FOUR DIRECTIONS NEWS

a newsletter
supporting
Wicahpi Koyaka Tiospaye
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

November 2019 NEWSLETTER

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Ti Ska Ceremony House
Renovation Update

We are thrilled to report that the first phase of work began in June with setting the foundation for the new addition. The construction was started in July and three weeks later on the evening of July 24 the community gathered to have a ceremony of "giving thanks" in the newly completed addition! To have so much work done in three weeks speaks to the dedication, belief and commitment of a shared vision! It was beautiful to see the community gather around this project and volunteer their hard work to make it possible. To witness a community come together to make
a "dream" a reality is phenomenal and powerful!

A year ago, after a major medical procedure Mr. Moves Camp, Executive Director of Wicahpi Koyaka Tiospaye, gave voice to his vision of renovating and adding an addition to Ti Ska Ceremony House. His vision was centered on leaving a solid foundation for the future generations to continue to have ceremony, to pray and to stay healthy. Ti Ska's infrastructure is built on the principals and legacy of the Lakota Oyate's cultural teachings, ceremonies, stories, songs and healing for a path to health, wellness and survival.

Jim Willis, general contractor with Cherokee Builders Corp and Larry Steele, carpenter, took the lead in beginning the first phase of this project. Families came together to work on it and the community was involved from the beginning to the end. It took numerous volunteers to make this first phase possible and we acknowledge each and every one - from contractors to laborers, runners, cooks, supporters and many others!
Photos include foundational work for the new addition, flooring, framing, siding to match the new addition with the old structure, sheet rocking, new roof on the old structure and new addition, electrical work, set up plumbing for the second phase of the project.

We want to thank the primary donors for the funds they donated to the first phase of our Ti Ska Ceremony House project:

2013 Northern Lights Fund
Peace Development Fund
Mary McGuire
Ashley B. Semier
Bob Steffans

Our next goal is to raise $20,000.00 to begin and complete the second phase of this project in summer 2020. Please consider supporting this project by making a generous donation.
Tax deductible donations may be made on line at www.wicahpikoyaka.org or checks may be mailed to WKT c/o Billy Marchese, treasurer, 820 Palm Blvd., Venice, CA 90291

If you would like to contribute to Wicahpi Koyaka Tiospaye, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, please make a donation HERE

Appreciation for Lupe Avila

Today, we honor Lupe Avila. From the bottom of our hearts, Wicahpi Koyaka Tiospaye would like to say Pilamaya and thank you to Lupe Avila for her years of service. Lupe is a founding Board Member of WKT since 1994. Lupe has been instrumental in helping to organize all the events around the Sun Dance in Wanblee. Lupe has served on all Board positions from Member to President. Lupe has helped raise funds every year for WKT's projects for Sun Dance, Wiping of the Alter, Wiping of the Tears, Womanhood and Manhood Ceremonies, Youth and Elder Ceremonies, Healing Ceremonies, and Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. Lupe has worn multiple hats at once. She has taken care of the financial books, drafted letters, organized ceremonies, and spearheaded WKT to help provide ceremony, heal and feed us.
Lupe is a loving, passionate, and generous Indigenous woman. She cherishes her family and friends first. Lupe is a Sun Dancer and participates in many traditional ceremonies and events in her Tiospaye. She is surrounded by wisdom and has an unbreakable heart for these spiritual ways.

For years, Lupe has worked out of the cookshed preparing meals, serving food, organizing, cleaning, painting, fixing outlets, and praying over the food. Lupe contributes in so many ways to our Tiospaye. She has done this while taking the reins and making sure the needs of the people are taken care of for a powerful Sun Dance. One of the biggest ways Lupe gives back is through prayer. Her prayers are powerful and come directly from her heart. Her voice and her fortitude embrace her spirit. She continually gives and gives. She does not let anything get by her.

Lupe is a Grandma, Mother, Sister, Auntie, and Companion to us all. We all look up to her. We love you Lupe for who you are. You are an inspiration to every one of us! Lupe is a role model that We strive to be. She stands with the next seven generations. She cares for us. No task is too difficult or beyond her. With every step, Lupe remembers her ancestors and walks forward with humility. Lupe is a teacher to all of us. She shows us how we should care for one another. She has taught us to respect the plants, trees, grass, and bees. Lupe has instilled in us that with a little courage you can improve the world around you.

You have always been there for us, before you have taken care of yourself. You have taken care of ceremonies year after year. You have brought the
pipe and the tree girls into the Sundance showing your commitment to the People and the future of generations to come. You walk with a good heart and we say thank you.

Lupe does not do this alone. Lupe and her long-life companion and adventurer David have offered their home for years to the people. We thank you David for supporting WKT as well. David and Lupe are a big part of the Sun Dance Tiospaye. Lupe continues to help the Tiospaye after stepping away from the WKT Board this past summer of 2019. We pray that the Creator takes good care of you as you have of us. We ask that all your needs are taken care. We pray for good health and happiness to you Auntie. We love you dearly.

WKT Tiospaye

Youth Camp Success

The Cultural Youth Camp was held in the month of June. It was coordinated by Lor etta Moves Camp, Hector Patty, and Dow Souksavath. This camp was a part of another project called the Cultural exchange. The objective of the camp was to not only teach the youth a number of skills and have fun activities, but also to bring together youth from different parts of the United States. We want to thank the many people who donated funds to help make the Youth Camp a success.
Youth from Los Angeles and the Bay Area took part, as well as mentors from both areas. A couple of programs that participated in the camp were Homey from the Bay area, and the California Endowment from LA. We had our own local mentors and youth attending and we also had mentors from California who are not associated with these programs. The kids found that they had a lot in common with each other, even if their home environments were totally different.

During the camp we did yoga, horseback riding, a lot of different types of art projects, poetry, self-defense and Jiu jitsu, public speech skills learning, tipi making, hiking, and listened to stories from our elders. We also held talking circles and had conversations about mental health and healing. We had s'mores by the fire and shared Lakota stories. During the camp many relationships were built. Not only did the youth make connections with each other but the mentors all made connections as well. Over all it was a fun experience for everyone involved. The next step for the cultural exchange is to bring our youth from South Dakota to
California so they can experience the culture in both LA and the Bay area. We look forward to coming to California and to the next summer camp.

Dow Souksavath, Cultural Exchange/ Camp coordintor

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Lower Brule Sundance Family News

Hau Mitakuyepi!

Relatives, we are already more than one quarter into our year and time is flying by again! Here in Lower Brule we are preparing for winter, some say it's going to be cold and snowy again this year but I guess that's what winter on the northern plains is all about! We remember all of our Sundance family in our prayers as we get through another busy year with school, sports, work etc...

I wanted to thank everyone for a beautiful ceremony again. This year was an amazing expression of love and compassion with the Sundance family working on several projects at once along with preparing the grounds for ceremony. The ceremony house turned out amazing and we were able to hold the wopila ceremony in the newly remodeled house. Jim, Larry, and their crew did an incredible job and it seemed like it all happened almost overnight! I really tried to savor every moment this year working alongside such amazing people throughout the 12 days; it really is a blessing to be able to share this time with the hard working and talented Sundance family. To have Lekshi Richard and brother Carlos with us and both doing amazing after the surgery last year was one of the best parts of ceremony; wopila Tunkasila for the health of these two men! Thank you to everyone that
helped with our ceremony in any way, it is such a huge undertaking but is also amazing to see everyone working together to make it happen.

Coming back to work gets more and more difficult every year after leaving Wanblee but we need those prayers here and in all our communities. We'll keep everyone in our prayers and hope to see some Sundance family throughout the winter!

Mike Ryan

San Francisco Honors Indigenous Peoples
SF Arts Commission Honors Bay Area's Indigenous Community

From October 4 to December 14, 2019 the San Francisco Arts Commission's is co-sponsoring the American Indian Initiative celebrating the culture and contributions of local Indigenous Peoples.

Six months after the Community advocated for the removal of the Early Days sculpture from the Pioneer Monument, members of the American Indian community were photographed on the vacant 4th plinth illustrating that we are still here and we are pivoting the narrative toward truth and reconciliation. "The Continuous Thread: Celebrating Our Interwoven Histories, Identities and Contributions" includes art and poetry exhibitions, a temporary light-art project, community celebrations, concerts, a film festival, a fashion show and more.

The initiative began over the weekend of April 5, 2019, when more than 150 members of the local American Indian community were photographed by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, Jean Melesaine, and Britt Bradley, centered around the Pioneer Monument, specifically the empty plinth where the Early Days sculptural
50th Anniversary: Peaceful Occupation of Alcatraz Island
(Although this event took place last week, it is relevant news for us)

Indians of All Tribes will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the historic takeover and occupation of Alcatraz in 1969. The event will be celebrated with four days of prayer, ceremony, speakers, and entertainment beginning November 20 through November 23, 2019, on Alcatraz Island in conjunction with the National Park Service. The event is intended to bring together veterans of the occupation and to educate visitors to the island about the history and struggles of the American Indian. Led by student activists, Richard Oakes, from San Francisco State and LaNada WarJack from UC Berkeley, fourteen American Indian student activists initiated the takeover on November 9, 1969. On November 20, 1969, an additional eighty-nine Indian occupiers that included entire families, joined them on the island.

The activists relied on federal policy and a provision of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie that authorized Indians to settle land unused by the federal government. Alcatraz, formerly a federal prison, was closed under the Kennedy administration in 1963; therefore, the unused land fell under the provision of the Treaty that provided for resettlement by Indians. The students seized the
land not only as a political statement but a cultural one. They sought to develop an environmental and cultural center and a school that would allow them to teach native languages and customs to preserve the cultural heritage that had been denied them by government programs that practiced forced assimilation.

The takeover and occupation, which attracted a groundswell of support from across the nation, lasted nineteen months ending on June 11, 1971. The activists asserted their resolve for self-determination. During this time, there was a marked increase of American Indian militancy across the nation that attracted the attention of President Nixon. Nixon later signed fifty-two legislative measures to reform some of the grievances addressed by the protestors such as the Indian Termination Act of 1953, which had ended federal recognition of Indian tribes, disbanded tribes, and allowed tribal land to be confiscated and sold. His successor, Gerald Ford, championed Nixon's last piece of legislation, The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which was signed in 1975.

Today, Indians are fighting for a greater voice on the American political stage. Major issues such as the Keystone XL, which affect tribal sovereignty and water rights, are a serious environmental threat to tribal lands, and the ongoing disappearances of American Indian women continue to be a pervasive threat with no end in sight.

Everyone is invited to join the 50th Anniversary celebration, which will feature some of the original veterans of the takeover as speakers throughout the four-day event.

If you would like to support this event, volunteer, or obtain more information, please visit Indians of All Tribes on Facebook

Submitted by Julia Sabory

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