



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

JUNE 2024 ISSUE

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WELLNESS RETREAT FROM UNEA

BY: NICK ESPAÑA

The Urban Native Education Alliance (UNEA) recently held a wellness retreat aimed at fostering the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of Native youth. This retreat provided a unique and culturally enriching environment where participants could connect with their heritage while addressing contemporary challenges.

One of the primary impacts of the wellness retreat was its emphasis on cultural connection. Many Native youth face a disconnection from their heritage due to various socio-economic factors and urban living. The retreat offered activities such as traditional storytelling, drumming, and arts and crafts, which helped the participants reconnect with their cultural roots. This connection instilled a sense of pride and identity, which is crucial for the mental and emotional well-being of young people.

Moreover, the retreat incorporated wellness practices that focused on holistic health. Workshops on mindfulness, meditation, and physical fitness were integral parts of the program. These activities aimed to equip the youth with practical tools to manage stress, improve concentration, and enhance overall health. By learning and practicing these techniques in a supportive environment, the participants could better handle the pressures of daily life and academic demands.

The retreat also created a strong sense of community among the participants. Many Native youth in urban settings experience isolation and a lack of community support. The retreat provided a space for them to meet peers with similar backgrounds and challenges. This fostered a network of support and friendship that extended beyond the duration of the retreat, promoting long-term resilience and solidarity.

Additionally, the retreat featured sessions with elders and mentors from the Native community. These interactions were vital in providing role models and guidance, helping the youth see the possibilities for their future and the importance of their cultural heritage. The wisdom and experiences shared by the elders reinforced the value of tradition and education, encouraging the youth to pursue their goals with confidence and perseverance.



WICHONI WASTE WELLNESS RETREAT 2024

BY: ALEX ESPAÑA (COWICHIN)



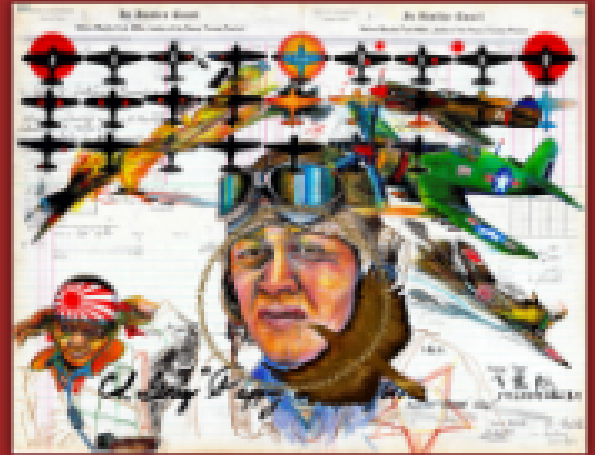
On April 12th through to April 13th the organization UNEA had its annual wellness retreat, Wichoni Waste. I had gone to the wellness retreat the previous year as a guest, but this year I was instead helping to work the event. There were a lot of differences between being a guest and helping work at the event, but working was always fun and eventful. Before this event I didn't have much work experience, so navigating through it and seeing how all the different workshops needed different things to set them up and clean them up. On the first day of Wichoni Waster I got there early to help set up, while setting up I had the chance to explore the North Seattle College's campus and get more familiar with it, it was a lovely day out, so I was enjoying it. When we were getting started with the event, elder Matthew Warbonnet gave an opening blessing song, then after the blessing the UNEA interns shared a song. After the interns sang, Vina Brown was introduced, sharing her keynote speech, which was about mindfulness, self-care, and how culture was medicine.

I thoroughly enjoyed Vina's keynote speech as I learned a lot. After Vina had shared, there were many workshops that we had done. Before the end of the day the youth were set to have a scavenger hunt, the scavenger hunt included going around the campus, some of the things we had to find were and indigenous plant, a picture of a frog, finding the pea patch and burying our hands in it. While my team didn't gain first place, we learned a lot of things about the campus and about ourselves. On day 2 of the wellness retreat I got there early again, helping to set up. The UNEA interns shared another song before everyone split off to go to workshops, I was in the painting workshop, as well as Alyssa Lunden's workshop talking about her experience with Pageants and Beauty. After Alyssa Lunden's workshop I then went to Stella Standingbears writing workshop where she told us how she got inspiration for her songs. When Stella's workshop ended, we went back to the Grove where the main event was being held, tr the dinner that was provided by UNEA, then after the dinner Stella Standingbear gave a performance to end the night.

LEDGER ART BY ROBERT UPHAM

BY: OLIVIA ANDRESS (SENECA/HAUDENOSAUNEE)

On May 9th, 2024, the artist Robert Upham came to Clear Sky Academy to show his ledger art and teach us about it. He described it as storytelling through art and proceeded to show his artwork. There were deep, meaningful stories behind each one. His piece titled “America’s Top Gun was an Indian from Washington” was about Pappy Boyington, America’s Top Gun. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his feats in World War II, in which he shot down twenty-eight Japanese Zeroes (fighter aircraft). Robert found out he was a Lakota Sioux Indian, enrolled in the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe.



He chose to use Pappy’s story because he was inspired by his courage, and the way the story was told- like a tough man singing the blues. Pappy is an inspiration to others locally, as he went to school in Tacoma and at the University of Washington, and worked at Boeing after getting out of the military. My grandfather also worked at Boeing, so this piece is especially meaningful to me.

There are several versions of this particular piece of ledger art. The first was done on vintage ledger paper from the Pierce County court system, and was done with colored pencil. The current version was done digitally, with an eagle and a wreath made of barbed wire. Each barb on the wreath represents the thirty-eight Dakotas who were hung in Mankato, Minnesota. The wire also represents the medal that is given to former Prisoners of War in America. When I spoke with UNEA Intern Tia Hiller about Robert’s presentation she said “It was really interesting, and I enjoyed learning about the history of ledger art”. I share her sentiment, and

BEADED GRADUATION CAP SIGNIFICANCE

IZZY HAAKANSON (SUGPIAQ)

This June, I will be graduating from Roosevelt High School. I had gotten offered by Chloe Schierbeck to help bead my cap for the ceremony. This is a great way to show off my culture while not disrupting the usual graduation attire. Unfortunately, not all people think that this way of celebrating graduation is appropriate. In May, a student at the Farmington high school graduation wasn’t allowed to wear her beaded cap and eagle plume. These caps show the resilience of Natives graduation, given the low graduation rates. In my family, my dad (Sugpiaq) was a first generation college student. In the village where he grew up, his teachers were mostly white people who didn’t want the Natives speaking our language or past, this is erasure. When I wear my beaded cap and walk across the stage, I carry with me the resilience of all of my ancestors that weren’t allowed to tell their stories. UNEA has not only showed me the resilience in our community but showed me how to pass it on to others. I look up to Kayla Harstad, one of the senior interns. She said, “As Indigenous students, we spend our years in educational institutions that don’t always fit the needs of our people. Wearing regalia and beaded caps at graduation help us signify this rite of passage and ceremony while celebrating our identity and who we are as tribal people.”

2024 UW ANNUAL POWWOW

BY: TIA HILLER

On April 13th and 14th UW had their annual powwow. I had gone to the UW powwow both days that it happened, the first day that I went it was almost going to end but for the time that I was there for I really enjoyed it. On the 13th when I got there, I was walking around looking at the stuff that the vendors had and after debating whether to buy everything that I liked or not I ended up going to say hi to my uncles that were there drumming at the powwow for both days. One of my cousins was also there on the first day so I went to hang out with him for a little bit and we just watched all the dancers and listened to the drumming, we were also talking about what dancers we thought would place in the competitions. A little later me and another intern Amelia decided to go dance for the intertribal portions. At first, I was nervous about dancing because I haven't dance that much since I was a little kid so when I do dance, I feel kind of out of practice but once I dance for a little bit I started to get comfortable with dancing and dancing with friends also helped me to get comfortable dancing in front of a lot of people. On the second and last day of the powwow I was there pretty much all day, when I first got there me, Amelia, and the group of interns that we were with walked around for a little bit then we went to go watch what was happening with the dancing and drumming. After watching for a little bit, we decided to go on round two of looking at the vendors' items and this time buying some earrings, but after buying the earrings Amelia heard that we could go out and dance, so we ran to the floor. When we were dancing this time, I felt more comfortable dancing because I had done it the day before, but this time we danced for longer and the longer that I danced the more I felt comfortable with dancing but I was a little nervous because my uncles were there watching but other than that I really loved dancing and I would like to dance more if the future.



SEATTLE WITH STELLA STANDINGBEAR AND STEPHANI

BY: KAYLA HARSTAD (TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA)

On Sunday, May 5th, Izzy and I had the wonderful opportunity to show Stella Standingbear the Lakota artist, and Stephanie around Seattle. It was a special day, especially for Stella, who had previously only visited the city for work. This time, she was here for Roxanne White's (Nez Perce) Missing Murdered Indigenous Women & People event at the Daybreak Star Pow Wow grounds. We were asked to be able to show them around the city and the cool spots of Seattle. Our adventure began when we picked up Stella and Stephanie from their hotel and headed straight to Pike Place Market. As we went through the market, I discovered new interests of Stella, like her love for loose-leaf tea and gifts she enjoyed getting for her relatives. We made sure to stop by the iconic Gum Wall, where we each left our mark with a piece of gum. Sampling honey, raspberry jam, smelling flowers, and picking up souvenirs. We then made our way to the Ferris wheel, where we assisted Stella in filming some content videos.

Our next stop was a vegan restaurant, where both Izzy and I were pleasantly surprised by the delicious cuisine. The highlight of the day was our visit to the Seattle Space Needle. Where we drank coffee, took photos, and viewed the cityscape from above. As the day was ending, I felt grateful for the chance to connect with Stella and Stephani on a personal level, all while sharing this memorable experience with my friend Izzy. It was a day filled with empowerment, and new discoveries leaving us all with cherished memories to treasure. As we drove back to North Seattle Izzy reflected on how, "Stella and Stephanie were very open people and I loved showing them the city they've never gotten to explore before. They shared stories about their musical career and living in Utah. It was such a great time talking with them and getting to know them." Next time Stella and Stephanie are in Seattle Izzy and I are the ones



GENTLE YOGA

Instructor Michelle Brewer

Breathe work Movement Reiki

All ages and levels invited

6/9, 6/23, 6/30
5:30-6:30pm

CONTACT US TO REGISTER

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uneachair@gmail.com

Urban Native Education Alliance



A poster for a BBQ party. The background is a green field with a grill and fire on the right. At the top, there are yellow and orange triangular bunting flags. The text is in various colors and fonts, including red, black, and white. A large orange banner with white text says 'BBQ Party'.

CLEAR SKY

**North Seattle College
CC 1161**

**JOIN US FOR HOTDOGS,
HAMBURGERS AND ALL
THE FIXINGS**

BBQ Party

*BBQ party to celebrate our successful school
year. Door prizes, food, games and more*

**JUNE 25TH
6:00-8:00PM**

(206)941-0338

URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION ALLIANCE
RITE OF PASSAGE
GRADUATION CEREMONY
SUNDAY JUNE 16TH
3:00-5:00PM

Becoming the Change

**North Seattle College
Courtyard**

**Dinner, Awards, Student Speakers, Keynote D'Andre Fisher, MC
Kasey Nicholson, 206 Singers and more**

**Indigenous High School/
8th grade Riser's**

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uneachair@gmail.com



CLEAR SKY

**Tuesdays/Thursdays
6:00-8:00pm**

Tutoring and Mentorship

NORTH SEATTLE COLLEGE
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