

NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Keeping our Commitment
to American Indians,
Alaska Natives,
and Native Hawaiians
since 1969!

the

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the Washington Issue

Legislative Summit

Internship Programs in DC

High School Facts

The Student Guide
to College Success

Whaling Event



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About the cover: Krystal Dixon is pictured. Photographer is Andie Belone (Hopi). Both are NIEA Members. Andie is a freelance photographer based in Flagstaff, AZ. She is currently pursuing a master’s degree emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation through photography. Andie is always seeking new assignments and can be reached via email at andiebelone@yahoo.com

The National Indian Education Association, a 501(c) (3) organization, was founded in 1969 to support traditional Native cultures and values, to enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities, to promote Native control of educational institutions, and to improve educational opportunities and resources for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians throughout the United States.

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Financial Lessons Learned: Freshmen Students Develop *Monopoly on the Rez*

By JoAnn DePenning

In the Fall 2007 issue of the NIEAnews, the Native Financial Education Coalition (NFEC) launched a new column to showcase best practices and financial education resources available to K-12 schools. The first column explored how offering financial education in Native communities can help to alleviate poverty, build individual and community assets as well as strengthen sovereignty.

We hope that article sparked your interest in Native financial education. If so, you are probably wondering just how your school or community can implement your own financial education program. To help answer these questions, we are sharing a success story – an outstanding financial education program in a Native school.

The featured program comes from the Hannahville In-

dian Community, a Potawatomi reservation in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Actually, it was a group of enterprising freshman students in an American History class at the Hannahville Indian School faced with an assignment that set the stage for the development of a remarkable teaching tool that comes in the form of a board game known as *Monopoly on the Rez*.

Modeled after the depression era board game that morphed into the modern day Monopoly® game, *Monopoly on the Rez* is unique because it teaches economics and money management to Native people from a Native cultural perspective. The Hannahville students set out to help young people understand money management, economics, and financial planning, and they came up with a very creative way to do just that.

“While our History class was studying the depression, some of us students thought it would be cool to come up with our own version of the board game,” remarked one of the young entrepreneurs. “But our version would be “rez” monopoly, to let the players look at the same situations in the eyes of a tribal member, rather than just anyone. We want to help teach the kids about taxes, debts, spending their money wisely and how to save their money.”

Guided by Social Studies teacher Mark McNabb, Resource Room teacher Jessica Timblin and Projects Coordinator Rich Sgarlotti, the students designed the game to be played by students as young as 4th grade but it is also appropriate for adults. *Monopoly on the Rez* blossomed from a project-based learning assignment integrating Native culture, a teaching method common to the Hannahville Indian School.

In designing the game, each student was asked to research a financial topic using the Internet or other sources, including people who work in Hannahville. Students then adapted the information on their topic to activities that were happening on the “rez.”

The students modified the regular Monopoly® game board to reflect properties in the Hannahville Indian Community. They then worked with Northern Michigan University’s Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship (CEEE) specialists and wrote a Teachers’ Guide defining the terms used in the game and aligning the game with national content standards in economics, entrepreneurship and personal finance.

The financial terms used in the regular Monopoly® game include Buying Houses/Hotels, (Beauty) Contest, Benefits, Dividends, Stock, Inheritance, Utilities, Improved Properties, Interest, Bargaining, Debt, and Monopoly. However, for *Monopoly on the Rez*, students researched and integrated additional financial terms including Per Capita Payments, Trust Funds, Credit Cards, Buying Cars, Casinos, Casino Entertainment, Non-Taxes, Bingo, and Appliance and Furniture Rental.

The Community Chest and Chance cards teach and reinforce important information about activities common to young people in Native communities like saving and checking accounts, buying a car, and using their “Per Cap” money wisely. In addition, the tokens used in the

“Rez” game include a Rez Dog, NDN Car, Moccasin, Bag of Per Cap Money, Feather, Concho, Arrowhead, Shell, and Bear Totem.

After using the game and having others play it, the students hope to have a version that can be used by youth in any Native community, to help others understand finances and entrepreneurship. The school is currently working to produce a game board reflecting Native American art and concepts, along with templates for property names so that each community can use their own landmarks in the game. The intent is for other students using the game to research topics in their own communities to further personalize the game.

Community partners were integral in the development process. The students received local financial information from many of the departments with the Hannahville Indian Community, including Tony Mancilla, tribal attorney. Major assistance, including printing of the Teachers’ Guide, was received from the CEEE at Northern Michigan University.

The Hannahville students involved in the development of the game include Elyse Teeple, John Lattergrass, Emma Migwanabe, Frank Keshick, Travis Wandahsega, Peter Meshigaud, Anakwud McCullough, Betsy Trudeau, Peter Elegeert, Vanessa MacDonald, Erynn Teeple, Kristen Williams, and Cheryl Sagataw.

The Teacher’s Guide can be purchased from the CEEE at Northern Michigan University, which also offers personalized services to stylize a game for your students. Contact cee@nmu.edu for more information.

Future NFEC columns in NIEAnews will highlight innovative programs and best practices for teaching financial education in Native communities. We hope to hear from many of the excellent teachers like those at Hannahville Indian School who are bringing financial education into their classrooms. By showcasing examples of successful efforts, we want to recognize their innovation and inspire further creativity in classrooms in Native communities throughout the country.

JoAnn DePenning is the Coordinator of the Youth Initiatives Committee for the Native Financial Education Coalition. For more information about implementing financial education in your school, visit www.nfec.info or contact JoAnn at jadenpenning@austin.rr.com or (512) 295-7975. 