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"Building Communicative Bridges In A Tri-Racial Setting"

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The Healing Lodge, a gateway to community service and support

by Mary Barton Largent

The Healing Lodge (Native American Interfaith Ministry). The Native American Interfaith Ministries is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit ecumenical faith based organization that takes a grass-root level approach to developing and establishing culturally appropriate services to disenfranchised citizens of Robeson County as our primary mission. The American Indians are our primary target group but we are a gateway service for everyone residing in Robeson County. Addiction recovery and life style change is a priority of our organization. Our organization represents approximately 128 American Indian Churches of five (5) denominations: United Methodist, Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, Holiness Methodist, Church of God, and the Assembly of God. The "Healing Lodge" is a hub that will help remove the greatest barrier in seeking medical care among American Indians and other groups of poverty (fear and a lack of trust in the health care system.) Mr. Millard Lowry, Jr. is the Executive Director of The Healing Lodge in Pembroke, North Carolina, located temporary at 450 Prospect Road. The Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, a board member organization of N.A.I.M., is providing this facility. This Interfaith Ministry began in 2001 when a health department worker came to a group of ministers and said she needed help. At that time, Robeson County was the number one in the nation for STDS.

The Center For Disease Control had come from Atlanta to see what was going on. The health department worker was at the end of her rope. She knew no other way to do it but through the churches.

This is when a group of ministers and lay people met together to see what could be done.

In the beginning approximately 80 people met together, but the group dwindled down to 10 people, and that is now the core group of people that the organization is formed from.

Seven permanent seats are set up so that there will always be help. Mr. Lowry stated, "The bottom line is there is a spiritual depletion and misunderstanding and have gotten away from the church. The membership in the churches are decreasing, and we feel like some are not being reached." "The church needs to change the way of dealing with people, dealing with issues. "We have to live in the now"

"Out Reach Ministry is a gateway to services that can reach some of the people that are not being reached by the church."

"The underlined message, for us as christians, Jesus died for us and loves us."

We need to deal with people first- the issues that keep them away from church, issues that keep them with the mindset that they're not good enough for the church. Some church members feel the same way because they're doing things they know they shouldn't be doing."

"We have a program to educate pastors and laymen to be sensitive to the needs of the people."

Funding from the American Cancer Society has allowed us to train Lay Health Advisors (LHAs) with a primary focus on breast and cervical cancer. We have produced and created a video of American Indian cancer survivors to be used in our local rural churches and communities in collaboration with UNCP.

Our "Faith In Families" program coordinator works with the

department of Social Services (DSS) and local church partners to help welfare families' transition back into the work place.

We have collaborated with Robeson Health Care Corporation to be a partner in the Southeastern North Carolina American Indian HIV/AIDS Initiative a federally funded Department of Health and Human Services Health

Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) Program. The program helped us to identify the three target areas of our Parish Nurse Program. We are able to provide spiritual training to local pastor and lay persons through this grant.

Mr. Lowry went on to say "We needed to change how we cared for people. How we were taking care of the ministry. We needed to take care of the social needs first and then get folks aligned spiritually. We have to take care of their needs, whether that's drugs, alcohol, health issues and addictions of any sort. All these things are related- domestic violence, suicide prevention, homelessness, sexually transmitted diseases.

"As a group of people, we do not grieve as we should. Counselors that we do talk to don't know how to deal with grief and bereavement and all the issues tied with death and loss, and it doesn't necessarily have to be a death-serious illnesses, also.

Several reasons for that is one morning a man will wake up and say that God has called him to preach and he starts a flock. We believe you need some kind of formal education, some kind of formal training so you can handle situations today. People of 2003 are different from when Jesus was on earth, even though we still have diseases and other issues, but we're dealing in a different way. We may have to change.

"There's a book I like to read and I wish everybody would read it. It's called "Who Moved MY Cheese" and if you don't move the cheese, the alternative to the cheese if it doesn't move, you lose."

"Change some of the things we do. Are we the church we want to be? Could be or should be? Or are we the club grandma and grandpa set up and we were fortunate enough they had the means to set us up. Are we the ministry of Jesus Christ? Are we reaching the poor, lame? Have we become a group of people that have become selfish?"

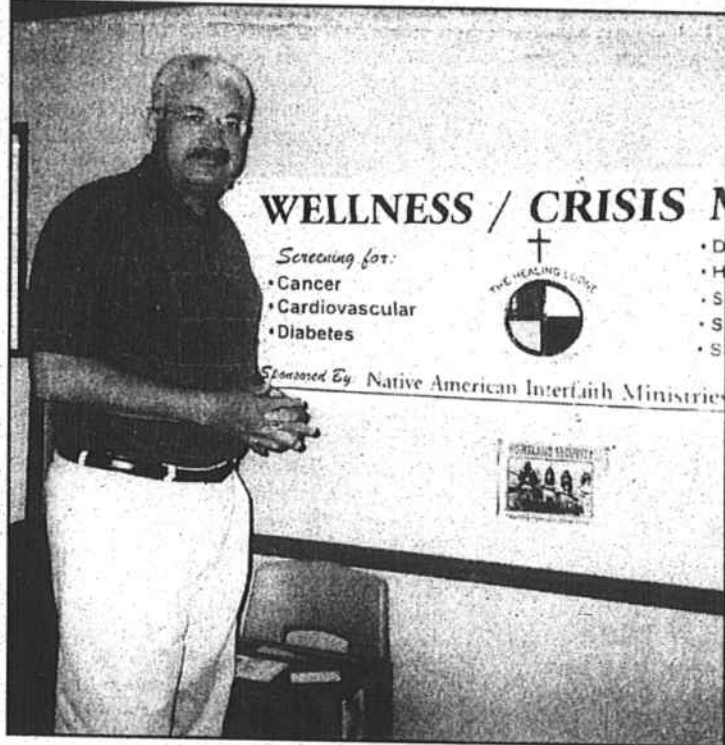
We have classes of people within our community, the ones that have and the have nots. Half keep grabbing and holding on and not giving to the have nots and the number of have nots keep growing.

Economic and education, and greed has caused barriers to be put in the place in a way to keep the have nots out. We're here to equalize the community system, a place where someone can walk in and and we help them with their issues. Our mission statement is to help people.

We do not provide a lot of services here, but we can test for several diseases. We are a non-traditional test site for the State of North Carolina for STDS, HIV and AIDS.

We have a research project working primarily with the Indian community, collecting information about STDS, HIV, and drug abuse."

This article will be continued next week.



Millard Lowry, Executive Director



Rev. Jo Lentz

Grand Opening Tribal Council set for Native Taxi meeting November 25

The Grand Opening for Native Taxi & Support on December 4, 2003 at 2 p.m. at the offices of the business located at 112 West 3rd Street in Pembroke.

The business will provide affordable transportation to Pembroke and surrounding areas. Native Taxi & Transport is owned by Angie Lowery and Grant Lee Hunt, Sr.

The Lumbee Tribal Council meeting has been rescheduled for November 25 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Lumbee Tribal Office located at 707 Union Chapel Road in Pembroke. For more information contact the tribal Office at 910-521-7861



AIMI building in Shannon

AIMI fills gaps in services

A small group of women incorporated American Indian Mothers as a State and Federal chartered non-profit organization to fill in the gaps in services throughout the rural community.

To address substance abuse, child abuse/neglect, teen pregnancy prevention, domestic violence and other risk factors that hinder Indian families to succeed.

Programs and services are not limited to American Indians.

What can the American Indian Mothers do for you? Compassionate Human Services:

- Family counseling
- Health services
- Women Empowerment
- Cultural sensitivity
- Spiritual awakening
- Pregnancy, nutrition, and parenting classes
- Substance abuse prevention classes
- Family support and job training

Educational Programs: tutoring, adult education, youth and adult counselors, multi-cultural programs, scholarship programs, sons and daughters of the first people.

Nutrition and fitness: youths camps, fitness for elderly, health issues, nutrition, and food bank, breakfast and lunch programs

Disaster Relief: food bank, and cannery, emergency shelter, 72 hour readiness and survival kits, plants herbs for medicinal purposes, and holistic approaches.

Rural Development: Economic development, pride and employment, job opportunity, industrial recruitment, promote

tourism, and show case multi-cultural heritage.

On October 30, 2003-November 1, 2003 the AIMI celebrated the Millennium Memorial and Warriors Awards Banquet in the Southeastern Farmers Market and Agricultural Center.

Greg Richardson, Director of NC Commission of Indian Affairs was the Master of Ceremony.

The 2003 Candlelight Memorial Service was introduced by Mrs. Ruth Dial-Woods. In her opening statements she said, "We are coming together to celebrate the life of our colleagues and great warriors, wasn't popular to be a Native and give thanks to their honor and American life, the memories and contributions of our visionary founders."

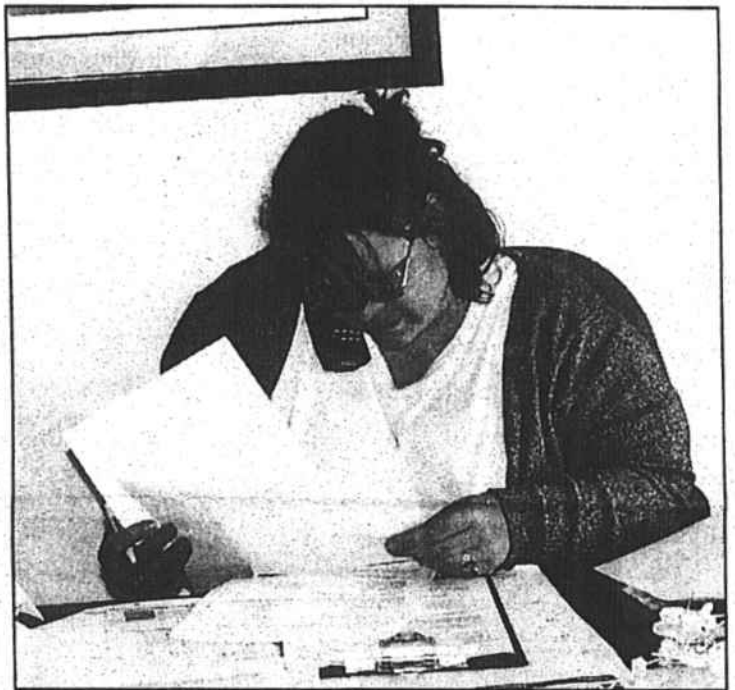
He was Chief of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribes. He was instrumental in the growth and progress of the tribe, as well as instrumental in the growth and prosperity of the overall community.

The United Tribes of North Carolina honored Chief Richardson by creating a scholarship in his name

Indian Educational Award Founders of Rex-Rennert School were given honor and recognition for their contributions to bring education to their children and the community.

Among those 7 that had a dream were A.N. Emanuel (Normie), Dennis Maynor, Eutie Wilkins, Henry Collins, Proctor Locklear, Charlie Lowery and Martin Hall.

Things in the school system has changed in Robeson, because they had a dream. Lewis R. Baron was awarded a plaque for his contributions on his historical work, and recognized as an authority on the Lumbee



Penny Jacobs, employee at AIMI does paper work



Rosella Jacobs, volunteer at AIMI helps prepare food for needy.

1 in 5 Americans will get skin cancer in their lifetime. If you can't choose, the sun will choose for you. Prolonged exposure will only accelerate the aging process and increase your risk for skin cancer. Wear sunscreen, cover up and get checked out by a dermatologist.

