

A letter from the Turtle Clan Chief

Hello all my relations!

Some of you will know me some will not. My name is Vincent Eagle Spirit Mann as kid growing up in and around Ringwood you would all know me as Vinny. For those of you who remember I am the son of Lehman Silver Bear Mann and June. My grandparents are Lehman and Violet Mann. My siblings are Lehman (Buttons), Michael, Terri, and Sherri. I'm sending this letter to inform you of the great things that the Tribal Council has been working on over the last few months that are now becoming a reality for our tribe. My brothers, our kids, and me along with the tribal council members have been working on our Long House, the first to be constructed in over 400 years.

Michael has become the president of the tribes non profit entity, Ramapough Mountain Indians, Inc. that is not the tribe but a part of the tribe that operates under the direction of the Tribal Council. The Long House (place of worship) is coming along nicely I have asked that the Tribal Council create a Long House Committee which was agreed upon. We decided to elect one person from each clan/band. If you wish to be on the committee or would like to just be a part of it please contact me via email.

I would like to remind everyone about the Li-heap Heating Assistance Program and also the new Weatherization Program which once you apply and qualify for, you may get benefits like roofing, windows, doors, heating, insulation, and the like. This program will be starting as I send this letter and we will have employees that will be going to each home to qualify you on the spot with hand held computers meaning you will know if you qualify right there. I am offering my help for anyone who doesn't know or doesn't think they can do the paper work themselves. Remember this is for you. You should take full advantage of all programs afforded to you as a Ramapough Lenape.

I'm also willing to help with genealogy paperwork. This is very important and needs to be addressed fully if you, I, or the Tribal Office does not have your complete paperwork we will need to get it straightened out. If you're children never received a Tribal Card, now is the time to apply. We need all Ramapough Lenape documented. I know that not all have access to a computer so we will need to help each other with this and all other tangible things that arise as a tribe. One quick note on the upcoming 2010 census, we need to make sure that we all put down Ramapough Lenape as the ethnic group. (Just those two words)

I am looking for someone to be my alternate in case I am not able to make a meeting to represent the Turtle Clan but most of all to represent all of our relations. I know that I have been out of sight for awhile but I have always been here listening watching and waiting until I felt it was time for me to speak and to have a voice for my people. I believe that now is that time. One thing that I have noticed over the last few months and let us never forget that one person does not make a tribe; never has, never will. It takes all of us from every Clan to stand up and to have one voice, not to say we won't have differences but that is where the Clan Chief takes that to the tribal council and we will make concessions to make sure that there is a compromise. Its not 'us and them', it's all of us surviving together as a tribe and always making a better life for our tribe, for our kids future, and beyond. As we begin to have clan meetings to share with you what the Tribal Council is

working on for the future. I would like for you to share any concerns that you may have and trust that I will address them and will raise them to the council. I believe in a total community of Ramapough Lenape. We are a nation, not as individuals. I know that there has been divisions in our past especially when it was forced on our people. Now is the time for us to come together and stand with one voice. The voice of the Ramapough Lenape Indian Nation! We are still here and we have never left. I will be starting a blog for those with access to a computer. This will be for information sharing and for communication between our Turtle Clan Members only. This is for this purpose only this is not a political forum. It's a place where we can be native brothers and sisters, to help us come together. If anyone elects to use this in any other way than which it's intended, they will be blocked from using it. I have worked hard for this and feel this is a very important tool for all of us to communicate. Please respect it and many good things will come of it I'm sure. Lastly I am aware that many of us have been hurt some by tribal members, some by non tribal members and all by what has happened to our ancestors. We are the result of resilient people that made sure that our lineage would survive. We all need to come out of our shells, stand up for ourselves. Stand up for each other, and stand up for your tribe. The Ramapough Lenape Nation! Stand proud as our ancestors have done so that we may still call ourselves Ramapough.

In closing I would like for everyone who would like to send me a small note with your number and email I will be sure to respond with my number so that we may reconnect and work together towards a common goal. The survival of a great people now rests on our shoulders.

Anushiik,
Chief Eagle Spirit