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# Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



**Help Papers Series**

**Support Materials for Parent/Child Programs**

**TOPIC:**

**Awards and Awards Programs**



# Awards Programs

### **FORWARD:**

This help paper is written not to “tell you what to do”, but merely presented to plant the seeds of ideas for developing your own awards plan. The North American Indian Theme offers endless possibilities for creativity. A few basic outlines are given here. Actual awards plan examples are available through the Great Lakes Region Library.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER:**

- Awards programs for parent/child organizations can be as simple or as complex as desired or necessary, custom tailored to fit the individual needs of the program, tribe, etc.. The size of the program may dictate some of this.
- The more complex the awards structure becomes, it may require that this be a separate job performed by one or more people within a Longhouse.
- The person or committee in charge of awards may have an official title assigned to the job such as “Feather Bearer”, Awards Chief”, etc. It is best to allow this job to be the effort of a person who is not saddled with other officer duties so that they may effectively create and carry out the mission of an awards program.
- Awards for members can serve as important tools to encourage participation in events, whether on the tribal level or on the Local Longhouse level.
- Awards can be structured to the individual level, tribal level, and also for the leaders of the program.
- Remember that there is no standard format. *Creativity and flexibility are keys to success.*
- Awards should serve as reward for accomplishment. Handing out awards just for the sake of it reduces the meaning of the award. Each award should have some meaning. Accomplishments can be very simple such as a participation award, to more challenging merit or achievement awards that are worked towards.
- Recognition for accomplishments builds self-esteem, especially at the young ages. The ages and skill levels of those involved should be carefully considered when developing award plans. Do not overemphasize awards to be given at the expense of enjoying the experience.
- “Honor in giving”, and “honor in receiving” is a part of North American Indian culture. Try to make the presentation of awards a memorable and honorable experience.
- Develop an outline for the structure of your overall program. Take constructive suggestions from as many people as possible when creating a system.

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## AWARDS TYPES AND EXAMPLES

### Participation Awards - Patches:

A popular and tradition-building part of the program. The wearing of patches on vests (or other official program uniforms) can be an important part of any program. Patches can be generally awarded for participation in the major Nation/Longhouse events or given as special merit/achievement special awards. At some events such as a museum visit, patches may be available for separate purchase. This can be made known to those that attend. A vest kit is purchased and assembled, and your patches are attached to it. Over time this vest will take on an even greater significance. It will serve as a commemorative to all the events we have attended. More importantly, long after the last campfire has turned to ashes, the vest and its patches will rekindle the memories of those times when parent and child took the time to share and experience together that will be remembered and relived over and over again.

### Merit or Achievement Awards:

Awards programs that honor achievement can be structured in many ways. Some programs have structured progressive awards so that each year, a different set of goals is presented. This system is geared mostly for tribes/clans that start as a fully new group in their first year, and continue as that group for the entire stay in the program.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> example of a progressive achievement awards structure:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year: A series of different colored feathers is earned for achieving a specific goal for each feather.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year: A series of different colored bear claws is earned for achieving a specific goal for each claw.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year: A series of different colored beads is earned for achieving a specific goal for each bead.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> example of a progressive achievement awards structure:

- A series of special colored/tipped feathers is earned throughout the time spent in the program. Each feather has specific meaning or challenge to earning it. Feathers can be earned at an individuals pace or that set by the tribe. A special feather or award is usually given once the entire group has been earned/achieved. Feathers could be replaced by beads, claws, whatever.

### Point Systems:

Some programs use a point system to measure the overall participation and involvement of each tribe. Points are awarded to tribes/clans for carrying out assigned duties, duties that they may chose to volunteer for, as well as participation, and sometimes for community service projects. The point system generally will have some eventual award to that tribe earning the honors, sometime even special privilege is grated to that tribe for the coming year. Remember that the primary goal of this system is to encourage participation in the activities of the program, therefore helping to develop the parent/child relationship. Do not allow competitive natures to spoil the basic purpose.

*Note: Some programs purposely chose not to create awards programs that can become overly competitive. Limited competition and competitive spirit can be healthy to a child's development, even healthy to the parent/child relationship. Great care must be taken that the program awards not be allowed to loose the focus for the goals of the awards system, getting carried away with the competitive side of the system.*

### The Six Aims Award:

A special honor patch is presented to those Sons or Daughters that learn the Aims and can recite them from memory to a chief or other officer. This honor is earned once during their time in the program. A special ceremony is held once annually to honor those that have achieved the award within the last year.

### Displaying the Awards other than a vest (or shirt):

The system of displaying the awards is also group determined. Feathers could be worn in the headband, or displayed on a coup stick. Beads and claws could be mounted to coup stick, but also formed into a necklace that is easily worn.

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## The Coup Stick:



The American Indian placed a high value on individual acts of daring and courage. It was considered the ultimate act of bravery to charge an enemy in battle and instead of killing him, lightly touch him or count "Coup" on him and get away without getting killed yourself. Each set of bravery that was witnessed by another tribe member was rewarded with an eagle feather which was worn in the hair, on a war bonnet or attached to his "Coup stick". The more feathers a warrior had earned, the higher his standing in the tribe. A warrior with many "Coup" feathers was considered a hero and an asset to his tribe.

A program may choose to have all of their child members to have their own "Coup Stick". This could be one of the first projects for a new tribe or new member at the start of the program year. The program could award all children "Coup Awards" such as Feathers, Claws, Beads and other Tokens as structured by their own Awards Council. This could replace or be in addition to the traditional patches that are awarded to members.

A Son or Daughter who amasses many feathers (awards) on his or her "Coup Stick" should be proud of their accomplishments. They are shining example of the Spirit of involvement and commitment you try to stress in the program. The stick will become another lasting memory of their times together as parent and child.

## SPECIAL AWARDS:

On occasion, a program may wish to honor an individual, whether it be an officer, or a child, whomever, with an award of great honor, to recognize them for some special achievement or contribution. Here are a few examples:

**The Joe Friday Award** was established by the Great Lakes Region to give special recognition to an individual who has given extraordinary personal services to a local program. The award was named to honor the memory of the late Joe Friday, an Ojibway Indian and close friend to co-founder of the original program, Harold S. Keltner. His spirit is the voice that encouraged the founding of the Native Sons and Daughters Programs™.

An individual who is to be considered for this award must meet these qualifications:

1. The individual must be an active member of the program who is or has been actively involved.
2. The individual must have been instrumental and innovative with the local program activities and promotions, and must be nominated by Longhouse.



A Longhouse may award as many Joe Friday Awards as it deems necessary, although *the reason of giving this award should not become trivial*. Contact Great Lakes RAL with the name or names of individuals you believe should receive the award. Please allow 30 to 60 days for consideration and award preparation. There is a design standard for this award. If desired, a Great Lakes regional officer will be happy to present the award.

**Native Sons and Daughters Programs Medallions:** Engraved with a personal message or a Indian name and worn as a necklace with your regalia, these beautiful medals later become treasured keepsakes for the parent whose child has grown past their program years. They are even more treasured by the child later in life.

A founding family project since 1971, they can be used in induction or graduation ceremonies, as gifts, honors, awards and prizes, or simply ordered and worn by individual program members. See the supplier's list for contact information.

# Great Lakes Region – Help Papers Series – Awards & Awards Programs

## RESOURCE SEARCHING:

Contact the Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge or other advisory lodges to obtain an updated list of vendors and other resources that are available to your program.

Contact the Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge for copies awards program examples archived in their library.

With Internet access, you can easily find your way to a whole bunch of suppliers of patches, feathers, and other awards supplies. Start with some of the following

[www.NSDMedallion.com](http://www.NSDMedallion.com). This is the web site for NS&D Medallions. There are many, many links to explore.

Visit the web sites of other programs around the country who are more than happy to share their ideas with others. These web pages can be found as links to the National Longhouse® website.

## Suppliers of Awards related materials:

### **Native Sons and Daughters Medallions Big Eagle at Walden House**

- 100 Clegg St.  
Walden, Tn. 37377  
Toll Free: 1-888-222-8228, Fax: 423-886-4969  
[www.NSDMedallion.com](http://www.NSDMedallion.com)

*COMMENTS: Exclusive NSD Photo plaques and personalized keepsakes  
Very reasonable costs; excellent quality and quick turn-around time;*

- **CQ Industries Inc.** ("The Patch Store" & "CQ Vests")  
477 W. Fullerton Ave.  
Elmhurst, IL. 60126  
1-800-53PATCH, Fax: 1-630-833-9503, [www.ThePatchStore.com](http://www.ThePatchStore.com)

*COMMENTS: Wide selection of ready-made or custom  
Indian theme officer & event patches; ready-made felt or  
denim vests, iron-on letters, or custom embroidery.  
Free catalog available.*

### **Great Lakes Patch Company**

Mail order only:  
14320 Hubbard Rd  
Livonia, MI. 48154-4146  
(734) 552-4843

*COMMENTS: Wide variety of patches. Indian Themes, custom orders,.*

### **Tandy Leather Company** (Contact NATIONAL LONGHOUSE® for exclusive Tandy discounts)

- [www.tandy-leather.com](http://www.tandy-leather.com)
- *COMMENTS: Adult & child vest patterns. Leather, beads and more for vests.*

### • **Grey Owl Indian Craft Sales Corp.**

Mail order only:  
Toll Free: 1-800-487-2376  
(718) 341-4000, Fax: (718)527-6000, [www.GreyOwlCrafts.com](http://www.GreyOwlCrafts.com)

- *COMMENTS: Limited selection of tribe & Indian patches. One of the largest selections of headdresses, authentic Indian wear, pelts, leather craft kits, cultural history & craft books and more. 209 page catalog \$3.00. Minimum C.O.D. - \$25. Minimum card purchase - \$20.*

- **Craftkits** (Exclusive NSD Rebate Program to NATIONAL LONGHOUSE®)  
Toll Free: 888-355-2552
- [www.craftkits.com](http://www.craftkits.com)
- craft kits, head gear, feathers, beads, claws, supplies, vests, pipes, clothing patterns, books

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## **Indy Products**

1225 N. Indianapolis Rd.  
Mooresville, In. 46158  
(317) 831-1114

*COMMENTS: Pinewood Derby patches, derby kits, and tracks.  
Computerized finish lines are also available.*

- **[Midwest Swiss Embroideries Co., Inc.](#)**

5590 N. Northwest Hwy.  
Chicago, IL. 60630  
(773) 631-7120

- [www.mwsemb.com](http://www.mwsemb.com)

- *COMMENTS: Stock Indian theme event patches; Custom hats, jackets, & shirts.*

- **Ozark Campfire Co.**

Mail order only:  
1505 N. Scott  
POB 1127  
Belton, Mo. 64012  
(816) 331-7112

*COMMENTS: Leather products; Leather patches, leather belt totems  
leather award ribbons & plaques; Ready-made suede vests; some beads and  
a few leather crafts.*

- **[PatchSales.com](#)**

2310 E. 11 Mile Rd.  
Royal Oak, Mi. 48067  
1-248-583-0580 ext 15, E-mail: [sales@patchsales.com](mailto:sales@patchsales.com)

*COMMENTS: Stock and custom made patches and pins.*

- **The Indian Store**

Store & mail order:  
1238 S. Beach Boulevard  
Anaheim, Ca. 92804  
(714) 828-3050

*COMMENTS: Pre-made leather vests, headdresses, tipis, and other Indian ware.  
Good selection of Indian craft kits. 11 page catalog, no C.O.D.'s*

- **S&W Crafts Mfg.**

POB 5501  
Pasadena, Ca. 91117

*COMMENTS: Derby ribbons & trophies; Pinewood Derby  
kits, decals & accessories and other wooden crafts*