Five Clear Sky Native youth leaders joined a panel presentation titled ‘Building Authentic Community Partnerships’ at the Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference, in collaboration with North Seattle College, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Department Director D’Andre Fischer. Our workshop presentation featured ‘Saving Licton Springs’ cultural and educational project. The five youth panelists included; Isaac H. (Assinaboin), Tim Shay (Yakama), Akichita (Standing Rock Lakota), Chayton and Cante (Hunkpapa, Lakota). Students opened the session with a beautiful Lakota blessing and our Clear Sky land acknowledgment, followed by a brief share about the late Chief Andy De los Angeles (Snoqualmie) by Akichita and, a respectful moment of silence in his honor. D’Andre led a powerful discussion on our process of building a strong relationship between NSC and Urban Native Education Alliance. Our formal partnership was established in the fall of 2020, and sealed with a Memorandum of Understanding. Our partnership has consisted of shared use of space (classrooms), scholarships for Native students, funded Intern position, exchanging resources and coming together to celebrate events, and culturally relevant presentations enriching both our shared communities. Clear Sky students benefit from having our programs located at the NSC site by reinforcing the expectations for students to continue to pursue higher education and to have the connections, familiarity and support of the NSC staff, administration and learning community.

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Each youth panelist provided meaningful statements on the lasting impact of the project on their lives. The Savings Licton Springs project was two years ago, but students’ learning experience has endured. AK facilitated questions from the virtual audience with natural ease and skill. Questions were fielded effectively by students and I was impressed with the amount of substance and knowledge students retained over the past two years.

**Student reflections included**

“Wow I was surprised we had so much interest in what we have to say”– Tim S.

“The project brought out importance of connecting with community”– Isaac H.

“This was fun! the questions were great and I recommend every Native youth join Clear Sky”– AK

“It was nerve wracking but I appreciate the opportunity to share about Licton Springs”– Chayton

“Sharing the Land Acknowledgment was important and helped start things off in a good way”– Cante

The event overall was a fantastic platform for our student leaders to shine and bring forward their experiences and cultural teachings learned from Saving Licton Springs’ project. We concluded our two hour interactive presentation with a Doksa Ahke “Farewell” in Lakota. UNEA would like to express gratitude to D’Andre and NSC and most importantly to our Clear Sky youth for their incredible brilliance and courage.
My Reflection on Billy Frank Jr.
by Lailani Norman Bigspring

Ohki Nitaniko Nestowa Otskoi Enestowasi (hello my name is Yellow Buffalo Stone Woman). My English name is Lailani. Billy Frank Jr. was an iconic man that really left his mark in this world. His story demonstrates my goals, expectations, strength and most of all perseverance. The meaning of perseverance is very important to me because my grandfather, who passed away recently, has always made it clear for me to keep going and persevere. Since I was born, he has always wanted the best for me and to make my mark on the world. Seeing how Billy represented that means a lot and shows me ways that I can make a good change amongst first Nations people, myself and my future. Reading, learning, and continuing my teachings I feel is very important so that myself, my generation, and the next generations can grow up with the same empowerment, same bravery, and passion because this is what it takes to make the world a better place amongst other ethnicities and especially First Nations. Billy Frank Junior and many more Native activists are my elders and other youths’ elders and it is very important to listen to their stories and listen to their teachings because at some point they will need us to pass on what we have learned and use our voices for them when they have done all that they could. Just like what my family and relations have taught me EEkahkimaht Spoomokinahn (Keep going and never give up). Billy Frank Jr., my elders, and many more activists have really pushed and represented this teaching that I will forever stand by. To all the youth that are reading this, I want you to know that it is okay to stand up for what’s right, no matter who it’s against. Do not let anybody get in your way and keep pushing. It is normal to be knocked down at some point when trying to do something great but just know that it is an exercise to make you grow stronger as a person, as an activist, and as a person who is creating a purpose in life. EEkahkimaht Spoomokinahn! (keep going and never give up!)

Campaigning for Billy Frank Jr. Day
By Kayla Harstad

The campaign for Billy Frank Jr. Day has been an amazing experience. Billy Frank Jr.’s activism has definitely influenced me on how much I can use my voice out in the world. Working on this campaign with my fellow interns was completely worth it, from doing Seattle Public School Board testimonies, making petitions, and gathering community members to support us. We each had a role to play, but everyone’s job was super important and it all came together with a great outcome. I learned a lot about Billy Franks Jr’s life, and how we can learn from his choice of actions and utilize his teachings today. We need to constantly stand up for what we believe in, and even if we have bumps on our journey we need to continue to fight for the change we want. Having Billy Frank Jr. Day as March 9th is just the beginning. We need to continue to celebrate him every day and have the same momentum we did when we started the campaign. I feel extremely grateful for having an impact on this decision and I love how much I learned from it. Learning about treaty rights, legends of the past, and how these fish-ins took place was all very impactful. As for moving on in the future, I will continue to push for this day to be celebrated EVERY March 9th for the years to come and I will continue to put my voice out there. Not only will this day be for the Indigenous community, but for every community to learn from the achievements of Billy Frank Jr. and how he still lives on today.

urbannativeeducation.org
My name is Jah’Lene Kaye Armes and I am an 8th grader at Washington Middle School. I am 14 years old and my tribes are Eskimo and Cherokee. I enjoy listening to music and watching TV. In the future, I hope to get a really good job so I can take care of my mom when I’m older. I decided to be a part of this class because I want to learn more about Native History and I want to take this information and teach the next generation about Native History. What I enjoy about this class is how we can relate what we are learning to what happened to us and tell each other stories on how we came this far as a community. What has been challenging for me is to get my work done from school and get this class work done on time.

My name is Kayla Harstad, I’m Turtle Mountain Chippewa and Assiniboine Sioux. I am a Junior at Ingraham High School and a Running Start Student at North Seattle College. My plans after graduation are to attend a college in California to become either a life coach or a body positivity activist. Some of my hobbies include playing basketball, painting, and baking. I have been an Intern with UNEA since August 2020.

I wanted to become an intern with UNEA because of the community. I also wanted to use my voice in a good way to help represent Indigenous students in Seattle. The people who are a part of UNEA do as much as they can to help people in as many ways as possible. I wanted to be more culturally connected with my fellow Indigenous youth and not just the ones from my school, and I felt like it was a perfect opportunity to be a part of something that allows me to build more relationships with one another. The most rewarding aspects of this internship are probably when I meet new role models and mentors that help me in times of need. I love participating in events and meeting new people. A challenge that I have faced but have overcome was when I was a facilitator for one of our online events. I had never done it before and I was extremely nervous and overwhelmed that I would mess up. But after the first 10 minutes into the event, I got comfortable, lost the feeling of being overwhelmed, and it was like talking to family on the phone except you’re learning something.
This month we are proud to lift up the Williams’ family for their amazing service to our Community Outreach Program. Mike and his exceptional youth, Neala, Nicholas and Nathaniel, have dedicated nearly every Saturday since early September to shopping for UNEA families and delivering essential items to their doorsteps. Thank you for your generosity with your time, energy and care!

1. How did you first get connected with UNEA/Clear Sky?

3-4 years ago my kids and some of my team from Chief Leschi came to run in the Billy Mills Run at Green Lake Park.

2. What made you want to get involved with the Outreach Program in the first place? What keeps you guys coming back?

“We were inspired by the work that Sarah was doing for the youth in the Seattle metro area and how she included us even though we were just a little farther south. My daughter Neala, is a senior this year and needed to do 20 hours of community service for her graduation portfolio, so we decided this organization would be a great program to be a part of. We keep coming back because this pandemic has been hard on everyone and this is an opportunity to pull together as a community to help each other out during these times. It’s also nice to learn the different areas of the metro area and make connections with families.”

3. Why did you want to have your kids be involved in this work? What has the impact been on them?

“I think the main purpose of our kids getting involved is to teach them traditional ways of community and service. Pulling together to help others and seeing that our responsibility is not just our well-being but also the communities that we live and travel in. The impact has been positive and has made them more empathetic towards others. Being isolated so much during the pandemic it kind of makes you forget about others out there.”

4. What are your kids’ thoughts on helping out with this each week? What do they like about it and what has been challenging?

“They enjoy helping and it’s fun to have watched their attitudes and abilities grow. At first all they knew was we had to be up early on a schedule and we were shopping which they didn’t have a lot of experience in. Now, while it is still the earliest day they have to wake up, they are ready and understand the purpose of the work. They have also become very informed shoppers and understand budgeting for food. I can send either my 17, 15, or 12 year old into the store with a list and they can shop on a budget any time we need. We feel this is a great life skill that will stay with them for a long time. The challenge is the Saturday wake up time, it’s literally the earliest day they have to wake up but as we have continued to volunteer they have understood the necessity of it and they really like the smiles they get from delivering. They also love getting out of the house.”

5. Why have you chosen UNEA as an organization to dedicate so much volunteer time to?

“Again, Sarah works tirelessly for all Native American people and it’s hard not to want to be part of something that is trying to help youth on their path to adulthood. All the staff and volunteers are such a great team and paired with the awesome families that we serve has just been a great community minded opportunity”.
Indigenous Conversation on the COVID-19 Vaccine

By Hunter Schierbeck

Indigenous Conversation on the COVID-19 Vaccine, an event in which UNEA partnered with the Seattle Indian Health Board, talked about Covid-19, the vaccine, and some common myths being passed about. This event was put on in order to help better educate our people in the community about the vaccine and debunk said myths such as people saying it will change your DNA or that when you get the vaccine, you are being injected with live COVID; both are false. Another great thing this event talked about was the reassurance that it’s ok to be fearful and that these fears are justified. The pandemic has not been easy for anyone and many of us have lost good friends or family members over the past year so to hear that you are not a paranoid crazy person is genuinely nice. This information is all massively invaluable to the community and with the continued help of the SIHB the Native population can set an example for the rest of the city. We need to continue to spread the word and get as many elders and traditional medicine practitioners vaccinated as possible first so we can move to the general public.

Thank you to Esther Lucero, Abigail Echo-Hawk, Dr. Maresca, Dr. Socia Love-Thurman, and LaVerne Wise of the Seattle Indian Health Board for joining us for this event and sharing your wisdom with the community.
Champions for Community

By Sarah SW

I want to take a moment to recognize our incredible cadre of dedicated, brilliant intellectual warriors and champions for Community; Hunter, JJ, Kayla, Gia and Lailani and newest member Cat have elevated their voices and visibility through their collective commitment to improving academic success for all Indigenous students. These students have advanced the work of previous Clear Sky leaders by initiating a campaign to establish a Billy Frank Jr. Day resolution at Seattle Public Schools. Their campaign efforts started with learning about Billy Frank Jr.: then proceeded to invite school board member Lisa Rivera Smith to our weekly intern meeting to ask her to sponsor the resolution. Next steps included a support letter template and a change.org online petition. Students participated in several SPS public testimonies, offering brief 2 minute impassioned speeches advocating for SPS to adopt our resolution to recognize every March 9th as BFJ Day. Students were recently interviewed by Town Hall podcast and students will co-plan and present a presentation at Clear Sky Academy. Along the way student have deepened their interest in tribal sovereignty, environmental conservation, ecology, salmon restoration, and activism. These young leaders are truly inspiring. Having a front row seat in the spirited growth of these young leaders has been remarkable. I want to thank all our community members, allies, and leaders for your encouragement and support for their campaign. We are happy to report SPS did adopt a version of Billy Frank Jr. Day to be celebrated this March 9th, 2021. Wopila to our youth and community!

North Seattle College and UNEA Partnership recent collaboration at Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference 2021

Demonstrating our deepening partnership and ongoing commitment to cultivating care and community, Clear Sky Youth, UNEA Leadership and North Seattle College Leadership presented collaboratively at the 2021 Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC) on February 12, 2021. Presenters were:

D’Andre Fisher, M.Ed. | Associate Vice President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, North Seattle College
Sarah Sense Wilson | Chair, Urban Native Education Alliance
Cante Remle | 13 year old Lakota youth
Chayton Remle | 16 year old Lakota youth
Tim Shay | 16 year old Yakama youth
Akichita (AK) Taken Alive | 19 year old Standing Rock Lakota youth
Issac Hochberg | 18 year old Assiniboine Sioux youth

During this session participants learned ways in which North and UNEA have built our relationship, and shared how other institutions and organizations could build relations with Indigenous communities to show their commitment to the Land both here and elsewhere while honoring their sovereignty, cultural heritage, and lives. Participants heard from students of the Urban Native Education Alliance Clear Sky Leadership Council Urban Native Education Alliance and learned more about the work of the (UNEA) student project “Licton Springs - A Sacred Site of the Duwamish Tribe Ancestral-Homeland”. They watched the documentary of the spring’s story through film and how the young leaders supported this important project with online campaigns, including a petition with over 1,600 signatures in support of Seattle first Native American historical landmark. The student panel was particularly moving.

In addition to our presentation this month, Dr. Chemene Crawford attend the UNEA Board of Trustees meeting on January 27, 2021 and shared that our Campus is seeking a partnership with Bellwether Housing/Chief Seattle Club, which specifies construction of an Affordable Housing unit and a 6,000 square foot longhouse. The location of this project is at the SW area of campus, nearby where the old tennis courts were located. Dr. Crawford was delighted and honored to attend, make this announcement and meet our UNEA and Clear Sky community members. Thank you UNEA and Clear Sky for welcoming Dr. Crawford, and for continuing to build our partnership.
My name is Mackenzie Tetrick, but everyone calls me Cat. I am Otoe-Missouria on my mother’s side and Scandinavian on my fathers. Growing up, I was not very connected with my family’s history. Nor did I have the knowledge for contribution. However, as I got older my need for self-identity grew and I wanted to know more about my ancestral history. During the summer of 2015, my family took me to our reservation in Oklahoma for a family reunion. Seeing the land, my family, eating together and talking with my cousins, brought me a sense of security and self-understanding. In 2018, I joined King County’s native youth group where we participated in putting together a radio talk show focusing on suicide awareness for indigenous youth. It was the first time I truly felt like I had the power and knowledge to give back to my community.

“In the united states, Native American communities experience higher rates of suicide than any other ethnic group. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native American youth ages 10-24, and Native youth teen suicide rates are nearly 3.5 times higher than the national average.” Center for Native American Youth. As of 2018, I have found it as my personal goal and obligation to contribute to the native youth community, and its mission in preventing suicide and contributing towards suicide awareness. I want to help provide indigenous youth with the proper resources and support that they need and create a community where all feel safe and accepted.

I transferred from BHS to Middle College High school in 2019. I first heard of Clear Sky from my history teacher Robin, who recommended that we all joined the language seminar on Lushootseed. I had done workshop classes with Native youth in Seattle before but I had never heard of this group and I was excited to see what it would be like. I had a small group of friends who all agreed to do the classes with me. On the first day we all took the city buses down there together, and I remember first walking in and feeling an overwhelming sense of calmness. Everyone was so nice and respectful. I was able to feel comfortable engaging and communicating with my peers. Not only was I able to engage in activities surrounding and supporting of Native Youth groups, but I was increasing my own knowledge and awareness around my culture as well. Clear Sky is an amazing group of individuals who all use their power, rights, voices and knowledge to speak up for our community. The impact and change that can happen when voices and people come together is life changing. I had never felt so accepted and understood by a community before. I finally felt the power that I have to give back and take in.

Welcome to our Newest Intern!
Mackenzie (Cat) Tetrick

I’m so grateful to UNEA Clear Sky Native Youth for starting this awesome project! I look forward to talking with the Native youth who I’m paired with every week. JJ’s family is from the Unangan (Aleut) tribe of Southwest Alaska, since I am originally from Alaska, I thought this was a great match. JJ and I share stories about our culture, traditional languages, her educational goals and aspirations. I share stories about the cultural work I’ve done over the years, what it was like growing up in a small village in Alaska, my work with Native youth, and activism.

The amazing volunteers who bring elders gifts, winter coats, gift cards, plants, salmon and snack are great, and very much appreciated. But, the real gift is something that can be felt in the heart, lifts our spirit, and gives us hope for our future…our Native youth! I raise my hands once again to UNEA and Clear Sky for making this opportunity possible. Gunal’cheesh! (Thank you)