



NAYA NEWSLETTER

EMPOWERING THE LIVES OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE PORTLAND AREA

WINTER/SPRING 2020

Into Action Celebrating those who make change

The beginning of a new year and a new decade is a natural time to take pause and reflect. However, this *NAYA News* puts a different spin on approaching the new decade. In this “Into Action” edition, we acknowledge those who don’t wait until January 1 to make resolutions. They are the go-getters, the engaged change-makers inspired to act, those special friends of NAYA who noticed a need, identified what they could do to make a difference, and then made it happen.

From those community supporters who found creative ways to generate year-end donations to NAYA and those emerging entrepreneurs fearlessly taking ideas and turning them into businesses, to NAYA’s dear friend, the late Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish, who lived a life of service to others, we pay tribute to all of those with the courage to take that leap of faith and move into action to make things better for us all.

Tribute: Nick Fish led a life of service



Commissioner Fish, Paul Lumley, and NAYA Elders

It seems fitting to dedicate a newsletter with the theme “Into Action” to the late Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish, who passed away on January 2, 2020, at the age of 61, after a two-year battle with cancer.

There are some who are born to be leaders, and Commissioner Fish was among the best of these unique individuals. Hailing from a very long line of public servants and statesmen (his father and grandfathers served in the U.S. House of Representatives; his great, great-grandfather was U.S. Secretary of State; and his brother, Hamilton Fish V, is named after Alexander Hamilton, a close family friend back in the day).

What is remarkable to note is that, without exception, each of the countless tributes published since his passing has praised the Commissioner for his dedication to all the constituents in his beloved city. According to those who knew and worked with Fish, he was a champion of consensus-building, and of taking the time to truly listen to other opinions and forge policy solutions collaboratively. In today’s unpredictable and contentious political climate, such a philosophy and approach will be dearly missed.

We at NAYA witnessed the sincerity of Commissioner Fish’s commitment to reach out to those whose voices were often disregarded and whose needs were left out of debates over city dealings. He was our champion. His renowned community engagement was an authentic attempt to bring diverse perspectives into City Hall. In an already overwhelming day-to-day schedule, Commissioner Fish made time to listen to his community, whether it was meeting constituents for breakfast before the workday began, or—as in the case with his many meetings with NAYA’s elders and clients—traveling across town in order to reach those needing such accommodation.

(Continued, P 2)

Go-getters create innovative ways to support NAYA

As a non-profit organization, NAYA tries to make contributing to our mission as easy as possible. A quick click on a link and the process of donating is done. However, there are some in the community who aren't completely satisfied with this. These are people of action, those who see how to parlay their individual support into something greater. Here are just a few examples.



Last fall, Willie McBride, co-founder of Wy'east Wolfpack (a Portland-based business that promotes health and wellness by encouraging physical activity, time outdoors, and life balance), figured that he could feed two birds with one seed. Since he was already signed up to participate in the grueling Moab 240 ultra-distance run in Utah, he decided he might as well generate a little good for his home community too.

As he explains, "I heard about NAYA and it seemed like it was providing a huge range of important services to

the Native American community in Portland. Also, since childhood I've had an interest in the running tradition of some Native American tribes, how activities like those bring you closer to the earth and into a mindset of spiritual search. So a 240-mile race that would push me to my limits seemed like an applicable journey to connect with the NAYA cause."

After 98 hours, countless blisters, and 240 miles of desert, canyons, and mountains, McBride finished the course. Moreover, McBride's colleagues, competitors, friends, followers, and others in the ultra-long-distance running community donated over \$2,500 to NAYA. He remarks, "It was actually a pretty big range of friends, family, and people in our community around our business. I was very thankful to receive that support and was heartened that people seemed to resonate with the cause."

Later, after letting the blisters heal, McBride made presentations about his remarkable journey and his support of NAYA, raising awareness about the organization with many who may have never otherwise heard of it, generating even more good will in the community.

Fish (continued)

Commissioner Fish was tireless in living a life of action, a life of service to Portland. Never squandering an opportunity, he even used his final public statement to advocate for Portland's homeless community. Fish used his last moments in the public spotlight to call for more resources for supportive housing—affordable homes with wraparound services for residents—because, he emphasized, it is a model that is proven to work in serving a community's most vulnerable citizens. Supportive housing is a model near and dear to NAYA. The recently opened Nesika Illahee affordable housing development adheres to the supportive housing model.

The Native American Youth and Family Center pays homage to Commissioner Nick Fish for his advocacy on issues important to the Native community and for always seeking opportunities to engage with more of our community. We recognize his unwavering commitment to use his platform to represent those born without privilege who needed him most of all. His legacy within the Native community—and all of Portland—will not be forgotten.



Commissioner Fish and Buzz Nelson



Portland band donates kicks to youth



Also bringing NAYA into the spotlight this fall was Portland-based band Portugal. The Man (PTM)—best known for their song *Feel It Still*, their philanthropy and activism, and for winning a Native American Music Award, or NAMMY, in 2019. As a result of some good-natured social media wagering during the NBA playoffs earlier in the year, PTM visited NAYA in November to surprise youth participating in NAYA's basketball league with gifts.

After being told by their head coach and Recreation Coordinator Micah Johnson only that there was a mandatory meeting to attend, NAYA youth arrived unaware of the giveaway about to happen. After a blessing from an elder to open the evening, bassist Zach Carothers announced that the band respected the hard work the kids had put into their teams. In recognition of their perseverance, Carothers concluded, PTM was gifting

each youth with a new pair of Nike Rize basketball shoes and new jerseys and shirts (all in Portland Trailblazer colors, of course).

As Coach Johnson explained to a local reporter, "This is really big for the community. A lot of the kids are excited tonight because they're total sneaker heads. But also, a lot of them are really excited because they have one less thing to worry about to participate in our basketball league. That is huge."

After an elated, sweaty frenzy to find the right sizes, ecstatic NAYA youth, their coaches, and families shared a huge a taco feast, also provided by PTM.

Tattoos for good generate support for NAYA



Jessi Preston, Lombard St Tattoo, Tattooed4Good

Putting her professional talents to good use, Portland Tattoo Artist and Owner of Lombard Street Tattoo Jessi Preston volunteered her services to the Willamette Week Give!Guide's Tattooed4Good flash tattoo event in November. Preston has participated in flash tattoo fundraisers before, and couldn't pass up the opportunity to donate her time and expertise to NAYA.

Preston explains, "I believe it is our responsibility as community members to help everyone reach their goals. My community is only successful if everyone in the community is able to be successful. We are all interconnected, so our achievements are shared."

Those who chose to participate in Tattooed4Good shared a strong collective enthusiasm to join the cause. Preston states, "There were a number of people that got tattooed because they were involved in NAYA years ago, but many of the people saw that it was a good cause and were excited to donate. Tattooing is a sacred thing that inherently brings people together and forges community through a common bond, the love of tattoos. It's an earned ritual and completely experiential. There are not a lot of things today that you have to endure to receive, so people really are donating more than money, they are donating pain and emotional energy. That is powerful stuff."

With artists like Preston, Christina Platis, and Olivia Storm, (and donated proceeds from Max Estes), the Tattooed4Good flash event generated over \$3,000 in donations for NAYA.

A neighborhood rallies for youth



Finally, the annual end-of-year gift drive in Portland's Kenton Neighborhood enlisted the help of businesses, their customers, and Portlanders from all across the city to donate gifts for foster and homeless youth served by NAYA. The gift drive started in 2014 as a project between a few Terry Street neighbors in North Portland. After a couple of years of very positive feedback, the neighbors realized their contribution would have greater impact if they reached out to the local business community to join.

As gift drive co-founder Melissa Bancuk explains, "I'm the vice president of the Kenton Business Association (KBA) so I took the idea to them. We talked about how these foster teens were asking for small items like headphones. What they wanted was just something special for themselves."

She continues, "We reached out to help this particular group of youth because we feel like it's a group that's often forgotten. During the holidays, a lot of people love to buy toys and I get that. But a lot of the gift tags [listing a youth's wish] were things that just helped make them feel comfortable at school and with themselves, like having nice shampoo, or a nice backpack, or shoes."

With Posie's Bakery once again serving as the gift drive's central command station, the KBA's gift drive for NAYA has grown beyond everyone's greatest expectations. In Kenton alone, Tech Net EZ, Victorian Belle House, Rebel Events, Tidy Nest Organizing, and others have joined in. Last December, Melissa received calls from businesses in downtown Portland wanting to help. And Cathedral Animal Hospital took the KBA's great idea one step further. In addition to a having gift tag tree, the business offered pet portraits with Santa Paws, with all proceeds going to NAYA.

Such a ripple effect is not lost on Bancuk and others. She states, "It is a great thing that the community has jumped on board. People are just so happy to help, and they're so generous. It just warms my heart so much. It's the most rewarding thing to be a part of."

Over 300 gifts were delivered to NAYA before Christmas, intended for Native youth that Bancuk and others understand have already led challenging lives. "I can't imagine how difficult it is to be a foster youth," says Bancuk. "I just want to make sure that, at least on one day of the year, they have something super special. And that they know that people care about them."

The act of giving x 500

On New Year's Eve 2019, when the dust finally settled, over 500 individual donors contributed \$39,112 online to NAYA through the Give!Guide. Moreover, NAYA's youthful supporters showed up for NAYA helping NAYA repeat as winner of the 35 & Under competition in our category. With the most young donors, NAYA won an additional \$1,000, bringing our grand Give!Guide total to \$40,112.



One donor shared, "Thank you for your compassion, kindness, and expertise. The work you do and the light you shine makes a big difference in the lives of so many. As a result, you are creating a more humane world for all."

NAYA is truly grateful for this support. We know there are many worthy causes who call on you at the end of the year. Your investment in NAYA tells us that you believe in our community. Your investment means so much. NAYA truly appreciates this overwhelming and inspirational end of an eventful decade.



NAYA Microenterprise Program graduating class

Entrepreneurs boldly reach for dreams

There are few things in life that require more professional courage than taking the leap of faith needed to start one's own business. The entrepreneurial way of life is not for the faint of heart, and those who actively pursue their dreams of taking their ideas to fruition are truly moving "into action."

NAYA's Microenterprise Program recently graduated a new 21-member cohort from its microenterprise business class. Through a Native lens, the class provides business skill fundamentals, such as creating a mission statement, marketing, and legal and financial basics. Students graduate with the material they need to complete a business plan. Those eligible can apply to receive a business Individual Development Account (IDA), a savings account that helps grow much-needed capital funding through contributions and generous matching funds. Program participants are also connected to Prosper Portland's Inclusive Business Network through which they can access subsidized legal help, loans, bookkeeping assistance, tax prep help, and more.

Members of the Fall 2019 cohort represented 20 different tribes and 20 different businesses. Their business proposals are as diverse as the participants themselves, with students pitching jewelry-making, health and beauty services, wellness coaching, landscaping, farming, online retail, grant writing, graphic design, and many other businesses.

Clearly, the local Native community is brimming with ideas for successful businesses. By offering this class and ongoing, customized, one-on-one business coaching, NAYA's Microenterprise Program staff provide the information, encouragement, and support to allow would-be small business owners to take the next step toward their dream.

According to NAYA Microenterprise Coach Santiago Vazquez, students are already seizing upon opportunities. He explains, "A handful of participants have already contacted me to begin their IDA applications. One has already been accepted and has also secured a loan to launch his online retail business in earnest, inspired by the fundamentals covered in class and the resources opened up to him by the program." Not satisfied to rest on their laurels, several other graduates have accepted NAYA's referral to Lewis & Clark Law School's Small Business Legal Clinic for corporate formation.

Taking a kernel of an idea into action to create a new business takes tremendous resolve, but with continued encouragement from NAYA, the benefits to the entrepreneurs, their families, and the community will unfold for years to come in ways that money cannot measure.



Kim Melton, Jesse Beason, and Kali Thorne-Ladd



Paul Lumley, Lillian Pitt, and Phillip Hillaire



Paulina Gutierrez and Tamara Henderson

A grand celebration at the 16th Annual Gala



Multnomah County Commissioners



Muthu Muthia, Eddie Sherman, and Eric Paine

The 16th Annual NAYA Gala and Auction reached new heights raising more than \$505,000 for our life-changing wraparound services that touch the lives of 10,000 people each year. More than 550 community members, partners, tribal leaders, and elected officials dedicated to the success of our youth, families, and elders, celebrated together at Oregon's largest celebration of Native American Heritage Month, November 15, 2019.

This year we honored Lillian Pitt for her significant contributions to the growth and development of the cultural life of Oregon. Native culture was also showcased through performances by virtuoso violinist Swil Kanim, *Lummi*, and an amazing presentation of live and silent auction items. Cowlitz Spiritual Leader Tanna Endgahl provided an opening prayer that set the tone for a powerful night of support for Portland's Native community.

We thank our Emcee Zeke Smith, *Osage*, and Auctioneer Johnna Wells, for their lively banter. Special thanks to Paulina Gutierrez, *Inupiaq/Puerto Rican*, for sharing her story that encouraged giving at the highest levels, "I can't fully explain what it means to know that your community believes in you, but I can tell you that this support—the kind of support that comes from events just like this one—has made all the difference in the world for me."

A huge thank you to our supporters and sponsors for a wonderful night! To see more photos from the 16th Annual Gala, visit gala.nayapdx.org.

THANK YOU, MAJOR SPONSORS!

POTLATCH "TO GIVE"



ILLAHEE "SUSTAINING LAND"



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Mural by Toma Villa at entrance of Nesika Illahee



Art installation designed by Lillian Pitt



NAYA Executive Director Paul Lumley



Eddie Sherman, Michael Buonocore, Mayor Ted Wheeler, Margaret Salazar



Siletz Tribal Council Members



William Iyall, Chairman Cowlitz Tribe; Sami Jo Difuntorum; Delores Pigsley, Chairman Siletz Tribe

Nesika Illahee welcomes community home

On January 29, 2020, it was standing room only as the community celebrated the opening of the first affordable housing project in Portland to offer tribal preference for some of its units. The development, Nesika Illahee, was historic in its use of tribal housing block grants and represented the culmination of years of groundbreaking partnerships that made such preference possible.

A collaboration between the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (Siletz), the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA), and Community Development Partners, Nesika Illahee—which means “our place” in the Chinuk Wawa language—offers 59-units of affordable housing from studio to three-bedroom apartments, in Portland’s Cully Neighborhood.

“We cannot solve our community’s housing crisis overnight,” said NAYA Executive Director Paul Lumley. “But Nesika Illahee is a historic step in the right direction. It demonstrates how innovation and collaborative partnerships allow us to do more to help the community.”

This is the first time the partners have come together to construct affordable housing using generous funding from the Siletz Tribe’s Indian Housing Block Grant off reservation. As a result of this innovative funding approach, 20 units of Nesika Illahee can be reserved for Native Americans who meet strict criteria for eligibility. All other, or un-rented, units are available to anyone who meets the tenant selection criteria on a first-come, first-served basis.

Siletz Tribal Chairman Pigsley stated, “We are so appreciative of all the work that has been done to complete this facility. It’s something that the tribe could not do by itself.”

Other speakers noted that Nesika Illahee’s partnership and funding model is one that could pave the way for more systems change in Portland and beyond. “The Native population is overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness,” said Michael Buonocore, executive director of Home Forward. “Systems that help people come out from homelessness aren’t working for the Native community. It is the wisdom and leadership of the Native community that are showing the us way to get it right.” NAYA thanks everyone who played a role in bringing Nesika Illahee to completion.

Photos by KLiK Concepts



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Save the Date!

NAYA's 14TH ANNUAL HOUSING TO HOMEOWNERSHIP FAIR

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020 | 11AM - 4PM

A FAIR FOR HOME BUYERS, HOME OWNERS, AND RENTERS

HOMEOWNERSHIPFAIR@NAYAPDX.ORG

Join us for one of our most inspiring events of the year, as we celebrate our youth and their journeys, at our annual Many Nations Academy Luncheon, Wednesday, April 22, 11:30 am - 1 pm. The luncheon honors the strength of our Many Nations Academy students and the commitments they make to themselves, their education and their families. Enjoy a Native-inspired lunch, as we raise essential funds for the culturally-specific programs, wraparound supports, and personalized attention that help each of our students thrive and succeed. For tickets and sponsorship information, visit nayapdx.org/mna-luncheon/main.

Dreaming of owning your own home? NAYA's Housing to Homeownership Fair, Saturday, March 14, 11 am - 4 pm, offers valuable information, workshops, vendor booths, and networking opportunities. **ALL ARE WELCOME!** For more information and to register, visit nayahomeownership.org.

THE 11th ANNUAL NAYA FAMILY CENTER MANY NATIONS ACADEMY

Luncheon

APRIL 22, 2020