

# Seattle Clear Sky

## Newsletter

*Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition*

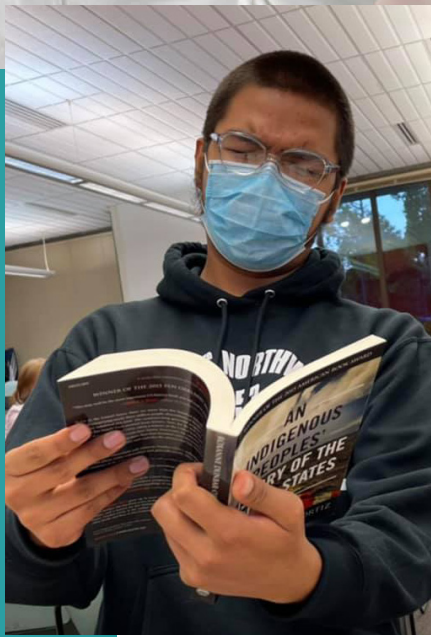
### OCTOBER 2021 ISSUE

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### CLEAR SKY ACADEMY BEGINS

BY JAZELL JENKINS

On September 7th, 2021, Clear Sky Academy (CSA) had their first official day of classes for their 2021-2022 semester long class of AI History and Contemporary Experience AI law & Policies and CSA's AI Art and Culture class. I'm enrolled into both classes for the semester, I plan to attend all these classes in person at North Seattle College because I'm local to the area and the in-person connection is important to me, being able to talk to teachers, collaborate with other students, using hands on material, and just being in the classroom environment with other students. Being in-person makes it a lot easier for me to learn and keep my full focus and attention to everything being taught in class, online classes have always been hard for me to put my entire attention to mentally and I know it's the same for many other students that had to experience 100% virtual classes for the 2020-2021 school year. I also enjoy the environment of the room CSA/UNEA is using for their classes at North Seattle college, the class is extremely spacious (larger than most of my classrooms at my high school), so you feel comfortable taking covid pre-cautious with a distance of 6 feet from others, and the room also includes its own restrooms and a large projector screen.



We started our first day with an opening song with drums played by Sarah, Asia, and was joined by me, then our CSA land acknowledgment was presented acknowledging all the Costal Salish tribes that we were currently on. There was more students in-person than online which I was excited about. We started with icebreakers in my first class (AI History and Contemporary Experience AI law & Policies) I talked with Doug an 10th grader who attends Lincoln High School, with our discussion we found out that we both have similar music taste, we both play basketball for fun, and that we both live in the same local area in North Seattle. We then started a difficult game, where we all stood in a circle then went around in circle naming a historical or well-known indigenous person without hesitation, and if you did hesitate then you had to step out of the circle indicating that you're out of the game. I knew a couple off the top of my head because of the Licton Springs tours that UNEA have hosted where we learned about the murals of the Native leaders (Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Chief Seattle). We continued class with introductions of what we'd be learning about throughout the semester in the social studies class.

We then were given a dinner break, provided food by CSA with fresh sandwiches, water, and donuts! Yum. Art class started and about all the same students were in this class as well. This class I favor because I love the arts, we started with an activity where we observed different

kinds of Indigenous art pieces for example weaved baskets, totem poles, large statues, and a silk printed Costal Salish design and took notes about them, what we found interesting about them, if there was any significance to us/what was inspiring about it, and what we found unique about the art piece. I think the art piece that inspired me the most was the dignity of the sky & earth statue. It's located on a bluff between exits 263 and 265 on Interstate 90 near Chamberlain, its stainless steel, and 50-foot-tall statue was specifically designed by sculptor Dale Lamphere to honor the cultures of the Lakota and Dakota people. I find it inspiring because it made me happy to know that such a large representation of a Native woman is publicly displayed for all to see, it's a big and beautiful masterpiece, with meaning beyond what the eyes can see. The woman is standing tall and strong, she holds outstretched a traditional star quilt featuring 128 stainless steel blue diamond shapes designed to flutter in the wind. We then ended our class with jotting down all the form of art that we could think of which a lot was more than I thought there was. Our first day was a success! I'm excited for all that we'll be learning, especially since its based upon our native culture and traditions.

## INIPI CEREMONY

By Tim Shay

As a 17 year old indigenous person in Seattle Washington, I had never been to a sweat lodge or really knew what they were meant for. Thanks to Clear Sky/UNEA, I had the opportunity to attend a sweat lodge in Tulalip, Washington.

At first I was not sure what to expect and was not sure if I wanted to participate so I chose to help maintain the sweat lodge while others participated. Once I got there I was welcomed and greeted by fellow Clear Sky interns. I then was taught how to set up the sweat lodge by layering the outer wooden lodge pieces with blankets to help conduct heat on the inside of the lodge. I then helped cool the hot rocks with a wet cedar branch as they were brought in one by one into the sweat lodge. I then made sure to keep all of the rocks in the fire pit covered at all times with wood to make sure they maintained a hot enough temperature. The others in the sweat lodge sang and prayed. I then was taught the reasoning behind sweat lodges and what the purpose of going to a sweat lodge was. We cleaned up and took everything down as we went inside to eat a nice meal.

Overall I had a fun and memorable experience and would be open to participating next time in any future sweat lodge ceremonies.

## A SUMMER OF DRUMMING AND SINGING

By Lailani Norman

I think drumming and singing gives a good opportunity for all ages to experience traditional songs and ways for indigenous people to come together as a community, to connect positively. It was my first time teaching a class, especially like this, and it was a really fun opportunity. It was a learning lesson, especially for me, to understand the point of teaching something that I've learned from somebody who has and will always impact my life: my grandpa. The goal he wanted me to reach was to be able to continue the teachings that I learned from him to other people. And that is exactly what happened. It was really fun teaching the horse song and the Blackfeet flag song. I look forward to teaching more and learning more drumming and singing with Clear Sky.



## THE SENIOR SUNRISE

By Kayla Sunrise

As the new 2021-22 school year was coming up I had a lot of emotions going through my mind. I wasn't ready for summer to be over and the reality to officially hit. I didn't know if I was going to be super behind because of going fully online last year due to COVID. I was confused on what my schedule would look like for my final year, how my grades would be, and how I would do for my last year of basketball.

When the first day of school hit I was ready to bust out the best fit. Showing everyone what quarantine did/didn't do to me. As a senior we had a senior sunrise at 5AM. Which meant everyone in the graduating class of 2022 would be able to show up at Magnuson Park, watch the sunrise and see one another for the first time in two years. I wasn't ever a morning person either, so I was impressed with myself that I had the motivation to get up 1. On a Monday morning, and 2. Knowing there wouldn't be any food in it for me. But as the good sport that I am, I rolled out of my bed. The "best fit" I wanted consisted of sweat pants, a baggy hoodie, and my hair pulled up in a bun because I didn't brush it. So much for them seeing me post quarantine.

When I got to the sunrise all the fun and happy memories flooded back, from all of my prior years in school with all my friends. I saw new pink hair on people, tattoos, and new cars pulling up for the first time. After sunrise everyone decides to hit IHOP. I knew I was going to go to secure myself a nice stack of pancakes and a good, iced coffee. Then I knew the sunrise was worth it. Getting ready to arrive at school after IHOP felt refreshing. It all felt normal again.

As I got my schedule and headed to my first class all of the nerves flew away. I wasn't scared or nervous anymore. I was realizing how much fun this basketball season was about to be and I was excited for what was ahead of me for this school year. I knew going into my last year I wanted to make a change. I was excited for the plans I made during summer that I could put to use during fall. Jazell and I were working on creating a Urban Native American Club at our school: welcoming all students and teaching them about the importance of the land we live on and drafting our own Land Acknowledgement for the school. Waiting to get our club approved by staff, we were ready to get the projects rolling: making flyers, painting posters, and getting the word out to all students.

Our approval went through this past week and we are now an official club at Ingraham that meets every Tuesday during lunch! I'm excited for the work that is about to get done and people who are able to support us in any way (UNEA). I have a lot to look forward to this school year.



## UNEA AND THE STORM

By Chris Bishop

This past month, UNEA and NWA received almost courtside tickets to four Seattle Storm home games. For four weeks in a row, we were able to take interns, NWA families, and UNEA volunteers to in-person, exciting games.

Photos from each game can show you the excitement had by all, but here is a quote from Cheyne Littlesun's experience:

*“This was such a great game! Thank you again to the Native Warrior Athletics program for giving us opportunities to take our kids to such great events! My girls got to talk and get an autograph from Breanna Stewart, #30! She asked them if they plan to play basketball when they get older, and Ryelle told her, “I’m already in training” and she replied back ‘well next time I see you, I want to see your moves.’ It was awesome that they got brave enough to run down and see her! [...] My girl is already so excited about next Thursday’s practice with NWA. She said she can’t wait to get better and play like the Storm!”*

We plan to continue making these great opportunities for our youth, to inspire, motivate, and cheer them on as they set aspirations and goals like becoming as good as the Storm.



### CHEYNE LITTLESUN

NWA Article

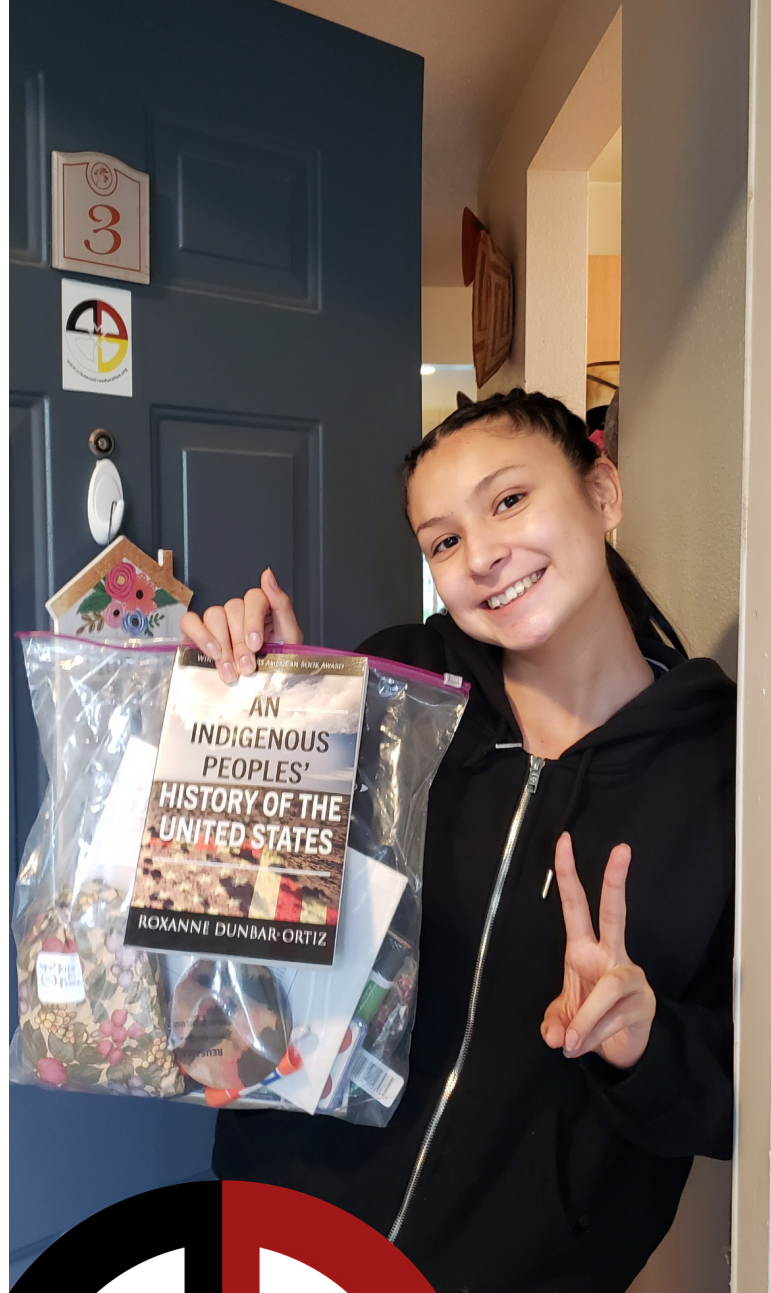
Hello, my name is Cheyne Littlesun. I am an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation and a descendant of the Crow Tribe. I am a full-time Graduate Student in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology at the University of Washington in the Molecular and Cellular Doctoral program. Besides being in school, I enjoy many things like being outside, walking, hiking, being around water and just spending time with my three bear cubs. As busy as I am in school and with life, I have found that finding time to build with your community is important. Being affiliate with Native Warrior Athletics (NWA) and the community it has, has been nothing but a blessing. I am honored to be part of the NWA program, as one of the assistant coaches. Teaching the game of basketball has always been something that I enjoyed. I have learned this game from many good players and coaches. I played ball and assisted coaching in my high school and college years, right along the sides of some awesome talented players and coaches. Teaching the game isn't as easy as it looks, but it's fun, inspiring and it brings great pleasure to be able to give the youth something to look forward too. Our youth are our next generation, it's up to us to guide, teach and inspire them.

## LAUNCHING CLEAR SKY ACADEMY 2021

UNEA continues our tradition of ambitiously diving into new projects and adjusting to the requests and needs of our youth and families. UNEA has successfully launched our 2nd year academic course offerings and expanded to provide an additional course titled American Indian Art and Culture and AI Historical and Contemporary Experience. These two courses are co-facilitated with educator Elaine Simons and myself along with a variety of Indigenous guest speakers and presenters with expertise in various related topics covered throughout our school year. We want to express a huge "WOPILA" to Yellow Wood Academy for their partnership in supporting our Indigenizing education journey to Charter school.

CSA students are now in their 3rd week of CSA classes and we notice our methods for engaging and interacting with students in a collaborative discussions, and activity oriented delivery is highly effective and impactful. While hybrid model continues to be challenging we are constantly learning and applying new techniques to best instruct our materials for all student learning and diverse learning styles. UNEA is fortunate to have a learning space which allows for a hearty meal each week and open area for moving and having spacious covid safe exchanges for our experiential activities. Developing curriculum, lesson plans, and speaker series while balancing academic materials and learning goals is challenging, exhilarating, fun and exhausting experience. Our student centered practices keep us grounded in adopting new ideas, activities, and materials/supplies for best supporting each individual students cultural and learning interests. We are grateful for the opportunities to strive for educational equity and Indigenize academic learning spaces for honoring our traditions, culture, heritage and values through Indigenous worldview we will carry forward our ancestor' vision for our continuation of our tribal way of knowing and way of being.

Email Sarah Sense-Wilson at [markseattl3@aol.com](mailto:markseattl3@aol.com) or Chris Bishop at [uneaprogramcord@gmail.com](mailto:uneaprogramcord@gmail.com)



## CSA STUDENT OF THE MONTH: XOCHITL NEVAREZ

This month, we'd like to highlight a new student from Clear Sky Academy, Xochitl Nevarez (Arapaho)! Xochitl was born here in Seattle, and is in nine grade. She is taking both AI/AN social studies and fine arts classes with Clear Sky Academy. We had the privilege interviewing Xochitl about herself.

### INTERVIEWER:

Hi, Xochitl! Thanks for taking time for the interview! I wanted to start by asking your tribal affiliation.

### XOCHITL:

Arapaho.

### INTERVIEWER:

What is your favorite subject at school if you have one?

### XOCHITL:

Hmm. I don't really have one. Not really.

### INTERVIEWER:

Are there any subjects you're good at even if you don't like them?

### XOCHITL:

I'm pretty good at reading and language arts.

### INTERVIEWER:

That's great! It's an awesome thing to be good at.

Do you read any books?

### XOCHITL:

I'm starting to get back into books. I hadn't read them in a while. I look books where learn about people and who they are. I also like fantasy books.

### INTERVIEWER:

Fantasy books are some of my favorite! How about your classes with CSA? What are you looking forward to?

### XOCHITL:

For the art class, I'm looking forward to learning more about traditional art and learning how to do it. For the history class, I'm looking forward to learning more about different tribes and their traditions.

### INTERVIEWER:

That's great! Well, I think you're going to like what we have lined up for both classes. Thank you again for taking the time for the interview, Xochitl!

### Xochitl:

Yeah! Thank you!



## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: MALCOLM BOWER

We would like to highlight the help of one of our very valuable volunteers, Malcolm Bower! Malcolm started volunteering for UNEA four to five months ago. He started out with weekly reminder calls, but more recently has been helping with Clear Sky activities on Tuesdays. Near the end of August, you could see Malcolm at our drumming and singing workshops, helping set up tables, chairs, and displaying our hand drums. Since September, Malcolm has been a regular volunteer at Clear Sky Academy, acting as a classroom aid and part-time participant.

We asked Malcolm a few questions about his volunteer work with UNEA.

### Q:

How did you get involved with UNEA/CS?

### A:

I found Clear Sky online after searching for nonprofits to volunteer for in my area. I know I wanted to volunteer at a Native American organization because of my background in lacrosse, a game which was invented by tribes in the U.S. and Canada hundreds or thousands of years ago. When I found UNEA's website, I knew it was where I wanted to spend my time.

### Q:

What is the best part about being a volunteer?

### A:

The best part of being a volunteer is knowing that I am making other people's lives easier.

### Q:

What would you like to share about sitting in on CSA?

### A:

Clear Sky Academy has been really interesting for me so far. I love how the class dives into topics that are not covered in great enough detail in Seattle's schools. Topics such as imperialism might be mentioned in a public school classroom; however, Clear Sky goes into more detail about them, giving a more objective lesson in North American history.

Thank you, Malcolm, for all your help!



## OUR NEW EDUCATOR: ELAINE SIMONS

CSA would like to welcome Educator/Instructor Elaine Simons to our team. Elaine will be co-teaching 2021-2022 CSA Courses; AI Arts/Culture (Fine Arts credit) and AI Historical and Contemporary Experience (social studies credit) in partnership with Yellow Wood Academy and UNEA. Elaine Simons - M.Ed in Art and Art Education, BFA Washington State Certified Teacher, K-12 Art, 4-12 LA, 4-12 Anthropology

Elaine attended Rhode Island School of Design-for her BFA & Teachers College, Columbia University for her Masters. She also taught art in alternative school settings such as Interagency Youth Detention School & Middle College HS. She is an Art Educator, Social Justice & Community Engager. She brings passion to her work from a student centered approach. She has a rescue dog name Sookie and loves walking her.

### 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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