

PALA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

April 2026

Newsletter

VOL

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month: Four Hazards To Discuss With Your Teen



April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, focusing on the high-risk behavior of teen drivers (ages 15-19), who have the highest fatal crash rates related to distraction. It emphasizes removing phone distractions, limiting passengers, and avoiding multitasking, as texting or adjusting apps can cause fatal accidents, with many states increasing law enforcement during this time.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual violence is not traditional. Take action. Protect the sacred.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Each April, the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, StrongHearts Native Helpline, and Alaska Native Women's Resource Center recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) by raising awareness of sexual assault and standing in support of survivors of sexual violence.

Earth Day

For Native Americans, Earth Day is not a once-a-year event but a daily, multigenerational commitment to stewardship and reciprocity with nature. While the modern Earth Day began in 1970, Indigenous peoples have practiced environmental stewardship for millennia, focusing on protecting, respecting, and living in balance with the land and all living things.





April 22nd

EARTH DAY



Indigenous peoples have long honored our Mother Earth. As the first stewards, Native peoples recognize the delicate relationships human beings have with not only Earth but also the whole universe. Our relationship is reciprocal, we take of the rivers to the cosmos, and everything in between.

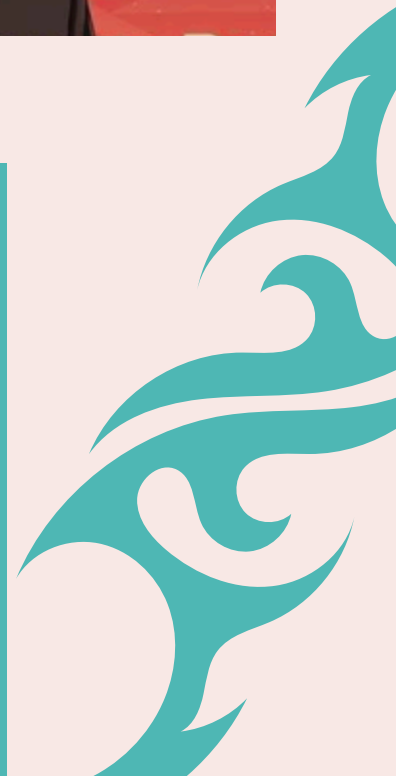
We understand that the Earth is the ultimate giver of life and that every rock, tree, animal, plant, and ecosystem has an interconnected spirit – without one, we can't have the other, as we share more than half of our DNA with many of the flora and fauna.

Native peoples have critically important knowledge systems and practices. The term “Indigenous ways of knowing” has been coined to recognize that the original inhabitants know how to protect and take care of the land. The term acknowledges the special connection Indigenous peoples have with the Earth and our responsibility as the original stewards to take care of and protect the Earth in order for our children and their children to survive and thrive.



Why Wildlife Matters

A key concept is thinking about the “Seven Generations,” meaning decisions made today should protect and benefit people seven generations into the future. This reflects a long-term responsibility to the environment that aligns closely with Earth Day’s message. For Native communities, Earth Day isn’t just one day, it reflects a lifelong responsibility to care for the land and maintain balance with nature.





TEEN DISTRACTED DRIVING

American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest motor vehicle-related death rates of all racial and ethnic groups. However, crash-related injuries and deaths among members of tribal nations can be prevented.



Prevention Tips for Teens

- **Designated Texter:** Make a passenger the "designated texter".
- **Secure the Phone:** Put the phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat.
- **Pull Over:** If a call or text is urgent, pull over and park.
- **Stay Focused:** Keep eyes on the road and hands on the wheel



Resources

- [Indian Health Services - Injury Prevention](#)
- [The Tribal Injury Prevention Resource Center \(TIPRC\)](#)
- [The Community Preventive Services Task Force \(CPSTF\) Findings for Motor Vehicle Injury](#)
- [Bureau of Indian Affairs \(BIA\) Indian Highway Safety Program](#)
- [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) Tribal Transportation Program](#)
- [Evaluating Disparities in Traffic Fatalities by Race, Ethnicity, and Income](#)





SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS



WHAT IS IT?

Sexual assault is a crisis that disproportionately impacts Native communities, with more than half of Native women (56%) experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime. Native women are 2.5 times more likely than non-Native women to experience rape or sexual assault, and at least 86% of perpetrators are non-Native men.

This violence is a direct result of systemic failures, the erosion of Tribal jurisdiction, and the federal government's failure to protect Native women. Perpetrators act with near-total impunity due to legal loopholes and the chronic underfunding of Tribal justice systems.

Resources

[Your Safe Place - Family Justice Center: 619-533-6000](#)

[Center for Community Solutions \(CCS\) Rape Crisis Hotline: 888-385-4657](#)

[Women's Resource Center \(WRC\): 760-757-3500](#)

[Rape Abuse Incest National Network \(RAINN\): 800-656-HOPE \(4673\)](#)

[Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention & Response \(SAPR\) Helpline: 877-995-5247](#)

[Indian Health Council: 760-749-1410 x5357 or x5326](#)

[La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians Avellaka Program: 760-742-8628](#)

[Southern Indian Health Council, Inc: 619-445-1188](#)

[Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition: 760-644-4781](#)

[District Attorney Victim Assistance Program: 619-531-4041](#)

[Child Protective Services: 858-560-2191](#)



National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day- April 10th

April 10th is National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day (#NYHAAD), dedicated to educating, reducing stigma, and promoting testing among Native youth and young people across the U.S.. It highlights that young people (13-24) are disproportionately affected, often with lower retention in care, necessitating culturally competent, accessible care.





Child Abuse Prevention Month

Why it matters in Native communities

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a critical time for Native American communities to focus on strengthening families, fostering cultural connections, and breaking cycles of intergenerational trauma. While Native children are disproportionately affected by abuse, advocates emphasize that cultural pride, community support, and protective factors are key to prevention



RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT & AWARENESS:

- [StrongHearts Native Helpline](#): A culturally appropriate, confidential service for Native Americans impacted by violence, available at 1-844-7NATIVE.
- [National Child Advocacy Resource Center \(nativecac.org\)](#): Provides resources to help prevent child maltreatment and support Native children.
- [Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women \(csvanw.org\)](#): Offers, educational workshops, and resources for community engagement.
- CSVANW +4

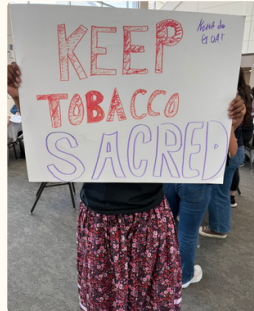
For more information, the [Child Welfare \(.gov\)](#) website provides resources on prevention strategies and community initiatives. connections that last.

YOUTH QUEST 2026

Sacramento, CA



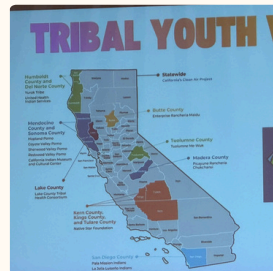
Tribal Youth Quest <<<<<



On March 22nd, Pala youth had the opportunity to participate in the Tribal Youth Quest, held at the California Automobile Museum.

During the event, youth connected with peers from Northern and Central California, creating a space for collaboration, learning, and shared experiences. Together, they worked in teams to discuss the impacts of commercial tobacco on tribal communities and reservations.

Through these discussions, participants explored how commercial tobacco affects community health and well-being, while also identifying ways they would like legislators to address these issues. The experience empowered youth to use their voices, advocate for change, and be part of shaping a healthier future for their communities.



>>>>> Youth Quest

On March 23rd, Pala youth attended the Tribal Youth Quest held at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center, where approximately 400 attendees gathered from across California. During the event, Pala youth had the honor of delivering a land acknowledgment to an audience that included many non-Native attendees, helping to educate others on the importance of recognizing Indigenous lands and communities. Participants also had the opportunity to engage with James Ramos' office, speaking with his representative, Linda. They shared their perspectives on the impact of commercial tobacco on reservations and discussed the importance of legislative support to address these issues. This experience provided valuable opportunities for leadership, cultural sharing, and collaboration, making it a meaningful and memorable event for all involved.



Pala Tobacco PROGRAM

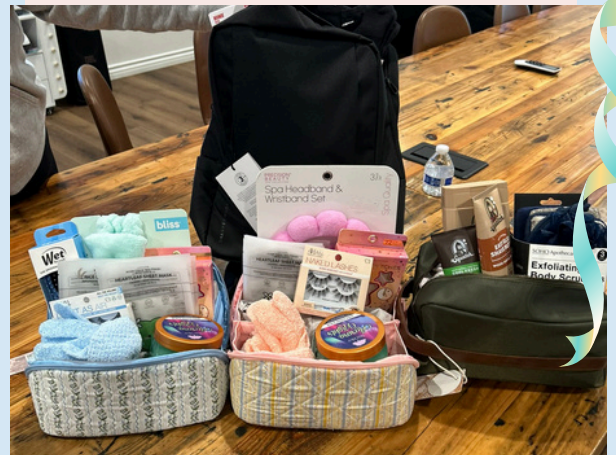
What Youth are Up to



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS CARE PACKAGES

TRIBAL YOUTH LISTENING SESSION

Youth in our program actively participated in a lesson session, offering powerful perspectives on how to prevent youth homelessness. Their voices were heard as they shared ideas centered on prevention, innovation, and building a stronger community.



YOUTH GARDENING COMMITTEE

Our youth came together to design and build garden boxes for our long-awaited community garden, showing strong engagement and teamwork. Through their ongoing efforts, they are learning valuable building skills while giving back to their community.

What Youth Are Up To

GIRLIE GIRL GARAGE

The first automotive maintenance class of the year was a success. The Youth Empowerment Program hosts these workshops to equip future teen drivers with essential skills like changing a tire, performing quick pre-trip inspections, and jump-starting a car so they feel confident on the road. For upcoming workshop dates, please contact us.



Public Speaking Workshop with Dr. Joely Proudfit from Cal State San Marcos (CSUSM)

She worked with our youth on building confidence when speaking, sharing their thoughts clearly, and remembering that their voices matter. Even at a young age, they can speak up, be leaders, and make a difference in their communities.

Thank you to everyone who came out and participated!

PHRC EVENTS 2026

Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative

WE ARE OPEN APRIL

April Schedule
Monday - Friday 10:30 am-7 pm
Saturday April 18th & 25th

For Any Questions
Contact Paula Ellenwood
(760) 638-1676




Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative Presents

DRIVING LESSONS

Attention all youth enrolled in online driving school classes! The PHRC is offering a space where you can complete your online classes and get answers to any questions you may have about the driving school.

Every Wednesday starting January 14, 2026
4:30 pm-6:30 pm
*check-ins are required



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



REGISTRATION NOW

Contact: Maria Villegas
(760) 315-0104



Wiwish WORKSHOP



Learn the traditional acorn preparation process with a modern twist using everyday kitchen appliances. Participants will explore cultural teachings and learn how to make Wiwish while honoring tradition.

April 2ND
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM
ALL AGE EVENT

PALA ADMINISTRATION KITCHEN
RSVP WITH MARIA (760) 315-0104



COMMUNITY GARDENING WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH
4 PM - 6 PM
PALA HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

Join us for an interactive gardening workshop open to youth and elders ages 12 and up. Families are welcome!

Participants will learn basic planting skills and create their own herb garden to take home. This hands-on workshop is perfect for beginners and anyone interested in in-home gardening.

Participants Must Register for the Workshop

Maximum 25 participants

Scan QR Code
or
Call Tina @
(760) 891-3510





PHRC EVENTS 2026



FIRST AID & CPR TRAINING

Get Certified in
First Aid & CPR
4 Hour Class

**Space is limited!!
Register today!**

For Age 12 to 24

**Saturday
April 25 at 10 am - 2pm**

**Pala Housing
Resource Center**

Training includes:

- Learning about Emergency Situation
- Basic Life Supports
- Get Started with CPR
- Get Started with First Aid
- Real-life Demonstration
- Focusing on Adults, Children, and Infants

CONTACT PAULA ELLENWOOD (760) 638-1676



Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative

ROOTED-N-CULTURE

Providing ongoing creative cultural activities for youth 12 - 24.

Location: Pala Housing Resource Center

Start Date: Starting Wednesday, April 8th, 2026

Frequency: **continuing every Wednesday | April - June 2026**

Time: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

CONTACT: PAULA (760) 638-1676

** Subject to change

Community Clean up

The Tobacco Program is looking to clean up at the Pala Park

Join us for a day of fun and action as we work to improve the reservation.

**21
APRIL**

Ages 12 and up

****Community Service available**

MEET AT PHRC

4 pm-5:30 pm

CONTACT DEANNRA
(760) 893-0769



DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE

18TH ANNUAL NATIVE YOUTH CONFERENCE

**SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 18, 2026**

**THIS EVENT IS FOR
NATIVE YOUTH 12-19**

← SCAN THE QR CODE TO COMPLETE THE DTI 2026 PRE-CONFERENCE SURVEY

CLICK ON THE DTI LOGO FOR MORE INFORMATION

NATIVE YOUTH WHO RESIDE IN SAN DIEGO, RIVERSIDE, ORANGE, LOS ANGELES & SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE

Community EVENTS 2026

23RD TRADITIONAL INDIAN HEALTH GATHERING



APRIL
24-25

OPEN
TO ALL



Pala Sacred Mountain • 5 miles east of I-15 off Route 76
34650 Sacred Mountain Way, Pala, CA 92059

We encourage you to join us as we camp under the stars each night!

Meals and snacks provided.
An Alcohol and Drug Free Event. Please no pets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
(760) 749-1410
Maggie Reyes ext. 5279

www.indianhealth.com
"Harmony in Health" artwork by Kamalite Elders

2ND ANNUAL
SOCALINDIGENOUSARTS.COM

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
INDIGENOUS
CULTURE & ART FESTIVAL

IN COLLABORATION WITH:
Eyaay Ahuun FOUNDATION
ESCONDIDO City of Choice
FNX

PRESENTED BY
IPA

CELEBRATING ACCM:
April is Arts, Culture and Creativity Month (ACCM) for the City of Escondido. SCIA is honored to support and be a part of the community celebrations!

ARTS & CULTURE
WECHAAWCH EWIP
HONORING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
BIRD SINGING & DANCING

APRIL 18 2026
GRAPE DAY PARK
10AM - 4PM

51ST CUPA DAYS

MAY 2-3, 2026
CUPA CULTURAL CENTER GROUNDS

FREE
ADMISSION
AND
PARKING



SAT
10A TO DUSK
SUN
11A TO 4:30P

OPENING
CEREMONIES
10A SAT

PEON
GAMES
DUSK SAT

CUPA.PALATRIBE.COM
THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME

VENDOR INQUIRIES CONTACT NA'LEIGHA AGUAYO @ 760-891-3590, NAGUAYO@PALATRIBE.COM

NO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, VAPING, OR SMOKING ARE PERMITTED AT THIS EVENT

Vivian Banks
Charter School

Exciting News!

Open
Enrollment for
TK - 5 Grade

Enroll Now

nancy.mata@bonsallusd.com

760-742-3300

SCAN ME



Free
TK

Community Resources



PALA SOCIAL SERVICES

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE!

HELP SUPPORT OUR NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES & KEEP OUR NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
760.891.3502
SOCIALSERVICES@PALATRIBE.COM



NEED A SAFE PLACE TO STAY?

Are you age 18-21 without safe housing?

Casa de Amparo's Transitional Living Program can help.
We provide housing and support for young women experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

WHAT YOU GET:

- Safe Housing**
A furnished apartment with your own bedroom and bathroom, plus shared kitchen and living space, for up to 18 months or more with possible extensions.
- Support & Care**
Caring staff who listen and treat you with respect, plus access to safe medical care, mental health support, and help when things feel overwhelming.
- Life & Ongoing Support**
Help with school or your GED, jobs and career planning, everyday life skills, and continued support even after you leave the program.

You may qualify if you are a woman ages 18-21, and:
Don't have a place to stay,
Were asked to leave home,
Are couch-surfing or living on the street, or
Are at risk of becoming homeless.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?
Call: 760-295-4600
Email: housing@casadeamparo.org
Visit: www.casadeamparo.org

You don't have to figure this out alone. We're here to help.

All services are free. Located in San Marcos.



2026 BIRD BUCKET LIST

- Singing of the Birds
- Agua Caliente All Night Sing
- Mul-Cha-Tha
- MEGA THROW
- Lehi Piipaash Matasheevm
- Gathering of Nations
- Gathering of the Pai
- Mesa Grande Gathering
- Sycuan Ipai-Tipai Mataayum
- San Pasqual Gathering
- Rincon Fiesta
- Viejas Bird Singers Gathering
- Morongo Powwow
- Quechan Indian Days
- Fort Mojave Indian Days
- Indio Powwow
- Pechanga Powwow
- Ashaa Takook New Years

PALA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE



"For Youth By Youth"

WHO WE ARE

The Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative is based on a "For Youth by Youth" approach. We encourage youth to actively be involved with the newsletter, content, training's, podcasts, and activities. We service youth ages 12 to 24 years of age. We strive to provide Pala youth with the life skills needed to become successful adults. Hours of operation Monday through Friday from 11 am-7:30 pm and every other Saturday from 9 am -5 pm

Meet the Staff



Maria Villegas
Youth Empowerment Lead
Cell: (760) 315-0104
Email:mvillegas@palatribe.com



Paula Ellenwood
Youth Empowerment
Cell: (760) 638-1676
pellenwood@palatribe.com



Deandra Molina
Tobacco Coordinator
Cell: (760) 893-0769
dmolina@palatribe.com

OUR SERVICES

Life Skills

- Cooking Classes
- Driving School Budgeting
- Workshops
- Resume Building

Personal Skill Development

- After School Tutoring
- GED Classes
- Goal Setting
- Community Service

Community Events

- Youth Training/Field Trips
- Community Outreach
- Social Media

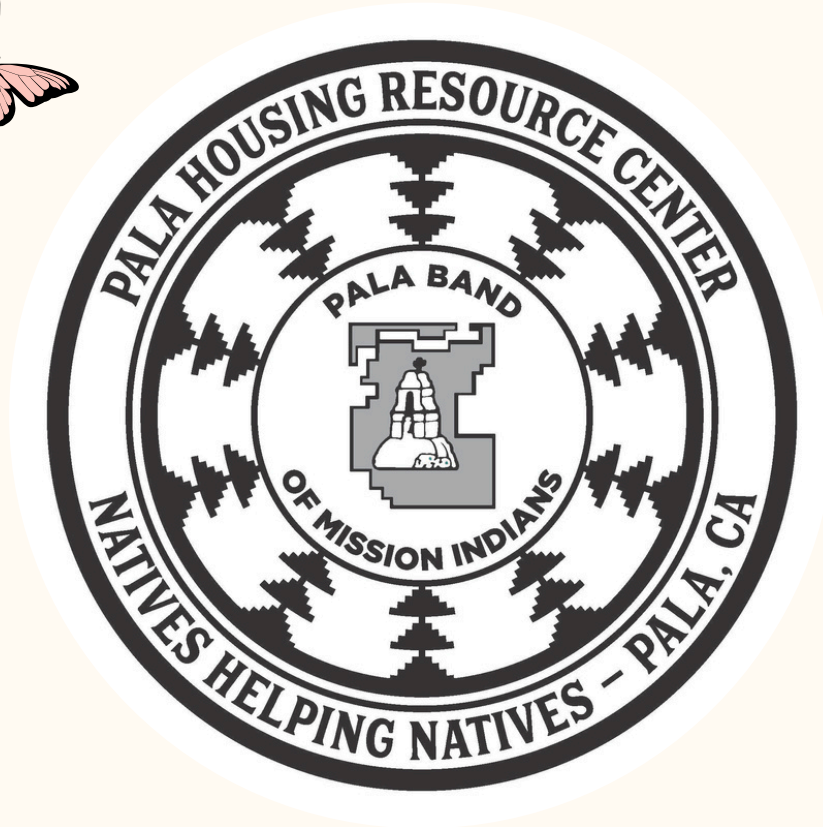
Other Services

- Mentorship Guidance and Career
- Development Youth Mental
- Health Guidance



PALA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

"FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH"



HAPPY EASTER
to *Every Bunny*



Location:

35990 Pala Temecula Road
Pala, CA 92059
www.PalaHRC.com

Youth Contact:

Maria Villegas
(760) 315-0104
mvillegas@palatribe.com

Paula Ellenwood

(760) 638-1676
pellenwood@palatribe.com

Deandra Molina

(760) 893-0769
dmolina@palatribe.com

The Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative is dedicated to preventing youth homelessness by empowering tribal youth, descendants, and community members ages 12 to 24 with the tools and support they need to thrive. Through a youth-guided and culturally grounded approach, we create safe, stable spaces where young people build life skills and transition successfully into adulthood. We provide comprehensive services, including mental health support, education and career readiness, and financial literacy, through both one-on-one mentorship and group learning. Guided by a “for youth, by youth” model, we collaborate with families, elders, and community partners to foster resilience, self-sufficiency, and positive futures.

The Pala Tobacco Program encourages our youth and community to respect the traditional use of tobacco, keeping our culture strong for future generations.