

Changing Spirits Voices

American Indian Changing Spirits Newsletter

Winter 2016



In the midst of another winter, we continue to keep our relatives in prayer. To the elders who have endured many winters, and the young ones struggling to defend land and water, we stand with you. This past year, American Indian Changing Spirits have experienced many more accomplishments and continued to grow, literally and figuratively.

Our facility has been approved by the State of California, for a bed increase capacity. American Indian Changing Spirits (AICS) is now increased to a 30 resident bed capacity from a capacity of 16 earlier this year. The facility increase was just the beginning of new and continuing recognitions for the program.

We have been recognized from local and state political officials, as well as media outlets. A wonderful article was recently featured in local news organizations, about the history of the program. The article ran in several different newspapers and online. Rachel Uranga wrote a wonderful piece and our good friend Thomas Cordova captured beautiful images of our program. For those who haven't seen it, the Press Telegram article is here: <http://www.presstelegram.com/health/20160904/finding-a-path-to-sobriety-through-spirituality-at-a-long-beach-sweat-lodge>

This New Year (2017) finds Changing Spirits not only expanding services for our men; but we have plans to have our long awaited American Indian Residential Program for Women that will open this coming summer. I am excited with our growth and continued commitment to serve our community of First Nation peoples.

Changing Spirits received a Certificate of Recognition for our contributions to our community from the City, County, and State. These awards were presented to AICS at our Community Sweatlodge and Pot Luck last September. Changing Spirits expressed gratitude to San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for all of their help in the past few years as well as the Los Angeles County Substance Abuse and Prevention Control. (See back page.)

Changing Spirits has served for the past two years as Lead-Agency for the Native American Neighborhood Network (NANN). NANN has led a driving and innovative force throughout Los Angeles County that is advancing commitment to provide culturally relevant wrap around services for substance abuse disorders with corresponding health and social problems. We thank the California Community Foundation for supporting this project. The NANN website is found here: <https://nativeamericanhealth.org> >

As we greet the New Year, I am passing on to you the light of peace, love, and prosperity through the year.

From the Director
Raul Garcia
American Indian Changing Spirits



A Surprise Visitor

Saturday, December 17 we celebrated our Winter Solstice Community Celebration to offer thanks for another year working with our friends and families of Changing Spirits.

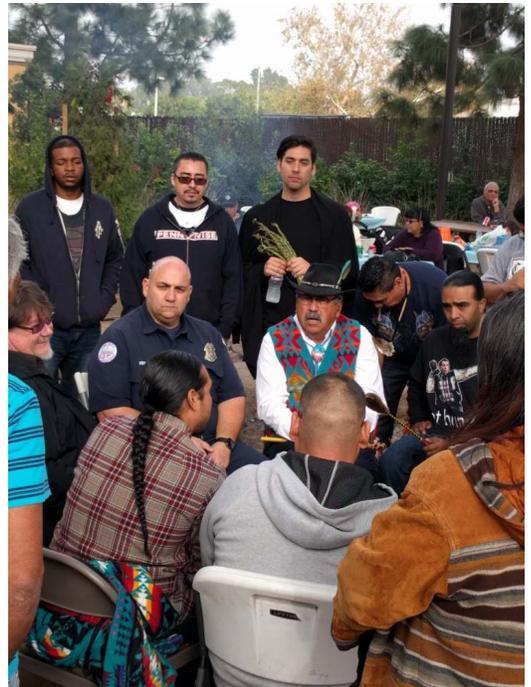
A surprise guest, Jake Heflin from the Osage Nation, brought toys for the children and for our clients to provide their children with gifts for the Holiday Season.

When Jake, a Public Information Officer with the Long Beach Fire Department, promised to join us in future Changing Spirits Community Events. He even joined our Drum to sing with our clients and supporters.

We thank ABC Channel 7, SoCal Firefighters, and Marine Corps Reserve for helping so many Native children have a special Holiday Season. And thanks, Jake!

Fall Feast of Thanksgiving

Over 200 friends and family members joined us in our Fall Feast of Gratitude. Thanks to Supervisor Don Knabe and his Chief of Staff Connie Sziebel for providing more than enough food to feed our clients and all of their family and friends. The weather was perfect, and Pipe Carrier Jimi Castillo led the group in a prayer of Thanksgiving for another wonderful year.



Meet Kylie the Therapy Dog

Yes, thanks to long-time supporter, Carolyn Gaw, we now have our very own American Indian Changing Spirits officially certified therapy dog! Kylie had to go to Therapy Dog School to be trained to work with us all (we need her as much as our clients do), and Kylie was greeted enthusiastically during our Winter Solstice Celebration on December 17th! Welcome Kylie!



SAN MANUEL BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

Special thanks to San Manuel Mission Band of Indians and the Los Angeles County Substance Abuse and Control. Without you, none of this would be



Honorings

We were amazed and grateful as this year we received recognition from the State Assembly, the County of Los Angeles, and the City of Long Beach, as well as a Pow wow Drum from Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Gilber Lopez

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