

COMMUNITY NEWS

National Youth Food Summit Hosted at Tunlii on Yavapai-Apache Nation

BY SEBRA CHOE,
Economic Development
Project Manager, Town of
Camp Verde

“Phenomenal, majestic, serenity, relaxing . . .” these are the one-word reflections the participants of the Youth Food Sovereignty Summit called out into the night, as they gazed upon the stars from Slim Shady trail in Sedona on Saturday, October 19, 2019. Fourteen youth from Chinle Navajo, Gila River, San Carlos Apache, and Hualapai tribes gathered at the Tunlii Community Center last weekend for a mini-summer camp event sponsored by the Intertribal Agricultural Council (IAC), centering on indigenous foods, agricultural practices, and tribal stories.

The IAC worked with Yolanda Trujillo, YAN Agriculture Resource Manager, to custom design the summit and host the event at Tunlii. According to their website, the IAC is a “non-profit, Tribal membership organization, serving all tribal producers and communities across the country, established in 1987 to pursue and promote conservation, development and use of Indian agricultural resources for the betterment of Indian communities.” They are funded by money from



Ice breaker activity with agriculture youth meeting .

Photos & video: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/EJx5LPf9FWTeMjNe8>

the Keepseagle settlement held in federal trust, awarded in the amount of \$47 million in 2014, according to IAC newcomer Matthew Denetclaw, Navajo Region Technical Assistant Specialist.

Summit participants included high school and college age students, such as Padgley Gonzales from University of Arizona’s Agriculture Economics program. “I want to serve the Gila River Indian Community with my degree,” said Gonzales. Brianna Perez, a high school senior from San Carlos said, “I was at a har-

vest festival and saw a flier for the event, so I asked my friend [Cristen Wilson] to come with me. . . I didn’t have any interest in agriculture, I just thought it would be fun to go somewhere for the weekend.” No matter the reasons that brought them, the group immediately bonded over traditional experiences, such as: stick ball, mesquite bean grinding with a metate and mano, hot mesquite tea sweetened with local agave syrup, mesquite flour pancakes, jewelry-making with yucca fibers, and hiking under the stars.

YAN Wilderness

Program Manager Monica Marquez and staff, along with the Utilities, Diabetes, and Agriculture departments partnered with the IAC to achieve a hands-on educational event bursting with youthful laughter and delight. Zachary Ilberty, IAC Leadership Development Specialist, leads youth programs like the Youth Food Sovereignty Summit in 12 regions across the nation, each specially crafted with the local staff. “I believe there are about 23 IAC staff across the nation. There is only one IAC staff member in Arizona, Teresa

Honga, Western Region Technical Assistance Specialist,” said Denetclaw. “I’m headquartered in Hualapai country in Kingman, but we are on the road 80% of the time.” said Honga. “We hope to come back more often and do another event with the Yavapai-Apache Nation next year.”

In an ice breaker memory game, students had to recall everyone’s name and animal. From left to right, pictured:

Zach the zebra, Sammy the snake, MacKenzie Martinez the monkey (IAC Partnership

Communications Intern), Barbara Lee (Chinle High School Agriculture Teacher), Padgely the penguin, Brianna the black bear, Matt the meerkat, Cristen the cat, Nina the newt, Lola the lion, Molina the mountain lion, Monica Marquez (YAN Wilderness Program Manager), Cass Stouder the cheetah (YAN Wilderness Program), Shelby the snail, Wrytt the walrus, Zenida the zoo, Jasmine the jellyfish, Taleah the turkey, and Teresa the tiger.



Group photo of Agriculture students



Making mesquite bean pancakes from scratch.

‘Trunk or Treat’ Halloween event draws many goblins and tricksters to the ball park on October 14.



Halloween Costumes



Halloween participants.



Halloween games.



Day Care