

QUAKER OAKS FARM Spring Camp 2018 Report

<https://www.quakeroaksfarm.org/>

Melissa Lovett-Adair, QOF Chairperson

Our 5th Spring Service Learning Camp for youth at Quaker Oaks Farm was held from March 26-30, 2018. This camp is a partnership of QOF, the Wukchumni Tribe, and the PYM Youth Programs Coordinating Committee (YPCC). Nineteen youth (9 Wukchumni, 6 Quaker and 4 other Native from Fresno American Indian Health Project) gathered with 9 adults (5 Native and 4 Quaker) and many additional part time facilitators for projects.

Most of the youth were returning campers familiar with the Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) curriculum, so this year, while staying within the GONA framework exploring themes of Belonging, Mastery, Interdependence and Generosity we utilized interactive experiences from the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) as well. We recognize similarities and differences within the framework of these tools and embrace the experiential learning they engender.

We continued our focus on Amash Pa'ahn, the Basket World of the San Joaquin Valley, and the native plants and uses for them. Steven and Mary Lee shared a big picture perspective using satellite images to highlight changes to this landscape from agriculture and development. This helped us understand the importance and potential of this specific piece of land and why habitat restoration is critical. We learned from last year's Pollinator Habitat service project which



plants survived and why. With that understanding we worked to enhance the Pollinator Habitat and develop a "Mother Garden" where we can showcase Native plants and use them to propagate others for further restoration work on the land. Working together we are investing energy in caring for the land as it has cared for us. The service project was the most frequently

mentioned thing the youth liked about camp on their evaluation forms.



This year we enjoyed more time outside and more hands on cultural activities. Making elderberry clap sticks, Pine nut necklaces, gourd rattles, weaving cradle boards, and processing acorns to eat provided lots of opportunity to learn new skills and enjoy time together. s we

learn more about how plants of this land were used in the past we can see how we are all connected. We started each day with a lesson in the Wukchumni language and from the language learn more about how the people and land inform each other and our world view.

That sense of sacred ancestral space was deepened by our field trip. Our destination was close to home, a sacred site with pictographs in caves used by the Yokuts people for praying, healing and ceremony. We learned how to respectfully visit a sacred site and the importance of these



sites to the living culture and spirituality of indigenous people today, not just something for archaeologists to study. Learning about the old ways, singing prayers and imagining the Eagle Dance Ceremony as we looked at the ancient paintings transcended Time.

On our way home we stopped at Foodlink Tulare County, a food distribution center, toured the food warehouse and garden and watched a film about food waste. Then we enjoyed dessert made from chia seed, a plant used widely by

California indigenous people.

Throughout the week Genna Kules shared her knowledge and video equipment with the campers. Campers have been developing skills to video tape and edit to tell a story over the past several years working with Genna at camp. We are excited this work will continue in July when Genna will lead a Peace Garden project at Quaker Oaks Farm.

Camp provides opportunities for youth and adults to develop leadership skills, build lasting relationships across societal divides and practice care for the earth.

