

Economic Services Administration Celebrates 18th National American Indian Heritage Month

by Georgia Payne

On November 2nd, the Economic Services Administration celebrated its 18th annual recognition of National American Indian Heritage Month (NAIHM). The event was hosted by the Office of the Assistant Secretary, the Division of Child Support's Tribal Relations Team, and the Community Services Division, State-Tribal Relations Unit.

November is the officially recognized month to celebrate and commemorate the heritage of our American Indian and Alaska Natives. It is a time to honor the enormous contributions, achievements, and sacrifices of America's first people. It is also a time to learn and celebrate the rich cultural and historical legacy of Native people. Proclamations are issued each year by the sitting [President](#) and our state [Governor](#).

The ESA celebration was held at the Capital View 1 building in Olympia, with over 100 people in attendance. Attendees enjoyed a luncheon of Indian Tacos with fry bread prepared by members of the Chehalis Tribe, and members of the SPIPA TANF program, with crockpots of Chili volunteered by ESA staff. Dessert was pumpkin pie, with whipped cream, and assorted cookies.

Attendees also enjoyed the Wa He Lut Salish Sea Drum & Dance Group (Performing traditional dance, drumming and singing). This talented group of elementary and middle school students 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 were display by ESA's Dana'e Marshall who is Navajo and Hopi, and an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. She is part of the 7generations Intertribal Culture Family, and she sings and dances with the Medicine Creek Treaty Tribes & the Coastal Ones of WA state. Her exhibit included canoe paddles, a baby board, cedar bark in the round, handmade moccasins, beaded jewelry, wool regalia, Pendleton blankets, and handwoven hats and baskets.

Native American Indian Heritage Month celebrations are continuing in DCS offices around the State. The **Olympia DCS** office held their celebration on November 7th, with tribal partners volunteering to help staff make cedar roses. They also had several showings of TED Talks featuring [Matika Wilbur](#) a member of Swinomish and Tulalip tribes who is working on a project called [Changing the way we see Native Americans](#), and [Surviving Disappearance, Re-Imaging & Humanizing Native Peoples](#).



The **Spokane DCS** office also held its celebration on November 7th, with a performance by the Salish School, followed by an Indian Taco lunch. All donations and lunch proceeds are being donated to the Salish School.

The **Seattle DCS** office held their celebration on November 7th. The Tribal Team invited Aimee Gone, Office of Indian Policy, and Becky Bendixen, Tribal Program Specialist with the Northwest Regional Council, to come and present. Aimee recently took a trip to San Francisco and spoke about her visit to Alcatraz Island where she learned about the occupation of Alcatraz by 89 American Indians who called themselves the Indians of All Tribes. She challenged us all to learn more not only about the occupation but other historical events relating to Native Americans. Becky is a Culture Bearer for her tribe, the Unangax, from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. She spoke about her culture, answered questions and sang a song in her native language. The presentation was very well received by Seattle staff!

The **Everett DCS** office celebration was held on November 8th featuring Tulalip storyteller, [Lois Landgrebe](#). In the afternoon they enjoyed a performance by the Quil Ceda Tulalip Elementary school drummers and dancers. An Indian Taco Buffet lunch was served between sessions. And they learned a canoe paper craft. The Everett Tribal Team is also sending a weekly tribal tidbit, fact, or video to all staff throughout the month of November.





Bernadine Phillips, Rachel Lundin, Julie Edwards

The **Wenatchee DCS** office celebration was held on November 14th, featuring Julie Edwards from the Colville Tribal Police Department, and Bernadine Phillips, the Wenatchi Bands Aboriginal Rights Coordinator for the Colville Tribes. Georgia Payne, Sr. Manager of the DCS Tribal Relations Team also spoke about the history of DCS' tribal program. Bernadine's presentation included parts of the video False Promises: Lost Land of the Wenatchi. Participants also viewed the DSHS [All My Relations](#) video regarding the importance of cultural connections for Native Americans.

The **Tacoma DCS** office held their Native American Indian Heritage Month celebration on November 16th. The celebration included Native American Art and drum music, and a Tacoma Tribal Quiz Show. They also served Indian Fry Bread with cinnamon, sugar, and jam for dessert!



Tacoma Tribal Team Deidre Finley, Mary Groom, and Brandon Aasen; and Chris Franks HQ/TRT.

The **Vancouver DCS** office held their celebration on November 21st, with the sharing of the history of the local Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and a performance by Native Cowlitz drummers.

ESA extends our appreciation and sincere thanks to all the Tribal presenters, cooks, volunteers, staff and everyone who participated and donated. Without your help we could not host such awesome events each year. We are looking forward to next year's NAIHM celebrations and seeing you there!