

honor your Self

HONOR

“WORK HARD, STUDY, GO TO CLASS, AND YOUR WORK WILL BE EASY. IF YOU MISS CLASSES AND DON’T DO YOUR WORK, YOU MAKE IT HARDER ON YOURSELF.”

“Sah-ki-to-win”, says Dustin Whitford when asked what the word “Honor” would translate to in the Cree language. “It means ‘loved’ and that includes yourself mostly,” he says. “and then you could change that same word around and be talking about other people, your home, your mind, your body, your spirit.” Dustin was thinking about going into landscaping when he met an influential teacher at Stone Child College. Robert Murie, a Native American Studies and Cree language instructor, inspired Dustin to go on to The University of Montana and get his Bachelor’s degree in Native American Studies and Anthropology. Dustin then returned to Stone Child College, where he is now a Cree language instructor. “I’m in a field that I really enjoy,” says Dustin. “When I go to class to teach, it’s not really work. It’s fun. It’s a great reward to see my students learning.” At Stone Child College classes are small and students are able to get to know their instructors well. “It’s full of culture,” he says, which is one of the reasons he wanted to return as a teacher.

Culture is very important to Dustin. Besides teaching the language, Dustin is very involved in the community and is especially involved in powwow dancing. He enjoys dancing Prairie Chicken, Grass Dance, Crow Style and Traditional, and is an international champion Chicken Dancer. He has competed and won the San Manuel, Morongo and Gathering of Nations powwows. While at The University of Montana, Dustin served as President of the Kyi-Yo Club and coordinated a team of students to plan and host the Kyi-Yo Celebration. Dustin also enjoys singing and does so with two groups, one from Oklahoma called Scissor Tail and one from Manitoba called North Buffalo. He is also very active in ceremonies. “We have a lot of our ceremonies still on Rocky Boy’s,” he says, “so I think we’re pretty lucky and I try and participate in most of them if I can. That includes Sundances, Round Dances, Give Away Dance, Horse Dance, Ghost Dance...there’s lots and lots.”

Dustin’s top priority, he says, his most important responsibility, is his family. He is married and has a son. He is also very close to his parents, grandparents and brother and sister, who have all been a great support system for him. He advises people who want to be successful to stay close to their families and their good friends and to stay drug and alcohol free.

“STAY CLOSE TO YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR TRUE FRIENDS—THE ONES WHO AREN’T GOING TO GET YOU IN TROUBLE.”



Dustin J. Whitford 26
Chippewa-Cree
Rocky Boy High School
University of Montana
Educator/Native Language Advocate