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National UNITY Conference

UNITY was a conference of healing, family and relaxing. My expectations of UNITY were open, since I was unaware of what was going to occur while in Colorado. Although I was unaware of the events that were taking place; I was expecting to create new relationships, feel empowered and inspired. Coming home I thought that everything was going to be the same, not in the environment, but in myself. When I had come home from Colorado, I had felt more connected to my people and had learned what culture is to other tribes and reservations. On July 7th, there was a cultural exchange and during that exchange many tribes had shared dances and songs with us, even the meaning behind these traditions. During the cultural exchange, I had felt connected to other tribes just by seeing the similarities and the things that they were doing, made me PROUD to be Native American. The next day on July 9th, one of my favorite presentations had happened by a Native group from Taiwan. In this presentation, they had talked about what it has been like for them to be in Colorado, traditions that they have in Taiwan within their tribes and on their reservations. At one point that had asked 10 males to go on the stage and play one of their traditional games and later they had asked the crowd to do one of their tradition dances as well. During this presentation, there was one point where one of the young girls had started tearing up because while at UNITY they had saw the UNITY fire lit up and they have a fire that is used for healing and such, like the fire in Colorado was. Seeing what they do and their traditions had made me think that although or tribes and reservations are located in different areas and have different traditions, there is nothing drastically different from one another.

Throughout the week, there was cultural sharing, presentations and discussion panels. One of the discussion panels had contained: Former Governor Greg Mendoza, Chairman Clement Frost, and a lady named Lucille Echohawk. The main question of this panel board was *What is Cultural Wellness?* The answers vary from Mrs. Echohawk saying that she's taken the culture around her in and that she grows stronger and hold wellness close to her because of past incident and to Chairman Frost saying that "Cultural Identity is a part of cultural wellness. It was made clear that you need to take care of yourself, do healthy to survive and caring for others and objects you love. One of the last things that I had enjoyed while at the conference was one of the workshops that I had attended. The workshop was called the Legal Frontline, which was done by Rainbow-Star Zephier and her brother Journey Nani Manji Zephier. One of the topics that they had talked about was how they were suing the federal government for climate change. These two along with 21 other individuals were suing because of the high sea levels. The supreme is the last call for hope for us and our future generations to come. This one presentation/ workshop had empowered me because these teenagers are making an impact not only in their community but soon it can be the world. Since I've been back from Colorado, I've started carpooling to school to reduce the gas in the air and started looking more into my culture.