What we do and who we are

The Yakama Nation Victim Resource Program (VRP) is a self-funded Tribal program, created under the Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Services (YNBHS) umbrella, through the Department of Justice-Office for Victims of Crime through the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant. VRP has obtained additional grant funding such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Washington State’s Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants, and Children’s Justice Act Partnership for Indian Communities (CJAP).

The mission of VRP is to support and identify the needs of victims of crime and the Yakama Nation community, through a comprehensive approach that integrates mental health to address historical and interpersonal trauma. VRP will assist victims of crime through Advocacy, referral services and education to create stability through awareness, intervention and healing. VRP will help all victims of crime, focusing on domestic violence, sexual assault/abuse, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. Victim-centered activities will focus on culturally competent services for mental health, substance abuse, physical & emotional wellness, job training, financial empowerment, crisis management, emergency victim services, and youth engagement.
In 2017 the remains of a Yakama Nation MMIW was found near White Swan, WA. This case is still under investigation by FBI.

A Yakama MMIW was reported missing in December 2017 and less then a month later her body was found at the intersection of Harrah Road. The case is under investigation of Tribal Police and FBI.

In 2017 a Yakama MMIW remains was found in the Yakima River near Toppenish, WA with a gunshot wound to her stomach.
The Red Dress Project started in Canada and has spread throughout the United States. The empty Red dresses represent the 1000’s of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. The dresses draw attention to the general and racialized nature of violent crimes against Aboriginal women and evoke a presence through the marking of their absence.
An Idea is Born

- Nearly every tribe had its own distinctive style of dress, and the people could often tell each other's identities by looking at their tribal clothes, headdresses, and ornamentation. Some traditional American Indian garments, such as buckskins, ribbon dresses, and beaded moccasins, are still worn in many tribes, particularly to formal events. Others, such as breechcloth, leggings, headdress and dance shawl, are only worn at powwows and religious ceremonies. In general, American Indians use the word regalia for traditional clothes which are used for ceremonial occasions. Some native people find the phrase "Native American costume" offensive, due to long association with hurtful red-faced Halloween costumes. Personally, the regalia handed down to me (Katherine Saluskin) was beaded by my grandma, who envisioned designs that represented the person of whom she was making an outfit, as she said, “that is what represents them.” The idea REDgalia was created by our own VRP Team when presented ideas across Indian Country of various Red campaigns for MMIW. The BOLD RED signifies the red campaign for MMIW, and galia was added as a “portmanteau” word meaning the blending sounds and meaning of two words.
Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Established by the Treaty of June 9, 1855

RESOLUTION

T-086-17

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Yakama Tribal Council, meeting in Regular Session at the Governmental Headquarters of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, with a quorum being present, that the Yakama Nation turns its grief into action and hereby designates the Fifth day of May as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Yakama Nation is calling on all those concerned for the safety of Native Women and Girls to organize at the local, national, and international levels to support the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Yakama Nation hereby resolves to advocate for action to address the crisis of missing and murdered Native Women and Girls by directing the federal government and its agencies to:

1. Review, revise, and create laws enforcement and justice protocols appropriate to deal with the disappearance of Native Women and Girls, and resolve inter-jurisdictional issues, and including a local, regional and national resolve Native Women database for review by the public; and
2. Provide increased victim services to the families and community members of the disappeared or murdered Native Women and Girls such as counseling for the children of the disappeared and burial assistance; and
3. Coordinate efforts across federal departments to improve the response to the disappearance or murder of Native Women and Girls; and
4. Provide necessary resources so the Yakama Nation may respond to our immediate crisis in this area; and
5. Coordinate, in consultation with the Yakama Nation, efforts to increase the response of state governments, where appropriate, to cases of disappearance or murder of Native Women or Girls.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Yakama Nation does not waive, alter, or otherwise diminish our sovereign immunity, whether expressed or implied, by virtue of this resolution for any and all administrative or legal actions which may arise directly or indirectly from the same, nor does the Yakama Nation waive, alter, or otherwise diminish our rights, privileges, remedies or services guaranteed by the Treaty of 1855.
Beginning of REDgalia

- VRP started the REDgalia campaign in fall 2017 with its first exhibit revealed at the VRP Trauma Informed Care Conference, October 25-26, 2017 at the Heritage University, to honor and bring awareness of the MMIW of the Yakama Nation.

- VRP has had a dozen wing dresses, modern day traditional regalia, made with the theme of red to honor the MMIW of the Yakama Nation.

- “By wearing red, it acknowledges that those who have gone missing or have suffered a violent death are still in the hearts of people who knew them.” -Chief Bobby Cameron.
Wingdresses
**Wingdress** is a modern day traditional regalia that represents the buckskin dresses we wore long ago. They are worn for ceremonies for honoring new foods to funerals.

**Shawls** the fringe is said to represent the tears of Indian women crying for the pain and suffering their people have endured for generations; yet it also represents **strength, beauty, and solidarity**. In the Washat 7 Drum Religion we leave our right arm out to bring prayer to and from our heart and when we raise our right hand to the sky we are bringing testimony to Creator as a form of Amen. We wear it as armor to protect and arm us against negative energy and spirits.

**Scarves** to protect and cover our head and hair, as our hair is symbol of our life.

**Belt** holds wupas baskets while gathering. A woman who doesn’t wear a belt may be a symbol of carrying life inside her (pregnant).
Why May 5th?

- May 5th is the birthdate of missing and murdered Hanna Harrison of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.
- A congressional resolution on April 2016 was conducted in efforts to make May 5th a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls (MMNWG).
- A National Day of Awareness for MMNWG will help shed light on the countless tragedies involving our Native sisters.
- On May 5, 2018 we joined local, tribal, state, national, and international levels to support the National Day of Awareness for MMNWG.
It’s a National Epidemic

- An FBI investigation on the Yakama reservation in 2009 found as many as 32 unsolved cases of missing persons or deaths.
- A recent report from the National Institute of Justice found that 4 out of 5 Native American women have experienced violence today.
- The U.S Department of Justice found that American Indian women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average.
- Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2016, homicide was the third-leading cause of death for Native American women between ages 10 and 24 and the fifth leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women between 25 and 34 years of age.
Washington Legislature has passed House Bill 2951

- Recently, the Washington Legislature has passed House Bill 2951, addressing violence against Native American women on reservations.
- House Bill 2951 sponsored by Goldendale Representative Gina Mosbrucker, whose 14th District encompasses the Yakama Reservation, Ancestral tribal land in Central Washington, and the Columbia Gorge area.
- Mosbrucker was influenced to bring House Bill 2951 to Washington Legislature by our own Yakama Tribal Council after watching the movie Wind River.
- The measure calls for the state, tribal and federal jurisdictions to work together to identify missing Native American Women.
- We recently met with Washington State Patrol and the Governors Office of Indian Affairs to discuss their efforts in conducting a study to increase state criminal justice protective and investigative resources for reporting and identifying missing Native American Women in Washington State.
Yakama Nation Victim Resource Program REDgalia MMIW hosted a walk and rally on May 5, 2018 in solidarity across Native America in support of the congressional resolution for making May 5th a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls and to promote the VRP REDgalia campaign into a national movement.
After the request for more shirts for those who could not attend the REDgalia event on May 5th, 2018, the Victim Resource Program (VRP) in collaboration with our Ladies of Council Special Committee for MMIW, we increased our outreach to the community and declared Thursdays the day to wear our REDgalia shirts or any/or red shirt. The intention is to bring awareness and in remembrance of our Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls on the Yakama Reservation.

In light of the recent women who have gone missing on the Yakama Nation Reservation the VRP team is working to bring awareness and education to promote healing to the surviving families and the Yakama community. The intent is to motivate bystanders and the Yakima County community to speak up and acknowledge the injustice our Native women have endured.

Most of all Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Services, Victim Resource Program and our Ladies of Council Special Committee for MMIW want our REDgalia campaign reclaim our Power of what has been taken from us physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally through HEALING. Here are some ideas to begin your journey to healing: Purification Ceremony, Support Groups, Meditation, Journaling, Art Therapy, Exercising, Wiping of the Tears/Grieving Ceremony.
What is done to one is felt by all!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_1zw9KGmDo&autoplay=1&fullscreen=1