

# Community group bonds over growing white corn



**Kali photo/Nate Wisneski**  
White corn hangs in a rented barn a group of community members rented to harvest their crop of white corn. The group harvested 176 braids which they will share between the group.

Culture Archivist) Randy Cornelius came out and blessed the field. Before we started picking the corn we had really good feelings. Everyone was in a really good frame of mind. We were laughing, teasing each other and enjoying great meals that everyone brought food for.

change,” said Laura Manthe. “We needed to record all the growers experience with the fish emulsion.”

The small group knew if their project was going to be successful communication was going to be key. That meant many phone calls and texts along with the creation of a private Facebook page.

“We planned on sharing all the work and sharing all the benefits equally. It was impossible to think of the entire project at once but we could do increments. We would have monthly meetings and record what to do. We knew what was done, and what needed to be done. Everyone knew who was doing what so everyone knew who was doing what,” said Manthe.

Each person brought unique skills to the project, which resulted in 176 hanging braids in the group’s rented barn. The group is proud of their first harvest and is quick to credit good minds.

“We started it out the right way. (Language and

We’re just so thankful that this is our family and we’re able to get this work done. It’s truly a blessing.”

Some group projects can drive wedges between people but the shard workload created a positive environment.

“There’s a real spiritually working with the corn. We knew each other but after you spend this much time together it really built our little community up,” said Manthe.

With this year’s success optimism is already high for next year. The group has already secured three more acres of land.

Once the corn has dried the group will distribute the harvest evenly among themselves. Some even plan on sharing their portion with community members to tell their story and encourage others to grow their own.

“We’re going to plant it together, were going to grow it together, were going to harvest it together, and were going to eat it together,” said Manthe.

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White corn is a cultural staple to Oneidas that in recent years has been more difficult for community members to get.

With the assistance of grant, a small group of community gathered to take on that challenge and planted three acres of white corn.

The group was allowed access to three-acre plot of land which was nutrient deficient. The plot was a perfect spot to test the three-year grant parameters.

“The grant was used to purchase the sprayer, fish emulsion, our language, and travel to visit the Onodagas for a cultural ex-

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