



Unlocking Silent Histories



CRITICAL AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION
BY INDIGENOUS YOUTH
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Unlocking Silent Histories
ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

UNLOCKING SILENT HISTORIES (USH) *had a simply amazing 2016.* We are anxious to share this incredibly full and exciting year with you, as none of this is possible without your support. With your assistance our program continues to grow exponentially. The success of this work has been realized through the well-deserved amount of global recognition we received this past year. With each spotlight invitation, the emphasis has been both on the work that we do and, more importantly, the way that we do it.

Our programs continue to thrive, amaze, and expand. For one, USH remains solidly entrenched in Guatemala, diligently supporting Indigenous youth voice and media expression. This past year, USH Program Leader Carlos led two new groups of youth in the productions of their very first films. Four youth from the community of Nahualá and nine from Santiago Atitlán got an invigorating introduction learning what it means to discover their own interests and project their own voices. This year's film topics again are unique to those that we have had in the past, unveiling the ever-present and endless depth of Maya Indigenous traditions and cultures that underlie these resilient communities. What is more, USH is thrilled to announce that we have expanded to begin working with the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, United States. Two college-aged Lumbee Tribe members are simultaneously working on their first films while helping younger students create their first films. Our first U.S. chapter is possible both through a collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of Pembroke, and with the generous support of a First Nations Youth & Culture Grant.

The most exhilarating aspect of this year is that USH is gaining notoriety. We couldn't be more humbled by the unprecedented attention that our program is receiving. This recognition began prior to 2016, with a generous invitation from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). What started as an innocent conversation between the NMAI cultural programs director and myself, materialized into a stunning Smithsonian collaborative exhibit. The cultural program director first extended an invitation to bring three USH youth to the United States to present their work in Washington D.C. However, as conversations proceeded, the creative energies and visions emerging from our conversations translated into my being part of designing, and creating, a larger Maya Cultural event at the museum. As if this was not enough, on the day of USH's 3rd year anniversary we received more great news. USH would be featured during a keynote for the International Indigenous Research Conference in Auckland, New Zealand. The talk focused on sharing the inspiring work of our USH participants and how these youth are envisioning and building our future. Garnering attention, USH then found itself invited to be the opening talk for the Native Speaker Series at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. Later that month, USH kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month at Bunker Hill Community College with a special guest speaking engagement. You can now relate as to why 2016 has been exhilarating and breathtaking for all of us associated with USH.

Without further ado, we invite you to read the details of our year, how it is refining the goals within our mission and vision, and the way it is setting the foundation for a bright future led by inspiring new leadership at every level of our work.



Donna DeGennaro, PhD
Founder and Executive Director



nlocking
Silent
Histories

I. MISSION

Unlocking Silent Histories provides opportunities for Indigenous youth to critically analyze how they are represented in the media and to creatively express their worlds through documentary films.

As youth produce cultural films, they discover their histories, re-engage with their languages, and foster dialogue across generational and geographical boundaries.



II. RE-FOCUSING

Unlocking Silent Histories envisions a future where Indigenous youth leaders around the world inspire teams of young people to capture, revive, and reinvigorate their cultures, traditions, and languages through documentary films. We imagine these Indigenous youth to make social impacts, locally and globally.

Moving toward this ambitious goal will not be achieved easily. It requires that USH participants and leaders continuously reflect upon our mission, actions, and growth. With this, we will constantly evolve as we listen to the changes the youth and communities desire to make in order to support this work.

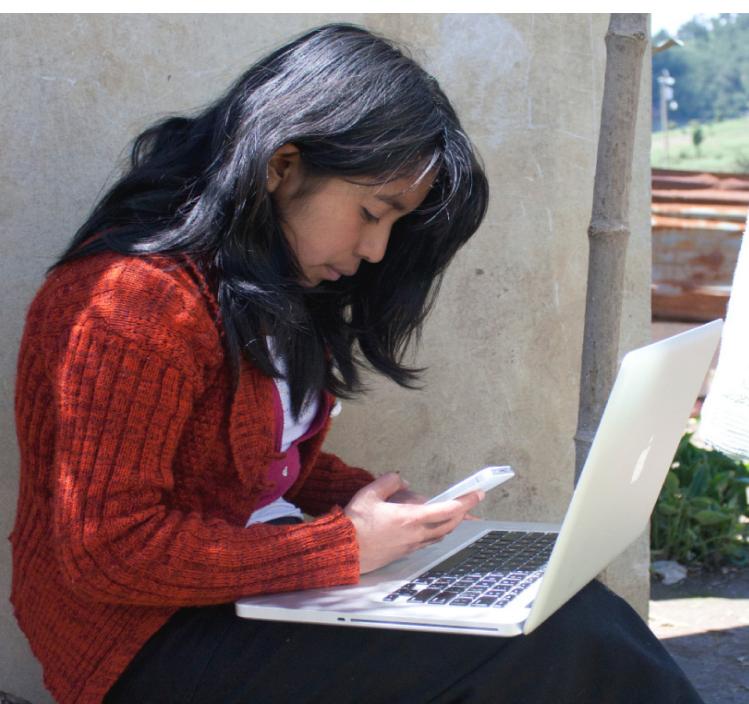
Our most recent conversations have led us to refine our goals within our mission. With a sharpened focus, we offer a clear illustration of our aims and intended impact. While the organization itself has a complex set of interrelated aims and goals, the simple fact is that we are focused on building Indigenous youth leaders in youth ages 12 to 25.

Why leadership? We see leadership as central to our work because participating youth begin to practice leadership skills from the day they self-select to be part of the program. This is in fact revealed upon review of the USH levels of participation.



In the 2015 Annual review, we outlined our Level 1 and Level 2 workshops. Level 1 focuses on critical inquiry and creative expression, which are essential 21st Century skills often absent from traditional Indigenous school experiences. To foster these skills, we require that youth take the driver seat, determining how their groups function, what their goals are, and how they intend to achieve them. We support them in identifying topics in which they are personally interested, in creating open-ended research and interview questions, and in analyzing their videotaped interview data to identify and craft the emerging story. During this first level, the young participants build confidence in their voices and identities, by determining what stories should be told and how.

Level 2 is youth led and directed. The Level 2 leader organizes her team consisting of a producer, director, editor, videographer, and sound person to create a more professional film. These leaders coordinate and manage teams, schedules, equipment, and budgets. At the same time, and along with their production teams, they practice and develop shared and non-hierarchical leadership styles. While the young leaders gain business management skills, the teams also apply social change skills. This includes creating marketing and campaigning plans and organizing screenings. The screenings are an opportunity to develop and raise awareness about language and cultural knowledge loss, and inspiring cultural revival initiatives. The screenings aim to incite dialogue with an intention to mobilize the community around cultural revival and preservations.





Local Production in Chirijox Guatemala

During this developmental trajectory from self-initiated learner (Level 1) to community leader and change agent (Level 2 and beyond), youth illustrate the ways in which they learn, adopt, and use media technologies to understand and represent their lives, histories, and communities. In the process, they are creating meaningful educational experiences where content is culturally relevant and accurate that can impact how the outside worlds sees and knows the meaning of being Indigenous.

Through our meta-analysis of our applied work, we offer a slight makeover of the USH tagline and "coming soon changes" to our website. Despite this, the nature of what we do and why we do it remains tried and true.

We invite you to continue reading as we illustrate youth leadership development within our two focus areas and the ways in which these address the critical needs of Indigenous youth.



III. LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Indigenous Media Producers

Our program aims to address the significant education gaps that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth across the globe by offering the chance to critique and explore Indigenous life in spaces outside school walls.

To be clear, primary and secondary education distances Indigenous youth from their cultures and languages by offering content that misrepresents Indigenous culture and history. The disconnect between home and school demotivates attendance and makes it difficult for youth to convert educational capital into significantly greater earnings and overcome poverty gaps.

Youth participating in USH are using media to discover their cultures, traditions, and knowledges first hand within their communities. Connecting with and creating culturally relevant content is critically important to Indigenous motivation to engage in real world learning. Our program affords Indigenous youth the opportunity to participate in an education that not only respects local knowledge, but also allows youth to define an accurate and fair representation Indigenous peoples' diverse cultures and ways of life.

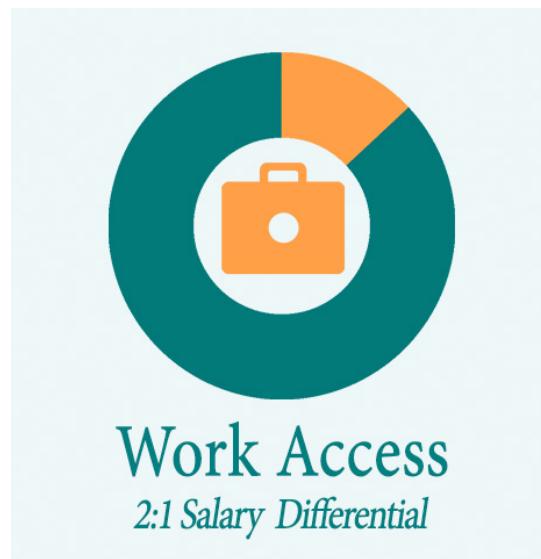


Indigenous Leadership Development

Personal critiques along with creative expression begin to build local leadership. We cultivate communities of Indigenous youth leaders who harness the power of media to bring awareness to important cultural traditions and social issues.

Leadership development is part of our alternative educational method that places decision-making and authority in the hands of Indigenous youth. At USH, leaders also act as teachers and learners while they engage with their students in experiential, interactional, and on the ground knowledge development and problem solving that is often absent from the traditional education models in their communities.

Attention on leadership is our way of responding to the desperate need for internal leadership within, among, and beyond Indigenous local communities where, "despite efforts "to improve conditions and to increase recognition of Indigenous rights through law and policy, litigation, national dialogue and enhanced leadership opportunities, full accommodation of Indigenous rights remains elusive".



IV. PRODUCTIONS

Asociación Nuevo Amanecer: Anadesa

Francisco Esquina, Jose Byron,
Edgar Andres

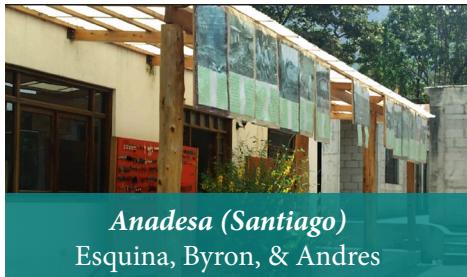
Santiago Atitlán 2016 Films

In Santiago Atitlán, nine enthusiastic students met each Sunday morning to engage in USH's Level 1 workshops. Activities took place in a local school, where students practiced camera techniques, interview skills, editing practices, and topic development. Their themes reflect what they care about within their community.



Nahualá 2016 Films

In Nahualá, Fridays were days filled with the creative energies of five young filmmakers. Nestled in a small home these youth also imagined themes that would reflect their community, and ultimately completed five films, all of which are unique topics that we will add to our archives. We congratulate these blossoming documentarians on their work.



Anadesa (Santiago)
Esquina, Byron, & Andres



Woodcutter
Pascual Federico Sohom Tzep



Holy Week (Nahualá)
Miguel Feliciano Sohom Ixtos



Art of Indigenous Women
Juana Herlinda Sohom Ixto



Grinding Stone (Nahualá)
Manuela Imelda Sohom Ixtos



Making of Bread
Catarina Liliana Tambriz y Tambriz



V. COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

Engagement: Our films are developed in stages and alongside our communities. Ultimately, youth complete two drafts of their work - a prototype version and a final cut. When the first version is ready, our young filmmakers work with Program Leaders to organize a community show. The purpose of the show is to solicit feedback on how to enhance the films. The filmmakers present themselves, their film, and the reason that they chose their topics.

Following the presentation, we ask the following questions:

- What message did you get from the movie?
- What were the strengths of how the author conveyed the message in the movie?
- Was there clear support or evidence for the concepts?
- What comments do you have for the author about improving the story?
- If not, what would you tell the author to do in order to improve the story?
- What comments do you have for the author about his/her composition?
- Did you think that the visuals relate to the story and when the author is narrating?
- What images/videos would you suggest that the author include to improve his/her message?

These questions are a tool to solicit important feedback so that the filmmakers can improve their final cuts. In addition, and in a very powerful way, audiences often depart from the technical aspects of the video to delve into deeper conversations regarding the topic and its relationship to their daily lives.

Santiago: This year in Santiago, the nine participating youth captivated an enthusiastic audience to participate in their conversations about the films and the social impact the youth hope the films will have on their communities.



Nahualá: Similarly, in Nahualá, the five participants began imagining what their presentation would include. Led by the vision of youth, it was a true community celebration! This small community bonded together to make it a festive celebration. They organized music, food, and fun. This levity at times padded the deep and sometimes difficult conversations around topics being raised regarding cultural preservation and change.



Impact: Following the discussion, we have one last step. If our films are intended to be archives of Indigenous life, with an aim to revive, educate, and represent Indigenous life accurately and fairly, we are responsible for documenting the impact of our films. As a result, we ask the audience to complete a survey to help us gain insight into exactly what that impact is.

- How would you rate your experience of the presentation overall?
- I feel that I gained cultural knowledge about Indigenous Maya communities because of this experience.
- I feel that I have an enhanced understanding of issues facing Maya communities because of this experience.
- I feel that I was able to engage in a cross-cultural experience through the films.
- I feel that I have gained awareness about media representations of Indigenous peoples and will now view those representations more critically.
- Having the filmmaker(s) present significantly contributed to my experience and understanding of the films.



VI. INTERNATIONAL SCREENINGS

Pembroke, North Carolina

UNC Pembroke's Native American Speaker Series

One of the highlights of the year was our invitation to the Native American Speaker Series at UNCP. This took place directly after the Smithsonian presentation. Three of our Program Leaders, Carlos, Carmen, and Chema, received a warm welcome from the Pembroke community, where the travelers experienced their first tastes of traditional southern dinner!



After a restful night, Dr. Jane Haladay greeted and led us to UNC Pembroke (originally the Croatan Normal School – built by and for American Indian higher education). Our group visited two university classes, showing USH films and engaging in discussion about Maya culture and education.

In the evening, Carlos, Carmen, and Chema spoke at UNCP's Native American Speaker Series. We were just about to begin, when the entire town of Pembroke lost electricity! These leaders handled it beautifully, engaging the audience by talking about USH's pedagogy and evolution. Shortly thereafter, we regained power and were able to show a Level 1 & Level 2 Film.



Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Spanish Language Class

While in the United States, Program Leaders Carlos, Carmen, and Chema spoke at a Spanish class at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The invitation came from our founder's dear friend and colleague, who is Maya K'iche', convinced us to stop and speak to his class. Emilio del Valle Escalante, a professor and researcher in Latin American and Indigenous literatures and cultures, engaged his class in a conversation that centered on the films, their purpose, and their impact. The most exciting part for our Program Leaders was that the discussion was fully in Spanish!

Wilmington, North Carolina

Flytrap Brewery

In early 2016, USH reached out to the Flytrap Brewery to discuss holding an annual event at its establishment. In addition to making great craft beers, Flytrap aims to give back to the community. It supports artists and nonprofits, by holding events in its vibrant space. We are thrilled to be listed as one of the causes it supports. At our first annual collaborative event, friends and neighbors celebrated with films, culture, and fun.



UNCW Lumina Theater

Also in Wilmington, the Centro Latino hosted a screening of our films at the distinguished Lumina Theater at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. We featured four USH films in front of an audience of students, professors, and community members



Boston, Massachusetts

Piano Craft Gallery

Weaving Past & Present
A Visual Arts Glimpse into Maya Life



#SmithsonianBound

Multimedia Show
April 1 - May 1
Friday 6 - 8; Saturday/Sunday 12 - 5

Featured Organizations/Artists:
Unlocking Silent Histories (USH)
Maya Traditions Foundation (MTF)
Worthy Village
Byron Rabe, Artist
Gloria Cholotio, Artist

PIANO CRAFT GALLERY
793 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02118

Closing Jazz Reception
Sunday, May 1
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

USH Film Screenings & Discussion
Fine Art Show, Weaving and Handcrafts
Light hors d'oeuvres and Wine
Free and open to the Public



This event is part of USH's "Journey to the Smithsonian Screening Series"
USH & MTF will be featured at the National Museum of the American Indian
(NYC & DC: September 2016)

Bunker Hill Community College

Our Bunker Hill Community College presentation called ¡Inspirate! was part of BHCC's 2016 Hispanic Heritage month events. We began the day with an informal lunch and discussion, which was held at the Chelsea campus. Later that evening, the extending community gathered for dinner, multi-media presentation, and program discussion. Amidst the audience, Cedric Woods, a Lumbee Tribe member, who wanted to see what was coming to his community!

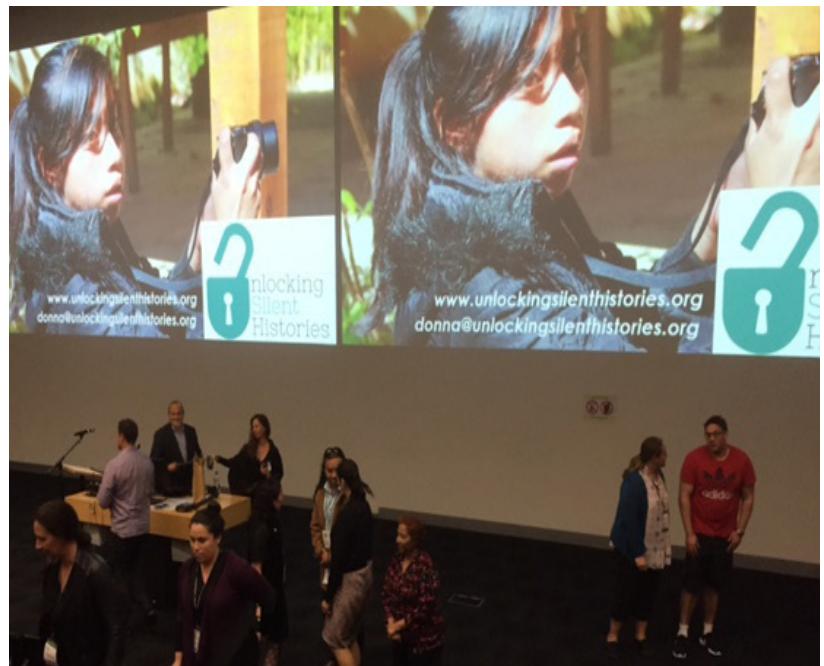
Unlocking Silent Histories established a relationship with the Piano Gallery in November 2014. The then director of the space had a vision that the gallery would support nonprofits that had an art and culture focus. This past year, the gallery director invited us to hold an event for one month. This multimedia exhibition included several documentary film debuts, photographs, as well as paintings, textiles, and woodwork created by contemporary Guatemalan artisan that address the preservation of Maya culture through artisan work.



Auckland, New Zealand

International Indigenous Research Conference 2016

On March 23, 2016 - the 3rd anniversary of USH, a special invitation arrived. The Māori Centre of Research Excellence in Aotearoa, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga committee extended an invitation to our founder. Donna was selected to be one of 10 International Keynote Speakers at this globally renowned biennial conference. The talk on *Creative Indigenous Innovation* traced the founding of USH as the result of Donna's scholarly movement from "Imagined Creativity and Innovation" to "Transformative Creativity and Innovation." As the talk progressed, Donna "disappeared" from the research, to symbolize how "*Employed Creative Innovation in Indigenous Spaces*" privileges youth voice, agency, and vision.



VII. SMITHSONIAN

New York, NY

The big news of 2016 was our announcement that we had been invited to present at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. This once in a life time opportunity began in New York City. It was here that the USH presenters took to the stage and got their first look at their USH films on a professional screen. Lively conversations followed, as audiences asked profound questions. Program Leaders Carmen, Carlos, and Chema could not have been more impressive. The manner of confidence, knowledge, and professionalism exhibited during this opening event illustrated how youth participating in USH have embraced its philosophy and how they and their students have each developed their unique voices.

When not on stage, Chema, Carlos, and Carmen manned our USH information table (see photo bottom right) positioned in the Alexander Hamilton Custom House, a monument to commerce that was built between 1900 and 1907. Sitting at the entry way to the rotunda of the custom house, USH greeted museum visitors, sharing literature, movies, and their stories. NMAI in NYC? Simply perfect.



NYC Site Seeing

We certainly could not have enjoyed NY without visiting some tourist sites. In this city that never sleeps, we enjoyed a ferry ride to Staten Island, a walk over the Brooklyn Bridge, several subway rides, a night stroll on Times Square, and finally, a walk through and around Ground Zero on the eve of September 11. When asked about their favorite spot, it was an unanimous response: Time Square.



Visiting Pamela Yates

As fate would have it, the very busy Pamela Yates - an early supporter of USH - just happened to be in NYC the weekend of our NYC visit. She graciously invited Carlos, Carmen, and Chema to her studio space, where she and her editor, Peter, were working on their film *500 Years*. These USH filmmakers engaged in conversations about storyboarding, shots, and editing decisions. A truly special gift!



Washington DC

Welcome!

In Washington D.C., we were greeted by Korah English Morez, the National Museum of the American Indian Cultural Arts Program Specialist, who collaboratively facilitated a breathtaking and beautifully curated exhibit of “Maya Creativity and Cultural Milieu.”

Unlocking Silent Histories Filmmakers and our Maya Traditions Foundation guests were joined by Maya weavers from Weaving for the Future, a Washington, D.C.-based cooperative. An array of colors and crafts permeated the space. Indigenous Design Collective, a Washington-based Maya graphic arts initiative dedicated to educating people about Maya symbolism, facilitated hands on activities. The museum displayed interactive websites, and the Smithsonian Latino Center organized opportunities to learn about Maya migration and Bak'tun 13. This was all set to energizing, authentic Guatemalan marimba music.



Film Screenings

The USH Film Screenings took place in the NMAI Rasmuson Theater. Here the audiences viewed the thoughtfully threaded programs crafted by Melissa Bisagni, NMAI Program Manager Media Initiatives. Featured were 16 youth-produced films from our nine partner communities in Guatemala. In both the morning and afternoon conversations, Chema, Carmen, and Carlos (bottom right) described their roles in co-creating USH, how the organization belongs to all of them, and why this work is important for their Indigenous communities.





Other surprises!

Melissa Bisagni prearranged a very special trip to the Human Studies Film Archive at the Museum Support Center (MSC) in Suitland, MD, where we viewed various archival ethnographic films of the Lake Atitlán region of Guatemala, dating between 1920 and 1960. Melissa told the youth, “*your work is important because we often have films about Indigenous communities, but not many from within them.*”

Another fun excursion included a trip to the IMAX theater at the National Air & Space Museum. We imagined what it would be like to take a trip to the moon.

As if the program that Korah and Melissa had prepared was not enough, we also welcomed a very special guest, Duane Howard. Duane who played "Elk Dog" in movie *The Revenant*, commented that the USH youth filmmakers “*carry the spiritual aspect of Maya life.*”



VIII. SPOTLIGHT



EMILIO: BEFORE AND NOW

Perhaps one of the most ambitious aims of USH is to amplify the identities and voices of Indigenous youth. Watching Emilio, who was 13 years old when he volunteered to participate in USH's initial pilot program, over the years has been simply inspiring. During his first year, Emilio wasn't quite certain about our method of putting the power in the hands of youth. Asking him to direct his own learning and author his own story was a foreign concept. Yet, slowly, Emilio, the youngest student in our first 2012 cohort, emerged from a timid and quiet participant, to a confident and vocal filmmaker.

During our initial workshops, Emilio hid behind his older sister or cousin. Making eye contact with him was always a challenge. Shyness engulfed him, and at the same time he was so endearing. He later confessed his fear of public speaking, whether it was in front of his peers or an adult audience. When asked why he thought he had this feeling, he answered that he didn't like to be criticized for his thoughts. It was quite surprising then that he took on a topic that was heavy and about which he clearly had a solidly formed opinion. But the topic was personal.

Emilio chose to explore alcoholism in his community because he and his family been affected by it and he wanted to explore the problem on a larger scale - to delve into its effects on the entire community. As he journied through this process, his sense of self and his innate abilities began to surface. This documentary, in some sense, was an opportunity for Emilio to heal, hope, and visibly transform.

Fast forward to 2016: the confidence of this 18 year-old exudes in various aspects of his life. Immediately following his participation in USH, he ran for and was elected class president. When ask how he likes it, his response was, "Es muy dificil! Pero puedo hacerlo! [It's really hard! But I can do it!]" Next, he was on the production team as the camera person for his second film, *Manuel Yojom Mendoza: Life Without Limits*. He has also been attending school to earn his degree in Agriculture. This coming year, Emilio will again take the role of camera person in a production team he and his sister organized in their home community.

Emilio's first documentary continues to be an audience favorite. Follow Emilio's story and the story of his team as they continue to make films that represent their lives through their eyes.



Emilio Tzoc Portillo, transforming from a shy young man, to a confident and talented filmmaker.

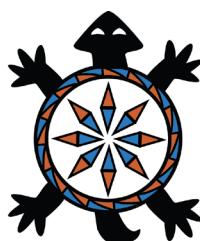
IX. PARTNERSHIPS

USH: LUMBEE TRIBE:

USH would like to extend a sincere thank you to the First Nations Youth and Culture Fund, which is supporting our collaboration with the Lumbee Tribe. Along with leadership from the Boys & Girls Club of Pembroke, NC Carolina, USH applied for this grant. We received \$20,000 to begin our USH: Lumbee Tribe Chapter, offering Level 1 Workshops to youth in Robeson County. We are thrilled about this first U.S. Chapter and look forward to the first films, which will premiere at the annual Lumbee Homecoming in June 2017.

Native Youth and Culture Fund

A Program of First Nations Development Institute

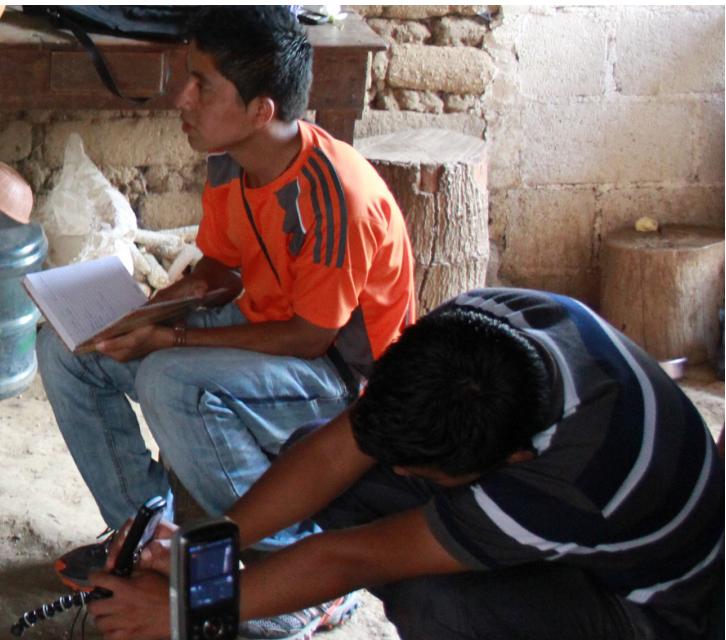


USH: GUATEMALA

When we began our work in Guatemala, we did so with the vision of increasing youth leadership and generate local youth ownership. The current team, who have emerged from crucial partnerships, is now realizing this vision. As it does, our relationships inevitably change.

Maya Traditions: It is a bittersweet close to our 4-year partnership with the Maya Traditions Foundation. We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and for joining us at the Smithsonian. A special thanks to Marisol, who has been with us since the first day that we began our USH pilot in 2012. We wish you continued success with your endeavors in Guatemala!

Natik: Our partnership with Natik continues to develop. We are working closely together to envision how to support the Program Leaders in developing their own business model and to further USH's internal sustainability. We look forward to great things to come!



Chapter and Partnership Developments

X. CALL TO ACTION

Casting Calls: Play a Role!

INSPIRE INDIGENOUS VOICES!



Lillian and Imelda want you to help support continued growth!

Sample Sponsorship Level Spreadsheet

Level Program Leader			
Local Sustainability			
Local Program Manager			
Item	Quantity	Cost	Total
DSLR Cameras	1	\$450.00	\$450.00
Boom Microphone	1	\$25.00	\$25.00
Tripod	1	\$25.00	\$25.00
SD Cards	1	\$10.00	\$10.00
One Year of Adobe Cloud	1	\$600.00	\$600.00
Phone/Internet Access	1	\$30.00	\$360.00
P/T Salary (per month)	1	\$385.00	\$4,620.00
3-day Training Workshop	1	\$70.00	\$70.00
Computer	1	\$500.00	\$500.00
Hard drive	1	\$100.00	\$100.00
Travel stipend (per month)	1	\$20.00	\$240.00

Sub Total **\$7,000.00**

Community Dialogue; Story Development

Digital Media Production Kit	Quantity	Amount	Total
Equipment:			
Weekly workshops for 1 year	10	\$30.00	\$300.00
Curriculum Materials & Guides	1	\$35.00	\$35.00
Meetings with Elders/Groups	2	\$45.00	\$90.00
Community Screening	1	\$75.00	\$75.00

Sub Total **\$500.00**

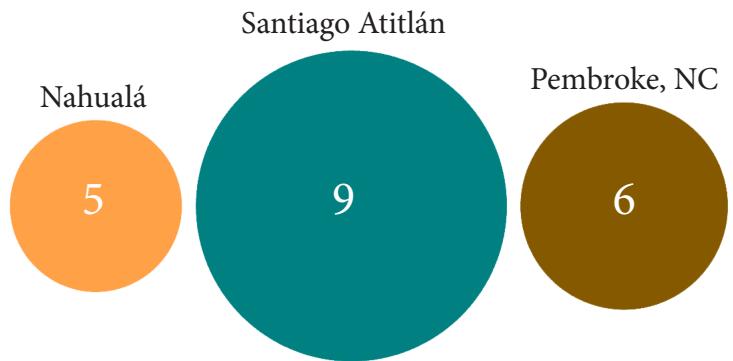
Sponsor a Filmmaker

Digital Media Production Kit	Quantity	Amount	Total
Equipment:			
Basic Level Cameras	1	\$150.00	\$150.00
SD Cards	1	\$10.00	\$10.00
Microphone	1	\$25.00	\$25.00
Curriculum materials	1	\$10.00	\$10.00
Workshops	1	\$45.00	\$45.00
Graduation Activities	1	\$10.00	\$10.00

Sub Total **\$250.00**
\$500.00

Grand Total **\$1,000.00**

Funding sources & Growth



Our Level 1 youth participation is expanding within and outside of Guatemala.



Jessika, Angelica, Edwin, Chema, and Edwin want you to consider sponsoring us!

XI. LEADERSHIP TEAM

Guatemala Team



Carlos Vasquez, Program Leader

A proud native of San Juan la Laguna, Sololá, Carlos' high school studies focused on Computer Science. He has been with USH since 2012. He produced Success, a documentary short that explores community definitions of that topic. Carlos became a Youth Educator in 2012, leading a group of students in San Juan, and has continued his work with us ever since. He along with his teammates continues to teach new groups of students at both Levels 1 and 2, and imagines USH becoming a sustainable Guatemalan business. Carlos speaks Spanish and Tzu'tujil.

Carmen Tzoc Portillo, Program Leader

From the town of Chuaxajil, a highlands community north of Lake Atitlan, Carmen is inspired to share the future of her community. She graduated from high school with a concentration on education, has a Guatemalan teaching certificate, and is currently enrolled at the university studying Social Work. She was one of USH's first participants creating her first film called Nature. Also our first Youth Educator, she led a group of students in Chuacruz. Carmen speaks K'iche' and Spanish.



Chema Vasquez, Program Leader

A Tzu'tujil native from San Juan la Laguna, Sololá, Guatemala, Chema focused his high school studies on education, and has his Guatemalan licensure in primary school teaching. Chema began working with USH in 2012, creating his first film, Fighting Women. Chema became a Youth Educator in 2013, leading one group of students in Santa Clara la Laguna. He now leads groups of students in San Juan la Laguna and Santa Clara la Laguna and holds the responsibility of developing new leaders in additional communities. Chema speaks Spanish and Tzu'tujil.

Elias Shevchenko, Program Leader

A resident of Santiago Atitlán, Elias graduated with a degree in specialized mathematics. At an early age, he subsequently obtained a bachelors degree in Computer Sciences at the la Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. He currently teachers at the Institute of Basic Education and works at the Cooperativa de la Aldea San Antonio Chacayá del municipio de Santiago. Other organizations to which he contributes and applies his leadership skills include Natik and the Ruk'ux Spanish School Elias is the newest leader to our Guatemalan team. He speaks Spanish and Tzu'tujil.



Lumbee Tribe Team



Reagan Cummings, Program Coordinator

Reagan, our Program Leader, is a Native American student at UNC-Pembroke majoring in Biology with a Biomedical Emphasis with aspirations to become an orthodontist. Reagan serves as an ambassador for Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) and is an American Indian Association Scholar. She is passionate about social issues surrounding Indigenous people and is excited to be working with USH and the Lumbee tribe.

Bryan Hunt, Program Assistant

Bryan is 20 years old and is from a small town called Fairmont, North Carolina, which is located in Robeson County. He is currently seeking his Criminal Justice Degree at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. His willingness to give back to the community and help give his Lumbee people a voice inspired him to pursue Unlocking Silent Histories: Lumbee Chapter.



Denise Hunt

Denise is passionate about education. In her 18 year career, she has been a classroom teacher, mentor, clinical teacher and curriculum facilitator. Currently an instructional coach for novice teachers, she believes is dedicated to ensuring teachers positively impact students' lives. Denise's attention is equally focused on working with the youth within her tribe,. Trough "Unlocking Silent Histories." she can assist in opening opportunities to Lumbee youth, giving them a chance to unearthing her tribe's past, present, and future through this innovative documentary approach.

Tiffany Locklear

Tiffany is a Gate's scholar and a Lumbee woman of great determination. She passionately believes that the Lumbee youth of Robeson County should encounter learning experiences that are relevant to their history, heritage, and culture. She is thrilled about offering this opportunity for the youth to capture, represent, and revitalize their histories, cultures, and languages through inquiry-based documentary film making alongside Unlocking Silent Histories. In her free time she enjoys church, food, and fellowship with family and friends.



Executive Board



Donna DeGennaro, PhD Founder/Executive Director

A graduate from the University of Pennsylvania, Donna is passionate about creating socially just learning designs that are technology-mediated and youth-driven. Her research focused on developing an innovative pedagogical model that simultaneously addresses the digital divide, culturally responsive learning, and social justice education. USH utilized this pedagogy model that emerges from the local context, a program that unleashes youth voice and agency and opens spaces for young people to envision and create their own futures.

Heather Lascano

Heather has gathered 19+ years of professional experience in a variety of areas (ranging from entrepreneurial to corporate) in fields of biochemical research and development, patent and business law, advocacy in education, and consulting. She continues to consult in business program and project management, both locally and internationally. A common thread in all of her work has been in upholding individual access to information and education – which is what led her to support USH and its mission.



Ingrid Sub Cuc

A native of Sololá, Ingrid is Kaqchikel and Q'eqchi' Maya. She moved to the U.S. at age 12. Ingrid went on to pursue her passion for Indigenous rights and medicine in the U.S., graduating with a B.S. in Biology from Whitworth University in Washington State. Ingrid has returned to Guatemala various times, working as an intern and volunteering for health organizations in Guatemala and later working for Cultural Survival, an Indigenous Rights organization, based in Boston, with a sister organization in Guatemala. She speaks English, Spanish, and proficient Kaqchikel.

Janelle Babington

Janelle is the founder and CEO of One Red Lion, an online social platform that helps potential donors and animal advocates discover, support, and form communities within of nonprofit organizations that are dedicated animal welfare. She is tirelessly dedicated to this cause and building her organization. In doing so, she brings many resources to USH, assisting with its developing business and financial models. In her past life, Janelle has planned and presided over 100 plus board meetings.





Jennifer Baker, JD

A business administration graduate from the University of Oklahoma, Jennifer went on to study law at the University of Oklahoma. She served as an Articles Editor for the American Indian Law Review and received a Certificate in American Indian Law. Jennifer spent three years working at DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc., a nonprofit legal services corporation that operates on and around the Navajo Nation. Jennifer's legal practice focuses on representing Indigenous Nations, including sovereignty, tribal governance, contracts, and environmental issues.

Mark McMullen

Mark is an award winning screenwriter/producer and a partner in Matching Sweaters Productions. For twenty years he has consulted in cyber security, system development life cycle, and training & curriculum development, with Booz Allen Hamilton and CAP Gemini/Sogeti. Mark also has acted as Director of Membership at the United Way of America, has been a professional member and youth mentor with the American Indian Science & Engineering Society, and was the founder and co-chair of the Native American Forum at Booz Allen Hamilton. He's passionate about tribal culture and all things Indigenous.

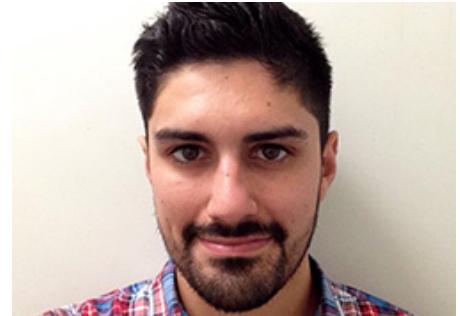


Nikki Young

Nikki is a systems engineer and project manager at Booz Allen Hamilton. She has 15 years of project management experience beginning with her work as an engineer at Boeing, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, and Raytheon Company. Nikki is both Navajo and Cherokee, which inspires her passion for making connections between education and work for Native youth. She is excited to apply her experience of creating such pathways to helping USH continually refine its youth leadership models.

Temis Quiroga

Temis is a soon-to-be graduate of the International Development masters program at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Melbourne, Australia. His formal education is based in the theory and practice in the development field, and he hopes to take on a permanent role with a grassroots NGO upon completion of his masters. Temis has been volunteering with USH since 2014.



Advisory Board



Chico Colvard

Chico, a filmmaker and an adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, now offers film related courses. He also founded and curates the UMB Film Series. His award-winning film, *FAMILY AFFAIR*, premiered in competition at Sundance (2010) and was the first film acquired by Oprah Winfrey for her cable channel OWN. The film has since screened at festivals and cable channels around the world, Including PBS – America ReFramed, RTÉ TV/Ireland, Stern TV/Germany, Denmark, Israel and New Zealand.

JK Presnal

JK (Jim), founder and former President of Community Film Studio Santa Barbara (CFSSB), the world's first non-profit, all-volunteer, community-centric motion picture studio, continues to produce films. He has also been a Senior Instructor, UCLA Extension's "Making the Short Fiction Film", a Program Administrator, UCLA Extension Film, Television and Multimedia program, and a Program Administrator, Maine Media Workshops+College (formerly: International Film and Television Workshops).



Rachel Bodkin-Fox

Rachel, a passionate and experienced advocate for community engagement in all sectors: public, private, nonprofit, and for-benefit. As former director of the Building a Better Wilmington Campaign, she spent nearly two years producing and marketing films about the great work of the many nonprofits in Southeastern North Carolina. Rachel formerly served as the Congressional District Leader for the ONE Campaign, an anti-poverty organization co-founded by Bono from U2, where she led the charge on requesting funding for programs benefiting the many in poverty.

Rick Duque, PhD

Rick's research focuses on the global diffusion of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as Internet, mobile phones, and digital video technologies across developing regions of the world. He has published widely on the adoption and use of new ICTs in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, and on how these technologies are shaping knowledge work, social networks, identity, research praxis and pedagogy.



Volunteers



Jerome Edmond Atger

A native of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Jerome comes from a Mexican and French ethnic background. Jerome supported humanitarian assistance and international development efforts with the U.S. Department of Defense from 2007-2011 in Peru and Costa Rica. He is an advocate of international development concepts in Latin America, and he is devoted to serving Indigenous communities. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Jonathan Hyun

Jonathan is a web developer primarily focused on Javascript. He has been working diligently to help USH create a new look and ensuring that communications forms, video pop-ups, and information boxes are functioning for our visiting audiences. During his free time, Jonathan likes to work with non-profits. Some of his hobbies includes snowboarding, traveling and reading.



Lacey Schauwecker

Lacey is completing her doctorate degree at the University of Southern California. She teaches Spanish and Portuguese, as well as courses on Latin American culture, history, and politics. As a volunteer with Unlocking Silent Histories, she is interested in learning more about student-driven education, critical media literacy, and grassroots Indigenous cinema. Her time with USH has been highly informative and inspiring.

Shani-Leigh Searcy

Shani-Leigh Searcy, a graduate of Western Carolina University, received her B.A. in English with a concentration in professional writing. With her interest in non-profit work, inter-cultural communication, and social justice, she is continuing her education at Western Carolina by studying technical writing in the English Master's program. Shani has worked with non-profits throughout her college career and continues to pursue her passion for community development by volunteering for a number of organizations and events.



XII. DEDICATION

During my talk at Bunker Hill Community College, I noticed a woman staring at me intently. At the close of the talk, she asked, "What makes you do what you do?" I froze for a moment, standing in front of this crowd only two days after losing my mother. Lois DeGennaro passed away peacefully at her home Sunday, Sept. 25, 2016 at the age of 78. "I think I'm going to have to ask you to take this, Amparo (I directed my glance at one of the BHCC organizers who I had been confiding in about the passing of my mother)." But I took a deep breath and said, "I believe it was from being in the presence of my mother." The tears flowed, and the audience could feel the heaviness, and the strength, of this sentiment.

My mother was born Feb. 4, 1938, to a family that struggled financially. They lived humbly, at times without indoor plumbing and without electricity to heat her home on cold nights. One would never know my mother's struggles, she was never one to talk about herself or her fears of returning to impoverished conditions. She instead was a silent, yet strong woman, characteristics not fully realized until our loss. Yet, I uttered, almost without consciousness, that it was my mother that had been the source of my inspiration, the model for how I live my life. She navigated life's challenges, never in need of recognition for any of her accomplishments, nor desiring material goods to represent her worth.

In what was my last substantive conversation that I had with my mother before she passed, is a reminder of what she gave to me. I was enthusiastically embracing Unlocking Silent Histories' amazing 2016. What we, the youth especially, were doing was working. These voices, these lives, often hidden under the blankets of marginalization and discrimination were being heard. My elation was flanked by an inherent sadness as many when those I loved and trusted either could not find a way to celebrate this with me or wanted the credit and spotlight placed on themselves. In expressing my distress, my mother said to me, "*Donna, continue to be humble, that is your strength.*" Remembering those words as I held her hand on her final day, making this promise, "*From this day forward, my work will be dedicated to you.*"



Lois DeGennaro (1938 - 2016)

*May we all enter spaces humble,
with a willingness to learn about
ourselves and each other.*

*May we all unleash our collective
creativity and innovation to
not imagine and accept what is,
but rather to generate what is
possible.*

*Donna DeGennaro
International Indigenous Research Conference
November 2016*

USH will forever be dedicated to Lois DeGennaro: devoted wife and mother; unconditional friend.



nlocking
Silent
Histories



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**CRITICAL AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION
BY INDIGENOUS YOUTH**
AUSTIN, TEXAS