

## 2013 Alice BigPond Memorial Award



### *Michael Duncan*

*California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.  
Sacramento, California*

plan which contributed to the creation of his nonprofit organization.

Michael founded Native Dad Network (NDN), a community based cultural wellness group that inspires and motivates fathers to devote their best efforts in teaching and raising children to develop their potential and attributes needed for happy, safe, and successful families. He also established the Sacramento and Stockton chapters of Fatherhood is Sacred, a national group that promotes happy and safe families, fatherhood peer-to-peer support, and Native culture and traditions. In addition to his tireless volunteer community service, he has motivated and coordinated fatherhood groups to participate in volunteer activities for the Native TANF programs in the counties of Sacramento and San Joaquin, the Sacramento Native American Health Center, and other groups. Michael has coordinated the Inter-Agency Native Softball Tournament for several years in Sacramento, California. His charisma and engaging manner have consistently brought together various Native agencies to showcase the community's "Native Pride" as well as strengthen community members' sense of unity.

Most significant are his activities counseling Native youth and providing them with meaningful, useful guidance with regards to the prevention of drugs/ alcohol and crime, and encouraging them to become involved in their Native American culture.

His own past struggles, which included prison and alcohol/substance abuse, convinced him that only through sobriety and community service would he become the kind of father he wanted for his children, just as he has become an outstanding role model for so many others. Michael truly lives by our rich traditional ways that promote each family's happiness, healing, and accomplishments through the maintenance of safe, supportive environments for its generations.

**T**hrough his passion for and commitment to his community, Michael E. Duncan's exemplary service to the Native communities in California is evident in his daily life as he supports all aspects of Native American culture, customs, and values set forth by our ancestors. He is a responsible head of household and role model to his children, and an active and enthusiastic participant in traditional dancing, Native community events, and a drum group.

In 2012 as a WIA participant, Michael was selected to attend Leadership Training for Entrepreneurial / Small Business / Economic Development, conducted by California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc. During this four-month culturally-relevant program, Michael had the opportunity to learn how to write a business

## *2013 Howard Yackus Memorial Scholarship Award*

### *Tesia Zientek*

*Citizen Potawatomi Nation  
Shawnee, Oklahoma*

**T**esia Zientek's enculturation within her mother's Citizen Potawatomi Nation community provided her with the knowledge and practices of her Native American heritage, both past and present. Over time, she recognized and despaired over the disparities many of her peers faced as some joined gangs and became involved with drugs.

During these formative years, Tesia's mother and Citizen Potawatomi Nation Employment and Training Program counselors pushed her to continue with her

studies and supported her to access WIA resources. These steps allowed her to obtain job placements within her tribe and secure needed school supplies to finish high school with honors.

As the recipient of numerous scholarships and grants, she attended Notre Dame University, graduated with honors, and then pursued a graduate program. Tesia decided to continue her volunteerism in Puerto Rico, her father's homeland, where, for two years, she taught English as a Second Language and helped run an after-school tutoring and mentoring program for students that had learning disabilities and lacked positive role models.

Again, she identified the vital role that meaningful educational experiences and an unwavering support system had for marginalized young people; that is, its importance as a catalyst for their future opportunities, a means for them to realize their potential. Upon her return to Oklahoma, Tesia retooled the Potawatomi Leadership Program, a leadership in-



ternship program for graduating high school seniors from her tribe.

This year, Tesia will receive her Master of Arts degree from the Stanford University Graduate School of Education in Policy, Organization, and Leadership Studies. This outstanding and accomplished young woman then plans to return home to work with her tribe to engage and help other students access the same educational opportunities she has had.

## 2013 Outstanding Participant Award

### *Amanda Ann Peaches*

*The Phoenix Indian Center, Inc.  
Phoenix, Arizona*

**A**manda Ann Peaches' childhood and youth involved a transient family lifestyle immersed in severe domestic violence and alcoholism. At one point she was in a coma for three days due to the severity of the abuse. She had no support from the community and it appeared as though she was destined to live a life of poverty as an unskilled, unemployed teen mom.

Against all odds, Amanda continued to work hard and graduated from high school with her class in 2005. She then moved to Phoenix with the intent of securing a safer, more secure life for her baby and herself, and obtained part-time work and went to school to study Business/Accounting. Unfortunately, the program was closed due to insufficient enrollment. She started another part-time job and sought assistance at the Phoenix Indian Center.

Despite various challenges (such as being evicted, the repossession of her vehicle, and working two part-time jobs, all while caring for her baby and her seven year old niece), she consistently helped other family members who had also left the reservation in hopes of securing employment, encouraged them to seek help with their alcohol related issues, and shared her knowledge of available resources.

Through The Phoenix Indian Center, she participated in four Skills for Success classes in six weeks.



Later, Amanda successfully completed four months of outstanding Work Experience as an Administrative Assistant in the Human Resources Office of the Arizona Department of Transportation. Currently, she is a full-time permanent employee of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

### *2013 Outstanding Participant - Honorable Mention Certificate*

#### *Gerald Desmulin*

*The Phoenix Indian Center, Inc.  
Phoenix, Arizona*

## *2013 Outstanding Participant Award*

### *Polly Byrd*

*Inter-Tribal Council of Alabama  
Montgomery, Alabama*

**A**fter being unemployed for two years and exhausting her unemployment insurance benefits, plus the additional burden of no reliable transportation to viable job markets (that were located at least 50 miles away), Polly Byrd tried her best to pay her bills and debts by cleaning houses in her community. This effort fell short to sufficiently support her household that included her seven year old grandson. She continued to apply for other employment, however, was informed that her age of 60 years and lack of clerical skills (such as Excel and data entry expe-

rience) prevented employers from hiring her.

Polly went through four-months of training that included multi-line telephone/receptionist, Excel and Word, setting appointments, grant writing and implementation, at the CSBG and LIHEAP programs.

Upon successful completion of the training, Polly was hired as the Tribal Secretary for the Mowa Band of Choctaw Indians. Shortly thereafter, she was promoted to become the tribe's first full-time Tribal Coordinator, a position that she created and fulfilled its duties.



Her professionalism, energy, and determination to provide for her community is testimony of the importance of the WIA program.

## *2013 Outstanding Participant Award*



### *Sylvia Reed*

*Citizen Potawatomi Nation  
Shawnee, Oklahoma*

termination to turn her life around for herself and her children.

Over a 20-month period, Sylvia received classroom training while participating in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Employment and Training program, attended the Gordon Cooper Vocational Technical Center where she completed various courses, such as Microsoft Word, Excel I, and Excel II, and completed work placements in different office environments through the program's Work Experience ac-

**D**espite many years of abuse due to domestic violence and alcoholism, a painful divorce process, ongoing bouts of depression, and lack of significant work skills, Sylvia Reed has exhibited outstanding resilience and de-

termination to turn her life around for herself and her children. Over a 20-month period, Sylvia received classroom training while participating in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Employment and Training program, attended the Gordon Cooper Vocational Technical Center where she completed various courses, such as Microsoft Word, Excel I, and Excel II, and completed work placements in different office environments through the program's Work Experience ac-

tivity, all of which helped her gain the skills and knowledge required for her current position. Her current full-time employment at the Sac and Fox Nation's Food Distribution Warehouse came about from a Work Experience placement with that same employer.

Sylvia took her family on a vacation trip for the first time this past spring break 2013. She has become her children's role model and an inspiration to those who may be experiencing hardship.

## 2013 Outstanding Employer Award

### *The Fry Bread House*

*The Phoenix Indian Center, Inc.  
Phoenix, Arizona*

One of the first Native American owned businesses in the Phoenix area, The Fry Bread House opened its doors in 1992, showcasing the same fry bread recipes and techniques owner Ms. Cecelia Miller of the Tohono O'odham Nation had learned as a child. Today, there are two restaurants with 22 employees, all Native American.

On March 13, 2012, Arizona Republic restaurant critic Howard Seftel announced The Fry Bread House as one of five restaurants nationwide to receive the annual "American Classics" designation

from the prestigious James Beard Foundation, the restaurant industry's equivalent of the Academy Awards. It is the first Native American eatery to receive this outstanding award since its inception in 1998.

The Fry Bread House educates its employees about the basics of high quality food preparation that follows the standards required by the local Health Department, provides useful training in customer service to maintain a high level customer base for walk-ins and call-in



orders, along with training on the cash register, recordkeeping, and ordering procedures.

This outstanding employer has always been supportive of trainees who are first time entrants or re-entering the workforce, and advocates on their behalf whenever necessary.

