

Press Release

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**Indian Country Leaders Assemble in Iowa to Explore
Innovative Approaches to Building Sustainable Communities**
www.AmericanIndianSustainableConference.org

**Plan includes renewable energy, organic agriculture,
cultural preservation, and meditation**

Top leaders of Indian Country will assemble to explore how modern organic agriculture and renewable energy technologies combined with ancient meditation practices can be used to build healthy, sustainable American Indian communities during an international conference from September 25 to 27 in Fairfield, Iowa, at Maharishi University of Management.

Panelists include Joe A. Garcia, President of the National Congress of the American Indian; Robert Cook, President of the National Indian Education Association; Lucille Ecohawk, strategic planner for the Casey Family Programs; Kevin Skenandore, Acting Director of the Bureau of Indian Education; and Stan Holder, Chief of the Division of Accountability and Performance, Bureau of Indian Education.

A key feature of the conference will be a five-point plan for sustainability has been developed by the Hocak Elders Council, Inc., of the Winnebago Reservation, according to Prosper Waukon, hereditary leader of the Thunderbird Clan, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

Conference hosts and participants include the Hocak Elders Council, Inc., Indian Health Services (IHS), National Congress of the American Indian (NCAI), National Indian Education Association (NIEA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Winnebago Tribal Health Services (WTHS), Winnebago Treaty Hospital-IHS, and the David Lynch Foundation.

For information and registration: www.AmericanIndianSustainableConference.org.

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**Transcendental Meditation helps American Indian students
overcome stress and improve grades, graduation rates**

**Results of new studies to be presented at international conference
on sustainable American Indian communities, September 25-27
www.AmericanIndianSustainableConference.org**

A simple, stress-reducing meditation technique practiced for 10 minutes twice daily by hundreds of American Indian students in three tribes significantly reduced their stress and anxiety levels, improved their academic achievement, and boosted their graduation rates, according to early results of several new studies.

The results will be presented during the “International Conference on Building Healthy, Sustainable American Indian Communities” at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, from September 25-27.

The technique, known as “Transcendental Meditation,” produces a unique state of “restful alertness.” Extensive published research has already shown the technique reduces high blood pressure, anxiety, and depression; improves intelligence and memory; and reduces cigarette smoking, and alcohol and drug abuse. A recent study published in the January 2009 issue of the peer-reviewed *Current Issues in Education* found the TM technique had beneficial effects on students with ADHD.

Early results of the new studies on meditating American Indian students:

- A three-year study on meditating middle school and high school students on the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska found 25% less absenteeism, 30% improvement on the Nebraska state standardized tests, and a 28% increase in graduation rates compared to controls.
- A two-year study on meditating high school students on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota found reduced anxiety and depression, greater self-esteem, and improved relationships compared to controls.
- A two-year study on meditating high school students at the Passamaquoddy tribe of Maine found decreased disciplinary incidents and improved test scores compared to controls.

“High levels of stress among students fuel anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and violence—and undermine the learning process and academic performance,” said John Boncheff, co-director of the TM program at the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

“More than 40 years of research and classroom experience have found that this simple Transcendental Meditation technique practiced by students and teachers during a ten-minute

“Quiet Time” period at the beginning and end of the school day can have a profound effect on reducing stress and stress-related disorders as well as improving grades and test scores,” Mr. Boncheff said.

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Indian Health Services collaborates on study on Transcendental Meditation and diabetes

**Preliminary results to be presented during international conference
on sustainable American Indian communities, September 25-27
www.AmericanIndianSustainableConference.org**

Can an ancient meditation practice, proven to reduce insulin resistance and lower high blood pressure, be an effective solution to the crisis of diabetes among American Indians?

To find out, a \$2 million research study is now under way with 400 members of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska who have been diagnosed with diabetes. The Indian Health Services is contributing to the project \$560,000 in in-kind services.

Preliminary results of phase one of the study will be presented during the “International Conference on Building Healthy, Sustainable American Indian Communities” at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, from September 25-27.

American Indians are 250 percent more likely to suffer from diabetes than the general population of the United States. Seventy percent of the population in some tribes is either pre-diabetic or diabetic.

“Insulin resistance is often associated with abdominal obesity, which is a factor in the ‘metabolic syndrome’ and is implicated in the development of atherosclerosis. Insulin resistance together with beta cell dysfunction leads to the appearance and gradual progression of type 2 diabetes,” said Ahmed Mohammed, M.D., the chief medical officer at the Winnebago Indian Hospital-IHS, who will help direct the study.

A 2006 study at Cedar-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles showed a dramatic and unprecedented drop in insulin resistance among TM meditators. The report, which was published in the American Medical Association's *Archives of Internal Medicine*, found that meditating had significantly lowered blood pressure; improved fasting blood glucose and insulin levels, which signify reduced insulin resistance; and more stable functioning of the autonomic nervous system.

“The results of that study correlate with our initial findings,” Dr. Mohammed said. “There has been a significant drop in insulin use and diabetes symptoms among children and adults from several reservations who are practicing the TM technique. We are hopeful that this study will

reveal the TM technique to be a safe and effective approach for American Indians to prevent and manage diabetes.”