



Image courtesy of Afā & Family

Support Indigenous Tongan Sāmoan Family Following School Violence

Content Warning: systemic violence, bullying, anti-blackness, anti-indigeneity, white body supremacy

Our beloved Carry The Water Garden Relatives Afā, Ti, and their children have been subjected to systemic violence and bullying at Newman Elementary School for over a year. Afā's son has transferred schools three times due to bullying rooted in white supremacy, anti-blackness, and anti-indigeneity. When the bullying students were not held accountable and their parents were not contacted by the principal for calling Afā's son racial slurs, Afā took action to protect her family and asked the students to stop abusing her son. In response, these students yelled at Afā and pushed her and a teacher. The students' parents also yelled obscenities and sexist and racial slurs at Afā. There has been no action taken to restore justice or address the violence Afā and her children have endured; the principal did nothing to stop the spread of white violence in the school and has not met the family's requests for a mediated conversation.

The bullying and violence Afā and her children experience is rampant for Indigenous and Black Families in Utah's school system. In Afā's words: *"From elementary to high school I was called the N word, ugly, ugly skin, ugly hair, N body, N fat body. Since Kindergarten my son has been told he has ugly hair, ugly skin, cut his hair and always the*

most deplorable language, the N word...We will not be invisible, disrespected and silenced. This will stop with my child." With her son only 8 years-old, Afā already knows the extreme emotional labor that Native Mothers bear: she must protect him from the white patriarchal, toxic masculine, racist, and transmisogynist norms in non-Native spaces that tell her son that his long hair is too feminine and his demeanor too soft. Afā must do this while imparting to him their Indigenous ethos and opposing the cultural confusion that attacks her son's body and psyche on a daily basis. This pressure on the Family is unacceptable.

Afā and her family have been in severe distress and need time to metabolize this trauma. We are calling for mutual aid to support this beautiful family.

PLEASE SUPPORT AT:

gofundme.com/afa-ti

Please do not contact the family at this time; know that they feel your love, support, and warmth.

When we envision a safe and just learning environment, we envision safety and security for BIPOC children who can show up as they are, be celebrated in their distinctiveness, and protected from systemic violence. We envision responsive teachers and administrators who are trauma-informed, grounded in spiritually-just teachings, restorative justice, and conflict transformation methodologies. We envision a place where families are welcome to be a part of the educational environment as stewards of learning and community care. We envision space for learning all forms of knowledge and knowing, not only those deemed valuable by white supremacy culture. Ultimately, we envision a space where the potential and sacredness of children is uplifted and valued with deep care and love from a diverse and ever expanding community of educators, families, and community members.

Blessings, CTW

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