



**MMIWP+ Artwork by Helen Goodteacher
(Nez Perce)**

Spokane, WA

This powerful artwork by Helen Goodteacher, a Nez Perce artist based in Spokane, Washington, is a reimagined piece derived from her earlier work *"More Than a Headline."* Created to honor and raise awareness of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWP+), this piece reminds us that these individuals are more than statistics or headlines—they are lives, families, and vibrant members of our communities.

At the heart of the artwork is a strong, central figure—a woman of Pacific Northwest origin—standing over the earth with her shawl extended. She embodies the sacred role of women as life-givers, protectors, and

spiritual guides. Her expansive posture symbolizes protection and remembrance, as she honors those who cannot return home and carries them to the creator among the stars. The red stars above her represent the lives lost—the missing and murdered—whose spirits continue to shine.

Her shawl is adorned with ribbons that honor Two-Spirit, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC communities, emphasizing that the violence and loss reflected in the MMIWP+ crisis often disproportionately impact those at the intersections of race, gender, and identity. These vibrant colors also appear in her moccasins and the horizontal stripes across the design, affirming the presence and resilience of these communities.

The sun and moon in the artwork signify that this movement is ongoing—present every hour of every day. It is not bound by time, but carried on through constant remembrance, resistance, and action.

Below her, a diverse group of figures represents the MMIWP+ community in all forms—acknowledging the full spectrum of identities affected by this crisis. The inclusion of the State of Washington, marked with the red handprint, connects this work to a broader, global symbol of the MMIW movement and situates the crisis in both a local and international context.

Through this deeply symbolic and emotionally charged piece, Helen centers Indigenous strength, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ visibility, and the sacred responsibility to protect and uplift each other. Her art stands as both a memorial and a movement—a call to remember, to act, and to never look away.



Helen Goodteacher is an Indigenous artist, marketing professional, and entrepreneur based in Spokane, Washington. A proud member of the Nez Perce Tribe with Sioux and Ponca heritage, Helen weaves her cultural background into every facet of her work. She is the founder of *Forward Native Works, LLC*, a business she launched in 2022 that centers on graphic design, communications, marketing, and painting instruction.

Raised on Nez Perce tribal land in a creatively rich household—her parents both attended art school—Helen was immersed in the arts from an early age. Her work is heavily influenced by Nez Perce "Dreamer" style artists as well as the evolving world of Indigenous fashion, both traditional and contemporary.

A self-taught graphic designer and acrylic painter, Helen blends traditional Native American motifs with modern and classic fashion aesthetics to craft bold, narrative-driven visuals. Her art radiates confidence and movement, reflecting the presence and pride of Indigenous identity. Through her creations, Helen seeks to elevate Native voices and celebrate the beauty, complexity, and resilience of Indigenous cultures today.

Helen holds a Master's degree in Communication and Leadership from Gonzaga University and currently serves as a Marketing and Communications Manager. When she's not painting or designing, she is exploring new artistic avenues such as clay sculpting and printmaking—all while raising her daughter and fostering a legacy of creative empowerment.