

Megan England Transcript (Film Crew Interviews)

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Princess: [00:00:12] Okay, would you like to introduce yourself?

Megan: [00:00:14] My name is Megan England, and I'm enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. It's one of the western Oregon tribes that's Indigenous to the area that we're in. And my ancestry is Chetco and Tututni from the southern Oregon coast, and also Gros Ventre from eastern Montana. And I was born in Ketchikan in Alaska, and I moved to Waltherville when I was four and grew up in this area. And now I live in Springfield, and I'm raising my kids here, and Springfield is home to me.

Princess: [00:00:52] All right, I would like to ask, um, what is your current role in the Native community?

Megan: [00:00:58] Well, I grew up going to events by the Siletz Tribe. And being a part of my family, and learning about my family history from older people in my family. And now as a mom, I'm trying to learn how to be a good parent and teach my kids the things that they're going to need to know.

And I work part time as a freelance writer. And I do work for local museums, and I do history writing and historical research. And I'm a member of the Springfield History Museum Committee. And I've also done some writing work for the Native community. And I, uh, joined the Springfield History Museum Committee in 2021 during the pandemic because, uh, I was just looking for a way to connect with people and kind of get to know people.

And I was also really interested in, um, just learning about the work, uh, with the local Native community and Native history of this area. And so, uh, I got involved with a history book that they've been developing. I've been working on it quite a bit over the past two years. And trying to find ways to incorporate Native history into that, uh, which is something that hasn't really been included in, in previous history books about the city and about this area. Uh, so I'm really excited about that. It should be coming out down the road. And, uh, that's how I got involved with the Illumination project. I had a relationship with the museum, and they invited me to come be a part of this.

And I was really excited because it's a contemporary history project. And I knew that, uh, there's a lot of really cool stuff happening in the Native community today, and it would be a way that we could, uh, document some of that and highlight it for the community.

Princess: [00:03:13] Awesome. What's the importance of hospitality during interviews and bringing gifts in exchange for knowledge and/or as thanks within the Native community?

Megan: [00:03:25] Well, uh, when I was growing up, my mom was working for the Siletz Tribe as the Community Health Advocate. And so in that role she had to plan a lot of events for the Siletz community. And I was always coming and spending time at the tribal office over in Eugene and—uh, actually the old tribal office was in Springfield. It was by Day Island Park, but it's in Eugene now—but those events always were very welcoming, and they always had food. And my mom was very adamant that you have to have food. And even if it's not, uh, maybe the best, like if it's, if it's hot dogs or if it's, we're going to open this can of chili, we're going to have some chips and nacho cheese, whatever we have, like, we have to be able to offer something. And so that was always really special for me growing up, because it, it created this, um... This really nice feeling when you come in, and you know that you're going to be taken care of. And, uh, that you're going to feel at home.

And so, for this project, we really wanted to try to recreate that for the people we were interviewing. And even though it's a project that's being sponsored by the Springfield Museum, we, uh, since we're part of the Native community, we wanted to bring some of that with us to this event and try to make people feel welcomed and feel at home. And so we tried to, uh, set up a nice space for them when they came in.

And we brought some snacks. We brought gifts for them and, uh, tried to just be welcoming and make them feel at home. And we also have the interviews at the U of O Longhouse and the LCC Longhouse. Because those are spaces that a lot of people in the community use and they're familiar with and, uh, we really just wanted them to feel, uh, like they were being welcomed and in the way that they would recognize.

Princess: [00:05:22] Awesome. Thank you. Um, with that, if there's any last words you'd like to say, um, I invite you to.

Megan: [00:05:30] Well, I wanted to, uh, just share that we had some really interesting conversations as we were working on this project. This is the fourth year of the Illuminations project, and we felt like there were some unique needs when we were approaching the Native community, uh, that we wanted to be really thoughtful about.

And there is, uh, there are just some challenges with telling stories about Native people. Uh, because in the past, our family members haven't always been treated respectfully by institutions like museums and universities. Or we haven't always had control of our Images or intellectual property or things like that.

And, uh, and so not everybody feels comfortable sharing their story. Uh, because they're concerned that it might be misrepresented or not cared for in the way that they think is appropriate. And, so, um, we

just felt like there were some questions that we've been talking through and, uh, how we wanted to approach that. And we're still working through it.

I, I think that one thing we tried to do is be really thoughtful with the questions that we were asking and trying to, uh, think about the other person and what they would feel comfortable sharing. And trying to use it to highlight their accomplishments and all of the, um, amazing things that they're doing in the community, and not necessarily pushing them to share anything that's too personal or, um, you know, sharing just for the sake of "getting your story out there" or "being seen" or, or things like that, that you'll hear people say.

So, uh, yeah, that was an interesting challenge that we're still working through. And, uh, I do think that this project is really important for the public and really important for, um, just elevating Native voices in the community.

But we really want to make sure that, uh, this also feels good for the Native community and for the people who are, uh, on this project, Princess and Kunu and myself. And, um, making something that we can all feel good about.