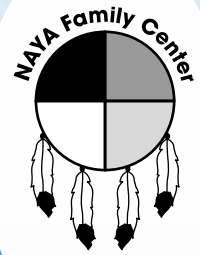


NAYA Family Center NEWS

Empowering the Lives of Native Americans in the Portland area



April/May/June 2010

Spring Newsletter, Volume 14, Issue 2 of 4

Youth to Young Professionals

By Gretchen Lovell, Sustainability Assistant

As we had hoped, youth we served have returned to serve their community. Three have made the transition from NAYA youth to young professionals.

NAYA Early College Academy graduates Kateri Eagle Staff (*Mniconjou and Oglala Lakota/Northern Arapaho/Northern Cheyenne*), Jennifer Noonan (*Ojibwe/Cherokee*) and William Miller (*Cherokee/Blackfeet*) were very active in NAYA youth services programming.

When Kateri came to NAYA, she hated school and was behind in her classes. Over time, she improved her grades with help from youth services staff and participated in their events and programs. Last summer, Kateri, Jennifer and William interned with the NAYA Family Center through the Youth Summer Works program funded by Worksystems, Inc.

Jennifer came to NAYA in 2007 as a teen in foster care seeking support. The foster care staff at NAYA worked to support her and later, she began attending the Early College Academy. After interning with NAYA, she worked at Free Geek for nine months.

William and his brother started coming to the NAYA Family Center about five years ago, when he wanted to learn more about his Native heritage and be more involved with the Native community.

Now, Kateri attends Portland Community College and is very active on the Portland Youth and Elders Council Steering Com-

mittee. She was selected as a Multnomah County Public Health Hero. Kateri was nominated for this award because of her significant contributions to community economic development through her work in our tax site, which positively impacts our county's economic health in a variety of ways.

She and Jennifer now work as client facilitators for the NAYA tax site. There, they assist clients by setting appointments and making sure new clients get a clear understanding of the tax site.

"Every time we've asked [Kateri] to step up when we've sensed a need for additional help, she's always accepted the challenge," says Deanne Grant, community economic development coordinator. She also says that Jennifer "[does] an impressive job of remaining cool and calm under pressure, all while being very detail-oriented and patient."

William works as the anti-poverty support receptionist intern at the NAYA Family Center. In the height of the cold winter months, William was answering more than 70 messages every day from clients needing rental and energy assistance.

"I don't like it—I love it," says William. "I took the job and ran with it, and it's been phenomenal." The job is very fast paced, but this is nothing new for William. He is a member of the student council and serves as the Reynolds School District Student Board Representative.

We're very proud of our young professionals and are glad to have their skills and agency knowledge here at the NAYA Family Center!



William Miller



Kateri Eagle Staff



Jennifer Noonan

Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings NAYA Family Center community!

In the year 2010, NAYA Family Center continues to grow and to work hard to meet the ever-growing needs of our community. We are serving more Native people than we ever have in the history of our organization and are working to assist families in overcoming more challenges. Our families are faced with many complex situations—and like many of the families that we serve who are struggling to meet their needs each day, NAYA Family Center is also working to rebalance the growing need of the community and the resources that we have. While we have been incredibly fortunate to bring more resources to the community, we continue to see overwhelming need each and every day. We are very proud of our staff and our community volunteers for the hope, spirit and respect that they bring each day to this community that allows us to make true change for our people.

One of the important roles that NAYA Family Center provides in the community is helping our children and young adults prepare for their future role as leaders—and, ultimately, someday as elders in our communities. In the next 40 to 50 years, the youth that we currently have in the learning center, in our academy and playing on our basketball teams will be the elders in charge of passing on our heritage and culture to the next generation. This is an overwhelming and inspiring responsibility. I am very excited to share this work with all of you; it is our goal to always do this work in the most respectful way. This also creates opportunities for community members, elders and allies to step up and help us. Maybe you can share part of your tradition with our youth by volunteering in our culture and arts classroom, serving as a volunteer in our evening programming or helping to advocate for our community through the youth and elders council. Whatever your interest, passion or experience, there is a role for you in our community; what is more certain than ever is that we need you! Please visit our new and improved website to discover the countless ways you can contribute to the Native community.

In addition to an improved web page, our newsletter format is being updated with many new sections. We want to be sure that you always stay the most informed and up-to-date on what is going on at NAYA Family Center. Please look for an article introducing a new addition to our board—Ethel Branch! We feel so proud and fortunate to have this Harvard-educated attorney who is a member of the Navajo Nation serving in a leadership role in our community.

In closing, I would like to invite you all to our first ever powwow on May 14 and 15. This event will celebrate our new role as land owners and stewards of this important historical resource for our community.

Gunalchéesh (Thank You)



Nichole J. Maher, MPH
Executive Director





One Team, Many Tribes

By Micah Johnson, Recreation Coordinator

The NAYA Family Center grade school basketball team is coached by Eddie Sherman and Raven Williams. In his third year, they are at the helm for the 6th grade and younger co-ed basketball team. This team has seen its roster grow to as many as 20 players this season, which says a lot about the positive work that Eddie and Raven are doing with the youth!

The team started out slowly this season, going 1-4 in their first five games. However, in the last three matches, they have played more focused games, both offensively and defensively. It has shown with a two point defeat and two straight wins! This team has a chance to put together two more (3-5 currently) wins and finish with a .500 record for the year.

Three members of the team come from a family with a strong basketball background. Job Schimmel, Milan Schimmel and Mick Schimmel are the younger siblings of the Franklin High School basketball standouts Shoni Schimmel and Jude Schimmel. Shoni is currently ranked in the top 10 nationally for her class and just received the Portland Interscholastic League (PIL) Player of the Year award for the 2009-10 season. Jude is a junior and received PIL Player of the Year honors as sophomore and returned to the first team for the 2009-10 season. College coaches crowd the stands at Franklin games hoping to get the girls to play for their school. Job and Milan lead this young team offensively and defensively. Mick, one of the younger players on this team, is getting stronger and improving everyday. Job had a season high of 20 points during a February 27 victory at Harrison Park.

The team is one of the most diverse groups we have at NAYA with students from nine different tribes. The tribes are Umatilla, Klamath, Oglala Lakota, Siletz, Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Upper Skagit, Mayan and Nez Perce.

The Native American Youth and Family Center's "Neerchokikoo Powwow: Honoring Our Youth, Elders and Sacred Land"

The Native American Youth and Family Center hosts its first ever Neerchokikoo Powwow on May 14-15, 2010. The purpose of this powwow is to celebrate the purchase of the new NAYA Family Center's building and grounds from Portland Public Schools, once known as the old Whitaker Middle School. The property is historically intertwined with the Native community and was once called Neerchokikoo, a Chinook village site located on the property. NAYA Family Center sees the property as a place that incorporates the history and honors the significance of reclaiming tribal lands.

The site on which NAYA now stands was a thriving village for the Multnomah Chinook people well into the 20th century. It had more than 126 dwellings and a year-round encampment. In June of 2006, when NAYA Family Center moved to the site, staff officially asked the Chinook community for permission to make their new home on Chinook homeland. The process to purchase the property included a major investment from the Northwest Area Foundation to complete renovations and provide for the down payment before the purchase could be final.

The powwow will kick off at 7 p.m. on Friday evening to begin our celebration. There will be an honoring for the Northwest Area Foundation which helped to make the purchase of the building possible. On Saturday, the powwow will also include a dinner for the public and an honoring of youth and elders in the Native community.

Come join us in getting together to see old friends and meet new ones! All are welcome!

Native American Youth and Family Center hosts Neerchokikoo Powwow Honoring our Youth, Elders and Sacred Land		Vendors and Food Concessions Registration is required by April 30. To register, please contact Tawna Sanchez or Donita Fry at (503) 288-8177.
	Friday and Saturday May 14-15, 2010	Announcer Arnold Little Head Whip Man Ed Goodall Host Drum Four Directions
	Ground Blessing and Grand Entry Friday at 7p.m.	NAYA Family Center 5135 NE Columbia Blvd Portland, Oregon 97218
	Saturday Grand Entries 1p.m., 7p.m.	<i>NAYA's Mission</i> "To enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families in partnership with the community through cultural identity and education"
Feed and Honoring Saturday at 5p.m.		

Native-Owned Business Spotlight

By Gretchen Lovell, Sustainability Assistant

Last May, Kenton resident and former NAYA employee Jessie Burke (*Ojibwe*) opened Posie's Café, a coffee shop for parents and kids alike.

"I knew our neighborhood needed a sort of third place," says Jessie. "You have home, you have work and where you spend time with your community is the 'third place.'" As a new mother, she knows that there are few places to go where a child is completely welcome.

"I wanted to create a community space that truly welcomed the entire community, children being a valid component of the community, and everyone having a space." They have incorporated a children's room (complete with a chalkboard wall and toys) into the café, as well as other activities and events for both adults and children.

The community was very supportive. On their first day open, without any publicity, more than 100 people walked through their front door!

Walk into Posie's, and you will see a broad range of clients. Most likely, there are folks on laptops and children—lots of children. Every weekday morning, the café hosts a children's activity. Those working on laptops don't mind.

"They've heard my spiel about this being a true community shop," Jessie says. The second wave of kids comes when they get out of school. During the evening, parents often come in for dessert and listen to live music.

Posie's Café
8208 N. Denver Avenue
Portland, OR 97217
(503) 289-1319

"I wanted to create a community space that truly welcomed the entire community, children being a valid component of the community, and everyone having a space." Jessie Burke (Ojibwe), Posie's Cafe



Jessie Burke with her daughter, Anouk

Nawitka Catering: Open for Business!

By Tim Tommaso, Kitchen Coordinator

NAYA Family Center's (NAYA) Food Services Program officially began in November 2008 with the opening of our new state-of-the-art kitchen. At the time we had one full time employee, Tim Tommaso, (*Blackfeet*) and a small but dedicated group of volunteers to serve NAYA's program needs and lunch for the Early College Academy. Since then we have seen the birth of our licensed catering company, NAYA's Nawitka Catering Service. In addition, we have added two full time employees, Sarah Sterling and Mona Ballard. Nawitka is now providing nutritious lunches to four schools outside NAYA as well as an extensive catering menu to any who seek our services.

We are also in our third growing season in the NAYA garden. Our garden not only provides fresh produce for our catering program but also provides unique education for students and the general public in food production and sustainable practices.

In the future, we are looking forward to experiencing growth in our catering service both in providing a Native oriented cuisine as well as an opportunity for students and clients to receive experience in sustainable commercial food service.



Radjeep Kaur, IDA December Graduate



CHILL 2010

By Jeremy Matsen, Academic Specialist

Six NAYA youths completed another successful season in the CHILL Program. CHILL is an organization with a mission to build the self-esteem of underserved youth by teaching them to snowboard.

The six Youth Services students completed the six-week program Saturday, March 6, 2010. Two of the students are CHILL graduates who returned this year as peer leaders to support students snowboarding for the first time.

CHILL gives students the opportunity to experience a challenging and exciting sport that they may not be able to experience otherwise. The organization provides students with snowboarding equipment, clothes, lift tickets and transportation to the mountain.

"[CHILL] takes me to another place, another world. It's something fun to do and showed me that I do have persistence," says Ramiro Soliz, one of the new participants.

"Being on the mountain has given me a new appreciation for nature," says Soliz.

NAYA employees, Jeremy Matsen and Amanda Kaur, spent the last six Saturdays at the Timberline ski area teaching and learning along with the students. The support that students receive from CHILL staff, chaperones and volunteers provide everything the youth need to succeed at snowboarding.

Approximately 100 students participated in CHILL this winter. They all demonstrated amazing progress and by the end of the program they were venturing throughout the mountain on all types of terrain, something many of them could not have imagined six weeks earlier!

Educational IDA Success Story

By Debra Clayton, Achievement Coach

Radjeep Kaur was born in 1975 in Punjab, India. In 2003, she moved to the United States with her husband. Along with many challenges because of the move, she faced many other hardships. Life was a constant struggle for her; she was isolated from her family and her husband became abusive. After three years, she gathered the courage to take her young son and leave. She started over with nothing—she had no clothes, no money and no food. She stayed in shelters, filed for her legal immigration papers and endured a year-long court battle over her divorce and custody of her son. Rajdeep has now finished all her prerequisite classes and is actively applying to nursing schools.

"I have complete faith that Radjeep will get into a great nursing school and excel," says Debra Clayton, achievement coach at the NAYA Family Center. "She is going to make an incredible nurse and has been a complete joy to work with."

When asked how the Educational Individual Development Account (IDA) program, a 3:1 matched-savings program toward higher education, has helped her, Radjeep says, "The staff has been a source of encouragement and support, and I do not have to worry about problems financially when I feel secure."

Since the Post-Secondary Education IDA's inception in 2008, our clients have saved over \$18,688! The potential match for that savings is \$49,399.80. The program has kept students from taking out additional student loans and creating more debt.

"Most of our students spend their matched IDA funds on school tuition, which is a major expense for students," says Debra Clayton, achievement coach. The investment of a college education is a major step in improving and changing a student's life, and is a strong motivator for college success in improving the futures of our families and children.

Help Make the Invisible Visible: 2010 Census

By Lai-Lani Ovalles, Indigenous Community Engagement Coordinator

The Census is a count done every 10 years of everyone living in the United States. This includes citizens and non-citizens of all ages, tribes, races and ethnic groups.

Identifying as Native American on the 2010 Census will help ensure that our community receives quality culturally specific services and programs. Please identify as Native American if you are the descendent of American Indian or Alaska Natives and you feel culturally connected to the Native American community. You do not have to be enrolled in a tribe. You do not have to meet blood quantum requirements.

Historically, there have been chronic undercounts of the Native American community in Census data. An inaccurate count affects equals distribution of resources to our community. When you fill out the Census, you're making a statement about what resources our Native American community needs going forward. With every person counted, we will strengthen our community and give us a stronger voice in decisions that affect our lives and families.

Census forms will be arriving to homes the week of March 15 and should be mailed back by April 1. If you have questions or need help filling out your Census form, you can go to any Questionnaire Assistance Center in Multnomah County between March 19 – April 19. Let's all work together to help make the Native community visible in Multnomah county.

For more information online:
 Multnomah County Census website: www.PDXcensus2010.org
 Federal Census Website: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>
 Toll-Free Telephone Assistance: 1-866-872-6868

Arts in the Academy

By Shilo George, Academy Art Teacher

Dyami Thomas (*Ojibwa/Klamath*) is a junior at NAYA's Early College Academy and is enrolled in Ms. George's 7th period cultural arts class. Dyami has attended NAYA's high school since the first year it opened three years ago.

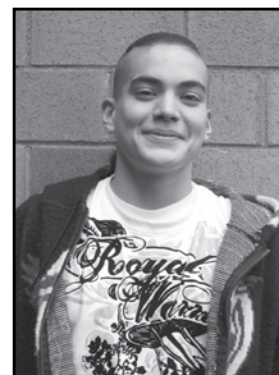
Dyami's older sister, Becca Kirk, also attends the Early College Academy and both grew up watching family members sew regalia, make beadwork and create other types of artwork. Dyami's favorite type of beadwork is loom beading and he created a bracelet in cultural arts class last semester. When he finished the bracelet he started beading a long belt on the loom that he is still working on in class. Although he prefers loom beadwork, he would like to learn lazy stitch, beaded medallions and relearn peyote stitch. In June of 2009 Dyami helped his mother make his powwow regalia.

In all of Dyami's in-class projects, the connection between his artwork and his culture is strong. From using traditional Klamath designs on his shield project to the beadwork design for his belt Dyami's pride in his culture shines through.

In addition to attending NAYA's Early College Academy, Dyami also participates in NAYA's Monday Culture Night, NAYA Basketball and other local community events.



Dyami and staff member Selona Willet at the Winter Student Art Show



ECA student Dyami Thomas



Dyami's beaded belt on the loom



Ethel Branch, our newest board member

Academy Luncheon Celebration!

By Christine Dupres, Sustainability Officer

The NAYA Early College Academy will celebrate this April 29, 2010, with a fundraising luncheon. The luncheon theme is "Literacy for a Lifetime – Engaging Our Students and Making Lifelong Readers." In cooperation with youth services, the Academy is focused on increased student literacy as part of a school wide plan. The luncheon will feature a student digital storytelling presentation from students whose lives are changed every day. Although not everyone can attend this sold out event, we would love your support. It's a hard year and all proceeds will go to straight to the kids at the academy!

New On Board

By Gretchen Lovell, Sustainability Assistant

NAYA Family Center wants to introduce you to our newest board member: Ethel Branch!

Ethel Branch joined NAYA's board of directors in September 2009. Ethel is a public finance associate at the law firm of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in Portland, where she assists tribal communities in financing critical capital infrastructure that ranges from roads, schools, and government facilities to economic drivers such as casinos and energy projects. "I joined the board of NAYA Family Center because I strongly believe in the function it serves in the Portland Native community," says Branch. "One of my core values is to help foster environments where Native children can grow up in happy and healthy environments where they have the personal liberty to flourish to their fullest academic, social, spiritual and athletic potential." Ethel is a graduate of Harvard University, where she received her B.A., M.P.P., and J.D. She is a member of the Navajo Nation, where she was born and raised and where her family continues to live.

"The NAYA Family Center now stands on the precipice of a promising future," she says, "I'm honored and humbled by the opportunity to play even a small role in charting that future."

Welcome aboard, Ethel!



Shilo George, academy art teacher with ECA student Sylvia Woolf

SAVE THE DATE & GET INVOLVED! 5th Annual Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair

Saturday, July 31, 2010
10a.m.-3p.m.
NAYA Family Center
5135 NE Columbia Blvd
Portland OR

Questions or want to get involved?

Contact Jen Matheson at
503-288-8177 x297 or
jenm@nayapdx.org

For academy luncheon sponsorship opportunities, please contact Christine Dupres at (503) 288-8144 or email her at christined@nayapdx.org.

Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd.
Portland, OR 97218-1201
Phone: 503.288.8177
Fax: 503.288.1260



*Serving Native youth and their families
through cultural identity and education.*

April/May

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NAYA Early College Academy Now Recruiting for '09 - '10 School Year

NAYA Family Center's Early College Academy started its third year last fall and is **always accepting students!** Early College Academy students have the opportunity to **earn college credit** through a partnership with Portland Community College. If you would like more information, please contact us at 503-972-2461.

As part of course offering, this year we will be offering all core subject area classes, as well as world languages and a comprehensive physical education program that will include health as part of the curriculum. We will also offer Teen Parent, Native Art, and Native Dance classes. We look forward to this new school year at NAYA, working with so many caring individuals and being a part of our young people's journey toward graduation.