



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2023 ISSUE

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GONA 2023

BY: LANDON BREWER



Seattle Indian health board set up a youth GONA (Gathering of Native Americans) at the Suquamish clearwater casino. The drive there was great. Sunday morning all of the clearsky people convoyed from north Seattle to Mukilteo where we got on the ferry, I really enjoyed the ferry ride there because I rarely get to go on one. When we arrived at the casino we did a lot of get to know you activities, and it was cool cause I ended up seeing a lot of people I knew before. I also ended up Meeting a couple blackfeet that used to live on the Flathead reservation and know a lot of the people I know down there, and I roomed with one of them the next couple nights which was cool. Each morning we had to be awake around 7:30 for breakfast, and would all be doing activities all day. One activity that was very cool was drum making, it was many peoples first time making drum, only my 2nd time. In addition we made drum sticks. Another one of my favorite things we did was go down to the beach, it was cool looking for crabs. We did an activity where they separated us into groups based on our gender, and what it means to be a man or woman or non-binary person, aswell as what a healthy relationship looks like. I thought this activity was very important, because traditionally men and women had different roles within a tribe, and there were different activities they did that were a big part of your day to day life. Gona was a really great experience and I learned a lot of important life lessons, aswell as what it means to support others in your community.

UW DAY

BY: KAYLA HARSTAD (TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA)

On Friday, July 14th, UNEA organized a University of Washington Native Youth Mentorship Day. The purpose of this day was to bring Native youth from our community on an exclusive tour of UW, during which professors, undergraduates, and grad students shared information and their experiences of UW as a whole. The day started by meeting at the Intellectual House to welcome everyone and form groups. Students were split into groups based on their intended interests, such as arts and humanities or the public health track. Mentors from these groups guided them around different departments and answered their questions, sharing what it's like being a Native student here. Eventually, the groups made their way to the Burke Museum, where they were given a tour of the Northwest Native art. After the tour, the students had a meal at Off the Rez cafe, located at the bottom of the Burke Museum.

As a current undergrad at UW, I also participated in the mentorship day and learned a lot of new things about the campus that I did not know before. I visited the law school, which is of high interest to me, and had the opportunity to meet with the director of Native American Law, motivating me to become a student there.

Touring college campuses is crucial for Native youth as it exposes them to higher education opportunities they may not have encountered in their communities. It helps them understand college life, connect with Native communities on campus and in groups, and engage in conversations about scholarships and financial aid. Campus tours challenge stereotypes and inspire educational aspirations, helping them gain confidence and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, these experiences empower Native youth to make informed decisions about their academic futures and pursue successful college journeys, as they have a place on campus and are the future of this generation.



GONA

BY: KAYLA HARSTAD (TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA)

Being a 19-year-old chaperone at an All Native Youth trip was an incredibly enriching and eye-opening experience. Initially, I was nervous about taking on this responsibility, as I was still relatively young myself. However, as the trip unfolded over three days, I quickly realized how much I could learn from the youth and how rewarding it was to witness their growth and development. As a chaperone, I found myself not just guiding and supervising, but also learning about growth and finding my own path in life. Throughout the trip, I had the opportunity to interact with the youth, many of whom were experiencing the trip away from their families and communities for the first time. As they navigated new environments and participated in various activities, I saw their confidence and independence grow exponentially. It was heartwarming to see them supporting and encouraging one another, forming strong bonds and friendships despite coming from different backgrounds. I know many of them found new friends that they were able to connect with and hang back at home.

Being a part of their journey towards self-discovery, generosity, and empowerment inspired me to reflect on my own growth as a young adult. As a 19-year-old, I was still figuring out my path in life, and witnessing the youth face challenges, overcome obstacles, and embrace their culture made me realize the importance of staying true to myself. Their determination and resilience encouraged me to explore my own interests and passions, unapologetically pursue my dreams, and embrace my identity. Hearing youth share cultural teachings, languages, and stories was inspiring to see how great this next generation of Native youth are.

In the end, the GONA trip not only provided the youth with a memorable experience but also allowed me to learn valuable life lessons. It's important for youth to have the opportunity to travel and experience being around their people. Being a chaperone allowed me to witness firsthand the power of community, the strength in unity, and the significance of embracing one's identity. I know I had some difficult times and a few bumps in the road but it also made me learn for next time. It taught me the value of guiding and supporting others, while also acknowledging the growth and development I was experiencing personally. I found myself not just helping others find their way, but also discovering my own sense of purpose and identity along the journey. I am excited to see where next years GONA will be held with hopefully me being another chaperone with a bit more experience, and meet all of the amazing youth who will share their story.

“KEEP DOING GOOD TROUBLE” – BILLY MILLS

BY: ISABELLA HAAKANSON (OLD HARBOR TRIBE)

On Saturday, we had the opportunity to have dinner and have questions answered by Billy Mills, an olympic gold medalist runner. During his speech, he was talking about what to keep in mind when going through life. He said “Keep doing good trouble.” I resonated with the meaning behind what he said. It reflects the enduring spirit of resilience, activism, and advocacy in the Native community. Especially being in an urban environment, some people can be less informed of the history and culture of Indigenous peoples. I think this phrase aligns with the rich culture and history of our people, pushing for positive change while maintaining our connection to cultural values and traditions. UNEA creates these learning experiences and helps put youth into leadership positions. We work to address and bring awareness to the history of genocide and oppression so we can have a more just and equitable future for our people.



BILLY MILLS RUN/WALK FOR LIFE

BY: KAYLA HARSTAD



On Sunday August 26th UNEA held their 6th annual Billy Mills Run/Walk for suicide prevention. This event was held at North Seattle College with the help of the Running Strong organized running group. For our event we have the privilege to have Billy Mills himself come to Seattle and speak to UNEA leadership and community. Billy Mills was an athlete who achieved greatness due to his natural talent, hard work, resilience, and the motivation derived from his cultural identity. Billy Mills' ability to overcome adversity, and struggle, led to his historic gold medal victory at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. This made him an inspiration to people worldwide, but especially to the Native community.

The event was full of vibrant energy of community engagement, featuring a range of activities and partnerships. Running Strong helped organize a shoe giveaway. We had collaborative efforts from the Seattle Indian Health Board, North Seattle College, and United Indians to provide essential opportunities for the community. The scene was filled with their pop-up booths, adding to the event's diversity and inclusivity. Our event offered a mix of cultural delights, including Off the Rez, Bubble Tea, and Sugar and Spoon Ice Cream Truck catering. Through this unique blend of contributions and collaborations, the event aimed to both provide practical support and create a celebratory atmosphere for the attendees.

Indigenous Influencers like Billy and Tonia play a crucial role within their communities by inspiring resilience and determination. Their ability to overcome obstacles serves as a powerful example for younger generations. Their commitment to giving back to their Indigenous communities demonstrates their advocacy for positive change, fostering unity and addressing critical issues like higher education, health, positivity, and chasing your dreams.





BISHOP BLANCHET CLEAR SKY SCHOLARSHIP FOR 2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

Bishop Blanchet High School, in an effort to intentionally create community, is seeking to award one, four-year, full scholarship to a committed member of the Clear Sky community. The aim of this award is to recognize and honor scholars who are looking to be both dedicated to Clear Sky while also pursuing an education at this institution. Bishop Blanchet strives to form and educate each student within a challenging, positive, and diverse environment. An integral part of this mission is our ability to continuously expand on the ways we cultivate a more inclusive and diverse school community reflective of our local community. As a Catholic institution, we recognize our responsibility to rectify harms of the past and to build positive relationships in the present and future.

Please connect with a UNEA staff for more information about The Bishop Blanchet Clear Sky Scholarship.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:



UNEAI ★
INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP

\$500.00 stipend per month

Indigenous youth leadership
Ages 14-19
Earn \$ & HS Credits while learning
and connecting w/Elders, Mentors,
and Peers

Trip to DC
Dinners with Elders Council
Community Building
Civic Service

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**NWA Registration
2023-2024 Season
Ages 4-14**



**Kick off Sunday October 8th
5:00-7:00pm**

Gas cards, Snacks, and skills/ team building

North Seattle College
(206) 941-0338
www.urbannativeeducation.org



UNEAI
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION
DINNER

Thursday Sept. 28th 6pm at NSC room CC116

RSVP
uneachair@gmail.com