

*Jessica House:* I started playing ball when I was eight years old. I just had a really good passion to play basketball for Oneida Nation. Basketball is my life, and so is the culture.

My name is Jessica House. I am a senior, and I play for the Lady Thunderhawks. To be a Lady Thunderhawk, you have to learn discipline. I mean, you're role models. You've got to think about how you're acting out in public. In order to play basketball at Oneida, you have to be in the culture. You have to participate.

Not a lot of girls were raised into it, where I was. But they are starting to find their ways now. Some of them even come to Long House now. It's important because I think it helps know who they really are. Sometimes you get so caught up in the other world.

There's other girls, like me and Tasha, we take separate classes out of school for an actual language class. Our teacher, Shalihókt, when he was younger, there was more of the elders around that spoke the language, whereas now we don't really hear it.

*Shalihókt:* Have you learned, have you learned it?

*Jessica House:* Shalihókt teaches us words to say.

Every time we go for a huddle, we go: "[speaking Oneida] Whoo! [all cheering] Yay!"

We have 11 girls on this Lady T-hawk team. I am captain. I'm also the point guard, so I'm expected to keep the game going, keep everyone under control. Keep myself under control! Before, we had hardly any people in the stands. My sophomore year, the fans started to fill in.

My parents only missed one game out of the three years I've been at Oneida. I think it's really cool when all the parents are there supporting their daughters. It gives us our energy. I don't know how the other girls see it, but there's no better feeling than when you play basketball.