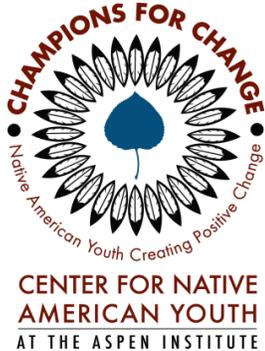


Center for Native American Youth Champions for Change

Recognizing and Encouraging Native American Youth Who Are Creating Positive Change



The Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute, created by former US Senator Byron Dorgan in 2011, is dedicated to improving the health, safety, and overall well-being of young people in Indian Country. CNAY is aimed at bringing greater national attention to the issues facing Native youth through communication, policy development, and advocacy.

Champions for Change Program

The Champions for Change (CFC) program at the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) recognizes and encourages inspirational Native American youth (ages 14 to 24) working in their tribal or urban Indian communities to promote hope and create positive change.

The CFC program is an annual invitation for Native youth to submit an essay or video demonstrating how they are changing perceptions about Native youth, and improving their communities through positive efforts. CNAY selects five Champions for Change each year as a part of our efforts to elevate Native youth voices and share inspirational stories from Indian Country.



As Champions for Change, these young leaders:

- Travel to Washington, DC for a series of recognition events and meetings
- Serve a one-year term on CNAY's Youth Advisory Board
- Participate in ongoing opportunities to develop leadership skills
- Stay directly engaged with CNAY to build a strong network of young leaders across Indian Country

Visit the CNAY's website at www.cnay.org or contact us at cnayinfo@aspeninstitute.org or (202) 736-2905 to learn more about the CFC program.



The Center for Native American Youth's Champions for Change program, inspired by a 2011 White House initiative, recognizes and encourages inspirational Native youth working in their tribal or urban Indian communities to promote hope and make a positive impact. Visit www.cnay.org to learn more about Champions for Change.

2016 CLASS OF CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE



Vanessa Goodthunder, Lower Sioux Indian Community

Age: 22; Hometown: Morton, Minnesota

Vanessa helped found *Daunkotapi*, a program that unites youth from the four Dakota communities in Minnesota, to talk about the issues they face and solutions to address them. Through teaching the Dakota language, Vanessa is combatting historical trauma by connecting Native youth in her community with their language and culture.



Noah Blue Elk Hotchkiss, Southern Ute Indian Tribe/Southern Cheyenne/Caddo Nation

Age: 17; Hometown: Durango, Colorado

When Noah was 11 years old, he was involved in a car accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Last summer, Noah secured a Dreamstarter grant to launch the *Tribal Adaptive Organization* that uses adaptive sports to address the needs of Native Americans with disabilities. Through the organization, Noah hosted three wheelchair basketball camps in Native communities in the Southwest region of the United States and plans to host three more this year.



Samuel Slater, Navajo Nation

Age: 18; Hometown: Bethesda, Maryland

As the only Native American student at his high school in Washington, DC, Sam exposes his peers to his Navajo culture by leading a school-sponsored service learning trip to the Navajo Nation every year, which his family created and sustains. Sam uses this immersive, two-week service-learning trip to educate his peers beyond the limited accounts contained in history books. Through this initiative, Sam seeks to cultivate non-Native partners and allies for Indian Country to further educate other communities about tribal and urban Indian communities.



Brayden White, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Age: 21; Hometown: Hogansburg, New York

After losing a close friend to suicide, Brayden founded *Helping Hands*, a peer mentoring and education program that helps the public to recognize signs of suicide and connects at-risk individuals with mental health resources. Brayden is also forming and training a group of youth to serve as "Crisis Mediators," who will work in coordination with mental health professionals to assist youth in need of immediate help.



Christie Wildcat, Northern Arapaho Tribe

Age: 17; Hometown: Riverton, Wyoming

Christie founded the *Wind River All Action Crew*, a youth group that seeks to inspire a life-long commitment to community service and promotes positive relationships between youth of all races. The group has raised money for the Special Olympics, served meals to community members, and volunteered at a local nursing home. Christie is also an accomplished artist and is passionate about combatting racism through education systems reform.

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