



# The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

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## Respecting the site of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School

**Mt. Pleasant, MI** The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's (SCIT) Tribal Historic Preservation Office was awarded a Tribal Heritage Grant from the National Park Service (2019-2020) to install a protective fence around two buildings at the site of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School (MIIBS), a historic district property listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The MIIBS was part of the Federal Indian boarding school system, which removed American Indian children from their families and culture as part of a forced education and assimilation initiative that persisted for nearly a century. The SCIT is in the planning stages of rehabilitating and repurposing the site for the healing of our people.

"It is with heavy hearts that we share with you that our efforts to protect the buildings continue to be compromised. Vandals continue to cut sections of the fence to access the buildings. Once again we face the cost of repairs and deal with the very painful reality that people are desecrating the site," states Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Marcella Hadden. Based on postings on social media, some think it is 'interesting' or 'fun.' Some think they are 'ghost hunting' on the site of an 'Ancient Indian Burial Ground.' These hurtful actions have prompted the tribe to call on university, civic, and public communities to support and assist tribal efforts to stop the unlawful access to this important historic site.

Any unauthorized access (including walking the grounds) may be subject to civil and criminal penalty. When Tribal Police issue citations, trespassers have to answer to Federal Court in Bay City because the buildings are on Federal property.

By preserving and protecting this important cultural and historical resource, we take a step toward restoring trust with the non-Native community and the Federal Government. The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, the Tribe's museum and cultural center, has a permanent exhibition about the MIIBS and co-hosts *"Honoring, Healing & Remembering."* Honoring, Healing & Remembering is a yearly celebration held each year on June 6th which celebrates the closing of the school. The event honors those children and families who suffered from the effects of the Boarding School Era and creates opportunities for healing our Tribal community. HHR this year will be virtual planned for Friday, June 4, 2021.

As we await Ziibiwing's reopening during this public health crisis, we invite you to educate your communities by visiting <http://www.sagchip.org/ziibiwing/planyourvisit/pdf/AIBSCurrGuide.pdf>

If you have information or knowledge of anyone trespassing please contact Tribal Police@ (989) 775-4700 or the anonymous tip hot line@ (989) 775-4775.