



# Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition



## VOICES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

By Kayla Harstad

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On Tuesday and Thursday of February 15th and 17th, UNEA presented Clear Sky youth and families the opportunity to listen to the Voices of Boarding Schools presented by Matthew Warbonnet, (Lakota), and Roger St.Clair (Turtle Mt. Chippewa). This night was meant for community members, students, youth, and families to be able to hear the lived experiences from boarding school survivors. We were blessed with the opportunity to listen, engage, and learn about boarding schools from members within our community, and it was an honor being able to listen and absorb so many emotions and knowledge from the speakers. The first night started with a blessing given by Matthew Warbonnet, followed by our Clear Sky Land Acknowledgement shared by Jazel Jenkins (Aleut).

Prior to this two part presentation on U.S. government Boarding School, I knew little to nothing about Indian boarding schools. I was never taught about US Government Policies on boarding schools in in my educational career at Seattle Public Schools. What was interesting to learn was that there were over 367 identified Indian Boarding schools across the United States. When I found this out, I asked myself, why haven't I heard of this number before? Why haven't we been informed about the true history of boarding schools in our schools curriculum? I was unsure and angry.



## Voices of Boarding Schools continued...

While I was listening to Mathew Warbonnet share stories from his experience he had while enrolled in St. Francis elementary I felt his pain and suffering. Mathew Warbonnet shared about extreme trauma and abuse at the hands of members of the Catholic Church. He told us about many young children being sexually, spiritually, emotionally, verbally and physically abused. One survival skill was learning how to be cautious in what you do and say, so you won't have to face trouble later. "You learn how to be defensive, but you also learn how to take care of yourself."-Mathew.

Mathew he told us about surviving all of the violence, abuse and mistreatment sanctioned and condoned by the Catholic Church, and that all he wanted from them at the end of the day was for the church to apologize for their wrongdoings. How they treated children, stripped them from their identity and culture, while also being root cause of trauma and intergenerational that we live with today. He wants the church to recognize, take responsibility

and acknowledge the years and years of Church violence waged on innocent Indigenous children. In one historic meeting with National Church leaders Mathew simply requested the Church make an official apology to survivors and their descendants and if the church publicly apologized he would come back and work for them. It is now going on 9 years and he has yet to hear back from the church.

Today, we see Mathew Warbonnet as a respected leader, educator and Elder in our community, always willing to help out, joke, laugh and share his ceremonial songs, prayers and he does whatever he can for his people. He maintained being culturally connected by singing songs his father taught him and always remembering that "the dawn has arrived, you live another day, and you do what you have to do here today". The knowledge I gained in this special two part series on 'Voices of Boarding School' have left an indelible imprint on my heart, mind and spirit. The history of Boarding Schools and the legacy of trauma and survival will help fuel my desire to seek justice and reconciliation.

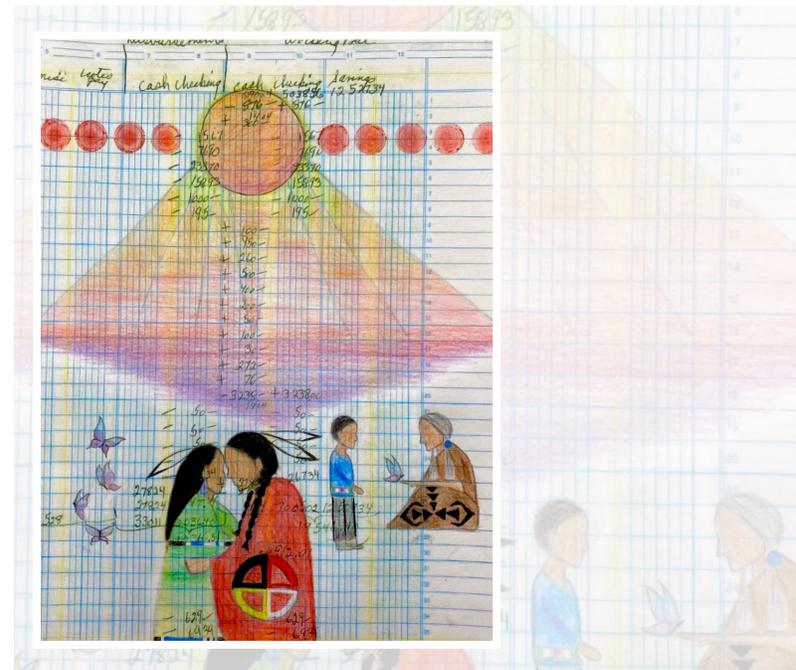


## MATTHEW WARBONNET JR. & ROGER ST. CLAIRE 'VOICES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS'

By Jazell J

Matthew Warbonnet is a Lakota, he has strong youthful soul, kind eyes, and quite the humorist. On February 15th and 17th of 2022 Clear Sky had the honor of having him and Roger St. Claire join us to speak about their experiences as boarding school survivors. The Blanchet High School Leadership Legacy Club joined us to listen and learn as well. I was grateful to be in the presence of such knowledgeable and humble people. Matthew Warbonnet and Roger St. Claire endured and survived the evils and torture of boarding schools, elementary through high school. Their stories rocked my core, them and the thousands of other Native children were forced into to these corrupt, violent and oppressive educational institutions. These institutions intentionally stripped them of their culture and diminished their very own sense of self-love and identity.

Many boarding school survivors were sent to these schools for 10 months out of the year away from family. Meals often consisted of mush and students were deprived of food as punishment. It was typical for the children have endured physical abuse, sexual violence and molestation but that's only a fraction of what these children were put through. Matthew spoke about how young they became skilled with survival skills and suppressed their emotions, thoughts and cultural practices like speaking their own language, "you knew from your own classmates telling you that you don't speak Lakota language there", shared Mathew. He spoke to the depths of the impact that the boarding schools had on the children, saying, "the schools put a deep hatred in their hearts and spirits, they became abusers to themselves, their families, and friends, they never learned how to heal so they held down their emotions therefore never learned how to cope with them". Matthew spoke about a song that his father had given him that made him feel hopeful, the translation "friend the dawn has arrived, I live again". I found it poignant and touching, he used the song to uplift his spirits and give him faith,



hope, and strength needed to survive the prolonged and projected torment at the hands of priests and other school staff. As a student learning about boarding schools from first person survivor I felt the sorrow, and pain but also the strength and absolute astonishment at the resiliency of both survivors. I admire both Matthew and Roger for allowing us insight on their experiences of survival, they show us great strength in the vulnerability of these traumatic, heart wrenching stories shared with strangers, it takes great amount of courage and strength. I wish to offer them blessings and continued resilience. My learning will continue in personal reflection, prayer and finding ways to honor the survivors.



## VOICES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

By Joseph Aleck

On February 15th and 17th, Elder Matthew Warbonnet joined us for an open conversation about his childhood experiences at Saint Francis and Oglala mission schools in South Dakota. Matthew shared stories on a variety of different aspects on impacts and trauma from being a victim of assaults, and violence perpetrated by priests running the boarding schools. Mathew also shared how his culture remained intact and in particular a Lakota song he was taught by his dad gave him the strength and spiritual will to survive. The song lyrics were important to his resilience “When the dawn has arrived I live again.”

The other elder who joined us was Roger St. Clair who spoke about his experience of being in a boarding school located far distance (over 500 miles away) from his home (Turtle Mt. Chippewa). The distance was so great that his parents were unable to visit or bring him home for holidays or schools breaks. When it came to the experience of school life it was acknowledged that the main form of discipline was physical assault including; use of cattle prods, whips, sticks, or boards/paddles. Ways of coping from the violence was laughter; joking with one another and internalizing the pain and suffering. Ultimately survivors often experience deep sadness, pain, and suppressed anger. Survival required living in trauma silently in life.

When it comes to boarding school era I acknowledge the generational impact on my life. I am a grandchild of the children who survived these boarding schools, and intergenerational trauma coexists in my life today. Shedding light on how the lasting trauma of boarding schools continues to affect our families is necessary for healing. We must recognize and identify the rippling impacts of historical intergenerational trauma because all aspect of our life echo this dark history.

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## LESSONS FROM 'ENERGY OF WORDS'

By Cat Tetric

Comedian Kasey Nicholson provided interns with skills and tactics critical in public speaking. These skills help us acknowledge the importance of our tone, body language and preparation when talking to an audience. These tools are fundamental in our work with the community, as public speaking brings awareness to the voices and needs of our people.

The energy in our words is a key point in developing our speaking technique. Our tone is what may persuade or stultify a listener. The delivery of your tone is salient. It is how you use your voice to get your point across. If you do not do it right, there is a risk of your point getting lost or misinterpreted. For example, speaking quietly may lose your listeners attention or even make it hard for them to understand what you are saying. While Speaking loud and clearly will likely keep them engaged and entailed in your key point.

When approaching a listener sounding bored and uninterested, you are less likely to capture their attention. Speaking without a key point that you want your listener to take away can also be confusing and make it difficult for your audience to grasp and understand what you are saying. Take the necessary preparations before speaking. Make sure you have a key point and you present yourself as confident in what you have to say. Proper body language helps present ourselves as confident, eager, and content with what we have to share. Which is important when speaking with a listener whom you want to persuade.

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## BOARDING SCHOOLS WITH MATT WARBONNET

By Cat Tetrick

Matt Warbonnet spoke to use about his personal experience in boarding schools and how they effected young indigenous children. Native youth were placed in boarding schools in attempt to be converted to the Christian and Catholic Church. More than 100,000 Native Americans attended at least 367 boarding schools. There were 13 boarding schools in Washington, while 83 were located in Oklahoma. Matt explained how the church held power over the children, their families, and the community. "If you think the power of the government is strong, it is nothing compared to the power of the church" (-Matt)

Matt shared very personal stories regarding the variation of abuse children were subject to by the church. Children were beat with razor straps and willow sticks. He recalled a time when he was only fed bread and water for ten days. Upon arriving to the school, your hair would be cut off and they would bathe you by deeply scrubbing your skin with a bristle brush. Matt shared a story with us about how he and his friends had stolen some money while in the school. When they were caught, they were beat once for every cent they had stolen. One boy who had taken over a dollar in cents was beat until he passed out on the floor, and had continued to be beat while unconscious.

What personally spoke to me was how Matt explained that the abuse of the boys and girls who attended boarding schools led those kids to grow up and become abusers themselves. It left them with internal and external scars that later evolved towards depression, PTSD, drug abuse and abusive relationships. "I never drank alcohol because I saw what it did to people, and I saw what caused people to do those things" (-Matt) It is important that we be told these stories in regards to our generational trauma. Rather than hold hate for what it did to our people; Matt explained he only wished for the church to acknowledge what they did and how it damaged young children and their families.





## FINDING MY CONFIDENCE

By Lailani Norman Big Spring



Have you ever had times when you are so nervous your stomach turns, your palms sweat, and your voice stutters? That is exactly how I felt before I ventured into public speaking. I lacked confidence. Confidence is underrated problem that many feel but don't normally talk about. When I finally started doing public speaking, I was able to understand and practice techniques to get comfortable quick and use my mistakes as lessons to build my confidence.

I've always have been a people person. I practice imaging the collective number of people I have talked to in my whole life and visualize all of them in one room when speaking. MMIW school assembly was the first experience speaking to thousands of people. I was so ready and excited to share my words on stage in front of 3,000+ people. I kept telling myself "I know this will be light work". I allowed myself to share from my heart instead of practicing and not really understanding the actual grasping the confidence.

Being called on stage was a magical moment. I walked onto the stage and was elated to see the thousands of people awaiting my speech. Hearing all the cheers, applauds, and amazing enthusiasm gave me an exhilarating feeling unmatched by anything I have experienced. Then suddenly it was dead silent; it was so silent I could hear a single person out of 3,000 plus people clear their throat. With the thought of so many people quietly anticipating my presentation and all the eyes on me just instantaneously made me feel as if I was small. I could feel my chest sinking in, palms sweating, voice quivering and tears filling my eyes. I knew the show must go on, so there was a pause where I blocked everyone out and read my speech. I spoke as if I was speaking to myself and that is when I found calmness and started speaking comfortably and naturally. My self-confidence grew as I read my speech, drawing on my inner strength lent me the courage to successfully elevate my voice in an arena where Indigenous women are typically excluded.

After this whole experience, I was taught that no matter what your situation is, that confidence is key to succeeding. There are times where I might feel prepared and there will always be an unpredictable element that sneaks up, and now I have learned that overthinking will get in my way. How I fix that now is by understanding what I'm there for, what change I want, and why change is important. Understanding my worth when it comes to public speaking is a key to self- confidence, it will help improve anyone's speaking skills. A persons outlook, opinions, and most importantly engage the audience on what it is you are speaking about. Your audience wants to see that you are confident and really understand what you are sharing and teaching.

The experience is unforgettable, because I learned a lot from this one experience. The speech I presented changed my whole outlook on my social life and how I can even improve it when meeting new people. Yes, I occasional have social anxiety, but remembering how I triumphed in overcoming my momentary 'stage fright' gives me both strength, and hope for possibilities, and happiness. My self- confidence can invite possibilities in life. I see how gaining self- confidence brings opportunities for more public speaking and ultimately broader visibility as a representative of our urban Indian community.



## UNEA CORNER

By Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala)

UNEA has shifted our attention back to Clear Sky regular Tuesdays and Thursday evenings with a focus on cultural, life skills and tutoring programming. Our return to activities geared for drop-in services for ages 9-19 has been met with encouraging success. This past month we planned a variety of presentations supporting ongoing learning about U.S. Boarding School era 'Voices of Boarding School' with featured speakers Elder Mathew Warbonnet Jr. (Lakota) and Elder Roger St. Clair (Turtle Mt. Chipewa). Both speaker sessions were riveting, heartbreaking, but also humorous, and light at times. The lived first person experiences helped to illuminate the dark history of US Government policy sanctioning, funding and instituting federal law to assimilate Indian children over the course of five decades. Students and community members shared tears, laughter and both anger and sadness together as we learned about the immense trauma from abuse by staff at these faith based government funded board schools. Each session started with prayer, smudge and land acknowledgment and concluded with prayer song, smudge and expressions of genuine appreciation to both courageous speakers.

Our UNEA Leadership students plan to work with Bishop Blanchet High School Legacy Club to co-author Resolutions for addressing Boarding School History of Trauma, Intergenerational trauma and Healing. The long road to heal the scars and wounds from the violence and death in educational concentration camps. Roger St. Claire made a remark early in his presentation to give context to his experience he gently but poignantly stated "It was as if I lived as an orphan". Both his parents lived in Turtle Mt. but he was sent away at age seven over 550 miles away to Marty, S.D. He literally lived in the boarding school 24-7 for ten months of the year. He also shared about forming close brotherhood relationships with children he essentially grew up with while in boarding school. He smiled as he reflected on his bond with a few surviving friends. To this day they remain in regular contact. The overall heaviness of the stories was lightened up with Mr. Warbonnets story about his "spark" with Bernadine and how he thoughtfully shared his hard earned candy bars with her each week at movie night. This story was particularly sweet given the harsh abuse and separation of female and male students. One final request was made by Mathew Warbonnet, "Please acknowledge those children who are being found, remember them and cry for them." Our commitment to the survivors reaches beyond listening to their experiences, our commitment is to cry for those forgotten children, embrace our tribal identity, and pursue truth, accountability and healing through language, culture, wellbeing and educational success. Woplia Mathew Warbonnet and Roger St. Claire for your stories, we will forever remember and we celebrate you both as honorable survivors of boarding school era.



**THE SKY BRIGHTENS UP WHEN  
MY ELDERS ARE LOOKING OVER ME** LARISSA



## Angel George (Tlingit/Haida/ Oglala) Bio

My name is Angel, I am Tlingit and Haida and Oglala Sioux, I am many things, Mexican and Philippina. I love to do art and I love to do art and I hope to one day be a painter and be like my dad, I also like to sing and write, some of my favorite singers are Doja cat SZA and all the old members of Destiny's child's. These words help me get through life especially when going through those insecure times.

"If your only intent is to be seen, you'll never be seen. If your intent is to be happy, comfortable, genuine, and true in craft, you're destined to be noticed." – Doja cat

"I live in my imagination, so sometimes movies help me get lost. I feel like I'm in it." - SZA



## Lena George (Tlingit and Haida) Bio

I am Lena George I am Tlingit and Haida, I am a person who's happy place is friends and family, I like to play sports because I grew up playing basketball with my dad. I hope to one day play at my school and win a few games. My favorite basketball player is Slick Watts, my uncle. I grew up with him at my elementary school with him telling me that I should play when I get older which is something I plan on doing soon. Some of my favorite things that he said that will always stick with me are,

"When you are stuck between two paths with a friend don't go down the same path that they are gonna go down write your own story, Be you because no one else can."-Slick Watts  
"When playing the game don't fall behind or stick with them, be ahead by two steps." – Slick Watts



## Junior Victor – Bio

Hello, my name is Junior Victor. I'm a pacific islander of the federated states of Micronesia. I was born in Seattle Washington and I'm a ninth grader at Nathan hale high school. I'm trans and go by they/them. My family and friends will always come first. My favorite colors are lavender and royal blue. My favorite things to do are singing, cooking, and doing my make-up... A LOT. Some of my favorite people who like doing the same things that I do such as singing; Selena Quintanilla, Sza, Jhene Akio, Queen Naija, and Summer Walker. The quotes that they said touched my heart is.

"If you are gonna be somebody, you need to be a leader not a follower. The impossible is always possible" – Selena Quintanilla.

"Take me to reality... drag me to the truth..." – Sza

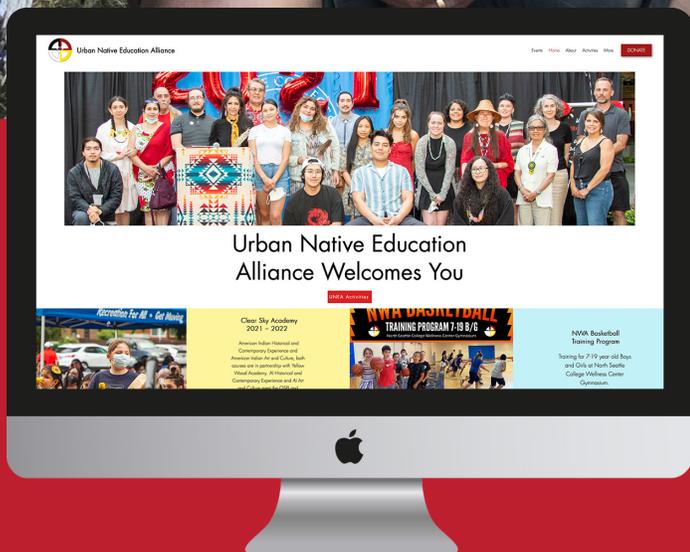
"What you create for you, no one can take from you" – Jhene Akio

"I promised myself I wouldn't fall but every time I see you, I just want to risk it all" – Queen Naija

"Hold on to your happiness for dear life... it slips away too easily" – Summer Walker.

## Volunteer of the Month

John Garibaldi has been volunteering with Clear Sky since 2020. He attended their Licton Springs video presentation and was impressed by the energy of the group, especially the young adults. John teaches Social Studies at Mercer Middle School on Beacon Hill, and enjoys time outside in PNW forests and mountains whenever possible. John has been consistently a regular tutor for Clear Sky and is always in good spirits, happy, friendly support to our students seeking academic tutoring. We appreciate his warm, thoughtful attentiveness to meeting the learning needs of students seeking support.



## UNEA Student of the Month

Daniel Jackson (13) Quinault Tribe, a student at Whitman Middle School and a regular participant at Clear Sky and Native Warrior Basketball. Daniel is quiet but is always game for hooping, or tutoring, even a regular at our Greenlake run/walk. Daniel and his parents are always a positive source of support willing to lend a hand or offer any support for filling in wherever needed. Daniel is our student of the month for his dedication to fully engaging in all activities offered by UNEA. Congrats Daniel you are a wonderful example to your peers and community.



### About Us!

Seattle Clear Sky Native Youth Council (SCSNYC) provides:

- **Academic Support:** Instructional tutoring and mentoring.
- **Cultural Learning Activities:** Song and drum instruction, beading, talking circle, mural painting, storytelling, and art projects.
- **Individual Recognition:** Student of the month, monthly birthdays, and Native graduation acknowledgments.
- **Community Involvement:** Spirit Walk, social justice rallies, and field trips.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Circle discussions, fund-raisers, community organizing, and leadership building projects.
- **Basketball Program.**
- **Student Service Learning.**

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