

## **STRONG ROOTS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH THE WELCOME HOME PROJECT**

**AKWESASNE MOHAWK TERRITORY** — The Strong Roots Charitable Foundation and The Welcome Home Project are pleased to announce a new community initiative that will directly support the transition of returning community members from incarceration by providing resources which include safe housing and strength based peer support. The collaborative forces of these two community organizations is rooted in creating an Akwesasne community led, trauma informed response to those returning home. The partnership will help individuals released from incarceration have access to affordable, single-person living units, along with community support, resources and encouragement to acclimate their way back to their families and society.

“The Welcome Home Project believes in the power of transformation and having access to resources that contribute to one’s personal growth, so that they may enter the sacred circle of their families,” stated Jonel Beauvais, one of four (4) community members who are providing a path for formerly incarcerated community members to succeed. Beauvais added, “The vision is to build strong relationships with self, family, and community in order to effectively contribute to the wellness of our nation and our people.”

Through the 501c3 non-profit donation mechanisms of the Strong Roots Charitable Foundation, The Welcome Home Project will raise funds needed to complete four (4) tiny homes; along with a septic system, vegetable garden, children’s play area, and other furnishings needed to help Mohawk men and women on their path towards regaining their personal and cultural identity. The partnership will help fill a gap that exists in Akwesasne; as not having a healthy, supportive environment often leads to parole violations and an individual’s return to incarceration.

“The passion, strength, and determination of these community members to address a much-needed demographic of our community is what brought Strong Roots on board,” stated Dianna Tarbell, Strong Roots Charitable Foundation Treasurer. Tarbell further shared, “These homes will provide a safe space for personal growth; as well as for children’s visitation and growing a garden. It is our hope that a modest fee collected from temporary residents will help make it self-sustaining and provide for the village’s upkeep and future expansion.”

Welcome Home Project group member Pray Lazore has generously provided land for the project, which currently includes one (1) living unit that, in the past two (2) years, has assisted five (5) community members on their successful return to their families and the community. For each of the formerly incarcerated community members, they note that their successful integration back into the sacred circle of the Akwesasne community was having the support and space to do so.

To make a tax-deductible donation that will support this community initiative, please contact Strong Roots Charitable Foundation Administrator Chessie Thomas by calling (315) 296-3920 or The Welcome Home Project Representative Jonel Beauvais at (315) 705-5277. Donations can also be made online at [www.strongroot.org](http://www.strongroot.org), notate Welcome Home Project.

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