



Seattle Clear Sky

Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

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HOLIDAY GIFT MAKING EVENT

By Kayla Harstad



On Sunday, December 19th UNEA hosted a Holiday Gift Making event for our youth and families. Welcoming families to North Seattle Community College for craft stations, cultural arts, photobooths, food, and musical entertainment. UNEA offered 4 different cultural crafts throughout the stations. These stations taught the youth how to make Cederhead bands from Laura Pennington (Skagit) Sew small Bags with Applique designs instructed by Alice Oligario (Nanaimo, Sechelt, and Squamish) and Craft Parfleche bags and pouches.



In the beginning of the event we started with a blessing, following our land acknowledgement, introductions to our guest, and open announcements from the community. As people would walk into the door and sign in, everyone had the opportunity to enter their name in our door prize giveaway. UNEA volunteers were leading families and youth to certain stations where they could begin their journey with arts and crafts. On the side of your artwork, you could have enjoyed yourself with a nice Italian soda or Pink Bella cupcake.



Holiday music was filling the air. MC Star Nayea (Ojibwa) helped herself to our open karaoke and went off on the mic. She has a beautiful voice. Every so often, we had our door prizes called, prizes ranging from huge lego sets, and toys, delicious hot cocoa and chocolate provided from See's candy, and one of our grand giveaway prizes was a mountain bike! We had so many good prizes and a huge range from youth and adults winning our giveaways.

We eventually got to the time where food had arrived, eating Buffalo burgers mac and cheese, and salad from Native Soul Cuisine. We had our amazing chef, Jeremy, cook the food for our event this evening. The food was a hit and the Pink bella cupcakes were a great dessert. Following our meal, every kid had a chance to receive a toy from our Toys for Tots table. Kids could receive one toy and one stocking stuffer. It was exciting, kids making friends with their peers and enjoying themselves with their toys while also being able to adventure these craft stations.

As time would shortly come to an end, we were still able to finish our crafts we made and take home the start of the supplies we had for our next one. It was a wonderful time having Che Sehyun set up a photobooth area and take pics of everyone throughout the entire event. He captured wonderful memories through his camera lens and I can't wait to see how they turn out. Thank you to everyone who made this event possible and provided our families with a great holiday experience.



YOUTH SUMMIT GATHERING

By Joseph Aleck

Moving in Solidarity was a virtual youth centered event held on Saturday Dec. 18th 2021. The 'Moving In Solidarity' summit included multiple panels led by youth from different youth organizations. Keynote speaker Edwin Lindo (Educator, Business Owner, and Activist) shared on his extensive knowledge on organizing for solidarity through both life experience, research and business bookstore co-owner featuring unique cultural repository of historical activism and political movements led by the Black Panthers. Mr. Lindo's expertise on the subject of Activism influences his worldview and gives him perspectives on current politics and complex issues relevant to our generation. I was on the panel titled 'Race, Gender and Intersectionality' and our panelist shared about various challenges, barriers and culturally specific issues impacting our ability to build solidarity. Some of the subjects covered included related to social and economic disparities and systematic oppression in our lives.

It was an honor to participate alongside two other youths about race and gender intersectionality. When it came to working with other youth on the panel, we quickly that we had all felt cultural pressures and binaries on our identities. These binaries compound weight on us because our cultural, gender, socio-economic, sexual, and racial complexities shape our experiences and interactions in mainstream society. The communities we grew up in influences our self-perception and our ideas about "othering" based on differences. My father was most impactful in shaping my identity as an Indigenous person; however, his connection and cultural ties were taken from our family generationally due to historical trauma and victimization through colonial violence. His hard life and struggle affected his parenting and our relationship was difficult and confusing at times.

I enjoyed listening to the other speakers talk about their race and gender in detail. It was important to see how we connect and differ from one another through our intersecting identities. So, if you want to listen to the panels and key speaker Edwin you can go to the youtube channel Communities of Opportunity. It is worthwhile and I highly recommend it. Thank you for this opportunity BSK and UNEA.

VAX UP, MASK UP, BOOST-UP-WARRIOR UP

By JJ

Interns at UNEA are partnering with the talented musician and videographer Star Nayea. We are co-producing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) with City of Seattle Covid-relief funds. Our plan is to create a PSA message geared to promote covid safety titled 'Vax-Up, Mask-Up, Boost-Up and Warrior-Up'. Our PSA is aiming to educate, while also drawing on our cultural/traditional teachings as empowerment for protecting our relatives, community and society.

In light of the COVID-19 Vaccine being available and eligible to individuals 5 years of age and older and the booster vaccine for 12 years and older. Only 62.2% percent of the U.S. population being fully vaccinated, while according to National Indian Council on Aging Inc. a Covid-19 data tracker conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 45.5% of Native American and Alaskan's received at least one dose and only 39.1 percent fully vaccinated by July 6, 2021.

We want to urge Native youth through social media platforms to receive their vaccine and booster, and to continue to wear masks consistently and correctly in all public settings. These common sense practices not only to protect yourself but also stop the spread to others including our elderly and those with underlying health conditions who are in a greater danger of losing their life to the Covid-19 disease. We are fortunate enough to be able to film our PSA at the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB) a community health center that provides health and human services to its patients, while specializing in the care of Native people. The SIHB is offering Covid-19 vaccinations for individuals 5 years and older by calling their vaccine hotline at (206) 328-4128 and speaking directly to the scheduling team at the SIHB.

Our PSA will feature UNEA interns whom all prepared our own 1-2 minute scene. We look forward to sharing our PSA with you. Special thanks to all interns, Sarah, Tina, Chris, and Star Nayea for your teamwork and efforts to make this happen.

Sources : <https://www.sihb.org/vaccine/> <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=USA> <https://www.nicoa.org/american-indians-have-highest-covid-vaccine-rate/>

UNEA WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE

JEFF SMITH

(MAKAH)

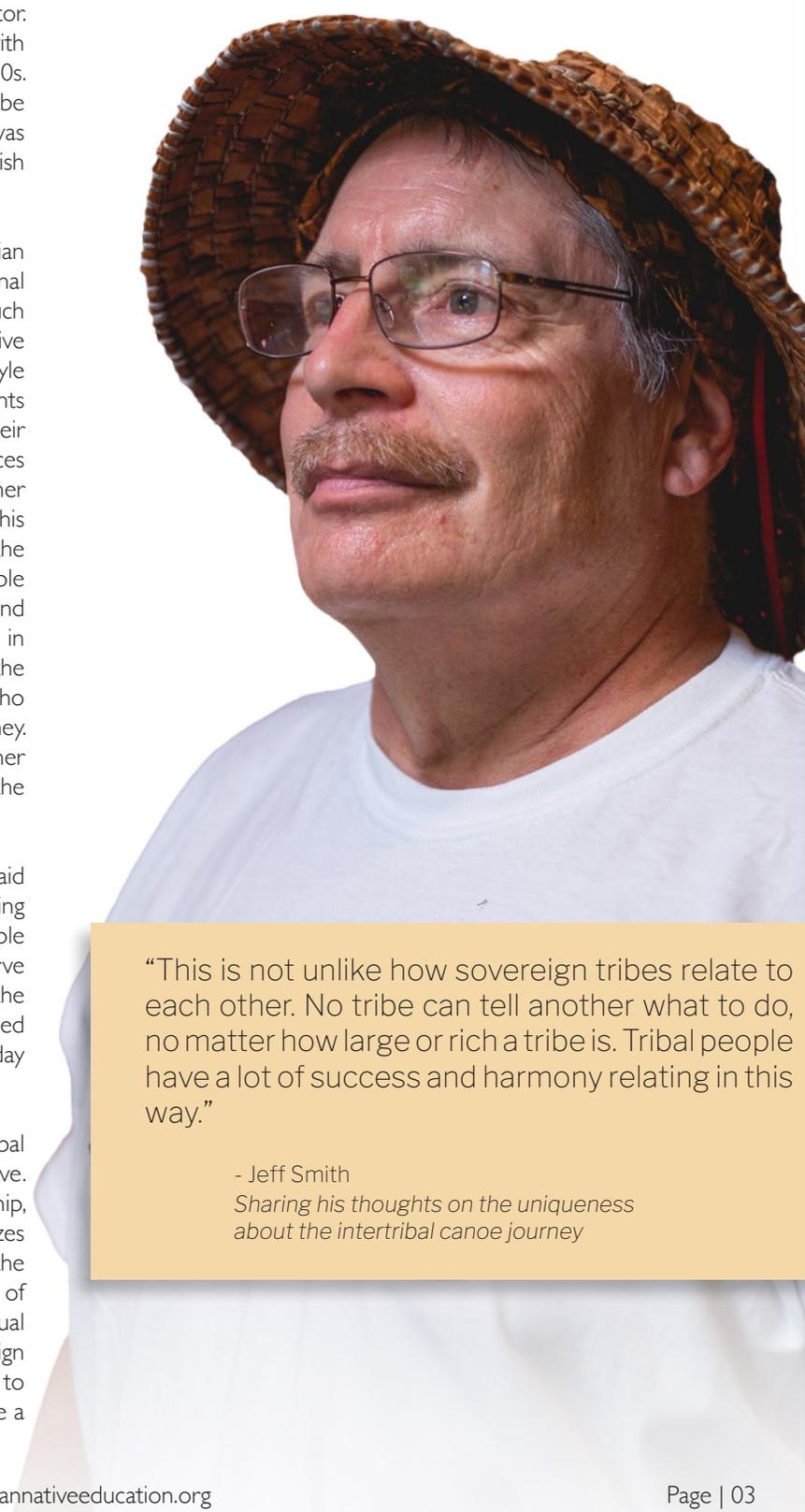
After Working more than 30 years in, for, and with Native communities Jeff Smith (Makah) is retiring. Jeff has been a friend of the UNEA since its inception having known the Wilson family since Sarah Sense-Wilson and her family since Sarah was in high school. He started his work in the Native community in 1989 as UW School of Social Work graduate student working in the Suquamish drug and alcohol program. He went on to intern and then work as a mental health counselor for the Quinault Indian nation.

He began working for American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1993 as the Northwest Indian Program Director. AFSC is a Quaker peace and social justice organization with a legacy of supporting Native communities since the 1950s. His first major project was working with the Skokomish tribe in their fight against Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU). TPU was diverting 96% of the flow of the north fork of the Skokomish river into pipes to generate electricity

Jeff became interested in shifting the focus of the AFSC Indian Program's to help develop leadership and organizational capacity using progressive methods and philosophies such as grassroots community organizing. He noticed that Native communities were adversely affected by the neo-colonial style of the federal government's relationship with tribal governments and that community members were disempowered by their expectation that their tribe would provide all kinds of services that would normally be provided by civil society in other communities. While looking for a countervailing power to this neo-colonial paradigm he found that others had identified the intertribal canoe journey as a vehicle to help mobilize people to create positive change for themselves, their families, and their communities. He went on his first full canoe journey in 1996 and decided to devote his life to being a part of the canoe journey. AFSC enabled him to be the only person who was paid year round to work on the overall canoe journey. He has worked on the journey for 25 years. He and the other early pioneers of the canoe journey have been proud how the canoe journey has grown.

Asked to give a brief overview of the canoe journey he said that it is an annual journey of up to 100 canoes traveling hundreds of miles for weeks at a time. Around 4,000 people travel with the canoes. Many never get on the canoe but serve as ground crew. The goal is simple and concrete: reach the same place at the same time by canoe. It is explicitly designed to be drug and alcohol-free. The journey ends with a 4-7 day celebration hosted by one or more tribal communities.

Asked what he thought was unique about the intertribal canoe journey, he said it is notable for what it does not have. "The intertribal canoe journey itself has no formal leadership, organization, hierarchy or funding. Each canoe family organizes itself, usually with some sort of hierarchy, even it is only the skipper [captain] of the canoe. But each canoe, or group of canoes on the canoe journey, has the opportunity to be equal with any other canoe family. This is not unlike how sovereign tribes relate to each other. No tribe can tell another what to do, no matter how large or rich a tribe is. Tribal people have a lot of success and harmony relating in this way."



"This is not unlike how sovereign tribes relate to each other. No tribe can tell another what to do, no matter how large or rich a tribe is. Tribal people have a lot of success and harmony relating in this way."

- Jeff Smith

Sharing his thoughts on the uniqueness about the intertribal canoe journey



Other areas that Jeff worked in included environmental justice, anti-racism, and gender justice. Jeff served on various boards, including seven years on the United Indians of All Tribes Board, four as Chair of the Board. He held the post of Interim Executive Director of United Indians for seven months in 2011.

He retired from AFSC in 2017 and helped found the Nakani Native Program. Nakani is a peace and social justice organization. He served as founding Executive Director until September of 2021.

Asked what he would like to share with UNEA students he said "UNEA students are fortunate to be involved with community-based organizations such as UNEA. Not only do students get to be with other Native youth, they can experience being in the Native community with people of all ages. I remember that I was very happy in multi-generational settings, such as church picnics, family reunions and potlatches. I find the multi-generational experience at UNEA activities to be very positive.

I hope that the UNEA experience encourages Native youth to look at careers in peace, social justice, and community organizing. I expect that many youth will go through life serving on boards and committees. I think that this will help our communities to experience physical, emotional, social, and intellectual health."

Asked what he is going to do now that he is retired, he said his two main goals are to spend more time with his elderly mother and deepen his meditation practice. He also looks forward to connecting with friends and relatives as the pandemic allows.

Jeff has been married to his wife Vishaka since 1998. They have a young adult son, Ravi.

Our communities are all the more healthier, stronger and connected by the quiet, steadfast, fair, honest, ethical and honorable work of community builder Jeff Smith. Wopila Jeff for your incredible multi-decade support of our urban Intertribal community.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH ELDER FLORENCE KAY FIDDLER

We are recognizing UNEA's original co-founder Elder Florence "Kay" Fiddler (Turtle Mt. Chippewa) as Volunteer of the Month. Kay assisted with UNEA's Toys for Tots with Charles Fiddler and Tina Norman. Kay enjoys this yearly "sundance" as a tribute to her Elder Virginia (Lafrombois) Baker "Aunt Ginny". Kay, along with family members; Charles Fiddler, Annabel and Jesus, not only helped apply for the Toys for Tots, she used her personal van to pick up gifts, store, sort/organize, deliver and distribute the items to our urban AI/AN community. Kay and Charles set up the most wonderful "toy store" at our UNEA Gift -Making event (North Seattle College), the toy store was a wonderland of fun games, toys, stuffed animals, legos and gifts for all ages. Both Kay and Charles welcomed kids and families into the wonderland with warm smiles, enthusiasm and holiday spirit. The "heavy lift" of facilitating this effort was extraordinary especially for an elder. We want to acknowledge her kindness and dedication and shout out to Charles Fiddler, Jesus and Annabel too. In the spirit of the Holiday season gift-giving we want to express huge "WOPILA" (Thank -you) to Elder Kay Fiddler and Charles, Jesus, and Annabel for their volunteerism, leadership and exemplary initiative in making a special x-mas for our children and families.



NWA AND UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BASKETBALL

By Coach Cheyne

Native Warrior Athletics program has given me so much insight on what community is. Community is important! It's hard enough that in life, we as Indigenous people have to FIGHT, and when I say FIGHT, I mean we have to work TWICE as hard, sometimes THREE to FOUR times harder to get to a level we deserve to be on. This program gives its Native youth the chance to explore and be part of those options, it gives them the opportunity to fight past those obstacles we face as Natives! As a Native Scholar, I experience these obstacles daily, but it's the support of programs like this that make it easier! Urban Native Education Alliance, Clear Sky and Native Warrior Athletics bring so much to Native youth!! And I get to be part of it. Basketball has been an outlet in my life growing up, and to be able to teach, coach and mentor youth in this very game is enjoyable. NWA was given the opportunity to scrimmage during halftime at the UW Husky Men's Basketball game this past Saturday. The kids did amazing! They had the crowd cheering and the feedback they got, lifted them up! Being a Coach is a different type of feeling when you hear and see the positive vibes it creates in your team. Thank you to the families that are always willing to help! We can't do this without y'all! Thank you to NWA for all that you do for our youth!



GIFTING BACK

By Gia Tran

On December 12th, 2021, UNEA held an event centering elders with joy and holiday cheer. Daybreak Star was decorated with a winter wonderland flair: Round tables draped in blue tablecloths and poinsettia centerpieces with silver snowflake garlands hanging from the tall wooden ceiling. We began with a song the Clear Sky interns learned for the event, titled the Crying Song- taught by Whaakadap Monger (Tulalip). Comedians Donovan Archambault Jr. (Fort Belknap) and MC Kasey Nicholson (Aaniih/Blackfeet) performed charmingly. Native Soul Cuisine also blessed us with a delicious meal consisting of buffalo and wild rice. Kasey Nicholson went above the stars as an MC. Throughout the event, names were drawn from a raffle to receive a special gift. The winners of the raffle walked up gracefully as Kasey announced their names and what they received. With the theme of gifting back, everyone went home with a beautiful gift bag and poinsettia. Much dedicated work went into making this all possible, it was very successful. A big thanks to all volunteers, Daybreak Star for the space, comedian performers and MC for the wonderful entertainment including chair of program Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala Lakota), Kateri Joe (Swinomish/Halalt/Board member of UNEA), Tina Norman (Blackfeet/Cultural Specialist), Chris Bishop (Admin), D'Andre Fisher (Equity Vice President NSC), and Clear Sky Interns.



STUDENT OF THE MONTH LAILANI BIG SPRING NORMAN

We are recognizing Ms. Lailani Big Spring Norman (Blackfeet Nation) as Clear Sky Student of the Month. Ms. Lailani has been a dedicated member of the UNEA Leadership / Internship for the past year and shows up for community events hosted by UNEA with enthusiasm, positivity and willingness to work. Ms. Lailani is a Junior attending Clear Sky Academy, Middle College/Running Start and Cheers at Chief Sealth. Ms. Lailani has recently entered into an elite category of competition joining the Ms. Washington Teen USA Pageant 2022. The pageant competition will take place on Saturday February 5th at the Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center 400 S. Second St. Renton, WA 98057. Ms. Lailani serves as a great example to our community for her ability to step into an arena where Indigenous representation often absent and her talent as a traditional dancer, singer, and practitioner of traditional lifeways. We are all very proud of her achievements and stand with her in her pageant journey. We know Lailani will find success in anything she puts her mind to given what we have already witnessed with her determination and leadership. Congratulations Lailani in representing not only Miss Teen West Seattle but also in beautifully, brilliantly, eloquently representing Indigenous youth and community.

USHERING IN NEW BEGINNINGS BY SARAH SENSE-WILSON (OGLALA)

We are delighted to be starting the New Year off with an exhilarating breath of fresh air and a deliberately slow exhale releasing negative toxicity marked by struggles, strife and challenges. As a grassroots non-profit we are always evolving and responding to emerging circumstances. 20 months of covid and the exhausting impact of interlocking systems of oppression, dysfunction and social injustice play a part in our community as a collective feeling exhausted, burned- out, discouraged with every new wave of covid infections. Despite the uncertainty of day -to -day life, UNEA keeps constant. While various staff, contractors or volunteers join, leave, and sometimes return- back, it is our commitment to remain a reliable touchstone for community. Our UNEA leadership team continues to stay the course despite the winds of change. I am encouraged by the strength of adaptability within our organization to learn new skills, lessons and assignments while steering with a steady grip and focused eye on what is most important- Our Youth. UNEA will be pausing on our Clear Sky Academy for second semester with a plan to resume next Fall 2022. Our CSA evaluation process and strategic planning will guide us in advancing our Charter School application process. The Charter School design team is working together to develop a strong application for a Native focused Charter High School 2024. We are working towards the goal of completing the application with the help and support and input from all stakeholders. We will be posting announcements for our quarterly community engagement sessions as soon as we confirm our dates. Community input is highly valued and important in our design of our community driven Native focused Charter school effort. So please stay tuned for pending dates on our facebook and email listserv. And as always our organization is open for feedback, volunteers and support throughout the year. Wishing everyone good health, happiness, joy, and time for family, friends 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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