



Stay in the circle...

My Name is Johnny Ku-Wen Mao

There are many things about the world that I have yet to learn. However, I have figured out one thing: I want to earn a degree in public health. Ever since this realization, I have been immersing myself within as many facets of the public health realm as possible.

As a student from the University of Washington, I was given a chance to work alongside Native People for Cancer Control staff through the work study program. At first, my goal was to learn as much as possible from those around me, and after one year, that goal still remains the same. However, I now work toward a goal that I feel is bigger than myself.

I am a research assistant and am currently developing a curriculum for *The Native Comic Book Project*, a program that uses comic books to teach students on a wide variety of health oriented themes, or more specifically, in our case, tobacco prevention. The program will collaborate in Native communities and youth groups will be emphasize a learner-centered approach as students will have complete control over the completion of their own comic books

under the guidance of one or more instructors.

Beginning with an anti-tobacco themed curriculum, students will be able to reflect upon the mainstream and

traditional influences that shape their own perspective about tobacco. The comic book creation



process will not only give students practice in their writing and storytelling skills. The end result will be something that can be shared with the entire community.

I believe that public health is vital not only to my education and the education of others, but is also a platform on which I can build a foundation to better understand the world.

This month I will be traveling out of the country for the first time in my life to study multiculturalism in Britain as a reflection of race, ethnicity and class. It is always important to try new things.

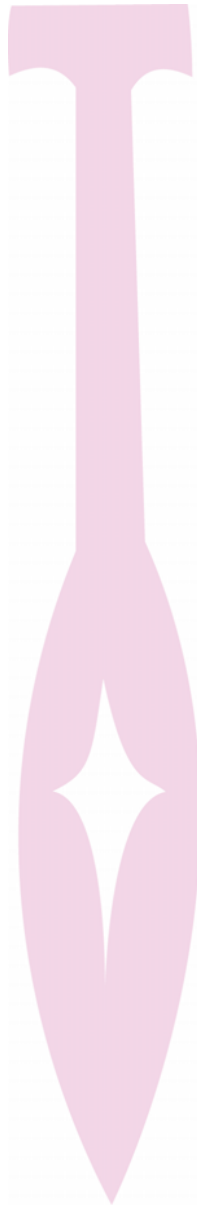
—Johnny Ku-Wen Mao

Native People for Cancer Control newsletters are now available on our web site. Visit – uwccer.org for past issues.

The Pink Paddle Project was started by...

Roberta “Birdie” Kimberly in 2006. Roberta is a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and she is a breast cancer survivor. Roberta was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004 and went through treatment and surgery for two years. She had a dream to have a Breast Cancer Survivors Canoe participate in the annual Canoe Journey. Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, among others, helped her to attain her goal. Her mission was to lend support and education about early detection of breast cancer to all Native people in the Northwest. This is the real story of the 2008 Canoe Journey to Quw’utsun told by Birdie Kimberly.

Our journey this year was a real difficult pull. The water and the weather did not cooperate. The pull to Esquimalt, British Columbia, was eight hours. I did not get on the canoe this year because I am not physically strong enough. The canoe faced thick fog and seven-foot swells. The pace setters in front got very wet and cold. Three of the girls got sea sick and mild hypothermia. Our support boat had two feet of water in it, so it had problems. It could not follow us. We had all our food and water on the support boat. So we did not have that either. The Muckleshoot support boat came to rescue us. They started to tow us. The waves were bad. The tow line snapped. Due to their hypothermia, the girls in front could not move to bend down to pull the tow line out of the water. So our skipper, Harry



Moon, climbed up to the front and reached down and got the tow rope while our doctor, Ron Bergman, who is a cancer survivor, skippered the canoe. Every canoe that left Port Angeles harbor was towed due to the situation with the fog and the extreme waves. Pink Paddle had to pull most of the way because of our tow line snapping.

While the canoe was having difficulty in the water, three adult Orca whales and three young Orca whales followed along the sides of our canoe. The Orcas were watching out for the Pink Paddle Canoe. They escorted us for almost one hour. The sight of the whales was exhilarating. It gave the girls the strength to continue. The girls started singing the Tribal song called the Whale Song. The Orcas circled around the Pink Paddle Canoe three times. The Orcas then swam under the canoe and disappeared. The girls were exhausted but have a memory that will last their lifetime of their pull to Canada.

Before reaching the beach, the girls called me and said they were without food and water. I rushed to MacDonald’s and picked up ten hamburger meals, which I delivered to them as they arrived on the beach. Once they got food and water in them, they were so excited about their experiences. Two of the women and two of the men were cancer survivors, and the four other girls were family support members. We left the first

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Urban Indian Health Conference

The Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB) hosted its third annual National Urban Indian Health Conference July 15-16, 2008 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Seattle. This year's conference focused on the theme of "Managing for Stability: A Legacy for Future Generations". Two workshop tracks were offered: public health strategies and planning/management. Over 60 people attended the conference including representatives from urban Indian health organizations across the country. For

Pink Paddle Project Continued



seat empty in the canoe for people who have passed on from cancer. So there was a total of eight pullers on the canoe and our skipper, Harry Moon, from Canada. We had a great impact on the Northwest Canadian Tribes. Many families have been touched with cancer. The Chief from the Ahousat Tribe from North Canada said during his protocol speech that "the work Pink Paddle does, does not go unnoticed." It was such an honor to hear that from their Chief. The rest of the week during protocol it rained and rained. I did not have walls for my booth, so I only set up one day. We were all so mentally and physically worn out that it was all we could do.

We had three more days of paddling to get up to Duncan from Esquimalt, British Columbia. The water did not change; however, we were always close to the shore line, so it was a bit easier. We were towed a bit along that route because the tides were against us. Despite these difficulties, the Pink Paddle Canoe made it all the way up to Duncan.



more information on the Seattle Indian Health Board or future events visit their website at www.sihb.org. *Ralph Forquera and Jessie Folkman at the Urban Indian Health Conference. Photo: Courtesy of SIHB.*

The pullers know about survival in more ways than one. We met many cancer survivors and listened to their stories. We had another successful canoe journey. Our support and education to the Native communities is essential. We really make a huge statement with our Pink Paddles. However, we are in need of a cedar strip canoe. It was hard to maneuver the Healing Canoe in rough waters. We need something sleeker for the waters. Also, the top tip of the bow of the Healing Canoe was split in half when the canoe crashed into the support boat in the rough waves. A replacement canoe is the goal of our fund raising for next year. The Pink Paddle Project will accept any donations towards the cost of a new canoe. For more information, contact Roberta Kimberly at rkimberly@elwha.nsn.us, 3080 Lower Elwha Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98363, or work number 360-452-8471 ext. 205.

In 2009 the canoe journey destination will be at the Suquamish Tribe in Washington State. Paddles Up to everyone. Thank you.

Birdie K.



REGISTER NOW

Saturday • September 20, 2008
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Seattle • Washington

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Primary care & specialty health care providers
- Health plan leaders
- Nurses, social workers, health educators
- Insurers
- Public health professionals
- Tribal leaders
- Researchers
- Advocates
- Community organizations

IMPORTANT: If you did not receive this email directly from Kaye Matusik and wish to be contacted with more details, please send an e-mail to kmatusik@intlmeet.com.

Preventing Colon Cancer in ALL Communities: *A Washington State Dialogue for Action™*

The *Dialogue for Action™* is an innovative and action-oriented summit to increase colon cancer screening in Washington.

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Dialogue for Action™ is a program of Prevent Cancer Foundation.