



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

NOVEMBER 2022 ISSUE

UNEA | P.O. Box 25142 Seattle, WA 98165

E: sswilson@urbannativeeducation.org

Ph: 206-941-0338



WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT ON EDUCATION

By Lane Ryan (Assiniboine/Oglala)

I was raised by my parents in West Seattle who both have college degrees. Most of the people around here have the expectation to have their kids pursue a higher education, which is a resource that my birth parents didn't have on the reservation. What inspires me is that I'm in a position that I can help my plains communities because I can use the access I have in the city and bring those skills to the reservation and make that knowledge beneficial for my relatives. I'm not sure exactly what that looks like yet, but I am really interested into going into women's health so that I can be a voice, advocate, and ally for native women in an area they often get neglected.

I can acknowledge that I grew up in a privileged situation where I don't have financial limitations to worry about at school and I have personal support from family and friends - but I feel I don't have a lot of support from my school because of the very small number of native students/ teachers and frankly the lack of interest my school has for native inclusion. As it is it feels extremely isolating being such a minority, that I can imagine it would be a lot harder without the resources I have. I often feel like my native voice isn't being heard, and that part of me is invisible. That when I try and bring indigeneity to my school, they brush it off and don't give me the support I need to bring more visibility and recognition of the indigenous peoples of this land. However, the support from Lauren as a Seattle Public Schools Native Education counselor, her visits once a month provide so much help and community for me, because through her she introduced me to NAYLA (Native American Youth Leadership Academy) and she showed me Clear Sky which is a community organization at North Seattle College where I now go to multiple times a week and take traditional native art classes and now intern- through Clear Sky I have found my community and sense of belonging as an urban native growing up in Seattle.

The history curriculum is troubling, Indigenous people are an afterthought in textbooks- Last year I took AP US History and we basically learned that once the British came to "New World" they came in, took our resources, pushed us west and then killed us off. While I appreciate the honesty of the genocide, we didn't learn about any of the prosperity or resilience our ancestors which they still exemplified today. It was taught as if we aren't still here. There should be more integration of indigeneity in schools especially in history classes, even if there isn't a high percentage of native students, because we are on native land. And it will only benefit white and Indigenous students to have a deeper and wider understanding of native culture. I also understand that staffing is different but staffing regionally to provide support for native students would be useful and it would give them access points. Additionally, there needs to be more collaboration between schools and community-based organizations like Clear Sky Academy because they support cultural/social and educational needs of students in urban settings. We may have grown up in the city and not on the reservation but, we still need to feel part of a native community, and that our voices are heard.



CSA Drum Making

By Savanna (Blackfeet)

I experienced my first traditional hand drum making lesson with instructor Jeremy Garritson (Northern Arapaho). It was a lot of fun! I learned the drum making process required teamwork, and everyone helped one another "make one help one" was our motto. Helping my CSA peers with their drums was especially meaningful because we gained greater connections and bonds with one another in our shared experience.

The final results of our hand drums was impressive, and I was surprised at how professional they all looked. I observed my hand drums tight strings, and the elk hid dried nicely to form a smooth cover. When all was said and done my drum sounded great. The following CSA class lesson brought us all together to share in drumming and singing with Storyteller Gene Tagaban. We all perfectly harmonized with every beat of our hand drums. The drum beat, sound, and vibration with every rhythmic beat was powerful feeling reverberating throughout our classroom.

I also learned to respect the drum. Some protocols and rules for caretaking our drums include; not putting it down on the ground, and not putting it face downwards, and instead put it down on the side and to never drop the drums as well. I learned importance of teamwork, respect, and about responsibility, taking action, and caring for the drum like it is a baby. Do not mishandle or neglect the drum, it must be treated with respect.

I really enjoyed the lesson, I am so thankful for this opportunity and I look forward to future Native American cultural lessons.



The meaning of our Ribbon Skirts

by Jazell Jenkins

I think we can all agree that when we wear our ribbon skirts bring us some sense of empowerment. We're treated with more respect by others, while we feel more confident and grounded. Milwaukee Public Museum found that ribbon work dates back to 1802 on a Menominee wedding dresses. These typically long colorful skirts decorated with silky ribbon around the outside of the skirts, have a spiritual significance as they are often worn in ceremony. Ribbon skirts have a meaning of strength and connection to the earth.

"Have you noticed that when you wear your skirt you feel better?" Alice Oligario our teacher at UNEA's Ribbon Skirt/Shirt making told me, I agreed I told her It makes me feel powerful and confident in myself, as if I'm a successful business woman in her suit and heels. I told Alice about the multi-cultural day at my school, Ingraham last year and how I wore my black ribbon skirt I had made with her teachings the previous year as my traditional clothing to present at our assembly about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & People. The feeling of wearing that skirt that I had made with my own hands, put in my time and effort to stitch and put together, and made with my Native elders sacred teachings at UNEA was so much more meaningful than if I had bought this skirt. Alice also mentioned to me that she owns 26 ribbon skirts, which I thought was quite impressive and inspiring, I hope that I'll get to that many one day. I have 5 currently, 3 that I've made with Alice but I have to say my most recent one that I've created at UNEA for our 2022 Washington D.C. trip (happening in November) is my favorite inspired by a silk ribbon skirt I was gifted at UNEA's 2022 Graduation ceremony made by Igmutanka Ihanble and Jamie Okuma 8th generations wool blanket. This Ribbon Skirt is black satin material with the striking "old time colors" from the wool blanket by 8th Gen that my family owns. I'm so excited to wear this beautiful ribbon skirt to Washington D.C., events, and ceremonies. Bless Alice and Tonya for their sacred valuable knowledge and time.



MY FIRST DRUM

By Landon Brewer (Flathead-Shawnee-Spokane-Colville-Cree)

On Sunday October 16th Clear Sky Academy scholars learned how to make hand drums by Jeremy Garrickson (Northern Arapaho). Jeremy works on behalf of Unkitiwa, another Indian ran non-profit organization located in Kent.

The drum making process started with our elk hide's pre -soaked in water. Then we took thin long strands of hide and wrapped them around metal poles and going back forth holding an end in each hand, we evenly thin out the strings. We had to make 8 holes in the hid cover to evenly spread out around the edge of the circular surface of the drum. The next step was taking the long strands of hide, and putting the ends through two corresponding holes after you find the center of the drum. The next part requires two people, one holding the tension on the rope, and another creating a pattern of twisting, finding another set of corresponding holes, putting the ends through and pulling tight. And finally, we made the handle by rapping the hide around itself. After a couple days of drying the drums we were ready to drum. I really appreciate learning the process, it was an amazing experience, going from raw elk hide into a hand drum felt very rewarding.

When traditions are shared, it keeps culture alive. Jeremy shared with us that he had been incarcerated for much of his life starting at very young age, but getting more involved in the Native community was life changing and transformative for him. This story is a similar story to many other Indians I know. It is important that when we are given the gift of being taught our traditional practices, that we take that information and pass it on. We need to cherish these teachings, learning culture and traditions keeps young people on the right path from the start.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY OR COLUMBUS DAY?

By Evita Fuentes

Historically most Native American Tribes were matriarchal, believing that women were the wiser ones, but the European settlers took that as a direct threat. European patriarchy dominated Western society; one aspect of patriarchy is believing a women's place was in the home. Indigenous and European ideological difference led to more conflict. Europeans believed women were possessions and property of their fathers or husbands. Women were not included in decision- making, land ownership, or autonomy. In contrast, in most tribal societies women hold positions of leadership, council and considered sacred, and honored for their ability to be life givers.

When Christopher Columbus arrived, he brought death, destruction and devastation to the Native Americans. Upon contact, he spread diseases, which the Native Americans didn't have the immunity which resulted in a population decimation greater than the European black plague (estimated deaths are in the thousands). Christopher Columbus came to the Americas thinking it was India and started calling Native Americans "Indians", but Christopher Columbus was searching for different spices until he saw Natives with gold jewelry. He was greedy and used inhumane methods for exploiting Natives for purpose of extracting gold. Some journals from the era share about Christopher Columbus cutting off the arms of Natives, killing babies, allowing dogs to maul children. Senseless murdering of innocent and vulnerable people.

It is my opinion Indigenous Peoples Day should replace Columbus Day. Our society should discontinue erroneous celebration of an individual who was directly responsible for genocide, inflicting pain, suffering, and torture on thousands of Native Americans. We should not just add Indigenous Peoples' Day to the calendar alongside with Columbus Day, we should stop celebrating Columbus Day altogether.



Winter Holiday Gift Making

Sunday Dec 18th 1:00-4:00pm

**Toy
giveaway** **Gift
Making**

North Seattle College

Rm cc1161

Free Event

206-941-0338

FOOD

UNEA/NSC

Photo

booth

North Seattle College/ UNEA

JAMBOREE

DECEMBER 28/29 & 30
NWA BOOTH

Coaches Dietrich Rios & George Hill

Training/Wellness Coaching

\$200.00 Entry fee per team or \$25.00 per Individual

206-941-0338

markseattl3@aol.com

Native youth ages

4-6

7-9

10-12

and

13-14

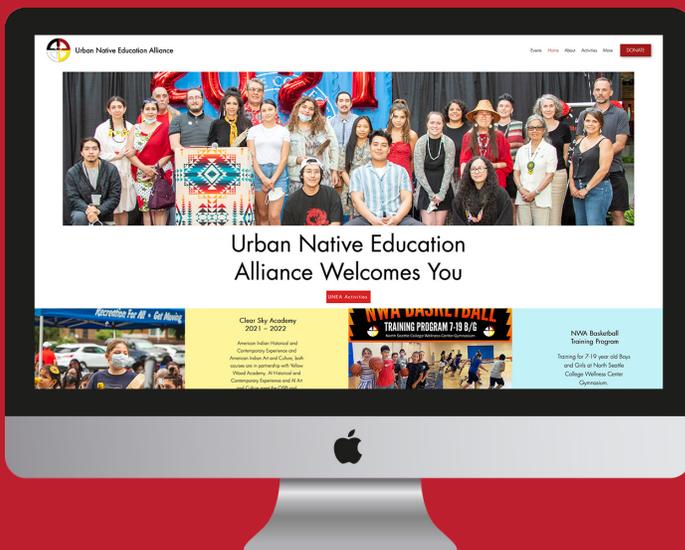
About Us!

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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NATIVE WARRIOR BASKETBALL

NWA is planning to host a Jamboree combined with skills clinic with featured coaches Dietreich Rios-Nicolaisen (Ojibwa) and George Hill (Suquamish). The jamboree will be for ages ranging from 4-14 and all skill levels invited to join in as an individual or part of a group or team. We want youth to experience the fun of competing in real games while also learning from hands on coaches to improve their level of play. The event will be held at North Seattle Wellness Center on Dec 28th, 29th and 30th. Entry fee for teams is \$200.00 or individually \$25.00. The invitation for teams to participate in our Jamboree in hopes to draw in youth from local tribal communities and within Seattle urban Native region. We invite all Native youth interested in gaining basketball experience while enjoying the company of other tribal youth. Please contact us if you are interested in registering your athlete.