



## NOVEMBER 2023 ISSUE

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### ORANGE SHIRT DAY RALLY BY: CAMERYN H (TLINGIT/HAIDA)

On September 30th, 2023, Canada and the U.S honored orange shirt day. Orange shirt day is to recognize the mass genocide and disrespect of native children in Canadian/U.S. residential boarding schools. Almost 2,000 children's bodies have been found in mass graves across both nations and more are found every year. Orange shirt day brings light to these children and the lives they lived. "Bring them home" was among one of the many chants shouted at the rally in downtown Seattle on Saturday. Hundreds gathered to march through the streets for this day of remembrance. As a native, seeing so much recognition made me feel like we can finally start shedding a light on how these children were never given a proper burial. UNEA interns helped organize, carry the signs, sing, and drum as we walked through the streets. Seeing the article with us pictured in the Seattle Times made me really proud. The first American boarding school for Alaskan natives was meant to assimilate Tlingit and Haida children for my tribes. The school was called Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, and that is where many Alaskan Native children were sent. Doing this march was really fun and the speeches given at the end by boarding school survivors meant a lot to many people in the audience. It was really cool that we got so many people together and got to do an event mandated by the city and with police escorts. Orange shirt day has been recognized as a day of remembrance in Canada and I think that this was a step in the right direction. I hope we get to do something even bigger someday and that we can help spread the word about other topics of issue regarding native rights.



## ORANGE SHIRT DAY

**BY: LANDYN ZYSKOWSKI (STILLAGUAMISH TRIBE OF INDIANS)**

On Saturday, September 30th, UNEA Interns, family and friends, gathered downtown Seattle to support and honor “Orange Shirt Day” with Matthew War Bonnet (Lakota).

Orange Shirt Day is a day for bringing attention to the injustices to Native children and their families for those who were placed in residential boarding schools. For people that do not know the origin behind the ‘Orange Shirt’, it started with a grandmother buying a new shiny orange shirt for Phyllis Webstad to wear on her first day of attending the residential school, but when she arrived, they took it away.

Matthew War Bonnet (Lakota), spoke before the gathering to share his personal experience within the residential boarding school system and the impact not only to him but his family. He shared the personal, physical, mental and emotional abuses he and his siblings experienced on a daily basis. He shared the impacts endured for generations to come. I listened carefully to his retelling of his experiences, and it made me feel sad and more intensely about the discriminations within our school systems and government imposed on native American communities. I, along with my fellow interns, showed our support with our presence, listening, drumming, and singing to honor Matthew War Bonnet’s testimony and Orange Shirt Day.

September 30th is a National Day of Remembrance of Indigenous Boarding Schools and to bring attention to the damage the residential school system did to indigenous children and families and the generational impacts. I feel very privileged to be an intern supporting UNEA’s Orange



## RIBBON SHIRT MAKING

**BY: TIA HILLER**

At North Seattle College, UNEA sponsored a ribbon shirt/skirt making workshop on Sunday, October 22, 2023. UNEA offers cultural courses to students to enhance their knowledge of cultural practices of Native peoples. Men typically wear ribbon shirts, but woman sometimes also wear them. Ribbon shirts and skirts are made by sewing colorful ribbons onto cloth to form intricate designs, often reflecting particular tribal traditions. Ribbon shirts are worn at social and cultural events, such as the pow wow.

The ribbon shirt/skirt making was my second time making ribbon shirts and I was glad that I got the opportunity, especially for the second time because the process of making a ribbon shirt/skirt is a fun, relaxing, and engaging activity for me. Since it was my second time doing his, I was able to assist others if they were stuck and needed some help. I also was able to do more elaborate things for my ribbon shirt this time around, by experimenting with designs and color combinations. I got to experiment and expand my knowledge beyond my first experience.

# YOUTH GAIN LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND SELF-REGULATION AT CLEAR SKY

## BY: ROBIN WILSON AND ANDREA D'ASARO



For Clear Sky students, mindfulness means breathing with eagle arms, rolling down the hill, or sitting in a circle under the trees listening to nature sounds and singing bells.

Now, as the days grow shorter and colder, students each carry a small electric candle and walk single file under the bright moon, then run with long breaths to release pent up energy.

Luka and Noa, who have attended mindfulness for more than five years, say that they are able to bring the skill of attention into emotional regulation and challenges at home and school.

“Mindfulness can be helpful if kids have a test in school or need to work on difficult assignments. Mindfulness can help them learn how to take deep breaths and regain their focus,” says Luka, whose aunt, Robin Wilson, is a long-time member of UNEA and a former board member.

Luka’s younger sister Noa, who leads mindfulness each week, suggests, “Young people should join us because we get to learn a lot of fun mindful activities such as mindful walking and eating, and the mindful breathing ball.”

“My favorite thing about this mindfulness group is when we all have fun together,” says Moxie, who helped the group develop guidelines. “We usually play monkey in the middle, and I feel like it connects us all in having fun. My mom told me: ‘play is the work of childhood.’”

Robin Wilson brings Noa and Luka, her niece and nephew, Coeur d’Alene and Samoan, each Thursday. Wilson also leads mindfulness for her students at Middle College High School, an alternative public school at North Seattle College. “Mindfulness recenters me so I can be there for others; this is essential for my native Coeur d’Alene culture.”

Each Thursday, certified mindfulness instructor Andrea D’Asaro inspires leadership skills in students who take turns guiding each other in mindful drawing, breathing and more. Students also lead kid-choice activities such as monkey in the middle and hide and seek.

Siblings Noa and Luka aspire to practice and share their indigenous mindfulness teachings such as smudging and walking in nature with the wider community. They guided teens, youth, and elders in traditional exercises at UNEA’s spring health conference with D’Asaro, a long-time friend and teacher.

“Having fun and building community while enjoying games that bring emotional regulation are my goals for the program,” says D’Asaro, who has been leading mindfulness at Clear Sky for more than 5 years.

“Mindfulness can help you understand how to deal with being angry or anxious. You can try walks in nature, taking deep breaths, bell ringing or creating art to express your emotions, says Noa, who leads mindful walking with sense awareness. She encourages students of any age to join kids from five to twenty years old each Thursday at North Seattle College, beginning at 6 p.m. with circle blessings and land acknowledgment.

“Young people should join Clear Sky mindfulness to take a break from social media, get out of the house, meet new people and make friends, and calm down strong emotions,” says Luka, who leads a group favorite, mindful eating.

For questions about the mindfulness circle at Clear Sky on Thursdays, email Andrea D’Asaro at [awakentomindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:awakentomindfulness@gmail.com)



## **DRUM MAKING 2023**

**BY: ALEX ESPAÑA**

UNEA offered a drum making workshop for UNEA students/interns on October 17, 2023, at North Seattle College. UNEA sponsors various cultural activities led by an elder with expert knowledge, in order to afford students/interns the opportunity to learn culturally-based practices. The instructor for the drum making was Lisa Monger. The hand drum was the type of drum we made that night. Hand drums are used by various Native peoples for cultural and social activities and also provide a means for spiritual expression and healing. Drums are used to accompany songs sung by the drummer, alone or with other singers.



The drum making workshop was my first time making and owning a drum, so it was an enlightening and fun experience for me. I didn’t know the process to make a drum before the workshop, so learning about how to construct a drum was a surprise to me because I didn’t expect for the drum to be made that way, especially the smell and texture of the wet hide and wood. The hand drum is made by stretching a piece of wet hide with twelve holes onto a wooden hoop and using a thinly cut hide to lace it up. Once the hide dries, it tightens around the wooded hoop, and it is ready to be used. If the drum face ever needs tightening, it can be held briefly over a flame to make it taught and restore its sound. For all the students/interns involved in the workshop, the careful, deliberate process of making a drum helped us to connect to the materials and the spiritual significance of the drum.



## TRADITIONAL DRUM MAKING

BY: AMELIA

In preparation for our highly anticipated trip to Washington, D.C., Clear Sky Leadership took the initiative to organize a special workshop for all the interns and a select group of students. The purpose of this workshop was to create our own drums. Leading the class was the Lisa Monger, who is considered an elder in our community.

The workshop began with an important step stretching the deer hide strings that would be used to lace our drums. We were instructed to wrap the strings around a metal pole, and use a pulling action to ensure they were tightened and stretched. One particular statement from Lisa resonated with me deeply. She compared the process to wrapping a dream catcher, emphasizing that with each pull through a hole in the hide, we should imagine our prayers enveloping our drums.

I took this advice to heart with every pull and wrap, I infused the drum with my energy and offered my prayers. Lisa patiently guided us through starting our first knot and demonstrated the weaving pattern for the drum. As we laced the drum, we were told to pull the bottom laces individually, ensuring they were tightened properly. Once this step was completed, we began crafting the handle by tying every three strings into a tight knot, ultimately weaving them together. Throughout the entire process, I found myself seeking advice and guidance from my fellow participant, Kayla Heartsted. She was quick to offer help and support. Additionally, Blaine E. came to my aid when my knot unexpectedly snapped while I was tightening the laces. Their assistance truly exemplified the spirit of community.

To conclude our evening, we celebrated Lisa's birthday and engaged in lively conversations with the members of our community who were present at the workshop. After patiently waiting for our drums to dry over the course of three days, we eagerly returned, ready to drum alongside Lisa on Thursday. To start the session, Lisa sampled three different songs and allowed the group to choose which one we would learn. We decided to focus on the first song. As Lisa led us through the drumbeat, I closely observed her movements and silently sang along, absorbing the rhythm. It was truly inspiring to witness how quickly some grasped the song, and soon enough many of the interns picked up the song as a unified group. To ensure our confidence in singing in front of others, Lisa instructed each participant to sing one note alone at the end of the session. This exercise served as a powerful reminder that we were capable of expressing ourselves boldly and fearlessly.

The workshop was an incredible experience that not only allowed us to create our own drums, but also fostered a sense of community and connectedness. Through the guidance of Lisa, the support of fellow participants, and the jubilant celebration of Lisa's birthday, we embarked on a journey of creativity, spirituality, and personal growth. As we continued to practice and refine our drumming skills, it was evident that this workshop would forever hold a special place in our hearts, reminding us of the power of unity and community.



## **CHIEF SEATTLE CLUB 2023 LUNCHEON**

**BY: AIDEN GALINDO (APACHE)**

On Thursday, October 12th, I along with a few UNEA Interns, Elders, and Board Members, gathered at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Seattle to bring awareness to assist the native homelessness crisis within Seattle.

Our role was to come together to learn more about the magnitude of the homelessness crisis, the efforts that have been taken so far, and understand how we can further support. I learned that the major factors impacting our homelessness is their struggles with mental health, substance use and abuse, and lack of receiving appropriate care to treat their struggles. Coincidentally, I learned that October is National Substance Use and Abuse Awareness month.

This is my first month as an UNEA Intern and I feel privileged to be one of three interns to be invited to a luncheon to listen and learn about a widespread issue within our Native community.

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY SPEECH

## BY: LANE RYAN (ASSINABOINE)

Hello, my name is Lane Ryan I'm Yanktonai Sioux from Fort Peck Montana, I'm an intern with Urban Native Education Alliance and a student at the University of Washington. First, I would like to say how thankful I am to be here to share this speech and to spend time here at this Indigenous Peoples Day event. It's so heartening to see all these amazing people come together to celebrate this day.

I found UNEA my junior year of high school and it has changed my life for the better. UNEA is an organization founded in 2008 to engage all generations to serve and empower Native youth through education, culture, and tradition. Having participated in the events we host and the educational classes, and community work it has reconnected me to such a strong Native community I had not experienced before. I am so grateful to be able to work with such amazing people, the youth interns, teachers, mentors from other local organizations. Everyone is so committed to teaching and carrying forward our way of life. But mostly importantly I am so grateful to be able to work with our elders. To me I was taught elders are not just a status that comes with age but what you do for your community, how you pass on teachings to the young ones, the respect and patience you walk with day to day; you must earn the title of an elder. Which I quickly came to find UNEA was filled with honorable elders.

When I first met Sarah (Oglala) it was at a weekly UNEA meeting. She was zooming around directing, managing, and leading. The silences in the room were filled with questions like, "Where's Sarah, have you seen Sarah?" And I instantly knew that she is someone I was going to look up to. Sarah has been such an inspiring mentor and role model to me and for so many other people. Having such a strong, smart, Native woman leader in my life has really impacted my life for the better. She pushes me to speak up, work harder, and lead with confidence. I will forever be grateful for Sarah Sense Wilson.

I first met Mathew Warbonnet (Rosebud) when he came and taught us a traditional song. The first song he taught us was "War Party". This song is about when the battle of Greasy Grass was starting a young boy ran to another village to warn others before the U.S Cavalry came. He sang this song as he was running over. Getting to learn the song by Mathew has been one of the most memorable moments in my life. Before teaching us any words he started with the importance of caring for our drums, he gave each of the youth some sage to keep inside and taught us our drum is not just an object but something that has spirit and should be cared for like a baby. Mathew was the first elder to share with me a plains song and teachings and I will always hold that with me. After spending more time with him I also learned that he is a boarding school survivor of St. Francis Mission, and hearing about how he shared his experiences before Congress in May 2022 and has many articles about his time at St Francis I saw how courageous, gentle, and inspiring he is.

Two summer ago, UNEA worked on making a mural for Ingraham High School, this project was led by Kayla Harstad (Turtle Mt. Chippewa) and Jazell Jenkins (Unungax) and they asked artist and elder John Romero (Northern Shoshone) to co-lead. As an experienced muralist, I knew months later when I would make a mural at my high school, I wanted to invite him. He came into this project with such good energy and intentions and shared with me all his wisdom to creating Native art, I really enjoyed those months working with him.

And when things got difficult with the school regarding the project, he was right there at the meetings supporting me. John pushed me to keep going with my head high, focus on the positive, and to not let the school hold me back. I will always remember his support for me.

And finally, last year at this Indigenous Peoples Day event I met Kay Fiddler (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) She welcomed me with open arms and took me as in as one of her own. Being around her brings me so much peace and calmness. She too is another strong Plains woman who carries herself with integrity, and traditional teachings. Kay is somebody I know will always be there for me for when I need to ask questions about ceremony or to just talk. Like John and Sarah when times got hard with my school with the art project, she too was at that meeting with the administration questioning them and making them think hard about their actions. Kay is a resilient, compassionate, loyal friend who I always enjoy spending time with.

These are only some of the amazing elders I work with at UNEA, the whole community there is so important and will have an everlasting impact on me. The support for Urban Natives UNEA provides is something everybody should admire. My love for these people is so strong, and I am so grateful to work with the elders of the Native Seattle community. Indigenous Peoples Day to me is about unity, awareness and recognition about what our fellow relatives are doing in the community, and so by honoring our elders on Indigenous Peoples Day is a beautiful way to show respect and gratitude for their wisdom and contributions. They hold the knowledge of our cultures and traditions, passing it down to future generations. We should celebrate their resilience and learn from their experiences. Wopida Tanka (Thank you)

## **RIBBON PANTS MAKING**

**BY: KATT L**

Over high school, I've struggled to reconcile my joint genderqueer and Native identity. Because of this, I was initially nervous about choosing between a shirt and a skirt in our ribbon regalia workshop, as these pieces of cultural clothing have always appeared very gendered to me. I was nervous if I chose a shirt, I'd be signaling that I'm somehow genderqueer, but if I chose a skirt, then I'd be labeled as solely a woman, along with all the perceptions that entails. I didn't want to choose at all; my whole life has been spent agonizing over which to choose.

For all of these reasons, I went with ribbon pants.

This was still somewhat frustrating, honestly, as I've spent the last few years attempting to decolonize my gender identity (for me, that means disregarding colonial-based perceptions of my gender, and living my life authentically regardless of how I dress or look), and this still felt like I was centering outside opinions far too much, and that's always led to unhappiness for me.

You'll always find a double standard in westernized gendered clothing. It's acceptable for women to wear "men's clothes," but unacceptable for men to wear "women's clothes." I wanted to break away from gender roles entirely, as much as I possibly could. Pants, to me, feel the most gender-neutral out of either of these options. Rather than having one leg like a skirt, a pair of pants consist of two legs. In a way, this represents my two-spirit identity. I lay a foot in each realm, connecting myself to the earth through the lens of my unique understanding of gender. Although I had to do some extra work to get started on my ribbon pants, I'm always grateful for an opportunity to further merge my Native and genderqueer identities.



## UNEA CORNER

**BY: SARAH SENSE-WILSON (OGLALA)**

The month of November is officially recognized as National Native Heritage Month. We, as tribal people have much to celebrate, reflect on and acknowledge as we have made many advances throughout Indian Country. Our collective achievements, advances and progress are seen on a broader scale as a result of a tribal communities dedicating resources to education, restore tribal ways of life, active efforts to reclaim and define for ourselves tribal sovereignty, self-determination and decolonization. Our commitment to economic growth, educational achievement and cultural revitalization is critically important for our survivance. Cultural continuity within urban and rural communities requires we all actively build on the work of our ancestors and elders. I firmly believe UNEA continues to make strides through our vision for every urban Indian child and youth to have all the tools, skills and support needed to self-determine a future for themselves.



UNEA leadership works to develop and evolve to meet the needs of our constantly changing ecosystem, and in relationship to our partnerships, within the context of community. We are blessed to serve our youth, elders, families and community as a whole. Our gratitude extends beyond our funders and partnerships but with our land, plant relatives, food sources, medicines, and our elements we utilize for our wellbeing, and health.

November will be a busy month for us, as we plan to travel to Washington D.C. for the purpose of learning about our federal government, gain knowledge about politics, civic service, and learn about prominent historical figures, and events, all of which impact policies, laws, and practices influencing our tribal relationship to federal government. We plan to visit museums, monuments, and memorials, tour the White House, meet and greet with the staff from the National Center for Native American Youth, and many other important sites and historical places of significance. We are grateful to our funders for supporting this annual student leadership fieldtrip, because without the funding UNEA would not have the opportunity to travel across the country to Washington DC.

UNEA will be co-hosting the annual North Seattle College and UNEA 'Giving Thanks' Dinner on November 16th at the 'Grove', followed by a Drumming and Singing presentation at Roosevelt HS on November 21st 6pm, and on Friday November 17th I have the distinct honor of co-presenting with Kayla Harstad and Mathew Warbonnett at Bishop Blanchet school wide assembly. And finally, on November 30th we are hosting our first ever Intertribal Jam. The Intertribal Jam will rock NSC at The Grove in a two hour jam session. Our Intertribal Jam is a powerful gathering of drummers and singers throughout the area joining together at NSC to celebrate, spread blessings and share in spreading good medicine.

We hope you all are as excited as we are for the multiple cultural enrichment activities we are hosting for our community. Please let us know if you would like to join or volunteer.

**EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:**

**Native Warrior Athletics  
Basketball program**



**Free**

Thursdays  
6:00-8:00  
Sundays  
5:00-7:00

**Ages  
4-14**

**North Seattle College  
(206) 941-0338**

**[www.urbannativeeducation.org](http://www.urbannativeeducation.org)**

**Winter Holiday  
Gift Making**

**Sunday Dec 17th 1:00-4:00pm**

**FOOD Toy Gift  
giveaway Making**

*Card Making  
Gingerbread House  
Making Medicine*

**Santa Pics**

**Photo booth**

*North Seattle College  
'Grove'*

*Free Event  
206-941-0338*

**UNEA/NSC**

**EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:**

# CLEAR SKY

Tuesdays/Thursdays  
6:00-8:00pm

## Natives on the Rise Mentorship

NORTH SEATTLE COLLEGE  
RM CC 1161

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