

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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Taylor named NICWA 2024 Individual Champion for Native Children

MISSION, Ore. – Julie Taylor, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) director for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), has been named the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) 2024 Individual Champion for Native Children.

Taylor, an enrolled CTUIR member in her 12th year as DCFS director, was expected to accept the award at the 42nd annual Protecting Our Children Conference on April 9 in Seattle.

“I feel very honored and blessed. I think it was a lot for working with the children and families, and that’s rewarding,” she said. “I have very good staff who assist me daily, and of course, I enjoy the community’s and my family’s support that I receive to keep me working hard every day. It’s a real honor to get this award through NICWA. They’ve been my mentor ever since I started my MSW (master’s degree in social work) program when I went to school in Portland.”

According to NICWA, Taylor is receiving the award for being a dedicated leader within her community who exemplifies how culture and connectedness can translate to lifelong service.

“Julie has demonstrated outstanding behavior for decades in child welfare practice and personal habits, engaging in service to her people, foraging innovation and always striving to make the next best decision for future generations,” NICWA states.

According to the association, a nominee should be an exceptional or emerging leader, social worker, case manager or foster parent who has made significant contributions to the well-being of Indigenous children, families and communities in the United States or Canada.

“In her own tribe, Julie’s unwavering dedication to its well-being and development is evident. Within the CTUIR community, Taylor is recognized for her leadership, commitment, and strength in empowering others,” NICWA states. “Taylor’s extensive involvement in various committees and positive engagement with government agencies underlines her commitment.”

She was integral in the creation of the ICWA Qualified Expert Witness tribal pool, which expanded from one resource to more than 20 tribally approved resources across Oregon in three years. And as DCFS director, her job is to encourage and support the health, viability and self-sufficiency of CTUIR members via holistic approaches to promote overall well-being.

"I cannot think of a more deserving person to win this award than Julie. Her dedication to and passion for her job knows no bounds. And when you have such employees, they vastly help improve the work being done in the community and for the people," said CTUIR Deputy Executive Director J.D. Tovey.

NICWA works to support the safety, health and spiritual strength of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children along the broad continuum of their lives. It supports tribes in building the capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal and tribal levels.

The nonprofit, membership organization based in Portland includes tribes, individuals and private organizations from around the United States concerned with Native child and family issues, and it annually hosts the largest national gathering on AI/AN child advocacy issues.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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Caption: Julie Taylor