Native American Heritage Month 5:00 P.M. 11/3/17 Z.DWYER

 Native American Heritage Month isn’t the most prominent celebration in today’s society, but stands for a variety of important reminders about the Native American community.

Zach Dwyer has the story.

MP3 RUNS : 89 Q: STANDARD

ZACH DWYER: FOR FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M ZACH DWYER. NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH TAKES PLACE DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER AND SERVES AS A REMINDER FOR THE STRUGGLES THE GROUP HAS GONE THROUGH. HOWEVER, IT CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR THE SMALL NUMBER OF NATIVE AMERICANS AT UNIVERSITIES TO FEEL INCLUDED. SAM GALE, A HISTORY PROFESSOR AT UW-RIVER FALLS, DESCRIBED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS TO STAY COMMITED TO WHO THEY ARE.

SAM GALE: REMAINING TRUE TO THAT IDENTITY IS CRITICAL. IF YOU TRY TO SORT OF SACRIFICE OR HIDE THAT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF FITTING IN, IT’S EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ON A PERSONAL LEVEL TO DO THAT, AND IT DOESN’T ACHIEVE WHAT YOU NEED.

ZACH DWYER: AIYANA LEDWEIN, A SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYER AT UWRF, HAS HER ROOTS IN THE STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE BAND OF MOHICAN INDIANS. LEDWEIN STILL FINDS WAYS TO STAY ROOTED IN HER CULTURE, EVEN THOUGH NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH ISN’T ALWAYS WELL PUBLICIZED.

AIYANA LEDWEIN: SOMETHING THAT MY BIRTH FAMILY TAUGHT ME WAS HOW TO MAKE FRY BREAD, WHICH IS A NATIVE AMERICAN FOOD. YOU CAN MAKE INDIAN TACOS WITH IT SO IT ACTS AS A TACO SHELL, OR YOU CAN PUT SOME CINNAMON SUGAR ON IT AND IT’S KIND OF LIKE A DONUT. SUPER GOOD.

ZACH DWYER: ONE WAY THAT LEDWEIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO FIND HER VOICE AT UWRF IS THROUGH FALCONS UNITED. THE GROUP MADE FOR MINORITY ATHLETES IS BEGINNING TO EXPAND OUT TO BE AVAILABLE TO ANY ATHLETE ON CAMPUS.

AIYANA LEDWEIN: THE GOAL IS TO REALLY MAKE THE ATHLETIC COMMUNITY CLOSER AND KIND OF HELP THEM OPEN UP THEIR PERSPECTIVE TO SEE AND HEAR OUR POINT OF VIEW. IT’S KIND OF LIKE A TEACHING GROUP.

ZACH DWYER: LEDWEIN SAID SHE LIKES THE GROUP AND THAT IT HAS BEGUN TO MAKE HER FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO UWRF. FOR FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M ZACH DWYER.

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