

OPINION / COMMUNITY



DON
DECKER
From the Editor

My Opinion

This issue of the community newsletter is about Yavapai-Apache Nation youth. I had an opportunity to spend about 12 days with our youth as they ran across 4 states in the upper Midwest across the prairies in latter part of June. Do not ever doubt the veracity and commitment shown by our youth and as evidenced by their running for miles and miles in the 500 mile Sacred Run in Lakota country. I for one, was made a believer. They are positive thinkers, they have respect for others and know how to work together as a team. My hats off to the social service department for bringing this opportunity to our youth so that they could participate.

And in the summer youth work program, Nina Sanchez is coordinating some great activities for some of the same youth who went on the South Dakota trip. It's about learn-

ing how to work and to learn about the special traits of staying on task while on the job. These WIOA (Work Innovation Opportunity Act) work experience participants traveled extensively as well helping with various cultural events, learning how to make tortillas and basically keeping busy all summer including swimming in Fossil Creek east of Camp Verde in the mountains.

The same with the recreation program with Mina Eppinger who organized great activities for the children and teens throughout the summer. What Indian nation studies Geography for the summer? Our kids did with the recreation program.

And to the culture departments of the Nation who added to the offerings to allow the youth to interact with their cultural mentors in various settings. YAN youth-future leaders!

YAN's summer youth work experience participants tour the White Mountains



WIOA participants get ready to set up camp in Show Low on a recent outing.

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

Nina Sanchez, program coordinator for the WIOA (Work Innovation Opportunity Act) for the Nation wanted to conduct a different type of a summer work experience program for the summer work program for the teens so she added a cultural com-

ponent which has given much exposure of cultural activities for the participants.

First, it was a trip to the Pai Festival and the Yuman Language Conferences both held on the Hualapai Nation during the month of June where the WIOA participants assisted with the conference by

helping out in various capacities. It was also an opportunity to camp out.

From July 10-14 second session, WIOA workers went on a tour of the White Mountain Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona visiting with Apache people

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Nation firefighters on the frontline.

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

From Utah in June and now the big fires in Black Canyon City labeled the 'Brooklyn Fire' north of Phoenix and the 'Hatchery Fire' in Nevada plus the 'Surprise Fire'

in the mountains east of Peach Springs in early July, the YAN Nation fire crew have been busy putting out fires.

These are trained firefight-

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Taking care of the river

BY VIVIAN STEVENS,
YAN-EPA/Environmental Specialist

The Verde River has been the life line for the Yavapai-Apache Nation throughout history. Because of population growth the river itself and adjoining banks and land have become infested with invasive plants and wildlife. The Nation's Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received funding from BIA Invasive Wildlife Program to identify and begin removal of invasive species. We gathered data and will begin preparing for a management plan which will include removal of invasive wildlife and their habitat without disturbance of native plants and wildlife. A work



EPA teams learn together. (L) Chase Choate from Quechan Nation in Yuma with Damien Baca, Donny Norris and Jason Fuller from YAN-EPA department

group was formed to identify what reptiles, amphibians, mammals and

fish are in the Verde River. Data was recorded out in the field on types, quantities, locations, and habitat of species. This data will help lead to a management plan that is realistic to our Nation's land. The EPD worked early and late hours to gather data. We look forward to a management plan to help bring back our native plants and animals to where it used to be. We are in the process of looking for more funding to complete this project. We thank the council, tribal departments and community members for your continued sup-



EPA crew members set metal traps for inventory.

port in what we all do to help protect our people, animals, water, and land. Any question or comments contact the YAN Environmental Protection Department /Vivian Stevens @ 928-649-6952

Nation's member completing doctorate degree from Arizona State University

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

Former director of social services for the Yavapai-Apache Nation Tahnee Baker is finalizing her doctoral dissertation that will meet her requirement for a doctoral degree in the School of Social Work from Arizona State University. She visited Middle Verde recently where she is enrolled.

Mrs. Baker is the daughter of Mary Sine Williams of Middle Verde and the late Lee Williams, a Navajo originally from Teesto, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. Mrs. Baker has a proud heritage of Yavapai, Apache and Navajo as she is the proud grand-daughter of the late David Sine also of Middle Verde and the late Alice McIntosh Sine, of San Carlos.

"My clans are Road Runner and Towering House," she says and her roots go back to the place where she was born-San Carlos, Arizona. The Bakers currently reside in Chandler and they have three children ages 15, 9 and 8. They also have two God-daughters

through the Apache Sunrise Dance ceremony.

Mrs. Baker graduated from Tempe High School in 2001 and started her higher education at Gateway Community College and eventually transferred to Arizona State University to obtain a Bachelors Degree in Justice and Social Inquiry in 2006 followed by a Masters Degree in Social Work in 2010. She spent 2 years with the Yavapai-Apache Nation from September, 2010 to July, 2012 as a social worker and completed a partial directorship of the Department of Social Services before departing for Arizona State University in August 2012 where she began her doctoral program and with hopes to successfully defend her dissertation in Spring 2018. Mrs. Baker is proud of the educational accomplishments within her family, with both parents and brother graduating with Bachelors degrees and her husband who just graduated with a Masters degree this spring, all from Arizona State University. In February



Tahnee Baker is completing her doctoral dissertation to complete her requirements at Arizona State University School of Social Work

of this past year, she received permission from the Nation's council to conduct a qualitative research study with YAN tribal members who have graduated from college.

So far she has passed some hurdles within her program in addition to getting permission to conduct the research with YAN college graduates. "I approached the tribal council to tell them about my plans to study members of the Nation. A resolution was conducted and passed. The tribal council asked some great questions and supported my study and overall goals" she says

with confirmation from the Attorney General's office.

"The study is about college graduates who have obtained a Bachelor's degree living both on and off the reservation. I will be speaking with individuals about their educational experiences and their knowledge of tribal history and how all that relates to where they are at now. I am collecting the data right now and I will be done by September (fall 2017) and start my analysis and hopefully have a draft of the entire the dissertation written by the end of the year," she said. Mrs. Baker states the Nation has a rich history which may or may not play a significant role in the current lives of its members and these are the stories and experiences she will be honoring in the dissertation. She stated her dissertation proposal, or study plan is already 75 pages of her own writing, which will be incorporated into the final dissertation.

The study is entitled "Exploration of Historical Trauma among Yavapai-Apache Nation College

Graduates." Mrs. Baker is the co-investigator under the direction of principal investigator Dr. Elizabeth Segal, PhD and Professor with the ASU School of Social Work, as well as Dr. Myla Vicenti-Carpio and Dr. Cindy Sangalang. Mrs. Baker is proud and thankful to have strong female mentors to guide her through her academic journey.

Mrs. Baker states that the study of cultural impact on the educational processes of indigenous people is not a new area of investigation and cites previous studies conducted 20 years ago with the indigenous people of Australia and other indigenous communities.

Mrs. Baker is also incorporating Indigenous research methodologies within the dissertation. Essentially, these methods ensures the research of Indigenous communities honors the people, experiences, land and Indigenous way of life. Conducting the study in this way is important to Mrs. Baker as she enters the small circle of American Indian scholars.

There are many variables that Mrs. Baker is studying, most importantly, she wishes to highlight the strengths of American Indian people which help in obtaining goals on a personal and community level.

To the average lay person, this study seems very complicated but to Mrs. Baker she finds solace in knowing that she may uncover new grounds into contributing factors which promotes or impedes the success and healing for American Indian communities. Mrs. Baker expresses her gratitude to the YAN tribal council, administration and community members for their support and valuable contribution to her academic journey. She views education as an important tool to help her people and encourages others to always strive for success. If you are interested in learning more about this study, Mrs. Baker can be reached via email at yan.asu.study@gmail.com or at 520-789-6480.