Speaker 1: We find it very important to stand with our indigenous people, especially as an environmental club, because indigenous people really advocate for the environment. So it's important that we understand what they're protecting and what they are overall protecting, it protects us as well.

Christina B.: Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun: And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to The Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina B.: Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun: We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4: And I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 5: She is a Sociology major, and she's transferring to CalPoly Pomona, Psychology major, English major.

Sun: From transforming part-time into full-time.

Speaker 6: ... really like the time that we spend with Julie about how to write a CV and cover letter.

Christina B.: Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 7: ... think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina B.: We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

Sun: And I'm Sun Ezzell, learning assistants faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina B.: And this is The Magic Mountie Podcast.

Sun: Hi, this is Sun Ezzell. I recently had the pleasure of not only witnessing the amazing celebration and honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day on October 14th, but also of talking with some of the people who helped make it all happen. According to the SAC media article, Why Mt. SAC Dropped Columbus Day, in 2016, the Mt. SAC Associated Students voted 16 to two and passed a resolution to change Christopher Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day, thanks to the hard work and activism of Mt. SAC MEChistas and the Mt. SAC Native American Intertribal Student Alliance. According to the article, Mt. SAC renamed the holiday before the city of Los Angeles did. It wasn't until 2018 that LA celebrated their first indigenous day, that included all-day celebrations of Native American history and culture.

Sun: Other States, such as New Mexico, Maine and Wisconsin have also voted to rename Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day. Since the change, both MEChA and NAISA celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day yearly. The celebrations grow every year and more student organizations have joined in collaboration. MEChA and NAISA club members, in collaboration with American Indian Movement and Environmental Action Group for a Livable Earth, were involved in organizing this year's event, particularly, student leader, Julian Ibanez Mandujano.

Sun: If you missed the celebration that took place at the Indigenous Peoples' Fountain in front of the Mt. SAC Library, here's your chance to hear from those who participated talk about their message and why Indigenous Peoples' Day is important. Enjoy.

Didi: Hi. My name is Didi Munsonata se Barra, I am the tribal chair of [foreign language 00:03:09] [foreign language 00:03:11] and I'm also a descendant of the Kizh Nation Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians. Today I'm here celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day with the students of Mount SAC. I was invited by Pedro Gonzales of MEChA to be out here to welcome them to Kizh land with the opening prayer. I am also on the board of murdered missing indigenous women of California and I'm going to share a little bit about our organization a little bit later today. I am also representing American Indian Movement of SoCal Chapter, of which I am the assistant director. So I'm here wearing many hats here today. But one thing, I am always indigenous. I am letting everybody know that our people are still here. We continue to exist, we're not going anywhere. We have fought for years for our rights, and we're not ever going to let anybody take them away from us.

Didi: We are here to celebrate the day, to celebrate the changes that have been made, especially with the American Indian Movement, for the last 50 years that have fought for indigenous rights for our people. And in the early seventies the freedom of native American religion act, which gave us the right to celebrate out here with our ceremonies and our customs. And to be out here today in front of everybody burning our Sage and celebrating. We have that right. We won't give it up. We had some dancers "danzantes" out here. Sharing their prayer and their culture which they're allowed to do out here because we are all indigenous from Turtle Island, North America, South Central America. We are all one. We are all the same people. Christopher Columbus never set foot up here. There is no reason to celebrate him out here, because he never set foot here in North America and all he did, the places he did set foot on was destroy, kill, rape, cause genocide and enslave people. Brought sickness and did nothing good out here. No reason to celebrate.

Didi: He didn't even sail for his own country of Italy. He sailed for Spain. So there's no reason for even the Italians to be celebrating what that man did. So you know, we're out here celebrating that at least people recognized the real reason to celebrate today and changed the name from Columbus day to Indigenous Peoples' Day. And I proud of our County, proud of our city of Los Angeles and especially proud of the city of Pomona because we were one of the first. And this area down here, there are still so many more cities to go, so many more States to go. Now, state of California would just make it a holiday and it needs to go national. Because governor Newsom just did an apology to the indigenous people last month. He needs to make it a state wide holiday for all indigenous people. He needs to do that because once he does it, then every city and County in the state will be forced to follow.

Speaker 9: Today Eagle is here representing indigenous Peoples Day. First thing we want to showcase was some native plants that were found here on campus, so we have white sage acorns from coast live oak, deer grass and bulrush. These are all plants that were found on campus, and they're all plants that the natives have used for either building their houses, basket weaving, or they use the acorns as like a source of fiber. We also wanted to showcase some current issues that were happening. So we have these images at the front showing Mauna Kea, which is happening in Hawaii. They're trying to build a telescope on some very sacred land. So indigenous people over there have been protesting and doing what they can to protect their land.

Speaker 10: We wanted to bring awareness to the fountain, which is in front of the library because this fountain is for indigenous peoples of the world. And so we noticed last year that it didn't have water, it wasn't clean. It had water, but it was like there, because it was raining and there was larva swimming and stuff. And we just thought like, "What does it say about the school if it doesn't respect a fountain that's for Indigenous Peoples Day?" So then the people before me, they started doing the event here because we wanted people to see. I don't think a lot of people know either, it's for indigenous people. So we had it here and then we have a friend that used to be in MEChA. He's out over at UCLA. Alejandro. And so him and his family do Danzazteca, which is an indigenous dance.

Sun: What brought you here today?

Speaker 11: We had the privilege to be invited to be performing at Indigenous Peoples Day here at Mt. SAC. So we're very happy to be here just to show a little bit of our culture. I always get motivated, especially in higher education in Academia to just continue to advocate for people, and to change that narrative that has been taught in the educational system. So I always leave very inspired to continue to do what I'm doing. We started with our blessing to the four directions. And so what we always do at the beginning of each of our ceremonies is that we bless the four directions, the four elements that give us life. Because especially in Danzazteca or Aztec dance, we emphasize a lot of honoring mother earth and the elements that gives us life. So we'd go ahead and start with an opening the ceremony and then we did a couple of our dances. You know, we have a variety of dances that signify specific things.

Speaker 11: We perform that. And then what I really enjoy was we asked some of the students to come and join our friendship dance and everyone at different groups that do it differently. But something I would like to emphasize is as a friendship dance is to come together as one. And not look at color or race. The borders that sometimes get in between our ideas or ideology to just be human beings and then connect as one. And we did that friendship dance. So we taught them a little bit of our movements and we did Ozomatli, which Ozomatli is monkey. It signifies a lot of fun, a lot of being funny, and so I just having a good time and then when they really enjoyed it, we really enjoyed it too. We also taught them what the movements that we were doing meant and just reminding them to take up space in the educational system, to rewrite that narrative.

Speaker 11: It's so important and to continue to preserve our indigenous traditions. It's important.

Sun: Can you talk a little more about taking up space.

Speaker 11: Taking up space. And what I mean by that is, you know, minorities or indigenous minorities obviously taking up space, for me at least means, for during our education and taking up those spaces, those places of power and advocate for our people instead of going with what society and the educational system has taught us about who Christopher Columbus is.

Speaker 11: And as indigenous we're rewriting those books about what it is to be indigenous and what our actual traditions, who Columbus is, who Christopher Columbus was and what he did when he came in. You know, supposedly discover America when, you know, he didn't discover, we we're already here. So taking up space means that, and even in an a minor scout, taking up space, you know, being involved in MEChA, carry that heritage and those traditions. That's taking up space. And just being yourself and being indigenous and being proud of who you are is taking up that space. We have a lot of work to continue to do and let's continue to do it and continue to fight the oppressive system that continues to look down upon us and fight for that respect that we need as indigenous people.

Eva: Hi, my name is Eva Rios-Alvarado. I am the student equity and outreach librarian here at Mt. San Antonio college. I want to share about the events that took place today at Mt. SAC and why I believe students think it's important for them to come together and bring the campus together on Indigenous Peoples' Day. So today is October 14 and normally in our calendars we see Columbus day, but just recently there have been many movements here in the United States and in other locations to also commemorate indigenous peoples. Because not everybody sees the coming of Columbus or Europeans to different lands as a discovery. And so I believe the reason why students, especially MECha students come together to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day is to commemorate that fact that there are many ways of living in life and that as students, especially in an area of higher education, they have that ability to explore and to relearn things. And so Indigenous Peoples' Day I believe for the students is a way for them to gather and relearn whether it be facts, whether it be language, whether it be dance or movement or spirituality or empowerment.

Eva: So students are able to do those things through the organizing of Indigenous Peoples Day amongst the many activities that they do. What takeaways did I get? Well firstly I really love that the event is in front of the library at the indigenous peoples' fountain, which I don't really know the history about, but I want to know more about it. Because it's in an area that normally people associate with like quiet or doing things that are not collaborative I guess, in a sense. Because I think there's a stereotype about libraries. On that note. I also know that some of the the danzantes mentioned taking up space and that to me is very critical because in higher education, especially for people of color, we often feel like we can't take up space. And so for people to actually do that through the honor of indigenous peoples, to take up space in areas where we're often felt to not be able to take up space is a very empowering act.

Eva: So that was kind of one of my takeaways and kind of like yes, yes moments. So I was happy to see that. I feel like I need to give honor and acknowledgement to a longstanding advisor, current advisor even of MEChA, which is Manuel Castillejos, who is a Spanish professor here at Mt. SAC. He has been the backbone and I want to say the longstanding kind of like elder for MEChA here, MECha De Mt. SAC. And so he deserves all the credit and acknowledgement for that. I started off as a co-advisor to support students because I do think that there are a lack of spaces for people to explore non Western types of identities, ideas and practices. And so that's what drew me to supporting students doing that. I was actually never a MEChista. I was a MALCSista in college. That stands for Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social, which is a women's centered organization where it's only women identified. People are allowed to be in that environment.

Eva: But I do have a lot of friends who are MEChistas, who are like presidents of chapters on campuses. So I have a different lens. So when students ask me to be an advisor, I was very honored because it's a huge responsibility. But also, I have a different way I think, of maneuvering things because I believe highly in spaces that empower women and people of color that are, especially for women. I want to say Manuel deserves a lot of credit. Other advisors currently are April Diaz in history and Natalie Paredes EOPS counseling. And of course Fabian Pavon, who has been a MEChA member who actually coordinates a lot of MEChA events through the Pomona Valley MEChA. And those folks, so Fabian and Manuel and the students deserve the majority of the credit. I'm just a supporter.

Sun: I saw so many books out on the table out at the event. And I was wondering if you might talk a little bit about how your role as an advisor, one of the advisors informs your work as a librarian.

Eva: Wow, so I'm really glad you asked me that question. Because one of the things that I try to see, like what are students interested in. Of course librarians collect for different disciplines and departments based on our lead collection development liaison areas. For instance, I collect for geography, architecture and nowdance and some others. But what I found was that when I went to some of the student events and I found out like what are the activities that they're doing and how can the library collection support those interests. I found that, for instance, we didn't have anything on the other Los Muertos for instance. Which is a Mesoamerican holiday, and I was kind of shocked because we are, this campus is 50% plus I believe now 60% plus LatinX.

Eva: So that was kind of a shocking awakening for me, but I'm not surprised because we have so many areas that we're in charge of collecting for, that sometimes things are missed. So that happens. But through my work with MEChA for instance, and other student equity programs as well, I've been able to see what is not in our collection that can support the learning and the just general interests of our students here at Mt. SAC or even faculty and staff. So yeah, that work has been informed by that process. I highly encourage any faculty and I believe full time any, I think staff and faculty can both serve as advisor. So it's not just faculty. So I'm talking to everybody right now. I would highly encourage you to be an advisor. It does add extra time and hours labor to your work, but it does provide you a fulfillment as far as providing a service to the different communities on our campus because there are many and yet we are one.

Eva: And so I would say that to be an advisor provides you with a different richness and higher education that I don't think that you could get from a classroom that you wouldn't be able to get from serving on a campus committee or task force. I believe that being a club advisor goes above and beyond the work that we're asked to do. And so I really thank Andrea Sims and Julia Walker for providing the recent training for advisors and because there is a large responsibility, I think many people shy away from it.

Eva: But I highly encourage you to reach out to Julia Walker and Andrea Sims through that process because they are there to support and they want to encourage participation because students do highly benefit from being civically engaged or just even creating a meeting. The process of creating a meeting on a topic that they care about can be a very healing process. So I think, there's a lot of untapped areas of support. If people are looking for ways to support students, that could be another way to provide that service and that love, that passion of being an educator through the different venues on campus.

Christina B.: Thank you for listening to the magic Mountie podcast. Remember to subscribe on Apple podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to get your podcasts so you can listen in the car, in your office, or however you like to listen. Once you subscribe, we'd love to hear what you think by leaving us a review. And don't forget to share your favorite episodes.