

Monacan Indian Nation



June 2021

## Tribal Newsletter

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am happy to say that our election on April 24 to fill the vacancies on our tribal council went well. The Monacan people elected seven tribal members to fill the open positions. I was a bit disappointed with the number of Monacans who voted during the election, but I hope that our continued encouragement will help to bring all Monacans out to vote when we have tribal elections.

Work continues at our Highview Monacan Community Center in Madison Heights. We are seeking approval to add several more multi-purpose buildings towards the back of our property. And, engineers and planners with Indian Health Services have visited our site and hope to break ground on our clinic expansion sometime in the fall.

Our staff and volunteers with the Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank have been busy putting several grants to work to help provide food assistance to tribal members and to local community members. It is exciting to see

how all the hard work is paying off and accomplishing so much for so many.

One of the grants will help us to purchase a commercial grade stove and ice maker to use when hosting our elders' dinners at the Highview Monacan Community Center. We had our first dinner on May 8 and had more than 50 attend. The food was delicious and the time to visit with one another was so special since many of us had not seen one another for a very long time. Our next elders' dinner will be on Saturday, June 26, at 4 pm.

We all continue to work hard for our people, and it is wonderful to see the results. Our next tribal meeting will be at the Highview Monacan Community Center on Saturday, June 19, beginning at 11 am. Please come so you can see firsthand what is going on and learn what you can do for our people.

*~Chief Kenneth Branham*

### SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In order to better recruit and support Native American students, Virginia Tech has created the Native Tribal Initiative. The initiative works with Native American Virginia Tech Alumni to reach pre-college Native students at powwows and other tribal events and supports both virtual and on-campus events throughout the year to increase awareness and understanding of Native American culture. To learn more about this initiative visit: [www.vt.edu/admissions/tribal-initiatives.html](http://www.vt.edu/admissions/tribal-initiatives.html)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Bureau of Indian Affairs Grant Improves Access to Monacan Burial Grounds on Bear Mountain

Money from a recent Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) grant will help to pave the road leading to the historic Monacan burial grounds on the 98-acre parcel on Bear Mountain that is owned by the tribe.



Sign just off of Matohe Road in Amherst County indicating turn for the burial grounds

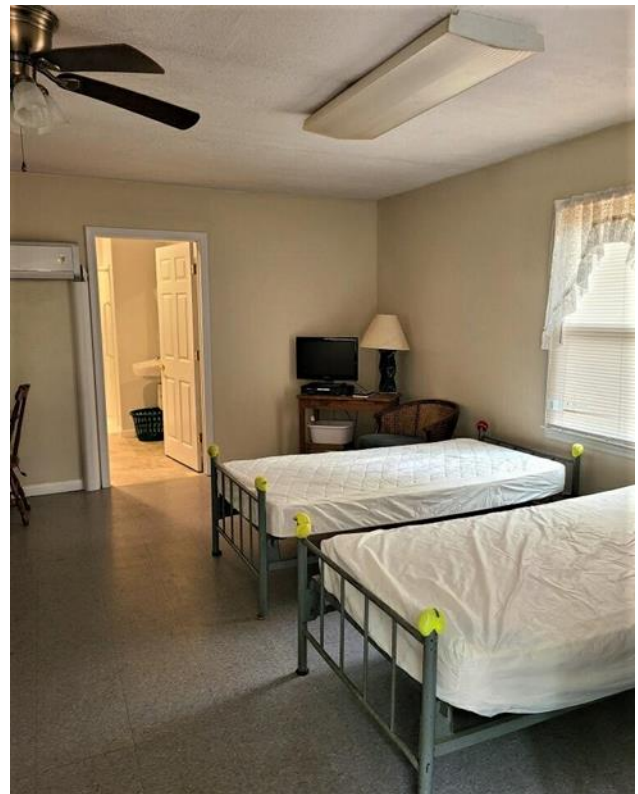
Records indicate that burials at this site began in the 1800s and continued into the 1900s. In the fall of 2016, a memorial ash garden was installed near the tribe's ancestral burial grounds in memory of the late Chief Sharon Bryant.

## Monacan Cabin Ready to Rent

With recent access improvements complete, the tribe's hilltop cabin, near the intersection of Kenmore and Indian Mission Road, is now ready to rent. With a selection of single and bunk bed accommodations, the cabin sleeps 15 and offers a wheelchair accessible ramp into the building, as well as wheelchair roll-in showers and wheelchair accessible bathroom sinks. The cabin also offers a galley kitchen complete with a Microwave oven, coffee pot, griddle, and a small refrigerator for simple meal prep.



New ramp offers easier access to tribal cabin



With air conditioning through, the hilltop cabin comfortably sleeps fifteen



Wheelchair accessible roll-in shower with grab bars and wheelchair accessible sink in new cabin bathroom

Outdoor enthusiasts will find a nice deck on the back of the cabin, a picnic table and a fire pit. The cabin also offers air conditioning throughout the building for summertime comfort.

To make a reservation for the cabin call 434-944-5032 or email [minculturalfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:minculturalfoundation@gmail.com).

## Monacan Museum Now Open Five Days a Week

The Monacan Ancestral Museum is now regularly staffed and open for visitors each week, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 – 4 pm. While a new t-shirt order will soon be available at the museum, Lou Branham is working hard to update the museum’s gift shop area and hopes to include Monacan-made artwork for sale. If you have handmade items that you are interested in selling in the gift shop area, Lou asked that you contact her at the museum to arrange a time to meet. The museum phone number is 434-946-5391.

**Our elders took their responsibility seriously, they taught us how to make and grow things. Let us continue that tradition by doing likewise and teaching our young people these skills.**

## Excitement Continues to “Grow” as Food Bank Receives Multiple Grants

The Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank was awarded several grants this spring to help advance their work to feed tribal members and members of the surrounding community. One grant provided funds for additional computers needed by office staff and for a WIFI barcode scanner and printer to use with the food bank’s inventory software.

A second grant provided funds for a commercial grade stove and ice maker to be used when preparing meals for the much-anticipated monthly gatherings at the new Highview Monacan Community Center for tribal elders who are over 60 years of age. Last month’s dinner, held on May 8, was very well attended, and guest chefs, Don Branham and Bertha Branham, prepared a delicious meal.

The third grant is the Community Nutrition Spring 2021 Award from the No Kid Hungry program. This grant will support the Monacan Nation Cultural Foundation's community feeding and nutrition education work by funding an on-site garden, purchasing and installing a greenhouse and starting a seedling program where Monacan youth are taught how to grow vegetable seedlings that they can then share with tribal elders.



Work is well under way getting the area behind the Monacan Indian Food Bank planted with a wide-range of summer crops.

Food Bank staff member Jennifer Austin has already planted a variety of garden vegetables for this summer including Jalapeno peppers, green bell peppers,

Cherokee purple tomatoes, Amish paste tomatoes, Tutelo corn, green beans, kale, red romaine, and basil, and soon she will be planting carrots, radishes, squash, cucumbers and potatoes.



Caged tomatoes growing in our food bank garden.

Once harvested, the produce grown in the garden will be distributed to tribal members and members of the community through the Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank.



Growing Three Sisters—beans, corn and squash—in our food bank garden.

### **Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank Captures Regional and National Attention.**

All of this hard work and enthusiasm has caught the attention of not one, but of two of our supporting agencies. Both the *Blue Ridge Area Food Bank* out of Verona and *Feeding America*—“the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization” have noticed the activity from within our food bank. Staff with *Feeding America* visited our site, interviewed our staff and

volunteers and some of our clients to put together a cover story on our food bank that will be published sometime this summer.

### **June’s Areas of Outreach for Our Food Bank**

In addition to the foods supplied through the *Blue Ridge Area Food Bank*, our food bank applies for grants, hosts fundraisers, and highlights areas in which we can help meet the needs of our neighbors. During the month of June, the Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank is raising awareness for PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

While most people tend to link PTSD to military experience, in fact, PTSD can affect people of all ages—men, women, and even children. All types of traumatic events such as disasters, accidents and abuse, can bring on PTSD which explains why it can affect anyone. Individuals with PTSD often feel like they are reliving the traumatic experience during what is often an otherwise safe and normal situation.

Often times, a person suffering from PTSD experiences flashbacks, sleep disturbance, and cognitive impairment. These symptoms can be brought on by certain smells, sounds, or sights that are associated with the traumatic experience, but the good news is that PTSD can be treated.

Treatment of PTSD is often most effective when it focuses on all three aspects of an individual—mind, body, and spirit—through a holistic approach to healing. Many free resources, courses, and groups are available to assist individuals in overcoming struggles with PTSD. Resources may be located by contacting primary care providers, local faith-based organizations, community service boards, or the Indian Health Service.

Individuals experiencing a PTSD crisis who need immediate help may contact their local community services board, call 911, or visit a local emergency room. In addition, veterans experiencing a PTSD crisis may also contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, option 1.

Our food bank is also recognizing National Cancer Survivor Day – Sunday, June 6. As we Monacans so well know, cancer claims many lives every year, particularly amongst American Indian and Alaskan Native populations. National Cancer Survivor Day is set aside to celebrate those who have survived cancer and to encourage the research necessary to help prevent and cure cancer for all.