

# Association on American Indian Affairs

## 2020 SUMMER CAMP REPORT

NATIVE YOUTH SUMMER CAMP GRANT RECIPIENTS





## ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture  
Educating Youth • Building Capacity  
SINCE 1922

The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 98-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Tribes to support the implementation of programs that affect lives on the ground.

The Association began providing funding grants to Native Youth Summer Camps in **1963** as a powerful way for the Association to achieve its vision, mission and goals. There is significant research that shows when young Native people are connected to their culture, they fare better mentally and emotionally than those who are not. Healthy and strong Native American youth will sustain strong Tribal cultures and protect Tribal sovereignty for years to come.

The Association provides funding for summer camps who are connecting Native youth with cultural experiences as well as providing curriculum on health, wellness and self-care. Between 2003 and 2020, the Association has granted \$218,395 to 140 Native Youth Summer Camps! This year the Association provided funding for four summer camps that provided educational opportunities regarding health and wellness, cultural practices and languages. **In total, the 2020 Summer Camps reached 933 youth from at least 19 Tribes!**

This year summer camps across the nation look different from years prior. The Covid-19 pandemic caused many summer camps this year to alter their programming or not provide any programs at all. The Association recognized that summer camps needed to provide programming using safe social distancing measures, and educate youth about protecting themselves by using masks, hand washing and social distancing. The camps the Association funded this year provided information to show that these measures would be in effect to protect the safety of youth, Elders and others during the summer camp experiences. Despite the challenges that Covid-19 brought, Native youth were still able to learn, connect with family members and have fun while social distancing.

The following Summer Camps received funding for 2020:

- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians- Youth Education & Activities, Sault Ste. Marie, MI  
*594 Native youth attended from 2 Tribes*

- American Indian Youth Wellness Camp, Tucson, AZ  
*36 Native youth attended from 15 Tribes*
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Native Youth Summer Camp Program, Kingston, WA  
*283 Native youth attended from 1 Tribe*
- Native Village of Ruby, Ruby, AK  
*20 Native youth attended from 1 Tribe*

The Association's 2020 Summer Camp Program Awardee stories are included in this Report and provide a sample of the minimum we can do for Native youth. But we must do more!

Currently, the majority of our summer camp program is funded through a single donor: the Ben Plucknett Charitable Trust, who donated \$6,000 in 2020. The grant program is also funded by Association's unrestricted operating funds, which comes from general giving.

The Association sees a demonstrated need to develop a consistent national program throughout Indian Country that will address self-advocacy and build the Native youth voice. In doing so, a national summer camp program will help youth develop leadership skills that will support Tribal sovereignty and self-determination while fulfilling the Association's vision of creating a world where Native American cultures are lived, protected and respected. The Association is developing a detailed project design that will support its vision to develop this annual national opportunity to Native youth. If you would like to participate in the development of this national opportunity, please contact the Association!

Help the Association build a **NATIONAL YOUTH CAMP** that is available consistently every summer to Native youth in regions across Indian Country. Curriculum is currently being developed that will provide education through diverse cultural teachings that include:

- Self-care and self-advocacy so that Native youth are not taken advantage of.
- Suicide prevention so that Native youth have a network of support and ways to seek help.
- Health and wellness to stay strong and brave.
- American Indian History and the U.S.-Tribal government-to government relationship to understand what Tribes need to grow and provide for their peoples.
- Develop political leadership and advocacy to support sovereignty, self-determination and protection of cultures.

**BE A PARTNER  
BE A TEACHER  
BE A MENTOR**

**END THE CYCLE AND SUPPORT A NATIONAL NETWORK OF  
NATIVE YOUTH ADVOCACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION!**

## SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS YOUTH EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES PROGRAM



The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Youth Education & Activities Camp took place from June 22 through August 28, 2020 in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The Camp served 594 Native youth from ages 5 through 19 years from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the Bay Mills Indian Community. The theme for the camp was the Circle of Life and focused on teachings related to the Medicine Wheel and the 7 Grandfathers. A kit was sent to Native youths every week with crafts, lessons, healthy snacks, and outdoor activities. Each weekly kit had its own theme focused on the Medicine Wheel and the four directions. Lessons on COVID-19 and communicable disease safety prevention were also provided.

All programming was geared toward intergenerational learning and bonding. Native Communities were involved in planning the curriculum for the weekly kits and preparing the kits. Native youth created cards and wrote letters for elders in assisted care facilities. Virtual coffee and language classes with elders were also available. Prevention Specialists provided information on mental health awareness and topics specific to Native youth.

## AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH WELLNESS CAMP



American Indian Youth Wellness Camp in Tucson, Arizona took place from July 6 through September 4, 2020. There were 36 Native youth served from ages 2 to 19 years coming from the following Native Nations: Colorado River Indian Tribes, Fort McDowell Yavapai, Gila River, Hopi, Hualapai, Jemez Pueblo, Navajo Nation, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, San Carlos Apache, Tohono O'odham, White Mountain Apache, Yavapai Apache, Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe. The camp's goal was to support activities for Native youth and their families. A box of curriculum and other materials were sent to Native youth and families participating. The Native youth boxes contained a binder with a schedule, contact information, daily activities for Monday through Friday, instructions, resources, snacks, and supplies. The family boxes contained hygiene products (shampoo, hand soap, foot powder, face soap), home items (dish soap, paper towels, hand sanitizers, trash bags, gloves), food (rice, beans, pasta, cereal), sunscreen, insect repellent, and a water bottle and camp t-shirt for each family member.

Camp youth and family members followed a schedule. Every morning started with a walk or run, including a lesson on sunscreen use and the importance of drinking water. A lesson on healthy food choices and nutrition was next. After lunch, Native youth engaged in an activity such as crafts, planting beans, and making a face mask. Following this was family reflection time when Native youth were encouraged to write and share responses to questions. A game promoting physical activity such as tag or a scavenger hunt was next. The day wined down with reading time and an evening walk or run. Every day, camp staff called each family to check in and evaluate their progress.

## PORT GAMBLE S'KLALLAM NATIVE YOUTH SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM



Port Gamble S'Klallam Native Youth Summer Camp took place in August 2020 in Kingston, Washington. The camp served 293 Native youth (162 families) ages 2 to 18 years. All youth were citizens of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

The camp provided Native youth and their families two project options - individual or family project - that was developed to connect Native youth and family to elements of culture. Individual projects consisted of a choice between a moccasin kit, necklace beading kit, medicine bag kit, or dream catcher kit. Family projects were an 18" drum kit, or a *Places of Importance Trip* to the Village of Qatay. The trip included snacks and money for gas. Culture kits were also sent out to Native Youth and families.

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal citizens and Youth Services staff worked hard to plan, assemble, and distribute information and kits. They urged Native youth and families to participate in the activities. Elders with Native youth in their homes participated in the activities.

## NATIVE VILLAGE OF RUBY CAMP

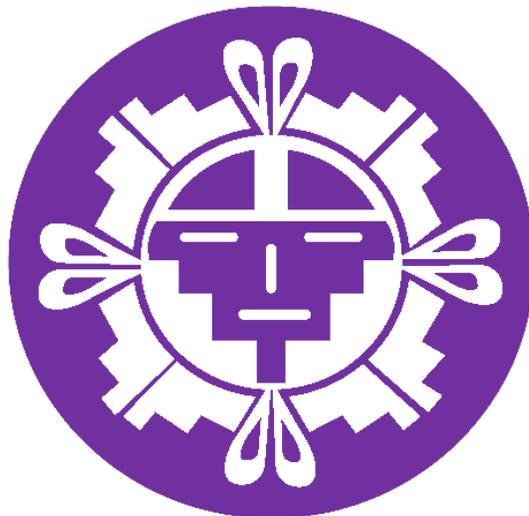


The Native Village of Ruby Camp took place August 3 through August 8, 2020 and served 20 Native youth ages 8 to 18 years. All youth were from the Village of Ruby. The camp is an Athabaskan culture camp focused on Athabaskan culture, heritage, ethics, cultural values, and traditions.

The Native Village of Ruby is remote and far from mainstream Alaska. An in-person camp was provided this summer with five Native youth campers per group. All activities were outside and social distancing was followed. The Native youth were taught the importance of hand washing, social distancing and use of face masks. The Elders that lived through pandemics and the tuberculosis outbreak shared their stories and experiences.

Native youth were also taught the importance of subsistence foods and traditional methods of harvesting. The camp has a fluent Athabaskan language teacher who lives in the village. She spent a day teaching the Native youth basic Athabaskan words for everyday surroundings. Two days of camp included boat journeys to explore the areas ancestors hunted, fished, trapped, and gathered their yearly supplies. Every evening at dinner time Tribal community members came and shared a traditional meal with the Native Youth. The Native youth helped cook traditional foods and took this opportunity to hear of the important nutritional values of the food they prepared.

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*The Association is a 501c3 non-profit public organization.*

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