



CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

Recognizing and Encouraging Native American Youth Creating Positive Change

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute, created by former US Senator Byron Dorgan with \$1 million from his excess campaign funds, is dedicated to improving the lives of Native American youth. CNAY is aimed at bringing greater national attention to the issues facing Native youth through communication, policy development and advocacy. To help shine a spotlight on inspirational stories and promote hope in Indian Country, CNAY launched a new initiative - **Champions for Change**.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

The Champions for Change (CFC) program recognizes and encourages inspirational Native American youth (ages 14 to 24) working in their tribal or urban Indian communities to promote hope and make a positive impact. Champions include individuals who initiate programs, hold events, and engage in efforts to improve the lives of their peers, communities, and Indian Country as a whole.

CNAY announced the CFC program in November 2012 and selected its inaugural class of five Champions. Each year, CNAY selects and recognizes five Champions through a series of events and media attention in Washington, DC. The CFC program is an annual invitation for Native American youth to submit a story in written or video form about how they are making a positive impact. *CFC program submission categories include:*



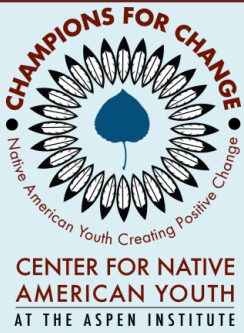
- Health (including youth suicide prevention; bereavement, grief, and healing; and substance and alcohol abuse prevention)
- Sports, Nutrition or Wellness
- Education, Mentorship or Afterschool Programs;
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Building Healthy Relationships (teen dating, elders and family)
- Cultural Preservation and Native Languages;
- Anti-Bullying and Personal Empowerment
- Self-Expression through Arts and Crafts
- Emerging Leadership in Government Service
- Economic and Community Development

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE RECOGNITION

Center for Native American Youth and its Board of Advisors honors the Champions for Change in the following ways:

- Certificate of recognition and medal;
- Travel with a chaperone to Washington, DC for a series of national celebratory and recognition events;
- Opportunity to participate in a mentorship coordinated by CNAY;
- Serve a two-year term on **CNAY's Youth Advisory Board**; and
- Participate in CNAY outreach trips in Indian Country and potentially host a **visit from a member of CNAY's board of advisors** to their home community to share more about their leadership initiative for change.

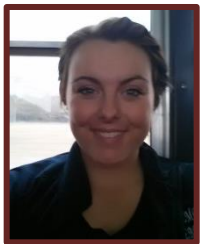
Visit CNAY's website at www.cnay.org or contact us at cnayinfo@aspeninstitute.org or (202) 736-2905 to learn more about the CFC program.



The Center for Native American Youth's Champions for Change program, inspired by a 2011 White House initiative, recognizes and encourages inspirational Native youth working in their tribal or urban Indian communities to promote hope and make a positive impact. Visit www.cnay.org to learn more about Champions for Change and the upcoming application process.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE: 2014 CLASS

*"If you want to get involved in the Champions for Change program, just do great work for people."
-Vance Home Gun, 2013 Champion for Change*



Elizabeth Burns, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Age: 18; Hometown: Claremore, Oklahoma

Elizabeth is the current president of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Youth Council and competed for Junior Miss Cherokee. She mentors youth who struggle with obesity, self-acceptance, nutrition and eating disorders.



Danielle Finn, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Age: 23; Hometown: Bismarck, North Dakota

Danielle is a positive role model who volunteers as an after-school tutor, teaches kindergarten students, and teaches dance in her spare time. In addition, Danielle serves on the Mid Dakota Teen Clinic Advisory Board, helping to solve health issues impacting Native youth.



William Lucero, Lummi Nation
Age: 17; Hometown: Ferndale, Washington

William is a member of the Lummi Nation's Teens Against Tobacco Use (T.A.T.U.) group, which informs youth and their parents about the hazards of smoking. By educating youth, William is inspiring his peers to become positive enforcers for their parents who want to stop smoking.



Keith Martinez, Oglala Lakota Sioux
Age: 20; Hometown: Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Keith works with the Lakota Children's Enrichment, Inc. to fight against poverty and increase educational resources available on the reservation. Keith serves as a Youth Ambassador with Youth Service America for the state of South Dakota.



Lauren McLester-Davis, Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin
Age: 16; Hometown: De Pere, Wisconsin

Lauren co-founded First Book of Greater Green Bay, a non-profit company that seeks to provide books to children in need. By fundraising and asking for donations, she has successfully placed over 15,000 new books into the hands of children in need within her community.



The Champions for Change (CFC) program at the Center for Native American Youth, inspired by a 2011 White House initiative, recognizes and encourages inspirational Native youth working in their tribal or urban Indian communities to promote hope and make a positive impact. Please see abbreviated biographies below for our 2013 inaugural Champions for Change class. Visit www.cnay.org to learn more about the CFC program and the upcoming application process.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE: 2013 INAGURAL CLASS



Dahkota Brown, *Wilton Miwok Tribe*
Age: 15; Hometown: Jackson, California

Dahkota started his own peer-to-peer study group called NERDS (Native Education Raising Dedicated Students). Dahkota works with local high schools and middle schools to help Native American students better connect with and relate to lessons. Shortly after his CFC recognition, Dahkota received funding to support NERDS for the next year, and he was invited to present on his efforts at the United Way's Day of Action.



Cierra Fields, *Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma*
Age: 14; Hometown: Fort Gibson, Oklahoma

Cierra is a melanoma cancer survivor and now volunteers her time to travel across the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to promote healthy lifestyles in order to reduce the risk of cancer. To help share her message, Cierra has collaborated with the Cherokee Nation Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, Mayo Clinic, Circle of Hope, St. Francis Children's Hospital, and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.



Joaquin Gallegos, *Jicarilla Apache Nation & Pueblo of Santa Ana*
Age: 23; Hometown: Denver, Colorado

Joaquin has a strong passion in oral health and access to health care. He collaborated with the Center for Native Oral Health Research at Colorado School of Public Health to secure a grant for a study to determine the dental status of designated tribes in the Southwest. In the summer of 2013, Joaquin interned at the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health in Baltimore, Maryland.



Vance Home Gun, *Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes*
Age: 20; Hometown: Arlee, Montana

Vance, a recent high school graduate, has been working with tribal departments, local organizations, and youth groups for over six years to help preserve the Salish language. Vance teaches language classes at high schools and created an organization called Yoyoot Skkwimlt (Strong Young People) that utilizes peer-to-peer methods to teach language and culture.



Sarah Schilling, *Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians*
Age: 19; Hometown: Charlevoix, Michigan

Sarah worked with her tribal council, peers, and youth programs in the community to organize and develop their tribe's first youth council in 2009. She helped create the youth council's constitution, bylaws, code of conduct, and affiliated the council with the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) organization.