

AIR News



3 Aug 2009

Proudly serving the San Diego American Indian Community for 15 years



AIR Summer has completed as funding will not be renewed

SAN DIEGO, California —It's been a great two years for the AIR Program which has enjoyed funding through the Administration of Native Americans. Our program has expanded and help more students within our San Diego Native community than ever before. Our statistics are close to

500 overall participants within our program during the last two years (mentors/community volunteers and student participants). We have forged over 25 partnerships (outside our program and where the majority are Native organizations) to bring an overall greater community effort for the success of the program. Truly, the AIR Program does not stand alone but works as a community effort. Unfortunately, we have received notice that we will not receive a grant from ANA for the 2009-10 funding year. As with grants, they are competitive with numerous organizations applying and this year we did not qualify.

Our program has been in existence for the last 15 years and we have enjoyed ANA funding which has taken our program into a greater direction capitalizing on our overall mission. In recent meetings and through letters of support we have heard of our impact on our community as many students have improved in their academics and have gone on to pursue higher education. Our goal was simple in 1993, if we change the ideals of one student, if we change the mind set that higher education can be a realization for that one student then our program is a success.

At the start of this summer we had many challenges facing our program and we were worried of having 15-18 students participating within our program as our resources may be stretched. By the end of this summer we had some 45 student participants within our program with the majority of students returning each week.

Has the AIR Program met our modest goal? We believe we have, as that one student is now many and those many students are assuming leadership within their tribal communities.

We state this as we pledge to continue our services for many years to come and to continue to help bring our American Indian Community to see a great and proud future...

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Kelsey Novi Say's...

During my brief time with the AIR Summer Program, I have had the joy in experiencing noticeable changes in our students. These changes include becoming more friendly with each other and mentors, showing excitement for activities and expressing interest in pursuing higher education. During the first few meetings I noticed students staying close to familiar faces and were hesitant to participate in workshops. After no time, their shyness dissolved and our group of students and mentors worked cohesively. Along with the new relationships that were established, students were obviously excited about scheduled activities such as scavenger hunts and Peon. Their interest in the activities encouraged both students and mentors to have a fun experience. Last but not least, since the relationships between mentors and students became effortless, students would freely ask questions about college experiences and ask for advice. I consider their curiosity about college to be the greatest success of the program because we have made

the image of college more realistic and attainable and allowed students to see it as an attainable goal.

Roberta's Corner

This week the AIR Summer Program came to an end and it ended with our visit to Sea World. The kids had a great time not only at Sea World but the Program was a hit. They learned so much this summer about college with the three different workshops. This week's workshop was picking a school that will fit you and then we broke into small groups to talk to the students about the colleges they want to go to. I asked all of the students in my group where they would want to go and most of them were not sure but knew that they wanted to go to college. One student even asked me "Is college hard, be honest with me Roberta." I replied "It is a challenge but I know that anyone of you can and will do it." They all smiled, I am really glad I got to be a part of the AIR Summer Program it was a lot of fun and I got to meet so many students. I hope that I taught them as much as they taught me. I was reminded that the learning goes both ways between mentors and students. When we were at the zoo we were given assignments to take pictures with 5 indigenous animals and 5 indigenous plants, I was given the list with the indigenous plants but the students were able to identify them without the paper. They taught me about the plants and explained that they are found on their reservation. It was a great experience and I know that if any of the students ever need help with college information I can help them.



Thank you to the Department of American Indian Studies at SDSU for all your continued support and commitment to our program...



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

AIR Program Summer Stats (Brief):

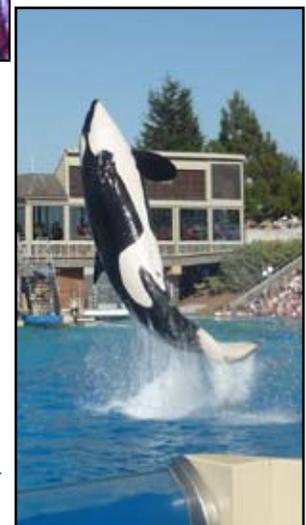
Number of weeks and meetings	5/10
Number of students total	45
Number of staff/community volunteers/mentors	26
Number of hours for meetings (total)	56
Tribal affiliation	7
Community Partners: SDSU, Department of AIS/SDSU Dept. of Psychology/San Pasqual Reservation, Education/SIHC, Youth Program/SCTCA Urban TANF/SDUSD	6

Thank you CSUSM for your support. We look forward in working with you in the near future.



Thank you to the Department of Ethnic Studies at USD for all your support and the University of San Diego CASA Program for your contributions to our students

Thank you to Sea World for the great time we had there. We were privileged to go back stage with the Sea World staff and learn more about their sea life preservation projects.



Supporting our Native Community Organizations



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A primary goal for our program is that our student participants embrace their cultural identity as a means of empowering them to succeed in academics. This of course is easy to say, but difficult to prepare for. You can't teach identity with a curriculum, but you can expose students to a variety of diverse cultures in hopes of promoting self-esteem and a broader cultural awareness. Our summer program aimed to expose students to the rich history of the Kumeyaay people of San Diego.

There are endless places to visit to learn about the Kumeyaay, some of which AIR visited this summer. The Laguna's, SDSU university, even Sea World and the Zoo. We had planned to tour the Museum of Man as well. Unfortunately, we learned that there were some issues going on that affect the Native community's relationship with the Museum.

Red Tail Monitoring is an organization that monitors cultural and sacred sites in and around San Diego. They also work with the Museum of Man on special projects related to American Indian artifacts. Clint Linton, Executive Director of Red Tail Monitoring, has been a great supporter of the AIR Program by providing various workshops on NAGPRA, tours through the Museum of Man, and has even hired former mentors from the AIR Program.

As reported in the Union Tribune, Red Tail Monitoring and the Museum of Man are in conflict regarding various issues regarding the handling of Native artifacts; that included accusations theft. The issue focuses on the Native program being put under heavier scrutiny than other groups also involved, and therefore being treated unfairly. AIR sees it important to support our fellow Native organizations that work so tirelessly for the betterment of our community. AIR has seen good things by Red

Tail Monitoring and hopes they reach a sensible and respectful resolution to this issue so that the Museum can continue to be a significant place for education for all peoples. (<http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/jul/23/backers-target-museum-man-accreditation/>)

Bobby Levi Says...

Bobby Levi is a first time student within the AIR Program and has agreed (from time to time) to write on his progress in the AIR Program.

Hello, my name is Bobby Levi, I am Cahuilla and Hopi from the Torres Martinez Reservation. This is my last column for AIR since the program has completed. In the last week of the AIR Program and throughout the program, I learned that when you start high school you should also start to look towards college. After all college and the future is right around the corner.

On the last day of the program we went to Sea World and we all had a great time. Throughout the program I met a lot of new people and learned more about their culture and mine as our tribes are

very similar. This summer was so much fun and I learned a lot, I hope to join the program next summer.

*Devon L. Lomayevva (Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel)
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