



The Generations Project

The Indigenous Voices of our
Community as seen and
heard through Photovoice

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Contextualizing this Presentation & Partnership

- Project work began by invitation in the Spring of 2014
- Community resource member interviewing process & UMD SW 8102: Advanced Research classes: A strengths-based assessment process.
- Assessment results presented at 2016 Feast & Forum
- Proposal to apply a Photovoice approach to extend our work = The Generations Project!



Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

- A research approach that equally involves researchers and community members in the research process (*Israel et al, 2003*).
- Community members will be involved as "co-investigators" in all stages of the process.



Photovoice: What is it?

- A CBPR method that involves placing cameras in the hands of community people so that they may visually represent and communicate to others their lived experience *(Wang & Burris, 1994)*



Goals of Photovoice

- Record and reflect personal and community strengths through taking photographs
- Promote critical dialogue about important issues through discussion of their photographs
- Reach policy makers and decision makers who can influence positive social change through public forums and showings of their photographs

(Lopez, Eng, Robinson, & Wang, 2005)

Examples



- Rural women in China to document their lived experiences (Wang & Burris, 1994).
- To look at environment and health risk perspectives among Huu-ay-aht First Nation territory in Canada (Castleden, Garvin, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2008)
- To examine social determinants of health among Black men in North Carolina (Ornelas, Amell et al., 2009)
- To examine role of social support & love among urban youth in Baltimore (Downing, 2007)
- Document and discuss interpretations of community health among adults, youth, and policymakers in Flint, Michigan (Wang et al., 2004).
- To document strengths of life in an urban “slum” (Noyes-Parker, Dakin, & Amell, 2014)

The “Generations” Project

- “*The Generations Project*” engaged American Indian community members in a Community-Based Participatory Research process using Photovoice
- Working with members of the Duluth Indigenous Commission, 13 Indigenous Community residents were recruited to document neighborhood needs and assets through taking photographs
 - 3 youth
 - 5 adults
 - 5 elders



The Generation Project:

Photo-Assignments & Photo-Discussions

- What do I like best about my community?
- Invisibility of the Indigenous Community/ Improving Visibility of the Indigenous Community.
- Using our Voices...
 - How are Indigenous voices being heard?
 - Do people want to hear us??
 - Where would I go to hear Indigenous voices???
- What is it like to be Indigenous in Duluth?





SHOWeD Method

1. What do you See in this photograph?
2. What is really Happening here?
3. How does this relate to Our lives?
4. Why does this situation exist?
5. What can we Do to address or improve this situation?





Data Analysis

- Photovoice discussions were audio recorded and notes were taken at each session
- Recordings were transcribed verbatim for content analysis
- Coding scheme
 - Identification of recurring themes
 - Comparing and contrasting the experiences of participants
- Photographs and themes that emerged across all discussion sessions are presented

Results!

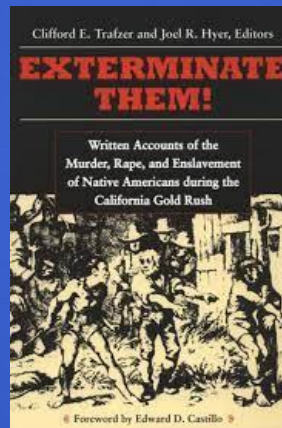
Community Challenges

Historical Trauma

- The forced removal of Indigenous children practiced in the boarding school era, and currently by government child welfare systems, has resulted in widespread historical trauma, that is, the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations... which emanates from massive group trauma” (Brave Heart et al., 2011 p. 283), and which continues to affect Indigenous families and communities today.
- Settler replacement of Indigenous systems and parenting role models, coupled with personal trauma histories, poverty and racism have traumatized generations of Indigenous families (see Bussey & Lucero, 2013).
- These experiences have seriously damaged both the capacity of many Indigenous families to trust government agencies and staff members (e.g., Horejsi, Craig & Pablo, 1992), and the capacity of non-Indigenous agencies and staff to understand the harm settler colonial structures continue to cause to Indigenous communities.

Historical Trauma

- “... years of trauma that have pushed our people down so far that they're not there to fight for it. And again,... that it's almost normal to you because it happens so much...”



- “...(If) you disregard history, you disregard the people. It's hard to try to persist in spite of that and we are at a really hard time right now where we are learning our own history and it's hard. But other people are not learning our history. ..And when we learn it, it's really deeply painful and it's personal... And when other people learn it, they just choose to avoid it because they feel guilty about it or that fragility is more important than the experience”...

Historical Trauma (Reminders):...“years of trauma that have pushed our people down so far that they're not there to fight for it. And again,... that it's almost normal to you because it happens so much”...



- “I was told that the reason that they started digging up that hillside and knocking trees and brush down was because they were going to build townhomes. They were going to do that knowing that this was an important historical area”...

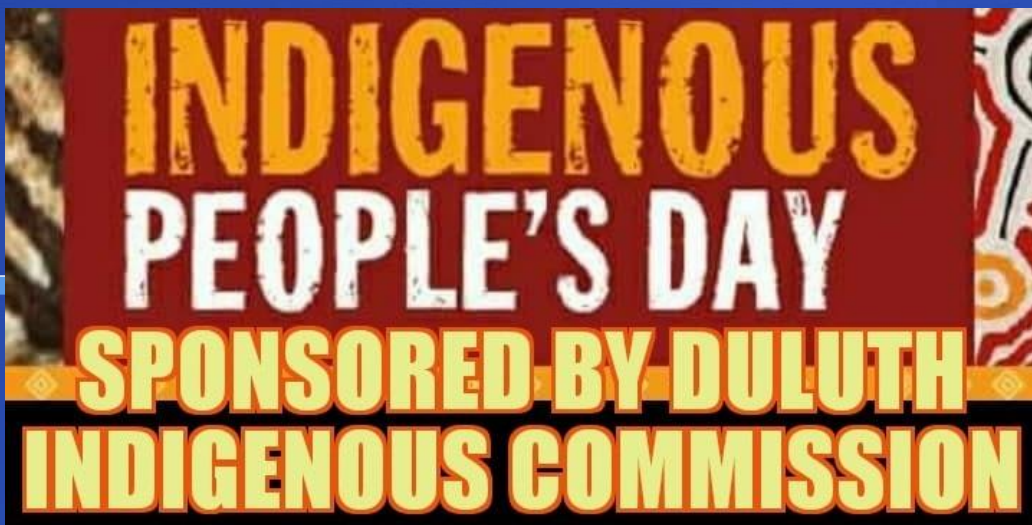
Implicit Bias/ Color-Blind(edness) Whitewashing

- Implicit Bias.... *is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors* (NIH, 2022).
- Color-Blind: *Color or culture make no difference and that all people are the same* (Cross, Bazron, Denney, & Isaacs, 1989).
- Whitewashing: *to alter (something) in a way that favors, features, or caters to white people: such as... to portray (the past) in a way that increases the prominence, relevance, or impact of white people and minimizes or misrepresents that of nonwhite people... to gloss over or disregard* (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Implicit Bias/ / Color-Blind(edness)/ Whitewashing



- “(This is) whitewashing... something beautiful we put up and they have to dominate it. They are not even aware of that, it’s just automatic. It is in the streets and in the community... you are partially seen, never heard, and there is always something more important than what is us, what is Indigenous. **WE** deserve more than half the picture... Without it even being said, she wonders if anybody sees her. If this woman spoke and (the other) spoke, who would you want to listen to? Who are you conditioned to listen to?? It is important what **THIS** woman is doing; (she is) the water protector. So, what’s happening here is she is being silenced... Again”.



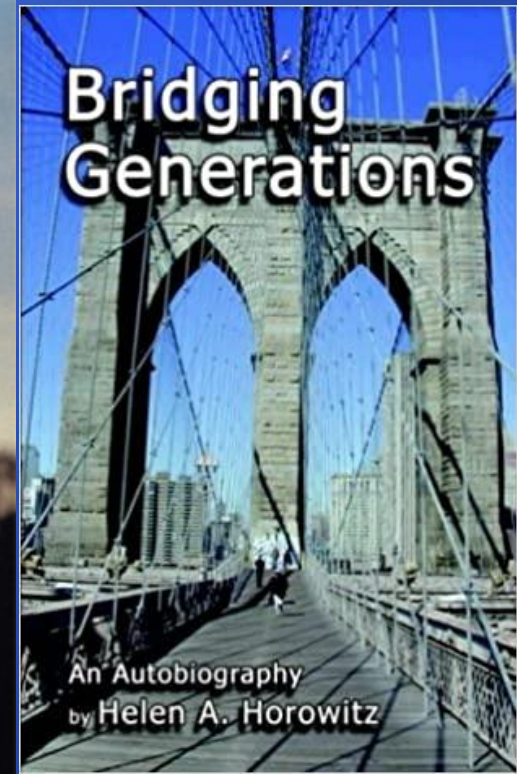
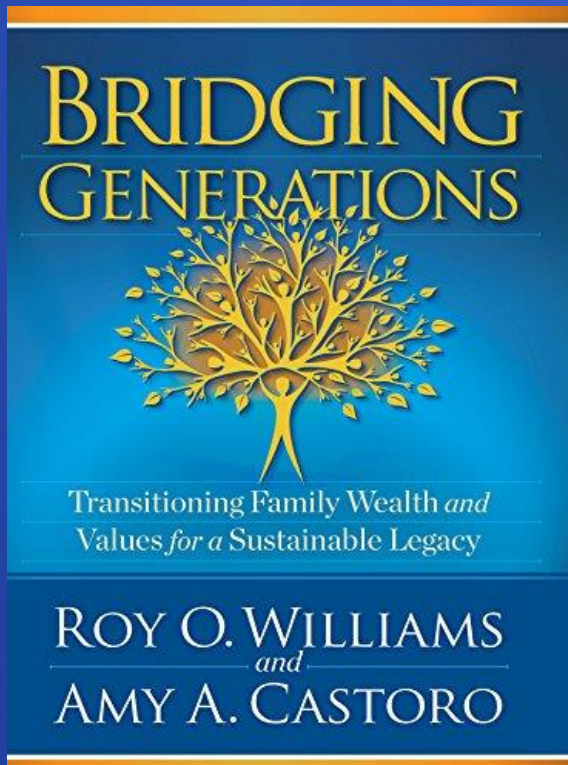
How to affect change?

What is being done? What can we keep doing??



Bridging Generations

- “Native people don't think in just this generation. We think (about) the next seven (generations) and then the seven beyond that”...



Bridging Generations: Reclamation ...

"Indigenous people across the US want their land back -- and the movement is gaining momentum (CNN, 2021).

- "We need more public spaces that acknowledge Indigenous peoples. Something permanent. The purpose of a park is for community. (A park) describes communities' wants and needs, and says parks can offer those (and) fulfill those. We gather there, it's accessible and free"....



Bridging Generations: Reclamation

- “In Minneapolis, they renamed one of their lakes (by) either a Lakota or Dakota name. We are working on trying to rename spaces in its original Anishinaabe name. Reclaiming has to be bold. People are really hurt by that. When you take a stand, reclaiming a space, our identities, it has to be bold and strong” ...



Bridging Generations: Indigenous Space at the Local Level

- “I think at one time it was seen (by the community) that there was a need in the community for outdoor space that is cared for. It was a political thing, sentimental to the communities enough that they said they needed that space for their kids and grandkids. I want spaces in the communities that say, ‘you’re on Indigenous land’. I want it in some art, at the lake, (or) at a park ... a space that can bridge generations”.





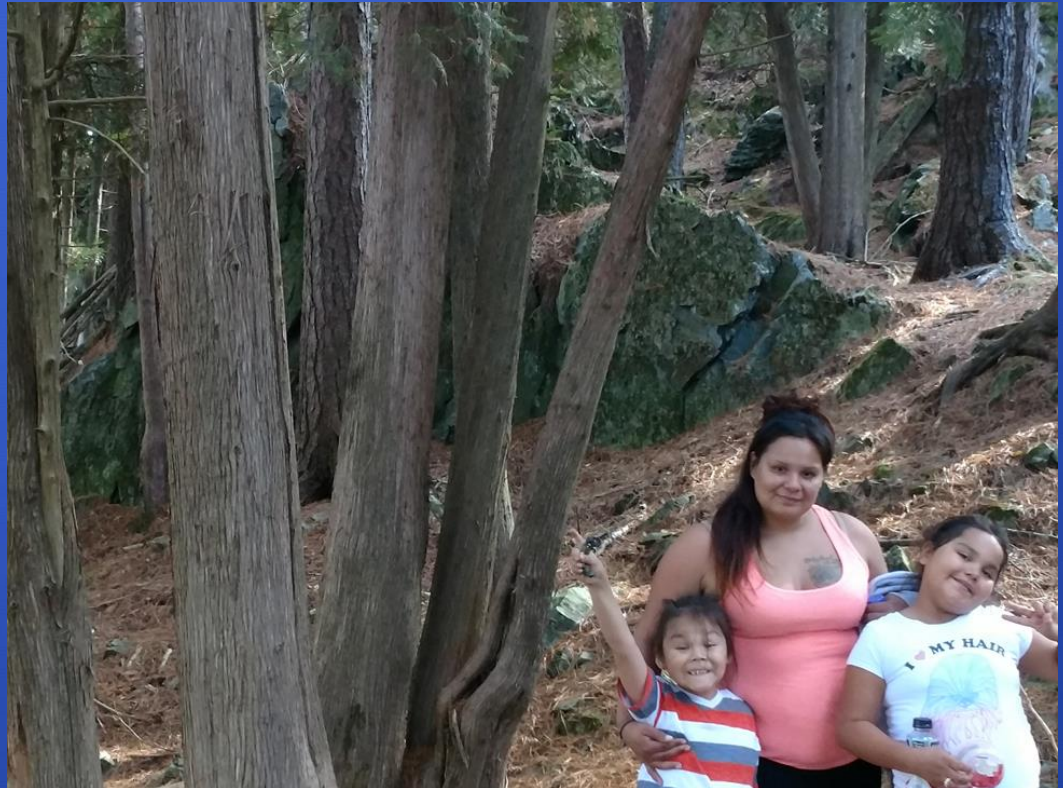
Bridging Generations: Reclamation & The Role of Allies

- “Allies are really important. The only reason that park got named is because allies brought us to the table and believed in us ... that we could name a park, even though we, at first, were like, ‘What? Name a park?’ They are like, ‘Yeah. Come to this table to name a park’, and that's how it started. But it was our allies that brought us to the table. We had a hard time getting to these tables. We do need to be invited. I can crash it, and I've done that. I've crashed things, but it's not always a fun feeling. Why not be invited?”.



Bridging Generations: Role of Family & Social Support

- “The kind of, seven generations idea, everything you do in your life is for not just your children, but their children. I'm just trying to think older. You know, what you pass off to them. Like what gifts you can give and how they're going to use them, and what they have for their future generations”...



Bridging Generations: Role of Family & Social Support

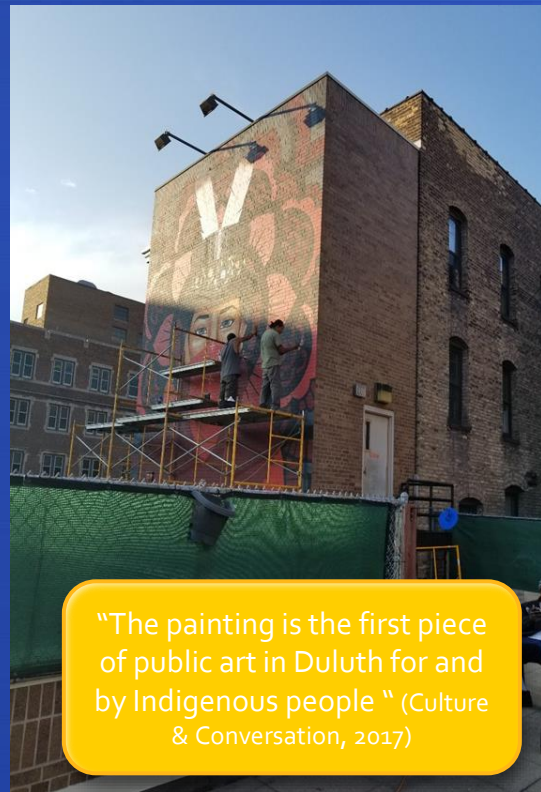
(The) next generation is key to understanding the needs of the wider community" ... (Duluth Indigenous Commission & Amell, 2016).



● "I always enjoy taking pictures of children, seeing children, because I'm a mother now and it's a different experience... As a mother, a lot of what you do relies on intuition. There is not a straightforward path to how to help your children learn or grow... I think in some ways we are connected in a much deeper way than just, the whole biology and the mixing of genes... I really feel like, as spirit people, we have always kind of been meant to be together (as a family and as Indigenous peoples)"...

Indigenous Art & Artistic Expression...

"We need more media coverage and community awareness about the positive things the community is doing instead of just the deficits" (Duluth Indigenous Commission & Amell, 2016)



"The painting is the first piece of public art in Duluth for and by Indigenous people " (Culture & Conversation, 2017)



● "If you look at the pictures themselves, the artist renditions of them ... they talk about their (and our) lives... "

Indigenous Art & Artistic Expression

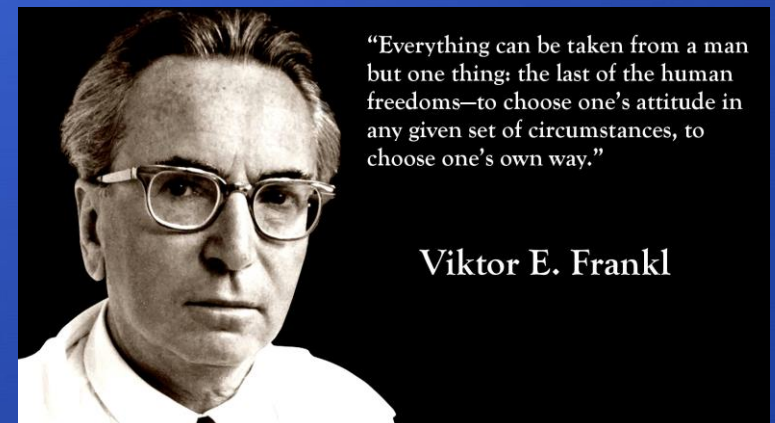
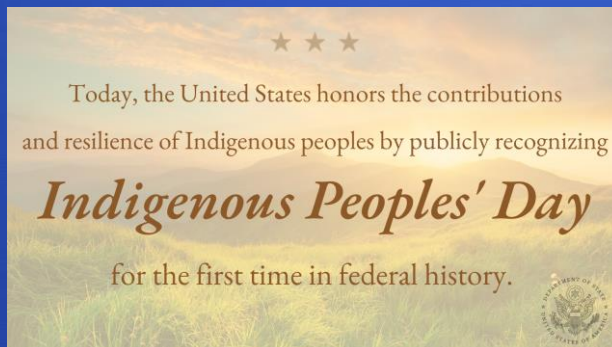
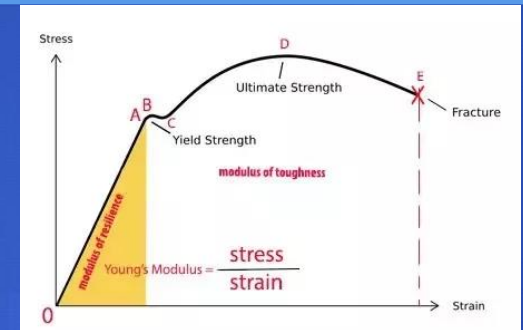


Indigenous First Art and Gift Shop helps display the art work of 80 different artists with a majority of them being Native American

- "I see the artist trying to capture serenity. The water in the background, blue sky, no gusty winds, the peaceful rock. And the tree. Small and (it) grows. Serenity and peacefulness"...

RESILIENCE

- Historical evolution as a concept:
 - Physics, Materials Science, & Engineering
 - Victor Frankl
- Resilience theory represents a theoretical orientation that examines how individuals respond to a variety of stressors or risks and also emerge intact and/or display positive adjustment (Werner, 1995; Masten, 2001; Amell, 2006).

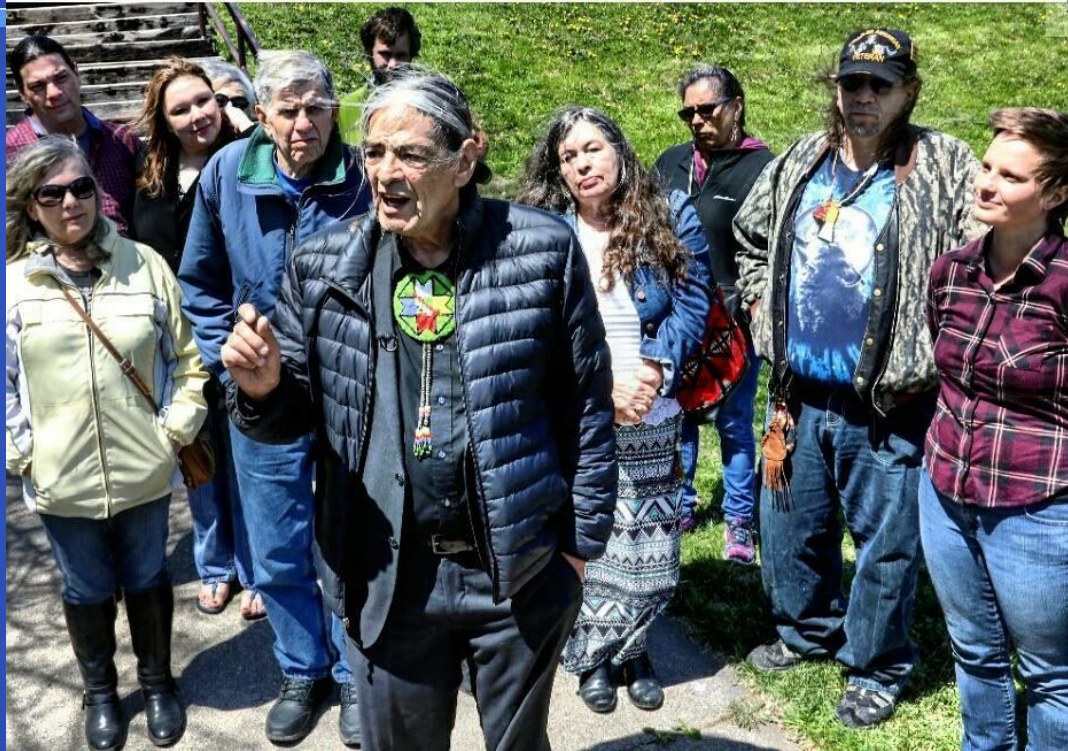


Resilience: Exercising our Voices & Standing up in Solidarity



- Where do you hear Native voices? Do people want to hear Native voices?? I'm speaking and it doesn't matter whether you want to hear me or not. It was a time (when) I did not have a voice at all, so I think about voices being heard as mostly about us hearing our own voices speak, not others hearing us speak, as important it is that we speak. That is my big message. We need to hear ourselves speak and be okay with using our voice. When you look really close at the facial expression, you see that hidden strength that everybody has. That picture captures the seriousness in it, but the strength of being bold and speaking what's on her mind, what's the issue ... speaking to it. The determination of putting it out there"...

Resilience: Exercising our Voices & Standing up in Solidarity

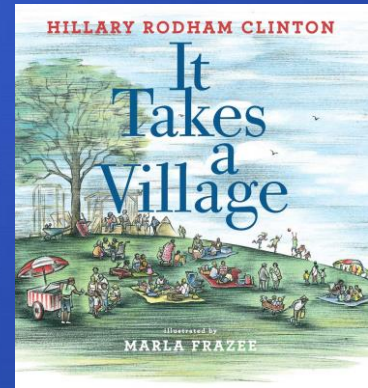


- “Hearing the Native voice, having a Native person step forward, and put out front ... the issues, and talk about the issues, which concern not only the Native American community, but the community in general. I was talking about water and how sacred the water is... There's strength in numbers and with more voices.... the trick is turning the anger into determination. It's not always easy”....

Affecting Change: **Community Responsibility & Traditional Ways of Imparting Knowledge**

- Although Indigenous peoples' resilience is threatened by their vulnerability to the negative effects of (social and) climate change, often they have been able to adapt to these changes by the continued practice of traditional knowledge, often encoded in indigenous languages and passed between generations (United Nations, 2022).
- Need for continued local support from local, state, and national leadership... Over the last 20 years, Indigenous Peoples' rights have been increasingly recognized through the adoption of international instruments and mechanisms, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2016, AND 23 ratifications of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention from 1991 (The World Bank, 2021).

Affecting Change: Community Responsibility & Traditional Ways of Imparting Knowledge



- “I think as native people, the value of our traditions and our ways of doing things, and what people (have) worked really hard to preserve (is very important). I think it shows that as a community we have to support each other better and be more involved with each other, because **it does definitely take a community** to do a lot of things. You know, like in a family, everybody has their role and we have to support each other in those roles”

Affecting Change: Community Responsibility & Traditional Ways of Imparting Knowledge



● “My favorite thing about native people in my community is the caring for others; communal aspect versus individualism. That is what I like. I see community, I see people coming together in a common purpose to take care of one another. I think (this) relates well to our lives and shows us the right way to do things, to support one another to work together in common good for everybody. It also shows us, as native people, the value of our traditions and our ways of doing things, and what people (have) worked really hard to preserve. I think it shows that as a community we have to support each other better and be more involved with each other, because **it does definitely take a community to do a lot of things.**”

What is Happening in Your Backyard!

- UMD Land Acknowledgment location on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous peoples: <https://about.d.umn.edu/campus-history/land>
- Cultural resilience: A perspective grounded in community control and cultural context: https://shelterforce.org/2020/08/18/30926_connecting_climate_and_cultural_resiliency/
- Raising Awareness & Building Momentum
- Local change resources in Duluth:
 - American Indian Community Housing (AICHO)
 - Gimaajii Mino-Bimaadizimin (Housing & Community Center)
 - Mending the Sacred Hoop
 - American Indian Education (Duluth Public Schools)
- The Indigenous Commission works to ensure that the views of the Indigenous Community are incorporated in the decision-making, future planning, and stewardship of the city of Duluth



Acknowledgments

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Miigwetch!

Questions/Discussion