

First Kids 1st Newsletter

July 2015
Edition 3

We're excited to share the positive work of tribal nations and communities, Native families and organizations, and the Administration that empowers our youth to thrive. In partnership with the My Brother's Keeper, Generation Indigenous ("Gen I"), and First Kids 1st Initiatives, please join our First Kids 1st community and share your stories and best practices that are creating a positive impact for Native youth.

To highlight your stories in future newsletters, send your information to firstkids@ncai.org.

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YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

Inaugural White House Tribal Youth Gathering (WHTYG) – July 9, 2015



The first-ever [White House Tribal Youth Gathering](#) was held on July 9 to provide American Indian and Alaska Native youth from across the country the opportunity to interact directly with senior Administration officials and the White House Council on Native American Affairs. President Obama made the announcement in a [video message](#) played during the Gathering of Nations Powwow in Albuquerque, NM.

The Tribal Youth Gathering, a collaboration between the White House and [UNITY, Inc.](#), continues to build the President's [Generation Indigenous](#) ("Gen-I") Initiative and his commitment to improve the lives of Native youth across the country. Youth who successfully participated in the Gen-I Native Youth Challenge and submitted their application were invited to the Gathering – over 1,000 youth from more than 200 tribal nations and over 170 watch parties attended.



A WHTYG attendee reflects on her experience:

By: Marilyn Fox

President Obama released the Generation Indigenous initiative that has changed my life and other Native youth for the better. I was elected to participate on the White House Tribal Youth Gathering Steering Committee by my fellow White House Tribal Youth Ambassadors. Planning the gathering meant taking rainchecks on after school activities, but I was able to gain new friends and vocalize my opinions to my peers.

On July 9, the day we have all been waiting for, I thought on the day of the gathering. After all the conference calls, countless emails, and teamwork, it was coming to a peak. What was expected to be over 800 youth, turned out to be over 1,000.

During my time at the event, I got the opportunity to co-facilitate a fireside chat. I had the opportunity to ask vital questions to Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Cecilia Muñoz and Senator Heidi Heitkamp. I learned how diverse, yet similar we are. I also learned that not everyone has a desire to own up to his or her entitled political voice. While placed in the breakout session “Education – *Our Schools, Our Curriculum, Our Success*”, I’ve also learned that Native students need to feel our teachers’ commitment. We long for a small pat on the back for coming to school when we have no motivation to. I’ve also learned that there are a large number of us that seem to genuinely care about our drop-out rates inclining.

With barriers of offensive mascotry and cultural appropriation, it creates an insincere image of Native Americans as a whole. It is not bluntly recognized that Native youth are dying to be heard – literally. Yet, I’ve personally witnessed the love and energy that emerged from the crowd of youth leaders. It was pervasive. We, Native youth, love good listeners, and the breakout sessions provided that and more.

It was a historic event created for Native youth, and I really didn’t know how to feel once I got there. But when I look back, I realize I felt pride. I felt the need to live up to the deaths caused by massacres and mass hangings. Walking into that ballroom, I remember a quote one of my peers had said on a panel previous to the WHTYG, “I owe it to our ancestors to become something.” And I do, I sincerely do.

In the backseat of a car, I was gazing out at D.C. and it really got me thinking about the WHTYG and my suicide attempt. With the two occurrences on my mind I thought, “Man, I am going to live for these people. I am going to live for all these people and their communities. My people.” We are the Seventh Generation. We are Generation Indigenous, and we are just warming up.



UNITY National Conference Draws Over 1,800 Native Youth

The nation's oldest and largest Native American and Alaska Native youth organization, the United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY), held its 39th annual national conference July 10-14, 2015 in Washington, D.C. More than 1,800 attendees – the largest turnout in its history – converged at the nation's capital representing over 256 tribes and indigenous communities; traveling from more than 40 states and internationally from New Zealand, Taiwan and Canada. Participants at the annual youth and leadership-focused conference were immersed into a five-day agenda that included: internationally renowned speakers and trainers; physical fitness activities led by Nike N7; and youth-led discussions and initiatives.



Pathkeepers for Indigenous Knowledge Holds 3rd Annual Native Youth Leadership Camp, July 18-26, 2015

Pathkeepers for Indigenous Knowledge held its 3rd Annual Native Youth Leadership Camp, July 18-26, 2015, in Culpeper, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Native youth, ages 9-17, from tribes across Indian Country attended, including: Navajo, Gila River Indian Community, Southern Ute, Zuni Pueblo, Tlingit (Alaska), White Mountain Apache, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Lumbee, Pascua Yaqui, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Oglala Lakota, to name a few. The Camp provided these youth with opportunities to explore education and leadership activities, identify healthy food and life choices, improve physical and emotional fitness and explore their personal interests and tribal identity. Through these opportunities, the youth increased their self-esteem, leadership and consensus skills, educational goals, health and wellness and creative passion.

Food offered at the Camp was healthy and nutritious with an emphasis on traditional foods. Camp cultural and educational activities included: Native horsemanship; playing lacrosse; a "College Day" event with university representatives; learning to bead; identifying Native plants and herbs and making them into a salve; learning to drum and sing; writing poetry and storytelling; composing and recording contemporary music and traditional flute; fishing; and painting. The Camp also took a



field trip to Washington, D.C. for two days, visiting Capitol Hill, where the campers met with three U.S. Senators and toured the Capitol. The Campers also visited the Center for Native American Youth, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Natural History Museum.

President Obama Visits Choctaw Nation

On July 15, President Obama visited Durant, OK to discuss his ConnectHome initiative – ensuring digital opportunities for all Americans by expanding access to broadband internet services. The President and Choctaw Chief Gary Batton met with a group of Native youth prior to the event, and discussed the recent White House Tribal Youth Gathering and opportunities for young Native boys and girls. The President mentioned 16-year-old Kelsey Janway – a member of the Choctaw Youth Council who represented the Choctaw Nation at the White House.



President Obama emphasized that kids like Kelsey have big dreams, and that we need to invest in those dreams through advancing technology in rural and low-income areas. The President said, “When we make those commitments to all of our children, the great thing about it is the blessings are returned back to us—because you end up having a workforce that is better educated, which means suddenly companies want to locate, which means businesses start booming, which means businesses start hiring, which means everybody does better.”

To watch President Obama’s entire speech to the Choctaw Nation, click [here](#).

NCAI Mid Year Conference – St. Paul, MN, June 28-July 1, 2015

There was a large representation of Native youth in attendance at the 2015 NCAI Mid Year Conference. These youth had a meet and greet with other youth attendees, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior Kevin Washburn, and Congressman Raul Grijalva. They also participated in the “*What are Tribes Doing to Support Youth*” breakout session and voiced where they think more could be done. During the breakout session they shared personal stories as to why they are working on certain projects in their communities. Overall, the youth enjoyed the interaction they had with tribal leaders. Through conversations with other NCAI participants they



learned ways of how the youth can follow in their footsteps to create the change they believe could be made in their communities. At the upcoming NCAI Annual Convention, be on the lookout for the Youth Agenda.

First Nations Development Institute Publishes Report Detailing Unmet Funding Needs for Native Youth



the United States.

On July 29, 2015, the First Nations Development Institute published a report based on its Native Youth and Culture Fund data, detailing some of the recent trends in grantmaking for programs and projects aimed at Native youth. The report, *Investing in Native Youth: Grantmaking Trends from the Native Youth and Culture Fund*, reveals a significant unmet funding need for such programs, and opportunities for funders across

To learn more about the First Nations Development Institute, visit [here](#). To read the full report, visit [here](#).

Quapaw Nation Holds Language Preservation Camp

The Quapaw Nation of Oklahoma held its Youth Language and Cultural Preservation Camp July 20-24, 2015. Campers participated in traditional song, dance, and games and listened to guest speakers while learning the Quapaw language. Native youth are not the only target, with classes for adults beginning in early September. For more information about the event, visit [here](#). Moreover, the Quapaw Nation, in collaboration with the Osage and Omaha Nations, formed the Dhegiha Preservation Society to keep their languages alive – the 5th Annual Dhegiha Language Conference is set for July 29 & 30. For more information, visit [here](#).



Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc. Receives Grant for *Investing in Native Families Project*

The Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc. (ONAC) received a \$17,482 grant in June from the First Nations Development Institute of Longmont, CO for their *Investing in Native Families and Promoting Conversations about Native Assets* project. With this grant, ONAC will partner with Osage Financial Resources, Inc. and the



Mvskoke Loan

Fund to fund 80 Children's Savings Accounts in the next year. The project includes financial education and an art project, where participants will be invited to create a piece of art that reflects their

understandings of Native assets. Partners will display the youth artwork at an art show at a location of their choice. ONAC will then generate a calendar, with the youth art included, which highlights various perspectives of Native asset building throughout the year.

For more information about ONAC, visit [here](#).

Youth in Alaska Native Village Make Impact on Fellow Residents

Throughout April, several youth from the Native Village of Afognak's Alutiiq Club (Kodiak, AK) fulfilled their pledge to the White House's Gen-I Challenge. The Alutiiq Club members recorded radio public service announcements highlighting Child Abuse Prevention Month and Hunger Awareness Month while incorporating the Alutiiq language into sections of the advertisements. Along with the public service announcements, students engaged in two separate community outreach projects. The first project focused on promoting healthy families, where club members handed out Child Abuse Prevention ribbons and flyers from a table in a busy grocery store. On the second project, the kids assembled and delivered sandwiches for Kodiak's local homeless shelter. The Students were excited to know they were able to make such a difference in their community.



National Indian Child Welfare Act (NICWA) Update

NICWA participated as an early adopter of the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) Challenge. Several national Native organizations, including NICWA, NCAI, UNITY, the National Indian Health Board, and the Center for Native American Youth identified and recruited representatives to sit on the WHTYG Youth Steering Committee. Linda Gokee-Rindal, NICWA's youth engagement specialist, participated in the Youth Steering Committee and attended the Gathering. Linda also facilitated a discussion during one of the break-out sessions. During a world café style facilitation she lead the conversation in one of the "pods" about cultural protection and revitalization including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, indigenous language revitalization, food sovereignty and other issues. NICWA had the opportunity to identify a Native foster youth to attend the Gathering as well. Foster youth advocate and NICWA 2015 annual conference youth panelist Alecia McConnell (Umatilla), 18, attended and had the opportunity to meet Michelle Obama and connect with high-level federal officials.



NICWA



National Indian Health Board (NIHB) Update



The National Indian Health Board (NIHB), in partnership with the Indian Health Service (IHS), hosted an area gathering for Alaska Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative (MSPI) projects on July 14 and 15 in Anchorage, AK. The two-day gathering featured opening remarks from the IHS Alaska Area Director, Christopher

Mandregan, Jr. and a panel of Alaska Native youth - Lee Breinig (*Haida*) and Talon Masterson (*Ahtna Athabascan*). The panel spoke about issues youth are facing in their communities and provided an opportunity for the project members to engage in conversations about how to best serve youth. The gathering highlighted the ongoing work in Alaska to address mental health and substance use. The predominantly Alaskan presenters created a project-driven gathering that greatly benefited the nearly 60 attendees.

Native youth from the INSPIRE Pre-College Program visited the offices of the National Indian Health Board on Monday, July 20, to learn about the Indian health system and policy development from NIHB's Director of Federal Relations, Mr. Devin Delrow. These 9 students from across Indian Country gathered for a 3-week course on Native Politics and the American Political System at George Washington University. Learn more about the INSPIRE Pre-College Program [here](#).



ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES

Gen-I Native Youth Challenge

Native youth ages 14-24, tribes, non-profits, and educational institutions are invited to join the National Native Youth Network by accepting the [Gen-I Challenge](#).

Organizations, colleges, universities, as well as tribal colleges and universities can take the Gen-I Challenge too by committing to help their youth and students complete the Gen-I Challenge! Just follow [this link](#) to get signed up!

The following organizations have already committed to take the Gen-I Challenge:

- [American Indian College Fund](#)
- [American Indian Higher Education Consortium](#)

- [Boys and Girls Club of America](#)
- [Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute](#)
- [National American Indian Education Association](#)
- [National Congress of American Indians](#)
- [National Indian Child Welfare Association](#)
- [National Indian Health Board](#)
- [United National Indian Tribal Youth](#)

Gen-I Tribal Leaders Challenge

During NCAI’s 2015 Executive Council Winter Session, the administration announced the latest installment of the Gen-I Initiative with the [Gen-I Tribal Leaders Challenge](#). The White House is inviting tribal leaders to take concrete steps to engage with Native youth in their communities, including: working with or creating a youth council; hosting a joint meeting between youth and tribal leaders; and partnering with youth to plan a program to support positive change in their community.

The following tribes have already accepted the Gen-I Tribal Leaders Challenge:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians | • Osage Nation |
| • Aroostook Band of Micmacs | • Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians |
| • Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians | • Ponca Tribe of Nebraska |
| • Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska | • Puyallup Tribe of Indians |
| • Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes | • Round Valley Indian Tribes |
| • Coeur d’Alene Tribe | • Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians |
| • Crow Tribe | • Southern Ute Indian Tribe |
| • Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians | • Three Affiliated Tribes |
| • Gila River Indian Community | • Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians |
| • Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin | • Tsimshian/Pawnee |
| • Lummi Nation | • Tulalip Nation |
| • Mashpee Wampanoag | • White Mountain Apache |
| • Native Village of Afognak | • Wilton Rancheria |
| • Navajo Nation | • Yakama Nation |
| • Nez Perce Tribe | |
| • Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin | |

For more information, such as the Gen-I toolkit, latest news, and other resources, visit www.genindigenous.com.

Legislative Updates

Native American Children’s Safety Act:

The Native American Children’s Safety Act was introduced earlier this year in both the Senate and House by Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) and Congressman Kevin Cramer (R-ND). The bill would amend the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act to prohibit the final approval of any foster care placement or a foster care license from being issued until the tribal social services agency: (1) completes

a criminal records check of each covered individual who resides in the household or is employed at the institution in which the foster care placement will be made, and (2) concludes that each of those individuals meets the tribe's standards established pursuant to this Act. The bill would also direct the Department of the Interior to issue guidance regarding procedural implementation and the sharing of best practices.

The Senate passed [S. 184](#) introduced by Senators John Hoeven (R-ND) and Jon Tester (D-MT) in early June. The House wrote its own version in early June as well – [HR. 1168](#) – which was introduced by Congressman Kevin Cramer (R-ND). The two chambers are now currently conferencing the two bills to find a compromise bill for final Congressional action.

Alyce Spotted and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act:

The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act ([S. 246](#)) was introduced earlier this year by Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) that would establish the Commission in the Office of Tribal Justice of the Department of Justice. The Commission would be comprised of individuals appointed by the President and Congress with significant background experience and expertise in health care issues facing Native children, Indian education, juvenile justice programs, and social service programs used by Native children. The Commission would conduct a comprehensive study of federal, state, local, and tribal programs that serve Native children evaluating several components. The Commission would report its findings and recommendations to the President, Congress, and the White House Council on Native American Affairs for legislative and administrative action.

The Senate passed [S. 246](#) in early June and has since been referred to the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs. The House has since introduced a companion bill – [H.R. 2751](#) – by Representatives McCollum (D-MN), Cole (R-OK), Takai (D-HI), and Denham (R-CA) that is awaiting subcommittee consideration.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization:

Senate: S. 1177 – the “Every Child Achieves Act”

On July 16, 2015 the Senate passed its reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), [S. 1177 - the "Every Child Achieves Act."](#) The bill maintains the Indian Education Title VII with greater flexibility for early childhood education programs and includes a provision added by Senator Franken (D-MN) that would establish a Native language immersion grant program within Title VII. During the floor debate a series of additional Native education amendments were voted upon and added to the bill that include: restoration of key Title VII grant programs, enabling of the Bureau of Indian Education to apply for competitive grants (similar to state education agencies), creating a demonstration project and federal grant at the Department of Education for Native language immersion education programs, among others. To learn more on the Native education amendments that were adopted, [visit here](#). The Senate and House are now tasked with going to conference to devise a compromise bill between their respective chamber's versions of the ESEA rewrite.

Final Vote: 81-17 (39 Republicans, 40 Democrats, 2 Independents)

House of Representatives: H.R. 5 – the “Student Success Act”

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed their rewrite - [H.R. 5 - the "Student Success Act"](#) - along party lines with no democratic support. The bill maintains the Indian Education title as "Title V - The Federal Government's Trust Responsibility to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Education."

Final Vote: 218-213 (218 Republicans, 0 Democrats)

NCAI will continue monitoring these bills, advocating for tribal priorities, and keep our members updated on developments.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCAI and the National Financial Education Coalition Launch “NAT\$VE in the BANK” Campaign

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Native Financial Education Coalition have launched the “NAT\$VE in the BANK” campaign for Native youth and young adults ages 13 to 25. Open a bank account, increase your financial knowledge, and win some exciting prizes! To learn more, go to: <http://nfec.us/>

2016 CNAY Champions for Change Applications Now Open

Last week, the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) announced it is now accepting applications for the 2016 Champions for Change. Deadline: January 11, 2016. To visit the Champions for Change page, click [here](#).



HBO Seeking Two Native American Interns for “Lewis and Clark” Series

HBO is looking to hire two Native American interns to work on the Mini-Series: “Lewis and Clark.” Requirements: Applicants must be 18 years of age or older, have a strong interest in film and television, and must reside in Georgia. For more information on the series



itself, visit [here](#). To apply, contact Yvonne Russo - Producer, Tribal Liaison and Advisor for HBO at: russo.yvonne@gmail.com.

WeRNative Offers Community Service Grants For Native Youth

WeRNative, the all-inclusive health and wellness website made by and for Native youth, is offering Community Service Mini Grants to those ages 13-21 interested in making a positive impact in their community. WeRNative will provide funding and staff to help implement the action plan; to apply and learn more about the application process and current and/or past success stories, visit [here](#).



2015-2016 U.S. Youth Observer to the UN Applications due August 4th

The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) and the U.S. Department of State are searching for youth ages 18-25 to serve as a U.S. Youth Observer. Youth Observers serve a one-year term spent traveling around the country and world, engaging in the UN process while acting as an elevated voice for youth in the global policy dialogue. For more information on the Youth Observer Program, to hear from past participants, or to apply, visit [here](#).

National Indian Health Board (NIHB) Accepting Applications for Native Youth Health Summit

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) is now accepting applications for the 2015 Native Youth Health Summit, *“Youth Advocacy: Telling Your Story to Create Change”* on September 16-21, 2015. This year’s Summit will feature events with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, White House staff, a scavenger hunt in the National Museum of the American Indian and the 6th Annual Native Youth Film Festival – featuring the digital stories created by Youth Summit participants! We are excited to host 30 youth, ages 14-18, in Washington, D.C. Participants will have the unique opportunity to learn about tribal health and tell their story to policymakers through the innovative art of digital storytelling. Application Deadline: Friday, August 7 at 5:00pm ET.

More information regarding the Summit and to apply, visit [here](#).

National Urban Indian Youth Alliance Seeking Youth Board Applicants

The [National Urban Indian Youth Alliance](#) (NUIYA) is currently accepting applications for positions on its Board of Directors. NUIYA is a new youth-driven organization that advocates for American Indian and Alaska Native youth living in urban areas. The organization was created for and by Native youth with the goal of providing a national, unified voice for urban Indian youth and a platform to engage local and national philanthropic organizations, city and state governments, and tribal entities. NUIYA also provides grants and other funding opportunities to individuals, students and youth groups, organizations, and

tribal entities that emphasize and work with urban Indian Youth. The organization is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with regional hubs in Denver and Seattle. Applicants must be 25 years of age or younger and a resident of an urban area.

To learn more on the board positions and how to apply, visit [here](#).

More Scholarship, Internship, and Fellowship Opportunities!

Please visit the websites of our partner organizations to learn about more upcoming opportunities:

- [American Indian College Fund](#)
- [Center for Native American Youth](#)
- [National Indian Education Association](#)

CALL FOR FUTURE CONTENT

We'd Like To Help Tell Your Stories!

If you have any content that you or your organization/tribe want to share please send to firstkids@ncai.org and we'll be sure to include it in the next issue! Pictures and external links are especially welcome!

You have been added to our subscriber list because of your prior involvement with NCAI and/or Native youth issues. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please email firstkids@ncai.org to be removed from the list.

