

Story Title	Food Preservation-A Community Comes Together
Program	Franklin - Food preservation
Educators	Pat Banker
Is this related to an Equal Program/Employment Opportunity?	Yes
Executive Summary	Participation in Master Food Preservation course leads to continuing community food safety and food preservation programs in schools and community center. Akwesasne "cannery" is formed.
Issues/Needs and Audiences	<p>National statistics document that Native Americans continue to experience high rates of poverty, contributing to significant food insecurity in many Native American communities. According to the most recent American Community Survey, about 26 percent of American Indians live at or below the poverty line. The same survey indicates that roughly 12% of all Native Americans living in poverty was age 55 and older. Other studies conducted by the National Resource Center on Native American Aging note that Native American seniors suffer from higher rates of obesity, diabetes and other negative health indicators when compared to other senior groups in the United States.</p> <p>Members of the St. Regis Mohawk wished to address the need and desire of having food security by forming traditionally based community gardens, greenhouses, and a teaching facility where members of the community could grow, process and preserve foods in scientifically proven, safe and nutritious methods for extended periods of time that would serve the primary objective of securing a variety of food year-round from the community owned gardens, greenhouses, livestock, and wild game and traditional foods available.</p> <p>A grant was received on the Akwesasne reservation to purchase food preservation equipment which included 2 commercial food dehydrators, 2- 41 ½ qt pressure canners, a large chest freezer, 2- 32-qt pressure canners and various other pieces of food preservation equipment. It was evident that there was a need for all community members to learn to properly utilize all equipment that was facility that was dubbed "The Cannery" for the safety and health of all who would have access.</p>
Extension Responses	Cornell Cooperative Extension Franklin County held a Master Food Preserver 3-day course at the community facility for 24 tribe members. Participants learned how to safely preserve foods using the newly purchased equipment. The initial classes developed a desire for the community to learn how to also preserve traditional foods, wild edibles, venison, moose, fish and other wild game safely.

Several participants were instructors at the complete immersion Freedom School, Master Fishermen, Master Hunters, Master Foragers, Master Gardeners and others were from the Early Childhood Development School on Akwesasne.

Accomplishments and Impacts

Because of the value of the information and hands-on instruction given at this first class, classes were scheduled for more community members and venues. Classes continue to be ongoing at “The Cannery”, the Early Childhood Development School and The Freedom School.

Participants learned to preserve food safely, following best practices based on research.

Collaborators

The Freedom School, Akwesasne Garden Club, Early Childhood Development School, Akwesasne Master Fishermen, Hunters, Foragers, Gardeners and St. Regis Mohawk.

**Special funding sources
(if any)**