

Addressing OSEU 3 with Cheryl Medearis

One of the challenges I think we have for our Native youth is they don't see themselves a lot on TV. They don't see themselves in the music. They don't see themselves in all the things that are important, especially to upper elementary, middle school, high school students. The students on our reservation want to be anything but Indian. So I'm very thankful for every opportunity that they have to see the Frank Wands and that they see the students like performing today that are learning how to play the flute.

And as we do our Founders' Day celebration at Sintagalaska every year, we see more and more drums with young students sitting around there. And I walk up and always try to personally thank the teachers or the mentors who are there with those students around those drums, teaching them the songs, teaching them that way of life. So it's something we have lost and have to really work hard in the educational setting to gain back, again, that cultural identity and to be proud of who they are and where they came from. And they are okay.