

# Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

## Leo Reano Memorial Award

Presented to a nominee whose activities in American Indian/Alaska Native affairs significantly impact education and equal opportunities for American Indian/Alaska natives.



**Dreams of Eagles**  
*Non-Members, Nebraska*

From the tip of South America to the Arctic Circle, the eagle has been a very special creature for Native Americans. Their power and grace are revered. A common Native American greeting reflects this reverence: "May you have the strength of eagles' wings, the faith and courage to fly to new heights, and the wisdom of the universe to carry you there."

Dreams of Eagles is an intertribal organization (with 501C status), with the courage to fly to new heights. Headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, its purpose is to preserve the tribal customs, oral traditions, language and history of Native Americans and Alaska Natives by uniting people with tribal and village elders. The founders of Dreams of Eagles recognized the need for organized cultural activities and classes to assist Native people living in urban settings to maintain their cultural traditions and share those traditions with non-native people.

Through the efforts of many dedicated individuals, Dreams of Eagles has successfully brought together members of the following tribes: Athabaskan, Cherokee, Chicameca, Huron, Lakota, Mdeakiantonwon, Mesquaki, Miniconjos Sioux, Navajo, Oglala, Ojibwe, Pawnee, Ponca, Pottawattamie, Roebud, Seneca, Santee, Sisseton, Tlaxcalpeca, Tobique mauseet-First Nations, Totanacak, Uma "ho", Wahpeton Sioux, Winnebago and Yankton Sioux.

The biggest event by far that Dreams of Eagles organizes is the annual Native American/Indian Education Days. For the past seven years, this event has exposed all the children in the fourth grades of Omaha Public Schools to Native American arts, crafts, traditions, lifestyle, and history. Fourth grade teachers prepare their students the day before and do follow-up activities the day after.

There are approximately 4,000 students in the fourth grade in Omaha schools. Therefore, approximately 28,000 students have experienced Native American/Indian Days. Significantly, this Dreams of Eagles event takes place on the very grounds where Chief Standing Bear was housed at Fort Omaha during his famous trial. Chief Standing Bear was a native Ponca, and as a result of his trial, Native Americans were determined to have rights as individuals under the law. *"I Am A Man": Chief Standing Bear's Journey For Justice*, by Joe Starita (last year's Leo Reano Memorial Award winner), chronicles this important chapter in American history.

In addition to this annual event, Dreams of Eagles organizes Native games, dance exhibitions and pow wows as well as classes in beadwork, quilting, moccasin making and other Native art forms. Moreover, Dreams of Eagles has an even bigger dream: A Native American Community Center in Omaha, with a multitude of activities intended primarily for educating young people.

