

The Roundtable

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Healthy and well. But she got there the hard way.

“ In the United States in 2016, of the 39,782 new HIV diagnoses, 1% (243) were among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. Of those, 81% (198) were men, and 19% (45) were women.”- Wabanaki Health and Wellness



Sharon Tomah Jordan, co-founder and executive director of Wabanaki Health and Wellness, brought the story of the many programs of the agency to the meeting this morning. “Wabanaki” means “People of the first light.” The four Maine Indian tribes are the Maliseet, Micmac, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, known collectively as the Wabanaki. The Bangor-based agency provides culturally sensitive case management and health promotion for tribally-enrolled Native Americans. In addition to Maine, Wabanaki

tribes can be found in New Hampshire, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

“I am a social worker at heart. I love working with clients.” Ms. Jordan described her personal acquaintance with poverty, foster care, and bearing a child when she was 14. It was only through perseverance in getting her GED followed by college and a master’s degree that she broke out of what might have resulted in a lifetime of problems.

“You never know how a little bit of help can go a long way,” she said as she described buying a couple of ties and shirts for two young men who are graduating this week from high school. “We tend to focus on specific needs populations,” she continued.

Wabanaki Health and Wellness focuses on clients in the greater Bangor area, with about 300-350 clients. To be eligible to be a client, a deep background check is performed to guarantee that the individual is at least ¼ Native American. Ms. Jordan said background checks can extend back seven generations.

Activities happen throughout the year as well as programs at the peer recovery center on Park Street throughout the week. “We are trying to help people become more stable,” she said. In addition, they operate a 1-week camp in the summer for youth with special needs.

A major initiative is the Wabanaki Health & Wellness rapid testing, a quick process that tests for HIV in saliva. Getting quick results help prevent the spread of the disease.

“A goal we have is getting food and shelter for clients,” Ms. Jordan said, adding that finding housing for some clients is challenging. Another goal is getting clients into the work force so they can support their families.

“What we do makes a difference.”

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The rainy morning settled the decision to stay inside in the Rangeley Hall meeting room. **President June Kontio** reminded us of the annual dinner on **June 20** at the Sheridan Four Points restaurant. Cost is \$44 per person, but parking is free if you park in the short-term lot and bring your ticket for validation. This meeting replaces the morning meeting that day.

Volunteers needed! **Ken Kimball** is gathering pancake batter for the July 4 pancake breakfast at Brewer Auditorium, but he reports that he has only one volunteer signed up; he needs ten. **Pudge Harrison** met with the Area 9 clubs – Old Town, and Bangor Noon, and volunteers from these clubs can be a source for projects for all of us. Ken announced that he will undertake- or overtake – his first “double century” bicycle ride- 200 miles – next weekend. He must have a very comfortable bike seat.

Ken Nagle applied for another grant for the wheelchair project that will provide \$1,800, with a total of \$5,500 needed. Each wheelchair costs about \$165. The group will travel to Panama at the end of February or in March.

Camp Hope is scheduled for June 26 at Camp Jordan. **Kendra Speed** is your contact for volunteering. She needs six to help with cooking the meal and other tasks.

Ken Kimball served as Sgt-at-Arms *pro tempore* as he took a jubilation dollar (we think that’s what it was) from Pudge as he announced that his oldest daughter is getting married on Saturday. **Tom Violette’s** sister is coming from Colorado for a visit, her first in five years.

What is the hottest planet in our solar system? That’s the kind of trivia question you can help answer by attending the EMCC Trivia Night this Friday. Check with **Jen Khavari** for details.

We thank **David Zelz** for his remembrance of D-Day in which he recounted his visit to France and Normandy. The museum, photographs, and his friendly reception as an American among people there prompted his recommendation for us to visit the sites.

Les Myers- June 6, 2019, who will be conducting press maintenance for the next couple of Thursdays. Your subscriptions will not be affected.



Collaboration

