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# AIR News

*focus*

“OUR MISSION IS THE PROMOTION AND SUCCESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS WITHIN EDUCATION.”

*Created in 1993 the AIR Program has set out to create a greater future for our American Indian Community through education.*



## *AIR Fall 2010 Complete and preparing for Spring 2011*

(SAN DIEGO) We have completed our Fall 2010 program with great success as we have had over 25 participants in our programs (tutorial and AIR Sr.). Along with our traditional series of projects

within our program, we tackled issues on “*Hate Speech*” and “*Environmental Racism*”. Although difficult topics, it was exciting to hear our students discuss these topics and finding that our students knew a great deal on each topic. Drawing from both their research and their own experiences our students were able to pursue each topic with greater understanding by applying their knowledge of our community. Guidance from our mentors helped our students pull together impressive presentations (even though their time in our program was brief).

Overall, we had a very successful year, expanding our program to include our three San Diego based universities (San Diego State University, the University of San Diego, and the University of California, San Diego) and having had tremendous support from all three schools. We cannot express how appreciative we are of each school as are providing more support for Native students. Although one can find that greater parity for Native students is needed, we believe that our partnered universities are advancing in the right direction.

We are grateful that Chancellor Fox came to our meeting taking time to welcome our students at UCSD. We are proud that the Office of the President at SDSU has been meeting with us and providing their support. We are truly grateful that USD has been sponsoring both our tutorial and AIR Sr. programs. With the completion of this semester we now look to our eighteenth year in operation with great optimism. We survived on our usual shoestring budgets and are thankful to all those who contributed to our program to support our students. As mentioned so many times before, our mentors and staff are all volunteers that have great dedication to our community and we cannot express how they truly make our program successful. Thank you again to all for your support in helping our Native community.



## Renee's Corner

### Thanking Renee White Eyes for all her help, guidance and care for our program.

*From time to time Renee has contributed to our newsletter giving her thoughts on various parts of our program, Native issues and events. Today we wish her the best as she has taken a position at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Renee has been with our program for the last 3 years and has recently volunteered to coordinate our tutorial program. We cannot express how thankful and honored we were to have her work with us. Best wishes.*



I came to San Diego County in 2001 in order to pursue my higher education at CSU San Marcos. Little did I know that my life was completely going to change and discover a passion that I didn't know existed. I had originally went to CSU San Marcos to be a biology major but after a series of bumps in the road, I decided to get my degree in Human Development. While I love the biological sciences, I was more comfortable in this new world. During this transition, I was a student worker in the Early Outreach Program and Upward Bound. It is through these two programs that I discovered my passion for recruitment of under served populations, particularly the Native populations. After CSU San Marcos, I decided to go on to get my graduate degree in college counseling in order to help with Native student recruitment at the University of San Diego. Once accomplished, I landed a job with the American Indian Recruitment Programs and was finally able to start doing the work that I so passionately believe in. Due to funding, I had to leave AIR and started working at Mental Health America as an outreach specialist in Urban Native communities.

During my time in San Diego, I have met many people that have helped me grow professionally in one way or another. I have been fortunate to work with many students in the area who have touched my heart and remind me why I work in this arena. My time in San Diego has come to a close and as I write this, my heart is heavy. While I am sad to be leaving so many people, friends and family, I am happy to be relocating to a new place to continue my work in Native recruitment. The students that I have worked with remind me that 1% native students in higher educational institutions is not nearly good enough. Our Native students are smart enough and determined enough to earn a spot in the UC and CSU system. That is why I have accepted a job at UCLA as a recruiter in Undergraduate Admissions, as well as a liaison for Native communities. Even though I am not in the San Diego area doing my work, you still have a friend at UCLA who will be speaking up for Native issues.

I would like to thank Elena Hood, Dr. Bonnie Bade, Juan Castellanos, Vickie Gambala, Tishmall Turner, Dr. Joely Proudfit, Racquel Morrison, and Louie Guassac for influencing me as well as supporting me. You have all impacted my life and have helped shape who I have become.

I want to say a special thank you to Dwight and Devon Lomayesva. It is through the AIR Programs that I have really grown and have been able to work in the field that means so much to me. I firmly believe that I would not have received this position at UCLA without AIR. The program means so much to me, and I have been truly fortunate to be a part of it. Lastly, I would not be here without the students. It is the students that drive me to do better and try to create change at these institutions. They are our future, and as long as they never give up, neither will I. This is not goodbye but rather, "Until next time".

*Sincerely,*

*Renee White Eyes, M.A.*

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### Thanking the San Pasqual Band of Kumeyaay Indians for their sponsorship of our AIR Programs Annual Fundraiser Banquet

Our AIR Programs Fundrasier Banquet was a sold out success. In all we raised much needed funds to help us maintain our program for our upcoming Spring semester. We especially give our thanks to the San Pasqual Band of Kumeyaay Indians who underwrote our Banquet this year in North County San Diego. Our banquet serves a multitude of purposes beyond that of fundraising. The Banquet serves to honor those within the AIR Program who have had outstanding performance both in our program and within their life. This year we honored Cathy Espinoza (Mesa Grande-Kumeyaay) who was named "Student of the Year". She had recently graduated from Julian High School and has been honored (2010) by San Diego Councilman Todd Gloria's Office for excellence within our American Indian

community. Our "Mentor of the Year" award was given Wynona Peters, a University of San Diego senior (Tohono O'Ododom-additionally a McNair Scholar and finalist in the NIEA Oratory Competition) who has demonstrated excellence in mentoring within our program for nearly 3 years. Finally, our Community Leader of the Year has given great support to our AIR Program for many years, Vice Chair of the Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel, Ms. Brandie Taylor. Brandie was re-elected to serve as Vice Chair in December for another term while also being elected to the Warner Springs School Board.

Our Banquet also gives our programs a chance to tell our community what we have done and are accomplishing within our program. We believe in accountability to our community who has given tremendous support for so many years and therefore we take this time to explain the great success that we have had this last year.

Finally, it is a great chance to see our long time program friends. We again thank the San Pasqual Band of Kumeyaay Indians for this opportunity and our community for their great support for our program.



## Local Heroes Honor

Recognition by KPBS/Union Bank  
By Dwight Lomayesva

Last November I was honored in receiving the KPBS/Union Bank Local Heroes Award for Native American Heritage Month. I am truly honored to receive this award. Working in Community Service programs, it is rare that anyone recognizes the work that one does to help our youth, so it is an honor to receive this

award but this award really represents an award for all our mentors who contributed and worked with our students so that they may have a greater future. Our program is very fortunate that we have had so many inspiring mentors within our program. It is because of their efforts I still become inspired to continue to work with the same motivation of when our program started. So this honor is really for them as they are the foundation of our program. Thank you to our great mentors both present and past as they are the Local Heroes for our community.

Finally, we congratulate Campo Band of Mission Indians Councilman Paul Cuero on his honoring by KBPS/Union Bank Local Heroes for all his work within the community.

Thanking the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for their support for our program. Your help has given our students a greater ability to reach their greatest potential.



## Highlights of 2010

**AIR Programs:** Is in operation at three of our local universities, San Diego State University, University of San Diego, University of California San Diego.

**AIR Program Sr., Tutorial and Summer:** AIR Program has three main programs in operation, our AIR Sr. Program and AIR Tutorial Program, AIR Summer Program.

**AIR Programs Banquet:** Honors our Community leaders: The Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel, Vice Chair Brandie Taylor, Student of the Year Cathy Espinoza (Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians), and Mentor of the Year Wynona Peters (Tohono O'Odum).

**UCSD and SDSU:** Chancellor Fox visits AIR Programs and meets with our mentors and students. SDSU, Director of Diversity, Office of the President, meets with the AIR Program.

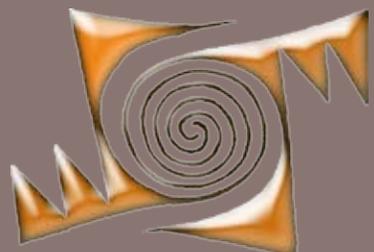
**AIR Students enter College:** Our Spring students (2010) have now entered Stanford University, Cal State San Marcos, and Palomar College this last Fall.

**Community Sponsors:** San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, Barona Band of Mission Indians, San Pasqual Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, UCSD Chancellors Office, USD Dept of Ethnic Studies, SDSU Office of the President.



**AIR Facebook site:** We started this a while back but decided to develop and use it this last Summer and Fall to have greater communication with our mentors and students: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/AIR-American-Indian-Recruitment-Program/113847658870>

**AIR Programs enters 18th year of operation:** We are starting our 18th year in serving the Native American Community of the San Diego region. We have had nearly 1,000 students go through our program with the majority of them graduating high school and pursuing higher education.



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*Special Thank you, to all our raffle sponsors and to Eleanor Miller, Vera Tucker, and Megan Lenaghan for coordinating these great giveaways at our 2011 Banquet.*

### AIR Programs Board

*Devon L. Lomayesva  
(Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel)  
Board Chair / President*

*Larry Banegas  
(Barona Band of Mission Indians)  
Board Member*

*Natalia Beresford (Kumeyaay)  
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*Stephanie Saavedra  
(Otomi/Pueblo)  
Vice Chair / Vice President*

*Hattie Lou Lomayesva  
(Hopi Tribe)  
Board Member*



Thanking all our Community Partners for their support of our program, Native Children and bringing hope and future for all our American Indian Community.



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

