

Grand Canyon Music Festival

2020 Lewis Prize for Music Infusion Award

Winner: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award

NewMusic USA New Music Educators Award

Winner: Governor's Arts Award

Paula Cullison

Arizona Women's Partnership

13058 North Surrey Circle

Phoenix, AZ 85029

January 26, 2021

Dear Ms. Cullison,

We are deeply grateful to the Arizona Women's Partnership for your continued generous support of the Native American Composer Apprentice Project (NACAP).

While we were faced with unprecedented challenges, your support meant we were able to not only move forward with NACAP, but also expand opportunities with two new projects, a new podcast by and for our students entitled “Original Score: A Native Perspective on Music” (a link is attached to this email), and a partnership with Shelter Music Boston.

Challenges: The digital divide was never more apparent than during the Covid pandemic. There can be no equity until the digital divide is addressed. Students on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations often live in homes without electricity and running water. Internet access is a luxury.

While schools and communities made valiant efforts to reach students—with school bus and school parking lot “hot spots”—there were students who did not even have the gas to drive to those hot spots. One school reported 30% of students have simply dropped off the map.

Successes:

While we found that we were able to move forward providing remote lessons, everything took longer than usual. In a normal year, we expect by mid-January to have completed most of the private lessons with the students. This year, to date, NACAP's teaching composers, Raven Chacon (Navajo Nation) and Michael Begay (Navajo Nation and NACAP alum), tutored students from Chinle High School, Hopi High School, and Whitehorse High School in the art of composition, from inspiration to notation, and workshops with the Catalyst Quartet took place. Our Tuba City partner schools are slated to begin in mid-February.

“Original Score: A Native Perspective on Music.” An Infusion Award from the Lewis Prize for Music allowed us to pursue a project we have been hoping to develop for a long time: A podcast by and for NACAP students. Produced by Michael Begay (a NACAP alum and teaching composer) at KGHR, Navajo Radio in Tuba City. The podcast highlights NACAP students, their

lives, aspirations, and music. It is available on Mixcloud and we hope to develop wider distribution to share our students' voices with a wider audience.

Shelter Music Boston. Over 3 months, from February through April, our NACAP students, current and former, will be the virtual composers-in-residence at Shelter Music Boston. A paid service, students will share their music and experiences via video with the Shelter Music Boston audiences. Several students are also being commissioned to create new works. NACAP students will share their experiences with Native youth of the Wampanoag tribe, the Indigenous people of the current-day Boston area.

NACAP 2020-2021 is ongoing, finding ways to connect with our students and work around the challenges of these times. NACAP has been an anchor for these youth, a way to express themselves and find some connection to normalcy.

We will be sending you via WeTransfer videos of a few of our 2020 NACAP students. (The files are too large for email.)

Recent NACAP student news:

Cina Curly started her freshman year at Harvard, remotely.

Sage Bond, a sophomore at NAU, studying music, was invited to be a guest speaker at a recent Creative Youth Development Community Meeting sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and asked by Blavity.com to submit an op-ed about the positive impact learning and making music has on her life and community.

Dennelia Stevens has just started her Army basic training.

Please feel free to contact me, by phone or email, if you have any questions or would like additional material about NACAP.

Thank you again.

Your support means so much to us and to our youth!

Clare Hoffman
Grand Canyon Music Festival
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*“This is something they do for themselves. It can pull a suicidal kid out of a dive.”
- English teacher, NACAP Partner School.*