



Covington Catholic High School  
1600 Dixie Highway  
Park Hills, KY 41011

January 23, 2018

Dear Covington Catholic High School Administration, Staff, and Students;

We, the staff and mentors of the AWAKE Media Program, are writing you about the incident between your students and Nathan Phillips at the Lincoln Memorial on January 19, 2019 after the Indigenous Peoples March. AWAKE Media was created because our narratives have always been told for us - the stories spun about our people are laden with inaccuracies and we want to change that. We support Native people, youth in particular, in speaking up and telling their own stories. We believe in correcting the history that has been taught for too long...one that systematically dehumanizes us and fails to mention our contributions to society. Part of our programming is the AWAKE Youth Media Fellowship, a year-long program that trains 8 indigenous youth in filmmaking, journalism, and media. Nathan's daughter Alethea is one of our fellows and an incredibly important member of our team.

As administrators of a Native youth media program, we often have to find ways to facilitate healthy discussion around racism, culture, and understanding and seeing the video of some of your students as they stared down a Native elder praying for them was difficult for many of us. Our songs are our prayers - they are how we connect to our Creator and those around us. Our songs are our way of life, a whole perspective of seeing the value of our lives and those around us. With this way of life comes an understanding that we are humble beings dependent on the world around us. Our societies teach us compassion and generosity - these are not just words but consistent actions that make us who we are. Nathan saw the potential for violence among misunderstandings and misconceptions between groups and he chose to intervene in the way he knew how - by singing a unity song for them.

While we know that this is a divisive time, we are coming to you with a hope to build understanding. We appreciate the official release from the school administrators and diocese that did not condone the actions of their students and we know that there is an opportunity here to learn from what happened. We would like to hold a workshop or a series of talks guided by our program leaders and community elders to help your school staff, administration, and students learn about our lives, our beliefs, and how to treat people of different backgrounds with thoughtfulness and care. There has been a definite miseducation about Native people and this is where we can grow. We all pray in different ways, but we still pray together.

Sincerely,

The AWAKE Media Project Team

Doug Good Feather, Floris White Bull, Teena Pugliese, Myron Dewey, and Josh Fox