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November 2021

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month

Dear Friends,

There is so much to learn from the generations of Indigenous people who stewarded this land for centuries before Europeans arrived and who continue to steward the land we live on. The history of Native Americans is the history of America.

As Native American Heritage Month draws to a close, I challenge all of us non-Native people to make time throughout the year, not just in November, to honor and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, histories, and contributions of Native people. Let us transform our culture and our institutions so that we authentically recognize the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and in the present, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

With that in mind, last week many of us took time away from work to be with our families for the Thanksgiving holiday. While it is commonly taught that Thanksgiving commemorates a time in 1621 when Pilgrims broke bread with members of the Wampanoag tribe to celebrate a successful harvest, this history is not accurate.

Not only is this idyllic story of European colonizers and Natives feasting together untrue, but it also ignores and erases the years of massacre, colonization, and oppression of the first people of this nation at the hands of Europeans and Americans. This legacy of genocide is baked into the foundation of our country, and something that we must name.

When we recognize and name inequities, we can begin healing the generations of pain, suffering, and oppression; we can admit when we need to change. This is essential for us – as a nation, a community, and as the Port – to not only heal but also to fully realize a future where equity is possible for all.

With Gratitude,

Bookda Gheisar
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

Why Do We Remember?

November 20th marked the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance. Started in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998, the day is an important tradition to commemorate all the transgender people lost to violence. Learn more about the importance of this day and tips for inclusive communication.

Shop Local and Support Indigenous Artists

This November at SEA Airport, and in collaboration with the Port of Seattle's Native American Committee, the Port is highlighting the works of Indigenous artists, creators, and the importance of shopping small businesses. Read this recent blog featuring The Sacred Circle gift shop at SEA and information about upcoming Native Art Markets.

Sustainable Century Award

The Port's Sustainable Century Awards (formerly Environment Excellence Awards) will return in January 2022 with a new name, revisions to existing award categories, and new recognition opportunities emphasizing actions centered in Equity:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Activity results in a direct, measurable benefit to historically marginalized communities (e.g., communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities).
- Equitable COVID Pandemic Recovery: Activity demonstrates leadership supporting an equitable COVID pandemic recovery while maintaining or advancing sustainability initiatives.

These awards annually recognize customers, tenants, non-profits, and business partners of all sizes for their outstanding sustainability accomplishments. Visit the Sustainable Century Awards webpage for more information about award categories, eligibility, and for application instructions and deadlines.

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