

The Yakima/Ellensburg LICWAC consists of 5 important participating members and one emeritus member.

Andy Thompson is the chair of our ‘urban’ LICWAC. He is a member of the Cherokee Nation, a participating member of the Yakima Warriors Association, and a Southern Gourd dancer. He is an Air Force Veteran and has been a member of this LICWAC for nearly 30 years. He is a retired radio announcer and engineer. Besides LICWAC, the Warriors Ass. memorial services, he has recently spent a lot of time helping develop and raise money for the Veteran’s Building on the Yakima Reservation.

Marilyn DeLozier is a retired school counselor from the Wapato School District and has often had both social workers and parents in LICWAC meetings who she had as students when she was working. She is a member of the Assiniboine Sioux Tribe from Ft. Peck in Montana. She has recently moved into a new modular home on the Yakama Reservation and because of her work with the school district knows Yakama families. She provides good information about family histories for LICWAC, including dogs who bit her car tires when she was making home visits.

Leona Smartlowit is a member of the Umatilla tribe. I met her several years ago when we evaluated Head Start programs in Yakima County. We were nearly arrested together in Toppenish because a business owner didn’t want any ‘Federal employees’ in her place of business. Later she, too, was a school district employee. She was a horse woman when she was younger and now enjoys photography. She too, lives on the Yakama Reservation and knows a great deal about family history. There has been a display about her at the Tamastslikt Cultural Institute in Pendleton.

Bonnie Labbee is a retired counselor from Yakima Community College who was instrumental in having the change in the mascot for the college several years ago. She is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, out of South Dakota. She too, has seen many of our social workers while at YCC. She has twin sons, who were outstanding athletes when they were in school here. She lived in Harrah, for a long time and her family is infamous for their mint oil. She also has a daughter who is a therapist in our community.

Mariah Lowells is the newest member of this LICWAC. She is the ‘Indian Desk’ for the Yakima School District, being responsible for keeping track of attendance, family needs, and graduation requirements for the District. I met her when interviewing a child at McKinley School when I was told I could use her office. She is an Aleut from Alaska and has been helpful to us in contacting corporations from there. She, obviously, has also been helpful with Yakima children, especially when it comes to getting enrollment cards.

Our emeritus member is Tallulah Pinkham, who is a member of the Yakama Nation. I met her when she was on the advisor committee for the Battered Women’s Program when it first started in our community. Tallulah has a background in mental health which has served this LICWAC well over the years.

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This LICAC was recognized by the state at one time as the only LICWAC without a state employee on it and provided training for facilitators across the state in how to recruit and maintain LICWACs. They have testified in court on cases. They hosted a social worker from an Indian tribe in the mid-west who came to investigate whether a non-Indian family could adopt an Indian child that they had staffed.

This is an amazing group of people who come with a wide range of backgrounds which provides us with a similar amount of history regarding customs and has given us connections across the country. They are also well-steeped in the traditions of and people of the Yakama Nation. We celebrate their willingness to provide advice to the social workers in the Ellensburg and Yakima offices.