

# First Kids 1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter

October-November 2015

Edition 5

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We're excited to share the positive work of tribal nations and communities, Native families and organizations, the Congress, and the Administration that empowers our youth to thrive. In partnership with the My Brother's Keeper, Generation Indigenous ("Gen-I"), and First Kids 1<sup>st</sup> Initiatives, please join our First Kids 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:firstkids@ncai.org).

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# TRIBAL YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

## Change the Mascot Campaign Airs Radio Ad Calling on Washington Football Franchise to End Its Use of the R-Word

On November 19, 2015 the Change the Mascot campaign launched a 60-second radio advertisement calling on the Washington football team franchise to follow California's lead in ending the use of the R-word slur as a team name or mascot. The ad was played on Washington DC's WTOP-FM on Friday, November 20 as well as on the Carolina Panthers' flagship station, WBT AM-FM, from Thursday, November 19 until the matchup on Sunday, November 22. Featuring student activist and NCAI Youth Cabinet Member Dakota Franklin Kicking Bear Brown of the Wilton Band of Miwok and Change the Mascot leader Ray Halbritter of the Oneida Indian Nation, the ad highlights that no group should be the target of racial slurs.

To listen to the ad, click [here](#).

## NCAI National Native Youth Cabinet Member Tells Her Story

On November 12, 2015, Whitney Sawney – a member of the NCAI National Native Youth Cabinet – was featured in *Natives in America*, an online literary publication for Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian youth. In her interview, Sawney spoke of her educational background at the University of Arkansas, attending the White House Tribal Youth Gathering, and her video project intended to empower Native women titled, "[Beautifully Native](#)." When asked to speak about her motivations, she accredited "lateral goodness" and the need to support our peers through collaboration. Sawney also spoke on the Washington football team and harmful mascots, and offered advice to future college students: "...speak up in your classes...this is your opportunity to educate others and engage them in conversation [about Native people]."

To read the full article, click [here](#).



## Navajo Nation Student Senate President Gives National Presentation on Native Student Leadership

Triston Black, Student Senate President at the Navajo Preparatory School, Inc. (NPSI), along with peers and teachers, presented at the National Indian Education Association's Annual Convention and Trade Show in Portland, Oregon on October 17, 2015. Triston said, "This

presentation was special to our school because it was focused on student leadership, and it was presented by students.” The title of the presentation is *Fostering Cultural Values Through Student Leadership*, and is something Triston is passionate about. He says that NPSI uses this theme throughout the school to help students succeed in life. Triston says, “Our culture is what makes us well-rounded people and improves our state of mind to a positive well-being. Most cultural events at the school are created by students and are student lead. We have a passion for what we learn in our Navajo way of life.”

## Lilya Begay Crowned 2015-2016 Miss Diné College

Lilya Begay, a former [Together on Diabetes](#) high school student-hire in Chinle, AZ, was crowned Miss Diné College 2015-2016 in Tsaile, Arizona this October. "My work with Johns Hopkins changed my life," said Ms. Begay, "I am honored to start a new journey and my platform is to promote education and health—using what I learned in Chinle." Ms. Begay is pictured at left with Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health founder Dr. Mathuram Santosham. The Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health recently announced its 500 Scholars Initiative, which will raise \$3 million to assist 500 American Indians and Alaska Natives in pursuing higher education, work-training, and health careers. For more information, click [here](#).



## NCAI Youth Commission Annual Convention Report

The NCAI Youth Commission designed a cooperative agenda to coincide with the main agenda during NCAI's 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention in San Diego, October 18-23, 2015. The Youth Commission, when not participating in main sessions with tribal leaders, attended youth-specific sessions on topics such as harmful mascots, financial education, and social media. Each Native youth session began with cultural awareness through a prayer and short discussion about what it means to be connected to your community as a Native youth. Beginning an open discussion, the Youth Commission started every day with goals and challenges that engaged tribal leaders.

To view the NCAI Youth Commission Newsletter, click [here](#).



## Wiyaka Little Spotted Horse Uses Art to Empower Native Youth



Wiyaka Little Spotted Horse (picture left) of the Oglala Sioux Tribe recently won a \$500.00 Summer of Creativity Grant through the [Youth Service American](#) organization. Wiyaka is passionate about art and poetry as a means of healing and self-expression and will be using the grant money to host a series of events in her tribal community where youth can creatively express themselves through art, poetry and digital storytelling. Wiyaka is an active youth advisory board member for [Lakota Children's Enrichment](#) (LCE). LCE will mentor Wiyaka through the project and assist her in inviting health professionals and other Native youth leaders to join

in raising awareness of behavioral health issues experienced by Native youth. Wiyaka says, "My story is called *Life is Beautiful* and I want people to know that I am a future leader in Indian Country and I hope to someday be a published writer."

To watch Wiyaka's story, click [here](#).

## Cherokee Nation Opens New Building for HERO Project

At the end of July 2015 the Cherokee Nation moved its Helping Everyone Reach Out (HERO) Project office into its very own building in Tahlequah, OK to better accommodate the needs of Native children. The HERO Project, a division under the tribe's behavioral health program, was established to counsel Native children on how to cope with everything from abuse to doing better in school. The new 7,300-square-foot office provides a more comforting and private environment for children seeking assistance during trying times. Since the HERO Project began in 2013, it has gone from zero children's behavioral health visits to over 1,500 in 2014 and over 2,400 so far in 2015. The program's staff each has experience and education in social work in order to provide sufficient counseling and resources for children. HERO Project staff also provides parenting education courses, info sharing group events and other parent/child supports.



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

## Learn to Grow Program Holds 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Children's Farmers Market



Also in July, the Cherokee Nation's Learn to Grow Program held its inaugural Children's Farmers Market at the Vinita Health Center in Vinita, OK. Learn to Grow teaches children to garden and to raise their own vegetables, while

encouraging students to get outdoors, eat healthier and live up to higher nutritional standards. Over 115 children operated their own produce stand, and the event provided a place for families to interact and further promote healthy lifestyles. The Cherokee Nation provides participating day care centers with two garden beds full of soil and multiple varieties of seeds – including summer and fall vegetables – and use the produce to prepare meals for the children. Last fall, First Lady Michelle Obama commended the Learn to Grow program and thanked the Cherokee Nation for promoting the health and wellness of its citizens. The garden initiative currently works with 112 child care centers and providers across 6 Oklahoma counties to directly impact over 3,300 children. Program officials hope to make the Children’s Farmers Market a yearly event.

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

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## ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

### White House Tribal Nations Conference

On November 5, 2015, about 30 Native youth participated as youth delegates in the 7<sup>th</sup> White House Tribal Nations Conference (WHTNC). On November 4, the attendees were able to visit the Eisenhower Executive Office Building and meet with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. Secretary Jewell spoke about what the Department is doing to enhance opportunities for Native communities, and shared that her position as Secretary has enabled more personal relationships with tribal communities – something the Obama Administration focuses on making a priority. After meeting with Secretary Jewell, the White House arranged a panel of young Native professionals working in various fields in Washington, DC to speak to the youth participants about their adversities and growth while working in the nation’s capital.

To kick off the WHTNC the next day, 2015 Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) Champion for Change recipient Rory Taylor provided remarks about how the federal government needs to work with Indian Country to create and promote an educational system that assists Native Americans in getting degrees. Throughout the day, youth participants heard about which policy issues and trust responsibility obligations are most important to tribal leaders and voiced their opinions on how those priority issues affect their peers. The top three issues that the youth felt most passionate about include mental health, school climate for Native American students and opportunities for young men and women.

Youth delegates and other WHTNC attendees wrapped up with a session after the panel with President Barack Obama. Their takeaways were making stronger connections with the tribal leaders they met, encouraging their peers to continue to get involved and learning more about what they can do to make change.



## Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and BIE Director Charles “Monty” Roessel Announce Broadband Partnership While Visiting Arizona BIE School Students

On November 17, 2015 Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and BIE Director Dr. Charles “Monty” Roessel visited the Winslow Residential Hall on the edge of the Navajo Nation to highlight a new public-private partnership with Verizon and Microsoft to bring high-speed internet access and Nokia tablets to 10 BIE dormitories. The partnership will directly impact over 1,000 Native youth in 6 different states and is part of President Obama’s [ConnectEd program](#), which strives to provide all K-12 students more technologically-rich, interactive learning experiences. Secretary Jewell applauded Verizon and Microsoft for their commitment to providing a high-quality education for Native students.



For the full article, click [here](#).

## Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and BIE Director Charles “Monty” Roessel Discuss Every Kid in a Park Initiative



On November 18, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and BIE Director Dr. Charles “Monty” Roessel met 25 fourth-graders from the Santa Rosa Ranch School of the Tohono O’odham Nation at Saguaro National Park to discuss the Every Kid in a Park initiative. The initiative is aimed at fourth-grade students and their families exploring the great outdoors by visiting National Parks, forests, grasslands or wildlife refuges at no cost until the end of August 2016. Secretary Jewell and Dr. Rossel presented the fourth-graders with their park passes and built petroglyphs from clay with the students.

For more information on the Every Kid in a Park Initiative, and to get your pass, click [here](#).

## White House Screens Sioux Film as Part of Native American Heritage Month

As part of Native American Heritage Month, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) partnered with The White House, the National Education Association (NEA), the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and other organizations to screen the film

Across the Creek on Monday evening, November 30 at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The thirty-minute documentary consists of Rosebud and Pine Ridge Sioux stories and suggestive dialogue regarding cultural restoration, healing, and rebuilding - issues relevant to many other communities in Indian Country. The event included a reception and a post-viewing discussion.

To learn more about the film, click [here](#).

## Gen-I Native Youth Challenge

As part of [Generation Indigenous \(Gen-I\)](#), the White House is calling on Native American youth ages 14-24 to get engaged and address community issues through the [Gen-I Youth Challenge](#). By taking the Challenge, youth pledge to do something positive of their choosing (for example: starting a community garden; hosting a culture night; or becoming a mentor to a younger person) and sharing back what they did with the [Center for Native American Youth](#). Youth who take the Challenge will be eligible to participate in events in DC this fall/winter. To take the Challenge, click [here](#).

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](#)
- [First Nations Development 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:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians</b>                       | • <b>Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes</b>      |
| • <b>Aroostook Band of Micmacs</b>                                    | • <b>Coeur d'Alene Tribe</b>              |
| • <b>Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians</b>                        | • <b>Crow Tribe</b>                       |
| • <b>Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska</b> | • <b>Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians</b> |
|   | • <b>Gila River Indian Community</b>      |

- Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin
- Lummi Nation
- Mashpee Wampanoag
- Native Village of Afognak
- Navajo Nation
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin
- Osage Nation
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
- Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Round Valley Indian Tribes
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Three Affiliated Tribes
- Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
- Tsimshian/Pawnee
- Tulalip Nation
- White Mountain Apache
- Wilton Rancheria
- Yakama Nation

For more information, such as the Gen-I toolkit, latest news, and other resources, visit [www.genindigenous.com](http://www.genindigenous.com).

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## Legislative Updates

### **Native American Children’s Safety Act (S. 184 & H.R. 1168):**

*The Native American Children’s Safety Act* was introduced in January of this year in both the Senate ([S. 184](#)) and House ([H.R. 1168](#)) by Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) and Representative 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.

Both bills have passed their respective Chambers and are awaiting action by the other Chamber.

### **Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act (S. 246):**

*The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act, S. 246*, was introduced in January of this year by Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and 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 by 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. In July, this bill was referred to the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs where it is awaiting action.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization (S. 1177 & H.R. 5):**

***S. 1177 – the Every Student Succeeds Act (No Child Left Behind Reauthorization)***

Both the House and the Senate appointed conferees to reach an agreement on the Every Student Succeeds Act. This legislation is the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act which expired in 2007. On Wednesday, December 2, through a conference agreement, the House passed [S.1177, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015](#) and the conference bill will be considered by the Senate on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

S. 1177 incorporates several tribal provisions, including a proposed new language immersion program in Title VII; stronger consultation requirements between State Education Agencies (SEAs)/Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and tribes; reauthorization of the State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) Program; technical assistance to assist eligible LEAs/BIE schools with grant applications and improving implementation; and interagency research between the Departments of Interior and Education to identify policy implementation barriers, funding limitations, options for the recruitment and retention of teachers/administrators, and strategies to increase high school graduation rates.

**Family Stability and Kinship Care Act of 2015 (S. 1964):**

[The Family Stability and Kinship Care Act of 2015, S. 1964](#), was introduced August 5, 2015 and would improve access to federal funding to support child abuse and neglect prevention services for American Indian and Alaska Native families and children. The federal finance system that supports tribal and state child welfare has been heavily focused on providing funding after children are removed from their families related to child abuse and neglect. Funding to prevent further risk for maltreatment and strengthen families is in short supply. Less than a quarter of the current federal funding supports these preventive services. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced this legislation to address how this disparity affects our tribal children, families, and communities. S. 1964 would open up existing funding sources to cover these preventive services (Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) and expand existing sources that already do (Title IV-B Promoting Safe and Stable Families).

Representative Lloyd Dodgett (D-TX) introduced a House companion bill with the same title on October 21, 2015 – [H.R. 3781](#).

**Tribal Early Childhood, Education, and Related Services Integration Act of 2015 (S. 2304):**

On Wednesday, November 18, Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced [S. 2304 – Tribal Early Childhood, Education, and Related Services Integration Act of 2015](#). The bill amends the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to provide tribes and tribal organizations the ability to obtain technical assistance and training to administer new childhood education initiatives, better access to early childhood education resources, and coordination among six early childhood initiatives operated by the Department of Health and Human Services. The bill also bolsters infrastructure and the recruitment and retention of teachers by providing supplementary funding for school structures and extending the federal loan forgiveness program for early childhood educators.

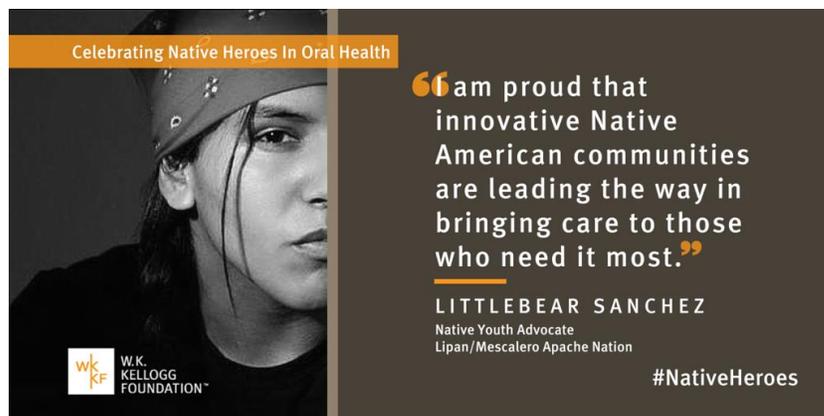
NCAI will continue monitoring these bills, advocating for tribal priorities, and keep our members updated on developments.

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## Partner Updates

### W.K. Kellogg Foundation to Highlight #NativeHeroes in November

Native Americans across the country are taking a stand to protect and improve their people's oral health. In honor of Native American Heritage month, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Dental Therapy Project launched #NativeHeroes, a month-long Twitter campaign highlighting Native organizations and individuals, like Native youth Littlebear Sanchez (picture right), who are helping advance positive change in the status of oral health for Indian Country. The



#NativeHeroes campaign has recognized a mix of Native individuals including Dr. George Blue Spruce, the first American Indian dentist; Dr. Jessica Rickert, the first female American Indian dentist; Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians and Native youth advocate Joaquin Gallegos.

To see the complete list of highlighted heroes, click [here](#).

### Center for Native American Youth Hosts Public Gen-I Event



As part of the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative, the Center for Native American Youth (CNAV) at the Aspen Institute hosted a public event on November 10 in Washington, DC themed "Generation Indigenous: Elevating Young Native American Leaders." The event, held in conjunction with National Native American Heritage Month, raised awareness of Native American issues through dialogue with three youth leaders from across the country. The youth panelists included Darius Sparks, 20, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; SuSun Fisher, 16, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; and Keith Martinez, 22, Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe. The panelists shared their successful youth-led efforts as part of the

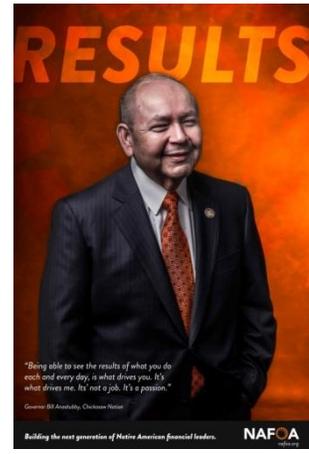
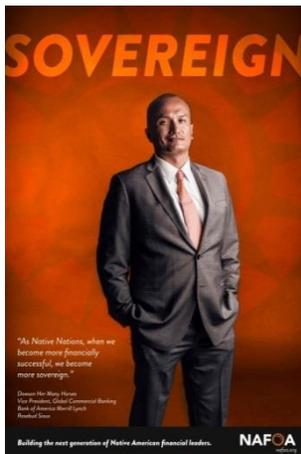
Gen-I Challenge and provided their perspectives on a wide variety of issues including Indian child welfare, Bureau of Indian Education schools, higher education, poverty, role models and healthy activities, among others. The conversation was co-moderated by CNAV chairman and founder, US

Senator Byron Dorgan (ret.), and Patty Talahongva, award-winning journalist and CNAY board member. The event, which had over 100 attendees, also featured closing remarks by US Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn.

To learn more about the youth panelists, click [here](#). To visit CNAY's homepage, click [here](#).

## Native American Finance Officers Association Launches Next Generation Campaign

Launched in October, the Native American Finance Officers Association's (NAFOA) Next Generation Campaign utilizes social media to inspire Native students to pursue business and finance careers as a means to create positive change in Indian Country. To be part of the campaign, take action by sharing on social media the ads (below) or the video available online [here](#). Next, be a part of the story by taking a picture – in any way you see fit – that represents your tribe's economic success story, tell Native students why we need more business leaders, and upload using the hashtag #NOFOAnextgen.



## First Nations Development Institute Awards \$460,000 to Support 26 Native Youth Programs

In August, the First Nations Development Institute, through its Native Youth and Culture Fund (NYCF), granted 26 different American Indian and Native Hawaiian organizations \$460,000 in program support for 2015-2016. For 35 years, the First Nations Development Institute has worked to restore Native American control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own, while the NYCF arm of the organization works specifically for the youth by enhancing culture and language awareness, and promoting leadership and community building. Some of the organizations receiving granted funds include: 1) Lower Brule Community College, Lower Brule, South Dakota (\$13,000) – 30 youth will participate in a 9-month Lakota language immersion program taught by elders, and the tribal college students will then teach the language to



**Native Youth  
and Culture Fund**  
A Program of First Nations Development Institute

elementary students; 2) Ogallala Commons, Nazareth, Texas (\$9,200) – This project will support four summer or semester-long internships where each intern will work on local food projects and activities that promote and enhance Native food sovereignty; and 3) Pueblo of Nambe, Santa Fe, New Mexico (\$17,596) – 30 youth will participate in a renovation project helping to rebuild the local basketball and tennis courts to include more seating and a fire pit, which will then be used to host community events. The 26 projects will directly impact over 1,200 Native youth.

To view the complete list, click [here](#).

## National Indian Health Board Update

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) hosted their 2015 Native Youth Health Summit this past summer in Washington, DC. The Summit provided 30 Native youth from across the nation the opportunity to meet with Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and White House Department of Intergovernmental Affairs staff members to discuss their ideas on how to positively change health outcomes in their respective communities. TJ Keeya Talamoni-Marcks (age 15, picture top right) and Rodrigo Lupercio (age 14, picture bottom right) were among the youth attendees and highlighted the role of sports in combating substance abuse and promoting healthier lifestyles. Talamoni-Marcks and Lupercio have much in common. They are Pomo Indian of California, childhood friends, teammates on their local high school football team with professional football aspirations, and they’ve both witnessed the effects of addiction on their own family members. Talamoni-Marcks and Lupercio spoke with the staffers about the need for alcohol and smoke-free sporting events, more opportunities for Native youth to participate in sports, and a rehab and wellness center in their communities for tribal members of all ages. Recently, a Northern California Public Media station covered the boys’ story.



To read the full article, click [here](#).

Also during the youth summit, NIHB awarded just one youth the 2015 Youth Leadership Award, which recognizes leadership and outstanding efforts to increase the quality of healthcare or awareness of health issues on a local or national level. Summer Montileaux (picture left) received the award. She serves as Vice-Chair of the Lakota Children’s Enrichment (LCE) Youth Advisory Board on the Pine Ridge Reservation where she is in charge of Health and Wellness Programs. Montileaux has led several health awareness campaigns and programs in her community, and has been recognized for doing such by ABC/Disney, the Center for Native American Youth, Generation Indigenous and WeRNative. In May of this year, the New York Times published her letter to the editor regarding sexual education in reservation schools. Montileaux has recently been awarded a Scarsdale Transfer Education Program (STEP) Scholarship where she’ll undergo intensive college prep at Scarsdale High School in New York.



To read the full article, click [here](#).

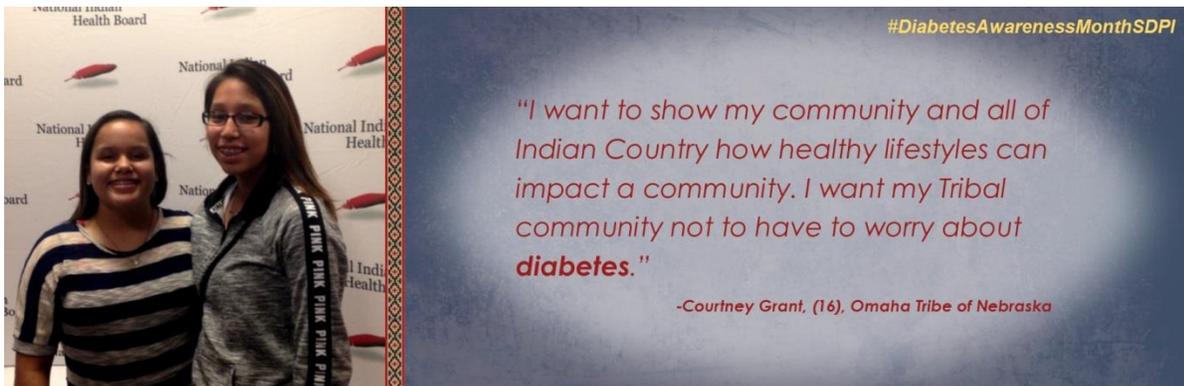
## November is Diabetes Awareness Month!

Type II diabetes is now a common disease among American Indian and Alaska Native youth over the age of 10, and has increased over time. Type II diabetes can lead to other health complications and affects many major organs, including your heart, blood vessels, nerves, eyes and kidneys. The good news is that American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth can prevent Type II diabetes with physical activity and healthy eating!

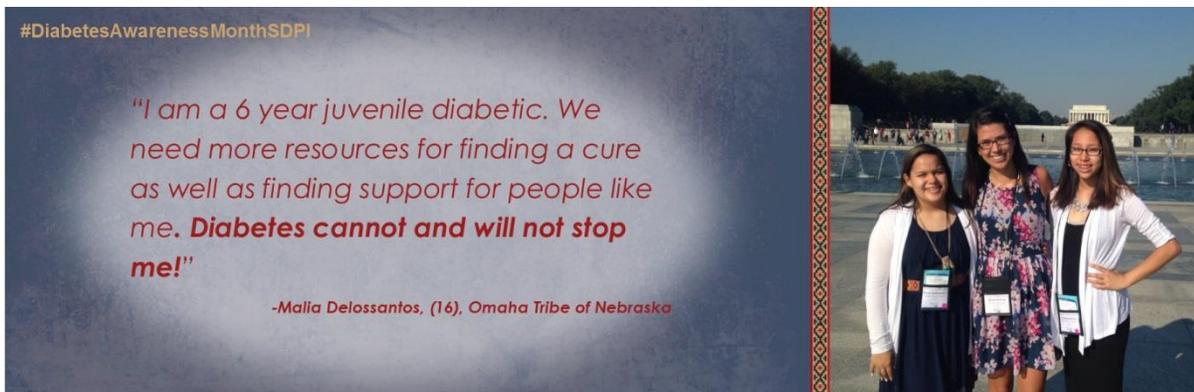
Here are several ways you can get involved in Diabetes Awareness Month:

1. Take this [online quiz](#) to find out if you are at risk for Type II diabetes.
2. Check out these digital stories created by Native youth on the impacts of Type I and Type II diabetes on their families and tribal communities:

**Courtney Grant**, 16, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska. View Courtney's digital story [here](#).



**Malia Delossantos**, 16, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska. View Malia's digital story [here](#).



3. Share your story about living with Type I or Type II diabetes on social media and use the hashtag #DiabetesAwarenessMonthSDPI for the chance to see your story on the National Indian Health Board's website!

## National Indian Education Association Update

The National Indian Education Association hosted their 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Trade Show in Portland, Oregon from October 14-17. Over 1,800 educators, advocates, and students participated in over 150 workshops and research forums designed to increase discussions around Native education. With presentations on language immersion programs, early learning, and college and career readiness, Native educators and advocates were able to bring innovative and important lessons back to their classrooms and their communities.



The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention was also the site of NIEA's second annual College Fair and Showcase hosted by College Horizons. College students from across the northwest were able to talk with and visit with over 50 colleges and universities to learn about the college admission process, financial aid, and college applications. Ensuring that Native students have the ability to learn from college admission officers about the admissions process is an important resource for Native students and NIEA hopes to provide the program at future NIEA conventions.

Lastly, the Convention hosted its first ever World Café, an environment that encouraged Native educators and advocates to share their thoughts around NIEA's policy work for the next 50 years. With questions and information being shared on Twitter, Native education advocates from across the United States were able to share their thoughts with the 1,800 people in attendance. In the coming months, NIEA will release a report on the information that was gathered. While the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention was a success, NIEA looks forward to seeing you **October 5-8, 2016 in Reno, Nevada** as it continues to move forward and continues to help Native students succeed!



## National Indian Child Welfare Association Update

On Wednesday, October 21, 2015 two new youth board members were elected to NICWA's board of directors. Since 2007, NICWA has had a Memorandum of Agreement with NCAI's Youth Commission to elect youth to serve on NICWA's board of directors. This was an intentional strategy to allow for youth

board members to get input from the NCAI Youth Commission during its several meetings per year and for NICWA to be accountable to the Youth Commission for its youth-related programming. The relationship between the Youth Commission and NICWA's youth board members means that information can be shared back and forth as NICWA programs are designed and implemented and advocacy priorities are developed.



Since NICWA's mission is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, it's vitally important that NICWA have young people on its governing board. Because NICWA delivers technical assistance to tribal communities about programming for children and youth and advocates for policy change and resources to better support Native children and youth, NICWA is committed to having youth on its board. NICWA youth board members are full, voting board members. They serve three-year terms (in this case, October 2015-2018) and travel to participate in quarterly in-person board meetings. Other than being excused from fundraising requirements, youth members participate in all the same ways as adult members: helping to develop meeting agendas, sitting on various committees, developing and tracking progress on NICWA strategic plans, setting policy and programming direction, representing NICWA at our annual conference and other meetings, monitoring NICWA's fiscal status, and approving NICWA's annual budget.

NICWA's two new youth board members are Teressa Baldwin (Kotzebue, Alaska) and Cassondra Church (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, Michigan). They will participate in their first NICWA board meeting in January 2016 in Portland, Oregon.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS, ANNOUNCEMENTS and OPPORTUNITIES

### Native Education Raising Dedicated Students to Host 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Youth Gathering in 2016



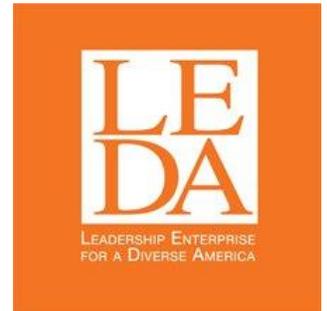
Native Education Raising Dedicated Students (NERDS) is a peer-to-peer mentoring and tutoring group dedicated to improving statistics affecting Native youth, founded by Dakota Franklin Kicking Bear Brown – a member of the Wilton Band of Miwok Indians in California, a 2013 Center for Native American Youth Champion for Change Award recipient, and a NCAI Youth Cabinet Member – NERDS raises awareness in both Native and non-Native communities and schools through various community service and cultural activities.

NERDS is excited to announce that its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Youth Gathering will be held February 13, 2016 in Jackson, CA. Although it will be the third gathering, this is the first time the event will be open to the general public.

To register, visit this [website](#).

## LEDA Organization Searching for Next 100 Scholars

The Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) is searching for 100 qualified scholars to attend its free 7-week summer program at Princeton University. The program is designed to empower **high school juniors** who exhibit leadership qualities but may lack the support and exposure necessary to apply to selective colleges. LEDA also provides ongoing support throughout college, an effort to diversify the leadership pipeline and ensure America's leaders are truly reflective of its citizens.



**Deadline: December 11, 2015.** To apply now, click [here](#). To learn more about the program, click [here](#).

## Running Strong for American Indian Youth's Dreamstarter Program Accepting Applications

Running Strong for American Indian Youth (Running Strong) is dedicated to providing better futures for Native youth, families and communities by supporting programs that create self-sufficiency and self-esteem. Running Strong's Dreamstarter grant program will award ten \$10,000 grants each year for the next 5 years to community non-profits who partner with Native youth Dreamstarters in achieving the young person's dream for his or her community. The community non-profit will mentor each Dreamstarter in implementation of their project, and work together to develop the idea, demonstrate funding needs and highlight ways it will benefit Native youth. This year's theme is: Arts & Culture.

**Deadline: December 14, 2015 at 11:59 p.m. PST.** For more information, and to apply, click [here](#).

## CNAY 2016 Champions for Change Applications Now Open

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) is accepting applications for the 2016 Champions for Change Award. The award is given to young movers and shakers in Indian Country dedicated to making positive and lasting impacts in their communities. Adults, tribal leaders and other youth are also invited to nominate an individual. Once nominated, CNAY will reach out to the respective nominee and encourage them to apply for the award. If selected, youth will participate in a series of recognition events hosted in Washington, DC in late February.



**Deadline: January 11, 2016.** To apply for the Champions for Change award, click [here](#). To nominate someone for the award, click [here](#).

## The George Washington University's INSPIRE Pre-College Program Accepting Applicants for Summer 2016

The INSPIRE Pre-College Program at the George Washington University (GW) is a full scholarship open to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian junior and senior high school students, including seniors who will graduate in 2016. The program includes a 3-credit undergraduate course, room and board on the GW campus, airfare to and from Washington, DC, textbooks, and local travel. The INSPIRE Pre-College Program is an extension of the Native American Political Leadership Program at GW, and will take place from July 3-23, 2016. **Application deadline: March 1, 2016.**



To learn more about the INSPIRE program and to apply, click [here](#).

## 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 to learn more about the application process and current and/or past success stories, visit [here](#).

## Johnson Scholarship Foundation to Grant Over \$550,000 in Entrepreneurship Scholarships

For over 20 years the Johnson Scholarship Foundation has been making investments in Indian Country. In an effort to stimulate economic growth in American Indian communities, the Foundation collaborated with various Tribal colleges and universities to create the Entrepreneurship Scholarship in 1992. Entrepreneurship scholarships are available for Native students with unmet financial need who are studying business or entrepreneurship. Each year the Foundation distributes over \$550,000 in funds towards these scholarships and another \$100,000 to \$200,000 for endowment building. Check with your college or university's Financial Aid Office to see if this scholarship is available for you.



For more information about the Foundation, click [here](#).

## AmeriCorps Hoopa TCCC Seeking Applicants



As the only tribal residential AmeriCorps program in the United States, the Hoopa Tribal Civilian Community Corps (TCCC) is searching for applicants ages 17-24 to participate in its 1,700-hour (6-9 month) program. The program takes place on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation in Northern California. There participants engage in community and life skills development projects with a variety of organizations and agencies including home building with Habitat for Humanity, FEMA disaster missions, environmental work for military veterans, and various work with other tribes. Participants work in teams of 10-15 and receive a bi-weekly living stipend, free room and board, student loan forbearance, health and child care benefits and an AmeriCorps Education Award of \$5,550 upon completion of the program.

For more information and to apply, click [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](#)

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## 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](mailto:firstkids@ncai.org) and we'll be sure to include it in the next issue! Pictures and external links are especially welcome!

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*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](mailto:firstkids@ncai.org) to be removed from the list.*

