



Portland youth from the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) visit Washington, D.C. for a leadership development program where they visited colleges and toured historic sites like the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Arlington National Cemetery.

## Youth Empowerment and Public Policy

Summer program at NAYA brings students to Washington, D.C.

Four young representatives from Portland's Native community traveled to Washington, D.C. this summer to participate in a youth development program. The students had a chance to meet elected leaders, tour historic sites, visit colleges in the D.C. area, and attend sessions on a variety of topics related to governance and youth empowerment.

Participating in the program were Quin Clark (Blackfoot and Cherokee), Logan Chapman (Seneca Cayuga), Lesly Vera (Mexican Indigenous), and Davineekaht White Elk (Ute and Blackfoot) all of northeast Portland's Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA).

White Elk says last month's trip opened her eyes to the need for Native American leadership, especially being from Portland where there are so few people of color serving as elected officials.

She says the visit ignited her interest in public policy, a subject she wants to pursue.


"All week I felt like I was teaching people the Native perspective on things, making them know we're still here. But that's not enough. I want to make decisions," she says.



Davineekaht White Elk, a student representative of Portland's Naive community, took this selfie with Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden during a visit to Washington, D.C. Wyden's staff offered the opportunity to youth from northeast Portland's Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA).

# MID-K

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