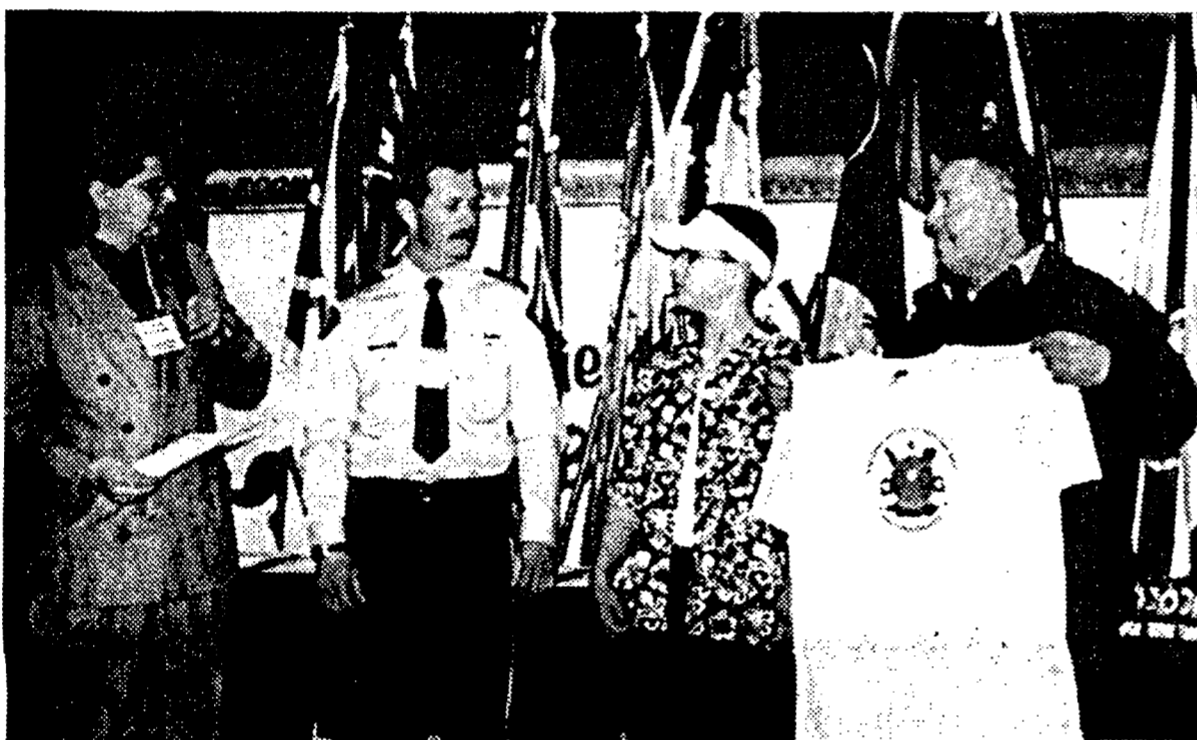


Race Against Drugs Net 925 Students

by Bill Reidy and Joyce Mitchell



With the year 2000 underway, the war on drugs shifted into high gear as Akwesasne youth took up the fight April 25, 26, 27th at the A'nowara:kowa Arena on Cornwall Island.

"Race against Drugs" is an annual event and now it is in the third year at Akwesasne. The event is sponsored by the R.C.M.P. and the Ford Motor Company of Canada. Designed as an educational and preventative program to stopping illegal drug use, many components of the theme "Race Against Drugs" are implemented.

The attention grabber every year is the sport of racing. Professional racing is a sport that has a Zero tolerance towards drug use. The program success is attributed to the re-enactment of the race atmosphere and where the youth actually participate in for trophies.

The main goal of the program is to reach young minds about the truth of drug and alcohol abuse. It educates people about the consequences of drug abuse and, most important, the promotion and continuance of a healthy drug free lifestyle.

The Akwesasne Mohawk Police, St. Regis Mohawk Police, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Canadian Customs played a big part with a presentation on some of their jobs in the community.

Every campaign starts with students entering art work to design the year's logo. The selected piece appears on the t-shirts and on the programs which are handed out during the three day event. This year, Jay Francis' art work was selected for the event. (See related story.)

This year, 925 students in grades 3,4,5, and 6 from area schools participated. This included the district schools under the Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education: Akwesasne Mohawk School, Kanatakon School and TsiSnaine School. As well, students from Salmon River and the Mohawk School joined in the activities.

The event is kicked every year off by an open house which allows parents to see what the excitement is about and in some cases learn also about the dangers of drug/alcohol abuse.

There are 14 Pit Stops to visit: Native North American Travelling College, Cultural Story Telling/Life Styles. Frogtown International Speedway - car display, sitting in cars, safety features. St. Regis Tribal Health Services - Child Safety. Miller Hughes - vehicle display, Tribal Police - Child care safety. Canada Customs - drug detection and tools used to detect illegal drugs. RCMP Prevention Program - Drug free message identification of illegal drugs and tools to use against drug use. RCMP - Drag strip as an alternative to alcohol, negative drug influences and zero tolerance to drugs in the sport of racing. Akwesasne Police - Seat belt safety and roll-over simulator with O.P.P. RCMP oval strip - healthy lifestyle choices, high from thrill of racing. Let's Get Healthy Program - healthier eating habits/lifestyles. Prevention Akwesasne Child and Family Services, Prevention Program - Holistic Way of Life using the medicine Wheel to explain the importance of keeping a holistic balance. Effects on a person's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being from the consumption of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. Community Health Nursing - HIV/

AIDS awareness and prevention, abstinence, healthing living and happiness as well as personal hygiene. Police/Customs Drug Services - Dog Demonstration.

Sponsors for the event are: Akwesasne Area Management Board, Akwesasne Petroleum Co-op, A.M.S. Parent Committee, Canada Customs, Akwesasne Mohawk Police, Frogtown International Speedway, Io ha hi:io, Mexicali Rosa's, Miller-Hughes Ford, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, R.C.M.P., SJ Designs, St. Regis Recreation Committee, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Tim Hortons, Tribal Police. Many thanks to the organizers, participants and sponsors.