



Getting to Know Rose Hammock

“Walking life with an open mind is easy but walking life with an open heart is the hard part,” shares Rose Hammock, words of wisdom from her grandmother. Rose stresses the importance of putting her heart into the work she does in the community, referring to it as “heart work.” She works with many different organizations throughout Sonoma County serving as a cultural resource for these groups and as a school design coach with youth. She teaches her students about traditional plants, languages, ceremony, art and other cultural traditions. Growing up in an educational system that showed no representation of her Native community, from the teachers to even the bus driver, experiencing discrimination and racist comments from her non-Native peers, and not learning about her own culture in her courses, Rose knew she wanted to give back to her community and pass down her knowledge and teachings to the younger generation.

The Native American community in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County and the United States has and continues to endure many hardships that go unnoticed and swept under the rug. The racial injustices and stereotypes have led Rose to change the narrative of what people think about her and her community. Natives carry themselves a certain way and have a culture that is not embraced by the people in that culture themselves, but those who appropriate, oversexualize or fantasize the culture. Women and children are going missing and are killed, domestic violence is an issue, many are underserved and often overlooked when discussing racial injustice. To Rose, just because it’s not being talked about doesn’t mean it’s not happening. Their lives are not trends or valuable just for a moment. However, despite all the hardships and everything that has been thrown their way, the Native community is resilient and continues to overcome the struggles they have faced. She explains that her Indigenous peers need to be in more positions of influence – becoming teachers, sitting on committees and boards, addressing local officials and being advocates for not only for the community but for themselves. She works to help youth take leadership positions to have their voices heard, connect with their cultural background and educate non-Natives on their culture. When she becomes an elder, she hopes that the following generations learn the teachings and pass them down to those who will come after them.

Rose is proud of who she is and honors those who have come before her. She is of Pomo, Wailaki and Maidu descent and identifies as Indigenous because it encompasses and honors where she is from and her ancestors. She strives to create spaces where people can share who they are and uses her platform to share her culture whole heartedly. Building relationships with non-Natives and ally-ships leads to trust and more authentic and heartfelt connections. As a leader in the community she has something to uphold and knowledge to provide. She encourages non-Natives to do their research. Connect with people from the culture and ask appropriate questions. Learn whose land you’re on and find the best way to honor them. The



Native community deserves to be uplifted, supported, engaged in important dialogue and have the platform to advocate for themselves and be a part of the change in the community.