



**CENTER FOR NATIVE  
AMERICAN YOUTH**  

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**AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE**

# **Voices of Native Youth Report**

**Volume IV**

***2014***

## The Center for Native American Youth

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY), created by former US Senator Byron Dorgan, is dedicated to improving the health, safety, and overall well-being of Native American youth through communication, policy development, and advocacy. CNAY is a policy program within the Aspen Institute, headquartered in Washington, DC and overseen in part by a distinct board of advisors, executive committee, and youth advisory board.

### Board of Advisors:

*Byron Dorgan\**

*Dave Anderson*

*Allison Binney\**

*Tom Brokaw*

*Lucy Calautti\**

*Brian Cladoosby*

*Tom Daschle*

*Jacoby Ellsbury*

*Sara Garland*

*Megan Gregory*

*Pam Guleson*

*Phil Jackson*

*Dana Lee Jetty*

*Hattie Kauffman*

*Jefferson Keel\**

*Coloradas Mangas*

*Sam McCracken\**

*Robert McGhee\**

*Lisa Murkowski*

*Gordon Smith*

*Ernie Stevens, Jr.*

*Patty Talahongva*

*W. Richard West*

*Dirk Whitebreast*

### Youth Advisory Board:

CNAY engages young people throughout the organization's programming, including a Youth Advisory Board consisting of ten young leaders from the two most recent classes from the Champions for Change program. The Youth Advisory Board provides important insight and direction to the staff to maximize the impact of CNAY. Input is solicited that fits each member's area of expertise and interest. The Youth Advisory Board in 2014 consisted of:

*Dahkota Brown\**

*Cierra Fields*

*Joaquin Gallegos*

*Vance Home Gun*

*Sarah Schilling\**

*Elizabeth Burns*

*Danielle Ta'Sheena Finn*

*William Lucero*

*Keith Martinez*

*Lauren McLester-Davis*

\*Denotes executive committee.

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As a policy program at the Aspen Institute in Washington, DC, the Center for Native American Youth is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in convening stakeholders, identifying priorities, and communicating coordinated strategies at the national level aimed at improving the lives of Native youth across the country. CNAY's board and staff commend the advocacy work of tribal leaders and national Indian organizations for improving the social and physical well-being of Indian Country. Developing and maintaining meaningful partnerships with tribal leaders as well as national and local organizations is critical to CNAY's success and impact.

## *Purpose*

This annual report provides a summary of current perspectives and priorities of Native youth regarding challenges and successes in Indian Country. The purpose of the Voices of Native Youth Report series is to summarize and share what CNAY learns on an annual basis from Native American youth, thereby creating a platform to elevate the youth voices across tribal nation and urban Indian communities. Inviting youth to the table for dialogue guides CNAY's work and ensures that the voices of Native youth are present at the national level in discussions with policymakers, federal and tribal partners, as well as new stakeholders.

## **The Voices of Native Youth Report Volume IV highlights:**

- Key discussion themes from 25 Native youth roundtables facilitated in 13 communities in 2014;
- Native youth perspectives on education, health and wellness, cultural preservation, community enhancement, racial equity and extracurricular activities;
- National advocacy efforts from young leaders in Indian Country;
- Resources shared by CNAY with Native youth and tribal nation and urban Indian communities that respond to challenges and/or programming ideas expressed by young Native Americans; and
- National advocacy efforts, including news stories.

## *Introduction*

Today, there are 566 federally recognized Indian tribes, which operate as sovereign nations under the United States Constitution. Each tribe is distinct, with its own culture, traditions, language, and community. The federal government has legal, treaty, and trust obligations to provide individuals from federally recognized tribes with health care, education, law enforcement, and other services. However, many of the federal systems in place to fulfill these responsibilities are chronically underfunded, leaving much of Indian Country with limited access to health care, education, and law enforcement services. The needs in these areas also extend to urban Indian and other tribal communities.

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The Center for Native American Youth seeks to address the impact of historic neglect by raising awareness, bringing forth a dialogue on solutions, and highlighting success. Listening to Native youth, collecting their ideas and concerns, is vital to CNAY’s mission and work. Native American youth are the most at-risk population in the United States and face serious longstanding disparities in a number of areas including suicide, obesity and diabetes, substance abuse, education, and juvenile justice.

### **Native Youth Roundtables**

CNAY’s staff facilitates one-to-two hour conversations with small groups of middle and high school aged youth to cultivate relationships, identify priorities, ask questions about the challenges facing and successes celebrated in their communities, and connect them with resources that create a positive environment for youth development.

As a part of the conversations, CNAY’s team provides a “resource packet” to share with youth, parents, school administrators, and other community members. These resource packets include a tailored list of local organizations, internships, scholarships, technical assistance support, and information about national Indian organizations and federal agencies. Following each of these roundtable discussions, CNAY shares a brief summary report to the tribal nation or urban community and or school that includes key priorities mentioned by young people, as well as a tailored list of resources that address areas of expressed interest. Further, CNAY staff organizes follow-up discussions with each community six weeks after the roundtable visit for a formal discussion of the report. CNAY then works diligently to develop meaningful relationships well into the future. Ultimately, these tribal nation communities and youth become plugged into a greater network of Native youth advocates and resources.



## ***Summary: Emerging Themes from Native Youth***

Since issuing the Voices of Native Youth Report Volume III, CNAY facilitated 25 Native youth roundtable discussions – bringing the total number of roundtables facilitated by CNAY over the past four years to 101 in 20 states with youth representing over 260 tribes.

**The following is a list of key themes and highlights that emerged from CNAY’s 2014 roundtable discussions with Native American youth:**

### **Education**

- Higher education, post-secondary education is viewed by Native youth as critical to community wellbeing and to the future success of Indian Country.
- Mentorships, culturally-appropriate student services, and navigating financial aid systems are especially targeted as important to Native youth.
- Incorporating Native American studies into school-systems was identified as a youth priority that would promote positive learning environments.

### **Health & Wellness**

- Lack of access to health care persists as a barrier for Native youth and their families.
- The lack of access to health care services, providers, and funding for health care leads many Native youth to consider the health field as a career option.
- Normality of chemical dependency and lack of positive role models contributes to high rates of substance abuse in tribal nations and urban Indian communities.
- Sport and culturally-centered activities are positive outlets for youth and help to combat high rates of substance abuse.

### **Child Well-Being and Community Welfare**

- Keeping siblings together in out-of-home care is viewed as an important priority, especially for Native foster youth.
- Native foster youth want increased academic support, access to mental/emotional health services access, and stronger relationships and partnerships between tribal and federal governments.

### **Community**

- Improving housing conditions is necessary to address high rates of overcrowding and homelessness in tribal and urban Indian communities.
- Native youth highlighted the need for more adequate housing and transportation for their communities.

### **Cultural Preservation**

- Native youth express the desire to learn more about their tribal nations and heritage, languages, traditional food ways, and art forms.

## **Recreational Activities**

- Need for safe places for the community to convene and engage in positive outlets, especially sports.

## **Racism and Racial Equity**

- Negative stereotyping, discrimination, and bullying continue to serve as barriers for Native youth, especially in the education system and in urban areas.

## ***Emerging Themes from Native American Youth***

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) remains committed to learning from and listening to Native youth, tribal and urban Indian community perspectives. The valuable insight provided by Native youth directs the focus of CNAY's work and is central to dialogues and advocacy efforts with policymakers, federal agencies, tribal organizations, and new stakeholders.

During 2014, CNAY facilitated 25 Native youth roundtable conversations in 13 tribal and urban Indian communities to gather young people's priorities and perspectives on important issues. Through these outreach visits to Indian Country, CNAY connected with approximately 1,400 Native American youth in 2014, bringing our total connections with youth to more than 3,800.

Native youth have a holistic view of their success which includes the importance of equal education opportunities, leading healthy lives, creation of safe environments to live in, cultural preservation, recreational opportunities, and advocating for racial equity. The sections below provide more detail and specifics on the theme topics that youth identified as top priorities.

## **EDUCATION**

Throughout our roundtable discussions, Native youth continually express the importance of quality and equitable education. Successful completion of high school, college readiness, diverse career options, mentors, and the tools to accomplish academic goals were all highlighted by Native youth. This section provides more background on key education themes heard throughout the year.

### ***Pathways to Higher Education***

Many Native American youth believe that education is critical to the well-being of their communities and that higher education is connected to the future success of Indian Country. Some recurring education-related challenges identified during Native youth roundtables were: the need for more information regarding financial aid; tutoring and other forms of academic support; improved access to and encouragement from school administration; family support; and connections to mentors for guidance on navigating higher education as a Native American.

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In many roundtables, Native youth highlighted the need for positive mentors and role models to provide guidance throughout their educational journey. For example, simply talking with someone from their community who has gone through the process of applying to and finishing college has afforded students the support and mentorship to help them succeed. Native youth also identified the financial aid process as a significant barrier. In particular, they cited the need for help in searching for and applying to colleges and scholarships. Some youth expressed feelings of helpless and being overwhelmed by the entire process and did not know where to start.

For those already pursuing a post-secondary degree, college-readiness was cited as a major issue. Many youth felt that their K-12 education did not adequately prepare them for the rigors of higher education and felt unable to deal with subject material and course loads. In addition to difficulty with academics, Native youth also felt that there were not enough culturally appropriate student services, like Native American organizations or tutors. A lack of a Native community on campus made it difficult for some students to adjust to college and being away from home.

Youth in college noted challenges navigating financial aid while in school. For example, some felt intimidated by financial aid offices and confused by the number of different offices they dealt with, in addition to the complexity of maintaining and adhering to scholarship requirements. Specifically, many youth said they had difficulty making an appointment with the financial aid office and completing all of the necessary forms for their various scholarships or other forms of aid, which distracted them from their school work.

In addition to college and university priorities, Native youth express the need for pathways and specific scholarships to enter trade schools and professional fields like agriculture, retail, and sports among others.



**2014 Champion for Change Spotlight:** Keith Martinez (Oglala Lakota) is a college student who works with the Lakota Children's Enrichment, Inc. (LCE) to fight against poverty and increase educational resources available on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

*Learn more about Keith at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).*

### ***Connecting Culture to Education***

Throughout conversations, Native youth made strong connections between culture and academic success. For example, many noted that culturally-focused student services, tribally-run schools in their tribal nation communities, and integrating Native American studies into curriculums, would make an important and positive impact on Native students and their academic performance.

Many youth also express the need for increased diversity among faculty and believe they would benefit, especially in academic performance, from more Native teachers in their schools. Youth often said that they connected better with their Native teachers – especially those who came from their same community.

Tribally-run schools in local communities are also highlighted as a priority and as an effort that would increase student success. Many youth preferred this approach over attending public schools that are often located in off-reservation border towns, where students experience hostility and racism. Youth also noted that schools located in their local communities would cut down on travel time and allow them to focus on their studies and extracurricular activities.

Additionally, youth expressed the need for expanded curriculum in their schools that includes an accurate history of Native Americans. Many youth said that teaching the truth would help inform them and non-Native students, and thus assist with breaking down race-based stereotypes and improve school climate.

Young people said that they often motivate themselves by participating in programs that acknowledge and support their tribal heritage, as well as build upon protective factors like traditional and cultural values. To ensure their success, Native youth would like to have more culturally-based classes or lessons – not just history – to supplement their learning. Roundtable participants suggested art classes, cooking or other traditional lessons.



**2014 Champion for Change Spotlight:** *Lauren McLester-Davis (Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin), a college student, is passionate about providing books to children in need. She co-founded First Book - Greater Green Bay in 2007, a volunteer organization that provides books to children in need. Through fundraising and donations, Lauren has successfully placed over 18,000 new books into the hands of children in need within her community.*

*Learn more about Lauren at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).*

## HEALTH

In every roundtable discussion, health and wellness issues were cited as major priorities for Native youth. Some specific priorities and concerns include: access to health care, including dental and mental health care services; healthy lifestyle promotion; alcohol and substance abuse; suicide prevention; and teen pregnancy. Many youth also cited growing health disparities among Native American youth, including chronic disease and obesity, as major concerns. In addition to the challenges, many Native youth clearly expressed that they believe more funding and support for tribally-driven solutions, including the use of innovative practices, should be a priority.

### *Accessing Healthcare*

Across Indian Country, Native youth consistently identified a lack of access to adequate health care facilities or services as a major concern. Many youth mentioned long waiting lists to receive care, too few health providers – including Native American health providers, as well as limited access to dental, optometry, mental health services. Native youth regularly made connections between the lack of access to care and poor health outcomes for Native youth.

Regarding a lack of access to care in their communities, youth regularly highlighted having to travel long distances to access care. With regard to dental care, a youth from the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians said, “If you don’t have a car that can drive on the highway for a few hours or gas money, then accessing the dental clinic is next to impossible.”

Many youth were also concerned that their tribal or urban Indian health programs would experience funding cuts, meaning that it would be even more difficult to access care in their communities and important services or programs would no longer exist. Youth were especially concerned that much-needed mental health services and suicide prevention programs would be cut, resulting in an increase in suicide attempts among their peers.



Related to dental care, youth participants expressed the need for full-time dentists to be hired in Indian Health Service clinics or in tribal clinics. Some youth even suggested that dental care providers go to schools and incorporate wrap-around services for students because the long waiting lists at the clinic are a major obstacle when seeking medical attention.

Native youth articulated lack of access to health care as a major concern and it catalyzed them into health professions. As a result, many Native youth share an interest in the medical field as a career option because they witness and experience the lack of access, providers, and funding for health care.



**2014 Champion for Change Spotlight:** *Danielle Finn (Standing Rock Nation) is a current law school student, hardworking, and positive role model. She serves as a liaison between her law school and Native students. Danielle volunteers as an after school tutor, and teaches dance in her spare time. She also mentors children within her community and helps address teen pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse issues among Native Youth through her participation on the Mid Dakota Teen Clinic Advisory Board.*

*Learn more about Danielle at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).*

### ***Reducing Substance Abuse***

In nearly every roundtable conversation, Native youth highlighted pervasive substance abuse in their communities and among their peers as a major issue and challenge. Native youth often talk of how easy it is for young people to find and buy drugs and/or alcohol in their communities. Young people consistently discussed the numerous ways that substance abuse negatively impacts their peer's development and the community as a whole.

Youth attributed the high rates of substance abuse to the lack of positive role models within their homes and communities, peer pressure, and the lack of available positive outlets for youth outside of school. When CNAY asked participants about protective factors to avoid substance abuse, youth said that their future goals are the biggest motivation to abstain, as well as recognizing the damage and hurt caused by substance abuse. Sports and clubs were also mentioned as positive outlets that help youth stay away from drugs and alcohol. Native youth view culturally-centered activities such as powwows, sweat lodges and other ceremonies as effective ways to avoid substance abuse, while strengthening their tribal identity. To address substance abuse issues, some youth called for limits on how much alcohol one person can purchase as a way to alleviate the issue. To discourage tobacco use, Native youth have also suggested increasing the age to 21 for individuals purchasing cigarettes.



**2014 Champion for Change Spotlight:** *William Lucero (Lummi Nation), a college student, is part of the Lummi Nation's Teens Against Tobacco Use (T.A.T.U.) group. Through the use of peer-to-peer education, a public service announcement, and an annual "World No Tobacco Day Event," William's peers and the younger generation have become effective enforcers in helping parents who want to stop smoking.*

*Learn more info about William at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).*

### ***Education as Prevention***

Many Native youth expressed that accurate health education could aid in preventing some of the health-related challenges that young people face. Some youth discussed sex education and its importance in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy. Youth also noted that, although suicide is a serious and grave issue in their communities, it has not been made a high priority and many people still feel uncomfortable discussing it, which makes it difficult for prevention programs to succeed. Overall, youth said they believe that prevention services generally, especially for suicide, disease, and substance abuse, would have a positive impact on young people and community members. However, they cautioned that to be effective youth should be involved in the design and implementation of programs.

### **CHILD WELL-BEING AND COMMUNITY WELFARE**

Addressing the distinct needs and priorities of Native foster youth was a priority for participants in a few of the roundtable discussions. For example, youth highlighted the importance of keeping siblings together in Native foster homes or with relatives to provide continuity of culture and community familiarity. Many shared stories of friends or relatives being placed far from their home communities with non-Native families and the negative impact it had on identity and development.

Native foster youth also described a need to improve the public education experience for foster youth, since it is often unwelcoming to Native youth, resulting in racism and re-traumatization. Educational assistance and specific programs in schools for foster youth were highlighted as necessary supports to ensure that youth are successful. For example, programs that help youth transition from one school to another, due to placement changes, were cited as potentially beneficial.



During discussions, Native youth also described the importance of continuous and meaningful relationships with their social workers. Many youth cited strained relationships or irregular contact as contributing to their difficulties in the foster care system. Some youth even made simple suggestions like having social workers send text or Facebook messages to check in with them, especially on significant days like birthdays or the first day of school.

Native youth, including foster youth, often mentioned emotional and mental health supports as necessary for their immediate and long-term well-being. Opportunities to address their concerns with counselors, family or mentors were mentioned in many roundtables. Ultimately,

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Native foster youth identified the importance of staying connected to their Native culture, as well as the need for programs and services that appropriately address their unique needs.

### HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

During roundtables, Native youth often highlighted housing as a major concern and priority – particularly the quality and quantity of houses in their communities. When asked about issues related to overcrowded homes, youth discussed the need to repair and update existing homes and build new homes in Native communities. In addition to new and updated homes, the need for additional infrastructural changes like sewage and water systems was discussed.

Transportation was also mentioned as a priority for Native youth because they need safe, reliable transportation to access health care, afterschool activities and sports, buy groceries, or even just visit family. Native youth participants believe that creating a smooth public transportation system would greatly benefit youth and other members of their communities.

### CULTURAL PRESERVATION

During roundtable discussions, some Native youth spoke passionately about cultural preservation. They expressed the desire to learn more about and increase personal involvement in their tribal culture. Youth were very interested in learning more about their language and culture from elders, and many said that they would like to see more young tribal members practicing their language and traditional life ways. Many youth identified culture and language as protective factors and said increased funding for those programs should be a priority. Youth also highlighted contemporary and traditional arts as important outlets for healthy communities, and expressed the desire to learn more about traditional food systems and how to prepare traditional meals. Numerous participants shared the idea of incorporating traditional and contemporary arts in the educational system. For example, creating a safe place for students to engage in tagging and graffiti could discourage negative behaviors often associated with these art forms like marking housing or public buildings.

Participants also expressed the need for community members to recognize the possible challenges of living in both a traditional and contemporary manner. Living and receiving education in mainstream society while upholding tribal identity is a challenge often experienced by Native youth. Native youth expressed the need to receive support from others in their community to help them further develop identities and connection to culture.



**2014 Champion for Change Spotlight:** *Elizabeth, a college student, is passionate about promoting healthy nutrition and obesity prevention. She is a mentor to youth who struggle with obesity, self-acceptance, nutrition and eating disorders.*

*Learn more info about Elizabeth at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).*

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A top priority heard from young people is the need for more safe places to go outside of school, particularly on the weekends and during summer months. A number of participants mentioned the increase of disruptive gang activity in tribal nation communities is a probable result of the lack of youth programming in communities. Youth expressed concerns about gang activity off-reservation transferring to the reservation. Without positive activities and safe environments, like after-school programs offered in evenings and on weekends, at-risk youth are more likely to turn to gangs as an outlet for their frustrations and source for a sense of a belonging.

During conversations, youth often highlighted their desire for more after-school and weekend cultural, career development, and educational activities. For example, many youth expressed the desire to meet with professionals, learn about potential career paths, and since some students suggested a formal program to facilitate those conversations. Other youth mentioned STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) activities as having a benefit for their education and development.

Youth participants also stressed the desire to see physical activity to both promote healthy lifestyles and provide community members with positive outlets. Native youth convey the importance of sports and athleticism but describe the lack of athletic facilities, equipment, and uniforms as barriers to successfully participating in recreational activities. In roundtable discussions, young Native people mentioned the desire for public athletic areas, especially basketball courts so that the entire community can benefit.

Students would like to integrate more athletics into their school life. Some participants said they would enjoy and benefit from the creation of a skateboarding club at school. Integrating youth hobbies into the education atmosphere could make the school experience more engaging for those with particular passions.

## RACISM AND RACIAL EQUITY

Racism persists and is a barrier for Native youth throughout Indian Country. During 2014 roundtable discussions, Native youth expressed that race-based negative stereotyping is a major issue in the school setting and leads to bullying and discrimination. Native participants noted that in-school bullying between Native and non-Native peoples and cyber-bullying is prevalent. An experience in the southwest was shared of a young Native male having his long braids cut off by non-Native peers during a school bus ride. Youth believed that these racist attitudes and behaviors are especially present in urban areas and common in schools with racist imagery or mascots.

When asked about strategies for dealing with racism, youth responded with resilient, encouraging ideas for cultivating a more positive environment. Many youth expressed these situations as an opportunity to gather strength and motivation, using negative stereotypes as fuel “to prove them wrong” and create a positive path for younger youth to follow. Many participants thought that much of mainstream ignorance and stereotyping stems from a lack of accurate and comprehensive Native American history taught in public schools. As previously mentioned, Native youth strongly believe that education can help combat racism, discrimination and negative stereotypes against Native Americans.

## Conclusion

The Voices of Native Youth Report Volume IV captures youth perspectives, needs, and priorities assembled from 2014 outreach and engagement between the Center for Native American Youth and young Native Americans across Indian Country. The purpose of this report is to highlight current Native youth affairs and amplify direct Native youth voices from tribal nation and urban Indian communities to inform Indian Country advocates and other key stakeholders.

CNAY is committed to advancing meaningful partnerships with tribal nations, urban Indian communities, direct service programs, and Native youth to increase awareness to important matters affecting the lives of young Native Americans. CNAY’s national work and mission to improve the health, safety, and overall well-being of Native American youth are strengthened by its continued involvement with Native youth and allies.

If you have comments, questions, or want to learn more about CNAY’s roundtable visits and initiatives, please connect with us using the information below.



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 Center for Native American Youth

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### ***National Advocacy Efforts***

Throughout 2014, the Center for Native American Youth was successful in elevating Native youth voices into the national dialogue through media outlets. Educating the general public through press and social media is a part of CNAY's advocacy efforts to ensure Native youth perspectives are addressed. Major CNAY media highlights from 2014 are briefly described below and links to the full articles can be found at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).

#### **The Washington Post**

*"The hard lives – and high suicide rate – of Native American children on reservations"*

March 2014

The article focuses on the high rates of suicide among Native American youth and features CNAY's founder and chairman, former US Senator Byron Dorgan. "The children bear the brunt of the misery," Dorgan says, adding that tribal leaders are working hard to overcome the challenges. "But there is no sense of urgency by our country to do anything about it."

#### **The Huffington Post**

*"It's Time for Race-Based Mascots to Go Away"*

September 2014

CNAY's executive director Erin Bailey authored an op-ed highlighting the negative impact of racist mascots and imagery on Native youth and their tribal nation communities. Experiences of Dakota Brown, one of CNAY's 2013 Champions for Change, as a result of Native mascots in the school system are described. Use of Native mascots "create[s] school environments and communities where Native American youth do not feel welcome," says Bailey.

#### **The Washington Post**

*"A good idea for improving dental care that's proved its worth"*

July 2014

In a letter to the editor, Joaquin Gallegos, policy fellow at CNAY, responds to the Washington Post's editorial, "Good hygiene." His letter describes the need for improved oral health care for Native youth and their families and supports innovative solutions developed by tribal nations to provide quality safe care to their communities.

#### **The Huffington Post**

*"Changing the Narrative on Native American Youth"*

November 2014

Native American actor, Chaske Spencer, wrote an op-ed about CNAY's November public event, "Changing the Narrative," in which he was a guest speaker and panelist. Spencer said, through

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film and through storytelling, “I am working to help reshape the way the world sees Native peoples. And young people throughout Indian Country are doing the same each and every day. Whether it's on reservations or in urban Indian communities like Seattle and Denver, young Native Americans, like those involved in CNAY's Champions for Change, are addressing challenges in their communities through positive, youth-led initiatives, by graduating high school and college, becoming leaders, and giving back to their communities, all while changing the perception about Native Americans - especially Native youth.”

### **The Washington Post**

*“Native American kids need more protection, advisory panel tells Holder in new report”*

November 2014

The article described the newly released report by the US Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence entitled [\*“Ending Violence so Children Can Thrive.”\*](#) US Senator Dorgan served as Co-Chair of the committee which developed policy recommendations to the US Attorney General for curbing violence against Native children in Indian Country. “I felt profound sadness for what so many of these children have gone through,” says Dorgan.

### **The Washington Post**

*“How the stories of Native American youths made Obama cry in the Oval Office”*

December 2014

The article highlights the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference and President Obama's announcement of the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiatives, including the National Native Youth Network, a partnership between the Center for Native American Youth, the White House, and Department of the Interior. The article also describes the federal government's responsibility to tribal nations including provision of services that are all too often underfunded. “This should be mandatory funding,” CNAY's founder and chairman, former US Senator Byron Dorgan told The Post. “If you have a treaty and laws, how do you describe it as discretionary funding?”

### **Indian Country Today**

*“Making American Indian Children a Priority”*

December 2014

The article, authored by CNAY's founder and chairman, Byron Dorgan, highlights the partnership between the White House and the Center for Native American Youth, a part of President Obama's Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiatives seeking to better support Native youth. Dorgan recounts his many visits across Indian Country where he was reminded, “of our government's failure to keep its many promises to the First Americans. It doesn't have to remain that way. We can change that!” Spurred from his visit to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, the President is leading positive action to do more help. “We are determined save lives and improve the lives of the children of the first Americans,” says Dorgan.

### ***Shared Resources***

The Center for Native American Youth continues to identify and centralize resources to create pathways to success for young Native Americans and their tribal nation communities. CNAY is dedicated to sharing these opportunities with youth, tribal leaders, teachers, and others; and does so through various communication channels and outreach. Brief descriptions of resource exchange are described below and a full list of resources can be accessed at [www.cnay.org](http://www.cnay.org).

#### ***CNAY Online Resource Center***

*This comprehensive resource collection list scholarships, internships, suicide prevention and health promotion resources for youth, national hotlines; technical assistance information, grant opportunities, and key legislation for tribal nations; and general background and statistics on Native American youth for the general public.*

#### ***CNAY Weekly Emails – Native Opportunities Weekly***

*CNAY broadcasts Native Opportunities Weekly (NOW) emails to share information about current internships, scholarships, and other opportunities for young people in Indian Country. Previous NOW messages with information about exciting opportunities can be found on CNAY's [What's New](#) blog. Sign up [here](#) to join 3,000 Native youth, tribal leaders, parents and others who receive Native Opportunities Weekly.*

#### ***CNAY Monthly E-Newsletter***

*CNAY sends monthly e-newsletters to share program updates and relevant information with more than 3,534 tribal leaders, youth and other partners. Sign up [here](#) to stay up-to-date on CNAY's affairs.*

#### ***CNAY Publications***

*To advance its mission and goals, CNAY produces documents to elevate youth voices and advocate on behalf of Native youth. CNAY publications include "Fast Facts," Native American Youth 101, and numerous white papers on sequestration, Indian child welfare, and other timely subjects Visit [www.cnay.org](http://www.cnay.org) to access CNAY publications.*