STORYTELLER

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS Indian Education Newsletter September / October 2023

Native American College Career Tribal Resource Fair 2023

On September 16, 2023, over 450 people came together to make new connections, gather information, and formulate ideas to help students plan for THEIR FUTURE!

College, work opportunity, and tribal resource representatives came to meet with students and their families to share important information. The event was from 9 am to noon and gave people plenty of time for discussions. There were plenty of prizes and everyone walked away with something. The most important "take away" was information to plan for their future. Here are a couple of inspiring stories from this event:

- *One of the representatives at the UNM reported that she had attended this event two years ago. She met representatives from the UNM American Indian Students Services and connected with them. She has been at UNM for two years, and is now volunteering at the event to connect with more seniors.*
- *Another student, who is autistic, shared he had concerns about employment. He connected with an automotive repair certificate program. He has already started mentoring with one of the employees and is learning how to fix cars when he is not*

Mission

By working together with schools, parents, and communities, APS Indian Education Department develops enhanced and supportive Indigenous educational opportunities for Am erican Indian/ Alaska Native students by increasing knowledge of Native values through teaching language and cultural differences.

Meet Michael Garcia: Jobs for America (JAG) Specialist at Del Norte High School

Michael Garcia is thrilled to join the Native American Education Department as a resource and JAG teacher at Del Norte High School. As a 23-year humanities teacher within Albuquerque Public Schools, Mr. Garcia has honed his passion for education.

Mr. Garcia holds multiple master's degrees in education and curriculum development. Notably, Michael is a specialist in innovative project-based learning techniques, aiming to inspire creativity and critical thinking.

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Garcia spends time with his awesome wife and two teenage children. Additionally, when he's not teaching, he fully embraces his passions for cycling and jazz drumming.

Amber Reno, JAG Specialist at Cibola High School Won two national recognition awards:

Amber Reno has been a JAG Specialist with APS since 2020. She was awarded two national awards:

- Outstanding JAG Specialist
- 6 of 6 Program Award (*This is JAG's Highest Award which means that outcomes met or exceeded all JAG standards*).

Part of the outcomes is following students one year after graduation. JAG students who were part of the graduating class of 2022 were either employed and/or enrolled in post-secondary education one year after graduation.

JAG is a program that offers leadership training, development and workplace competencies, exposure to post-secondary academic and career opportunities. Three students last year had paid internships that led to full time employment after graduation. This year, several students are connected with the Notah Begay III. They are developing their own community service projects, which will be funded by the Notah Begay Foundation. Through job shadowing, career and leadership conferences, multiple guest speakers, students connect to people and opportunities.

SENIOR INFORMATION NIGHT

Every October, Sara Money, the College Career Readiness Counselor for the Indian Education Department, shares important information with seniors and their parents. This information helps students prepare for what they are going to do after graduation. Close to 70 people attended to learn about:

- Career Exploration
- How much money a person needs to earn to live the lifestyle he or she wants Apprenticeship programs
- Work Opportunities
- Military Opportunities (ASVAB)
- Colleges
- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Assistance)
- Scholarships
- Seals & Stole award

If you would like information about these resources visit: https://www.aps.edu/indian-education/resources/college-and-career-resources

Left: Mila Padilla, Zuni Language Teacher, and Right: Charlene Smiley, Navajo Language teacher

SEALS & STOLE AWARD

The Seals & Stole award is an exclusive award for Native American seniors. Students need to earn at least one seal to receive the stole. There are three opportunities:

Indian Education Tribal Seal: Students MUST submit an essay about themselves and their tribe. Create a google slide presentation, and put together a tribal demonstration. It can be dance, music, food, quilt work, storyteller, etc.

- **Distinguished Learning Seal:** Students MUST complete 30 hours of volunteer service and write an essay and create a Google slide presentation about their volunteer work.
- **Native American Bilingual Seal:** Students MUST complete Navajo I and II or Zuni I and II. Must be able to present language knowledge to a panel of judges.

For more information and for the application visit:
https://www.aps.edu/indian-education/programs/recognitions-and-awards/seals-and-stole-award

FORT UNION

On September 28, 2023, fifty-two students and five chaperones (Millie Chiquito, John Williams, Shannon Johnson, Charlene Smiley, and Swanson Martinez) went to the US National Park, "Fort Union," located in Watrous, New Mexico for an educational fieldtrip. Some of the students were from Ms. Chiquito's Navajo class at Atrisco Heritage and West Mesa, others were from John Williams' class at Albuquerque High School. Students arrived at 6:45 am to board the buses and they got to enjoy hot Blake's burritos for breakfast. The experience for Atrisco Heritage was cultured through a western perspective. As students took the tour of the park, they talked with the tour guide and shared the Native American side with the tour guide. When the students ended the tour, they felt culturally influenced as they heard more stories about our ancestors and their involvement at the Fort.

Although students were satisfied with what we had been exposed to, they also felt the experience didn't fully capture the Native American heritage that was in acquaintance to both the other tribes, western soldiers, and the fort. As we left the park students were told to answer three questions that were asked prior to exiting the bus. Most of the students were able to answer the questions assertively because we had left acquiring more knowledge than we had entered the park with. They also learned the western notion about the conditions, lifestyles, and treatment of the Native community there at fort union during the 1800's. After the tour, the students got to enjoy Subway sandwiches for lunch and they went to Santa Fe Plaza to view various indigenous arts and traditional sculptures. It was a GREAT DAY!

One of the students from West Mesa High School, "Xavier Silver" interviewed different students to get their opinions of the trip. "*As a class we learned that Natives, Hispanics, and Comanche people lived on New Mexico land before the U.S soldiers came. Soldiers from Fort Union would embroider their rifle; officers had to get approval from their commanding officer if they wanted to marry a servant or laundress. They would shoot a cannon every night on the parade ground. They were 3 different posts built. We also learned how the Natives lived in Fort Union, what the conditions were, and how they were treated."* All of this information and experiencing it in person, opened the student's eyes of how hard it was for them. Some of the students said it was an important part of history. Being present there spiritually connected students to their ancestors and history. It was life changing for others.

Cibola Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Career Association Initiation and Installation

During the first semester of every school year, the JAG Career Association formally inducts student members and officers. On October 27, 2023 they held their annual event at Cibola High School in the lecture hall.

Guest speakers included Carisa Yazzie-Gonzalez and Sihasin Nazbaa. Carisa shared that after high school, she joined the military, which allowed her to travel to various parts of the county and world. When she returned home, she became an advocate for indigenous communities, specifically for young people. Carisa inspired JAG students to use their voices.
Siihasin is an APS and UNM graduate who experienced homelessness throughout high school and the first two years of college. Despite these challenges, and with the support of loving teachers, Siihasin experienced great success, emphasizing how important it is for young people to find their support systems. Siihasin currently gives back as a land and water protector and through substantial and regular contributions to mutual aide.

Left to right:: Carisa Yazzie-Gonzalez, Jazmine Mitchell (JAG Association President), Sihasin Nazbaa.'

Cibola High School's new principal, Kimberley Finke, provided a warm welcome to the 2023-2024 JAG students. Her passion for young people and support for our students and program was uplifting.

Halloween Bash at Albuquerque High School

The APS Native American Leadership Council hosted their Annual Halloween Bash on October 26, 2023, in the Albuquerque High School Lecture Hall, at 6 PM. They had Arts and Crafts, Food, Games, a Haunted House and a Costume Contest.

The Career Enrichment Center Cosmetology program did hair and makeup for people and UNM sponsored a photo booth.

This is just one of the many events that students coordinate and gain valuable leadership and organizing skills. The planning and working as a team will help them when they are graduate and begin employment!

Halloween Contest

Arts & Crafts

Games

APS FALL TRIBAL LEADERS SUMMIT

On Monday, October 30, 2023 Tribal representatives from the Pueblos of Acoma, Isleta, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo and Navajo Nation gathered in person and several others joined us virtually at the APS Fall Tribal Leaders Summit. Superintendent Scott Elder, senior district leaders and APS school board members also attended and discussed the needs of Native American students, families and communities. APS is seeking input on how to better meet Native American student needs and which needs should be priority in our district.

Front row: Claudia Edgewater, Yolanda Montoya Cordova, Juan Rey Abeita
Second row: James Naranjo, Scott Elder, Wendell Chino, Pablo Padilla
Claudia Edgewater: Navajo Nation, Acting Superintendent of Diné Education
Yolanda Montoya Cordova: APS School Board President
Juan Rey Abeita: Pueblo of Isleta, 2nd Lt. Governor
James Naranjo: Pueblo of Santa Clara, Lt. Governor
Scott Elder: APS Superintendent
Wendell Chino: Pueblo of Acoma, 1st Lt. Governor
Pablo Padilla: Pueblo of Zuni / Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Counsel (and APS parent)