

2017 Southwest IAC Membership Meeting Native Youth Event

Hosted at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center - Albuquerque, NM

Report by the Intertribal Agriculture Council Youth Programs Intern Sophia Keesie (Navajo)

The 2017 Southwest Intertribal Agriculture Council Conference Youth Break-Out Session was a highlighted event at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, September 26th, 2017, with the support of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, Natural Resource Conservation Services, and Eight Northern Pueblos Council. A total of 15 tribal nations were represented by 4 youth, 4 youth leaders, and 9 other participants.

This four hour, region-wide event was in conjunction with the 2017 Southwest Intertribal Agriculture Council Meeting; a 2-day, regional event, located at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Planning and coordination was made possible with the assistance and leadership of past IAC participants serving as youth leaders, membership tribes and organizations serving as funding sponsors and hosts.

With Mr. Ross Racine introducing the Intertribal Agriculture Council to youth participants, they had the chance to hear the background and history of the IAC. With the brief welcome also came with the recent discussions for the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. The youth and other participants had the chance to hear first-hand of both advantages and disadvantages that the Farm Bill will have on Indian Country. Mr. Racine ensured that the Intertribal Agriculture will continue its efforts to encourage and prepare youth for the future of Indian Country Food Security.

Youth attending the Southwest IAC Conference Youth Break-Out Session met with regional leadership, youth interns, and national organizations to touch on the barriers restricting and improved health among many parts of the Southwest Indian Country Region. Youth were exposed to available agricultural education opportunities, and afforded a networking opportunity most often hindered by the extremely rural communities which they each represented.

Youth gained knowledge of resource managing and were exposed to the modern technology which will help to protect and preserve these traditions. Youth attendees were actively engaged in discussions around natural resource sustainability, healthy eating choices, higher education for Youth Ag interests, and securing financial capital for agricultural endeavors. This time, however, youth learned from their peers; the entire four-hours of presentations was lead by youth that had successfully participated in the opportunities discussed in previous IAC events. Two youth attendees presented about the Youth Loans that they received through the Farm Service Agency, to establish themselves among their family ranching operation. Julian Louis (Acoma Pueblo) and Nicholas Naranjo (Santa Clara Pueblo) shared how they spent their money, their progress, and their successes in working with the Intertribal Agriculture Council's Technical Assistance Program throughout the application process, start up of their operation, and further pursuing the IAC's Youth Equity Grant! After sharing their personal experience, they both collaborated to conduct an application workshop and assisted youth participants in filling out their own FSA Youth Loan Applications.

Local tribal leadership made their support of youth efforts very evident through their participation in presentations. The youth participants engaged in all discussions that surrounded the purpose of acquiring goods to produce, managing resources, and pursuing food and agriculture-related business enterprises. The Intertribal Agriculture Council looks forward to future food sovereignty efforts being pursued by these young leaders in the coming years. The success of this event can be most readily measured in the group's desire to pursue a leadership role within their community's food and agricultural development after attending the summit; the overarching goal of all youth efforts driven by the Intertribal Agriculture Council.

