

NAYA Family Center NEWS

Empowering the Lives of Native Americans in the Portland Area



Jan/Feb/Mar 2012

Winter Newsletter, Volume 17, Issue 1 of 4

New Partnership Creates Early Childhood Opportunity for Community!

By Lorne James, Child Care Provider

We are excited to announce—after years of working to have an early childhood education program for our community—that a partnership with Oregon Child Development Coalition will provide the little ones in our community with the opportunity to participate in a Head Start program!

Starting on January 18th, eighteen of our children will receive a quality education designed to help each child learn, grow and be better prepared for the transition from pre-school to kindergarten. This partnership is a great stepping stone for our community as we move toward our goals of having our own early childhood program here at NAYA Family Center.

As a community, we know that the success of our youth depends on the positive experiences that they have—and if we can begin that at a young age, they will be more likely to succeed. We see an overwhelming need in our community for early childhood opportunities, but find only a small number of our Native children in these types of pre-school programs.

We are working closely with our partners to create a safe space for our little ones to learn, and are looking at our Chxi San (“New Day”) playgroup as a model for the new Head Start classroom.

This Head Start will be a five day a week, half-day program with pick-up and drop-offs at NAYA Family Center. Although all eighteen slots have been filled, there is a waiting list available for eligible 3-5 year olds.



For more information on the Head Start program please contact:

Lorne James, Child Care Provider
at (503) 288-8177 ext. 218
or by email at lornej@nayapdx.org

NAYA Youth works with World-Renowned Artist Lillian Pitt!

By Krissy Alexander, Development Assistant

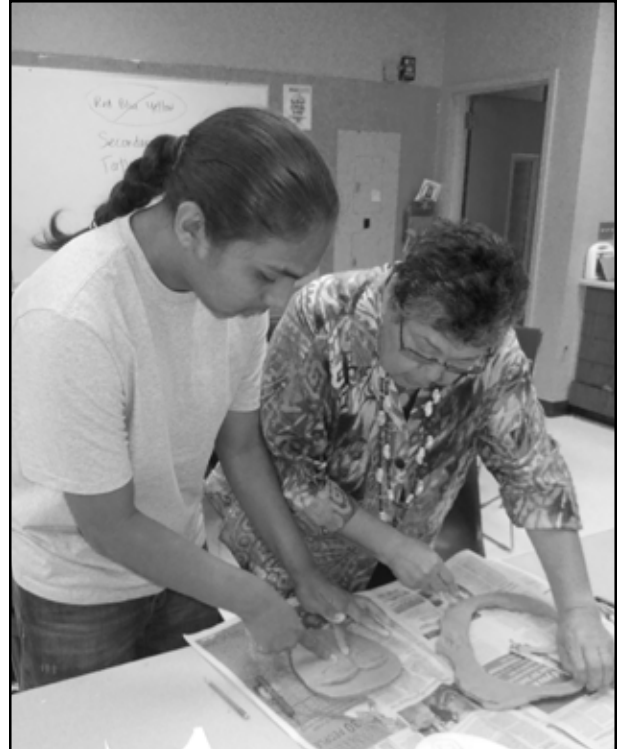
A few years ago, Marcus Johnson (*Warm Springs*) moved from the Warm Springs Reservation where he was born and raised, to live in Portland. Marcus quickly found a community of support at NAYA Family Center. Marcus, a sophomore in NAYA’s Early College Academy, has many talents and is a great athlete and artist. He was chosen to work with internationally recognized, award winning artist, Lillian Pitt (*Wasco, Yakama, Warm Springs*) on a mask for our annual NAYA Gala.

The process took several weeks and provided Marcus the opportunity to explore a new medium revealing a talent in clay that he never knew he had. While making the mask, Marcus also learned some of the cultural traditions, history and stories of his Warm Springs heritage.

Lillian’s years of experience and skills are strengthened by the elder artists who helped her along the way. Lillian remarked, “Now I try to return the favor, by teaching as many people as I can about the things that I know, and by helping them along their own paths in whatever ways I can.”

Lillian’s collaboration with Marcus has inspired him to continue his pursuit of the arts. He plans to attend UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television after graduating from NAYA’s Early College Academy.

We are grateful to Lillian for her willingness to teach and share her knowledge with our youth. Her contributions have paved a path for generations to come!



“It is an honor to be given the opportunity to work with an artist like Lillian.”

-Marcus Johnson (*Warm Springs*) , NAYA Youth

NAYA Early College Academy Students work to “Make a Change”

By Gabrielle Buvinger-Wild, Academy Teacher- Language Arts

Part of the important work we do as educators is teach our youth skills and provide them with knowledge to help them grow into the future leaders of our community. It is crucial that we provide each and every one of our youth with an education that not only helps shape their mind, but also their character.

Project “Make a Change” inspires and empowers NAYA Early College Academy students to bring about positive change in their local and global community through writing, publishing, leadership development and service learning. This year, as part of a collaboration between NAYA Early College Academy’s Language Arts and Social Studies classes, students are identifying issues that are important to them and learning how to be change agents in the community.

NAYA Early College Academy students are making an impact through opportunities provided by partnerships with *Street Roots* and Mercy Corps. Students will write poems and essays that will be published in *Street Roots*, a nonprofit, grassroots newspaper that assists people experiencing homelessness and poverty. One of our students, already had his dream of being a published poet realized, with his poem “I am what I am” appearing in the October 28 issue of *Street Roots*.

In the months ahead, our students will attend leadership trainings at Mercy Corps Action Center and develop skills to address a community need during a week long project.

When asked, “What does it mean to be a change agent?” A student remarked, “To be a change agent is to lead by example. This means doing what you say, when you say it.”



Our students are well on their way to making a lasting change in our community.

Keep an eye out for our students’ work in upcoming Street Roots!

Help us keep our food pantry stocked!

By Chenoa Landry, Elder’s Advocate and Domestic Violence Advocate



No child, family or elder should worry about where their next meal will come from, but unfortunately this is a reality for many in our community. The need for emergency food is continuing to grow, and as much as we try to meet the demand, our supply is never enough.

At the beginning of December, our community need was so high that the shelves of NAYA Family Center’s food pantry were empty. It is heart-breaking to turn families and elders away, especially when we know that the long winter months can be the most trying.

NAYA reached out to the community for support in replenishing the food pantry and in a week’s time we were able to temporarily restock the shelves. Although there was an outpour of support and generosity, maintaining a constant supply of food is a struggle.

Please consider making a food or cash donation to our organization, so that we can meet the daily needs of our community.

Donations can be dropped off or directly sent to:

NAYA Family Center
5135 NE Columbia Boulevard
Portland, OR 97218

For more information, please call Tawna Sanchez, Director of Family Services at (503) 288-8177 ext. 209 or email tawnas@nayapdx.org.

Thank you to all of our 2011 Gala Sponsors!

By David Roberts, Development Director

The Native American Youth and Family Center’s 8th annual gala celebration was an outstanding success! A sold out crowd of over 500 attendees and volunteers filled the Governor Hotel on the evening of November 11th making this our most successful gala to date—raising over \$239,000!

The evening began with a blessing from NAYA Elder, Buzz Nelson and featured a traditional Native American meal, live and silent auctions and a special performance by internationally recognized Northwest Native Coastal artist and Culture-bearer David Boxley and his Git-Hoan dancers. We were fortunate to have the support of many noted politicians. Governor Kitzhaber and first lady Cylvia Hayes, State Treasurer Ted Wheeler, Mayor Sam Adams and Commissioner Nick Fish were all in attendance and participated in the evening’s events.

Three of our community members—NAYA Elder Frank Alby, Portland Youth and Elder Council Coordinator Donita Sue Fry and NAYA Youth Jazmine Rodriguez—shared their personal stories of overcoming major obstacles and finding success through NAYA services and community support.

This event would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors:

The **San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians** was our Potlatch (“to give”) sponsor for the event. For the past several years, the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians has been a gracious supporter of the NAYA Family Center’s annual auction and gala event. This year the tribe extended their support as a Potlatch sponsor and it is with great appreciation and respect that we thank them and honor the relationship that we have built with this valuable community partner.

This year **Comcast** joined us as our premier Illahee (“sustaining land”) sponsor. Comcast continues to be a fantastic partner to NAYA Family Center and has helped our community in many ways. They have been a partner in increasing literacy, preserving language and the story of our elders, and this year we are honored to be a partner with Comcast in presenting the Digital connectors program in our Early College Academy.

The **Portland Development Commission** supports the Native Community on many different levels extending way beyond Native American Month and one of our strongest partners in creating successful Native Businesses. This year the Portland Development Commission joined our celebration as an Illahee (“sustaining lands”) sponsor.



Auctioneer Johnna Wells at NAYA's 2011 Auction.

The **Northwest Area Foundation** continues to be a very special partner for the NAYA Family Center. There is no easy way to explain the enduring impact they have had on the Native Community except to say that our organization and the Native community in Portland would not be as strong as we are today without their generous support!

This year we were also very proud to welcome **Legacy Health System** as a Tillicum (“relations”) sponsor to this year’s gala. Legacy Health System is a phenomenal partner for NAYA Family Center in our health and wellness initiatives and we are very thankful for their continued generous support and partnership.

We appreciate all of our sponsors and feel honored to have such tremendous support from organizations that provide us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Portland’s Native American youth and families.



Nichole Maher, NAYA Executive Director and Dana Arviso, Potlatch Fund Executive Director during the silent auction.

"Supporting NAYA and all the great work it does with youth, especially on the education front, is a great opportunity for us to give back to our communities."

-Lilisa Hall, Executive Director, Foundation and Strategic Outreach for Pacific Power



NAYA Youth, Jazmine Rodriguez-Griffin shares her personal story with a room full of NAYA supporters.



Governor Kitzhaber and First Lady Cylvia Hayes show their support for NAYA Family Center.



David Boxley and the Git-Hoan dancers perform to a sold-out crowd.

A New Homeowner!

By Jen Matheson, Homeownership Program Specialist



(From Left): Bev Mayorga, Lisa's real estate agent and Lisa Archuleta and her son Miguel

Lisa Archuleta (*Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde*) was tired of paying rent and wanted the safety and stability of homeownership. Lisa and her son Miguel moved in with family members to lower the monthly rent and started to figure out where she could cut costs. Working with NAYA Family Center's Homeownership program, she attended homebuyer education and opened a matched savings account with the IDA program. In partnership with NAYA Family Center, Proud Ground was offering a home in the neighborhood she wanted to be in at a price she could afford. The formerly foreclosed home had been renovated and weatherized by NAYA Construction Services, a construction trades training program. Lisa was also able to use a down payment assistance grant from her Tribe to increase affordability.

Lisa shared, "Everyone on my home buying team was very helpful. My Realtor, Bev Mayorga (*Chickasaw*) was exceptional; she took me step by step through the home buying process. I could call her anytime day or night and this was very reassuring to me."

Lisa and her son Miguel love their new home, "It's has everything we planned for, a fireplace, three bedrooms and two bathrooms, It's on a quiet street with a park full of tall Fir trees as our backyard. We already knew several people in the neighborhood, and even have family members a few blocks away." Lisa adds, "I am so blessed for what the Creator has provided us and thankful for the people and resources that have helped us. I feel a great sense of security; we now have an investment for the future. This is quite an accomplishment!"

Lisa's home was made possible through a partnership with NAYA Family Center Homeownership Program, Proud Ground, NAYA Construction Services, Wells Fargo, Community Frameworks and the City of Portland.

NAYA Early College Academy wins 2011 AIDS Walk High School Challenge!

By Lorne James, Child Care Provider

For the second year in a row, NAYA Family Center's Early College Academy students were announced as the Cascade AIDS Project's annual AIDS Walk Portland High School Challenge winners! Last year our NAYA youth raised over \$1,000 and recruited a total of 15 team members. This year, with higher goals set, NAYA Family Center's Early College Academy students raised over \$2,000 and recruited over 60 team members!

On Sunday, October 2nd, NAYA youth, staff and community members gathered in Portland's Pioneer Square sporting they're NAYA gear and banners for the 5K walk.

The AIDS Walk brings together, individuals, teams and volunteers with the goal of raising much-needed funds for HIV/AIDS services, public education and outreach to youth and adults most at risk for contracting HIV.

Half of the funds raised will be returned to the NAYA Early College Academy to support sexual health education. The NAYA Early College Academy students will also enjoy a Winter Wonderland themed dance as part of being the challenge winners.

Congratulations to our students and community!



Team NAYA at Cascade AIDS Walk.

Release of Native American Report Catches National Attention

By Leah Gibson, Lead Community Receptionist Specialist

On November 2 at the National Conference of American Indians, The Native American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile was released. The profile is a collaboration among the Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, the Portland urban Indian community, the Coalition of Communities of Color, and Portland State University.

The project’s main purpose is to provide much-needed, accurate, and timely information on the Native community in Multnomah County. This information is instrumental in helping leaders in the Portland urban Indian community affect policy and acquire funding for Native people in this region.

“The policy-making community can’t help but to take notice,” said Ann Curry-Stevens. “It builds their awareness and legitimizes Native American community participation on the policy level.” Curry-Stevens says that with this report, we are moving away from tokenistic approaches to real community involvement.

While the profile provides information and research that focuses on disparities in the Native community, it also provides a list of policy changes that needs to happen in order to turn those disparities around. Some of the most startling statistics are included in the section on child welfare for Native children in Multnomah County.



(From left): Damian Barnett, Executive Director, National Council of Urban Indian Health; Nichole Maher, Executive Director, Native American Youth & Family Center; Julia Meier, Coordinator, Coalition of Communities of Color; and Ann Curry-Stevens, Researcher and Instructor, Portland State University.

Recently, The Native American Community in Multnomah County report gained national attention through an article by Indian Country Today. Read the article by visiting, www.indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com

This report is one part of a larger project guided by the Coalition of Communities of Color to provide information on several communities of color in Multnomah County. For more information and to read the full report, check out www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/.

NAYA Early College Academy Students visit Nike Campus!

By Daniel Guilfoyle, Early College Academy Manager

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month, Nike provided NAYA Early College Academy students and staff, as well as students from the Umatilla Reservation, with an opportunity to visit Nike’s World Headquarters in Beaverton for a tour and private screening of “Off the Rez, the Shoni Schimmel Story.”

The Jonathan Hock documentary, follows the high school basketball career of Shoni Schimmel. The film is not only about basketball, but a story of community and the trials and triumphs of the Schimmel family as they strive to be successful off the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Schimmel family has a long standing relationship with NAYA Family Center and our community. It was a wonderful opportunity for our youth to view a film that they could relate to and find inspiration from, as they work towards their own goals.

Our youth were also taken on a tour of the extensive Nike campus, which left many of our students asking, “How can I work here?”

Our youth were also given the chance to speak with the Director, Jonathan Hock and Shoni’s mother, Ceci Moses, during a question and answer session following the film. To make the experience that much greater, one of our students won a pair of unreleased and very valuable LeBron James basketball shoes during the event’s raffle!

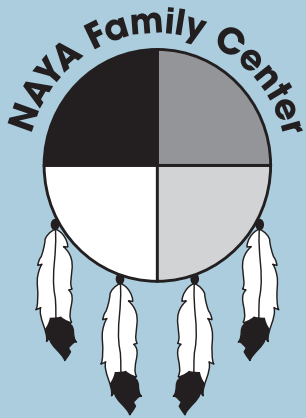
This was NAYA Early College Academy’s first ever all school field trip. It was a great experience for all of the students and staff. We hope to provide more opportunities that will leave our youth feeling inspired and motivated! Thank you Nike!



5135 NE Columbia Blvd.
Portland, OR 97218-1201

Phone: 503-288-8177
Fax: 503-288-1260
www.nayapdx.org

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #2851
Portland, OR



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

