



LET'S GET TO KNOW

DESERT SALT-RAINBOW RAVEN WOMAN

My family, Velarde, moved to Pueblo when the coal mines closed. I was born in Pueblo and lived most of my childhood there. As an adult, I lived in Missouri and attended Columbia University. It was at this time, my mother got us interested in learning about our Native American Culture. Mom was one of the founding members of an educational non-profit organization called the Thunderbird Society and it still exists today.

Anyone can join as long as they wanted to learn and teach about Native American culture. We made our own regalia, learned, and taught different dances, crafts, cooking, etc. We even put on pow wows. In 1994, Mom wanted to move back to Gardner and she formed a traveling school. She would bring intercity troubled kids to Bear Country with a group of teachers who had joined the organization and teach them to live off the land and connect to nature. In 1996, I moved my 3 children to Gardner. I was involved in her traveling school, helping with teaching crafts, cooking, and dance. She had groups of up to 30 kids at a time in the mountains for a week or two retreat. Five years ago, I retired and started making crafts from the leftovers my mom had. She changed worlds in 2002. I really love making crafts, combining the mountains for sweet sage...My name, Rainbow Raven, came from a dream and a vision. I am mixed-blood and never fit into the traditional Native American culture or any culture. The Rainbow represents the races blended as one. My rainbow medicine is used to build bridges to help people. When I started growing gourds and allowing dolls to be created through me, I realized that they were the Rainbow Blood Tribe. The tribe not affiliated with any tribe, unique as mixed blood, or anyone who doesn't fit into a paradigm. The tribe I belong to. Currently, I am involved in 6 grants, either as a board member or friend. In Gardner, we are working to get LaClinica opened to the public again. Also, a group of us are assisting seniors in getting a ten thousand dollar home repair grant from the USDA Rural Development. I have worked in hospitals or clinics since 1974. I was a certified diet technician until I moved to Gardner and started at SPRHC. where I worked in several areas for 15 years. Now, I am retired and busy having fun!