



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

“Thriving Through Education, Culture and Tradition”

January | 2021

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, fundraisers, community organizing, and leadership building projects.
- **Basketball Program.**
- **Student Service Learning.**

Table of Contents:

- Pg. VV1 Family Wellness in Era of Covid Student Articles
- Pg. 2 Student Voice and Testimonials
- Pg. 3 CSA and Internship
- Pg. 4 Student of the Month and Blanchet Article
- Pg. 5 UNEA Corner/ NSC voice/ Family Wellness
- Pg. 6 Elders Project articles

Native Family Wellness in the Era of COVID-19 By Anabel L.

On December 20th I attended the virtual community event 'Native

Covid. It's been a hard year for everyone and this special event really helped clarify that it's ok to feel angry, sad, and crazy during this time.

break and breathe from time to time. I learned that it's good to just sit and talk with family, but also lean away from others if I get overwhelmed.

I realized that life is not easy and it shouldn't be, because then you won't learn from the mistakes you make.

I also learned that sometimes I should look inside myself and reach back into my cultural history and teachings because I may find something there that will help me through the trouble I find myself in.



Wellness in the Era of Covid-19'. Some of my takeaways from the virtual event were; learning to appreciate the little moments more and hang out with family more often, and to be aware about how others are feeling.

As well as always being cautious and careful of my surroundings. It was also nice being able to hear other people talk about their experiences in life and most importantly,

The panelists helped to reassure me and made sure I knew that it's a weird time, and it's ok to not feel right sometimes. I learned that sometimes I need to just take a



Indigenous and BLM Allyship By Joseph and Julius

According to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, the two racial groups that are most likely to be killed by the police are Native Americans and African Americans. Black Lives Matter's (BLM) task is to raise awareness to racial disparities, and to collectively work against the status quo. When it comes to Indigenous folk, we are in the movement with them, because of the many similarities we experience as Indigenous people and African Americans with police brutality.

Indigenous allyship means protesting and actively defending the lives of the people dealing with these injustices. So, when BLM elevates the collective injustices related directly to the lives that were taken by police, we are sadly reminded that our lives (Indigenous people) are meaningless to police. A painful unrelenting reminder of our value in a colonizer society and we will be reminded of the necessary determination to change the system we hate to exist in.

Davida Ingram, a Public Speaker, Activist, and Conceptual Artist, a staunch supporter of Patrisse Cullor's (co-founder of BLM) project on state violence called POWER. When asked what are ways we can help be a good ally, she fiercely exclaimed,

"by loving one another and knowing that our destinies are tied together, because only when turtle island can be repaired for the rapes, murders, tortures, kidnappings, and imprisonment that others have done and continue to do will all of turtle island be free".

She further states, "Indigenous people and African Americans can ally with one another by loving each other and accepting that our destinies are tied with each other. Loving each other looks like showing no hate towards one another and protecting and defending each other".

Roxanne White (Nez Perce), Native Activist pointed out Alaska native feather indirectly that "first and foremost nobody's gonna fight for us or speak for us or do what we need to do. We as Native people need to always remember we have our own battles, our own fights, and yes, we can work with other people, but we could never just believe that someone else is gonna take care of us like Uncle Sam or government and politicians, even tribal council leaders. I feel like we each must always know that we have to use our voice to always

protect those we love and the things we believe in because that's where change starts". A part of loving one another is taking care of each other in the problems we face. In order to take care of each other we need to also speak for

black community. If we form a great allyship, we can fight back properly to make the world more equal, the way it should be".

Indigenous and Black Allyship is not just a trend, fad or a social



ourselves on topics of race relations in America.

We need to keep in mind we will have our time, but now we need to ally with the Black people and show unity and solidarity wherever we have common ground".

Roxanne further explains, "Ways we as Indigenous people can be a good ally are by listening to both sides of the story, by checking our own biases, participating in protests and awareness projects, donating to black owned businesses, and providing emotional support to the

movement moment, because history time and time again illustrates that social justice movements wax and wane, but if we form healthy unity and solid relationships with our Black relatives, we will build generational connections for change at many levels; personal, and as a society.

Allyship requires trust, respect, understanding of differences and willingness to grow together as we evolve for a better future for ourselves, for our families, community and society as a whole.



Clear Sky Academy Student Spotlight!

My name is Ty'teanna S. My tribes are Nottoway and Tuscorara nation. I am 15 years old. I attend Decatur high school.

I enjoy cooking and photography. Some of my cultural interests are Powwows, beading jewelry, and traditional food. I am a domestic violence survivor

and my hope for my future is to become a domestic violence lawyer.

I am new to Washington State and my auntie introduced me to UNEA and told me about a wonderful opportunity for QPR training and Indigenous social studies course.

I told her right away I wanted to sign-up. I was so excited to be accepted into the program.

I have learned so much about myself and my culture through elders, guest speakers, writing prompts, and the amazing staff.



Clear Sky Internship- Enrichment Opportunities

Our Interns continue to amaze me with their creative brilliance and energetic enthusiasm fueled by critical conversations about education and possibilities. Our youth have expansive intellects, thirsty curiosity and vibrant visions of the future on their terms and under their guidance.

Our youth have provided consecutive testimony to the SPS Board of Directors over the course of the past 10 weeks. Not many other youth groups have the tenacity, grit and commitment needed to call in, draft and practice and execute a total of 5 -two minute testimonies.

The range of issues and concerns students identified included; expanding

services provided by Indian Ed, Curriculum on sexual assault, violence and harassment, Integrating Native experience and support throughout all schools and increasing resources for covid impacted Native families, Leadership and specific

qualities our youth value in district staff and leadership, and improving partnerships with Native based services in Seattle.

Our students represented their peers, families, and community with impressive poise,

respect, and with cultural integrity. Our youth empower themselves by way of raising their voice to institutional power and with unwavering conviction to improve our collective educational experiences within a public school educational system, a system originally designed to exclude our voice, deny our identity and erase our past and define our future.

From my vantage point I see our youth as the beacons for change. Our youth serve to inspire, motivate and ignite change, change is coming and with the upside down, twists and turns of life during covid, I know our youth will be equipped to self-determine and fulfill their vision of what Indian Education can be, should be and will be.





Update from Bishop Blanchet High School's Legacy Council By Valerie Heckel

In November, as a part of Bishop Blanchet High School's Native Heritage week and effort to further educate the student body on Native history, students learned a little bit about local Native art and its history.

Artist Louie Gong, the founder of the Seattle-based brand Eighth Generation, put together an informative video for our students about his story and Coast Salish art. He talked about how much of the art that is viewed as traditional Seattle Native art actually isn't specific to the Seattle area and should be defined as Coast Salish, "representing a diversity

of communities in a larger geographical area". Coast Salish art features elements such as ovoids, crescents, and trigons.

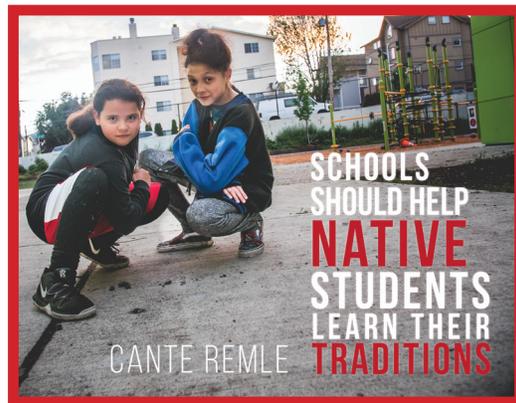
Gong takes these elements and includes them in his artwork in meaningful ways. It took a considerable amount of time for Coast Salish art to experience a resurgence due to "Coast Salish art and Coast Salish people being made illegal at different times in the Seattle area".

Some artists within the Native community have to learn what Coast Salish art really is because they were prevented from celebrating

their own culture for so long. Gong said that it took him some time to learn the specific characteristics that define Coast Salish art and make it meaningful.

In addition to this, the Legacy Council has been working on finding other ways to educate our community on Native history and culture. One way that we are doing that is by informing the students about heroes and sheroe's within the Native community.

On December 16th, we



made an announcement in recognition of Vi Hilbert, a linguist from Upper Skagit who passed away in 2008. She brought back the Lushootseed language of her people, and has been honored for her work in many ways. Hilbert truly cared about holding on to culture and tradition through the sharing of stories and songs, and her legacy will live on thanks to her massive influence in this area.

Clear Sky Student of the Month By Jazell J.

my general life goals, which include becoming an advocate for Native victims of sexual violence. Through my internship with UNEA, I was given an opportunity to voice issues and solutions regarding sexual assault and harassment within the school system and environment at the Seattle Public Schools' Board meeting. In my public testimony I expressed the need for the upcoming new superintendent to ensure consent is largely taught in FLASH (standing for Family Life and Sexual Health).

I demanded schools raise awareness about sexual harassment and abuse so that students can identify it and to prevent these acts occurring

against others. Speaking up about this in the testimony gave me clarity that sexual violence is something I want to continue to actively stand up against.

During my call experiences in the Elder's Care project I've gotten to talk with an amazing tribal woman who has inspired me with her stories of activism that she has done within our own community and I look forward to every call with her while we continue to build our connection. While creating gifts and cards for Elder's I was able to utilize my creative and artistic skills to provide care for Elders in our community.

A difficult experience

within the internship, which has actually been positive for me, was getting out of my comfort zone with public speaking, which I've struggled with for my whole life. With the internship I've gotten many opportunities, including the public testimony and reading the Land Acknowledgement at our Native Wellness event to challenge my own comfort zone.

Within the internship I've felt appreciated and accepted for who I am and been given the sense of community that I want to be a part of for a lifetime with UNEA. I have gotten to a better place in my life, with the support and love from the community of UNEA.



My name is Jazell and I am a student at Ingraham High School and an intern with UNEA. I'm a registered descendent from my mother as a part of the Aleut tribe in Alaska.

As an Intern with UNEA, I have gotten the support I've needed to work towards my goals in school as well as





SPS Public Testimonial December 16th, 2020 By Sarah Sense- Wilson

I want to take a moment to wish Denise Juneau the best in her next chapter.

We are at a pivotal point in time, a crossroads with our public education system. New beginnings is possible if you all are willing to have a shared vision with our Seattle community. Members of our community have recommendations to usher in new leadership.

The following recommendations are in response to both predicted budget short falls and covid pandemic.

1. Overhaul the Strategic Plan
2. Start planning Healing gatherings and restorative justice sessions with

students, parents and community.

3. Negotiate an MOA with our 'Multi-cultural Community Accountability Coalition'
4. External Audits of Title I, Title 6
5. Overhaul the Special Education Dept. We need an administration dedicated to providing services to IEP/504 students.

It is well documented the SPED dept. operates and functions to reject, postpone, and defend the administrators and with no effective mechanism for holding staff accountable.

6. Eliminate the Position of Superintendent Advisor

7. Eliminate the position of Board Liaison.

Dedicate those funds towards compensation to youth, parents and community members who donate their expertise towards SPS committee participation.

8. Cap the Superintendent Salary at 150,000.00 and eliminate Superintendent

'Bonuses'.

9. Community Participation in decision making for the new Superintendent hire. Do not waste public dollars to contract with a 'talent Search'.

Thank you to board members WHOM CHOSE TO STAND ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY.



The Native Family Wellness in The Era of Covid-19 By Aujanique S.

All we know as of this moment is that there are vaccines coming out and there are questions being asked about; how can we trust the vaccines, What steps can we take to help our children, How can we mentally and physically stay healthy and positive through this unfortunate time. Last night there were special guests that helped us answer those few questions.

The message I received from the speakers is we are in this together and we need to stay strong through this difficult time. There are different ways people are affected whether it's by poverty, depression, and especially sickness. We all have things we as Indians see this as we need to stick together, help out

one another, because the government isn't going to help us with our poverty nor our right to live. It's just a sense of we have each other and that's what matters because we are stronger together than standing alone.

A question was asked whether the Indian Health Board was giving out Vaccines or not. Some clarification I received from the Event is that there are going to be 500 Vaccines ordered to the Seattle Indian Health Board on the 28th of December. The Health Board decided to use Moderna Vaccine because they believe it has a longer life span of 10 days.

A question added on even if we can trust the vaccine.

We know the government can't be trusted, we know they are doing this for money. If you decide to take it, remember to take precautions and be safe . We will support you at all times because support is a sign of faith and healing.

A few Protocols that can be effective during this Covid-19 that can benefit me is to do self -care and find things that make me happy.

Especially caring for your children and finding ways they can stay happy because you may see that they are putting a smile but that's just a smile. Check in on our children, see how they are handing the school work, how they feel, and ask them about some goals they have for themselves. It also doesn't hurt to smudge,

pray, and do something that completes your happiness like feeding your soul.

I want to thank Kyle Schierbeck, Hunter Schierbeck, Ashley Schmidt (health professional), Jennifer Fuentes (therapist/mental health counselor), Jerrilyn Hamley (Elder with first hand experience with COVID), Esther Lucero (works for the Seattle Indian Health Board) for being our special guest and helping our family and friends with giving us a understanding that we are strong people and we are meant to heal each other.

I want to also give a special thanks to the youth leaders and committee members for putting this together!





Elders Care Project: A Critical and Inspiring Project

By Kayla Harstad

What led me to be a part of the Elders Care Project was how great the Elder's community is. Being one small part of it is a unique opportunity for me to create a strong bond and enduring relationship with Elders in the community.

My experience with the Elders Care Project so far is great and inspiring. The Elders I am paired with are people who I look up to as mentors and trusted adults. I've noticed that as the Elders' and I relationships are becoming stronger, I'm getting to see the funny or interesting side to them. I love hearing about the stories

of the past or how they are doing in light of current events. Hearing about how their families are doing or how work is going for them is like talking to another friend or family member.

I enjoy this special project because even if it's only reaching out once or twice a week, it still means something and I treasure the experience. I believe this project is important and valuable because, given the time that we are in (worldwide pandemic), it is more important now than ever to check in on loved ones, friends, and family.

A project like this is

valuable because even a phone call or text can make their day and make them feel cared for and not forgotten.

I have become inspired by them and I get to develop a cultural connection that is

special, lasting and personal, Elder's Project has opened my eyes to the importance of relationships, covid pandemic has taught me some vital cultural lessons.

Updates on Elder's Project



Our Elder's project is finally gaining momentum with all youth successfully paired with Elders and check-in calls happening each week. Youth participants have been exceptionally proactive with meeting their goals to reach out and to convene monthly with Elders Project Coordinator Kateri Joe.

The monthly convening is an opportunity for youth to share their challenges and problem solve as a group. Youth receive tips and suggestions and learn more cultural considerations with

lively conversations on cultural differences and nuances. Last session youth were instructed to find out what gift card and winter coat sizes.

A cadre of amazing volunteers assisted UNEA with distribution of Elder's Gift packages. Each Gift Package contained; \$100.00 gift card, Winter Coat, personalized Holiday Card, Smoked Salmon, Native made Soap/Lotion and other small items. We value the relationships we have with our elders and want to share our



love through gift sharing to spread kindness to each and every one of our Elders.

If you know of an elder in Seattle who is agreeable to participate by joining youth in weekly conversational check-ins and willingness to partake in occasional surveys, pics and

other activities as we plan for life beyond covid, contact us at markseattl3@aol.com. We are working on a more formal enrollment application to further outline the mutual commitment involved in Elder's Project.

