



## Voices of Native Youth Report

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# Voices of Native Youth Report: 2012

## *Volume 2*

Center for Native American Youth  
January 2013



## Voices of Native Youth Report

### CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

The Center for Native American Youth, 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. The Center is a policy program within the Aspen Institute, headquartered in Washington DC and overseen in part by a distinct board of advisors.

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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 to improve the lives of Native youth across the country. The Center's board and team 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 and national organizations is critical to the Center's success and impact.

### 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.

Native American youth are the most at-risk population in the United States and face serious disparities in a number of areas. These young Americans often live in communities that have long suffered from high rates of poverty and unemployment, health disparities and substance abuse, domestic violence and child abuse, and crime that includes increase youth gang activity. The shockingly high rate of suicide amongst Native American youth reflects the impact of these combined burdens - **Native American youth have the highest rate of suicide** of any group in the United States – **reaching 3.5 times the national average in recent years**. The Center for Native American Youth seeks to reverse 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 the Center for Native American Youth’s mission and work. The Center’s staff moderates one to two hour conversations with small groups of youth to identify priorities, ask questions about the challenges and successes facing young people and discuss role models, after school activities, and resources that are working and making a difference for young people.



As a part of the conversations, the Center’s team also provides a “resource packet” to share with youth, school administrators, and the community. These resource packets include a tailored list of local tribal organizations, internships, scholarships, technical assistance support, and information about national Indian organizations and federal agencies. After each event, the Center follows up with a written report summarizing conversations with youth, as well as an updated listing of resources that are available to address the specific needs recognized by young people. These meetings are a first-step in developing a meaningful relationship, which inform the

## Voices of Native Youth Report

Center's greater efforts and allow the organization's team to serve as a resource to tribal communities, on-the-ground direct services and most importantly, youth.

### PURPOSE OF VOL. 2 REPORT

The purpose of the Voices of Native Youth Report is to summarize and share what the Center has learned during youth roundtables in tribal and urban Indian communities. The purpose of inviting youth to the table for dialogue is to guide the Center's efforts and make sure that their voices are present at the national level. This report is part of an annual effort to provide current feedback from young Native youth regarding challenges and successes in Indian Country.

#### The Voices of Native Youth Report Volume 2 highlights:

- Key discussion themes from youth roundtables throughout 2012;
- Native youth perspectives on education, suicide prevention, bullying, culture/community, child welfare, racial equity and extracurricular activities;
- Recommendations developed by young Natives that address decision-makers like tribal leaders, federal agencies, policy-makers; and
- Shared resources between the Center, Native youth and/or tribal and urban Indian communities to address the challenges and/or ideas expressed by young Native Americans.



### **SUMMARY: EMERGING THEMES FROM NATIVE YOUTH**

Since the organization issued the Voices of Native Youth Report Volume 1, the Center for Native American Youth has held additional roundtable discussions with youth in New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Florida, California, and Washington, DC – bringing the total youth roundtables to 50 in 12 states with youth representing over 150 tribes.

**The following is a list of the themes and highlights that emerged from the Center’s 2012 roundtable discussions with Native American youth:**

#### **Education**

- In order to become strong candidates for their college application, students want more advanced placement courses.
- Youth want to be successful in school and need more encouragement from peers and family to thrive.

#### **Bullying & Suicide Prevention**

- Native youth know bullying is a problem in their schools and want resources to address the issue.
- Many youth and communities identify suicide prevention as a common priority for their young people and express a desire to address the sensitive subject delicately and maturely.

#### **Connecting to Culture & Community**

- Youth have expressed that culture is a catalyst for overcoming challenges and deterring from risky behavior found in their communities.
- Native youth have shared the need and interest in revitalizing tribal culture and traditions, which they see as a strong driving force for hope across Indian Country.

#### **Extracurricular Activities**

- Youth want more after school programs to combat the negative alternative influences they face in their community.

#### **Racial Equity & Healing**

- Native youth experience racism in their schools and communities, especially urban Indian youth. Youth recommend more efforts to bridge racial stereotypes.

### LISTENING TO NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

The Center remains committed to learning from and listening to Native youth and tribal community perspectives. The valuable insight of Native youth should direct our focus of work as well as be shared with policy-makers, federal agencies, tribal organizations, and new stakeholders. Themes and key issues shared by Native youth in 2012 are described in detail in this section.

#### EDUCATION

For many students planning to pursue higher education, achieving educational success is a concern and students have a number of ideas for attaining their educational goals. Many students expressed they want more advanced courses in high school and encouragement to stay in the classroom and continue their education.

Students told us they understand the lack of access to advanced courses in high school can serve as an obstacle for preparing a competitive application for post-secondary education. In addition to helping with college applications, Native high school students tell the Center they truly want to be challenged in the classroom with these advanced placement classes. Youth roundtable participants from smaller tribal communities expressed a desire to travel and experience life outside of Indian Country. Students went on to share they believe education serves as a vehicle to explore the world beyond their communities by furthering their education or experiences.

Youth often state their chief goal as being successful in school and see graduating from college as a standard mark of success. Although education is noted as a priority across many tribal communities, discussions with parents, school administrations, and staff revealed truancy problems in multiple communities and reports illustrated that some students come to school as little as two days out of the week. During conversations with youth about education, many students from various communities expressed that they feel a lack of motivation to succeed and that Native youth need more encouragement from their families to stay in school. When the Center asked students about what keeps them motivated and in school, aside from family encouragement, many youth told us socializing with their friends and creating that support network.

*“I do not see anything in my way when it comes to achieving educational success.” - California Native youth roundtable*

## Voices of Native Youth Report



For many, the lack of financial resources is often a huge barrier to attaining higher education; however, the Center learned from students that for some tribes who have seen economic success, there remains a lack of motivation due to the financial security provided to Native youth by the tribe. In these situations, community members and tribal leaders have told the Center it can be difficult for their young people to understand the importance of pursuing higher education not only for the experience, travel or success, but also for the well-being of the tribe as a whole. When discussing this unique issue with Native youth, students told the Center they would recommend their tribal leaders develop stronger policies that encourage all tribal members to pursue a higher education before releasing funds to tribal citizens. Ultimately, students recognize and appreciate any educational and financial support provided by their tribal nation, and

students tell us they are grateful for the educational opportunities and ongoing encouragement from their tribal leaders to continue their education for the benefit of their nation.

Many environmental factors, including access to resources and encouragement from support networks, have a strong influence on positive academic performance amongst Native American youth.

### **BULLYING IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**

Bullying is an issue and a youth priority raised in nearly all – from rural to urban – Indian communities the Center visited in 2012. Youth are concerned with bullying because it not only happens face-to-face at school, but students shared examples of bullying online – “cyber-bullying.” Students reported cyber-bullying taking place on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Students also shared that group bullying and aggressive/hurtful text messages are culprits of harassment and victimization amongst peers.

When the Center asked why bullying continues to be a serious issues among their peers, students made the connection between self-esteem, domestic violence and bullying. A student told us that domestic violence is common within the homes in their community and she believes her peers are deeply affected. She went on to say domestic violence leaves youth with feelings of low self-esteem and they end up mimicking the bullying they see in their homes. A solution to bullying

## Voices of Native Youth Report

that many students shared with the Center is avoiding social media outlets and finding the “right crowd” to befriend.



In terms of community environments, youth and program staff from one roundtable conversation told the Center that some elementary students attend their classes in rooms without windows and have limited access to recess or outdoor time. Youth went on to tell the Center they would like to see the school facilities and environment improved. Another concern raised by students in various communities is the vandalism found on structures and playgrounds. During one roundtable, the Center asked students if they

played on the slides and playgrounds, students said they do not use the playgrounds because of profanity on the plastic and that adults hang out at the playgrounds to drink and vandalize the equipment at night. Students tell the Center they would be more inclined to use the playgrounds and other community facilities if more security was available to prevent vandalism and substance abuse.

Many students have shared with the Center that they want to see more security or police patrolling in their tribal and urban Indian communities. Youth, program staff, and tribal leadership state they would like juvenile justice cases addressed in a prevention-oriented and innovative manner as opposed to sending youth to facilities hours away from home or out of state. Community leaders have stated they believe Native youth will benefit from a juvenile justice system that encourages a traditional, holistic approach, which reintroduces these young people back into the community with a support system in place.

### CONNECTING TO CULTURE & RACIAL HEALING

When visiting Native students across Indian Country, the Center came across a common connection - the desire to connect with traditional culture, language, and customs. During a roundtable in Florida, one student told the Center that compared to their peers, “I want to be different.” The student went on to say they turned to their tribal culture to steer them away from trouble. Other students chimed in and said they understand that it is a choice to walk down a positive or negative path, and they



## Voices of Native Youth Report

want to make the right choice not just for their own sake but also for the future of their tribe.

The preservation of Native language is another aspect that resonates with youth in both tribal and urban Indian communities. Native youth expressed the need and desire to learn their respective Native language, which they believe plays an important role in understanding and participating in their traditions, culture, and tribal customs. During all roundtable conversations, Native youth expressed a strong sense of pride about their cultural identity and in many communities, told us they want to see more cultural activities and events on weekends and after school.

In many communities, youth highlighted traditional dances and games as another way to reconnect with their culture. Youth roundtable participants who are engaged in traditional dance groups told the Center they view the dances as a positive outlet for young people in their tribal community. Students expressed immense pride in their dancing and underscored the bond created between all those who participate in a traditional dance groups.

*“We have so much fun playing traditional games. I wish they would last longer because we all have so much fun!” - Oklahoma Native Youth roundtable*

When students speak about connecting with their communities, they are very proud of the service and work that they accomplish during their participation in youth councils or programs. Many youth are interested in creating opportunities to get involved in giving back to local communities and/or other tribes. In some roundtables, students expressed the desire to participate in international efforts and philanthropic giving. Ultimately, Native youth communicate to the Center’s staff they want to be involved in creating solutions to racial healing and opportunities facing their local communities.

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students highlighted that the lack of extracurricular activities as a main contributing factor to the high rates of drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and gang activity found in many tribal and urban Indian communities. In addition to risky behavioral outcomes, many students also tell the Center they feel like they do not have a safe place to stay or visit after school. Some students identified that the youth centers in their communities are geared towards younger children and feel at a loss because there are no activities for teenage youth.

Drugs and alcohol abuse amongst Native youth is a common theme heard across various age groups and communities. When asked why the issue exists, students tell the Center it is because “there is nothing to do!” They also describe how easy it is to obtain drugs and alcohol in their communities. Students as young as third grade volunteered stories about where youth in the community go to do drugs and engage in gang activity. A group of youth told the Center the best

## Voices of Native Youth Report

way to steer away from substance abuse and other risky behaviour is finding good groups of friends, connecting with role models (“like an older sibling”), or being involved in sports or other activities in the community.

Along with drugs and alcohol abuse, the Center has been hearing about the high volume of gang activity in many of the communities. Youth reported finding out about gangs at ages as young as six and eight years old. In some communities, students share that gangs are one of the top issues facing students and they proceed to tell us that students as young as grade school get involved in these gangs. The high rates of gang involvement among Native youth could correlate with the lack of engaging youth activities available in tribal or urban Indian communities.

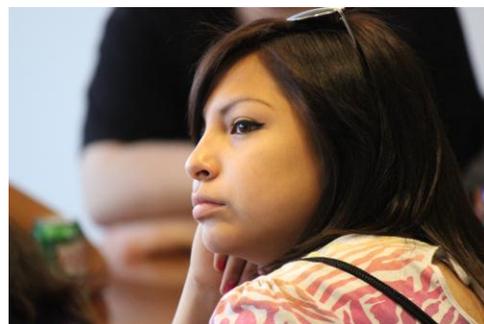
“I had to step out of the picture and look at it to decide gang participation was not for me.” - Florida Native youth roundtable

It is a reoccurring theme that Native youth need healthy outlets in order to abstain from unhealthy activities. Many students are motivated to find resources and communicate their needs with school administrations and communities so they can create safe places and alternative activities for their peers.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION

When discussing serious issues and Native youth priorities, it is common for youth to highlight suicide and the need for more prevention activities. During one youth roundtable, a student told the Center that the majority of families in her community have experienced a loss by suicide. From these honest conversations, it is clear students are aware of the issue of suicide in the community and see this as a major issue facing Native youth and families. Further, Native students demonstrated the willingness and urgency to create and utilize resources to combat the epidemic and help save the lives of their peers. The Center continues to hear that students and teachers want to access suicide prevention trainings so they are equipped with the skill set to identify warning signs and help an individual connect to additional first aid response resources.

During one youth roundtable discussion, the Center highlighted one of the local Native youth resources that community leaders described in a previous meeting. The Center asked the students if they utilize any of these youth services and the youth told us they had never heard about the programs in the



## Voices of Native Youth Report

community. It is important to highlight the potential disconnect between resources and Native youth because when offering youth-related tools, it is vital to create effective strategies to appropriately communicate the availability of services and resources; however, the Center has also heard access to resource success stories from youth. When asked about the availability of suicide prevention trainings during a youth roundtable, the students immediately identified the local suicide prevention program and told us they enjoyed training activities because of the positive impact on their personal lives and well as their peers and tribe.

Although youth have expressed feeling sad during suicide prevention programming and curriculum, many Native youth also talk about wanting to be part of the solution to combat the suicide epidemic. Collectively, students say suicide can be an uncomfortable issue but want it addressed in a delicate manner. It is clear that suicide prevention is a priority for Native youth and they tell us it is important for adults to work with young people to find appropriate methods that teach them how to discuss, prevent and combat this sensitive issue.

### RACISM AND RACIAL EQUITY

Young people, especially those in urban Indian communities, have also expressed they often feel a target of racism at school because of being Native American. They encounter non-Native peers within their schools and communities who negatively stereotype them because of their race. The youth feel there is a lack of education about Native American history, culture and general awareness of cultural diversity in their schools. Students say they want help in educating their peers about Native American cultures and traditions to help address and demystify any stereotypes made against tribal youth.

In communities where tribal dividends are given to tribal members, youth told the Center they feel targeted pressure from non-Native peers to purchase drugs and alcohol because other youth stereotype them as being from a wealthy tribe. These youth roundtable participants expressed they need support and assistance from school administrators in order to create a comfortable space and platform for peer-to-peer education. It is clear that stereotypes and racism is a top concern and challenge faced by many Native youth from diverse tribal and urban Indian communities.

*“I hate being stereotyped at school because of the color of my skin and the wealth of my tribe.” - California Native youth roundtable*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NATIVE YOUTH



In addition to the general youth roundtable conversations in Indian Country, the Center for Native American Youth collaborated with the **National Indian Health Board (NIHB)** and **Healthy Native Communities Partnership (HNCP)** for the second annual Native Youth Track in Denver, Colorado. During this Track, the Center facilitated a Rez Café/roundtable session to create a dialogue about health and wellness from the Native youth perspective, as well as to share ideas about possible solutions to priority areas.

During the three-day event, thirty-five American Indian and Alaska Native youth worked together to create twelve digital stories to share their thoughts on suicide prevention, bullying, the differences between urban Indians and non-urban Indians, diabetes, and other topics. These short stories were shared with over 700 tribal leaders who attended the National Indian Health Board’s Annual Consumer Conference in Denver, Colorado. In addition to digital storytelling and the Rez Café/roundtable conversation, youth participants created recommendations (listed below) to share with policy makers and the President of the United States.

#### AI/AN Youth Recommendation Statements:

#### “TO MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN INDIAN COUNTRY, AI/AN YOUTH RECOMMEND THAT YOU...”

Use funding for better health care and education for tribes. Native Americans have treaties that address these issues and we recommend honoring those treaties. Native Americans have been disrespected and mistreated. We want to be respected.

We need you to stop the sale of alcohol on and near tribal reservations.

We need better medical care and need the right to budget our own monies as we see fit.

Urban Environments need Indian Health Services facilities.

We need access to healthy and fresh foods.

We need help with creating greenhouses/community gardens, and fitness centers.

We recommend respecting our culture and traditions when addressing our needs. Do not forget about us.

## Voices of Native Youth Report

We recommend that you encourage traditional healing along with modern methods of healing.
We recommend that you create more health care options and health care providers to help middle and lower classes.
Native youth recommend that you visit tribal areas, tribal members and Native youth to better understand our challenges and successes.
Listen and learn more about American Indian and Alaska Native history.
To make a positive change in health and wellness in Indian Country, Native American youth recommend that you help with funds for better housing, upgrade the Indian Health Services (IHS), educational funding, youth centers, and tribal economic growth.

### SHARED RESOURCES

During the Center’s travels and visits to tribal or urban Indian communities, the Center invites youth, tribal leaders, programs to use the Center as a resource for identifying opportunities that will positively impact young people in Indian Country. Following roundtable conversations, the Center provides a short report to the community, respectfully summarizing the conversations with youth. In addition to the reports, the Center also provides ideas for resources to help address the specific challenges Native youth face in their respective communities. Below is a list of example resources highlighted within roundtable reports for Native youth and Indian communities.

#### **BULLYING RESOURCES:**

**THRIVE (Tribal Health Reaching out InVolves Everyone)** is a project funded through the Indian Health Service that has created and made available new bullying resources for tribes and youth. The free resources (posters and fact sheets) are available for download to promote positive messages that help build an awareness campaign against bullying and cyber bullying, as well as preventing suicide. Sharing these resources with student councils, schools, youth groups and wellness centers could help spread the word about standing up against bullying. THRIVE is based out of based out of Portland, Oregon.

The Center also shares successful examples of students and schools creating their own unique “positive message” through mediums such as Public Service Announcements (PSA) - which

## Voices of Native Youth Report

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allows youth to use their creativity to stand up against bullying and share a strong and positive message with their friends. A few examples of Native youth PSA's against bullying include:

- *“Stand Up Against Bullying in Indian Country,”* by Indian Health Board of Nevada Youth Advisory Council and National Museum of American Indian in Washington, DC;
- *“I Got Culture PSA,”* by NativeSTAND Youth Conference in Chehalis, WA in Summer 2009; and
- *“More than that...,”* by Todd County High School students from Rosebud Sioux Reservation.

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION RESOURCES:**

The **Indian Health Service’s Behavioral Health Department** collaborated with the **Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board** to release a new media campaign, “I strengthen my Nation” to help Native youth resist drugs and alcohol. The campaign empowers Native youth to resist drugs and alcohol and motivates parents to talk openly to their children about this issue. Visit <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Behavioral/> to find fact sheets, brochures, posters featuring Twilight actor Chaske Spencer.

**We R Native** out of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board is a comprehensive health and wellness resource website made for and by Native American Youth. The website offers health resources substance abuse, including helping a friend with a drinking problem, information about self-medicating with alcohol or drugs, and other videos or blogs about how to handle issues surrounding drug and alcohol with Native youth peers. More information is available at <http://www.wernative.org/TopicDetails.aspx?Id=17&type=PhysicalHealth>

### **GANG PREVENTION RESOURCES:**

**Juvenile Justice Resource:** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Tribal Youth Program (TYP) within the Department of Justice is a great resource for the tribe in addressing delinquency control and prevention efforts to improve the juvenile justice system for Native youth. The TYP website has helpful information including grants and funding, research and evaluation efforts, training and technical assistance and other resources. The Center could be helpful in connecting the tribe with contacts at the TYP if further assistance is requested. <http://www.ojjdp.gov/typ/overview.html>



## Voices of Native Youth Report

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### **HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES:**

During roundtable conversations the Center shares information about our one-stop shop resource center created to help Native youth access and navigate the many resources and tools available to make higher education a reality. In addition to locating funding sources for college, students will also find a comprehensive list of youth organizations, internships and fellowships for resume building, and Tribal Colleges & Universities and Native studies programs. We invite students to visit the Center’s “For Youth” resource page to learn more: <http://cnay.org/ForYouth.html>  
Examples of programs geared toward Native youth and higher education include:

The **American Indian Summer Institute in Computer Sciences** is a free, two-week summer program for students to develop interactive story projects that combine computer game technology with traditional American Indian culture.

The **LEAD Summer Business Institute** is a 3 week college prep program for Native American high school juniors and is located at Stanford University, Duke University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Pennsylvania.

The **American Science and Engineering Society (AISES)** is a society that works to increase American Indian and Alaska Native representation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Program for students, professionals, mentors and leaders are available. More information can be found at: [www.aises.org](http://www.aises.org)

### **OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL:**

It is never too early to start thinking about college. The **Turkish Coalition of America** offers scholarships to eligible undergraduate and graduate Native American students who are interested in studying abroad in Turkey. You can read more about this exciting program at [http://www.tc-america.org/scholarship/scholar\\_minority.html](http://www.tc-america.org/scholarship/scholar_minority.html).

**College Horizons** is a pre-college summer program for Native American high school juniors and seniors. Participating colleges and universities include Columbia University, Fort Lewis College, Duke University, University of Notre Dame and more. A full list of schools and program information is available at the College Horizon’s website: <http://www.collegehorizons.org/>.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY RESOURCES:**

There are many organizations, councils and summer program opportunities available to Native American youth. Please visit the **Center’s resource page** (<http://cnay.org/ForYouth.html>) for a



## Voices of Native Youth Report

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full list of programs and councils available for Native youth. We also encourage students to sign up for the weekly **Native Youth Listserv** emails, which share information about scholarships, internships, and other exciting opportunities for young people in Indian Country. Examples of extracurricular activity resources include:

**United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY)** is an organization dedicated to encouraging young people to use their combined talents and energy to address major concerns facing Native youth today. Youth are able to design and promote their own programs to fit youth needs—including councils that serve as an after school extracurricular activity. Comprehensive youth council descriptions and resources are available at [www.unityinc.org](http://www.unityinc.org).

The Center for Native American Youth recently announced the launch of **Champions for Change**, a spin-off of a White House initiative, designed to recognize and encourage Native youth who are creating positive change in their tribal or urban Indian communities. The application is now available and five finalists will be selected to be recognized at a 2013 spring event AND youth will be invited to serve a two-year term on the Center's new Youth Advisory Council. Read more about the program at [http://cnay.org/Champions\\_for\\_Change.html](http://cnay.org/Champions_for_Change.html).

### **TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION RESOURCES:**

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) created a webinar entitled “**Selecting Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs for Native American Youth**.” This helpful webinar is available on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibFu7UKrC\\_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibFu7UKrC_s) FYSB provides more information about how tribal communities are benefiting from adolescent pregnancy prevention programs. More information from this bureau is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/success-story/native-teen-pregnancy-launch>.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES:**

Suicide prevention efforts can be as diverse as the 566 federally-recognized tribes in Indian Country. Prevention can be identified as trainings, programs, curriculums as well as other community efforts. At the Center we are continuing to identify impactful “suicide prevention” initiatives and in our first year we have created an ever-evolving one-stop shop resource center for youth and tribes to share these types of resources. Please visit [www.cnay.org](http://www.cnay.org) for a full comprehensive list and contact the Center if the community needs help connecting with any one resource. Examples of specific suicide prevention resources include:

## Voices of Native Youth Report

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- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free, 24-hour hotline, dialed at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
- **SafeTALK**, about three hours in duration, is a training that prepares anyone over the age of 15 to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.
- The **Suicide Prevention Resource Center** created an American Indian/Alaska Native page, with a newsletter called the Weekly Spark, which offers Suicide Prevention Online Training.
- The National Indian Child Welfare Association created a youth suicide prevention toolkit for tribal child welfare program entitled, “**Ensuring the Seventh Generation.**” The toolkit includes cultural approaches to prevention and community healing.

### **CENTER HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS:**

In addition to increasing access to opportunity by creating a one-stop shop resource center, the Center is also continuing to identify and shine a spotlight on successful Native youth initiatives - Center Highlight Programs. Throughout the year, the Center highlights an impactful Native youth initiative or program to continue our efforts to raise awareness to successful programming in Indian Country. The Center also connects Highlight Programs with one another to help create a network of impactful youth initiatives to foster support, ideas, and meaningful connections. Please see the full list of Highlight Programs below:

- **The Indian Health Care Resource Center (IHCRC) of Tulsa Youth Program** offers a variety of activities and programming to improve the health and enrich the culture of Indian children in the community. Such efforts include Native Cultural Summer Camps to explore local tribal cultures; the Fit Kids Healthy Futures camps to focus on physical activity, nutrition, and diabetes prevention; and an after school program to help with homework, physical activities, and gardening.
- **The BEAR (Be Excited About Reading) Project** is a literacy outreach program for youth and families on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The BEAR Project’s mission is to empower the youth, families and other community members from all walks of life to make positive choices and improve the lives of Indian people.

## Voices of Native Youth Report

- **Sunka Wakan Ah Ku Program - Bringing Back the Horses in Dakota Language** is a program grounded in Dakota culture and history, and is located in eastern North Dakota on the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation. The program’s main objective is to offer tools for juvenile offenders to reduce delinquency and the likelihood of repeat offenders.
- **The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project**, located on the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico, mission is to promote the development of healthy lifestyles and self-esteem among Zuni youth by providing the opportunity to engage in enriching, educational, and challenging programs designed for ongoing, positive youth development.
- **Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP)** serves more than 370 member families on the Cheyenne River Reservation in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. CRYP tailors its grassroots initiatives to the specific needs of the Cheyenne River community by offering not only after-school activities, but also family programs to help foster healthy choices and lifestyles.
- **InterTribal Sports (ITS)** is a non-profit consortium of 19 tribes and tribal organizations based in southern California. ITS serves more than 1,000 Native youth through programs that promote physical activity, cultural awareness, sportsmanship, self-esteem, education, and delinquency prevention.
- **NVision** is a national organization, based in Oklahoma, using the expressions of art, culture, education and media as a tool to promote and foster Native youth leadership and development.

### CONCLUSION

The Voices of Native Youth Report Volume 2 summarizes the key themes, concerns, and ideas generated from ongoing roundtable conversations with the Center for Native American Youth and young Native Americans from across the nation. The purpose of the report is to help inform Native youth and Indian Country advocates and other key stakeholders about the diverse concerns, priorities, and ideas raised directly by young people in Indian Country.

Each roundtable and community site visit contributes to the Center’s national work and mission – to improve the health, safety, and overall well-being of Native American youth. The Center values and prioritizes listening to communities, engaging in consistent diplomatic efforts, and is committed to maintaining meaningful partnerships with direct service programs, tribes, and their children as an on-going effort to bring awareness to Native youth.



## **Voices of Native Youth Report**

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If you have a comment, question, or want to learn more about the Center's travels and upcoming initiatives, please contact us at the information provided below.

### **Center for Native American Youth**

One Dupont Circle, NW Suite 700

Washington, DC 20026

Phone: (202) 736-2905

Email: [cnayinfo@aspeninstitute.org](mailto:cnayinfo@aspeninstitute.org)

Website: [www.cnay.org](http://www.cnay.org)

Facebook: Center for Native American Youth

Twitter: Center4Native