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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 Summer Program

### Starting - July 6, 2010 at USD



(SAN DIEGO) The AIR Program is proud to announce that we will be starting our Summer Program on July 6, 2010 at the University of San Diego.

We have a great summer program that integrates cultural themes and topics with academic projects. Our goal is to teach cultural based topics through a Native perspective. We use a teaching through culture methodology throughout our program which helps our students associate their own tribal identity with our topic. This increases their understanding on native issues and builds confidence and pride in being native. With greater confidence and continued academic assistance the result is greater academic performance and improved self-esteem.

Our program has seen a number of successful students participate within our program and go on to pursue higher education. Along with our academic based program we have had a great time and created long-lasting friendships.

We hope to see you this summer as we are going to have a great time.

For more information please contact Kate Gordon at:  
 kgordon-10@sandiego.edu (or)  
 info@airprograms.org



### Christy's Corner: For Rose...

*Christy Garcia is a contributing writer to our newsletter and has given her thoughts on various parts of our program, Native issues and events. Here, Christy (CSUSM Graduate Program) has agreed to contribute to our newsletter.*

(VALLEY CENTER) Rose Vasquez has participated in the AIR program since she was a freshman in high school. I met Rose since she was a freshman. I knew from the start she had great potential to do great things and succeed in everything she put her mind into. Other than her beautiful smile, she has a fun-loving personality and great sense of humor. I am blessed and

fortunate to know Rose. As a mentor through AIR and working with her at the San Pasqual Education Center, I have seen her grow as a person and improve both academically and socially; she is a great leader and role model for Native youth in her community. (Continued on pg 3)



## Adriana's Top Page

*From time to time we have our students and mentors, from our program, contribute to our newsletter giving their thoughts on various parts of our program, Native issues and events. Here, Adriana Secord (USD Graduating Senior) has agreed to contribute to our newsletter.*

This is my second semester with the AIR program, and had a particularly interesting moment as we rounded out the spring '10 semester with one of the students, that I wanted to share. We were in the process of figuring out the details of our final presentations, and one of the students was hesitant in making any decisions, because most of the group was not there. Dwight in his leadership fashion stressed the importance of collaboration, as it only make us good leaders. As Dwight left, the student turned to me with a frustrated look. I took that cue and looked over the work they had already done. I told the student that I was really impressed and that I was here to help in way possible. We were still not getting anywhere so I got out my pad of paper and pen (In hopes to show them I was interested and cared), and joked with them that we had to come up with something right now, "Ok let's go!" We all started laughing and we were on our way. The reason I find this instance important

to share is that it reveals some of the challenges and promises that mentors and students face as they interact with one another. If we are to empower these students to go onto to be leaders in their community, then we can't sit back and let them flounder, rather we need to be there in a supportive manner that encourages a positive American Indian leadership identity, even if we feel like we are taking a lead of faith.

**Special Note:** Congratulations Adriana on your graduation from USD!!!!

**PALOMAR COLLEGE**  
Learning for Success

## Ana's Reflection

*From time to time we have our students and mentors, from our program, contribute to our newsletter giving their thoughts on various parts of our program, Native issues and events. Here, Ana Resendiz (USD Graduating Senior) has agreed to contribute to our newsletter.*

Undoubtedly, the history of colonialism continues to affect people and the manner in which they integrate into society; this impact is further seen in the ill-equipped schools and inadequate teachers who work with students from these colonized backgrounds, thus lowering their chances to successfully complete their studies. Luckily, there are programs such as the AIR program for Native students as well as the AVID program for minority and low-income students in general. Both of these programs have the goal of preparing kids for college, but the AIR program is unique in that it is culture based and allows kids to develop their ethnic identity as a tool to succeed in their personal and academic career. As an AIR mentor, I was responsible for living up to what I told the students. For example, I asked some of my kids if they were thinking of attending SDSU for college, and they both said they could not because of their grades; they are only sophomores in high school and already they have set low academic goals. After hearing this I shared with them how I took charge of my future during in my Junior year in high school. I shared that it was then that I really thought about what I wanted to do after high school and realized that going to college would be best for me and my family's well-being. Being an example of someone who turned herself around from being an average student to enrolling in AP classes, I feel like my testimony helped the girls realize that it is not too late to raise their grades and begin thinking about college. AIR also provides a safe space where students are able to interact with other Native students and talk about tribal issues. An example of this is the research on Health and Nutrition that we did. Through this research the students were able to talk to kids that are not necessary from their tribe, thus making them aware about other tribes and the issues they have. Our space and time is valuable for establishing a relationship with the kids and for creating a community in which they feel comfortable.

Overall, AIR provides supportive and understanding teachers and mentors who create a safe space that academically supports Native students while nourishing their identity development. The program addresses issues that Native students and other minority students may associate with, as it was the case with the coping with stress, health and nutrition, and college planning workshops. These are many issues that would not necessarily be addressed in a school environment because of the absence of the unique elements AIR provides; culture based curriculum that fits Native students. Through my participation in AIR and in the AVID program I have learned about students with different stories and. Being an AIR mentor has made me realize how important culture based programs are to "underrepresented" students and how I can make an impact in the education and life of students who like me, only needed guidance to lead their ambitions.

**Special Note:** Congratulations Ana on your graduation from USD!!!!



## All Tribes Graduation by AIR Program Staff

We would like to take this time to congratulate the All Tribes Charter School on their continued success in graduating great students. We, at the AIR Program, were fortunate to see the graduation at All Tribes and cheer on two of our AIR Program participants: Monique Vasquez and Lizz Mejia who were both Co-Valedictorian(s) of their graduating class. We are proud and fortunate to partner with ATCS as we can see the true care and dedication that the Staff and Instructors have for their students.

Truly, this is what our American Indian Community is suppose to be where all our programs work together to assist and promote our youth to someday lead and protect our community and native rights.

Again, Congratulations to both the students of the graduating class of 2010 and ATCS for their continued success.



## Press Release: All Tribes Graduation:

By All Tribes Charter School

Over one hundred people gathered at the Pala Administration Building on Thursday, June 17th to celebrate the graduation of four seniors from the All Tribes Charter School. The seniors, Richard

Cherkin from Escondido, Elizabeth Mejia from Rincon Reservation, Darla Scott from Pala Reservation and Monique Vasquez from San Pasqual Reservation were all honored for their accomplishments. Among the guests present were representatives from the University of San Diego, San Diego State University, Cal State University San Marcos and Palomar College. Dwight Lomayevsa of the American Indian Recruitment program (AIR) was the Keynote Speaker. Dr. May Fu from the University of San Diego was a guest speaker.

All four of the graduates were surprised with laptop computers from the Edward and Suzanna Mazzetti Scholarship Fund. All four graduates plan to attend Palomar College in the fall. Liz Mejia and Monique Vasquez were the first All Tribes students to participate in the Early College program with the University of San Diego this past semester. The laptops will be very helpful for work with their studies at Palomar. This graduating class brings a total of 46 high school graduates from All Tribes in the past five years. All graduates met all the State requirements including passing the High School Exit Exam to earn their diplomas.

## Christy's Corner *(continued)*

Obstacles and challenges only make her stronger and inspire her to move forward. Words cannot express how proud and happy I am for Rose. Rose works hard and dedicates her time to get what she wants. Despite juggling work, school, and her personal life, she perseveres. In the past couple of months, Rose learned to prioritize her goals and had to make sacrifices to meet them. I know this because I tutored her with Algebra 2 and AP English, which were subjects she had fallen behind in. Rose worked long hours to raise her grades, but she made it! She will be attending Cal State San Marcos in the fall and has won numerous scholarships to fund her education. This is just the beginning for Rose! She will excel and make it through college because I believe in her, and most importantly she believes in herself. If she had not trusted herself that she could raise her grades and graduate from high school, there is a possibility she would not have made it. Having a support and guidance of someone, truly makes a difference. I have been blessed to have mentors that have guided my successes. Rose work ethic, intelligence, and dedication will help her on her journey. I will be guiding her through her first year in college, as we know, transitioning from high school to college can be challenging. She thanks the AIR program for providing her with the tools, scholarship, and mentors that have made her dreams a reality.



## Thanking the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for their contribution to AIR Summer

We thank the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for their generous donation to our program. Their donation will help AIR Programs continue our summer educational component. As you can read in previous articles we have had many successes for our students and with this funding we are able to continue our program that motivates and provides academic services to our Native Students. Again, Thank you.



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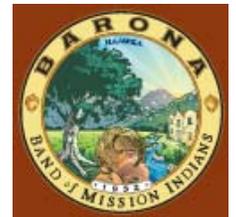
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**SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



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