Culture IS Prevention

Cultural practices are protective factors that reduce the risk of youth engaging in substance misuse. Learning, practicing, and knowing our culture has positive affects on mental health and self-esteem, lowering the risk of using mind changers and other harmful substances.

Gwa:dëh

"To Learn"

This Month's Topic: *Child Abuse Prevention*

Each year, National Child Abuse Awareness Month is acknowledged throughout April. National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. Throughout the year, communities are encouraged to increase awareness about child and family well-being and work together to implement effective strategies that support families and prevent child abuse and neglect. Prevention services and supports developed by this collaboration can help parents, other caregivers, and communities protect children and strengthen families.

Although child neglect is the most common form, child maltreatment includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or person in a custodial role, including a religious leader, coach, or teacher that results in harm, the potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. Being exposed to drugs, alcohol, mental health issues, food insecurity, and high rates of violence are all potential risk factors for child maltreatment. Raising awareness about child abuse and maltreatment helps support prevention efforts and reduction strategies to support healthy growth and development for Native children, families, and communities as a whole.

Let's take action and make a difference! As we gain knowledge and understanding of child maltreatment, it is imperative for every individual, in every family and indigenous community, to take action and bring about change by identifying potential risk factors of child maltreatment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outline a few protective factors to prevent child maltreatment.

Individual Protective Factors:

Caregivers creating safe, positive relationships.

Practicing nurturing parenting skills and providing emotional support

Meeting basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health services.

Family Protective Factors include:

Strong familial or social support networks.

Stable and positive relationships.

Maintaining a presence to enforce household rules and engage in child monitoring.

Having caring adults outside the family who can serve as role models and mentors.

Community Protective Factors include:

Communities with access to safe and stable housing,

Nurturing and safe childcare.

Safe after school-programs and activities.

Medical care and mental health services.

Economic and financial help.

Work opportunities with family-friendly policies.

Individuals and communities who teach Indigenous core values, cultural strengths, Native languages, and traditional beliefs positively impact a child's health and well-being, which ultimately decreases any potential negative health outcomes and risks for maltreatment.

APRIL IS
**CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION
MONTH**



**April is
Alcohol
Awareness
Month**

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