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North

## Mohawk hunter supplies Mother's Day meal of traditional goose meat to Cree patients in Montreal

Part of growing tradition of Mohawk and Cree hunters getting geese to those in need

[Susan Bell](#), [Cheryl Wapachee](#) · CBC News · Posted: May 14, 2020 3:00 AM CT | Last Updated: May 14



Bob Patton Jr., 2nd from left, of the Mohawk community of Kahnawake around 2014, hosting Cree hunter Nelson Blackned and his family. Patton has hosted Cree for a southern goose hunt since 1996. (Submitted by Bob Patton)

A Mohawk hunter from Kahnawake helped get a special Mother's Day meal of traditional goose meat on the table for some Cree patients stuck in Montreal.

Each Spring since 1996, Robert (Bob) Patton Jr., from Kahnawake, and Cree friends have harvested geese together in places like Alfred, Ont., or Kahnawake, Que., near Montreal.

And each year they share some of the harvest.

But this year, because of COVID-19, the southern goose hunt has become an essential way for Cree patients in Montreal to get an important taste of home. And for some Cree families in the North to get an important source of nutrition.

"This year was the biggest, because of the pandemic and we know that they've had a large shortage of geese this year and a lot of families could not make it back to the North for Goose Break," said Patton, who is a court worker for Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec.

**“Nice to see Mohawks helping the Cree.”**

*- Bob Patton Jr., Mohawk hunter*

Goose Break is an important yearly tradition for Quebec Cree, when families head to bush camps for several weeks in May to hunt returning geese in the spring.





Robert (Bob) Patton Jr. worked from 1995 to 2008 as a police officer in the Cree community of Waskaganish. (Submitted by Bob Patton Jr.)

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So when a call came from the Cree Public Health Department to supply geese for special holiday meals for Cree patients in Montreal, Patton immediately said yes.

"It's nice to see that the Mohawks are helping the Crees," he said, adding that so far they have supplied more than 30 geese.

Raymond Duff, a Cree hunter from Chisasibi now living in Ottawa, harvested geese for an Easter meal a few weeks back for Cree patients in Montreal and is sending geese north this year for Cree hunters unable to come south to hunt because of the pandemic.

"It feels good when you help somebody," said Duff.

An increasing number of Cree hunters now come south to hunt in areas around Montreal and Ottawa, but this year because of COVID-19, the [Cree Trapper's Association](#) asked them not to travel south because of a danger of bringing the virus back with them.

## Mohawk ties to Waskaganish

Raymond Duff and Bob Patton Jr. have been friends and have hunted together since meeting at a hockey tournament while Patton was living and working as a police officer in the Cree community of Waskaganish between 1995 and 2008.



Since 1996, Patton has hosted Cree at his home in Kahnawake during the spring goose hunt, something he says he is missing this year.

"It's sad because that's the first time in 24 years I have not been with my Cree family from the North to practice our Goose Break here," said Patton, adding that it's important for him to help out his "Cree family" by harvesting the geese.

"The people of Waskaganish pretty much took me under their wing," said Patton.

"They showed me the way of life in the bush and how to trap and how to hunt. I was taught by the Crees."





After learning to hunt from Cree friends, Kahnawake resident Bob Patton Jr. is teaching his grandson Wyatt, pictured here, to hunt geese. (Submitted by Bob Patton)

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Patton said the exchange between his Cree friends and his Mohawk ones has become a precious way to share some of the northern Cree ways and culture with the Mohawk of Kahnawake.

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"I'm passing it on to my grandson ... the Mohawks are picking it up quite a bit around here," said Patton.

"Those geese are not just birds flying over anymore. It's a healthy meal."

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