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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 Program Spring 2012 Expanding our future....

(San Diego) We start this year through the expansion of our programs that re-incorporates our AIR Jr. Project (at California State University San Marcos), expands our Tutorial programs and continues

our AIR Sr. and Summer projects. We are greatly encouraged that those students who are within our programs are showing great progress in graduation and pursuing higher education. For the last 4 years we have seen our students pursue higher education at a 4 year university along with students who have chosen the Junior College tract. This credit is not ours alone, as we work through a network of organizations that includes schools and many other community organizations that are all geared towards the promotion of our Native students. Our success is also made possible through our mentors who have put additional time to work with our students so that they may be college ready. Truly, we have a very special program that is helping our Native students achieve success.

Looking at this semester we are excited that California State University, San Marcos, California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, and the University of California, San Diego, will host our AIR Jr. program. We feel that AIR Jr. is an imperative program which targets our 6th through 8th grade Native students. We have found that our students come into our program without the ideals of being college ready. They fail to have adequate understanding on a-g courses that are mandatory to take to be college ready thereby failing to qualify for our California universities by their senior year. They fail to get adequate assistance on financial aid, study skills, and academic assistance that will also have them college ready. There can be a number of ideas on why this occurs but with educational budget cuts it will only get worse as limited resources within our educational system will not be enough to change this.

Our program has continuously been in operation for 19 years, through economic downturns and upwards swings, but our mission has always been the same, “*the promotion and success of American Indians through education*”, and we are more encouraged than ever with the support of CSUSM, SDSU, USD, UCSD, and our Native Community to have our students succeed and reach their greatest potential.



AIR Students are accepted at CA Universities/Mentor Honors/ and Community Partner Honors

In our previous Newsletter our students were applying to their universities of choice and have since been accepted to various 4 year universities throughout California. This is significant as California universities are becoming harder to enroll in as the standards and costs have risen. Ultimately, entrance to a university is an individual achievement but guidance by our Youth Service Specialist, Christy Garcia, has helped our students gain great ground in their preparation.

Again, our Native community is based on the ideals of working together and our achievement is gained on the premise of the many helping our students. The combination of mentoring, student achievement, schools, and others are what makes our success for our students. To this we congratulate our students on their great achievement.

We also congratulate Ms. Michelle Parada, (Cofounder of the All Tribes Charter School/Teacher), and Brandie Taylor, (Vice Chair of the Ipaay Nation of Santa Ysabel/Warner School Board), for being selected by Union Bank/KPBS "Local Heroes" for 2011. Both have set a higher standard for community service and dedication in helping our Native Community. We are truly honored that we have partnered with both, within our AIR Program, for these many years and look forward in all our future partnerships. Congratulations!

Finally, congratulations to Aries Yumal on being selected for "Teach for America". Aries has been a mentor within our program for over three years and has been dedicated in helping our Native Community in every facet possible. Truly, he will be a great inspiration and teacher for those who will have the honor to be part of his teaching objectives.



We thank our community partners who have donated and support our Native students under our AIR Program. We cannot express our gratitude enough how these organizations, Tribes, and Universities have supported our program through these many years. Together we are creating change for our Native Community so that our future will be of the greatest in our nations history.



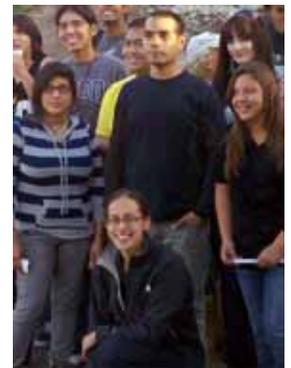
The importance of Community Service Learning as a Human Rights Pedagogy- by Michelle Jacob Ph.D. of the University of San Diego

ped·a·go·gy [ped-uh-goh-jee, -goj-ee] 2. *the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods.*

We take this time to congratulate our Community Partner, mentor and AIR Coordinator at the University of San Diego on being published in a Sociology Journal (Societies Without Borders). Dr. Jacob, in writing her paper (co-written) uses the AIR Program as an example on how grassroots organization and Community Service Learning Projects within the universities both benefit from working together in their service in meeting community needs.

The integration of community organization's concepts and successes, that are often unique to that community, with the academic solutions proffered by the CSL projects bring greater success and achievement to their target communities.

Here the AIR Program is part of an overall Native Community which has unique characteristics which differs in learning concepts of western educational standards. Using CSL projects that is infused with our methodology we have been able to bridge our communities within our program and garner greater success within academics for our students. Our success has seen the majority of our students leave our program to pursue higher education.



We thank Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP, one of the largest business law firms in Southern California. for their sponsorship of our American Indian Recruitment Program. Procopio is part of a public interest collaboration serving the Native American Community. For more information, contact Procopio's Native American Practice Group Leader, Ted Griswold at ted.griswold@procopio.com.



Kate's Corner

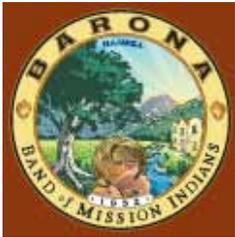
From time to time we have our students and mentors contribute to our newsletter by giving their thoughts on Native issues and events. Here, Kate Gordon (USD Alumni/AIR Mentor/and AIR Youth Service Specialist) has agreed to contribute to our newsletter.

My name is Kate Gordon and I am a youth service specialist for the AIR Program. I graduated from the University of San Diego in May of 2010 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science.

I have participated in the AIR Program for almost five years, as I started in AIR as a mentor in my sophomore year of college and joined the AIR staff a year later. I deeply missed my time away (after graduation I worked and lived in Washington, DC, working with a handful of non-profit organizations there) and I am really excited to be working with AIR again.

Presently, I am working with AIR Youth and Tutorial Programs (includes AIR Senior, Junior and Tutorial programs) and we are very fortunate to have a number of great people volunteering and supporting our program as things are progressing rapidly.

This semester we are reaching out to students' schools to further support our youths' academic and personal journeys. Overall, AIR has been an amazing experience for me - I love the community here and the philosophy of teaching through culture. I have gotten to work with incredible people who continue to inspire and challenge me.



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Christy's Corner

From time to time we have our students and mentors contribute to our newsletter by giving their thoughts on Native issues and events. Here, Christy Garcia (USD Alumni/AIR Mentor/and AIR Youth Service Specialist) has agreed to contribute to our newsletter.

Since the inception of AIR, AIR has implemented a "Teaching through Culture" model, which empowers Native students and inspires them to pursue higher education. This has been the primary focus but, over the years, we have learned that recruitment and retention are important issues that underline educational success among American Indian students, in general. Encouraging Native students to attend college through the use of workshops is one component, but in order to see a difference, one needs to provide one-on-one support to Native students who desire to go to college. Many of us are first-generation, low-income students who often do not receive the information and support in high school. Due to the inequalities in our educational system, often,

students are not aware of what they need to do to get into college. For this reason, AIR not only provides "academic success topics" (such as taking the SAT's, choosing college preparation courses in high school, completing college admissions applications, filling out the FAFSA form, finding and applying for scholarships) through workshops and small group discussions but has been actively approaching and working one-on-one with students outside of the normal AIR Program sessions, making sure students are on track and meeting college prerequisites before they apply. In order to ensure Native students success in high school it is important to be checking in with them on a weekly basis to see how they are doing. Many are often shy or feel uncomfortable asking for help. Therefore, our new approach of helping and guiding students during the college application process, academics, time management skills, and how to apply to financial aid has been the key to students success.



We thank the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for their continued support of our Native Students. Together we continue to bring a greater future for our Native children.



Christy (cont.)

In addition, to working with Native students in high school, we have been working with Native students in college. More Native students are attending college, but few are graduating and receiving college degrees, what support do Native students have in college to achieve success? Although there are many factors that contribute to students success, there are three important ones that I see when working with Native college students: 1) feeling a sense of belonging, 2) learning time management skills, and 3) being proactive about asking for help when needed.



Thanks to ANA, funding has provided some resources to help us implement this new approach and component in our AIR programs. We have found that there are two pieces to the educational success of Native students in higher education—recruitment and retention. AIR helps Native youth set personal responsibility goals through culturally appropriate, social and educational services that will foster a healthy well being, leadership, and empowerment of our Native youth and family community participants.

AIR Programs Spring Projects

AIR Sr. Program: February 27th, 2012, at the University of San Diego (Started)

This program serves Native students (9th-12th grade) throughout an eight-week program that implements a mentoring based program that combines academics and Native cultural concepts to empower our students so that they may reach their greatest potential. This program will be on Monday's from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Using this philosophy of learning and teaching through culture provides our Native students a greater sense of self-identity and empowerment to grasp the tools and resources to pursue higher education. For more information contact Christy Garcia at: christyg@airprograms.org

AIR Jr. Program: March 14, 2012, at California State University, San Marcos

This program serves Native students (6th-8th grade) for a 8 week program that follows in line with AIR Sr. but is given in a manner and setting for our younger students. This program will be on Wednesday's from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Most importantly, it is to prepare our junior high Native students for high school by providing them with an understanding about the requirements they need to fulfill to qualify for both a CSU and UC university.

For more information contact Christy Garcia at: christyg@airprograms.org

AIR Tutorial Program: February 28th, 2012, at the University of San Diego (Started)

Our AIR tutorial program serves our Native students who are in need of academic coursework and homework assistance. The tutorial project is on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on the USD campus. Our college tutors come from USD, UCSD and SDSU community-service learning projects—dedicated and helping our Native students succeed in their schoolwork.

Contact our Youth Service Specialist:
Danielle Chung at: dchung@airprograms.org (or)
Katherine Gordon at: kgordon@airprograms.org



Thanking all our community partners for their support of our program, Native children and bringing hope and future for all our American Indian community.

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