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American Indian speaker teaches about respect for culture

by Emily Salmon

The message that Anthony Redfeather Nava wants to pass on to children is that they should be proud of their ancestors and be proud of who they are.

A member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe in Arizona, Nava travels to schools to teach students about Native American culture. He visited Trapp, Pilot View, Fannie Bush, Central, Strode Station, Shearer, Providence and Hannah McClure elementary schools last week.

Bringing along his traveling Indigenous Peoples Sensory Museum, Nava provided the children with nine tables covered in drums, whistles, shoes, arrowheads and other artifacts, all of which they were allowed to pick up and touch. Nava got the idea when he

witnessed children wanting to handle items that he brought along to his presentations.

"That's how children learn, you've got to get their senses going," he said. "You've got to get them exposed."

Along with his work through education, Nava is also a flute player and recording artist. He is a showcase artist for the Kentucky Center for the Arts and a roster artist through the Louisville Arts Council and Southern Indiana Arts Council.

Nava has been bringing Native culture to students for more than 15 years, hoping to spark their interest in it.

"Everyone has some kind of Indian ancestry," he said.

According to Pippi Guerrant, arts and humanities coordinator for the Clark County School District, Nava's presentation relates directly to the students' core curriculum. In fifth grade, students are tested on Native Americans through social studies and the arts.

"He does a really good job of bringing it to life," she said. "The children are not just getting the information out of books, they're getting hands-on experience as well."

The presentation was funded by the Clark County Board of Education, Guerrant said.

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