

Highlighting Region 3 LICWAC Team Members

Thaidra Alfred



Thaidra was born and raised in Seattle and is a member of Cowichan First Nations of Canada. Thaidra spent much of her youth traveling from tribe to tribe for 1910 Shaker Services throughout the West Coast including Canada and, as such, is familiar with many tribal communities. Thaidra has been working at United Indians of All Tribes Foundation as a foster care licenser and recruitment/retention coordinator for eight years-the same Organization where she attended Head Start and other programs as a child. Thaidra also organizes and facilitates *Daybreak Circle Time Connections* to provide cultural outreach and support to caregivers and Native children who are placed with them. Thaidra has been an integral member of the Region 3 and 4 LICWAC teams for nearly eight years. She enjoys being a voice for Native families and providing the tribal perspective especially for those social workers who are new to working with Native children and families. Thaidra noted that she is honored to fulfill this role on the LICWAC.

United Indians is located in King County and they license homes from Pierce County up to the Canadian Border. **Please feel free to email Thaidra if you know of an individual or a family who are interested in becoming licensed foster parent(s) for Native children at talfred@unitedindians.org.**

Patricia Rudd (Pat)



In the early 1980s Pat was asked to join the LICWAC and has been a member since that time. Pat was employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and was able to bring her knowledge of the hundreds of tribes throughout the nation and her background in tribal enrollment to assist in identifying a child's tribal affiliation. At that time, tribes were beginning to implement the *Indian Self Determination Act* and assuming governance activities that had been managed by the BIA. Pat traveled throughout the United States teaching tribal staff the procedures of enrollment as authorized within their constitutional documents and supported tribes in developing enrollment ordinances. Pat also supported tribal self-determination in the development and implementation of court systems and child welfare programs. Pat became a confidential intermediary which allows her access to sealed court records when a child was adopted away from their birth family before the child's tribal history or enrollment was officially recognized by the tribe. Pat noted that this has been the most rewarding part of her career as it allows her to assist in obtaining the original birth records that support the claim for tribal enrollment and seeing that person get enrolled and connecting with their birth family. 'I have changed their lives and the generations yet to come and consider it a privilege to play a part in their lives.' Pat retired from the BIA 26 years ago but keeps busy with volunteer work through her church, as a confidential intermediary and as our valued Region 3 LICWAC member.

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Danita Washington



Danita is a member of Lummi Nation and is Canadian Firsts Nations descendent. During her early years, she was raised by parents struggling with alcoholism. Her parents found sobriety and then founded the Lummi Care Program which helped bring sobriety to others in the Lummi community. Danita has a wide array of work and volunteer experience serving tribal communities. She is the first Washington state Native American female law enforcement officer trained by the BIA. She spent her early career working for the Lummi Nation Police Department and the Lummi Nation Court primarily intervening to help youth navigate the juvenile justice system. She then starting working at a Whatcom County Teen Court with Judge Schneider where they developed a program that handed out consequences to youth that were developed by their peers.

Danita was then approached by Lummi Nation to develop resources and service referral for youth outreach. There were very few resources at that time but she coordinated with community partners such as schools, JRA, Whatcom County, Tribal leadership, grant writers, youth and their families to develop programs to serve youth. She helped to lead the *Mobilization Against Drugs Initiative* to develop and coordinate Inpatient Treatment, the Lummi Youth Home, and the Data and Statistics office. She has also served on the Child Protective Team for many years. Ron and Danita have facilitated Positive Indian Parenting Classes for six years and have integrated Lummi culture into the curriculum. She has especially enjoyed delivering this parenting course as it is preventative and they have worked with both court ordered and non-court ordered parents. Danita has served on LICWAC for ten years. She notes that there is a huge need for 'someone like ourselves' to influence the non-Indian staff of DCYF in how to understand tribal families and help them to connect for success through active efforts, traditions and culture.

Ron Tso



Ron Tso is a member of Navajo Nation. Ron began his career as a Training Sergeant for the BIA Indian Police Academy (1974-1978) which was held at Intermountain Tribal Boarding School. He met his future wife Danita there. They both remained at Intermountain Boarding School where he continued to teach at the Police Academy and she provided oversight, care and guidance to the Boarding School youth (the Police Academy and the youth boarding school were housed at the same location). During the fall of 1978 they moved back to Washington and Ron was hired

by Lummi Nation as a police officer, followed by a promotion to Lummi Nation Chief of Police. He worked with both youth and adult crimes that were not handled under state or federal jurisdiction. He returned to BIA service in 1978 where he continued to serve Lummi Nation, and eventually was transferred to work for multiple tribes in the Puget Sound area. When tribes began taking back jurisdiction over criminal matters, Ron transferred to US Customs Service and worked in Flagstaff and Nogales. In 2002 he and Danita returned to the Northwest and Ron worked the northern border at

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Blaine until he retired. Ron was rehired by Lummi as Chief of Police 2015. He is now retired from law enforcement. Ron is currently involved with *Children of the Setting Sun* to preserve culture and bring health and wellbeing through cultural support and rejuvenation. He also volunteers at the *Women's Spirit Coalition* that supports women's safety from domestic violence and sexual assault. As a member of LICWAC Ron stated 'if I can have a voice for children and their families to help them on their journey and LICWAC affords me that I am happy to participate. It moves me a lot to know that are doing good as a way of service.'