



PLACE AND NATIVE VOICE

A Cultural Resource Interpretation Program


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Luis Garcia



LUIS GARCIA is a native of New Mexico of Tiwa/Piro Pueblo and Chicano background. As a Mestizo, or mixed background, Luis identifies strongly with his indigenous roots as a Pueblo and Chicano person. Currently a bilingual teacher, Luis learned from an early age the importance of language and culture. Having grown up multilingually, Luis now speaks a total of 4 languages including English, Spanish, Tiwa, and later, through his involvement in Aztec dance, he began studying the Nahuatl or Aztec language and has

become well versed in the language after having studied in several Nahuatl-speaking communities throughout Mexico. Luis' wife Paula and daughter Miahuatl are native Nahuatl-speakers from the state of Morelos in Mexico.

An active participant in the traditional ceremonies of his Pueblo and Mexican cultures, Luis has learned much of the history connecting these two cultures. Having been raised by his grandfather, Luis has learned the traditional Pueblo art of weaving. After having visited various indigenous communities throughout Mexico, he noticed many similarities in the cultures ranging from language, textiles, dances, traditions, beliefs, foods, and the list goes on. Featherwork and weaving in particular have been the foci of Luis' creative outlet over the past several years. In traditional Pueblo culture, weaving was primarily man's work while in Mexico, weaving is mainly done by the women.

In Mexico, since ancient times, feathers have been crafted into ornate ornaments from headdresses to feather capes. In both regions, macaw and parrot feathers continue to be highly prized and sought after. In ancient Mexico, there existed featherwork guilds that produced some of the most impressive pieces of art with feathers from some of the rarest most beautiful birds such as the Resplendent Quetzal and Scarlet Macaw of southern Mexico and Central America. Both Luis and Paula supplement their income with the sale of handcrafted parrot feather and sterling silver earrings as well as the sale of textiles just as their ancestors did long ago.

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Having completed a Masters degree in Bilingual Education, Luis hopes to continue teaching language and culture allowing him and his family time to visit family and friends in Mexico and continue to practice the ancient arts of featherwork and weaving. Luis also enjoys developing curriculum and interpretive programs at Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque, New Mexico when his is not in the classroom.

