



INYO COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Inyo Insight

An Education Newsletter from the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools
Volume 9, Issue 7 www.icsos.us April 2017

Big Pine Students Experience Democracy in Action

When Big Pine Language Arts and History teacher Tim Steele began his unit on Civil Rights, he had no idea that his students would be embarking on a journey that would ultimately lead them to a rally of thousands of people in support of the victory of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in their battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

According to Tim, the “heart and soul” of Big Pine’s Expeditionary Learning model centers in inquiry-based, cross-discipline units of study (called Expeditions) in which students connect in authentic ways to their learning. When he began his Civil Rights Expedition this year, he planned to use the nascent “water protector movement” in Standing Rock and the #NoDAPL protests as a current example of a civil rights movement through which his students could understand and connect to historical concepts. Little did he know, though, that “my students would so passionately latch on to the movement and truly connect their learning to the outside world.”

Though there was little media coverage in August when the Expedition began, Tim’s students began following the movement in “real time,” as it unfolded, by reading daily social media and independent news sources such as *Digital Smoke Signals* and the *Indigenous Environmental Network*. Having studied the Arab Spring in 2011 and the vital role social media played in that movement, the students immediately saw that #NoDAPL was similarly leveraging social media in what could be described as a sort of “Indigenous Spring.” Tim explains how his students took hold of their own learning:

“One of the guiding questions of the Expedition was, ‘How can I be an activist in my community?’

Inspired by the daily footage and postings of water protectors, it wasn’t long before my students were writing letters to their state representatives, President Obama, and the Standing Rock Sioux chairman, David Archambault II, to voice their concern over the DAPL and support for the Standing Rock tribe. These letters gave a palpable voice to our learning – we had become activists from afar.”

In early November, Tim’s students shared their knowledge of the events at Standing Rock in a series of student editorials in the *Inyo Register*. They began to discuss the possibility of traveling to Standing Rock to document the water protector movement in film and interviews. After garnering overwhelming support for the trip from the community and Board, eight enthusiastic students stepped up to visit the Ocheti Sakowin camp to document the cultural and political movement unfolding before their eyes.

In an ironic turn of events, just days before the slated trip departure, the Standing Rock Sioux emerged victorious when the Army Corps of Engineers pulled the permit for Dakota Access to build the pipe under the Oahe Reservoir (Missouri River). Disappointingly for the students, all water protectors were asked to leave the camp and the trip was accordingly cancelled.

Tim explained, “Despite the cancellation of the trip, my students still wanted to celebrate the victory of the Standing Rock

Tribe. Students organized a school-wide rally to stand in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and celebrate their victory. Darian Robinson, a senior who was instrumental in organizing the rally, shared his experiences



Darian Robinson at Big Pine rally

visiting Standing Rock on his own during his Thanksgiving holiday. Another student, Jamie Robinson, delivered a speech about the importance of the water protector movement and why people should use their voices to protect water. Guest speakers included local Native American activists and educators Sage Romero and Kris Hohag, both of whom had traveled to Standing Rock. Students Paaku’u Dewey, Numa Tu Sa Hoi Davis, and Darian Robinson jingle- and grass-danced to honor the Standing Rock tribe before leading the entire student body in a Round Dance (Friendship Dance).

“The following day, eight students traveled to Los Angeles to join thousands of others at a #NoDAPL / Standing Rock rally while marching from Pershing Square to the Bank of America headquarters. Once again, I had the joy of witnessing my students step up to use their voices in our great democratic nation. Darian charismatically led a crowd of hundreds in the rally cry of ‘Mni Wiconi! Water is Life!’ Perhaps the most memorable moment came as I watched another student, Paaku’u Dewey, swiftly walk toward the front of the parade in full regalia. ‘I’m not sure I will dance today,’ she nervously muttered as she passed by.

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EQUITY THROUGH EXCELLENCE

Last month, ICSOS offered a countywide professional learning day. Resources for each session are below:

[Culture and Climate](#)
[Restorative Practices](#)



Sierra Adventure Summer Camp

Cost: \$20

**Dates: June 19-23 (boys)
June 26-30 (girls)**

Open to Inyo County Students currently in 5th-7th grade



Register online starting May 3rd!

**For more information visit:
sierraadventurecenter.org
or call: 760-873-3262**

Big Pine Students Experience Democracy in Action *continued*

But just minutes later, arriving next to the drum at the head of the parade, she suddenly burst out dancing, her jingle dress singing ancient songs of healing in the heart of an austere concrete metropolis. Ultimately, she danced at the front of the march for over a mile. It was one of those moments you cherish as a teacher. This was the connec-

tion to authentic and joyous learning for which I had been searching. They were stepping up as leaders in their communities and beyond. They were

physically and viscerally connected to their learning. They were literally making history. What better way to study the Constitution, or civil rights, or simply one's place in democracy? This was the kind of learning that would carry them forward in life.

"Jamie Robinson summed it up best while reflecting upon her experience at the rally: 'Being an introvert from a small town, I didn't know how I would feel

marching with hundreds of people,' she recalled. 'There were people dressed in their regalia dancing with skyscrapers on either side of them. Hundreds of people were gathered in the streets of Los Angeles to stand up for Native American rights. Everyone seemed happy and determined because they knew that though it was a small act, they were making a difference. The experience was amazing and definitely a trip I won't forget.'"



Paaku'u dances at the front of the LA #NoDAPL march

Get WET With Climate Change Education

Join the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Climate Change Team on June 15th from 8:00 - 4:00 for a day of hands-on learning about the basics of climate science through the lens of the Eastern Sierra, how DWR is addressing these impacts, and how you can use the interdisciplinary activities of Project WET to teach your students about climate science! Participants will receive a Project WET Activity Guide (2.0), breakfast, lunch, a \$50 stipend, and an opportunity to earn 0.8 CEU credits. Click [HERE](#) for the flyer and to register.

INYO COUNTY COMMUNITY READS

Storyboarding Workshop with Janell Cannon

Thursday April 6th—5:30pm, Jill Kinmont Boothe School

Janell Cannon will share her artistic and literary approach. Space is limited, call ICA to RSVP!

Eastern Sierra Audubon Bird Walk #2

Saturday April 8th—8:30am-10:30am, USFS Parking Lot on Line St.

Bring your binoculars or reserve a pair by calling ICA! Learn more at www.esaudubon.org

Community Art Day

Saturday April 8th—10:00am-2:00pm, Big Pine School Cafeteria

Art activities for all ages that celebrate and benefit our feathered friends!

Winged Migration—Documentary Film

Wednesday April 12th—6:30pm, Inyo Council for the Arts and Lone Pine Film History Museum

Book Discussion: Wabi: Tuesday April 25th—7:00pm, Spellbinder Books

Book Discussion: The Thing With Feathers: Wed. April 26th—6:30pm, Spellbinder Books

Owens Lake Bird Festival

Friday April 28th through Sunday April 30th, Lone Pine

Experience a special place during a height of migration. Open registration begins 2/15.

Learn about this year's books and events at INYO.org or call ICA at 760-873-8014

Professional Development Opportunity



The Teacher Ranger Teacher program is a professional development opportunity for K-12 teachers to spend Summer 2017 acquiring new skills in experiential learning. Participants will spend between four and six weeks in a NPS unit (located at Manzanar) developing a major educational project and participating in an online graduate course from CU Denver. Teachers receive a \$3000.00 stipend upon completion of the Manzanar project and graduate course.

For a full description and to apply, [please visit this link](#).

History Day Results

Thirteen individual posters, one website, and two group exhibits covering a variety of topics captured this year's contest theme of **Taking a Stand in History**.

The following students will be advancing to the state competition in May:

Steve Mather, *Fight against Railroad Monopolies* (website)
Naiya Warren and Kylee Mullen, *First Two Women in Space* (exhibit)
Cora Vannest and Kaki Saulque, *Alice Piper* (exhibit)

Shealyn Ludwick, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (poster)

Blake Winzenread, *Wangari Maathai* (poster)

Luke Winzenread, *John Muir* (poster)

The following students were also recognized for their hard work on their individual poster presentations: Elias Downard with *Wright Brothers*, Brooklyn Gardner with *Fannie Lou Hamer*, Elizabeth Ellsworth with *Annie Bidwell*, Malaya Mialazzo with *Clara Shortridge*

Foltz, Alyssa Buchholz with *Annie Oakley*, Jodie Bedore with *Malala's Stand*, Ty Arcularius with *Don Haskins*, Elan Boehme with *Charles Darwin*, Emma Dutton with *Susan B. Anthony*, and Claire Vetter with *Elizabeth Blackwell*.

Thank you to coaches Rande Arcularius, Billy and Shelly Daugherty, and Bryan Mack for working with their students to prepare them for the competition. ICSOS would also like to thank the local Altrusa Chapter for providing student prizes.



Kaki Saulque, Cora VanNest, Naiya Warren, and Steven Mather



Blake Winzenread, Shealyn Ludwick, and Luke Winzenread