

# Traditional foods in 2018: How can we incorporate them into our schools?

By Tiffany Stuart

Having salmon, acorn, camas and seaweed in the city for dinner tonight? Yes!

Traditional Native American foods has been a focus for me this term in my food in schools class at the University of Oregon. As a doctoral student, I have been able to navigate my studies in my interest. Questions I posed to my research are:

1. How can traditional foods be incorporated into school foods?
2. What are barriers to having traditional foods taught in schools and what are some solutions?

Themes I would like to bring out in my studies this term are:

1. Siletz- Dee-ni Language Class
2. Tribal Program Events
3. Individual Learning
4. Family Learning

We all have busy lives. I sure do as a single mom and going to school. I had to set my mind that I was going to language classes with Bud Lane at the Eugene Area Office. Even though I had some anxiety about going because I wasn't sure my boy would listen or if it was too late in the evening for my family, I still went.

After I got there, things were OK for me. Everyone at the class was kind and felt like family having a meal together and then learning about our language. Getting

to the class was a barrier I faced this term. With prayer and planning, I was able to move past it.

Without our words from our ancestors, we can't have our dances. Without our dances, we can't pray for our food and everything the Creator has given us (the purpose of our dances). Our language must be learned – <http://siletz.swarthmore.edu/> is the website from the Tribe. Also, Carson and Jerome Viles developed this website – <https://ildarchive.org/index.php?group=nuuda>. Many languages were spoken by our ancestors.

The second theme I would like to talk about is Tribal program events. The first event I went to this term was with Nick Viles and Kathy Kentta.


My son, Nayson Tooya, and I went with other Tribal members to gather hazel sticks. These sticks are used to make baskets, such as the basket caps we wear in our dances, baby baskets, fish traps and gathering baskets for foods such as berries or camas. Gathering hazel sticks links right back to our traditional foods.

Another Tribal event I attended was with Nick and Kathy to gather camas. Again I had to make it a priority to go. I almost decided not to go because of the pressure of my doctoral program, but I worked it out and made the trip.

Camas is a beautiful flower that our ancestors ate the root or bulb of the flower that was underground. Digging up this root and then cooking it for 14 hours made

me appreciate what our ancestors had to go through to have food.

**Traditional Foods**  
**Our Journey With Camas**



By Tiffany Stuart  
and Nayson Tooya (Ten Bears)

The third theme was my own learning. I took upon myself to learn about traditional foods. I interviewed multiple people, including elders, to learn about the camas plant and other traditional foods.

One day I interviewed a University of Oregon science professor and her husband who is a botanist (scientist who studies plants). They are working on a prairie restoration project at a local school in Eugene. A barrier to growing the camas and other native plants is that the school district cuts down the grass. So developing a relationship with your school and teaching of the importance of the area is important.

After interviews, I wrote a grant for Indian education programs to use to purchase camas bulbs and supplies to make raised beds or planters.

How can traditional foods be incorporated into school foods? This was my driving question. The idea is to spark the interest in students so they will attend a trip to gather camas or even make their own garden of camas at the school or their home. Also, we plan to harvest some seeds in June or July so teachers can plant them with their students and they can see them grow.

The fourth theme was family learning. My son and I created a poster for our house. Using the online language system, we were able to look up the phrase "I tasted"... "silh-nish." Then we could use this phrase many times while we try new foods in our home or at school.

Nayson helped draw pictures of our traditional foods. I went to Nayson's kindergarten classroom and we had a traditional foods tasting day. We tasted smoked salmon, seaweed, acorn mush and camas. The salmon and sea weed were bought at Costco. The acorns we gathered in September and dried them all school year.


Then I asked myself how do I get traditional foods knowledge to our youth who don't have families who do that. Here is my suggestion. If you are a fisherman or hunter, offer to come to your child's

classroom to share if you feel comfortable. Maybe they are learning parts of the animals or writing about their experiences hunting. Tell your child's teacher right at the beginning of the year that you would be willing to come and share.

Or maybe your family goes out and gathers huckleberries. I know some gathering and hunting spots are sacred and not shared. The students don't need to know every single detail of your traditional food experience, but sharing something is how we can continue our ancestral knowledge.

To incorporate Native American tra-

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ditional foods of the Northwest into our schools we should have:

1. Taste testing days
2. Field trips (gather camas, acorns, clams and berries, or fishing trips)
3. Reading materials about traditional foods
4. Hands-on curriculum
5. School garden (planting camas, wild onion and other herbs)

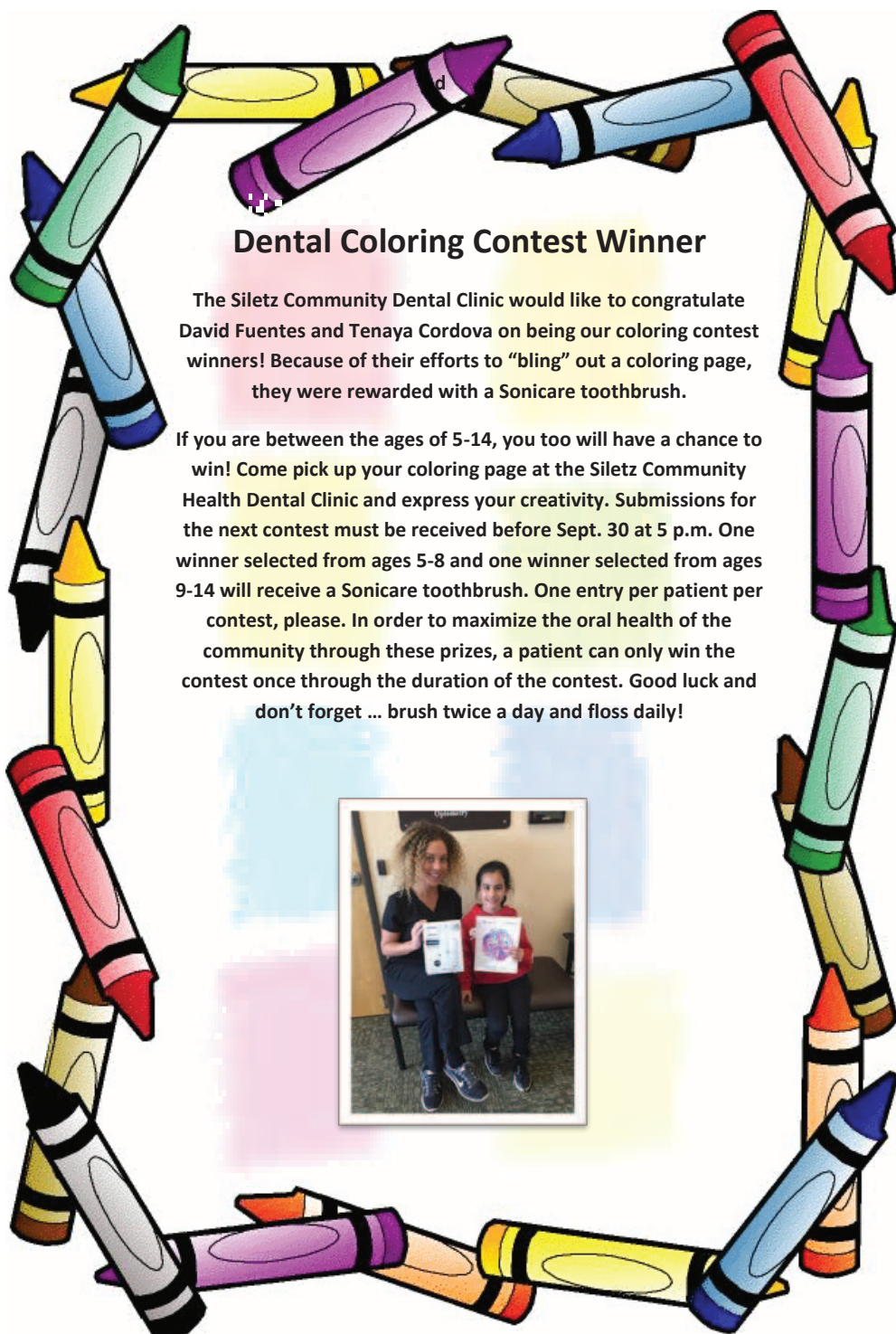
The field trips can be connected back to learning in the school. Research has shown the greater the experiences for students, the higher the test scores. These field trips might be within walking distance or on a bus. They could be with a special interest group in the school (like a club) or the entire class. I suggest doing it to make it work for you.

For reading materials on traditional foods, I started creating mini-books for students to read. You can access these books at [teacherspayteachers.com](http://teacherspayteachers.com). I also gave these books to Indian education specialists to teach our Native children about them.

To bring hands-on curriculum to the school, I created samples of the foods that can be kept frozen and shown to students when they are ready for that lesson. I bought small beading containers that fit an acorn, an acorn processed, and dry and cooked camas.

You can email me ([tiffany.wisdom@yahoo.com](mailto:tiffany.wisdom@yahoo.com)) if you want a digital copy of the mini-books and/or the full article with cited sources and supporting evidence for each theme.


This is for our people.



**Dental Coloring Contest Winner**

The Siletz Community Dental Clinic would like to congratulate David Fuentes and Tenaya Cordova on being our coloring contest winners! Because of their efforts to "bling" out a coloring page, they were rewarded with a Sonicare toothbrush.

If you are between the ages of 5-14, you too will have a chance to win! Come pick up your coloring page at the Siletz Community Health Dental Clinic and express your creativity. Submissions for the next contest must be received before Sept. 30 at 5 p.m. One winner selected from ages 5-8 and one winner selected from ages 9-14 will receive a Sonicare toothbrush. One entry per patient per contest, please. In order to maximize the oral health of the community through these prizes, a patient can only win the contest once through the duration of the contest. Good luck and don't forget ... brush twice a day and floss daily!



**Change in Siletz Clinic check-in times**

The Siletz Clinic asks all patients with appointments to check in 15 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time. This allows for any necessary paperwork to be completed prior to your appointment with your provider. Thank you!