

# Everyday Women of Sitka: Jacqueline White



- **Can you please tell me a little about yourself? How long have you lived in Sitka? What types of things are you involved in here?**

My name is Jacqueline White, My Arapaho Name is Te3oouu Niibeisei "Singing Crane Woman", my Tlingit name is Xas'Neech given to me by the late Ruth Kasko. My Parents are the late Robert & Elise Geboe, my Mother is from the Chippewa Cree Tribe in Rocky Boy Montana and My Father is Robert Geboe Jr. From the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming. I have been here in Sitka since the end of May. Prior to that I have been in Sitka for a few years. I worked here in the past, and left in 2004. I went home and then I came back again in 2009 and worked for a while for the Tribe, working as the Office Manager for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Family Justice Center. I worked there for a year, and then I went back home to Wyoming. So I am newly back here.

I have 5 daughters and one son. Emily, Whitney, T'Shina, Mercedes, Junior, and Wolfstar. Wolfstar's my baby. Wolfstar is a runner. She started her running career in 2009 when she

started running for Girls on the Run with the SAFV Shelter. Up until this day, she has had an excellent running career where she has been to state all four years of high school. That is one thing I am very proud of her for-her successes and her successes with running. Where she started out running is with Girls on the Run. I thought that was very important to point out because those things make a big impact on kids.

We did the food drive on October 7<sup>th</sup> with Fill the Bus for SAFV and for STA Social Services and for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska language program. The community members and people that have it in their hearts to give back, and those are really important activities to be involved with in the community.

As mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, I believe it is really important to live and be a role model for the younger generation and girls, or whoever it might be. It might be people older than you or your age that need encouragement and uplifting. As Arapaho women, it is our job to uplift each other and uphold each other. Our way of life as Arapaho people is to love one another, care for one another, and to help each other. And as women in the community, the more that we help uplift each other, the better life we are going to have as a community. The more that we empower one another, the more healthy our community and environment is going to be. To encourage the younger generation to empower themselves as deserving. That they deserve to have a good life. And that domestic violence, sexual assault, and bullying are not okay. And to empower them to tell somebody, and talk to somebody. There are a lot of young people that are afraid to say something. They live in this nightmare and we don't want that for our young people. We want them to go forward in life and be successful. It is my hope that I can be of assistance to anybody to be positive and uplifting. In my life I do my best to surround myself with people that are going to be positive and uplifting. It is a struggle when you see a lot of no good things happen.

Our teachings are to be careful what you say and how you say it because whether people realize it or not, your words can be so strong that it can cause someone could take their life. Some people do not believe that verbal abuse is detrimental to people's lives, but it is. It is how you talk to each other, and uplift each other, and help each other. The sacred things we are taught are to leave people in a better way than when you first came into contact with them. Say those good things to help each other. And so one of the projects that we have done in the past that I was proud to be involved with our Arapaho elders is that we went into the schools and we talked about bullying because there is a lot of bullying in the schools. A lot kids don't realize how big of a problem it is, and we need to speak up. We talked to the kids about how they need to tell somebody, and let them know what is going on. We also did some cultural awareness trainings for people that might not understand our way of life. One of the things I like to do as individual is to support people who might be having struggle in their lives whether it is a relationship or domestic violence, just supporting other people in the community that might need a little bit of help.

- **What is your biggest struggle right now?**

I think one of the biggest struggles that I have is when you see people struggling, seeing hurt people hurt other people. And I would like to see more strong women empowering each other and helping each other through those times rather than going around hurting people because they are hurting. I really truly believe that when people are struggling, to be kind and say good

words to them to help them. To encourage them to be strong and go forward in life. Having a healthy mind and positive support, as women we need that. We need to develop our circles to have strength around us. Women that are going to be positive and uplift you. Sometimes there are people that do not want to see you be successful and be happy. They want to drag you down, and those are the people who really need help. To pray for them and support them anyway you can. As long as you know they are going through something, you can do something good for someone else and try to help them along that way. Our Arapaho way of Life is to: Love one another, Care for one another, and to Help one another.

- **What makes you proud to be a woman?**

In the past several years, I have spent a lot of time with my elders where I get my teachings of who I am as an Arapaho woman. We are referred to as the backbone of family. We take care of our families in the home and have that strength to keep going forwards and continuing on to keep doing good work for others. And our elders teach us that life is sacred, and that it doesn't belong to us. It belongs to the creator, and it is up to us to take care of ourselves. What that means is taking care of our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits. With domestic violence and being a domestic violence survivor, sometimes people do not realize the importance of those things-of taking care of yourself. Because when you have been in an abusive relationship, people don't really know any other way of life until you have experienced something to make that change. I consider it a big honor to be able to learn those things from our elders, how to live your life, and the way our lives are intended to be lived. In those teachings, our elders teach us that women have the utmost highest respect because we are the givers of life.

- **Who was/is a female role model for you? Why?**

There are many female role models that I had: My Grandmothers, Aunties, Mothers, and Sisters. Because they are my Strength and Support.

- **Why do you think you were nominated to be featured on our Facebook?**

Maybe to be a positive role model and supportive to other women, to be strong and to go forward and help each other.

- **What does a normal "day in the life" look like for you?**

As I get ready for each day, I start off with prayer and bless myself with sweet grass, try to have good thoughts and be positive. Each day I tell myself to do something good for somebody else in hopes that I can make a difference no matter what that might look like. When going to work, I really enjoy and love my job helping other people. People that come in there whether it be the younger generation or elders. I have the utmost respect for our elder people. Anything that I can learn from them is a definite plus. I love that about our elders. My baby Wolf Star is always the center of my world and I spend as much time as possible with her. It's her Senior Year in High School and will be going to College soon. Also, what I did last weekend I started making some jewelry, earrings, and necklaces, I enjoy doing those kind of things. Usually in the evenings or weekends, I like to go walk. That is where I get my peace, through walking. Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup>, I got to go support the cancer survivor walk that they had. I really felt good to support the local community that way. I had lost a dad, a mother, and a sister to cancer. I still have many

loved ones that are still fighting cancer. I support that and I pray for people for strength to keep fighting that good fight. The Arapaho way of life is we believe there is always hope until that last breath of life. We continue that way.

- **Do you have something you'd like to say to other women in Sitka?**

If I was to say anything to other women, I would encourage them to be strong, to have faith and courage and wisdom to go forward each day, and to live in a good way whatever that might seem like. For me, my birth month was September. I told myself, I am going to be good to myself every day this month. And that is how it started, and now I am in October/November and I am still celebrating being good to myself each day no matter what that might be. Whether that is being uplifting to other people because you never know what someone might be going through something, someone might be having a hard time and they might need encouragement. As women, we need to be more positive to each other, to help each other, and to be supportive that way, to be strong, and to keep going forward each day. We all have families, people that we take care of, and the more that we can be a positive role model to them, the better life we will have in our community and in Sitka.

- **What does being a strong woman mean to you?**

What that means being an Arapaho woman is being strong and being helpful to others. Like I said, our teachings from our elders is that we are the backbone of our families. What that means is being a good positive role model for others to follow, teach your children and your grandchildren to be the best that you can be in whatever capacity that might be. To honor themselves to be good to yourself. We are taught that our bodies are sacred and that we need to take care of our bodies. The things that we live in today with the violence, alcohol, drugs, and addiction, we are taught to take care of ourselves and not put those things in our bodies. Not to allow that violence in whatever shape or form it is, whether it is verbal, mental or physical. In the school the kids have trouble with bullying. To know that that kind behavior is not okay. To stand up for yourself, to say something because that shows value in your life. To know that other people look up to you. To live life in a good way and to know that whatever teachings you can help the younger ones with to help live their lives in a good way.

In regards to domestic violence does not just happen with women, it happens with men and boys too and all walks of life. If you see someone out there that is having trouble, guide them in the right direction. And to know that what is happening is not ok, and there is help there out there. Stand up and Speak your Truth.