



Pokégnek Bodéwadmik • Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Department of Education

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March 11th, 2015

Grand Valley State University
Kutsche Office of Local History
Attn: Gi-gikinomaage-min Project
1 Campus Dr.
Allendale, MI 49401

The Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has awarded Grand Valley State University's (GVSU) Kutsche Office of Local History, in collaboration with GVSU's Native American Advisory Board, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Special Collections and Archives through the university's library, a planning grant to design an initiative called "Gi-gikinomaage-min: Defend Our History, Unlock Your Spirit," that will ultimately create the first archival collection focused on the urban Native American experience in West Michigan. The planning stage of this initiative will continue through May 2015.

In the last half of the 20th century, the federal government instituted a program called "The Urban Relocation Program" which created one of the largest movements of Native Americans in U.S. history. These policies were also known as the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, or Public Law 959. Here in Michigan, Native Americans were pushed into cities like Detroit, Flint, Lansing, and our focus area of Grand Rapids. According to the 2010 Census, there are more than 1800 self-identified Native Americans currently living in the Grand Rapids area. We would like to tell their story. We also want to include the experiences of those who were born, educated, have worked, or otherwise share important connections to the Grand Rapids area even if they currently reside elsewhere.

We, the Pokagon Band Department of Education support the goals of the Gi-gikinomaage-min Project and will offer our letter of endorsement to the GVSU project collaborators no later than May 2016. This will assist the project team as they work to submit proposals for grant funding to support the full initiative.

The overarching aim of this endeavor is to bridge the gap that lies between the urban Native American population and the citizens of our tribes that exist within the State of Michigan as well as the 566 Nationally Federally recognized tribes. We also hope to foster a larger sense of community for the betterment of all Native Americans.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Morseau".

Sam Morseau
Director of Education

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(A proud, compassionate people committed to strengthening our sovereign nation.

A progressive community focused on culture and the most innovative opportunities for all of our citizens.