



The Native Youth Program



Frog detail on Haida Pole
Photo: Bill McLennan

When the Museum of Anthropology's Native Youth Program (NYP) was introduced in 1979, it was the first such initiative to offer Native youth the opportunity to research and interpret their own cultures in a museum setting. The program has since been used as a model for similar programs established around the world, including Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and across Canada.

The program is jointly sponsored each year by the Museum and a First Nations organization. For the past three years, MOA has been fortunate to partner with the First Nations House of Learning and funded by the Aboriginal Career Community Employment Services Society (ACCESS), previously known as the Urban Aboriginal Labour Market Development Program. Before 1999, the NYP was co-sponsored by MOA and the United Native Nations.

For seven weeks in the summer, six high school students are paid to work at the Museum and its sponsor facilities, familiarizing themselves with the collection, and learning to communicate information about themselves and their traditions to the visiting public. Under the supervision of a manager, they meet artists, elders, researchers and others, who help the students develop leadership and team-building skills, as well as a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage. The program also offers unique opportunities for the students to participate in healing circles, attend conferences relating to youth and First Nations issues, and explore the university environment. In fact, the program has inspired many of its graduates to achieve success in college and university programs, or to gain employment related to their work experience.

For more information on the Native Youth Program, please contact

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