



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

FEBRUARY 2023 ISSUE

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NORTHWEST ART MUSEUM FIELDTRIP

BY: JUSTICE A.

UNEA Interns had the distinct privilege of an overnight fieldtrip visit to the museum of Northwest Art in La Conner, WA. When we first got there, we checked in, and we were greeted by Elder Lora Pennington (Upper Skagit) involved with the MMIW ART exhibit. She greeted us and ushered us towards the MMIW showcase area. We all sat down; she gave a presentation in Lushootseed language for about ten minutes. Her speech talked about Natives as a whole, but even more so, Native women are often ignored and unseen. She read aloud, "Even some of our families, friend say keep quiet". I think this means some of our own community starts giving up at some point. I felt bad for the young Native women because they have to look over their shoulder consistently. Sadly, almost every family has someone that has gone missing or murdered. After the speech, the first thing I did was I looked around the podium where she was speaking and there was a paper there with the speech on it in both Lushootseed and English. I took a picture of the speech to study for more understanding of the struggles and worries Native women experience.

The spectacular artwork spotlighting the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Honoring Our Stolen Sisters exhibition was astonishing. Although the showcase was in a small area, there were a lot of people, so I had to sit down and wait for the room to clear out. I started looking through the artwork once it cleared. The MMIW Art exhibit was exclusively Native artists. There were various types of art like sculptures, paintings, a knife sleeve made out of white bone disc beads and deer rawhide, and a video. In the video featuring a MMIW themed song by Antone George, there were about 15 Native women all in red dresses with red hand paint over their mouths symbolically representing the silencing many Native women experience. The women pulled canoe in the video while the melodic song played. The song was beautiful and emotional. The museum tour was my favorite experience in the month of January with the UNEA Internship program.



SOMETHING I HOLD SACRED

BY: IZZY HAAKANSON, SUGPIAQ

Recently, I had to bring something in for show and tell for my margins and centers class. I looked around my room for something I could share that had a story behind it. My other classmates had brought in things like stuffed animals and different photos then told the story behind them. My thoughts kept going to the thing in my room with a story that goes beyond just my life, my carved masks. This got me asking more questions about the deeper meaning of why our tribe carves masks and what stories lie beneath the wood.

In my room I have two protector masks, one made by me and the other a gift from my dad. I also have a pig mask that I made in the summer of 2021 in a culture camp me and my family go to every year. This camp is in Akhiok, Alaska, a week every summer people from all over get together and learn about our culture together. During this camp we carve masks, make seal oil lamps, go to the petroglyphs on the island, and many other crafts that we learn about that help connect us to our culture.

My dad leads what we call the carving tent, every year he has different interesting crafts for everyone to do and learn about the stories behind what we carve. A few years ago, he was teaching people not only to carve what we call protector masks but also teaching people about the story behind them. These masks are meant to share history and represent the spirit world. They are used in ceremonies that would allow my ancestors to communicate with the spirits that controlled life. Masks are sacred in my tribe; they aren't only works of art but also powerful religious objects. In Alutiiq they are called giinaquq meaning "like a face, but not really".

These deep stories behind my masks got me thinking about what other things we could learn if we just ask questions and are interested and involved. My tribe has lost a lot of elders this past year, including my grandmother, we are rapidly losing our language and stories the elders held. This gets me thinking about how important our elders are and how important it is to just listen and hear their stories so we can share them with the next generation. UNEA holds these values close by connecting generations and encouraging questions.



INGRAHAM HIGH SCHOOL LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT MURAL UNVEILING CEREMONY

BY: JAZELL J



The day finally came to present the Ingraham Land Acknowledgement Mural created by the UNEA community over this past summer. With the guidance of our talented artists John Romero and Megan McDermott, we were able to create this beautiful mural to honor the Ingraham Land Acknowledgement co-created by Kayla Harstad, Sarah Sense-Wilson, and me. I was able to pursue the Land Acknowledgment project with the leadership, confidence, and determination I gained through my work in the UNEA internship as well as the strong bond I have with my sister Kayla Harstad. Through the hardships and endless hoops to jump through to make this happen all the work is finally shown and paid off.

During the evening of Friday, January 20th I hosted the Ingraham High School Land Acknowledgement Mural ceremony event at my high school, all staff and students were invited along with the many of those in our Urban Native community at UNEA that contributed to the energy, time, and work of this mural. We were also lucky to be joined by our indigenous artists John and Megan so they could be honored and see where the final location of the mural they developed would be placed. Before the event took place, I was gifted the teaching of making an easy but delicious fry bread recipe from Jerilyn Hamley or Homely a humorous wild spirited elder that I adore and admire. The ceremony was opened by a blessing done by John Romero and Land Acknowledgment for which the mural was created for. Mr. Floe the principal of Ingraham then welcomed everyone, and powerful statements written by Kayla Harstad and Sarah Sense-Wilson were read. The fry bread was served hot and fresh with butter and jam thanks to Jerilyn and Jeffrey Hamley Ed. D. The ceremony was concluded with the mural being unveiled with the Letter of recommendation. This is the first step to our progress in indigenizing and decolonizing our school institution. Our mural also had a ripple effect, with Lane Ryan from West Seattle High School working towards creating a larger mural on the walls of her high school. I am so thankful for each and every face that came to the event.

Ingraham counselors were especially grateful and excited to see the installation of the mural full of color and life. Seeing the mural when I walk into school brings me great joy and a push of motivation, I hope this does the same for all Indigenous peoples that step into the school that get to see this representation of our people and heritage.



ELEMENTS SONG

BY: LANE R

This month I was lucky to have learned a song by Lisa Monger. The “Elements” song is a way to honor mother earth and the resources we are given. Lisa brought her adorable rez dog named Embry, a husky mix with the most piercing blue eyes. The energy when learning and practicing this song was so peaceful and joyful. This was my first-time meeting/learning a song from Lisa and I am grateful. The serenity and happiness Lisa radiated made me feel calm and happy to honor the earth. We started the night at North Seattle college with some good food, playing with the puppy and getting to know each other. By the time we started to learn the song I was excited. Lisa taught us that while we sing, we should stand in a circle, so our voices emit louder, and they are stronger as a group. By the time it was over I felt connected and proud to be part of the group at UNEA. I am eager to perform this song for Yellow Wood Academy on Wednesday to show other high school students the work we do, and I’m excited to show them this song in my new ribbon skirt that we have also been making this month with Alice Oligario. One thing I am grateful for is that I can teach others the skills I have been taught from Clear Sky. This is my second time making a ribbon skirt with Alice and I think she has taught me well enough that I can teach someone else. I am very thankful for the knowledge she has passed onto me.

NATIVE MINDFULNESS FOR ALL AGES INSPIRES CLEAR SKY YOUTH

BY ROBIN WILSON AND ANDREA D'ASARO

Every Thursday evening, 6 – 8 p.m., the mindfulness circle meets at Clear Sky, inviting people of all ages to join in joyful group inter-connecting and wisdom. Trained instructors Andrea, Robin, and Noa, age 10, have offered this native-inspired practice for over 5 years. Mindfulness incorporates indigenous practices to inspire physical, emotional and spiritual well-being for healing. Certified mindfulness instructor Andrea D'Asaro has taught social emotional learning in Seattle Public School and at North Seattle College for 8 years. Her assistants Robin and Noa, who studied mindfulness for kids with Andrea, also guide practices including tree breathing, mindful eating, bell vibrations and yoga.

Ten-year-old Noa, Coeur d' Alene, Samoan and a long-time Clear Sky student, led two girls in imaginative drawing at a recent circle. Both girls listened to her soothing description of a mountain scene with clouds, wind and animals. Then all three drew their interpretation of the tranquil scene on their white boards and finally described their art to each other, as if they themselves were the mountain or the rock or woodland creature.

You can learn more about mindfulness by attending one of our sessions or by researching the work of Dr. Michael Yellowbird's, citizen of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikar. He builds on neuroscientific research showing that healthy, constructive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors can positively change our brains. Dr. Yellowbird says that "mindfulness or Neuro-Decolonization seeks an understanding of how mind and brain function are shaped by the stresses of colonialism and compromise the well-being of Indigenous Peoples." He goes on to say that "stressors include racism, hate crimes, loss of territories, high levels of mortality, poverty, and poor health and disregard of Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and rights."

Noa thanks Clear Sky for allowing her to develop her natural leadership skills, and she invites each of you to stop by on Thursday evenings to find out more or to share your own mindfulness practices with the group.



**WELCOME NEWLY ELECTED UNEA BOARD OF DIRECTOR,
MEMBER AT LARGE BENJAMINE YAWAKIE**

BY: UNEA BOARD

Benjamin Yawakie (Zuni, Turtle Mountain, Fort Peck, White Bear) was raised in a northwest suburb of Minneapolis, MN. He has a B.S. in Biology, a B.A. in Chemistry and Statistics, and a Master of Public Policy and Master of Public Health. He has dedicated his life to serving American Indian and Alaska Native people and looks forward to working for Native children and families living in the Greater Seattle area.



NATIVE WARRIOR ATHLETICS BASKETBALL LEAGUE

UNEA is so proud of our little Warriors basketball 8-9 year old co-ed basketball athletes for their incredible endurance, enthusiasm and fearlessness. We have two little Warrior teams participating in the 8-9 year old basketball league at Northgate community center. Both teams are co-ed and have been competing weekly through the north end city leagues. Little Warriors are coached by Myleaka Webster and Mighty Warriors are coached by Stacy Williams. Neither parent coach had experience or prior training for their roles as coaches, but seeing them in action would give you reason to believe they both have natural talent for coaching kids. The teams have been short on players due to illnesses and late registration, but the iron 5 energy of the players shows the powerful fierceness each athlete has burning inside them. These games are fast paced, high energy and believe me not one dull moment. We want to express appreciation to the kids, parents and coaches for being so diligent, positive, and energetically supportive to all our athletes. If you can come out and join us in cheering on our NWA little Athletes.



INDIGENOUS MEN: THE NEED FOR THEIR OWN MOVEMENT

BY: EVITA

Indigenous men face high rates of poverty, suicide, and incarceration, all of which are interconnected. These issues require specific attention and solutions and can't effectively be addressed through a movement (MMIW) that primarily focuses on violence against Indigenous women. Thus, the ongoing neglect of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Men makes systemic inequalities and needs more attention and action to address their unique challenges and experiences.

A primary challenge is inadequate reporting and investigation. In her article, the author, Cecily Hilleary writes, "families may not report the missing for days, even weeks." Hilleary interviewed Meskee Yatsayte, a Navajo citizen. Yatsate elaborates on the issue, "And when they finally do, the police say, 'Oh, they'll be back,'" This is due to the lack of resources and biases within the criminal justice system, which are additional challenges.

Indigenous men often receive less attention compared to Indigenous women. Hilleary says, "thousands of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) men and boys who are missing or murdered in the U.S. ... capture little media attention in the shadow of the greater campaign seeking justice for missing and murdered indigenous women." In general, the media places an emphasis on the MMIWG movement, and there is a lack of recognition of the specific challenges faced by Indigenous men.

Some people think that issues are worse for Indigenous women. However, Indigenous men are overrepresented among missing and murdered persons in Canada and the United States. In her 2020 article, author Felicia Fonseca writes, "The Justice Department also looked at a 2016 study funded by the National Institute of Justice that shows Native men are 1.3 times more likely to experience violence than non-Hispanic, white men." Native men face higher rates of violence and murder compared to non-Indigenous men, often as a result of discrimination and racism.

Indigenous men need their own movement to bring attention to their unique experiences and empower them to take action. By having a separate movement for Indigenous men, harmful gender norms and expectations can also be challenged, and stereotypes about Indigenous people can be broken down. A movement of their own could provide a space for Indigenous men to build a sense of community and support, which is crucial for individual and collective healing.



THANK YOU TO OUR TEACHERS!



Emily Yuen & Jeri Hamley

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:

Clear Sky Academy Open Enrollment

Earn HS credits
American Indian Art and Culture class

2nd semester CSA
Orientation February 7th 6pm
Indigenous HS students

TUESDAYS 6:00-8:00PM
NORTH SEATTLE COLLEGE RM CC1161



UNEACHAIR@GMAIL.COM
(206)941-0338

North Seattle College The Grove *Sweet 16 Celebration*

Featuring Violinist Swil Kanim (Lummi)
MC Kasey Nicholson

Ribbon Skirt and Shirt
Contest

February 16th
6:00-8:00pm

Recognizing Partnerships Supporters
and
Food, Drinks, Entertainment

You are invited
to our celebration.
RSVP uneaprogramcord@gmail.com