



MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN AWARENESS, INC.

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MCNAA TurtleTalk: April-June 2022

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING AT MCNAA

MCNAA RECEIVES 4 YEARS OF FUNDING FROM CUMMINGS FOUNDATION

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member. Photo by Aquayah Peters

We are delighted to share the news that the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) is one of 140 local nonprofits to receive a grant of \$100,000 through Cummings Foundation's \$25 Million Grant Program. The organization was chosen from a total of 580 applicants during a competitive review process. I am elated to report that MCNAA will receive the \$100,000 over a 4 year period.*



*MCNAA Founder & President Burne Stanley-Peters
and Board Members Dawn Duncan, Anthony
SkyHawk, and Kim Orben.*

With these fund, the organization plans to expand its Educational Resources Program to include services that provide low income Native American college students with much needed culturally-sensitive mentoring and vital educational resources.

The Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties.

This year's grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including food insecurity, immigrant and refugee services, social justice, education, and mental health services. The nonprofits are spread across 45 different cities and towns.

Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than \$375 million to greater Boston nonprofits.



We can't thank the Cummings Foundation enough for their generous support. The funds are something we can rely on, for our Education Program, for the next four years. We are grateful!

NOTE: *Please know that by MCNAA receiving this grant (\$25K for 4 years), it does not mean that we no longer need your support. On the contrary. We need your support to help with our other programs that are not funded (scholarships, cultural arts, social change initiatives, etc.) So please, don't let this good news stop your support to MCNAA. ■

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE OFFICE!

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member. File photo by John Goff

With COVID-19 case numbers fluctuating constantly, we have not officially opened our doors to the public but we are still maintaining a physical presence by having a couple board members cover the office a few days a week. We are also meeting visitors outside who come by to pick up items they purchased from our website or to drop off memberships or monetary donations. Face masks are still worn for these short visits.



Anthony SkyHawk, Kim Orben. and Burne Stanley-Peters.

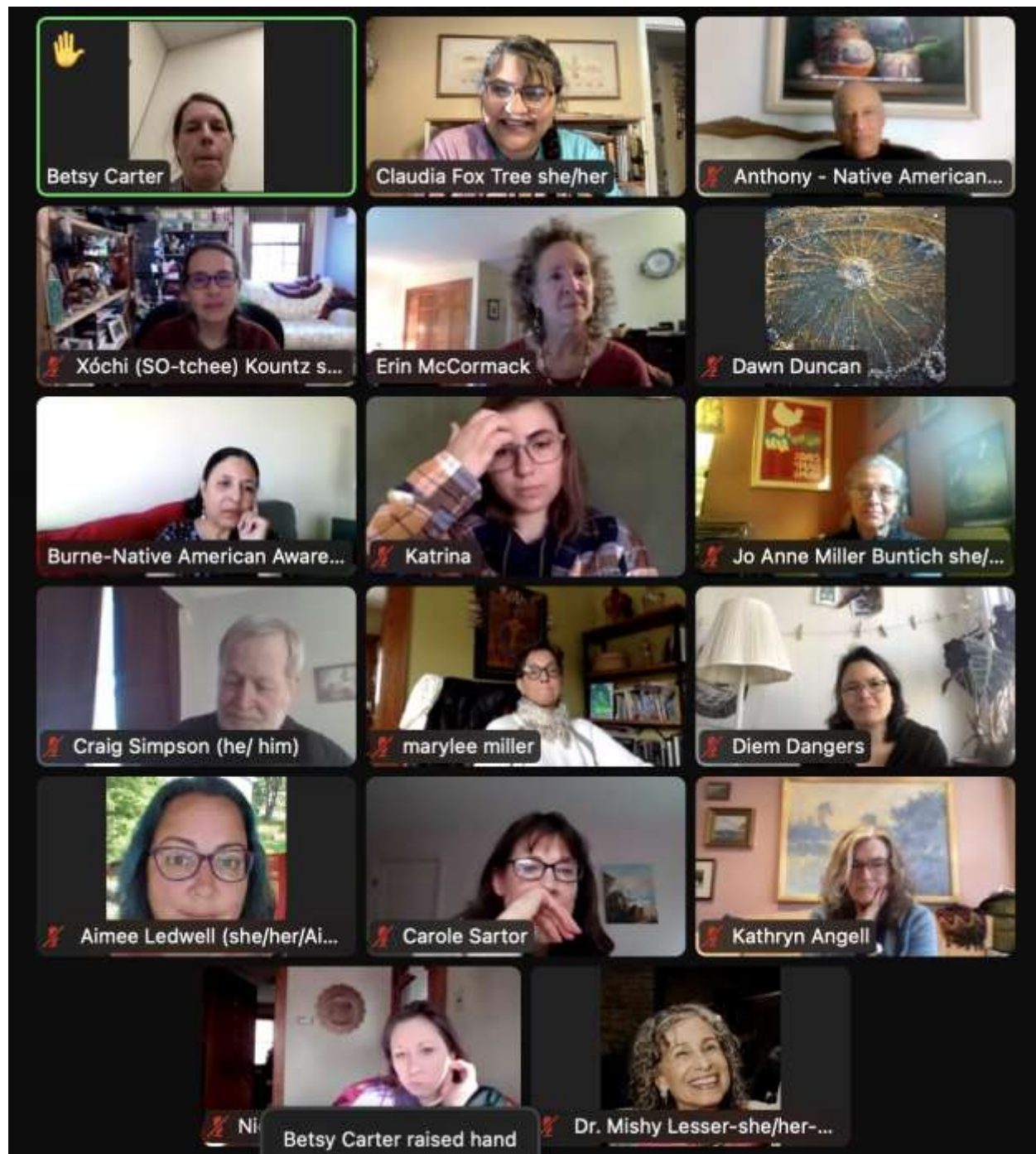
Still, with no live events planned, we continue to stay extremely busy with other important work as well as routine tasks. Over the last three months, we:

- * Assisted many needy Native families and Elders by mailing them food gift cards, and paying their utility bills.
- * Provided services to our college students through our Scholarship & Educational Resources Program which was expanded with recent grants.
- * Explored more grant opportunities.
- * Planned the video recording event & gathering at Claudia's home. (*Read article-pg. 8.*)
- * Responded to requests from organizations and civic groups for speakers, guidance, and information.
- * Worked on routine tasks –bookkeeping & account reconciliations, wrote donation receipt letters, processed membership renewals, drafted newsletter, attended informational & training webinars, responded to general e-mail inquiries, updated our website and facebook pages, etc. ■

MCNAA BOOK DISCUSSION OF “THE SENTENCE”

by Erin McCormack, Advisory Council Member. Photos by Xóchi Kountz

On April 4, 2022, MCNAA held its fifth virtual book discussion on Louise Erdrich’s newest and very timely book, “The Sentence,” set in Minneapolis during the covid pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. For the first time, participants listened and shared views in one group, rather than going into separate breakout rooms. While the number of participants was



slightly less, many of those who attended offered particularly deep and insightful observations on this complex, entertaining, and powerful book.

“The Sentence” relates the experiences of an Ojibway woman, Tookie, who has found unexpected happiness in a fulfilling marriage and working at a Native bookstore after ten years in prison for an unintentional “body-snatching”. Then a recently deceased, annoying wannabe-Indian customer named Flora starts haunting Tookie at the bookstore, providing the mystery: What is making her do this, and what does she want from Tookie? While at times lighthearted and comic, the story darkens, as do the threats to Tookie’s health and sanity. On another level, the haunting represents the unreckoned history of the place, dating back to the Dakota War of 1862, and hanging of 38 Native men for defending their homeland, the largest mass execution in American history. As one participant said, “When the ghost of Flora seeks to enter Tookie’s body, it is like the colonizers infiltrating the land so necessary to survival of the indigenous people who have lived there for eons.” In the manner of “Moby Dick”, another great American novel, this book transcends genres of writing, including poetry, non-fiction, and an examination of reading, writing and storytelling as essential parts of modern culture and opportunities to understand one another.



Our special guest speaker, Dr. Mishy Lesser, from the Upstander Project, talked about her work as a white ally, making films such as “Dawnland,” documenting the harms to Native children in Maine put into foster care; and “Bounty”, tying the cultural memories of Penobscot families to a proclamation signed in colonial Boston paying bounties on the scalps of indigenous people. Mishy spoke of the need for dedication and careful research in uncovering and sharing some of these difficult chapters of history in order to achieve justice and understanding. ■

MCNAA – A COMMUNITY PARTNER FOR THE 2022 CLIMATE JUSTICE RALLY IN NEWBURYPORT

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member; and Patricia Rocker.

Photo by Egils Zarins

Advisory Council Member, Patricia D. Rocker, was a keynote speaker at the Climate Justice Rally in downtown Newburyport on Friday, April 22, 2022. The Mass Center for Native American Awareness was a Community Partner for the event.

Patricia spoke on the global impacts of climate change on Indigenous Peoples throughout the globe, discussing the direct impact to our lands, sustenance rights, ability to follow our traditions, and how it adds to centuries of cultural trauma in our communities. Even Indigenous Peoples wishing to live authentic, cultural traditional ways from contemporary culture, are overwhelmingly impacted like the Inuit of the Arctic, Malaitan of the Solimane Islands, and Yanomami of the Amazon.



Patricia also oversaw a craft table to create rag dolls as an alternative to our traditional corn husks dolls. She cut recycled sheet strips to the length of corn husks and showed participants how to use the strips to make their dolls. From all accounts, this was a very successful event! ■

COMING UP

AUGUST 6-7, 2022

REDHAWK NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS COUNCIL'S BEAR MOUNTAIN POW-WOW, HARRIMAN STATE PARK, PALISADES INTERSTATE PARKWAY, STONY POINT, NY

NATIVE@REDHAWKCOUNCIL.ORG

MCNAA PARTICIPATED IN A FIELD TRIP TO MASCONOMET'S MEMORIAL SITE IN HAMILTON, MA

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member; Patricia Rockers and Kristine Malpica.

Photos by Kristine Malpica

On May 24 and 25, 2022, Advisory Council Member, Patricia Rocker, participated in an exciting field trip of the River Valley Charter School to Masconomet's Memorial Site. Our friends, Imalda "Chickie" Dobson and her niece Sarah Levenson also attended. Patricia spoke about historical and contemporary Eastern Woodlands People, answered questions from students and educators, and provided details about MCNAAs' programs.



Chickie and Sarah offered guidance to the students in tying prayer ties and bundles (*left*) and talked about the history and contemporary memorialization at the site.



L-R Sarah Levenson, Chickie Dobson, and Patricia Rocker.

It was reported that this was a special and deeply meaningful day for all and that the first and third grade classes of the River Valley Charter School were so grateful for the experience. ■

"And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell, and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being."

- Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks

MCNAA RECORDED A FUN, SHORT VIDEO CLIP FOR CUMMINGS FOUNDATION'S UPCOMING GRANTEES GALA

by Anthony SkyHawk, and Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Members. Photo by Burne Stanley-Peters

On Saturday, June 25, 2022, MCNAA Board members and a number of our close community members gathered at the home of Board Member Claudia Fox Tree for a video recording thanking the Cummings Foundation for awarding MCNAA with a generous grant for our Educational Resources Program.



Harry Hawk Edmonds, Lee Braveheart Edmonds, Claudia Fox Tree, Frankie Orben, Anthony SkyHawk, Milly Sanford, Maria Wilkins, Aquayah Peters, Autaquay Peters-Mosquera, Dawn Duncan, Kim Orben, Mariah Peters-Mosquera, and Ianoxoo Peters-Mosquera.

The weather co-operated, so we were able to successfully record in Claudia's tree lined backyard which provided the ideal backdrop for us while having conversation and lunch (pizza, subs, chicken fingers and cold beverages) after the final take. This was especially exciting as many of us had not seen one another in person since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we all sorely missed the in person comradery.

The video clip, which is unique in that it includes 4 generations of tribal members, will be included on a larger video reel with all 140 grantees. It will be played on a huge screen during the Foundation's Grantees Gala in July. This promises to be an exciting evening as all invitees who attend will also be spotlighted and encouraged to make some type of noise when introduced, to draw attention to their group. MCNAA representatives will go prepared with rattles. Because of spacing considerations, each grantee will only be allowed two tickets.

We are thrilled that MCNAA will be represented at the Gala in this special video as well as in person. This is an exciting opportunity for the organization as it validates our good work across the counties. We had so much fun recording this creative, celebratory video and can't wait to be part of Gala.

A FEW COMMENTS POSTED ABOUT THE VIDEO CLIP GATHERING!

Photos, on this page, by Claudia Fox Tree and Kim Orben



"It's so great to see all these familiar faces! I miss all the MCNAA Gatherings and seeing the friendly people. Thank you so much for all the work you do." - Maggie

"My heart is full of gratitude for being able to see my Indigenous friends and their families in person. Some I haven't seen in quite some time! We were able to hug, talk, and share a meal." - Claudia

"It was such a wonderful day! Full hearts here too." 🍷 - Maria

"So much to celebrate, especially the beautiful children who will lead the next generation!" ❤️ - ChaeRan



A huge thank you to the 4 generations of participants, represented at the video recording. (2.5 yr. old Natoohquhs, was also there, running in the background with his rattle.) And to Burne, the videographer, who directed, recorded and uploaded the clip for the Foundation. ■



MCNAA'S MONTHLY GIVING CIRCLE

BECOME A GEM DONOR

We received a small grant to help Native families and elders with heating costs this winter season and a second grant to expand our education program but these grants do not help with other program needs such as: scholarships for students; food for elders and families; social change initiatives; and youth activities. Monthly donations are a sure way to help with that.....for our organization to receive recurring funds on a regular basis to help more families and/or to put towards some of our other important initiatives.



In the spirit of “paying it forward”, we invite you as well as large, medium, and small businesses, to become a GEM donor and help make a difference by joining the circle of monthly giving. We are a 33 year old, tax exempt organization that needs additional support throughout the year. Donations will be applied to either our college scholarship program, our social assistance-needy fund, or our social change/social justice initiatives.

If your heart speaks and you would like to support the organization this way, please go to your PayPal account and make a donation to the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (or mcnaa@aol.com) then click “make this a monthly donation.” Or you can mail a check monthly to the organization at: MCNAA, ATTN: Monthly Giving Circle, 85 Constitution Lane, Suite 3-B1, Danvers, MA. Thank you. ■

“At the end of the day it’s not about what you have or even what you’ve accomplished... it’s about who you’ve lifted up, who you’ve made better. It’s about what you’ve given back.”

- Denzel Washington