

Director Causley: Kudos for youth powwows



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DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

Many things to talk about, but one thing I want to share is my experience this past month at our Newberry Youth Empowerment Powwow.

Eleven years ago, the youth education staff started a powwow in Rexton due to it being a area where we needed more cultural activity, it has taken place

every year since and the goal then was to have the youth in charge of facilitating and planning a powwow. John Miller and I were head dancers and we had one drum and a handful of kids, some in regalia and some not.

This year, the tribe's youth education program decided to move this powwow to the Newberry area so that we could have more involvement from the community and invite and reach more youth.

I had planned on attending with a few of my family members but, due to circumstances, everyone needed to rain check me so I went alone.

I was able to visit and speak with many community members there and, most importantly, I was able to reflect and watch what true pride and dedication the things that are happening in our tribal communities. So many people need to be thanked for

this outcome. I was very early and the activities had not started yet, but I walked over to the fire to offer sema and was so filled with pride to see Greg Currie as the fire keeper, this young man is on our drum and I have watched him grow into a young man who is prideful and dedicated to our tribe, he was only about four years old at our first youth empowerment powwow.

The day needs to be explained as a message for those who live here and far away; not everyone can be here, so sharing it with you will also make you proud about our people. John Miller and Fran Wyers were the head dancers and are committed to teaching our kids the proper way to dance, the MC, Cal Burnside, shadowing and teaching the young men how to speak and explaining the role of facilitating a powwow. I watched in great pride as the line up began with every single young

lady who went into the arena to dance at grand entry had on a handmade shawl and was taught the proper and traditional way to enter that ceremony (the youth staff worked all morning to make sure the girls all had shawls and were prepared).

During the grand entry, young men were able to carry the flags with two veterans assisting them; one, a lead elder, Tim Clark, and head veteran Terry Teeples following with our prisoner of war flag.

Our dedicated and amazing youth drums from Hessel, Mukkwa Giizek, and Manistique, Kichi Tikipi, with Joe Medicine's Sturgeon Bay drum assisting us too. All those adults on the drum prepare these youth and are patient and teach them to carry on our heartbeat.

In closing about this day, I want to recognize the elders of that community who came and supported the youth. There is one statement I sometimes hear and it couldn't be farther from the truth, "We are losing our culture." I'm sharing this to assure you all that if you could have witnessed this day, you'd

know that simply is not true.

I also attended the Sault powwow in July. I brought my granddaughters with me and my Ava looked up at me and said, "There are so many happy people here, gramma, this is a good powwow." She is only three and a half years old, all I could say was, "Yes, it is my girl." In that moment, I was truly so filled with pride from our tribe. So to all our people who assist with our ceremonies, chi miigwetch!

In Newberry, our youth education staff was all present and committed to making this happen. Shirley Kowalke and Lois Bryant always working and making sure things are running smoothly.

We plan to change the locations in the units so all youth can participate in the future.

Chi miigwetch. I hope you all know your dedication and involvement are so appreciated by so many people.

See you at the coming powwows in Newberry and Hessel. Baamaapii.

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