

Economic Services Administration Celebrates National American Indian Heritage Month

by Mike Mowrey and Sandi Cheek

On November 5, the Division of Child Support, Tribal Relations Team and the Community Services Division, State-Tribal Relations Unit, hosted our 15th annual celebration of National American Indian Heritage Month (NAIHM).



Since its inception in 1990, NAIHM was designed to promote and recognize the extraordinary professional, educational and cultural contributions by the first Americans that have enriched our everyday lives.

Their rich ancestry and sacred traditions illustrate the strength and unyielding spirit shared by the many great tribal nations across this land.



Well over 100 people attended the Celebration held at the Capital View building in Olympia. Our Celebration included:

- Luncheon featuring Indian Tacos and desserts
- WA He Lut Salish Sea Drum & Dance Group (Performing traditional dance, drumming and singing)
 - This talented elementary and middle school grade level performing arts group has traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe to perform and participate in cultural exchanges with diverse communities. The students from the Wa He Lut Indian School participate in rigorous culturally relevant performing arts lessons such as singing and drumming, dancing and speaking, as well as regalia and instrument making. They proudly performed in custom made regalia consisting of traditional colors, textiles, and designs that tell the story of creation from local Salish Sea Native culture.
- American Indian Arts and Crafts display
 - Vickie Era-Pankretz is an artist, teacher and historian. She has been extremely generous with her time participating in our annual NAIHM celebrations for many years. She displayed a wide variety of cedar, spruce root and grass basketry; intricate beaded jewelry and headdresses, small Alutiiq mask replicas and miniature paddles.
- Continuous Slide Show featuring photos taken at many years of partnership events such as Tribal Canoe Journeys and prior Heritage Month events
- Tribal Informational Resource Table



Each year, throughout the month of November, look for other events across the State to celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month.



Thank you to everyone participating in the Celebration, including those who brought food or provided monetary donations.

We look forward to seeing you next year!