



Native
People
for
Cancer
Control

*Stay in
the circle...*



Sweetwater Nannauck

Meet Sweetwater Nannauck

Waa saa ituwatee ax̄ xooni (How are you, my friend?) My name is Tlinukts'heen Nannauck (Sweetwater Make-it-Well). I am from the Gishbuwada (killer whale clan). My mother is from the Tsimshian and Haida nations, and my father is from the Tlingit nation.

I was raised by my paternal grandparents, Paul and Lottie Nannauck. They had an arranged marriage, they only spoke Tlingit to each other, and we ate mainly our traditional foods.

What I learned from my grandparents has been the foundation for my life's work. I teach Native youth in the area about culture, traditional stories, how to make regalia, cedar-bark weaving, and Beginning Tlingit language. I am also involved in the Native community. I work very hard in helping to promote Native artists, music, and performers, and I go on the annual Canoe Journey. At a young age I became interested in health because my grandmother was a health aide and helped to establish the Alaska Native Health Program as Grand President of the Alaska Native Sisterhood.

When my father was diagnosed with colon cancer, I had him sent down here to Seattle for treatment. I had been learning about natural health and medicine since 1995. I changed his diet, giving him traditional foods, carrot and garlic juice, natural supplements and herbs, and we prayed together every day. We addressed emotional issues that resulted from his early drinking days, and he apologized to our whole family and to his friends for causing any hurt during those times. He and my sister had dreams the night before he apologized that signified to us a cleansing of his old life and a new beginning for him.

After three months my father wanted to return to Alaska, so he opted for conventional treatment at the University of Washington Medical Center. There an MRI revealed his tumor had gone from 5 cm to 4.2 cm with the regimen I had him on. He then received chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. We also continued his alternative health regimen. As a result, he didn't lose any hair, get mouth sores or nausea, his blood count remained normal, and his immunity was fine. He recovered very quickly and was sent home in better health than when he came down here. He remained cancer free throughout the rest of his life. From my father I learned the power of forgiveness in the healing process and how it can bring people together.

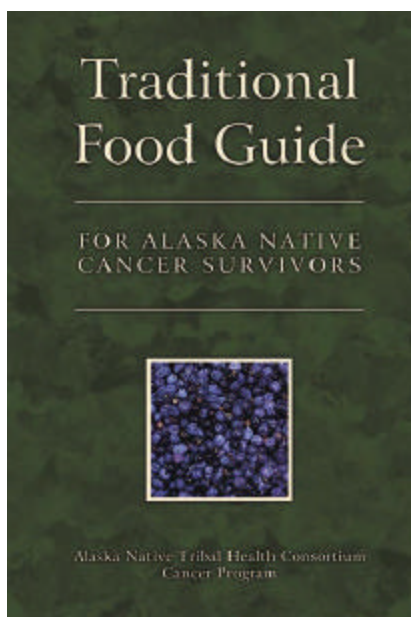
Working for Native People for Cancer Control (NPCC), I realized the need for more of our people in the health care professions, and now I am researching my options to incorporate culture and healing work. I am honored to be working with great folks at NPCC and look forward to working with all of you out there doing good work to help our Native people.

Gunal'cheesh (thank you). Yei-a-weh (that is all).

Sincerely, Sweetwater Nannauck

Cancer Survivor Handbook Based on Traditional Alaska Native Foods

Modern medicine now recognizes that the present-day Western diet is responsible for many of today's chronic illnesses. Many nutritionists and anthropologists have noted the decline in health that accompanies indigenous peoples' transition from traditional to modern diets. The new book *Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors* advocates a return to a traditional diet to help Alaska Native cancer survivors in their cancer fight, their recovery, and to maintain a healthy living. The book is co-authored by Desiree Simeon (Tlingit), Christine DeCourtney, and Karen Mitchell (Yup'ik) for the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. It offers information about subsistence lifestyle and the historical role that subsistence animals have played in the traditional Alaska Native's way of life. It also provides tips for disease prevention, and information about natural vitamins and how they help in healthy body functions. This book is not just for cancer survivors, but also for anyone interested in learning more about the wild food that is available in Alaska, how to prepare it, and its nutrition information. For more information or to purchase a book for \$24.95, contact Karen Mitchell at (907) 729-4491 or e-mail: kmitchell@anthc.org



National Cancer Survivors Day Sunday, June 1st

National Cancer Survivors Day[®] is an annual event that honors cancer survivors in over 700 communities throughout the United States, Canada, and other participating countries. National Cancer Survivors Day was founded by Merrill G. Hastings, Jr., on July 5, 1988, in honor of his wife, Priscilla B. Hastings, who was a breast cancer survivor.

National Cancer Survivors Day is observed on the first Sunday in June. It serves as an important celebration of life for the newly diagnosed patient as well as the long-term survivor. According to the National Cancer Institute, there are 10.1 million cancer survivors. This represents approximately 3.4% of the population. A cancer survivor is defined as anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer from initial diagnosis through treatment and beyond. On National Cancer Survivors Day, communities honor cancer survivors for their strength and courage and recognize the contributions of families, friends, and healthcare providers. Community celebrations can include races, games, parades, dances, carnivals, art exhibits, ceremonies, picnics, and many more fun and creative events.

The non-profit National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation supports hundreds of hospitals, support groups, and other cancer-related organizations that host National Cancer Survivors Day events in their communities by providing free guidance, education and networking. For more information about hosting an event, you can visit the website at: <http://www.ncsdf.org/>

National Cancer Survivors Day affords your community an opportunity to demonstrate that it has an active, productive cancer survivor population.

(Adapted from the National Cancer Survivor Day website)

37th Annual Northwest Folklife Festival's 2008 Cultural Focus: Urban Indians



Steve Charles at NPCC Booth

Northwest Folklife Festival is held every Memorial Day weekend and has become one of the largest free folklife celebrations in North America. Produced by Northwest Folklife and Seattle Center, it hosts more than 7,000 participants, 27 stages and venues, roughly 1000 performances, and an audience of approximately 250,000 at the Seattle Center.

Every year the festival features a different community or region for its cultural focus program. This year it highlighted Urban Indians. The festival honored the diverse Native cultural heritage of the Northwest region through four days of music and dance performances, visual arts and demonstrations, storytelling, a healing ceremony, panel discussions about current issues facing Native Americans, workshops, and films.

Native People for Cancer Control shared a booth with United Indians and Seattle Indian Health Board. We provided information to Natives and non-Natives about cancer education, training, and research opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Many thanks to Steve Charles, who spearheaded our participation.

Seattle Indian Health Board's Spirit Walk June 14, 2008

Funds raised through Spirit Walk support American Indian and Alaska Native community groups and health promotion activities of the Seattle Indian Health Board. Individual and group team walkers welcome.

Where: Seattle Center
Time: 8am-3pm
Distance: 4.3 miles or 1 mile

For more information on the Seattle Indian Health Board Spirit Walk call 206-324-9360. Or visit their website at www.sihb.org

NPCC will be participating as a team. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Brenda at 206-543-3939.



NPCC Research Project Update: Tobacco Reduction among Indian Youth

Deborah Bowen, PhD, University of Washington researcher, and Patricia Nez Henderson (Navajo), MD, Black Hills Center for American Indian Health vice president, are close to completion of their NPCC research project, the development and evaluation of a web-based smoking prevention tool for Native youth. This tool was adapted from Toronto's *Smoking Zine*, with revisions to make it more culturally appealing to Native youth.

Drs. Bowen and Henderson selected a summer enrichment program for Native youth in grades 6-12 in South Dakota to test the effectiveness of the web-based tool. A total of 164 youth were approached for participation. Half of the 113 who chose to participate received the program while the other half served as a control group. All youth completed a baseline survey before randomization, and 83% completed a two-month follow-up survey.

Overall, the short term results look promising. The program significantly decreased the proportion of youth who smoked weekly and the proportion of youth who said that they will be likely to smoke in the future. In addition, the program increased the proportion of youth who said that they helped someone else quit.

This project is the first intervention to be developed with and for Native youth to reduce smoking behavior. The results, while preliminary, suggest that this intervention could receive a full-scale testing in a randomized trial. The researchers plan to discuss with Native youth and adults the next best steps. First, they will bring the tool to a Native Youth conference in Washington State in June 2008. Here they will obtain feedback from youth about the best ways to implement this type of tool. Then they will plan for a grant submission in late 2008 to fully test the effects of this website on Native youth smoking in a setting to be determined. Settings discussed to date include clinics, schools, and after-school community settings.

The findings of this project have important implications for the health of Native youth. Smoking is responsible for more premature morbidity and mortality than any other known behavioral risk factor. Public school-based surveys in South Dakota in 2003 showed that approximately 26% of American Indian and Alaska Native youth in middle school and 53% in high school had smoked one or more days in the past 30 days. Web-based intervention is a tool that may be effective in influencing youth not to start smoking and in helping those who already smoke to quit smoking.

NPCC Family News and Announcements

Congratulations to Andy Bogart, NPCC Biostatistician, on his recent marriage!



**New NPCC family member
Noah Alexander Morigeau
Born May 12th
6lbs 5oz**

**Born to: Proud Parents Ryan
and Kirsten Morigeau**

**NPCC staff Ryan Morigeau is a
research assistant.**

**Red Eagle Soaring Looking for
New Play Hosts, Actors, Public
Speakers, and Sites**



Red Eagle Soaring's Youth Theatre Program is proud to present a new play for middle school to adult audiences, about traditional and commercial tobacco and the effects of both on the lives of two high school age youth.

Entitled ***Tobacco Leaves***, it was written this year by noted Native playwright Terry Gomez (Comanche) of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in collaboration with student actors, and directed by Rose Cano (Peruvian-American) of North-South Connexions.

Red Eagle Soaring invites you to host a performance in your community. It is an excellent opportunity for youth to have a meaningful cultural exchange, and for students, teachers, elders, parents, and families to join together to enjoy the play and to share ideas, problems, and solutions.

For more information, contact Larry Cordier or Martha Brice at **206-447-8860** or e-mail at: resoaring@earthlink.net

Rehearsal Dates: June 14-22

Tour of Tribal Communities: July 25th and July 13th

"On the Road" with the NPCC Team

In the past several weeks, the NPCC staff have been making conference presentations, attending training, and doing site visits across our eight-state region. During the first week of May, Program Director Brenda Manuelito was invited by the Northwest Indian College Center for Service Learning to present at their 2nd Annual Summit titled "Storytelling and Service Learning" on our NPCC digital storytelling project. In addition, she presented, along with staff members Steve Charles and Debra Sprague, a conference session titled, "Through the Native Looking Glass: Visual Images and Storytelling as Innovative Tools in a Regional Cancer Network Program" at the CU EXPO 2008, University of Victoria, British Columbia. This past week, Ms. Manuelito was also invited by the Center for Digital Storytelling to attend a three-day workshop called "Perspectives on Digital Storytelling in Health Care" and met with over 20 individuals from the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom who are utilizing this new technology for "humanizing" the health care system and improving cross-cultural care for patients and caregivers.

During May, Ms. Manuelito also made site visits with Dedra Buchwald, Jay LaPlante, and Ron Whitener to Anchorage, AK to meet with numerous individuals at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium regarding research grant and training opportunities. In addition, they visited with community partners, the Assiniboine-Sioux Health Education Committee and NPCC advisory board member Ken Smoker on the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, MT.

Additional trips are being planned to revisit Alaska and Montana to meet with community partners in Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, and Western Washington in the coming month. Later this summer, other trips will be planned to visit with individuals in North and South Dakota to continue our discussions regarding tobacco policy, screening, education, telehealth, and other workgroups formed at our 2008 annual meeting.

The Alaska Native Health Resource Advocate Program

is a joint effort on behalf of Southcentral Foundation and CIRI to provide information and referral services to Alaska Native People.

New Contact info:

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