



## NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER NEWSLETTER

April Edition | 2010

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### Native American Community Center Has a Home

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Rebecca Riall, *NACC President*  
*president@naccbloomington.org*

The Native American Community Center has moved to a new home at 1101 N. Dunn St., in an office in the lower level of the Windfall Dancers Building. If you were to stop by the center today, March 22, as I write this, you would find the office filled with ladders, paint cans, and brushes. We are making the space our own. Community members have pitched in to contribute everything from furniture to office supplies, children's toys to books about American Indians.

In other words, the Native American Community Center has found a home. We are ready to move forward and provide new services to the Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. We want to serve as an information center--advocating for Indigenous needs with other southern Indiana agencies, networking with statewide Indigenous groups, and sharing information from those other groups and agencies with local people. We envision a Native

community that is strong, organized, and supportive.

As the Community Center moves forward, its needs will be determined by the community. Because we are a volunteer-run organization, those needs will be met by the same community. Please come to our April 13 meeting at the Monroe County Public Library at 6:30 P.M. to help choose among the many possible next steps for the center, or e-mail the center at [info@naccbloomington.org](mailto:info@naccbloomington.org) to contribute your thoughts.

If you would like to stop by and see the center and chat, our temporary hours are M, W-F 2:00-5:00 P.M. I hope to see you there!



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### How to Get Involved

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Visit the *Bloomington Volunteer Network* for a full listing of volunteer opportunities at NACC.

Their website can be found at:  
<http://volunteer.united-e-way.org/cob-vn/volunteer/>

A few opportunities included:

- Book Listing Committee
- Building Search Committee-Head
- Help to the Library Loan Manager

...Along with many more!

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### How to Donate

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Donations can be mailed to :

P.O. Box 2194  
Bloomington, IN 47404

And are, of course, always greatly appreciated.

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# Native Film Series

## Celebrates Cultural Survival, Educates About Indian Boarding Schools

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Rebecca Riall, NACC President  
[president@naccbloomington.org](mailto:president@naccbloomington.org)

*Native American film series, in its fifth year, honors cultural vitality of American Indians in the face of enormous pressures to assimilate.*

Bloomington, IN—When many Americans think of boarding schools, they envision prep schools and Harry Potter. What they don't think about are the generations of American Indian and Aboriginal Canadian children who were forcibly removed from their families and sent to government schools--sometimes contracted out to missionaries--which endeavored to "kill the Indian, save the man."

For American Indians, however, the memories involuntary Indian residential schools run by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and its Canadian equivalent cut deep. A new generation of Native American filmmakers are engaged with Indian boarding school experiences, seeking to explain and to heal communities torn by the memories. Honoring these filmmakers, the Bloomington Native Film Series this year will feature films which document the boarding school experience--and cultural survival in the face of enormous pressures to assimilate.

The Native Film Series is a Bloomington institution, organized by several American Indian groups. Co-organizer Del Criscenzo explained, "This year's theme is very powerful. We will look closely at the impact boarding schools have had on the Native American community and on individuals." The Film Series will kick off **April 25 at the Buskirk Chumley Theatre at 2:00 P.M.**

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### Want to Subscribe to the Newsletter?

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The news letter will be sent out bi-monthly (every 2 months), and will contain articles from NACC board members, news on upcoming events and other various content pertaining to NACC activity.

If you are interested in receiving the NACC Newsletter for free via email, contact: [info@naccbloomington.org](mailto:info@naccbloomington.org)



All films are free and open to the public, and include both documentaries (such as *\*Our Spirits Don't Speak English\**) and feature films (such as *\*Older than America,\** a thriller about a contemporary woman haunted by her mother's boarding school experiences).

Organizers emphasize that the films are not about guilt or sadness, but about powerful cultural survival. "Despite the horrific details, my hope is that we can move beyond guilt and through understanding. By understanding a past, we can move consciously into a now based on a future in which we desire to live," said co-organizer Allison Strang.

"When people think of efforts to forcibly assimilate American Indians and destroy American Indian nations, they don't realize it was so recent," added co-organizer Becca Riall (Cherokee). "We are talking about people alive today who experienced these boarding schools. But the cultures survive."

About the Native Film Series:

The Native Film Series is an annual event organized this year by the Native American Community Center of Bloomington and the American Indian Student Association at IUB. Past film series speakers have included Gary Farmer (*\*Dead Man\**), John Trudell (*\*Thunder Heart\**), Tantoo Cardinal (*\*Smoke Signals\**), and Sterlin Harjo (*\*Four Sheets to the Wind\**). It was originated by the Native American Graduate Students' Association at IU.

Contact:

Becca Riall, Film Series Co-Organizer  
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# Justifications for Colonization

## How they affect America's views of Indians

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Laura Reagan  
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The effects of the colonization of the American continent are seen in the everyday lives of native people. First off, the population, Native Americans make up 0.8% of the United States population. Native Hawaiians make up 0.14% of the US population. Think about that; we were the first people on this continent, but we are now the smallest group and the smallest voice in our nation. There were Europeans who made contact with Native Americans before Christopher Columbus but none had such an impact as he did. Not only did his “discovery” of America bring on waves of explorers and settlers, but he brought on waves of disease. Within the first century after 1492, the population of Native Americans had decreased by 90%.

Many people try to justify the colonization of this continent. It is a new form of the old Manifest Destiny belief. Commonly used justification number one is: “There weren’t very many Indians here to begin with.” Many people still believe that the continents of North and South America were sparsely populated, with natives living in small groups. Many say the number of the population pre Colombian was only one million people living in North and South America. This is a gross underestimation. While nobody knows the exact number, it is estimated that the actual population of North and South America was around one hundred million. People use this old belief of one million people to say that “oh it’s ok, there weren’t many of them in the first place they just weren’t using the land much.” You might think well nobody out there still believes that, unfortunately, many people do. At one point, Cahokia, a Native city near St. Louis was one of the largest cities in the world. In the year 1250, the population of Cahokia was larger than the population of London, England; in fact, no US city surpassed the population of Cahokia (40,000) until 1800, when Philadelphia surpassed it.

Commonly used justification number two is: “Indians were nomadic and they didn’t really use the land, so it was ok for Europeans to come here and start using the land properly.” Native Americans had very sophisticated systems of farming. Yes, many tribes were primarily hunter gatherers; however, Native Americans had permanent cities and farms to supply them with food. In the Northeast, the natives had developed a system of farming that is often referred to as Three Sisters. Instead of having to plant a nitrogen producing plant one year and a nitrogen depleting plant the next in order to keep up the soil nutrients, they planted corn, squash, and beans together.

er. These three plants are what are known as the Three Sisters. The three plants work together to keep the soil full of nutrients, and they feed each other with the nutrients that they need. Furthermore, corn was developed and genetically engineered over a number of centuries from a grass to what we know it as today, further proof against this justification of colonization that has been taught to American children for centuries.

The third commonly used justification that I will write about, though there are many more, is: “they had no sense of ownership so Europeans weren’t really stealing from them.” Many Native tribes believed that the land belonged to the community, as the land was communally farmed. Many groups also believed that the land belonged communally to the women of the tribe because women were the ones who farmed. They did have a system of ownership, though not the same kind that Europeans believed in it. There were lands “owned” by specific tribes. Natives also believed in ownership of personal property and items could be passed down generationally, however items were often traded or given as gifts. Just because Native property and land ownership were not the same as Europeans, it does not mean that they had no system of ownership.

These are only some of the justifications for colonization that are heard around America every day. If we as Native people are ever going to step out of the shadow of colonialism and its effects, one of the biggest things that need to happen is education of non-Natives. Not every non-Native is ignorant, but many are. Many grew up with no Native Americans visibly around and therefore did not know of native issues. When they hear Natives talk about issues, they say that we’re living in the past, instead of learning what the issues are and how old issues still effect us. Hopefully this article can serve as an educational tool for people who need to learn more.

*About the Native American Community Center of Bloomington*

*The Native American Community Center of Bloomington is a nonprofit serving the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian community of southern Indiana, as well as educating the general public.*

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## **Native American Community Center Events April 2010 and May 2010**

Every Tuesday: Craft Nights at the Native American Community Center. 4:00-6:00 P.M. E-mail [craftnights@naccbloomington.org](mailto:craftnights@naccbloomington.org) for more information—or just stop by!

Every Sunday: Tune into to Native Spirit—Contemporary Native Music and News for Southern Indiana on WFHB Community Radio at 10 A.M. The station is at 98.1 FM and 91.3 FM in Bloomington, or online at [wfhb.org](http://wfhb.org).

All spring and summer: Native American Community Garden. E-mail [info@naccbloomington.org](mailto:info@naccbloomington.org) for more information!

April 10: Open house at the NACC's new office from 1:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M. Light refreshments will be served.

April 15: Native American Community Center Public Meeting at the Native American Community Center. Starts at 6:30 P.M. Meeting will be followed by a showing of the film *Quallunaat: Why White People are Funny!*, an Inuit satire about the experiences of Native people as research subjects.

April 17-18: Pow-wow during the Lawrence County History Festival in Bedford, IN More info at <http://northlawrencehistoryfestival.com/>

April 18: The Native Arts Series, presented in partnership with the Mathers Museum, continues with a Mississippian-Style Clay Pottery workshop at the Mather's Museum of World Culture from 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. Free and open to the public but seats are limited, so email [info@naccbloomington.org](mailto:info@naccbloomington.org) to register.

April 25: Fifth annual Native Film Series: "Cultural Survival, beyond the Boarding School experience" at the Buskirk Chumley. Starts at 2 P.M.

May 9: End-of-school potluck at the Native American Community Center of Bloomington, starting 6:00 P.M.