

NAYA Family Center NEWS

Empowering the Lives of Native Americans in the Portland Area



December 2007/January 2008

Bi-Monthly Newsletter, Volume 12, Issue 1 of 6

Generations Project is starting Talking Circle for the school year 2007-2008!

by Shilo George, Generations Project Intake/Outreach Coordinator, ext. 224

Talking Circle is an evening group for middle school and high school students to learn about healthy relationships, communication, respect and traditions while having lots of fun! **Talking Circle** is a safe place for youth to discuss how they are feeling and learn more about others.

Talking Circle is facilitated by experienced NAYA staff. Middle school Talking Circle is led by **Ryan Pinkham** and **Shilo**



George. Ryan is a middle school advocate at NAYA and Shilo is the **Generations Project intake/outreach** coordinator. High school Talking Circle is facilitated by **Brad Dennis** and **Selona Stallings**. Brad is a crisis counselor with Cascadia Behavioral Health care who has been facilitating **Talking Circle** for several years. Selona, NAYA's Independence to Living Foster Care Program Coordinator, also has several years experience running **Talking Circle**.

They are also going to be joined by Portland State University MSW interns Shari and Shawnetta to help facilitate and support our youth.



Talking Circle isn't just about talking, though! This year, our kids will be doing community service projects, yoga, rock climbing, art projects, meeting community members and elders, learning about Native cultures and traditions, participating in sweat lodge ceremonies, and so much more!

We look forward to a great year!



Sam Smith, Devis Umtuck and Kyler Buzalsky hamming it up for the camera!

Middle School Talking Circle is held on Monday evenings from 5:30pm-7:00pm and High School Talking Circle is on Thursday evenings from 5:30pm-7:00pm.

A healthy evening meal is provided and youth are transported home afterwards. There are also some middle school buses that will drop youth off at NAYA. *As always, Talking Circle is FREE and open to all middle and high school youth.*

Please feel free to call **Shilo George at ext. 224** if you have any questions or would like to refer a student.

Letter to NAYA:

September 20, 2007

Dear Nichole,

I want to thank you and your staff for the great job you all did for the gathering on Sept. 14.

The food, the decorations, the elder gift baskets and the Emcee, the greeters, it was all very good. The dedication of your staff is evident, I am sure the parents & grand-parents and all the community would agree.

Keep up the good work,
Lois Chilcott
Menominee Elder

NAYA Family Center would like to give recognition to Ecotrust, who coordinated an anonymous donation of \$10,000 specifically for NAYA youth to make college a reality.

Five NAYA youth were honored to receive a scholarship of \$2000 each to pay for college. Without this generous donation, these students would not have had the resources to enter college at this time. We are deeply honored by this gift and excited to help fund college tuition for our community. Three of the young adults chose to enroll in local community colleges and two of the youth enrolled in tribal colleges. **Many thanks to the donor and to Ecotrust!**

High School Night Is in Full Swing!

Every Wednesday night from 6-8 pm, students get together at the NAYA Family Center for High School Nights. **From going bowling and out to eat, to talking about college and scholarships, high school night is about getting to know other Native students in Portland!** Some of the activities we have planned for this year include movie night, playing games, and cooking classes. We always provide dinner and a ride home!

Know a high school student who might be interested? Contact **Daniel Guilfoyle at ext. 258** for more information.

Native American Youth and Family Center Dinner and Auction Huge Success!

The fourth annual NAYA Family Center Dinner and Auction, "Educating Our Children, Reclaiming Our Future," was held on Friday November 16th at the Portland Art Museum.

The auction was a huge success! It sold out to more than 500 guests who enjoyed a Native performance by Karen Therese, bought beautiful Native artwork, savored a sumptuous Ojibwe inspired meal and were dazzled by NAYA's rare and unusual packages galore! Keynote speaker Dr. Vicki Phillips finished the evening with a powerful and positive address describing all the great work that we do here at the NAYA Family Center.

Special thanks to all of our fabulous volunteers who made the night possible!

**The Native American Youth and Family Center is located at
5135 NE Columbia Blvd
Portland, OR 97218**

You can get here on TriMet bus #75, which stops a short distance away.

**NAYA Family Center (503) 288-8177
NAYA Early College Academy (503) 972-2461**

**www.nayapdx.org
info@nayapdx.org**

New Faces at the NAYA Family Center!



Hi, my name is **Shari Moore** and I grew up just outside of Kansas City, Kansas. I moved from Denver, Colorado, a year ago to pursue my **Master's of Social work at Portland State** with a focus on community. As an **MSW Intern**, I am working with the Generations Project to **help facilitate middle school Talking Circle and to assist with Community Gatherings**. I will also be exploring options to help with grantwriting and building community partnerships. I have a strong commitment to use my education and experience towards **social justice and anti-oppression social work**. I enjoy bicycling, music, basketball, and bowling and I have an identical twin sister who lives in Denver.

Hi, my name is **Shelly Alexander** and I was born in a small town in North Dakota and moved to Oregon when I was 5 years old. I attended the University of Oregon (business), Drexel University (graphic design) in Philadelphia, and Portland State University (business, anthropology, graphics design, psychology) and **obtained the degree of Bachelors of Psychology in 2005**. While completing my bachelor's degree I gave birth to a **beautiful baby boy, Jonah, who is now 2 1/2 years old**. I am currently **working on my Masters in Social Work at Portland State** and am **honored to be able to participate as an MSW Intern in the Healing Circle** here at the NAYA Family Center this year.



Greetings to all, my name is **Delores Herrera** and I was born December 23, 1968 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. I moved to Oregon in 1975 **and I am from the Klamath and Shoshone tribes**. I have **5 awesome children and a great partner, Manuel**. I am the new **Housing Advocate** for

the agency. I have worked in the social service field since 1994 and bring my expertise in housing to the native community. I am very honored to become a part of the NAYA Family Center family. **I look forward to assisting our community.**



Hello, my name is **Vickie Paxton**. **I am so excited about being a member of the NAYA family as the new Administrative Assistant. My grandfather is an enrolled member of the Nipissing Nation and my Grandmother is an enrolled member of the Western Band**

Cherokee, Bird Clan. I am the mother of **three great young adults**. My oldest daughter is a freshman at University of Oregon. My son is a grass dancer and a junior in high school and my youngest daughter is a sophomore in high school. I am engaged to a wonderful man that makes life complete. **Ed and I are both Traditional Dancers and live for powwows. There has been a great desire in my life to help my community and I have hopefully found where I am supposed to be.**

Hello! **My name is Marissa Thompson and I appreciate my warm welcome into the NAYA community!** I am the latest AmeriCorps*VISTA to join the NAYA Community as an Education Specialist for the Early College Academy. I have worked with youth in schools for several years and have served with a couple of different Americorps programs in Portland. **I am a native Oregonian; born in Portland, I grew up in Eugene**. I went to college out in Iowa, and returned to Portland in 2003. **Working with the NAYA Early College Academy gives me a great new opportunity to support youth, from the administrative side of the high school**. I am thankful for my welcoming reception here. I look forward to getting to know the community better as I work to support the NAYA programs.



The NAYA Family Center welcomes our new employees! We also encourage the community to stop in and say "hello" when you are in the neighborhood.

Healthy Partnership Night

by Shilo George, Generations Project
Intake/Outreach Coordinator



On Tuesday, November 13th, NAYA Family Center's Generations Project sponsored a celebratory evening for Native American couples at the second annual Healthy Partnership Night.

Couples were treated to a catered dinner and a night of entertainment and visiting. Participants were asked to volunteer for the "How Well Do You Know Your Partner?" game. This game was very similar to the Newlywed Game and challenged couples to guess the same answer as their partner to both easy and challenging questions.

Everyone enjoyed finding out who how well they knew their partner and all game volunteers were given a restaurant gift certificate for a romantic dinner.

Generations Project is funded by the Administration for Native Americans. **The goal of the Generations Project is to encourage the formation of lasting families and healthy relationships** by providing gender specific education and training on Positive Indian Parenting for adults and Relation Strengthening Groups for adults and youth, sponsoring four community gatherings per year and providing other avenues to celebrate and strengthen families and community.

Generations Project would like to thank **Flaming Carrot Catering** for the delicious food, **Ted Kiser** for his candid and beautiful photography, and **John Walker**, our event emcee, and the volunteers that made the night possible.

Sports and Outdoor Club Report

by Dave "Mad-Skillz" Higgs, Sports and Outdoor Club
Coordinator, ext. 215



NAYA Soccer

Congratulations to the NAYA Soccer team for their outstanding efforts this season! **The Warriors, twelve dedicated 11 & 12 year-old boys and girls, fought hard this year in a league where we were often smaller and younger than every member of the opposing team.** Our kids were undaunted by the challenges, however, and continued to progress week in and week out. They should all be very proud of their hard work this season. Special thanks also to Mr. Joe Ball, who did a superb job as a volunteer coach this season. Thanks also to Americorps*VISTA volunteer Amanda Kaur, Tracy, and also JoJo for their extra help on the field.



NAYA Basketball

Hoops practices for NAYA began the final week of November. We will be attempting to contact all members of all teams from last year to provide practice days and times. If you have not heard from us or have changed your address or

phone number, please call Dave Higgs and ask to be added to a roster. All youth grades 4-12 are encouraged to get involved with our youth basketball program!

All skill levels are welcome! This is your chance to learn how to play the game if you are new. If you are a NAYA basketball veteran, this is your chance to perfect your skills, and have fun! **League games begin in January.** There are still some openings for experienced basketball coaches.

To sign up, please call **Dave Higgs at ext. 215.**

Former Student, Now Girls Dance Instructor

by Lori Sams, Cultural Arts and Sports Program Manager,
ext. 230



NAYA Family Center is happy to announce the new girls Dance Instructor, Caitlin Hart!

Caitlin attended dance classes for five years as a very involved and dedicated student. She only missed a few classes over this entire time. She was always very helpful in class and the younger girls looked up to her. Her senior year she took a

digital media class where she designed a video using footage from dance classes and performances as well as a team dance. She was also involved with other NAYA Family Center youth programming, including Outdoor Club, MAPP (Mentor Artists Playwrights Project) and MASAP camps.

Caitlin graduated from West Linn-Wilsonville Arts and Technology Charter High School last June and is now attending classes at Clackamas Community College. Caitlin plans on taking general studies and later transferring to PSU where she plans to study Early Childhood Development and Education.

Dancing at powwows, benefits, fundraisers, grand openings, and for NAYA Family Center, Caitlin's mother and father told her to never stop dancing. After the passing of her father in May, Caitlin continued dancing in honor of his memory as he was very proud of her dancing.

Caitlin is very excited to teach classes, and we are very excited to have a former student return to teach.

Not only is Caitlin a committed teacher, she is serving as a great role model for the youth at NAYA Family Center.

Come join Caitlin and Reggie Johnson every Monday night from 6-8 pm for their boys' and girls' Native dance classes.

It's a lot of fun! We also have drum and regalia making classes if that's more your style.

Contact Lori Sams, Cultural Arts and Sports Program Manager, at ext. 230 or loris@nayapdx.org, for more information!

Monthly Culture Classes for Youth

The 2007-08 school year has an exciting schedule of Monthly Culture Classes, with a variety of field trips and hands-on classes being offered!

Winter Class Schedule

December 5th : *Navajo Weaving*- Melissa Waggoner, a NAYA High School Advocate, will teach this intro to weaving class.

January 16th : *Soap making class, part 1* – During this two-part series, we will learn how to make soap.

February 6th : *Soap making class, part 2*

All classes are held in the Cultural Arts Classroom from 5:30-7:30pm. **All supplies are provided and classes are always free!**

Please contact **Roanne Little Light, Cultural Arts Coordinator, at ext. 223** to sign up. Stay tuned for our Spring Class offerings!

Have a skill you'd like to share? Call Lauren McCartney, Volunteer Program Specialist, at ext. 227 to get started!



NAYA kids show off the tipis they made in Culture Class

NAYA Early College Academy Updates



On November 2nd, the NAYA Early College Academy hosted a session to define the Academy's ten core values.

Zeke Smith, Portland Public Schools Chief of Staff and NAYA supporter, facilitated the discussion. NAYA staff was joined by community elders Buzz and Joyce Nelson, Lois Chilcott, and Arnold Littlehead and Linda Looking, parent Stephanie Smith, and Student Leadership Council members Rebecca Kirk, Maria George, Dyami Thomas, and Black Bear.

The Academy's ten core values were first generated by focus groups with the Youth and Elders Council, the Academy planning committees, and NAYA staff with the idea that **the first class of the NAYA Early College Academy would take the charge of defining what these values meant for them.** All of the Academy students wrote about their definitions of these values in their advisory classes and their responses were used as a basis for the November 2nd discussion. **This first session generated thoughtful responses and great conversation. We look forward to seeing the final definitions our students come up with!**

NAYA Early College Academy's 10 Core Values

**Respect • Balance • Pride
Giving • Community • Tradition
Kindness • Accountability
Diversity • Leadership**

Student Leadership Council

The Academy has a Student Council! **Its 5 members represent students at school, the NAYA community and beyond.** Members are Maria George, Black Bear, Rebecca Kirk, Michael Marteeny, and Dyami Thomas. We look forward to the great work these students will accomplish in the coming year!

Letter from Frank Hernandez, NAYA Early College Academy Administrator

Dear NAYA Family Center Staff and Community,

I know the first quarter of the NAYA Early College Academy has been a new challenge for all of us, so I thought you would like to hear some results.

We exceeded our goal of having 80% of our students passing all of their classes in the first quarter. I have had five students in my office who have been ecstatic. All have said this is the first time they have been passing all their classes. One said he was very proud of himself, because he didn't have to go to the special education room for help and he was still passing everything. **His statement of "I am really proud of myself" gave me goose bumps.**

We have had students participate on panels at three conferences, sharing their experiences and recommendations for helping Native American students. And thanks to Micah Johnson, **we have two students, Kateri Eaglestaff and Kalene Desgrosiers, going on the Salmon Camp trip in Vancouver, BC. These students are going to another country for the first time in their lives.**

I want to thank everyone for their patience, support, and good wishes. **A special thanks to the Academy staff for their flexibility and their dedication.** Providing direct services to 60 clients a day with only 1-1/2 hours of preparation can be fatiguing. Please know how important you have been in this initial success.

Frank Hernandez
School Administrator

The Early College Academy is still enrolling students! Please stop by or **contact Ms. Sayers, Academic Counselor, at texas@nayapdx.org or 503.288.8177 ext. 264** for an application/tour.

Volunteer Corner

by Lauren McCartney, Americorps*VISTA Volunteer Program Specialist, ext. 227

Much appreciation and thanks goes out to all who worked on our annual dinner and auction gala! Our event was a huge success, mostly due to the time and spirit of our great volunteers. Thank you to Bow and Arrow, the NAYA Family Center board, and our family and friends!

Want to get involved and give back to your community? Here are some current and upcoming projects you can plug in to:

The NAYA Clothing Closet is being reorganized!

A committee of volunteers and staff will be managing the closet to ensure that it runs smoothly and meets the needs of our community. There are still positions open to be a part of this important service at NAYA.

With the changing of the seasons, the leaves of the trees are falling and it's getting darker earlier in the day. Community members are needed **to help keep the land and building beautiful and safe for the Academy students and community members.** Contact us if you're interested in getting out in the crisp air for a few hours a week to help ensure the grounds are well kept.

Presenters and assistants are needed for Monday night dance, regalia construction, and drumming classes. If you have a traditional art or skill that you'd like to share with our youth and families, please let us know. Assistants are also needed to support NAYA

The Employment Program would like to honor Marcia Simtustus for her involvement in our program and all of her recent achievements!

Marcia has **attended the Employment Support Group** since the beginning of June this year and was **hired at JoAnn Fabrics** in September. Marcia attended Mt. Hood's Steps to Success program in June and continued volunteer activities by participating in Mt. Hood's Project Enterprise from July through August. **Marcia says, "NAYA has been a big help with support and being here for us. I want to tell other clients not to give up and to keep trying."** We will continue to support Marcia in achieving her goal of becoming an alcohol and drug counselor. **Congratulations Marcia, we are all so proud of you!**

youth and families in passing on cultural heritage and traditions of our Native people. If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact us!

The NAYA Early College Academy is looking for community members for a variety of positions available throughout the school days, Monday-Friday. Positions include hall monitors (before, during, and after school), classroom assistants, and lunch assistants. These positions are important to support the success of Academy students!

We need tutors for our Tutoring Center! Work directly with kids, helping them with their homework in small groups and one-on-one after school, 2:30-6:00 pm on Monday through Thursday. Whether you can come for an hour or two once a week or every day we're open, we'd love to have you help out!

Please contact **Lauren McCartney at ext. 227** for more information and to sign up!



Thanks to our Reed College volunteer group who came in on October 17!

Tax Season is Coming Up!

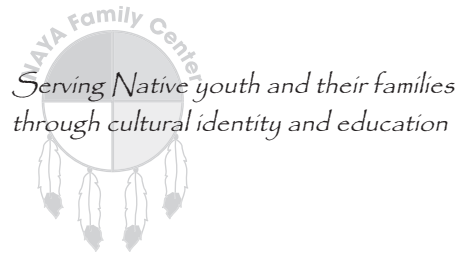
More than 75,000 eligible Oregon families and individuals failed to receive millions of dollars in tax credits because they did not file a return last year.

Having trouble with your taxes? Free services are available to file your taxes thru CASH Oregon, 1-888-227-7669.

Please call Deanne Goforth at ext. 214 or Tamra Russell at ext. 203 if you need more information.

Native American Youth and Family Center

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www.nayapdx.org

The NAYA Family Center has some wonderful home buying opportunities to announce!

In the coming year, NAYA Family Center has 4 referral slots available for homeownership grants of \$70,000 through Portland Community Land Trust (PCLT). These are "Buyer Initiated Funds" with the land trust, and are available for first time homebuyers to purchase in the city of Portland. Through programs and supports like this, owning a home can move from a dream to a reality for our families. We can also connect you with down payment assistance programs and savings match programs for homeownership. There are income limits that apply. For more information, contact Sara Libby, Homeownership and Resident Services Coordinator, ext, 232 or saral@nayapdx.org.

PCLT reduces the cost of homeownership for first time homebuyers through the land trust model. With the land trust model you can add on a garden, an extra room or remodel – more importantly you can pass on a land trust home to your children, grandchildren, or family members for generations. You can learn more about PCLT and land trust homeownership on their website: www.pclt.org/ or call their office at 503-493-0293. Buyer Initiated Funds mean that buyers can choose the home they want in the city of Portland and apply the grant, and are not required to buy an existing land trust home.