

Hello, my name is Shaylea Tatsey, I am Blackfeet, I'm a mother before I'm teacher, I'm a coach and a horse person, I wouldn't say cowgirl or anything, rancher, and I teach our first grade BNAF language, which is our Blackfeet language in our culture here in Browning and I've got two sons, my oldest is 6. His name is Thunder, and my youngest is 7 months old and his name is Buck. Well, it kind of stems back to my great grandmother, June, she kind of like paved the platform for all of us in our family. She started our first like school out to where we live in Badger Creek, she started the first like one room classroom and then she, you know, went off to college, she got her masters at northern also and she came back and she helped everybody just get into the teaching and inspired everybody, so I guess I mean it was it started that way but my grandparents were both teachers just seems like everybody in my family has been teachers and when I was little, I kind of used to boss my teddy bears around as a teacher, but I didn't really think I was going to be a teacher until I landed in the program and then it kind of clicked what I wanted to do, and then I also wanted to incorporate my culture into it, so teaching kind of really helped me and then all my classes were a lot of hands on, so it kind of helped me to figure out actually that I could be a teacher. Yes so, her name is June Bull Shoe. Her married name was Tatsey and our whole family resides out badger creek and that's 30 miles south of Browning, so it's closer to Heart Butte and it's funny because like that's where all of her children live, so like all of her sons, except her daughters, they all moved in with their husbands, and there was a house basically and so she took like all the kids there and that's where they would have school, that's where they'd have lunch, but they all had a place to go learn basically until an actual like public school was opened and so it was funny because like I say, most of my family are educators and so like we have admin, we have principles, we have teachers from K-12, on to college and we have coaches and so on the pandemic hit and our schools shut down, we were joking about setting up our own classroom out there, building a building, like we all have it down. We can have our language, our sciences and we all have cows or horses and dogs so we're all talking about, you know, we can have an agriculture class and we can learn how to do things like that, and it was just interesting because we know our grandma would've done it and she would have. I mean sure, she did a long time ago and if she was still here, I think she would've loved it. Just, you know, the whole idea was more of a memory of our grandma and that's something she would have wanted. We grew up with our culture and our language and since I was little, we went to like all of our ceremonies and my grandparents took us there and it was never forced on us, but also it's been a dying language and every reservation, every Native nation just because it was taken away and now it's more of a step where everybody is trying to bring it back and preserve it and that's one of my main things that I am still learning and I wouldn't call myself fluent because some people are but I could recognize and I could speak most of it and to be able to teach and like express it to our kids, so they're able to understand it, that's been fun to watch them and their little, especially first graders, and their little brains click when they're saying it and you know, just to carry on that tradition it's really neat. Well the first one when you graduate high school you don't really know what you want to do I actually when I was little I always knew I kind of wanted to be a teacher, but I didn't know that the time, so when it came to college, I actually had a rodeo scholarship to go to MSU Northern in Havre and so I took it and then I only went like a semester to just figure things out and what not and I actually landed in a tribal college outside of Havre, Rocky Boy, where the Stone Child Tribal college in then, finished my generals, out there that Spring, they mentioned that they had a teacher program opening up that helped you pay for school, pay your books and you would be in a cohort with other educators and so I was kind of interested in taking that level, so I moved to Harlem, which I to face to face at the Tribal College there and then I also took

online classes through MSU Billings and then I worked with the cohort and we graduated spring of 2016, but I actually graduated my AA and my BA that same year, so that was interesting. Then I got my first teaching job in Havre and then I decided to get my masters because some of my coworkers were just finishing that year, or started that year, so they were talking about it and it just got me interested. So, in 2018, I graduated with my masters in instructional learning. I would just tell myself to just not give up. In our language we say, try hard. We're always going to run into fork in the road or something that's going to throw us off our path, but I feel like we just need to keep pushing through it and not give up on what we need to get done. So I guess that would have been my advice that I wish I would've had just because there are so many tough times that I did battle or that I faced and if it wasn't for like my family being supportive and just reconnecting me all the time, I don't think I could have pushed through and got where I am today. Anybody that feels like it's just it's tough at this time, it could be tough right now, but it's tough at that moment and tomorrow will be a lot better.