



Outstanding Employer

Cook Inlet Housing Authority Anchorage, Alaska P.L. 102-477



Carol Gore

Ms. Gore is a proud Alaskan of Aleut decent. Her life and work is shaped by the rich heritage of her people, their lives and their stories. Carol was working passionately for her Native corporation, as the acquisition, disposition and asset manager for Cook Inlet Region Inc. when she was loaned, on an interim basis, to Cook Inlet Housing Authoring (CIHA) as they searched for a new executive director.

Under Carol's leadership, the CIHA team has more than doubled its affordable rental housing, from 267 units in 2000 to over 1,300 units owned and managed in 2016. Their portfolio includes a homeless shelter, construction and sales of affordable homes for immediate homeownership and the establishment and operation of an affiliate Native CDFI, Cook Inlet Lending Center.





Memorial Scholarship

Alice BigPond Roach



Cortney Bales

**Citizen Potawatomi
Nation**

Cortney is a very hardworking individual with an exceptional work ethic and has done an extensive amount of community service work starting at the age of 13. Cortney has served as treasurer and vice president for AIBL American Indian Business Leaders and The Native empowerment summit, among many other community service events such as raising awareness for breast cancer and organ donors and working with Cavett. She recently graduated from Haskell University with a degree in Business administration where she maintained a 3.82 GPA. She has recently been hired on with Indian Health Services as a budget analyst.

Memorial Scholarship



Howard Yackus

Cody Lanyate

Pueblo of Zuni



Cody is an ambitious young man who demonstrates strong will and motivation. Although Cody endured many obstacles and hardships growing up, one being the loss of his mother, he has persevered and has made positive strides toward his educational and career goals. Cody is open-minded, demonstrates humility and is focused. Cody has demonstrated perseverance to strive above and beyond academically and at work. Cody received his Associates of Science degree in Recreation and Fitness Management from Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) in Fall 2013. Cody has a lifelong passion of working outdoors and protecting nature, our Mother Earth. Thus, has made a commitment to focus his efforts in attaining a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science. We strongly believe that Cody will be a strong advocate in trying to curb as much environmental damage to nature, wildlife, and people as possible. Cody is currently enrolled at HINU, maintains a cumulative GPA at 3.9, and has been recognized for scholastic achievement at HINU. Cody has exemplified exceptional leadership skills, initiative and demonstrated diligence in all his endeavors. Cody is an exceptional father figure to his two children and sacrifices his time from his family to pursue his education away from home. Cody plans to return to Zuni and work with the Fish and Wildlife Program. Cody's expected graduation date Spring 2017.



Outstanding Participant

Norma Contreras

California Indian
Manpower
Consortium (CIMC)



WIOA Section 166

Norma Contreras, a member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, has made great strides to rise above many barriers and continues to move forward to achieve her goals with a strong will and graceful heart that is inspiring to everyone she meets. Norma is a single mother who works very hard to make a better life for her two daughters.

In 2010, Norma was coming out of a domestic violence relationship. During the transition, she learned to use art as a tool to help her oldest daughter heal from the trauma of this experience. She has used art to help express her own emotions and heal from the pain that she had been carrying from 14 years of abuse. Norma has been interviewed and featured in the book, "You Look a Lot Like Me," by Tortoise and Finch Productions. She shared her story of domestic violence and how she utilized art as a tool to cope and heal.

While working full-time and attending classes with the goal of becoming an Art Therapist, Norma enrolled in the CIMC Native Entrepreneur Training Program. Through this program, she created a business plan for "Healing Hearts." Her mission statement is "To provide coping and healing skills to the Native communities by utilizing art workshops." At the end of the training, she was selected by her peers as having the most unique and most helpful business in the class. Norma is currently working to obtain capital for her business and plans to launch in one to two years.

Norma is apprenticing with the art instructor at Indian Health Council and assists in facilitating the Women's Empowerment Circle. Norma is commended for using the available resources to create a future that will improve the lives of her family and community. She is always looking for ways to help the community as a whole; she is always striving to go above and beyond. Norma is an example of once you put your mind to it, anything is possible.

Outstanding Participants



Trixy Curtis



ALU LIKE, Inc.

WIOA Section 166



Adopted twice, abandoned three times, this beautiful young lady never ever let the past determine her future. She was determined to build a better life for herself. Against all odds, from childhood trauma, lack of resources, and no role models, she set out to make a life for herself. With a dream in her heart, and determination to fulfill and find her purpose, she is living her dream.



Outstanding Participant

KC Yatsatie

Pueblo of Zuni

P.L. 102-477



KC is a strong willed young lady who has demonstrated diligence and perseverance. KC had a shy personality when she came on board for ZECDC program services. Throughout her life she has faced obstacles but continued to thrive. The very first time she received services in 2008 under the WIA—Summer Youth Employment. After graduating from high school she returned for services in 2014. KC started receiving cash assistance which lead her to conduct job search, attend career/life skills workshop sessions and work on boosting her self confidence. She was selected to volunteer at the Zuni Utility Department. KC had the drive, passion and commitment to follow through with volunteer placement for a four month period, shortly after that, KC was placed under WIA WEX program. KC gained the required skills as an inventory clerk and was able to attain full time permanent employment . ZECDC supported her endeavors and encouraged her to always stay positive . KC is deserving of this award because she exemplifies exceptional leadership skills and has significantly improved in overcoming her shyness.

Outstanding Participants



Martha Only A Chief

Pawnee Nation

P.L. 102-477



Ms. Martha Only A Chief tirelessly serves her Nation in its newly established Cultural Resources Division while attending the local tribal college full-time and caring for her family of five. Ms. Only A Chief was vital in the development of the Pawnee Nation's newest Division of Cultural Resources that now serves as her full-time employer. While employed as a 477 WEX worker in the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, she developed a Section 106 data base to collect fees on projects on Pawnee tribal lands. An initiative that helped secure funding for the creation and sustainability of this division. In the process cultural programs such as language revitalization, repatriation and Museum development had a place to preserve cultural traditions among the Pawnee people. It's establishment created a permanent position for Ms. Only A Chief, and two full-time jobs as well as two contract workers for the Nation as well. She has remained committed to obtaining a college degree even through adversity and the hectic schedule of family life. Her efforts were recently recognized by the Pawnee Nation Traveler's Club and they awarded her with their inaugural student scholarship[. She has also maintained her Pawnee tribal scholarship for four semesters by carrying at least a 2.0 GPA and staying enrolled full time. Last fall she completed an Associates of Arts degree in American Indian Studies while working full time. Ms. Only A Chief serves her people by helping with ceremonies and is deeply connected to the community. Martha Only A Chief is the epitome of removing barriers in order to strive to improve her own life and those of her fellow tribal members. She is not slowing down as plans have been announced for a new language program, in the division and she has continued on in a Bachelor's degree program at Bacone College.