Diabetes Center of Excellence Fund-Raisers

By Janine Rourke
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Amazing, simply amazing!! These were celebrations of celebrations….The Let's Get Healthy and St. Regis Mohawk Health Services staff were awed. Donations for the Diabetes Center of Excellence building project came in, during the July 2nd Black Tie Event and the 3rd Annual Golf Tournament on August 14th. The Akwesasne Housing Authority sponsored both events.

Black Tie Event

As part of their 25th anniversary celebration, Lorraine Thomas of the Akwesasne Housing Authority offered this idea for the Diabetes *Center of Excellence* building in February 2009. Retha Herne and the AHA staff rounded up a team with vast creativity and the desire to make this special event. The Black Tie Event committee met frequently to decide on decorations, sponsorship design, entertainment, community participation and endless details. With Jacobs Tobacco Manufacturing's well-known generosity, the Black Tie Committee members secured the venue and dove into creating an atmosphere of elegance, sparkle and a Vegas-like show of dancing, song and impersonation.

Black Tie participants began the process through silent and public auctions, generating $19,000. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe strengthened its support for the project with a $30,000 check. To the astonishment of many, Retha Herne, AHA Director, presented a check for one million dollars to Debra Martin, Executive Director of St. Regis Mohawk Health Services. This support for the Diabetes *Center of Excellence* project provides a foundation to the generosity of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Black Tie event participants, Akwesasne families and friends in surrounding communities. Retha Herne, Debra Martin, Janine Rourke, Brian Garrow, Nancy Jacobs and Chief Monica Jacobs wove the emotions of how diabetes affects every Akwesasnoron family.

Golf Tournament

The 3rd Annual Golf Tournament for the Diabetes *Center of Excellence* Building Fund was held on August 14th. The day was filled with competition, the sun's heat and Malone's awesome course. The unsung heroes of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Health Services and Akwesasne Casino again led this successful tournament. Rob Cree, Dr. Benson Kelly, Debra Martin, Vicky Jock, Gloria Herne, Sherri Roundpoint, Mark Martin, Star Thomas and Kelly Jackson gave their time and hearts to coordinate sponsors, teams, supplies and awards.

Chiefs James Ransom and Monica Jacobs reinforced their support with a $30,000 check to ensure the Diabetes *Center of Excellence* building will soon become a reality.

Center for Excellence

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal leadership is *Helping Build a Better Tomorrow* through state-of the-art diabetes treatment and prevention models. This includes physical activity, diabetes self-management education, nutrition therapy and other best practices for every Akwesasne family. The *Let's Get Healthy* staff test and try many different educational strategies in diabetes and prevention. They are ready to move forward with successful program models for Akwesasne. The team has grown in experience and skills to be diabetes care leaders and experts in the specialties of nursing, fitness, nutrition and lifestyle coaching.

The Diabetes *Center of Excellence* will deliver state-of-the-art diabetes-related programs and services to the community of Akwesasne through two phases of construction. The *Let's Get Healthy* staff will integrate a range of educational strategies in diabetes management, nutrition therapy, physical activity, smoking cessation and stress management. They will use the models of best practices in adult weight management, youth and physical activity, diabetes self-management, pregnancy and diabetes and community advocacy.

Grassroots support from many individuals and groups such as the Annual Golf Committee members and golfers, Akwesasne Garden Club members, the Annual 7 Miles for 7 Generation walk participants and the St. Regis Mohawk School has brought in over $216,500. With the $60,000 donation from the Tribe and one million from AHA the total donations/dedications so far are $1,276,500. The Tribe's Department of Planning and Infrastructure is pursuing federal grants to help meet Phase 1 project costs. Total projected costs are $6.8 million.

The 7 Miles For 7 Generations Walk will take place on October 3rd. Please contact the *Let's Get Healthy* Team if you are interested in walking or making a donation.

The teams of the *Let's Get Healthy* Program: Diabetes Grant and Mohawk Healthy Heart express their great appreciation for the work of so many to help raise funds. From the *Let's Get Healthy* team, many thanks to all for your support and advocacy for this building. Businesses, families and organizations are all important factors to win the diabetes battle.