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**The Northwest Folklife Festival's Cultural Focus: Urban Indians
celebrates the art and life of Indigenous people,
Memorial Day weekend in Seattle**

Seattle, April 3, 2008—This May, the traditional arts and culture of the region's urban Indians take center stage at the annual Northwest Folklife Festival. Urban Indians are Native Americans who live in cities instead of on reservations. Though more than half of our nation's Native Americans live in metropolitan areas, they remain a relatively ignored demographic group. In the Puget Sound region, urban Indians not only represent local tribes, but they include First Nations and Indigenous peoples from all over the North American continent.

"Cultural Focus: Urban Indians" will take place Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 23, through Monday, May 26, at Seattle Center. Festival hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. each day. While admission is free, visitors' donations make the Festival possible.

"Folklife's Cultural Focus: Urban Indians is an extraordinary opportunity to explore and feature the incredible diversity of our Indigenous neighbors," says Robert Townsend, executive director of Northwest Folklife. "As we celebrate the heritage and traditions of Native Americans, we have an opportunity to confront many misconceptions and stereotypes that are steeped in history but created in ignorance."

The Puget Sound metropolitan area is home to Native Americans from more than 250 different tribes. Those individuals comprise approximately 2.4% of the total population. An advisory committee consisting of individual artists and representatives of local Native American groups, including the Duwamish Tribe, the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation and Longhouse Media, collaborated on the four days of programs. A large double tipi (teepee) will be set up on the grounds of Seattle Center, where family activities, workshops and performances will take place. In addition, a wealth of programming will include storytelling, dance and art exhibitions, a fashion show, panels on current issues facing Native Americans and concerts featuring a wide range of musical genres and performers.

On Monday, May 26, the last day of the Festival, a Healing Ceremony for the Human Family will be held at 9 a.m. on the Fisher Green. Open to everyone, the Healing Ceremony represents an age-old tradition of smudging, where materials are burned to purify a space. This sacred ceremony is based in a White Swan Dakota perspective of the Sacred Pipe and Medicine Wheel and is a way of remembering loved ones and dedicating energy for the healing and unity of the Human Family.

Programming highlights for the 2008 cultural focus include:

- Welcoming Ceremony performed by the First People of Seattle, the Duwamish, along with members of the Suquamish, Snohomish and Skokomish Tribes welcoming participants to the Festival. Friday, May 23, 5 p.m. in the Bagley Wright Theatre.
- Longhouse Media Contemporary Native Arts Showcase will feature regional Native visual artists, including Andrew Morrison, Linley B. Logan, Victor Pascual and Makita

Wilur. Opening Reception on Friday, May 23, 6-9 p.m. in the Bagley Wright Theatre Lobby.

- 1950's Relocation Act panel discussion will examine the origins of Urban Indians and their current struggles, moderated by Joan Staples-Baum. Friday, May 23, 4 p.m. on the Narrative Stage.
- Northwest Climate Change panel discussion will focus on current preservation issues facing marine life, animals and the landscape, led by Kim Camara. Saturday, May 24, 4 p.m. on the Narrative Stage.
- Northwest Folklife Benefit Concert, featuring Little Big Band, Swil Kanim, Peter Ali and Elaine Miles as the master of ceremonies. Saturday, May 24, 7 p.m. in the Bagley Wright Theatre. Tickets are \$10 in advance and are available online at www.nwfolklife.org or at (206) 684-7300.
- A panel discussion about the history of Daybreak Star Center in Discovery Park, which was the first occupied land returned to Native Americans by the Federal Government. Panelist will include Abe Johnny and Laura Wong-Whitebear. Monday, May 26 at noon on the Narrative Stage.

The Urban Indian Advisory Committee for the Northwest Folklife Cultural Focus: Urban Indians includes Peter Ali (*Yaqui/Berber*); Annette Squetinkin-Anquoe (*Colville*); ben-don-'k-heh (*Apache*); Martha Brice (*Tlingit, adopted*); Kim Camara (*Northwest Folklife Board Member, WorldKulturz*); Janeen Comenote (*Quinault/Hesquiaht*); Larry Cordier (*Lakota*); Charlotte Cote (*Nuu-chah-nulth*); Chris Cullen (*Cherokee*); Patricia Davis (*Navajo*); Roger Fernandes (*Lower Elwha Klallam*); Cecile Hansen (*Duwamish*); Phil Lane, Jr. (*Yankton Dakota/Chickasaw*); Sweetwater Nannauck (*Tlingit/Haida/Tsimshian*); Cindy Pedersen (*Haida*); Leon Rattler M.A.T. CDSIII (*Blackfeet*); Gene Tagaban (*Tlingit/Cherokee*); Tracy Rector (*Seminole*); LaVerne Wise (*Tlingit*); and Laura Wong-Whitebear (*Colville*).

About Northwest Folklife Festival

The Northwest Folklife Festival was launched in 1972 and is one of the world's largest free community arts festivals. The Festival honors people and traditions from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Northwest Folklife is dedicated to celebrating, sharing and sustaining the vitality of folk, ethnic and traditional arts for present and future generations. With approximately 250,000 visitors annually, the Northwest Folklife Festival brings communities together to share their arts and learn from each other. For details, please visit www.nwfolklife.org.

The 2008 Northwest Folklife Festival is made possible by the generous support of Safeco Festival, Seattle Center, KIRO 710, B97.3, the Mayor's Office for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Boeing Company, Sage Foundation, JiJi Foundation, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and 4Culture King County.

The 2008 Cultural Focus: Urban Indians was made possible by the generous contributions of Duwamish Tribal Services, Ji Ji Foundation, Longhouse Media, Sage Foundation, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation and Wyman Youth Trust.

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Northwest Folklife Festival

Memorial Day Weekend

May 23-26, 2008

Play • Sing • Taste • Dance • Learn • Participate