Volume 39
September 2026

Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative

NEWSLETTER



Inside This Issue

- Native American Day
- Youth Mental Health Day (Sept. 18)
- Suicide Awareness
- Community Events

"Honoring our past, celebrating our culture, and empowering the next generation."

Native American Day

California Native American Day is celebrated on the fourth Friday of September. In 2026, it falls on September 25. The day is an opportunity for Tribal youth to learn about and celebrate Native cultures, traditions, history, resilience, and the many contributions of Native people.

In California, the tradition began in 1939 as "Indian Day." In 1968, Governor Ronald Reagan and California Tribal leaders established the fourth Friday of September as American Indian Day. It was officially renamed Native American Day in 1998.

Native AMERICAN DAY



California Native American Day celebrates the distinctive culture of the Native American people indigenous to California and calls attention to their triumphs and struggles that comprise their rich history.

California designated the fourth Friday of September in 1998 as California Native American Day to dismantle the misconceptions about California Indians. Previously, students were led to believe California history began with the arrival of the first explorers and lacked a fundamental understanding of Native American's existing society. Native populations across the country were seen as primitive and were too often associated with stereotypes like teepees and drums.

Education in K-12 schools and community colleges has since evolved to entail the extensive history of the many tribal groups in California. We now have programs and conferences each year on California Native American Day to continue educating our communities.

2026

Ways to Celebrate...

- Attend Cultural events
- Learn tribal history
- Learn Native Artists and Businesses
- Visit Museum
- Spend time with Elders
- Learn the language



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH DAY

WHY IT MATTERS?

Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people. Unfortunately, in recent years, we've seen significant increases in certain mental health disorders in youth, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Many factors shape the mental health of young people, from individual to societal level forces.





YOUTH FOCUSED WELLNESS HUBS

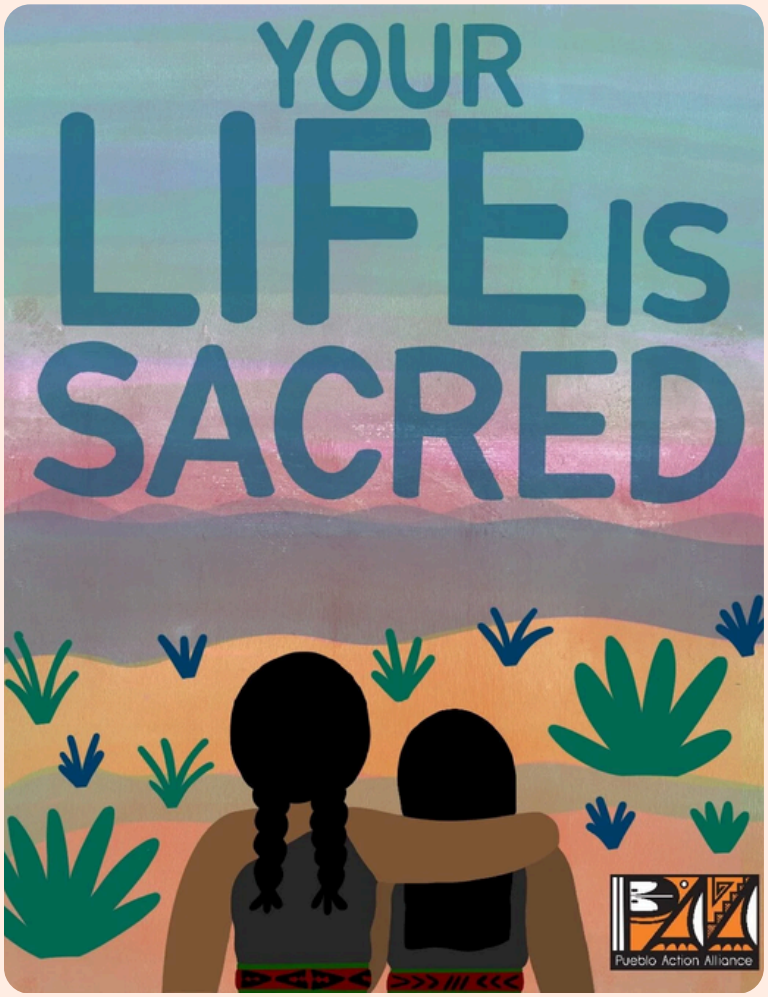
- **Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative**
- **Tuchily**
- **Indian Health Council - Behavioral Health**
- **San Diego American Indian Health Center**
- **Vista Hill Native American SmartCare**



Suicide Prevention Month

World Suicide Prevention Day. September 10 is recognized worldwide World Suicide Prevention Day. On this day, the global community pauses to reflect on a tragic reality: over 700,000 people die by suicide every year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). This means one life is lost every 40 seconds. Yet beneath this staggering number lies a deeper crisis faced by marginalized communities, including Native Americans, whose suicide rates far outpace national and global averages.

In the United States, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations suffer the highest suicide rates of any racial or ethnic group. Between 2015 and 2020, the CDC recorded an average of 566 suicide deaths per year among AI/AN individuals. In 2021, their age-adjusted suicide rate reached 28.1 per 100,000 nearly double the national average of 14.1 and significantly higher than the global average of 9 per 100,000.



As we mark World Suicide Prevention Day, these numbers demand more than awareness they call for culturally rooted, community led solutions and equitable access to mental health care. Because behind every statistic is a life that mattered and a future that might still be saved.

BACK TO SCHOOL; BE SMOKE-FREE

Pala Tobacco PROGRAM



As a new school year begins, it's the perfect time to focus on healthy habits that help you succeed both in and out of the classroom. Choosing to stay tobacco- and vape-free is one of the best decisions you can make for your health, your future, and your goals. Nicotine can affect the developing brain, making it harder to focus, learn, and manage stress. While vaping is often advertised as harmless, many vape products contain nicotine and other chemicals that can impact your lungs and overall well-being.

For Native youth, it's also important to understand the difference between traditional tobacco and commercial tobacco. Traditional tobacco holds cultural and spiritual significance and is used respectfully in ceremonies and prayers. Commercial tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, and e-cigarettes, are manufactured for recreational use and can lead to addiction and serious health problems.



A MESSAGE FROM KICKIT CALIFORNIA

Thinking about quitting commercial tobacco or nicotine? You don't have to do it alone. Kick It California offers free, confidential support to help people quit smoking, vaping, or using other commercial tobacco products.

Whether you're ready to quit today or just thinking about it, every step counts. Reach out and get the support you deserve.
Call 1-800-300-8086 or visit Kick It California to learn more and start your quit journey today.

PHRC Announcements





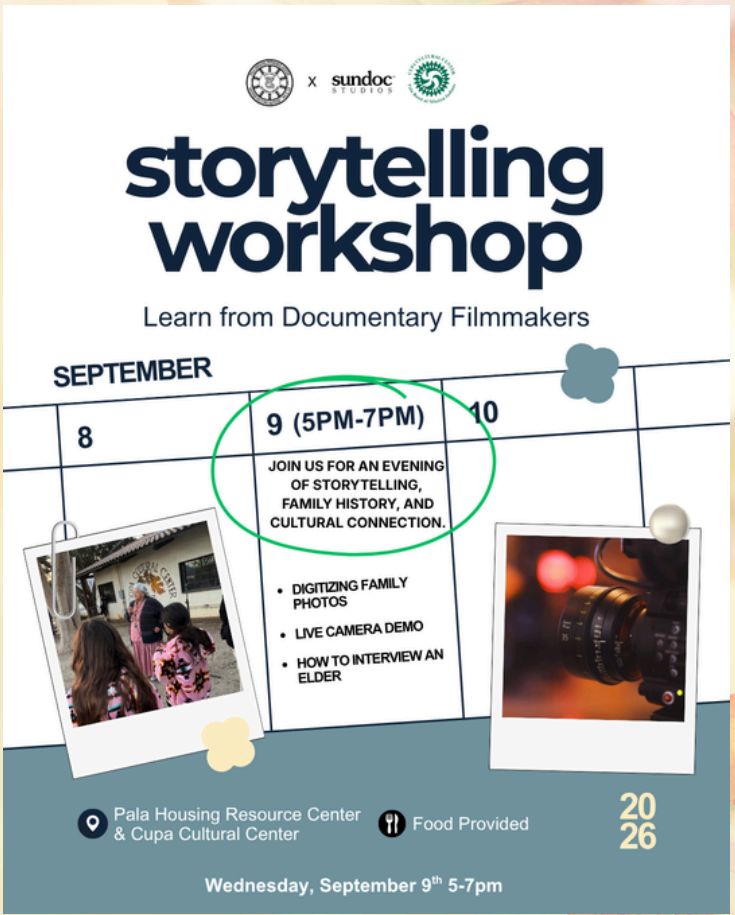
REGISTER NOW

The Pala Housing Resource Center is calling all youth 15 and up to join the waiting list for driving school. Let's work together on getting our youth safely on the road.

PHRC EVENTS


"FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH"
IN PERSON
TUTORING
Now assisting students ages 12- 24, with homework, projects, and another other educational areas that may need improvements.
MONDAY- FRIDAY
At 4:30 - 6:00 PM
PALA HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER
35990 Pala Temecula Rd,
Pala, CA 92059
MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
MARIA VILLEGAS
760-315-0104
www.palahrc.com


METAL ROSE
WELDING WORKSHOP
Saturday, September 19th
Youth Ages 14-24
Get hands-on with welding and learn how to turn metal into a one-of-a-kind rose. In this workshop, you'll get a beginner-friendly introduction to MIG welding and learn the basics of creating your own metal flower.
LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE
How to make a tack weld
Attach metal petals to a stem
Bend & shape your petals
* Field Trip: PYEI will provide transportation.
MENTAL ROSE WORKSHOP
2310-C Kettner Blvd, San Diego, CA 92104
SIGN UP:
Maria Villegas
(760) 315-0104

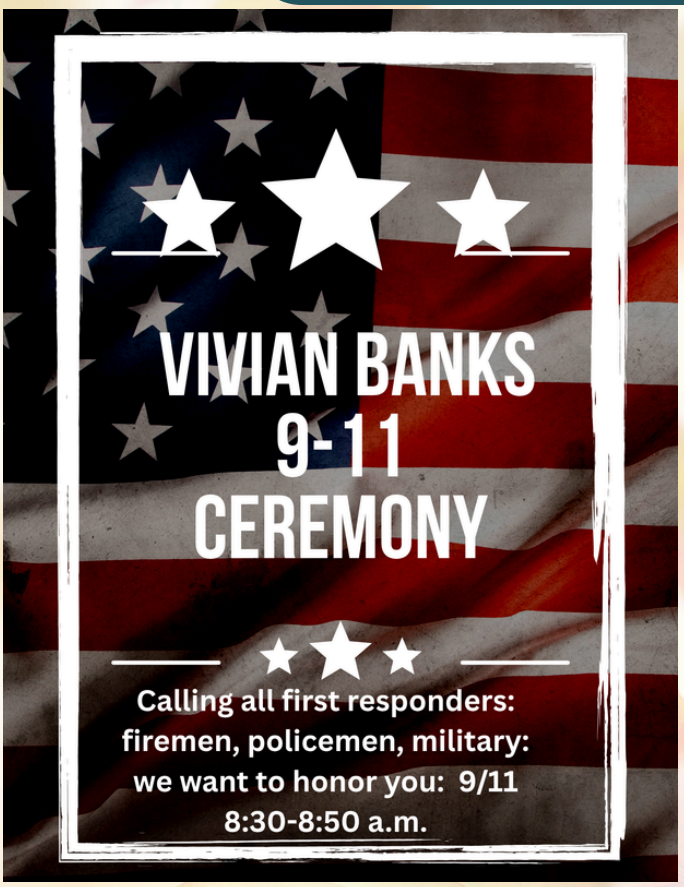

x sundoc STUDIOS
storytelling workshop
Learn from Documentary Filmmakers
SEPTEMBER
8
9 (5PM-7PM)
10
JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF STORYTELLING, FAMILY HISTORY, AND CULTURAL CONNECTION.
DIGITIZING FAMILY PHOTOS
LIVE CAMERA DEMO
HOW TO INTERVIEW AN ELDER
Pala Housing Resource Center & Cupa Cultural Center
Food Provided
2026
Wednesday, September 9th 5-7pm


Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative
YOUTH GARDENING CLUB
Cultivate Skills. Connect with Nature.
PALA HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER
STARTING SEPTEMBER 24TH
EVERY THRUSDAY
UNTIL DECEMBER 17TH
5PM-6PM
GARDEN
Youth Community Gardening Includes:
Community Service
How to work with tools
Planting and growing fresh produce
CONTACT MARIA AT (760) 315-0104

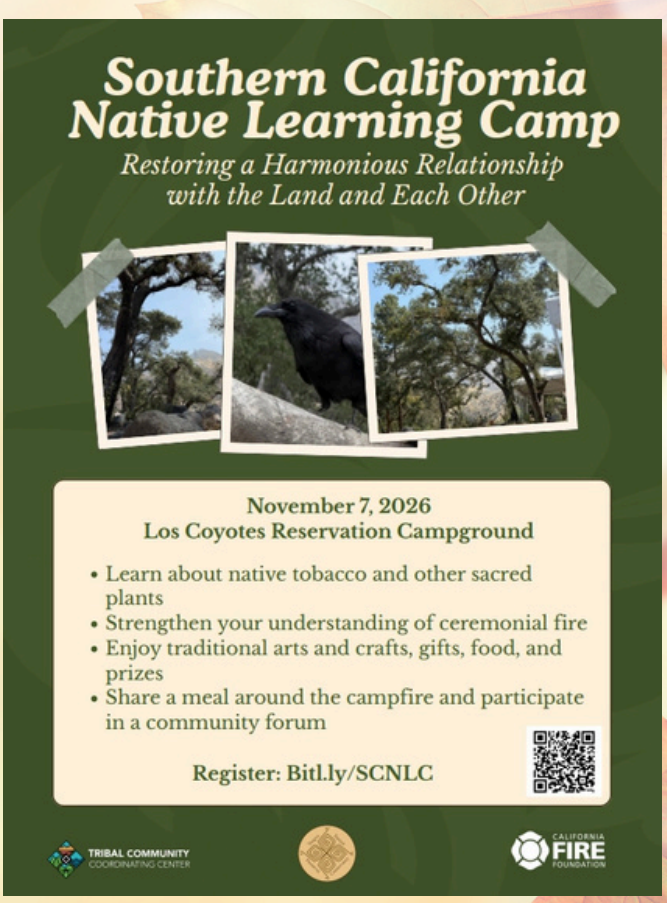
PHRC EVENTS


PALA COMMUNITY
SEPTEMBER
17TH
SUICIDE AWARENESS
GLOW
IN THE DARK
Walk
6:30PM-8:30PM
PALA
BALLFIELDS
Tuchily
Healing Hearts
Pala Tobacco
SCAN ME!
Register early and get your event
T-shirt and food tickets!
Secure yours while supplies last!

Community Events







hello
FALL

Community Events









Community Resources

TUCHILY HEALING HEARTS

Tuchily Healing Hearts



TRIBAL MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

OUR SERVICES

SCREENING
Conducts screenings and assessments to determine next steps for care.

TRANSPORTATION
Equipped to provide transportation services to individuals experiencing crisis and for continuing supportive service appointments.

REFERRALS
Provide referrals for therapy, behavioral health, medical, developmental disabilities, and long term care.

CASE MANAGEMENT
Case mangement support is offered up to 30 days. However, coordination of long term care is the goal.

(760) 292-6271

PALA KISH

(760) 292-6271

WHO WE ARE

Kish, the Pala Band of Mission Indians' Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program, provides supportive services to eligible community members facing housing insecurity, unemployment, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health challenges.

Pala Kish is a Social Services project dedicated to ending homelessness on the Pala Indian Reservation.

PROCESS

1. Contact our office to schedule a consultation
2. Complete Intake Application
3. Eligibility Determination
4. Sign Consent Form
5. Services Administered

SERVICES

- Rental Assistance
- Utility Assistance
- Emergency Housing
- Transportation
- Job Readiness Services
- Financial Literacy Workshops
- Case Management

Begin Your Journey Today!

TRIBAL OPIOID RESPONSE

TOR / HUNWET PROGRAM

- NALOXONE TRAINING
- COMMUNITY EDUCATION
- OUTREACH

760.292.6271

When our community recovers, we all do!





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 26 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 10:30 am - 7:00 pm and Saturdays on occasion for scheduled event.

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



Deanndra 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 Serivces

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

FOLLOW US

@palahousingresourcecenter www.palahrc.com

Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative

"FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH"



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

Deanndra Molina
(760) 893-0769
dmolina@pa

The Pala Youth Empowerment Initative is based on a "for youth by youth" approach. We encourage youth to actively be involved with the newsletter, content, trainings, podcasts and activities.

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