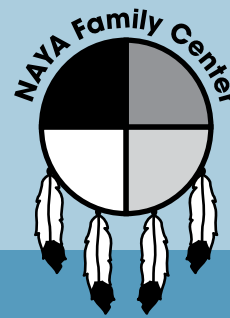


NAYA Family Center NEWS

Empowering the Lives of Native Americans in the Portland Area



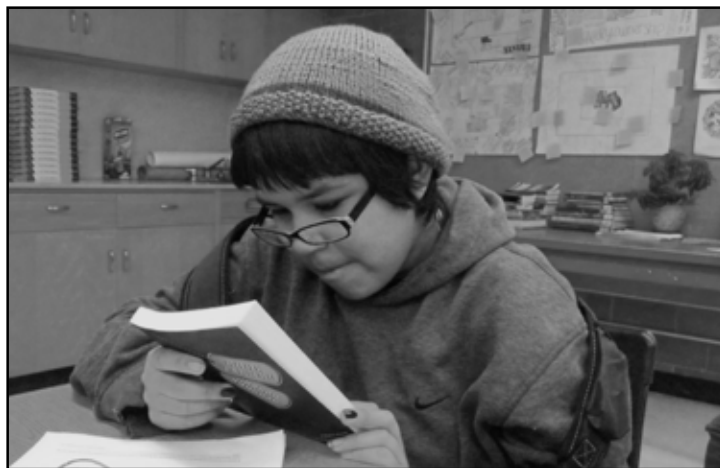
Apr/May/June 2011 Spring Newsletter, Volume 16, Issue 2 of 4

One Book, One Community

Building a community of readers happens one book at a time.

By Ashley Thirstrup, Youth Direct Services Manager

Over the last eight months, the youth services department and the NAYA Early College Academy have been planning the “One Book, One Community” reading event in collaboration with Paragon Education Network and The United Way. The month-long project was created to allow the entire NAYA community—youth, elders, parents and staff—to turn pages together in order to raise our children’s basic literacy skills. NAYA staff met and reviewed a number of different books with the goal to narrow the selection down to one that would resonate with our community. After creating quite a buzz around the NAYA Family Center, the chosen book was unveiled at the One Book, One Community Kick-Off.



NAYA youth Kathrine Suppah (*Warm Springs*) reads *Code Talker* during spring break camp.

Code Talker, by Joseph Bruchac, is a novel about the Navajo Marine Code Talkers of World War II and was chosen because of the interwoven lessons of Navajo culture and language, as well as the historical accounts of WWII that appeal to a wide audience. During spring break camp, youth spent their mornings learning words from the Navajo language, worked on Navajo art projects and read about the Pacific stage of World War II, allowing the students to gain perspective of the lives of the brave young Navajo men who left their sacred homeland to defend the United States. A gallery walk was also created so youth could see photos from the time period, which prompted questions that are being explored and answered during the month of April while students are reading the book.

The “One Book, One Community” project has everyone excited about reading and provides a great opportunity to build background knowledge to talk about events in our history that have shaped us into the people that we are today. Free copies of *Code Talker* were given out at the kick-off event and guest speakers were present to share memories of their experiences with the brave Navajo code talkers. Please join us for the closing event for “One Book, One Community” that will take place on April 27 from 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m. at the NAYA Family Center. For questions or more information, please contact Tracy Bogard, youth activities supervisor, at (503) 288-8177 ext. 316 or tracyb@nayapdx.org.

“Nihimá, ‘Our Mother.’ That is the Navajo word we chose to mean our country, this United States. It was a good name to use. When we Indians fought on those far-off islands, we always kept the thought in our minds that we were defending Our Mother, the sacred land that sustains us.”—excerpt from the book

Stop by the NAYA Family Center to pick up a free copy of the book and get ready to connect this April with the greater Portland-area Native community, one page at a time!

Chxi San: A New Parent & Child Playgroup

By Lorne W. James

Our native roots tell us that children are to show us a new way. Black Elk once said:

Grown men can learn from very little children, for the hearts of the little children are pure. Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss. —Black Elk

For our children, each day is new and brings new beauty. In January, NAYA Family Center's foster care support began the Chxi San ("New Day") Parent and Child Playgroup, a community oriented playgroup for parents and children from birth to age five. Chxi San is designed to strengthen the bond between parent and child, thus creating a stronger, more enriched community. Our play areas are structured to enhance learning at the different stages of our children's lives. Structured play is designed to promote physical, cognitive, language and social/emotional development in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

Through play, families have an opportunity to learn from the hearts of our children. Parents sharing and learning together builds a healthier community for our children to grow. Chxi San Parent and Child Playgroup meets every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Native American Youth and Family Center. For more information or to sign up, please contact Ava Hansen, foster care support specialist at (503) 288-8177 ext. 294 or avah@nayapdx.org.



Neamia Perry (*Wasco/Warm Springs, Yakima, Puyallup and Blackfeet*) builds structure during Chxi San Playgroup.

Unsung Heroes

By Mary Renville, Foster Care Manager

Many of us go through the day-to-day motions of living our lives and doing our jobs, not realizing that in a fraction of a second we could be called upon to act in a way that can change the outcome of another person's life.

The elders were enjoying their lunch, laughing and joking as usual, when all of a sudden one of the elders began to choke. In an instant, Chenoa Landry, domestic violence and elder advocate, threw the papers in her hand down to the ground and leapt across the room to administer the Red Cross Heimlich maneuver. The elder outweighed Chenoa by nearly 100 pounds, but her quick reaction prompted John Laverdure to help. After a few abdominal thrusts the food was dislodged and the elder was able to breathe again.

Those who witnessed Chenoa in action were amazed that such a small person could be so strong, quick-witted and fast-acting in such a situation. When asked to comment, Chenoa was taken aback by her own actions, saying, "It was so automatic; I didn't even give it a second thought. I'm just glad that everyone is okay."

NAYA Youth and Elders Attend *The Ghosts of Celilo*

By Chenoa Landry, Elders and Domestic Violence Advocate

Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor, one hundred NAYA youth and elders were given the opportunity to attend the ground-breaking production of *The Ghosts of Celilo*.

"The Ghosts of Celilo tells of three children's quest to escape a boarding school and catch their ceremonial first salmon before their home is destroyed by the rising waters behind the dam." — The Ghosts of Celilo press release

The musical is based on true stories and events that took place near Celilo Falls, as told by the late Warm Springs elder, Nathan Jim, Sr., and a number of interviewees. NAYA youth and elders enjoyed spending their weekend afternoon at the Newmark Theatre learning a piece of Oregon's indigenous history.

Home Sweet Home for the Angus Family

By Sara Libby, Homeownership Program Manager

Three years ago, the Angus Family was renting an apartment and had grown tired of paying rent to a landlord who did not respond to their needs—or the growing mold problem. Lukas (*Wallowa band Nez Perce, Cayuse and Tlingit-Haida*) and Erin Angus wanted to raise their children, son Jett and daughter Eva, in a healthy and affordable home.

Through their involvement with the NAYA Family Center cultural arts program, they heard about the Annual Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair. After attending their first fair in 2008 and learning more about the services that could help them realize their goal of owning a home, Lukas and Erin enrolled in the Homeownership Individual Account Program (IDA). The program provides a matched savings account; for every \$1 a homebuyer saves, the program matches with \$3. With the support of their Financial Skills Coach, they created a monthly budget to help them reach their most important saving goal.

Erin shared, “Everyone should be able to feel in control of their finances, being more aware of your purchases and goals.”



The Angus Family: Top Row (L to R)-Erin, Peggy-Sue, Lukas; Bottom Row (L to R)-Jett and Eva.

At the 2009 Housing to Homeownership Fair, their name was drawn as one of the \$2,500 Down Payment Assistance Award winners! In November of 2009, they used a HUD Section 184 Indian Home Loan to purchase their first home in St. Johns—less than one mile from Lukas’ job and only a few blocks to schools and a community skate park. Eva loves having her own room and Jett likes their garden, fireplace and the big tree in the yard. This year, the family welcomed their newest member, daughter Peggy-Sue.

The Angus family continues to stay connected to the NAYA Family Center, participating in a number of services that we provide. The NAYA Family Center homeownership program was happy to provide support for the Angus Family.

Lukas Angus comments, “The people at NAYA were always there when we needed them during the entire home buying process, from deciding it was possible to buy a house if we make it a goal, to being there during the signing of closing paperwork.”

For more information about the NAYA Family Center Homeownership Program, visit www.nayapdx.org/homeownership or contact Jen Matheson at (503) 288-8177 x 297 or jenm@nayapdx.org.

Corrections: The 2011 Winter Newsletter featured a story on the Wells Fargo, Proud Ground and NAYA Family Center Partnership, which was erroneously credited to Oscar Arana, Education Manager. The byline should have been credited to Sara Libby, Homeownership Program Manager.

Save the Date!

Saturday, July 30, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
6th Annual Native American Housing to Homeownership Fair
NAYA Family Center’s Siwash House
For more information, contact Jen Matheson at 503-288-8177 ext. 297 or jenm@nayapdx.org.

Early College Academy Art Show

By Melissa Waggoner, Academy Cultural Arts Teacher

Students from the Early College Academy were full of pride during their mid-year student art show held at NAYA Family Center. NAYA staff and elders came by to look at their creations and provide positive feedback for the students' hard work.

The art on display was produced during the first semester of both the cultural arts and 3-D sculpture classes. Students explored traditional Native American artistic traditions, such as beading, and took on the challenge to create medallions as their first major project. Other pieces on display included a paper mâché instillation inspired by the Navajo creation story and a collaborative, mixed-media art project completed by students in Ms. Johnson's U.S. History class.

Students are working hard to finish their loom beading work and will move on to designing their own projects that will showcase the peyote stitch. The 3-D sculpture class will be working on masks and learning about various Native American artists. The year will end with another student art show where our youth will display their artwork.



NAYA Youth Awarded Scholarship!

By Tracy Bogard, Youth Activities Supervisor



L to R: Jeremy Matsen, Phoenix Singer and Tracy Bogard.

NAYA is proud of Phoenix Singer (*Eastern Band Cherokee*), a NAYA youth who was recently awarded Portland State University's Diversity Enrichment Scholarship! The scholarship is given to only a handful of outstanding students from diverse backgrounds and experiences that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Phoenix is an exceptional young man who is a brilliant, motivated and talented youth and community member. Jeremy Matsen, youth advocate, has known and worked closely with Phoenix for the last year and a half.

"Knowing Phoenix has been a pleasure; he is one of the few voracious learners I've come across as a tutor and advocate for high school students. Phoenix always has a book with him when he comes to the tutoring center two to three times a week. He attends the weekly Culture Night and has been dedicated to learning traditional drumming and craft making. Phoenix is always open to new learning experiences and is a great addition to Portland State University."

As a first generation college student, Phoenix will work toward completing his degree while staying close enough to home where he provides care for a parent with MS and an autistic sister who adores him.

Phoenix remarked, "I am honored to have received this award; my thanks to Jeremy Matsen, Tracy Bogard and the NAYA Family Center for their belief that I have the potential to do great things."

Congratulations, again, Phoenix. We are very proud of you!

NAYA Spring Break Camps

By Ashley Thirstrup, Youth Direct Services Manager

Students from all over Portland and Vancouver participated in NAYA's high school and 5th-8th grade spring break camps. Both camps offered opportunities for our youth to explore their culture, build their literacy and math skills, explore forestry and science related fields and meet Native youth from other schools.

The 5th-8th graders explored the Navajo culture in preparation for the month-long "One Book, One Community" reading event. Students learned how to create a sand painting and the importance of corn pollen within the Navajo culture. Our youth also spent their time reading articles about World War II, Japanese and Navajo culture and boarding schools, which provided the students with a historical context for the "One Book, One Community" novel, *Code Talker*.



NAYA youth, Kateri James (*Oglala Sioux*), poses for a picture while horseback riding.



Spring Break campers play lacrosse in NAYA's Siwash House.



NAYA youth have tons of fun at the bowling alley.

The high school spring break camp spent their first day getting to know one another by taking a horseback ride in the beautiful foothills of the Cascades. For many, it was their first time on a horse, but after some gentle encouragement, they saddled up! The youth learned valuable job readiness skills and explored career options in the forestry field. Our youth also had a chance to learn some hands-on forestry-based skills by identifying trees around the Whitaker Ponds and critically examining the health of the slough. The last three days of camp were spent on the Oregon coast at Rockaway Beach. Youth spent their time canoeing, making dentalia shell necklaces, learning about salmon migration and relaxing in the sun.

We want to thank the U.S. Forest Service for their generous grant, as well as youth services staff who worked very hard to make sure that it was an exciting and enjoyable time for our youth!

Want to join the fun?
 For more information on NAYA Camps and Seasonal Programming, contact Ashley Thirstrup, Youth Direct Services Manager at 503-288-8177 ext. 236 or ashleyt@nayapdx.org.

Shawash Ulman Shiksh Cultural Exchange

By Mary Renville, Foster Care Manager



Ka Honua Momona visit with NAYA youth and elders.

In mid-November, the NAYA Family Center had the pleasure of hosting Ka Honua Momona’s Noelani Yamashita, Kilia Avelino Purdy and husbands Todd and Justin. Ka Honua Momona is a non-profit organization located on the beautiful island of Molokai with a mission to “be a model of sustainability *mauka a makai* (from the mountains to the sea).” The group from Hawaii came to Portland in order to engage in a cultural exchange with Native leaders and elders at NAYA and get a firsthand overview of the greenest city in the nation.

Although the group only visited for a short time, a strong connection was forged between our Native Hawaiian guests and the elders. Noelani Yamashita, executive director of Ka Honua Momona, remarked, “I think that it is beautiful that two indigenous groups, oceans apart, can have such similar and basic values and beliefs.”

The elders were invited to visit Molokai to explore Native Hawaiian culture firsthand and share their own cultural expertise with the people. The invitation spurred our elders to create the Shawash Ulman Shiksh (Indian Elder Friends) Cultural Exchange and begin their fundraising efforts.

There will be a kick-off and garage sale on Saturday, May 21 from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. at the Native American Youth and Family Center Siwash House. Soup and fry bread will be available for sale, in addition to baked goods and plants. Donations of good reusable treasures, including small appliances, are welcome; however, large appliances or furniture are not. For further information, contact Abby Wilson at (503) 331-0694.

Former NAYA Youth Accepted Into Three Master’s Programs

By Krystalskye Alexander, Development Assistant

After two years of working as a policy assistant with Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Cary Watters (*Tlingit*) has been presented with not one, but three amazing opportunities to continue her education. Some of you may know Cary Watters better as Cary Turkon, a NAYA youth that was involved with the community through Portland Youth and Elders Council and environmental projects.

In 2008, Cary graduated from Evergreen State College with a bachelor of arts and science in natural resource science and public policy.

Cary remarked, “My involvement with NAYA’s young adults group and Portland Youth and Elders Council sowed the seeds for my passion for civic engagement and community-based participatory research.”

Cary always planned to continue her education, and with encouragement, she applied to master’s programs at Portland State University and the University of Oregon. After weeks of anticipation, Cary received notice that she was accepted to all of the programs that she applied to. To make it all the better, the PSU Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program offered her a full tuition waiver for her first year and a graduate assistantship.

Although Cary has yet to make an official decision about which program she will join, her plans for the future remain focused on giving back to the community.

“I hope to work on environmental restoration and protection projects in the urban environment and some day bring my skills and experience to Indian country.”

Congratulations Cary!
We are so proud of you!



NAYA Sibling and Family Visit Night: From Seeds to the Family Tree

By Selona Willett, Foster Care Support Specialist

Two years ago, a group of concerned NAYA youth approached our foster care support staff to make a simple request. They asked the staff to provide an event where they would be able to share a meal and participate in an activity with the most important people in their lives—their families.

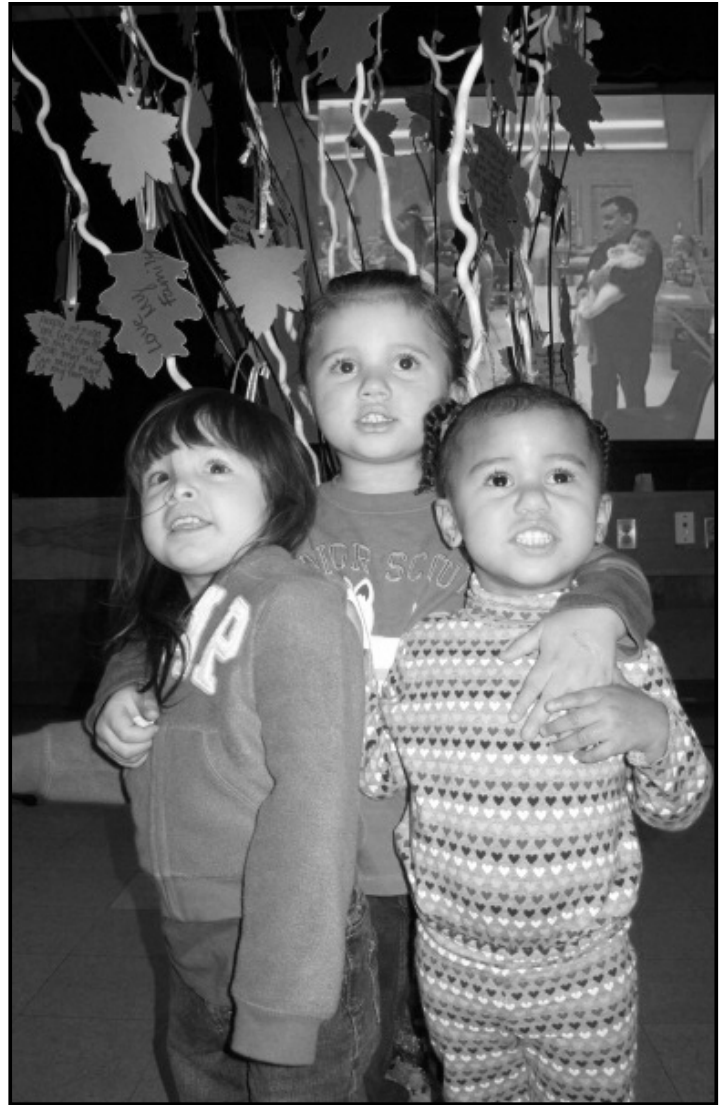
Ava Hansen, foster care support specialist and former BSW intern, wrote a grant proposal to the Albina Rotary Club Foundation. The awarded funds allowed the foster care support team to continue hosting the first year of Sibling and Family Visit Nights. The Rotarians were so impressed that they funded the program for a second year. NAYA has since included the monthly event with the help of the Portland Children’s Levy.

Before the Sibling and Family Visit Nights, the youth were only allowed to see immediate family in a setting in which they did not feel comfortable. Sibling and Family Visit Nights provide a safe space for over 87 youngsters and their families to connect with one another and the larger community. In January, the youth and families worked on a family tree project and were asked to comment on their favorite part of Sibling and Family Visit Nights. Each leaf on the tree revealed the many emotions, thoughtful insights and lasting memories of the youth and their families.

One youth wrote, “Sibling and Family Visit Nights bring safety and balance to people that don’t get to see family,” while others simply wrote, “Grandma.”

The family tree was displayed in the NAYA elders’ room and shared with the community. The foster care support staff recently presented the family tree to the Albina Rotary Club and the Portland Children’s Levy.

“We did this project to really show our supporters the impact that this program has on our youth and families within this community,” remarked Ava Hansen. “It is amazing how something so simple can make such a difference.”



Exploring the Chinook Language

Pronunciation: Kumtux Konoaway Tillikum

Meaning: Kumtux= all knowing/understanding everything;
Konaway= total, universal, the whole; Tillikum= people, relations.

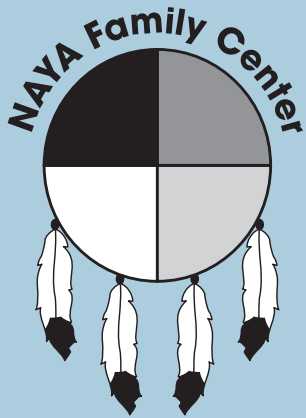
Respect
kimtəks k^hanawi tilixam
respect all people



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*Enhancing the diverse strengths of our youth
and families in partnership with the community
through cultural identity and education.*

