



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

MARCH 2023 ISSUE

UNEA | P.O. Box 25142 Seattle, WA 98165 UNEAchair@gmail.com 206-941-0338

UNEA SWEET 16 CELEBRATION

BY: LANDYN ZYSKOWSKI

I am a newly enrolled intern with Urban Native Education Alliance (UNEA), and this was my very first annual UNEA celebration that I was able to attend. I was very curious how the night's activities would unfold.

The main point of the event was twofold. First, to celebrate the 16th anniversary of UNEA and the support they provide for the indigenous community of Seattle and the greater area, specifically providing native youth a safe space to have a voice. Secondly, an opportunity for Sarah Sense Wilson and her interns to come together to honor and thank many different members of our community for their support and participation in creating a healthier environment for people of color.

As a UNEA intern, I had the opportunity along with my fellow interns to thank and hand out gifts to the honored guests. I also got the opportunity to stuff my face with amazing food and beverages. In addition, I had a role in setting up the room for the celebration.

What I found personally inspiring about the event was the violinist Swil Kanim, from the Lummi Nation, who shared a song he wrote called "Skipping Across The Parking Lot". This song was a song that Swil Kanim personally wrote about a happy time in his life. After the celebration I got to meet him, and we talked about music since we're both musicians, and I asked him if he would like to write a song together sometime, and he share with me that he has a studio in Bellingham that we could meet up at some time and record at.

Another thing that caught my eye is the print that one of our creative and artistic 2nd year interns, Jazell, personally made for all the honored guests. Another thing that I thought was pretty neat, was the beaded hat that Kateri Joe (an Intern Graduate) made for D'Andre Fisher.

All in all, as the celebration came to an end, and I saw all these kind people and actions. It made me realize that people like me do have people that support our cause.



ELDER TEACHINGS AND SONGS

BY: KAYLA HARSTAD (TURTLE MT. CHIPPEWA)

On the past couple of Thursdays, UNEA has had the opportunity and privilege to have a few of our elders come to Clear Sky. We have had our elders Mathew Warbonnet Jr. (Lakota) and Lisa Monger (Assiniboine) come and teach us a few songs. Before we traveled to Washington D.C we learned a song from Matt called "The War Party" song that we would sing on Veterans day to honor our Native American Veterans. Since we've been back, we have been learning a couple of new songs like "The Four Elements," taught to us by Lisa, and a prayer song, called "The Black Hills," taught to us by Mathew.

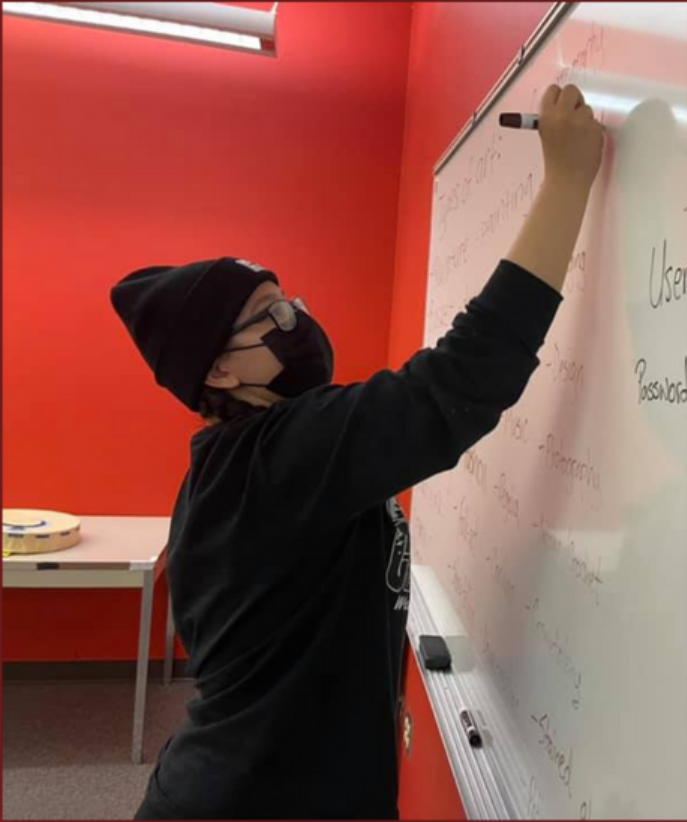
The more I receive the teachings from my elders, the more I understand the privilege we get from even hearing stories and songs from them. As youth, we should be immersing ourselves in all of the knowledge and wisdom they have so we can have these teachings in our life for the future. Instead of only learning the songs and the history behind them, we should be feeling the songs and singing from our hearts. Every time we sing a certain song, it should be with a purpose and a feeling that resonates with us. I've learned that when I am feeling down or upset singing has been an outlet for me to be grounded and I always think about why I am singing. I find myself singing the songs that I have been taught everywhere.

The older I get, the more I realize that we owe more respect to our elders. They don't have to teach us, and they don't have to pass down the wisdom that they hold, but they chose to. They want to be with us in the community. The smiles and laughs I receive from Matt when he makes a joke are what I look forward to every time I go to Clear Sky. Anytime I know when Matt is coming back to Clear Sky, I look forward to him saying, "I get cuter and cuter every day," because seeing him smile and laugh is the medicine that I need.



REASONS WHY CLEAR SKY IS SO GREAT

BY: EVITA FUENTES



Clear Sky is a Native Non-profit organization that has been empowering kids for 16 years now. Their mission is to provide support, mentorship, and educational opportunities for youth in their community, they offer a range of programs, from internships that teach leadership skills to tutoring for students who need extra academic support.

One of Clear Sky's signature programs is their youth leadership internships. Through these programs, interns learn valuable leadership skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. They also gain a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work, which helps build their self-esteem and confidence.

Clear Sky also provides tutoring for students who need academic support. They understand that not every student learns at the same pace, and that some need extra help to achieve their academic goals. Their dedicated tutors work one-on-one with students to help them understand difficult concepts and develop effective study habits.

In addition to internships and tutoring, Clear Sky also offers free dinner. They understand that some families in the community might struggle to put food on the table, and they believe that no one should go hungry. By providing free dinners to those in need, Clear Sky is helping to create a stronger, more resilient community.

Clear Sky also believes in giving back to the community. By working together to make their community a better place, Clear Sky is teaching young people the importance of civic engagement and social responsibility.

In conclusion, Clear Sky is a wonderful nonprofit organization that has been doing important work in their community for 16 years. Their programs are designed to empower young people, provide academic support, and promote community engagement. By focusing on leadership, education, and community service, Clear Sky is helping to build a brighter future for all.



'THIS HISTORY ISN'T FORGOTTEN; IT HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD'

BY: JAZELL JENKINS

Matthew Warbonnet is a Sicangu Lakota man known for his undoubtable resilience and kind heart. He is a man of great strength and wisdom; you are lucky to know him and be in his presence. Matthew is a Native elder that is taking on the important role of teaching the youth sacred knowledge of our stories, traditions, and songs that I hold close to my heart. I have learned countless lessons from Matthew, but I'd like to share the ones I think about and try to incorporate into my daily life.

Matthew has joined us at Clear Sky throughout the past few months teaching drumming and singing to any who wants to learn his songs. He has gifted the community the Lakota War Party song, the Black Hills Prayer Song, and the Lakota Are Charging songs. The Black Hills Prayer Song in particular, Matthew says is about "the center of the universe, the heart of everything." The words to the song sing from the sacred Black Hills, I'm with all my relatives, Grandfather Grandfather, have pity on us. A prayer song that speaks to the center of everything to have pity on us another way of asking for forgiveness for we know little. This song holds a sense of hope, that we are not looked down upon for all our wrongdoings and for not always knowing what to do, that we aren't seen for just our mistakes but for the growth we make daily striving to thrive and not just survive as Indigenous peoples. I thank Matthew for these songs, as the Clear Sky youth can sing to others.

Recently Matthew spoke at the Hibulb Cultural Center about his eight-year experience of being forced into the St. Francis boarding school in South Dakota for Native American children and demanding apologies from the churches involved. At a young age, he was taken away from his family to spend 9 months of the year separated from his family in a place of abuse, neglect, and restriction from any cultural practices. These tortuous institutions were meant to hold Native children up through the 12th grade, force European colonization, and deplete all tribal culture.

The amount of abuse that he and his classmates endured was astronomical and dehumanizing. Not long after Matthew said "this history isn't forgotten; it has never been told" this stuck with me because, throughout my entire life, I grew up never being told about these boarding schools for Native children until last year. Matthew with the strength he cares is doing this work to share this untold part of our people as he is still healing from it. Matthew shared how the people that survived boarding schools never truly walked away from it all, the trauma still lived long after. He spoke of the anger and helplessness that the survivors felt, never feeling any sense of peace. But now Matthew wants only asks for one simple request, although if done will be very impactful and important for those who survived and are facing intergenerational trauma.

"I want the churches to admit what they did to the children, and the cycle of abused they've caused."

It is imperative that the U.S. government and religious institutions open their records and histories and take the next step to make meaningful apologies and amends for their role in this history.

To create a better future for the generations after us, we must protect our elders. Building a safe space for our Native community to discuss our dark past and, ultimately, how we can move forward together. Generational trauma can stop with us.

PROCLAMATION – MMIP AWARENESS DAY

A PROCLAMATION of Seattle School District No. 1, King County Seattle, Washington declares May 5TH as Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day (MMIP). MMIP Awareness Day is an opportunity to raise awareness to the national and local crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People.

WHEREAS, On May 2022 President Joe Biden proclaimed May 5th as a National Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day, a day for actions calling for justice; and



WHEREAS, Indigenous women, girls, men, boys and Two Spirit people are more likely to be targeted with various violent crimes such as; trafficking, murder, homicide, rape, and sexual assault crimes; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates 1 in 3 Indigenous women are sexually assaulted or raped in their lifetime, And 4 in 5 Indigenous women experience violence in their lifetime; and
WHEREAS, a recent study found that AI and AN women are murdered at a rate ten times higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, Seattle has the highest number of MMIWG cases according to a study by Urban Indian Health Institute of 71 cities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, MMIP is an acronym inclusive to all our Indigenous relatives including LGBTQ+2Spirit. Recent data report 393 Indigenous people went missing in Washington in 2022. Currently there are 134 Actively Missing Indigenous people (58 Male and 76 female).

WHEREAS, the Seattle School Board recognizes Indigenous Peoples Day on the second Monday of October; and Seattle Public Schools acknowledge the vast impacts of intergenerational historical trauma including; health and educational disparities, homelessness, and other socio-emotional –political disadvantages experienced by many Indigenous students; and

WHEREAS, Seattle Public Schools is dedicated to eliminating racism, improving educational outcomes and providing a safe environment to support every student. Seattle Public Schools as an educational institution has a moral and ethical responsibility to inform all students on social justice issues and to promote values of equality, respect, and dignity to all; and

THEREFORE, Seattle Public Schools declares May 5th as MMIP Awareness Day. MMIP Awareness Day, is an opportunity to educate, inform, raise awareness, and show unity for social justice and a call, to end MMIP. Seattle Public Schools will encourage districtwide discussions, lessons, and presentations in classrooms and in homes throughout not only this day, but to continue conversations throughout the year.

ELDERS, YOUTH AND BOARD TOGETHERNESS

BY: SARAH SENSE-WILSON

On Sunday February 26th Elders Council members, Youth Leadership, and Board members gathered at Stanford's restaurant for sharing in a special meet and greet with one another. The gathering was intended to be an opportunity for us all to learn about one another, laugh, and share stories. Several parents joined our gathering too as part of our collective UNEA community.

Building relationships takes time, and a great starting point is sharing in laughter and stories about our lives, our children and our hopes for future. Youth seemed to enjoy every moment, especially during Mathew Warbonnet's joking and teasing with his fellow Elders. Gaining more understanding of one another helps with strengthening bonds for our shared passion; education, health, and safety of our Indigenous youth. Our UNEA motto states "Thriving through Education, Culture, and Tradition". I personally appreciated the opportunity to share about the history of UNEA advocacy and our contributions to Indian Education and specifically Nathan Hale H.S. The evening underscored our belief in the importance of learning from one another, and modeling healthy relationships, positive uplifting discussions and above all else honoring each other by showing respect, care, attention, and kindness.

I truly treasure these shared experiences because I know each of us has a variety of life challenges, struggles, and personal issues that can interfere with our ability to join together for these special gatherings. I appreciate our Elders, Youth, parents and Board members whom show their dedication to fostering strong, vibrant, successful and empowered young people as they grow into their own personhood.



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.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:

Join us in this Free Event

Michoni Wasté Wellness Retreat

April 14th-15th, 2023

Open to Indigenous Youth,
Parents, and Elders

Guest Speakers, Dinner,
Giveaways, and Photobooth

Scan QR code to Register



Thosh Collins &
Chelsey Luger



Dietreich Rios-
Nicolaisen



Kali "KO" Reis

WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

- ROUND DANCE 101
- YOGA/MINDFUL MEDITATION
- TRADITIONAL MEDICINE
- SELF DEFENSE/BOXING
- FITNESS/STRENGTH TRAINING
- SACRED SPACE

LOCATION

NORTH SEATTLE COLLEGE
9600 COLLEGE WAY
SEATTLE WA

MORE CONTACT INFO:

uneachair@gmail.com

