The Arizona State University Museum of Anthropology

Return of the Corn Mothers
October 7, 2010 to January 28, 2011
Education Packet

Developed for the ASU Museum of Anthropology by Kelli Adams
GUIDED GROUP VISIT INFORMATION

1. If you would like to schedule a visit to the ASUMA, please contact Catherine Nichols at anthro.museum@asu.edu.

2. Please arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your schedule time.

3. The museum can accommodate up to 30 students, but 10-15 students are ideal. Please include the number of students that plan on attending so arrangements can be made to have sufficient staff for your visitation.

4. One chaperone must be present at all times for each group of 20 children. Two chaperones are preferred.

5. Please schedule your visit one week prior to the date you want to visit the museum.

6. Discuss museum behavior before your scheduled visit. Students should have an understanding of museum etiquette. They will not be able to touch the photographs or objects in the gallery.

7. The museum is ALWAYS free; there are no fees for students, teachers, or volunteers. Museum hours are Monday through Friday, 11 AM to 3 PM. Other times can be arranged by appointment.

Please share this material with other educators. This packet is available for download at http://asuma.asu.edu/education/educationmaterials.
Overview of the exhibition

The exhibition is based on the Pueblo myth of Corn Mothers, said to have sung in the essence of creation, including the sacred Kachinas. The exhibition, a 2007 Rocky Mountain Women’s Institute award winner, features multi-cultural and multi-generational women from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, who embody the spirit of the Southwest.

The show's focus is a photo exhibition of women who have earned accolades for community activism and creative endeavors. Each featured woman also recounts in story form her memories of the women who influenced her in her life journey.

"This show is about women from 29 to 89 who tell stories that help shape and nurture our country. They represent the circle of life and the continuation of a never-ending story about love and perseverance," said curator Renee Fajardo. Master storyteller Carl Ruby and editor Ed Winograd helped gather and prepare stories for this exhibition. Arlette Lucero, Chicana muralist, rendered the original art.
Background Information

Information courtesy of the book Return of the Corn Mothers by Renee Fajardo

A Brief History of Corn Mothers

From Taos, New Mexico to the Hopi mesas of Arizona, the oral traditions of story continue to shape the living culture of the Pueblo peoples. Historically, one central figure in these traditions has been the Corn Mother, the giver of life. This legendary entity is important to the Pueblo cultures, as she is synonymous with Mother Earth and represents growth, life, creativity, and the feminine aspects of the world.

When human beings are in communion with Mother Nature, a harmonious existence is created, a place where air, fire, earth, water, and human beings become one. Corn Mothers are sacred women who provide direction to families and communities. Based on Native American Pueblo cultures about the beginning of life, they became sacrosanct mythological beings, sharing stories of birth, life, and death. In tune with the tierra sagrada (sacred land), they have learned how to intervene with Mother Nature, sustaining life through the creation of corn, with knowledge of natural medicine used to cure ailments, physically and spiritually.

Corn Mothers are the curanderas (healers) of the community, praying and creating healing ceremonies to heal the many wounded spirits: spirits disassociated from their bodies, fleeing, and then seeking forgiveness, unable to understand the melancholy of the times. Corn Mothers are guías (guides) with mysterious abilities and hidden conocimiento (knowledge), who emerge to provide understanding about life and its many challenges. They are the consejeras (counselors) of the comunidad (community) whose magical powers mend bleeding hearts, providing ameliorative support to those in need.

Corn Mothers never lose faith. They rekindle hope when it begins to dissipate. They often sprinkle happiness onto dejected human spirits, when all seems lost. They majestically transform hate into love and bleakness into light. As the moon keeps climbing higher during its peak performance, women are transformed into midnight tecolotes (owls), empathetic parts of the universe, protecting our spirits from meddling dreams that creep out as the soul is cleansed. They are the spiritual protectors of the community.

Corn Mothers are the carriers of traditions that have withstood foreign intrusion and governments on the verge of extinction, seeking power over others.

Corn Mothers come from all cultures and walks of life.
Stories of the Corn Mothers

Lucy López Dussart Lucero - Denver, Colorado

In 1927, when I was eight, my father got arrested for bootlegging. When he got out, he left for Missouri with his mother and left Mama and us kids behind. But she never cried or complained. She worked hard, and we worked hard. I could cut and fry a chicken when I was nine. When I was twelve, times were difficult. Lots of soup lines, and few jobs. Mama opened our home to anyone in need. She said we were lucky to have what we had.

In 1937 I married the love of my life, Avel Lucero. We had a wonderful life. Fridays after work, we’d pack up and go fishing. Later, we brought a carload of kids and friends. Those were good days. But you have to take the bad with the good. We lost one son, John, at 13. We lost our son Michael in a car accident when he was 12, and I was in a coma for almost a month. And we lost our last boy, Avel Jr., at 47.

But I never despaired. I still have my daughter Joanna and wonderful nieces and nephews to live for. Lots of kids came to my home to find some peace. Gay, homeless, or just kids who needed a break and a place to feel welcome. I never turned anyone away. I never judged them or belittled them. A little kindness goes a long way. The other day, a policeman came by. He must be about 65, but I recognized him. He remembered when I took him in after school and fed him cookies and cocoa. Imagine that!

No matter what, I’ve never given up. I wanted to see my kids grow, and prayed for that. I keep a pot of chili and beans on hand because I still have kids to see grow. That’s how life is. You just have to keep on and be kind. We didn’t just have good friends, we had great friends. And even with its sorrow, this life is a wondrous journey.

Barbara Clark - Cascabel, Arizona

I believe it is vital to be aware of the ecosystem in which one lives and is a part. We must live within our means, so that the natural system continues to function. By doing so, we sustain all the parts—animal, vegetable, and mineral—that contribute to its health and to everyone’s ultimate survival.

It is important to “know the place you live” and nurture the people and steward the ecosystem you are part of. That sense of place and community responsibility can come from independent people who see themselves as part of an entire organism, important
in their own right and as part of the whole. We are all partners in this game. We are all dependently independent.

I consciously engage in loving my neighbor as myself. I hope this will help us all be fearless enough to look beyond our short-term, selfish needs and see that a healthy landscape is vitally important for our future and a source of joy and rejuvenation in the present.

The world we live in—our beautiful, live planet—is composed of interconnected parts that function together to create life. I believe that the seen and unseen universe reflects this, too, and are the same—interconnected molecules and facets working together for the good of the whole.

We must make land-use decisions based on the healthy, best functioning of that landscape/ecosystem. I believe we cannot heal our planet without healing our relationships with other people.

I first learned the principles I live by from my mother and grandmother. My mother taught me I could do anything I had to—and that it should done well. She taught me that true joy does not come from surfeit of material goods, but that taking good care of our possessions is the responsible way to behave. My grandmother taught me to respect every human being, and that great people came from every walk of life, race, social stratum and culture.

Lois Harvey – Denver, Colorado

My philosophy of life centers itself on worthwhile work, a positive, caring attitude, and strong ties to family and friends. My family upbringing stresses that all people are one, and that peaceful solutions exist to all conflicts. The spiritual basis of my life is the belief that the inner light of godhood exists in all.

Reading has been the single most important “outside” element in my life. Reading enlarges and enlightens my life, and has since I was very young. I’ve seen it do the same for many, many people...of all ages. Even those coming to reading later in life have expressed this to me. I’ve found myself a niche from which to make reading accessible to many by offering used books of all kinds to people from all walks of life. I deeply enjoy interacting with people as they take joy in, and grow from, reading books. It is a humble place to be, but it’s healthy, soul-centered work, nonetheless.
My deepest desire is that some day, in some way, we will all see our connection and learn to act in ways that support life, rather than destroy it. I want to see the “power over” structure disappear and the “power with” structure become the precedent. There is a veritable plenty on the earth. If it is shared, none should suffer want.

The preceding statements make it obvious that I have an idealistic outlook, but I feel that my idealism is tempered with the pragmatism learned over time, and from the process of living. I am cheerful in spite of the evidence that we live in a less than perfect world.

Carrie Howell - Wheat Ridge, Colorado

We live in an extremely narrow-minded world, so we must demonstrate peace, harmony, and acceptance of every race to our youth. We must teach the traditional values, especially respect. Young people need direction in order to value and respect our elders’ knowledge and experience. Our children practice the behaviors they observe in adults, so it is important that adults be responsible for the messages they are conveying to our children.

I have worked with young people for over thirty years, beginning with Native American youths when I was just 18 years old. Later, I worked with deaf, blind, deaf/blind, or severely profoundly mentally impaired youths; with juveniles who were involved with the courts; with youths who were incarcerated; with high-risk dropouts; and with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

These experiences made me realize that we are responsible for all our children—Indian and non-Indian. We need to provide guidance and direction. It is essential that we educate Indian children continuously on their American Indian history and individual tribal history, encouraging pride and self-esteem. Many young people complain that adults do not listen to them. We must continue to educate them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. We as Indian people survived for a reason, because our ancestors fought for us to exist. We have responsibilities to our youth to continue teaching our culture, spirituality, traditions, dances, and music. I have the dual benefit and privilege of working with young people and performing with our family dance troupe. I wake up every day, thank the creator for my talents and gifts, and try to use them wisely.
SOME PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Class Discussion

Lead a class discussion using the following prompts:
• What is a Corn Mother?
• What are some traditions that you believe or participate in?
• What is a legend or a myth?
• Do you think legends or myths are real?
• Can you name few legends or myths?
• If you could make up your own legend or myth, what would it be?
Talking about Photographs

Students can use the above photograph or any of the other photographs on http://www.returnofthecornmothers.com/ to do the below activities.

Writing Exercise

Have your students write a story about the person in this photo. Who is this person? Where is this person? What is this person doing?

Class Discussion

Lead a class discussion using the following prompts:
- What are your initial thoughts about this photo?
- What type of clothes is the person in the photo wearing?
- What sorts of things do you see in the background?
- What does this tell you about this person?
- What do you not see in this photo?
- What kinds of things does the photo not tell you about the person in it?
- Is this photo “the truth”? Why or why not?
- How important is it that this photo is in color?
- How would it be different if it were in black and white?
- Do you think this photo is ‘art’? Why or why not?
- Why do you think that a Museum of Anthropology might have an exhibition of these kinds of photos?
SOME POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Write your own Corn Mother Story

1. Ask your students:
   - Do you have a Corn Mother in your life?
   - Who is she and what makes her a Corn Mother?
   - Describe your Corn Mother. How does she make you feel? How does she motivate you? How does she support you? Does she help a community? How so?

2. Next give your students a story structure page, which has steps on how to write a short story. The students will use this worksheet to write a short story about their own Corn Mother.

3. After the students finish their stories, have them share their work with each other.

4. Suggest to your students that they share their story with their Corn Mother.

The following diagram and glossary can be used to help students better understand some of the important components of a story.
Glossary

1. **Plot** - Narrative structure or storyline that consists of an exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action, and a resolution.
2. **Theme** - A subject or topic which a person writes or speaks about
3. **Exposition** - A way to provide background information and inform the audience about the characters, setting, and theme
4. **Setting** - Time and place of a story
5. **Rising Action** - The portion of the story where conflicts arise that leads up to the climax
6. **Conflict** - The problem that causes the action within a story
7. **Climax** - Point of greatest tension in a story
8. **Falling Action** - The action following the climax or turning point of the story that moves towards a resolution
9. **Resolution** - Sorting out the conflicts and bringing the plot to a close at the end of a story
Name _____________________________________

(ttitle of your story)

Exposition/Setting:

Rising Action/Conflict:

Climax:

Falling Action:

Resolution:
FUN ACTIVITIES

Mad Libs

Elementary School:

Big Mac Who?

Big Mac_______________(last name) had a ______________(noun), E-I-E-I-O.

On this ______________(noun) he had some ______________(plural noun), E-I-E-I-O.

With a __________(type of sound)-________(type of sound) here,
and a __________(type of sound)-________(type of sound) there,
everywhere a __________(type of sound)-________(type of sound),
Big Mac_______________(last name) had a ______________(noun), E-I-E-I-O.

A Day at the Zoo!

Today I went to the zoo. I saw a __________(adjective)
____________(noun) jumping up and down in its tree. He
____________(verb: past tense) __________(adverb) through the
large tunnel that led to its __________(adjective)
____________(noun). I got some peanuts and passed them
through the cage to a gigantic gray __________(noun)
towering above my head. Feeding that animal made me
hungry. I went to get a __________(adjective) scoop of ice
cream. It filled my stomach. Afterwards I had to
____________(verb) __________(adverb) to catch our bus. When
I got home I __________(verb past tense) my mom for a
____________(adjective) day at the zoo.
Middle School:

The Ball Game

Yesterday, I went to a ________(noun)ball game at ________(place). The tickets cost ________(number) dollars each, and it was worth it, because it was the ________(superlative) ________(noun)ball game I've ever seen. We took our seats, and when the refreshment ________(person) came by, we ordered ________(food, plural) and ________(food, plural) to munch on. The players came out onto the ________(geographical terrain), and the audience ________(verb, intransitive, past tense) and ________(verb, intransitive, past tense) at their arrival. Right in the beginning, ________(number) ________(time period, plural) into the game, Bob "The ________(noun)" Charles broke his ________(body part) and had to be carted off the ________(geographical terrain). I felt ________(emotion) about it, but the game had to go on. Shortly afterward, ________(first name) "__________(adjective) ________(body part)" Johnson scored, and a ________(sound) went up from the fans.

The half time act consisted of a team of ________(occupation, plural) ________(gerund, transitive) ________(noun, plural) in a ________(shape). In the second half, a foul ________(noun)ball flew over my ________(body part) and popped the ________(person) sitting behind me. Other than that, we had an ________(adjective) time.
From the ship's ________(noun, plural), nearly all the seamen now hung
_________(adjective); ________(noun, plural), bits of ________(noun), lances,
and ________(noun, plural), ________(adverb) retained in their ________(body
part, plural), just as they had ________(verb, intransitive, past tense) from their
_________(adjective) employments; all their ________(adjective) ________(body
part, plural) intent upon the ________(animal), which from side to side
______(adverb) ________(gerund, transitive) his predestinating ________(body
part), sent a broad band of overspreading ________(adjective) foam before him as
he ________(verb, intransitive, past tense). Retribution, swift ________(noun,
abstract), ________(adjective) ________(noun, abstract) were in his whole aspect,
and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid ________(color) buttress of his
________(body part) smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and ________(noun,
plural) reeled. Some fell flat upon their ________(body part, plural). Like dislodged
______(vehicle, plural), the ________(body part, plural) of the harpooneers aloft
______(verb, intransitive, past tense) on their bull-like ________(body part,
plural). Through the breach, they heard the waters ________(verb, intransitive,
present tense), as mountain torrents down a flume. "The ship! The ________(noun)!
-- the second ________(noun)!" cried Ahab from the ________(vehicle); its wood
could only be American! ________(gerund, intransitive) beneath the
______(gerund, intransitive) ship, the ________(animal) ran ________(gerund,
intransitive) along its keel; but ________(gerund, intransitive) under water,
______(adjective) shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few
yards of Ahab's ________(vehicle), where, for a time, he ________(verb,
intransitive, past tense) ________(adjective).
College:
The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I ________(verb, intransitive, past tense),
_______(adjective) and weary,
Over many an ________(adjective) and ________(adjective) volume of
________(adjective) lore,
While I ________(verb, intransitive, past tense), nearly napping, ________(adverb)
there came a tapping,
As of some one ________(adverb) rapping, rapping at my ________(room) door.
"'Tis some ________(relationship)," I muttered, "tapping at my ________(room) door
Only this, and nothing more."

_______(exclamation), _________(adverb) I remember it was in the
________(adjective) December,
And each ________(adjective) dying ember wrought its ________(noun) upon the
floor.
_______(adverb) I wished the morrow; _________(adverb) I had tried to borrow
From my ________(noun, plural) surcease of sorrow; sorrow for the lost Lenore
For the rare and ________(adjective) ________(person) whom the
_______(person, plural) name Lenore
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken ________(adjective) uncertain ________(gerund, intransitive) of each
_______(color) curtain
Thrilled me; filled me with fantastic ________(noun, abstract) never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my ________(internal organ), I stood repeating
"'Tis some ________(relationship) entreating entrance at my ________(room) door
Some ________(adjective) ________(relationship) entreating entrance at my
_______(room) door;
This it is, and nothing more."
Word Searches

STORYTELLING

K T A Y D Y R O T S D H T R W O D T E G
A M T S A P E R S T V Q N O I T C A P U
S D N W K I R I L S Z V L F Q I V P B J
E R E U P F Q E W R J Z P G L M S A X X
V E S G V B X D L T E U W F X N I F M J
W X E B U A Y K V L V S N U G Q O T C C
G S R R M N G F N Z E O O R A M Z H V B
O C P I U U O N N O C T Z L H K P E W J
O Q L B K T H I I C I P Y V U M O M Z T
N C K D D Q C X T T I T K R I T C E M K
Y D V S P N U U O A T Q I R O E I I Q L
F C V Y F D B E R M N E H S D T P O B F
Q J C V O N B A U T F I S Z O S S F N I
J T G B D W Z L E F S K G Y B P C Y T N
R X S V D O T O L P X L D A V V X T Z T
N W E T D B K S T U M A N B M W F E A R
T W I W T E O T U F S S E X X I L V H L
T B L M H E R U T U F D E T R U Y U U N
Z M M X O H T Y M S N S L M Y J X F L L

Directions:
Find the 17 hidden words listed below in the puzzle. You can find them in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards and backwards.

ACTION
CONFLICT
FUTURE
LEGEND
PAST
PRESENT
SETTING
STORYTELLER
THEME

CLIMAX
EXPOSITION
IMAGINATION
MYTH
PLOT
RESOLUTION
STORY
STRUCTURE
CORN MOTHERS

Directions:
Find the 24 hidden words listed below in the puzzle. You can find them in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards and backwards.

AIR
CORN
CULTURE
FAITH
FIRE
HARMONY
HOLY
MAGICAL
MOTHERS
NATURE
PROTECTORS
SPIRITUAL
WATER

COMMUNITY
CREATIVITY
EARTH
FEMININE
GROWTH
HISTORY
LIFE
MOTHERS
PRAY
SACRED
TRADITIONS
WOMEN