



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

Community organizations join to urge alternatives to New Year's Eve gunfire

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 20, Tsothóhrha/December 2012) The Community Protection Unit of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, the Kahnawake Peacekeepers and the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre's Community Health Unit are urging community members to end the practice of firing guns into the air to 'ring in the New Year' and, instead, find alternate methods to celebrate.

The organizations are responding to requests from community members to make stronger efforts to have the practice stopped. Many people, especially elders, strongly dislike the gunfire and have expressed fear at a time that should be celebrated. On several occasions over the years, bullets have penetrated the homes of community members, including one clearly documented instance when a bullet was found next to a baby's crib.

Especially dangerous is the use of high-powered firearms. Many people around the world tend to use more alcohol than usual as part of their New Year celebrations. The combination of alcohol and firearms is always dangerous. Fortunately, this is a situation that is fully within our means to address, as all it entails is for the community itself to make the right decisions.

The recent events in Connecticut in which twenty children were murdered have created an atmosphere where a growing segment of the community is suggesting that putting the guns away may provide a positive message of commemoration and solidarity with the unfortunate citizens of Newtown.

"Bringing back the pots and pans at midnight like the old days would be fun, but it's too dangerous to have community members stand out on the porch with bullets whizzing about," said Kellyann Meloche, Director of Community Protection. "Maybe we can start some new traditions."

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