

The Importance of Education - Dr. Sherry Johnson & Dr. Nadine Eastman

Mato said it well this morning when he referred to education as the new horse, and he talked about the historical value of what the horse, when we acquired the horse, of the historical value and importance it played in our own livelihood. And these days it's education. And we have, at our tribe, one of the main things is promoting education. I mean, it used to be the high school diploma was the place to get, and now it's the two-year degree. And so you have to have that, and people are looking for the four-year degree and to really come back.

And, you know, the tribes have a mentality of getting your education and coming back to the tribe. Well, you have to have places of employment for that too. Education is the way that is going to pave and open doors for us.

And I think some of our tribal resources that we have, like our tribal college, they're not just resources for Native people. We had a really strong nursing program, and we had a few Natives go through and they're nurses today, but we've had a lot more community members that were non-Native that finished their degrees there, and they're in communities and in our own community in nursing. So those are resources not just for local tribal people, but they're resources for everybody.

And it makes the more businesses we have, that's more it helps the economic development, and it helps the whole community, not just the Native part of the community, but the whole community at large, because the more money we have tribal members making, the more they can infuse it into the local community, and it helps the businesses. So, you know, it's a win-win situation. So the more resources that tribes have for their members, the more it helps the larger majority community as well.