

Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers to Perform at Spirit of Nations Powwow

The Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers, who have appeared in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, will be featured at the Spirit of Nations Powwow on Saturday, March 29, at Jefferson County High School in Dandridge.

The group, led by Gertrude Miller, Indian Education Coordinator for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, includes musicians, educators, and artisans from a number of tribal communities in the area of Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

The dancers, dressed in traditional clothing, will perform eastern social and cultural songs and dances, accompanied by a water drum and handcrafted rattles. Not only will guests at the powwow enjoy watching the performance, but they will also be invited to join in with the dancers.

"We encourage audience participation and prefer to dance with the people instead of for the people," said Miller.

The Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers have as their goal the sharing of cultural values with the younger generation and beyond: "We see the importance of these values for the lives of tribal youth and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities they move through, in the world."

Dr. Mark Finchum, president of Indian Creek Productions, Inc., sponsor of the powwow, said, "We are so excited to bring this amazing performance to Jefferson County. The Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers have performed in places as far away as Hawaii and the United Kingdom. Now they are coming here."

Other activities include demonstrations of quillwork, bandolier bag construction, stone carving, basket making, copper work, wampum jewelry making, wood carving, beadwork, and finger weaving.

New this year will be a bark encampment to illustrate life among the Southeastern Native population centuries ago. There will also be activities for children, hoop dancing, American Indian arts and crafts for sale, flute music, Indian tacos, a silent auction, and competition powwow dancing.

Funding for the Spirit of Nations Powwow is provided in part by grants from the Tennessee Arts Commission and the Jefferson County Department of Tourism, along with numerous businesses and individuals.

Jefferson County High School is located at 115. W. Dumplin Valley Road, Dandridge, TN, 37725. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$2 for children. There is no charge for preschoolers. Veterans and active-duty military personnel are admitted free also.

The powwow hours are 10 am to 6 pm, with the Grand Entry at noon. Performances by the Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers are planned for approximately 11 am and 2 pm.

More information is available at www.indiancreekproductions.com or on the Indian Creek Productions Facebook page. Specific questions can be directed to indiancreekproductions@gmail.com.