



The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

7500 Soaring Eagle Blvd. \

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

989.775.4000

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 have already been compromised. Vandals have breached a section of the fence and accessed the buildings. We must now 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.

Every June 6th, on the anniversary of the closing of the MIIBS, the SCIT holds a day-long event known as "*Honoring, Healing & Remembering*." 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. **This is the only time the site is open to the public.**

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*."

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>

The SCIT also encourages you to wear an orange shirt on September 30. Orange Shirt Day is an event, created in 2013, designed to educate people and promote awareness in Canada about the Indian residential school system and the impact it has had on Indigenous communities for over a century—an impact that continues today. Orange shirts can be purchased through this link:

<https://www.nosm.ca/our-community/indigenous-engagement/orange-shirt-day/>

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.