



Seattle Clear Sky Newsletter

Thriving Through Education. Culture and Tradition

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CLEARSKY ACADEMY LEDGER ART TEACHING

By JJ Jenkins

On January 18th John Romero joined us at Clear Sky Academy's (CSA) for our Art class for the first time to teach us Native students about the historical background and importance/value of ledger art. Ledger art is a unique and beautiful style of art that illustrates cultural continuity between historical and contemporary Native life. Ledger art started out in Fort Robinson in 1877. Europeans gave the Lakota drawing paper and pencils to do artwork to pass time because they lost the livelihood of hunting buffalo. A lot of scenes were of Little Big Horn.

I was able to create my own ledger art piece with the color pencils and a ledger print. The art piece I created is my image of my spiritually journey, the pink shaded butterfly towards the bottom is the spiritual element of my awakening where I began to have a deeper mental awareness, a connection with my higher being, and a sense of my true potential became clearer to me. My spiritual awakening began last winter, and I personally started to understand I thrive off independency and alone time because I'm able to recover from all the chaos of life and give attention to my wellbeing with journaling, reading, eating well-nourishing meals, spend time outside, manifesting, and meditating. The red and yellow shaded butterfly representing mental upbringing that was a large factor of my spiritual journey, with a decrease of depression and less of an urge to do the stereotypically rebellious teenage things but also growth mental balance by stepping back and observing my thoughts and feelings as they unfold. Then the top blue shaded butterfly illustrating my emotional development, during this awakening I became more sensitive but also gained control emotionally, while in the process I begin to notice an all-encompassing empathy and a more action-oriented compassion that feels normal, natural, and fulfilling.

All these butterflies are flying up towards the sky to where the phases of the moon are, to resemble the phases of me, not all are full but all are beautiful. I've had to learn to love of the phases of me in this life because without them I wouldn't be the human I am today, and I'm proud of who I am right now and the path I am on to become better with the more lessons I learn and knowledge I'll receive.



PSA AND UNEA LEADERSHIP

By Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala)

UNEA was approached by City of Seattle Neighborhoods to apply for funding to bring awareness to covid safety and pro-vax project. Students brainstormed ideas and landed on producing a PSA video with positive messaging elevating Indigenous youth voices to promote covid safety measures. Youth developed a theme under the guidance of PSA producer Star Nayea and storyboard imagery in planning for the day of filming. The PSA theme was 'Warrior-Up' and various messages about hygiene, vaxing, boosting, and social distancing. Student messages were designed to reach other Indigenous youth as a peer to peer support. Students learned about key words, filming angles, visuals, keeping messages in alignment with our theme while individualizing their personal message. Weaving in culture, tradition and collective pan American Indian values grounded the PSA from beginning to end.

Our PSA was in collaboration with Urban Indian Health Institute and SIHB and we decided to film our PSA at the Health board as a powerful visual affirming our messaging about the importance of vaxing and boosting and upholding culture based medical and health services provided by Seattle Indian Health Board. As organizational partners in serving our community to protect our collective future. Special Woplia to Whaakadup Monger; Haily Augustine, Star Nayea, SIHB/UIHI and City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods for this important opportunity.



INGRAHAM URBAN NATIVE AMERICAN CLUB

By Kayla Harstad (Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Assiniboine Sioux)

Every Tuesday during lunchtime at Ingraham high school Urban Native American club members gather in room 129. We begin with a blessing, followed by a student led land acknowledgement, community updates, and our opening questions. Each week we learn a cultural lesson or activity where we learn how history relates back to our Indigenous roots. This past week we had the opportunity to learn beading with UNEA Instructor Tina Norman(Blackfeet). Before Tina arrived we had a meeting with the club members to deepen our knowledge about traditional beading, such as beading origins and trade beads and cultural importance of beading. We learned about beading styles in different regalia, and symbolism in beading techniques. Tina explained to us how original beading was done with animal fur, bones, berries, porcupine quills, stones, and shells. Tina began instruction with offering students the option to either bead a necklace or a pair of earrings of our choice. Tina brought a wonderful selection of beads and bones and everyone was excited to get started on their jewelry. Tina taught us about how beading is a form of art, and is often overlooked, undervalued and unappreciated. Not everyone's beading is going to look the same and that's okay because as an artist you add a little bit of your own touch in your piece. For our upcoming Native club meetings we will be working on completing our traditional beading project and hopefully starting our Native based food initiative, and completing our land acknowledgement for Ingraham.

STORYTELLING AND CSA

By Cat Tetrick

Recently in UNEA's art class on Tuesday afternoons, we as students learned the importance of storytelling. Our instructor, Tina Norman told us several story's is which helped us understand how to use dialog, imagery, and performance when telling a story so the audience stays intrigued. Storytelling is an important part of indigenous culture. Without it, many traditions, stories, practices and history would be lost. Our assignment was to write our own story. Using either a story from our own culture or a story, we have been told. I chose to write about how the spider stole the sun, which is one of my favorite childhood stories that my mom would read to me. The story is about how grandmother spider took a piece of the sun and brought it to the rest of the animals so its light and warmth could benefit everyone. It is one of my favorite stories because it tells the creation of how certain animals came to be and the importance of trust and respect.

Our second class was learning about ledger art. This was particularly interesting to me because I had never heard of it before. Before blank paper was available, indigenous people were given old documents that they would draw on. These pieces of art were used to tell stories. As a class, we sketched out our own drawings and had them tell one of our own stories. Then we were given a ledger to transfer our drawings on to. I did not get very far in my drawings but my peers had made amazing stories out of there art and it was amazing to see how creative everyone was. The style and history of ledger art fascinates me and I am grateful for the experience I had to learn about it.

Overall, I personally love these classes because they are very interactive and hands on learning experiences, which help me stay engaged and interested. We have several amazing speakers and always get a wide variety of subjects to focus on. From drawing, photography, storytelling and weaving, these classes allow you to branch out of your comfort zone and explore the creativity, history, and fun of traditional art.



CSA LEDGER ART

By Joseph Aleck

Recently Clear Sky Academy students had the privilege to learn the art form termed 'Ledger' art. Instructor John Romero (Shoshone) presented on the history of how the plains Indians had drawn on various random ledgers provided to them while imprisoned. Historically, imprisoned tribal men got into drawing as a way to tell a story of their experience. These experiences usually centered around war, or significant events and typically the story an account of history from Indigenous perspective, something often ignored in western history lessons. Our task was to draw using ledger art form a meaningful story of our lived experiences, And so, we were put to the task of creating a visual story.

I made my drawing of a memory from my childhood that defined my outlook on the world. The image I created reflected quiet, deep in thought young boy gazing out of a window towards the street, and a singular silhouette of a tree during the break of dawn. The morning sky was an uncommon blueish purple hue which mesmerized while calming my mind. This memory holds strong for me today and this is why I chose this specific moment in time for my ledger art story.

UNEA REFLECTIONS

By Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala)

UNEA is celebrating our 14 years of community based, culture focused, student centered service to our youth, families and relatives across the Seattle region. The past 14 years have been marked by incredible watershed moments, milestones and trailblazing. We reflect on our accomplishments, and organizational growth while holding ourselves accountable in service to our youth and community. As a small organization we have our limitations but we also wisely optimize our resources (funds and social capital) to best support the emerging needs and shifts within the era of covid pandemic. UNEA has achieved a great number of successes this past year, including our first fieldtrip to Washington DC with seven scholars and three chaperones. UNEA also rebooted our NWA Basketball program with the assistance of seasoned coaches and volunteer parents. UNEA's important partnership with North Seattle College has provided us access to a high quality gymnasium (Wellness Center) for purpose of growing our NWA basketball program. Academically with the expertise of multitalented educator Brooke Stromme we completed a full year (two semesters) of Clear Sky Academy during a pandemic and with no formal roadmap to implement hybrid community based education. In addition, we recently finished our 3rd semester instruction for two courses (AI Historical and Contemporary Experience and Art/ Culture). A total of 23 Indigenous students earned high school credit for completing our courses. UNEA hosted our first community and youth driven Strategic Planning Retreat at Tulalip Resort. Our efforts to document, synthesis and accurately capture the voices of our community prompted UNEA to begin pursuing with greater veracity a plan for Clear Sky Academy Charter Public High School. While the Washington State Charter window is currently closed for new applications, we hold promise and vision for realizing a school we can call ours. For now, we will continue to network, build connections, and allyship with other charter school founders, leaders and educators to gain knowledge, support, and expertise in advancing our efforts. We are committed to continue to learn as we go, because there is no clear pathway to guide us until the state opens application. Opportunities to foster partnerships with private and public education will be welcomed as all avenues are open for possibilities.



NEW UNEA BOARD OF DIRECTOR

Please welcome Lareina Redwoman as our newest UNEA Board of Director. Lareina Redwoman (Northern Cheyenne) is a lifelong resident of Seattle, and a first generation graduate earning a BA. degree in Finance and Business from North Seattle College. Ms. Redwoman is a staunch advocate for education, environmental justice, and health care rights. Ms. Redwoman has extensive professional expertise in financial management, operations, and customer service. Ms. Redwoman is a true servant to her community through her role as an advocate for former foster youth, unsheltered, and undocumented students at North Seattle College. Ms. Redwoman's most valued role is being a parent to her awesome son Gus, and they both find joy in nature walks, stargazing, and spending time together. Ms Redwoman is newly elected first term UNEA Secretary.





INTERVIEW WITH LAILANI NORMAN (BLACKFEET) ON MISS TEEN WASHINGTON

By Gia Tran

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS IN BECOMING MISS WEST SEATTLE?

I first had to put in my application on why I wanted to do the pageant and my intentions with the title. The organizers read all of my information on why I wanted to audition and they accepted me from what I wrote. From there I began making my sponsorships for my entry free.

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN ENTERING THE PAGEANT?

There's not much Native recognition in pageants and it will be a good way to represent urban Natives and Indigenous peoples in general. I can use my title to help Indigenous communities/non profits.

WHAT'S REQUIRED OF YOU TO BE MISS WEST SEATTLE?

The pageant looks for not only outside beauty but being a leader and having a good heart. They like to see confidence in people as well as knowledge because they value someone who understands communities and what's important to them.

HOW MANY COMPETITORS ARE YOU UP AGAINST?

I'm up against 41 other contestants that represent neighborhoods in all of Washington State.

WHAT IS IT LIKE WORKING WITH THE PAGEANT ORGANIZERS?

The pageant people have been easy to work with. They've been very supportive. They give confidence classes and women's rights classes. It's been helping us get on the right path towards being confident on stage.

HOW CAN THE TITLE HELP IN ADVOCACY?

With my title I'm able to raise money and earn money for any non profit of choice. I help support fundraisers for different areas in Washington and I could get a place in national television.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP THE NATIVE COMMUNITY?

Redefining blood quantum because many people cannot receive Indigenous resources when it comes to enrollment. I'd like to help Native students in receiving tuition, Indigenous homelessness, Indigenous mental health services. As well as Women's rights.

What do you see yourself doing after the pageant?

After the pageant, I still want to represent the community and if I win I want to use the title to spread the word of Indigenous rights. I'd also like to apply to UW to become a pediatrician.

NEW UNEA LEADERSHIP INTERN

We want to welcome new UNEA Leadership Council Intern Jahlene to our student scholar's team. Jahlene is a Freshman at Garfield high school and has been a student of Clear Sky Academy for the past 3 semesters. Jahlene is excited to join UNEA as an intern and hopes to "break out of my shyness" by taking a leap into a new challenge as the youngest member of our leadership team. Jahlene also hopes to start a Native club at Garfield high school because "not much visibility or support" for Indigenous students. Jahlene loves to learn about her culture and participate in creating Indigenous art. We are pleased to see Jahlene take this step in broadening her horizons and future. education will be welcomed as all avenues are open for possibilities.





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ENERGY OF WORDS

By Gia Tran

On January 23rd, Kasey Nicholson (Aaniih/Blackfeet) enlightened us in his talk on the 'energy of words'. Kasey is a nationally recognized Comedian, MC, and Motivational speaker. Kasey started by our leadership training by opening with the French word of his tribe's name, Gros Ventre. He explained the French erroneously labeled his people Gros Ventre "Big Belly" because people from the tribe would often put their arms above the stomachs, which represented a waterfall. Part of Kasey's reclaiming his identity meant returning to his people's original name Aaniih. Perpetuating the use of French term Gros Ventre is supporting a French interpretation which mischaracterizes Aaniih people. The waterfall gesture used by Aaniih people references Mother Earth being the connection and flow. Kasey's engaging interactive and allowed us to think about what communication or public speaking goals we have in what we want to improve. Given his background as a life coach, it was very insightful to hear his pointers and overall wisdom. He spoke about confidence, and how our energy is expressed in our tone, inflection and body language. It was both entertaining and engaging, we learned valuable lessons on intention, being mindful and aware of what energy we each bring to the table.



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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