



## Peaceful Advocates for Native Dialogue & Organizing Support

Dear Mayor Mendenhall and Salt Lake City Council,

We are seeking to preserve the Og-woi People's Orchard and Garden space and lift the city deadline. The vision for the community garden is based on a gift economy model focused on providing opportunities for Indigenous people living in local urban areas to reconnect with land, ancestral teachings, and provide easily accessible nutrient dense foods. Almost half of Indigenous people in Utah live outside the reservation areas. 46% of Indigenous people in Utah live in urban Salt Lake, with many also living in Weber, Utah, and Davis counties (1).

For our organization and the community it supports, Indigenous sovereignty and growing medicine for missing and murdered Indigenous relatives are critical components of a just and equitable society. Indigenous communities have faced colonization, displacement, and systemic oppression, leading to the loss of land, culture, and lives. The call for Indigenous sovereignty acknowledges the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to self-determination, land, and resources; their voices and perspectives must be included in any policies that affect them.

Planting medicine for missing and murdered Indigenous relatives is an essential step towards healing and justice for the Indigenous communities that have been disproportionately affected by violence and trauma. Salt Lake City is ranked as the 9th highest number of cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the United States (2). The act of growing medicine is an act of resistance against the systemic violence that has been perpetrated against Indigenous peoples for generations. It is a way to reclaim traditional practices and knowledge, to honor the memory of those who have been lost, and to provide healing and support for those who are still with us.

The gift economy model practiced at the Og-woi Garden is rooted in Indigenous values and traditions. This model is a powerful tool for promoting sustainability, reciprocity, and community wellbeing. Instead of commodifying goods and services for profit, the gift economy values relationships and the circulation of resources as a means of creating social connections and fostering trust, such as the artist murals that have been given to beautify the garden and memorialize community activists. While the medicine from the Og-woi Garden has extended to the greater Utah community, Indigenous gardens and farms in the Puget Sound area have also partnered with the Og-woi Garden over the past 2 to 3 years. By exchanging plants, Indigenous communities on the west coast have access to specific plants used for medicine, healing and ceremonies.

**PANDOS mission statement: "PANDOS peaceful advocates for basic human & environmental rights, primarily Native and Indigenous rights. By organizing support and education, we encourage dialogue and the protection of our shared home"**

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In summary, allowing the Volunteers of the Og-woi project to continue to promote Indigenous sovereignty and the gift economy model is not only a matter of justice and respect for Indigenous peoples, but also a way to build a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

We appreciate you remaining open to working with the Og-woi and hope you can sense what this designated space means to all involved community members.

Sincerely,

Jen Boyce - PANDOS Board Chair

Michelle Brown - MMIW+ Utah Committee Chair

On behalf of

Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Committee

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For more information on the MMIW+ epidemic please read the full [report](#).

1. "Native Americans in Utah - Wikipedia." *Native Americans in Utah - Wikipedia*, 23 Oct. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native\_Americans\_in\_Utah.
2. Urban Indian Health Institute. (2018, October 18). *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls* <https://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Missing-and-Murdered-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-Report.pdf>
3. "2017 Community Health Profile: Salt Lake City UIHP Service Area &Ndash; Urban Indian Health Institute." *Urban Indian Health Institute*, 30 Aug. 2017, [www.uihi.org/resources/2017-community-health-profile-salt-lake-city-uihp-service-area](http://www.uihi.org/resources/2017-community-health-profile-salt-lake-city-uihp-service-area).
4. Angerman, Brad. "New Report Identifies 506 Urban Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls &Ndash; Urban Indian Health Institute." *Urban Indian Health Institute*, 14 Nov. 2018, [www.uihi.org/new-report-identifies-506-urban-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-girls](http://www.uihi.org/new-report-identifies-506-urban-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-girls).