

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Hopi and Yavapai roots makes for good art

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

It took some 40 years for Marvin Honwyteewa to decide to return to his Yavapai roots in Middle Verde. Today, he likes to point out that he came back "exactly one year from last May of 2015".

His father was the late Louis Honwyteewa, Sr. of Hopiland who married a Marion Whagado, a Yavapai from Middle Verde over a half century ago.

Young Honwyteewa acquired 6 sisters and 2 other brothers, Jerry Whagado and the late Louis Honwyteewa, Jr.

Honwyteewa grew up in Shungapovi on Second Mesa-Hopi and it is from here that one can see the holy mountains of the kachinas some 90 miles to the west in Flagstaff. It is in this village where all of the sacred ceremonies are held in the plaza and kivas throughout the year. Honwyteewa is steeped in his Hopi roots because Hopi is the place where he has spent most of his life although he shares the Yavapai blood on his mother's side.

Honwyteewa's father was a kachina doll carver and a painter and he credits his father for all that he has learned with

his art endeavors.

Honwyteewa took a basic drawing class in 1997 at Yavapai College in Cottonwood and that was the extent of his formal art training besides what he learned from his Hopi father.

One year ago last May, Honwyteewa packed his belongings in Shungapovi and moved to Middle Verde-Yavapai-Apache Nation where he makes his new home replete with wall decorations of Hopi baskets and other special objects carefully placed on his living room walls. He is content with his artwork and today he is sitting inside of his studio in one of the bedrooms facing the east.

For now, he is concentrating on painting ceramic plates accented with traditional Hopi designs.

This is Honwyteewa's speciality-taking traditional Hopi motifs and painting them on ceramic plates that he finds at thrift shops.

"I don't paint on paper. I paint on other substances such as flagstones, wood-bowls and pottery," said Honwyteewa. Interestingly, this day, he is contemplating his design layout for a ceiling fan he has to paint



"Marvin shows one of his prized art pieces that was sold during the Earth Day festivities" Photo by Don Decker

for a Middle Verde resident.

His trademark are the painted plates that are decorated with exquisite Hopi symbols featuring 2 perfect hands with a yellow and sky-blue color hand prints filled with tiny squiggly lines, dots, wavy lines, triangular shapes, checker board patterns,

diagonal lines and other symbols that may have a special meaning for Honwyteewa. These plates have caught the attention of buyers who came to the mesas where Honwyteewa lived until last year.

Honwyteewa has revived his art plate designs here in Middle Verde. It's Hopi symbol-

ism on the plates that "signifies prayer hands", and then there's the easily recognized spiral lines that are often seen on rock art which represents "spider mother-the endless cycle", says Honwyteewa.

On the plate, there are over 60 other different designs that Honwyteewa has painted and each

of these symbols has a special meaning in the Hopi way.

Honwyteewa is committed to carrying on the traditions of his Hopi father and his Yavapai roots continue to play an important role in his life.

Reno-Sparks Tribal Health Center Under New Leadership: Andrea Johnson-Harper, YAN member

BY STACEY MONTOOTH,
Community information officer
Reno-Sparks Indian community

Reno, Nev. - Andrea Johnson-Harper, has recently been named the director of the Reno-Sparks Tribal Health Center (RSTHC) at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC).

Johnson-Harper, a member of the Yavapai-Apache Nation in Camp Verde, Arizona, and raised in Las Vegas, brings over a decade of experience in health care to this important post at the Colony. Most recently, Johnson-Harper led the healthcare efforts for two Paiute tribes in Southern Nevada. "Growing up in Indian Country, I know the importance of healthcare and the effects it can have on so many," Johnson-Harper said. "I am happy to be back in Reno and I am glad to be working for a compact tribe."

Johnson-Harper, who graduated from Haskell Indian Nations University and attended UNLV, began her health center directorship at the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe and Moapa Band of Paiutes with a handful of staff and concluded her service supervising 85 people. "In just about 13-years, we went from a single-wide trailer to a custom constructed facility which served over 6,000 peo-

ple," Johnson-Harper said.

RSIC Chairman Arlan D. Melendez believes that Johnson-Harper's experience working with Native American community health care programs will be beneficial for the RSTHC.

"We look forward to Andrea overseeing our health center as we continue to expand services for our community and create partnerships for more specialty care," Melendez said.

Since opening its 65,000-square-foot facility in 2008, the RSTHC is staffed by over 150 people. Patient services include: prevent medical care, geriatrics, podiatry, ophthalmology, physical therapy, diabetes treatment and awareness, women's health, psychiatry, dentistry, audiology, pharmaceutical, and substance abuse counseling.

In 2013, the RSTHC recorded over 18,000 patient encounters ranging from a simple check-up to chronic and acute conditions, or pre-natal visits, to name just a few.

"I know the health care issues in Nevada, Arizona, and California so I have always maintained a good working relationship with IHS and state healthcare agencies," Johnson-Harper said. "However, I look forward to heightening levels of care and



improve services right here in this community."

Married for 26-years to husband Don Harper, a member of Cherokee Nation and geographer for the US Fish & Wildlife Services in Las Vegas, the couple has a son, Andrew Wathogoma, a student at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, and a daughter, Amanda Wathogoma, a student at Durango High in Las Vegas, along with 3 additional grown children.

ABOUT THE COLONY: The RSIC in Reno-Sparks, Nevada, was

established in the early 1900's and formed a federally recognized government in 1934 under the Indian Reorganization Act. The RSIC consists of over 1,100 members from three Great Basin Tribes - the Paiute, the Shoshone, and the Washoe and provides essential services to over 7,000 Natives.

(Andrea Johnson-Harper was former medical director for Yavapai-Apache Nation*editor: Don Decker, Ganavah/Yati Newspaper-Yavapai-Apache Nation)

YAN's mental health specialist works with Nevada tribes in Reno

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

(an interview with
Veronica Dominques-
Gephart-Yavapai-
Apache Nation member)

1. What school did you attend for higher education?

I completed my undergraduate degree at Sonoma State University with a major in American Multicultural Studies and a minor in Native American Studies; completed a Master's of Arts at the University of Nevada-Reno in Counseling and Educational Psychology with a specialty in Marriage and Family Therapy and Community Counseling with a minor in Addiction Counseling Services. I am currently a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and I moved here to Reno, Nevada in 2000.

2. Your last big time employment?

I worked for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Health Center for 8 years in their Behavioral Health Department where I provided counseling/therapy services for many tribal members of all ages while incorporating outreach for suicide prevention.

3. Children?

I have 2 children ages 11, Connor Gephart who is special needs with



Veronica of Yavapai-Apache Nation continues to work with the Paiute/Washoe/Shoshone tribes in Reno, Nevada as a mental health specialist.

Courtesy photo

Autism and Connor Gephart,14, who enjoys the Native American sport Lacrosse.

4. How do you like your work there?

I enjoy an old tradition (telling stories) that has been utilized in our culture for many years that is identified today as mental health counseling; I enjoy watching those who have trusted me with their stories become amazing individuals and contributors in strengthening Native American culture through their own healing. Most importantly, I enjoy going to work every day and besides