

AIR News



26 October 2009

Proudly serving the San Diego American Indian Community for 16 years

AIR announces: Annual Student Award Recipients



SAN DIEGO — The AIR Program officially announces our Annual Student Award Recipients for 2009. This year's "Students of the Year" are: Monique Vasquez, Chandler Hood, and Rose Vasquez.

The "Student of the Year" is chosen from our pool of students who have participated within our program for one year or more, in good academic standing and have the dedication in pursuing higher education. All three of our selected students have been in our program for three years or more and are current Seniors in which they are preparing to apply for college and/or a 4 year university.

From the beginning Chandler Hood (Navajo) has been on target to attend a 4 year institution from high school and is an academically outstanding student within his school. His success in academics is secondary to his dedication to his own self-identity as an American Indian. Truly, his interest within our program was more towards the cultural identity aspects that is embedded within our program. Interest for our overall American Indian community is primary and it is that desire of being part of our community when there are other opportunities for him that has made him special to our program. Mr. Chandler Hood is a remarkable man and we are certain we will look towards him as a leader within our community.

Rose Vasquez (Kumeyaay-Santa Ysabel) is another remarkable person who is academically successful where she too will apply to a 4 year institution from high school. In stating this, each person that can apply must have a 3.0 or better. Again, this is only part of the reason why we have selected Rose as an award recipient. Rose has dedicated herself to success in school, our program, and in life to being the best as she can be given any circumstance. She cares for her community and volunteers when needed to help those who are not capable in helping themselves. Such tasks can be great or as small as setting up chairs for community meetings but it is her community spirit that serves her and our community greatly.



Our final recipient for "Student of the Year" is Monique Vasquez (Mojave). Monique attends All Tribes American Indian Charter School where she has excelled as a student. She has been part of the AIR Program for the last 4 years and her desire to teach in an elementary school guides her choice to pursue higher education. We have chosen Monique for such a special reason and that is her determination to succeed. So many times she has been set back but she challenges herself to move forward and succeed and such determination will guide her to a great future.

All three of our students have unique qualities, along with their good academic standings, making them special and deserved of being students of the year within our AIR Program. Congratulations to all three of you as we will look to you to guide our Tribal Nations in a great and fantastic future.



Exploring Campus

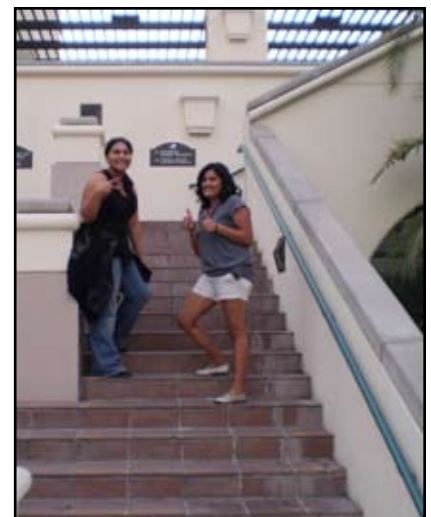
Believe it or not there is a reason why we make all students explore campus. Unfamiliarity with the college campus is one of a handful of reasons that college students cite on why they drop out. Statements like, “the campus is too big”, “the campus is intimidating”, “there are too many people here” are some of statements made by students. Our methodology is simple here; make the students get a feel for the campus by having them explore the campus through a scavenger hunt. Usually, we state they are a first year student that has to get to class. So they need to go to class from one side of the campus to the other in a timely fashion. Through this exercise our students explore the campus with their mentors and get a feel for college life and how the mysteries of higher education are not that mysterious. In the end the students come to the realization that college students are really no different than them and that many of them share the same fears and joys and often get lost even after years of being on campus. Many campuses are similar and getting to one campus can help you in understanding the majority of university campuses. Exploring the campus is a necessity when attempting to understand higher education and ultimately the student’s success.

Research Project

These upcoming weeks we will kick off our research topic. Each semester we pick a current American Indian issue to research throughout the remainder of the semester. The purpose of using this topical research approach is not to torture our students while in our program within more academics but it has many rooted tools that help the students better understand the university setting while learning a few Native issues effecting our community. These reasons include:

1. having the students become familiar with the university library (where most students in college spend the majority of time for both studying and research)
2. to give the students some research methodology practice via their mentors who help guide them. It must be understood that all students in college will have a research project. The more the students become familiar with the library, how to start your research, and how to ask questions of the librarian, the better off they will be.
3. to have the students become familiar with the feel of the campus by going with their mentor to the library observing and being able to ask the mentor questions on higher education and campus life.
4. to give them some information on current Native issues occurring within Indian Country.

The research project works well for getting the most from our program and promoting higher education. This semester our topic will examine Environmental Justice and its effects on our Native Lands.



Thanking the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians for your host sponsorship of our Annual Fundraiser Banquet



AIR Tutorial Program

The AIR Tutorial Program is accepting students throughout the year. This is one of our newer programs that has had great success in working individually with each of our student participants. The program is held in a safe environment on the campus of the University of San Diego, with qualified tutors and staff from the university. The location poses a terrific opportunity for research, study, and academic support.

For any information on our tutorial program please contact:

Kate Gordon (Youth Service Specialist-Site Coordinator) at kgordon-10@sandiego.edu or Dwight K. Lomayesva (Director) at info@airprograms.org

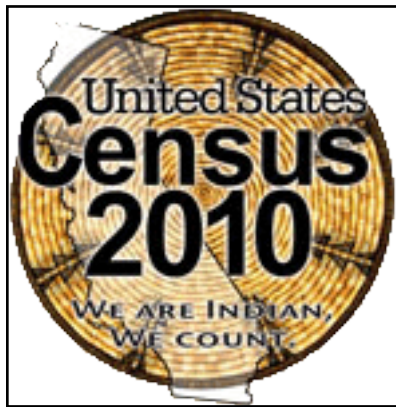
Thanking our community partners:
SDSU Dept. of American Indian Studies, USD Dept. of Ethnic Studies, CSUSM Student Outreach





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Stand up and Be Counted
Census 2010

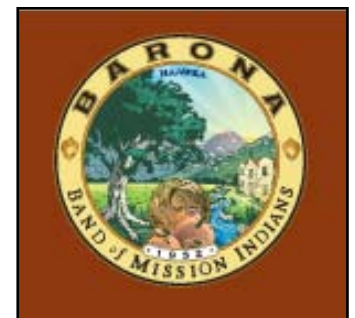


Environment Justice and Indian Country

The AIR Program has chosen Environmental Justice and its effects on our American Indian communities as this semester's research project. Many communities in search of revenues often resort to the sale of their natural resources (land and/or mineral). This could include numerous resources which extends to mineral resources (mining), renewable resources (timber), or use of lands for waste (nuclear, hazardous, etc).

Mostly the sale of natural resources are gainful in the short term but have long lasting effects within their communities. In the case of mining, many of the tailings (a by-product of mining) often containment the water table and cause cancer and other physical problems to those who use the water (even further than the borders of the community). Deforestation due to logging often erode the mountains causing landslides and other environmental problems harming those who are downstream from the community. Some communities have chosen to support landfills and storage of hazardous waste all leading to contamination of underground watersheds effecting the public far beyond their own region.

Some of these avenues, when implemented with safety and regulation, can be safe. However, many of these avenues have resulted in greater harm costing millions more to reduce the damages caused. We will examine these ideals within our research assignment. Our research will also coincide with a lecture by Winona La Duke at CSUSM. Winona La Duke is an avid American Indian rights and environmental advocate and we will take some of our students to hear her during her lecture at CSUSM. We look forward to seeing Winona and getting started on our research project.



Thanking the Barona Band of Mission Indians for their generous contribution to our Annual Fund-raiser Banquet on December 2, 2009 at the Harrah's Rincon Casino.

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