



CENTRAL COUNCIL

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

320 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite 300 • Juneau, AK • 99801
907.586.1432 • Fax: 907.586.8970 • www.ccthita.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Tribe Joins My Brother's Keeper Initiative and Holds
Local Action Summit**

Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska in collaboration with Sealaska, convened a local action summit last Friday in response to President Obama's White House initiative, "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK). The Tribe is one of only two tribes in Alaska and 15 tribes nationwide that have committed to the challenge.

The MBK initiative is a call to action to community members (mayors, tribal leaders, schools, agencies/organizations, etc.), who offer a program or service that provides a vital resource and is an integral component to improving the life outcome for minority boys and young males. The initiative challenges communities to work together on developing a plan of action and safety net of resources to help young people reach their full potential.

Nearly 75 community leaders representing tribal, municipal, and state governments along with agencies/organizations participated in the summit. Andy Lee of Sitka facilitated the summit with opening remarks provided by Sealaska President/CEO Anthony Mallott, Tlingit Haida Central Council President Richard Peterson (ready by Melissa Kookesh), and Governmental Affairs Liaison Barbara Blake; keynote address provided by Youth Representative Brandon Mayer; and panel discussion with Joe Tompkins, Brandon Mayer, Josh Clark, and Shilo Valle. The afternoon breakout sessions focused on six areas of life that can be indicators of later success and also where interventions can have the greatest impact:

1. All children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready to learn.
2. All children read at grade level by third grade.
3. All youth graduate from high school.
4. All youth complete post-secondary education or training.
5. All youth out of school are employed.
6. All youth remain safe from violent crimes.

Data presented during the summit revealed Alaska Natives suffer from disproportionately high rates of mortality (suicide and homicide), exposure to violent crimes, substance abuse, and high school dropout. While the statistics presented were difficult to hear, it was necessary for participants to review in order for the group to move forward with purpose and have a deep understanding of the many barriers our young Alaska Native males face.

Based on the outcome of the summit, a policy review to form recommendations for action is scheduled to be held January 24, 2015 with a final plan of action to be completed no later than March 23, 2015.



Participants of the My Brother's Keeper Local Action Summit held in Juneau, AK.

"We have heard the statistics on our tribal youth; when you realize what they face in their lifetime, you cannot sit idle. Our schools, tribes, communities, agencies/organizations are all an integral part of the solution. We will not find an answer to save our children and our future children until we all work together. I'm hopeful that through our long-term commitment, we can ensure our tribal youth have a chance for a brighter future and healthier life."

- President Richard Peterson

"There is a crisis with our young Alaska Native males – the crisis is real, ongoing, and growing. If action is not taken, we are going to lose more young men, which will lead to more dysfunctional households. The lack of support, opportunity, and the issues our young men face are leaving them hopeless. It is our responsibility to help our young Native boys succeed in life."

- Andy Lee, MBK Summit Facilitator

"While this effort may start out and appear to be Juneau based, it is imperative that what we develop is a pilot program and/or solution that can be replicated in our other communities and villages. We are committed to our children throughout the region. We will strive to develop and make available the tools and resources necessary to ensure the wellbeing of all Native children."

- President Richard Peterson

For more information on the MBK Local Action Summit including statistical data, breakout session reports, video recording of the summit, etc., please visit:

www.ccthita.org/info/events/MBKInitiative.html.

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Contact:

Barbara Blake, Governmental Affairs Liaison
907.463.7124 | bblake@ccthita.org