



*Inspiring Hope. Changing Lives.*

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

[www.unityinc.org](http://www.unityinc.org)



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## ABOUT UNITY

United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY), founded in 1976, is a national network organization that promotes personal development, citizenship, and leadership among Native Youth. Our mission is to foster the spiritual, mental, physical, and social development of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native youth aged 14-24, and to help build a strong, unified, and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement.

We proudly report that UNITY's network comprises 320 affiliated youth councils in 36 states. Tribes, Alaska Native villages, high schools, colleges, urban centers, and other organizations sponsor these councils. Our extensive network reflects UNITY's commitment to empowering Native youth and building resilient and self-sufficient Native American communities.

### UNITY TEAM

- Mary Kim Titla - Executive Director (San Carlos Apache)
- LorenAshley Buford - Training and Resource Development Manager (Yamassee Descendant)
- Greg Mendoza - Youth Programs Director (Akimel O'odham/Tohono O'odham/Yaqui)
- Tami Patterson - Bookkeeper/CRM Manager
- Will Mosley - Communications Assistant (Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Indians)
- Caleb Dash - Production Assistant (Onk Akimel O'odham)

# COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES' MESSAGE



**LORETTA TUELL, J.D.**  
**CHAIRMAN**

The past two years have taught us a lot, and as an organization UNITY has risen to every challenge that has come our way. Maintaining connections with one another and being a resource at a time when mental and spiritual well-being were especially important to our youth has been a priority for us this year.

Our Midyear and National Conferences exceeded our greatest expectations, surpassing our attendance goals and garnering positive feedback from advisors and youth alike. We were grateful to be able to showcase how Native youth are making an impact on the national stage – in entertainment, advocacy, culinary, education and many other fields. In sharing their stories, we hope to influence all of our youth to reach for their dreams and strive to make a difference in their communities.

We have also established a number of new partnerships that have allowed us to reach even more people and grow the scope of our programs to address the areas of greatest need. Virtual Meet Ups in the spring and fall in all 10 of UNITY's regions helped facilitate learning and connections, and Healing Circle training encouraged youth to embrace traditions as a means to coping with the effects of the pandemic.

These are only some of the remarkable things our staff, leadership team, councils and youth have accomplished over the course of the year. In the pages that follow, you will see how all of these entities have come together to support our mission and build a strong UNITY community. All of their hard work is reflected not only in the pages of this Annual Report, but also in the successes of the community we serve.

*Best,*  
Loretta Tuell  
Council of Trustees

## UNITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES

- Loretta Tuell, J.D., Chairman
- Tyler English-Rush, Secretary/Treasurer
- Elke Chenevey, Member
- Kyle Doney, Member
- Henry Lozano, Member
- Lori Winfree, Member
- Chenoa Scippio, Co-President & Member
- Colby WhiteThunder, Co-President & Member



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**MARY KIM TITLA**

I'm ecstatic! As I reflect back on the past 12 months and I think about what's been accomplished, I'm overwhelmed because so much comes to mind.

Some highlights include:

- Virtual Fall and Spring Regional Meet Ups organized by the National UNITY Council Executive Committee, which allowed Native youth an opportunity to check in with and learn from their peers, and most importantly to remain connected. One Meet Up times 10 regions, times two (Fall and Spring) equals 20 virtual events!
- 2022 UNITY Midyear Conference resumed as an in-person event in Phoenix, Arizona, with 450 youth and adult registrants, significantly surpassing an anticipated 250 participants. In addition, more than 25 attendees joined via live streaming.
- UNITY grew its partnerships with multiple organizations and entities, which allowed the organization to better reach and address the needs of Native youth (see partnerships page).
- 2022 National UNITY Conference surpassed its goal of 1,500 Native youth and adults with more than 1,800 in attendance in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

UNITY is responding to the toll COVID-19 has had on the mental well being of Native youth by developing Healing Circle trainings. These gatherings will celebrate Native peoples resilience; encourage Native communities to work together to rebound from the pandemic; and promote the establishment of new and reestablishment of inactive youth councils.

In this report, you will read more about these highlights and other activities that truly reflect the hard work of our youth leaders, staff, trustees, support team and others who stand with UNITY and support its mission to foster the spiritual, mental, physical and social needs of American Indian and Alaska Native youth and to help build a strong, unified, and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement.

These pages are only a glimpse of what UNITY is able to achieve, which would not be possible without our wonderful supporters, community partners, and volunteers. Thanks to everyone's continued support, UNITY is able to Inspire Hope and Change Lives. Enjoy the read!

*In Unity,*  
Mary Kim Titla  
Executive Director  
[mk.titla@unityinc.org](mailto:mk.titla@unityinc.org)





# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

## NATIONAL UNITY COUNCIL (NUC) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

 <p>Chenoa Scippio Co-President Navajo/ Santa Clara Pueblo</p>	 <p>Colby Whitethunder Co-President Alabama Coushatta</p>	 <p>Evynn Richardson Vice President/ Southeast Representative Haliwa-Saponi</p>	 <p>Jonathan Arakawa Secretary/ Northwest Representative Lower Elwha Klallam</p>	 <p>Nathan Solorio Northeast Representative Brokenhead Ojibway</p>	 <p>Angelina Serna Midwest Representative Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa/ Oneida</p>
 <p>Justice Fox Great Plains Representative Arikara</p>	 <p>Elwood McClellan Southern Plains Representative Iowa Tribe</p>	 <p>Watson Whitford Rocky Mountain Representative Chippewa Cree/ Navajo</p>	 <p>Derek Capitan Southwest Representative Laguna Pueblo/ Navajo</p>	 <p>Steve Harvey Western Representative San Carlos Apache</p>	 <p>Kaytlynn Johnston Pacific Representative Bishop Paiute</p>

# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

## NATIONAL UNITY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NUC EC) ACTIVITY

- **UNITY's Executive Committee hosted annual Fall/Spring Native Youth Meet-Ups** for regional networking and connection. These events provided a platform for Native youth to engage with peers, share experiences, and develop leadership skills.
- **At the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention**, the NUC EC submitted a resolution titled "I Will Live" to support a national initiative to raise awareness about suicide prevention. The NCAI General Assembly passed this resolution as NCAI Resolution #SAC-21-008, "A National Native Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative." We take pride in contributing to suicide prevention and mental health support for Native youth. Our ongoing efforts to promote personal development, citizenship, and leadership among Native youth will maintain a strong focus on these critical issues.
- **UNITY's website was updated to include comprehensive regional profiles** that showcase the vital work of our youth councils and NUC EC members. By highlighting each region's unique characteristics, we aim to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the contributions of Native youth to our shared cultural heritage and mission. These profiles are a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the diversity and vibrancy of our organization.
- **UNITY partnered with the White House to host a Tribal Youth Forum** for Native youth and UNITY leaders to participate in discussions with high-level administration officials, special guests, and Native youth. The forum allowed participants to engage in a dialogue on various topics of importance and how they intersect with the mental health issues facing our Native youth.
- The NUC EC and a group of Native youth leaders from UNITY were invited by First Lady Dr. Jill Biden to attend a **White House Native American Heritage Month Celebration**, along with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. Over 100 Native youth leaders participated in the event.

- The NUC EC hosted three town hall meetings to promote the **"Restoring the Spirit of Native Youth"** initiative, resources, and next steps for youth councils following the passage of the National UNITY Council resolution. These meetings facilitated communication and engagement with youth councils on this critical issue. They provided a platform for sharing ideas and strategies for supporting the mental health and well-being of Native youth.
- NUC EC Co-President attended a **Christmas Tour at the White House** in December 2022.
- Additionally, during a very busy 2022, the NUC EC Conducted 12 Business Meetings and Eight special meetings.

## NATIONAL UNITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

### UNITY Midyear Conference

- At the 2022 UNITY Midyear Conference, NUC EC Members shared concerns from youth council leaders from various regions about the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Native youth. To address this issue, they wrote and submitted a resolution to the National UNITY Council titled "Restoring the Spirit of Native Youth," which called for creating Healing Circles to engage and unite youth in a healing process. After due deliberation, the resolution passed unanimously.

### National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention

- To raise awareness about suicide prevention during the pandemic, the NUC EC submitted a resolution titled the "I Will Live" initiative to NCAI. The resolution aimed to draw more attention to the ongoing suicide epidemic. After deliberation, the NCAI General Assembly passed the resolution.

# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

## NUC Top 10 Issues Facing Native Youth

*(The issues were adopted at the NUC Business Meeting on July 10, 2022 in Minneapolis, Minnesota)*

1. Drug use, alcohol use and abuse
2. Suicide, self harm
3. Human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
4. School drop out or education disparity
5. Sexual abuse or violence
6. Single parent households, toxic home environment
7. Lack of cultural identity or cultural bullying
8. Bullying, cyberbullying, or gossiping
9. Blood quantum, or lack of belonging
10. Youth or family incarceration; generational trauma/hardships

## EARTH AMBASSADORS ACTIVITY

				
Watson Whitford Chippewa Cree/ Navajo	Tylee Tom Navajo	Steve Harvey San Carlos Apache	Maiya Martinez Spokane Tribe	LeAndria Gene Navajo
				
Lauren Shelly Pina San Carlos Apache	Gabrielle Nakai Navajo/Choctaw	Candice Joe Navajo	Binaahozhoonii Daisey Howard Navajo/Zuni	Karlín Tsotigh Kiowa

- **Announcement of Earth Ambassadors.** The class of Earth Ambassadors was announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2021.

- The **U.S. Department of the Interior** hosted a **Tribal Climate Youth Listening Session** where UNITY Earth Ambassadors shared their perspectives on the impact of climate change on their tribes. They also presented their environmental platforms aimed at addressing the effects of climate change.
- In April 2022, **UNITY Earth Ambassadors** hosted a **"Let's Heal Our Mother Earth" webinar** to commemorate Earth Day.
- **Earth Ambassadors** conducted workshops at both the Midyear and National UNITY Conferences. These workshops provided valuable learning experiences and opportunities for Native youth leaders to share their insights, challenges, and successes.
- **Earth Ambassadors** shared their **environmental platforms** during a series of planned monthly meetings.
- **The Native Youth Adaptation Leadership Congress** selected two UNITY Earth Ambassadors, Steve Harvey, and Tylee Tom, to serve as junior faculty members. Steve and Tylee worked with Native high school seniors to create personalized action plans relevant to current issues during the one-week congress held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services National Conservation Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.
- In 2022, the **UNITY Earth Ambassadors** held **eleven meetings** to exchange ideas, update each other on their projects, and receive guidance and feedback from peers and mentors. The meetings also helped in coordinating efforts for future events and projects.





# YOUTH PROGRAMMING





















## 25 UNDER 25 ACTIVITY

In 2022, UNITY announced the fifth edition of its **"25 under 25 Native Youth Leaders"** national recognition program, which honors outstanding Native American and Alaskan Native youth leaders. Every two years since its launch in 2014, this program selects, recognizes, and celebrates the achievements of a new class of 25 exceptional Native youth leaders under 25. These young leaders, who strive to maintain a balanced life by nurturing their spiritual, mental, physical, and social well-being, embody UNITY's core mission. UNITY collaborates

with each honoree to increase the impact and visibility of their respective efforts. At the 2022 National Conference, honorees **hosted workshops** to raise awareness of their community engagement topics. **Honorees were recognized at the National Conference** and awarded the highly esteemed beaded medallion in a **special ceremony on July 8, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN.**

				
Jonathan Arakawa Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe WA	Lilly Painter Winnebago/Kiowa Tribe OK	Kiera Toya Pueblo of Jemez NM	Candice Joe Navajo AZ	Bella Nayquonabe Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe MN



				
Elijah Cota Pascua Yaqui AZ	Shanell Lavallie Anahi and Nakoda MT	Leticia Cervantes Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma OK	Alexis Large- Cooley Confederated Tribes of Siletz OR	Ajah-Rain Yellowhair Navajo NM
				
Truman Pipestem Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians OK	Charles Mason, Mvskoke (Creek) Nation OK	Samuel Uuyavuk Schimmel Kenaitze Indian Tribe /Native Village of Gambell AK	Lourdes Pereira Hia-Ced O'odham/Tohono O'odham AZ	Karri Montero Ketchikan Indian Community AK
				
Jasmine Lamas Gila River Indian Community AZ	Jovi J. Williams White Mountain Apache Tribe AZ	Chelbie Turtle Cherokee Nation OK	Nathan Solorio Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation PA	Samuel Lopez Tohono O'odham Nation AZ
				
Elizabeth Bryant Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians OR	Ally Gee Navajo CO	Morgan Messimore Delaware Tribe of Indians OK	Kanyen Mousseaux Begay Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe SD	Maci Schott Ponca Tribe NE



## YOUTH PROGRAMMING

### NATIONAL HEALING CIRCLE TRAININGS

Since 2018, UNITY Peer Guides have collaborated with the National UNITY Council Executive Committee to develop Healing Circle Training resources to enhance community safety and reduce youth incarceration and delinquency. These resources, including a community readiness model, asset mapping, and building youth council support systems in 12 identified sectors, are tailored to meet the needs of each region. Peer-to-peer mentoring sessions prepare youth councils to host challenging community conversations and emphasize the significance of service leadership in building relationships with their tribal community.

The **objective behind utilizing the train-the-trainer** approach is to assist youth councils in creating community events to achieve the set goals. This approach seeks to provide the necessary tools, resources, and knowledge to the youth councils, empowering them to plan, organize and execute successful events. By doing so, the youth councils are better equipped to address the specific needs of their communities, promote youth leadership, and facilitate positive change.

The objective of implementing the train-the-trainer approach is to assist youth councils in developing their own community events to achieve the following goals:

1. Rebuild youth councils and cultivate community support in the aftermath of the global pandemic.
2. Gather youth feedback to identify the most effective strategies for overcoming obstacles to community safety.
3. Educate youth on hosting community asset mapping as a strength-based approach to community development.
4. Equip youth with the skills to facilitate town halls, focus groups, talking circles, or challenging discussions focused on identifying community challenges.
5. Provide training to youth in creating their own community readiness assessments and models to measure success.
6. Establish a safe space that encourages youth to seek help when needed.
7. Identify key community advocates and resources to enhance the growth and sustainability of the youth councils.
8. Empower youth to develop a stronger civic mindset and promote our responsibility within tribal communities through service projects.
9. Inspire young individuals to become influential advocates for transforming the spaces in which they reside.



## HONORING THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST COHORT OF PEER GUIDES

At the 2022 National Conference gala, UNITY honored the first Peer Guide Cohort of visionary peer mentors for their years of service. The organization recognized their unwavering commitment to promoting engagement with Native youth and increasing awareness of public safety issues in Indian Country. Over four years, this Cohort has facilitated peer-to-peer training and created valuable tools and training resources to empower Native youth to address some of our communities most pressing challenges.

Since the Healing Indigenous Lives Initiative began, UNITY has appointed 12 peer guides as project advisors and trainers. The initiative aims to promote and improve Native youth participation in community support systems and cultural restorative justice approaches. The Peer Guides received training, and mentoring focused on youth justice issues and delinquency prevention in Indian country and have played a key role in leading the initiatives youth-developed projects for the past four years.

Each Peer Guide has built upon previous OJJDP grants, developing cultural approaches and support systems for restorative justice, focusing on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. Their legacy will uplift Native youth impacted by incarcerated loved ones through UNITY's network of youth councils, and their lasting impact has forever changed UNITY.

The US Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) supported this Initiative through a cooperative agreement (2018-TY-FX-K002) with UNITY, Inc.

### 2018-2022 Inaugural Peer Guide Cohort:

- Angela Noah, White Mountain Apache, OR
- Audriana Mitchell, Colorado River Indian Tribes, AZ
- Cheyenne Kippenberger, Seminole Tribe of FL
- Collin Church, Potawatomi, WI
- Josiah Lester, Navajo-Dine, AZ
- Leticia Gonzales, Bishop Paiute, CA
- Rory Wheeler, Seneca Nation, NY
- Santana Bartholomew, Pueblo of Pojoaque, NM
- Savanna Rilatos, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, OR
- Sonwai Dj Wakayuta, Hualapai, KS
- Vance Homegun, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, MT





# NATIONAL CONFERENCES BY THE NUMBERS

## 2022 UNITY MIDYEAR CONFERENCE

February 25 - 27, 2022  
Hilton Phoenix Resort at the Peak  
Phoenix, Arizona

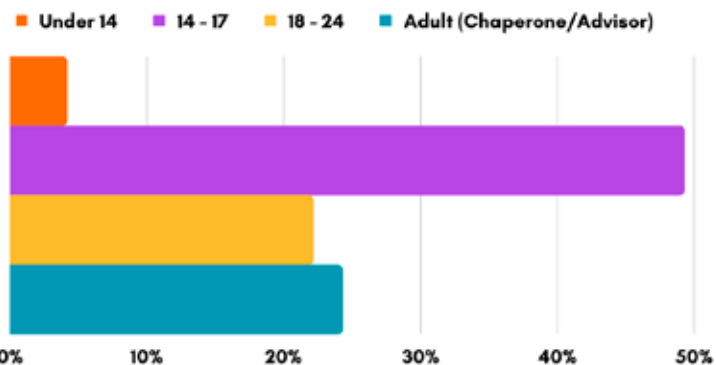
- **372** Attendees
- **18** Youth Councils joined virtually
- **18** Career & Education Exhibitors
- **10** Native American Vendors

## 2022 NATIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE

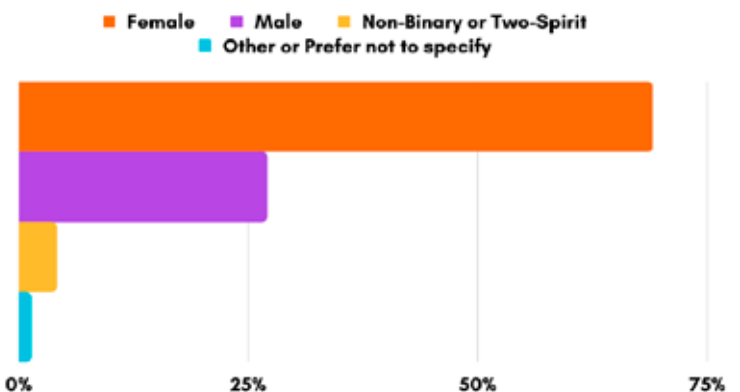
July 8 - 12, 2022  
Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis, MN

- **1,929** Attendees
- **28** Career & Education Exhibitors
- **18** Native Artist Vendors

### Attendee Age



### Attendee Gender



# SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

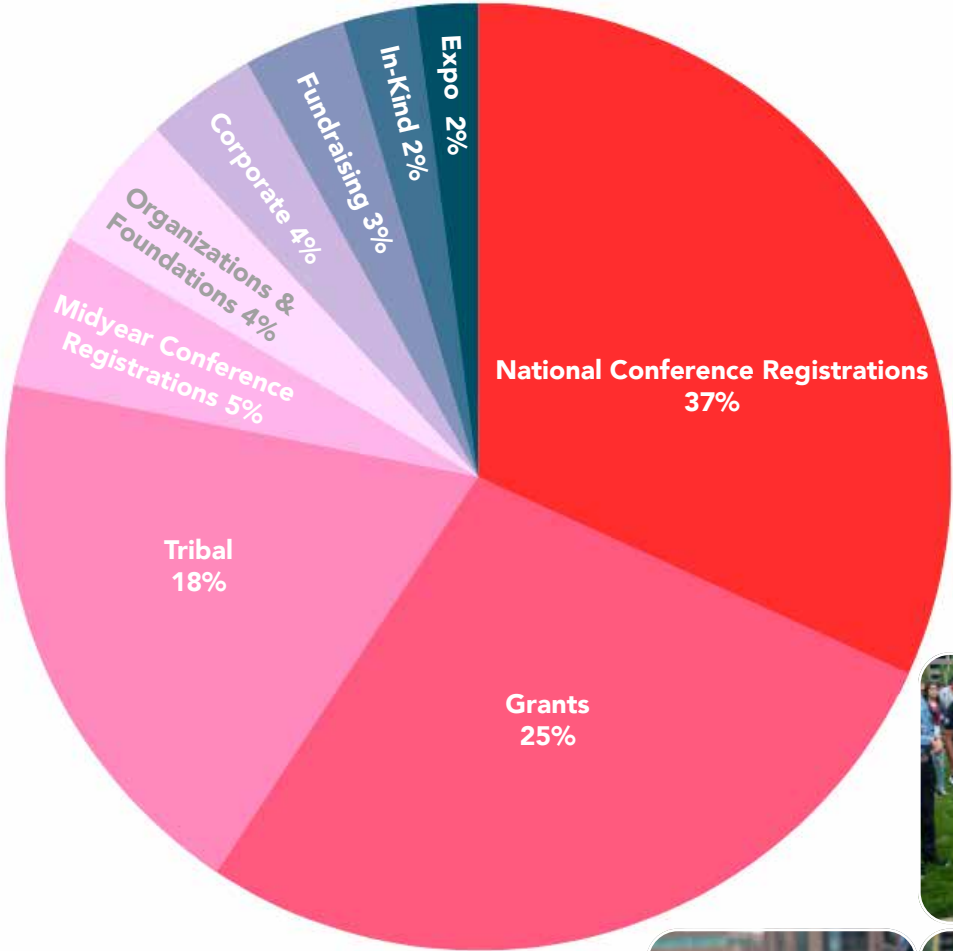
## SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

- Facebook Followers: 22,029
- Facebook Likes: 20,255
- Instagram: 4,535
- Twitter: 4,551
- YouTube: 373

## SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

- Facebook Followers: 24,158  $\uparrow$  9%
- Facebook Likes: 21,767  $\uparrow$  9%
- Instagram: 5,933  $\uparrow$  7.6%
- Twitter: 4,956  $\uparrow$  9%
- YouTube: 444  $\uparrow$  8%

# REVENUE SOURCES



# SUPPORTING UNITY



*"It is with great pleasure that the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and its people support tribal youth nationally through our partnership with UNITY."*

*We know how important the values of fostering the spiritual, mental, physical, and social devel-*

*opment of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native youth are in their daily lives."*

**- Bernadine Burnette, President  
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation**

## GIVING TO UNITY

UNITY relies on the generous support from Tribal communities, corporations, organizations and foundations, grants, and individual donors to provide our Native American and Alaska Native youth with culturally relevant leadership development training and experiences.

Individual donors are just as important. Something sparked for them to give; they believe in the UNITY mission. Many have experienced the positive effects of UNITY in their personal or community life. Individual donors are more than stakeholders, they are part of the UNITY family.

Your commitment to UNITY is greatly appreciated and allows us to have a direct impact and reach more than 4,000 youth and advisors each year from rural and urban communities across the nation.

## UNITY'S FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

*"Every year our company, Titan Facilities, LLC, contributes to UNITY for its education scholarships. I encourage all business owners to give to this wonderful organization, which promotes youth leadership training. I'm thankful UNITY is working with our young leaders who will one day take the places of people in charge."*

**- David Beaver, Winnebago, CEO/Founder  
Titan Facilities, LLC**

In 2022/2023 UNITY will embark on creating more fundraising activities to help cultivate our youth and inspire their desires to become successful Tribal leaders, business owners, political leaders, and leaders in their respective communities.

## MONTHLY GIVING

Consider a recurring monthly donation. Are you a UNITY Alumni wanting to pay it forward, or are you new to UNITY? Together we can give to Native youth in a significant way with recurring donations.

## CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIPS

Each year, UNITY hosts two signature events: UNITY Mid-year Conference in February with more than 500 participants, and the National UNITY Conference in June/July with more than 2,500 participants. Various conference sponsorship levels are available with deliverables ranging from your company logo, Tribal seal inclusion on materials, welcome message, reception host, naming rights, and more. Contact UNITY for the latest sponsorship opportunities for an upcoming UNITY event.

## FISCAL/YEAR-END GIVING

End of the fiscal year is an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of Native American and Alaska Native youth. If you represent a youth program or organization, the fiscal year ends vary. There may be funds available towards conference registration fees or providing a UNITY training session for your community or organization. Contact the UNITY office to request an invoice for upcoming UNITY conference and exhibitor registration or set up a UNITY event.

## EMPLOYEE MATCH PROGRAMS

If your employer has an Employee Match Program, consider selecting UNITY as your designated charity, and recruit co-workers to select UNITY as their designated charity too.

## WISH LIST

UNITY accepts donations of many kinds. We appreciate in-kind contributions that enhance the experience for our youth and offset budget costs to better allocate funding to direct services for Native youth programming. Contact UNITY for current needs.

Learn more by visiting our website [www.unityinc.org](http://www.unityinc.org).

# 2022 FUNDERS

## SPONSOR AND PROGRAM CONTRIBUTIONS

Agua Band of Cahuilla Indians  
Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas  
American Indian College Fund  
Arizona Public Service  
Bank of America  
Bowman Consulting  
Casey Family Programs  
Chickasaw Nation  
Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana  
Comcast NBC Universal  
Common Counsel Foundation  
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde  
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation  
Freeport-McMoRan  
Fund for Shared Insight  
Gila River Indian Community  
IGT -International Gaming Technologies  
Kauffman and Associates  
Mashantucket Pequot  
Mohegan Tribe & The Mohegan Sun  
National Education Association  
Pala Band of Mission Indians  
Pauma Band of Mission Indians  
Phoenix Suns Charities  
Prescott-Yavapai Indian Tribe  
RMP Foundation, Inc.  
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri In Kansas and Nebraska  
San Carlos Apache Tribe  
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians  
Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Seneca Gaming Corporation  
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
Soboba Band of Lisueno Indians  
Suquamish Port Madison Enterprises  
TASIN - Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations  
Thunder Valley Community Development  
Titan Facilities Services, LLC  
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians  
United Auburn Indian Community  
VADON Foundation

## GOVERNMENT GRANTS/CONTRACTS

US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

## INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$500 +

Chance and Tyler Rush  
Elke Chenevey  
Fabrice and Victoria Vasques  
Glenn and Jan English  
John Mosley and Mary Kim Titla  
Kirk and Lynn Kickingbird  
Loretta Tuell  
Lori Winfree  
Marquez and Melanie Quintero

## IN-KIND SUPPORT

Native Forward Scholars Fund  
NCAIED  
SAMHSA  
Urias Communications  
Volunteers





**2023 NATIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE**  
**JUNE 30 - JULY 3**  
**WASHINGTON HILTON - WASHINGTON, D.C.**



**2024 UNITY MIDYEAR CONFERENCE**  
**FEBRUARY 2 -4**  
**SHERATON DOWNTOWN PHOENIX - PHOENIX, AZ**



**2024 NATIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE**  
**JUNE 29 - JULY 3**  
**OREGON CONVENTION CENTER - PORTLAND, OR**

