November 2026 Vol. 41

PALA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

Youth Homelessness Month

Native American youth experience homelessness at disproportionately higher rates than many other groups due to a combination of historical trauma, housing shortages, economic challenges, and barriers to accessing services. For many young people, having a safe and stable place to call home is essential for their health, education, and overall well-being.



Giving thanks this November

November is a great time to reflect on the people, traditions, and experiences that bring meaning to our lives. While many people celebrate Thanksgiving in different ways, Native communities have long practiced gratitude throughout the year.

Read More



Native American Month

Each November, we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, a time to recognize the rich cultures, traditions, histories, and contributions of Native American and Alaska Native people. It is an opportunity to honor the strength, resilience, and enduring legacy of Tribal Nations while celebrating the unique traditions that continue to be passed down through generations.



NATIVE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

WHY ARE NATIVE YOUTH AT GREATER RISK?

Some of the factors that contribute include:

- Limited affordable housing
- Historical and intergenerational trauma
- Poverty and unemployment
- Family conflict or instability
- Limited access to services in rural and Tribal communities



A NEW BEGINNING

Every Native youth deserves a safe place to call home. By supporting one another, strengthening cultural connections, and ensuring young people have access to housing, education, and community resources, we can help build healthier, stronger Tribal communities for future generations.



Native Youth Statisics

- Native American youth experience homelessness at disproportionately high rates compared to many other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. PubMed
- During the 2022–2023 school year, approximately 6% of Native American students in U.S. public schools were identified as experiencing homelessness. Among students attending Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, 5.2% were identified as homeless. CSBA Blog
- A national study found that 10.2% of American Indian and Alaska Native youth ages 13–17 experienced homelessness or ran away for at least one night during a 12-month period. For young adults ages 18–25, the rate was 12.2%. PubMed
- According to HUD's 2024 report, 1,272 American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous unaccompanied youth were counted experiencing homelessness on a single night in the United States.



RUNNWAY AWARENESS

>>> YOUTH RATES

The National Runaway Safeline reports that between 1.6 million and 2.8 million youth run away each year. 1 out of every 2 teenage runaways end up in shelters or on the streets.

>>> REASONS

A variety of factors lead to youth running away or experiencing homelessness, including involvement in the juvenile justice system or child welfare system, abuse, neglect, abandonment, and severe family conflict. Mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and trauma, can also be major contributing factors. Additionally, a lack of access to resources, such as mental health services, housing, and employment opportunities, can be a significant contributing factor.

WHAT ARE THE LAWS ON RUNNING AWAY?

In California, there is no legal consequence for a minor running away. However, if a minor is caught by the police, they will be returned home to a parent, a guardian, or the court. Neither parents nor legal guardians can urge children to run away or hide minors. This act is punishable in California by up to one year of incarceration, a fine of up to $2,500, and five years of probation.

>>> SHOULD I RUN AWAY?

This is a big question to answer, think about how you would answer the following questions:

- Do I have a safe place to stay?
- What needs to change for me to want to stay at home?
- Is there someone I can talk to about my situation?
- Do I have a plan that is well thought out?
- What if my initial plan doesn't work?
- How will I survive on my own? (such as food, money, shelter)
- What are my concerns about staying and leaving?
- Who can I count on to help me?
- Is home safe?

www.1800runaway.org/

24/7 HELP

SAN DIEGO COUNTY ACCESS & CRISIS LINE

To get help or make a referral for any of our services, call or text (619) 241-0608 Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm. One of our team members will answer your call.



Runaway Helpline – Call or text

>>> Call(1-800-786-2929)

Text 11600

The National Runaway Safeline provides education and solution-focused interventions, offers non-judgmental support, respects confidentiality, collaborates with volunteers, and responds to at-risk youth and their families 24 hours a day.

Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. There are many factors that contribute to suicide. The goal of suicide prevention is to reduce factors that increase risk and increase factors that promote resilience.

>>> Suicide Prevention

Call or text 988



Youth Crisis

>>> Call 1-800-843-5200

California Youth Crisis Line: 24/7 statewide emergency line for youth (12-24) and families in crisis. If you or someone you know is experiencing any type of teen-related struggle or crisis, please call.

>>> Riverside county Operation SafeHouse

Call us: (951) 351-4418

24-hour Crisis Line 800-561-6944

Operation SafeHouse, with community support, provides emergency shelter, intervention, and outreach services to runaway, homeless, or other youth in crisis. SafeHouse offers youth positive alternatives to becoming victims of the streets.

Pala Tobacco Program

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS

WHY IT MATTERS?

Lung cancer is a leading cause of cancer death for Native Americans, with specific rates varying significantly by region. While overall rates may be lower than for some other groups, Native Americans have a higher prevalence of commercial tobacco use, a leading risk factor. Regional disparities exist, with incidence rates being significantly higher in some areas, such as the Northern Plains, compared to others, like the Southwest.





HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Youth can spread lung cancer awareness by sharing information on social media, wearing white ribbons to show support, and participating in or organizing local events.

SEEK HELP WITH KICKIT CA

If you're ready to take the first step, visit Kick It California, call 1-800-300-8086, or text "Quit Vaping" or "Quit Smoking" to 66819 to connect with a Quit Coach. Remember, asking for help is a sign of strength. Every step you take toward living tobacco- and vape-free is a step toward a healthier future.

The Pala Tobacco Program



YOUTH PAINT NIGHT

The Pala Tobacco Program recently hosted a Youth Paint Night and had the honor of welcoming artist and motivational speaker Bobby Von Martin to share his story with our youth. Bobby spoke about his life experiences, the challenges he has overcome, and how art has helped shape the person he is today. His message inspired our youth and showed them that perseverance, hard work, and believing in yourself can lead to great opportunities.

Throughout the evening, youth enjoyed painting, connecting with one another, and listening to Bobby's encouraging words. To make the night even more memorable, Bobby generously donated several of his original paintings for a raffle. Three lucky participants went home with one of his pieces, making the experience even more special.

Overall, the event was a tremendous success. The youth left feeling inspired, encouraged, and excited, and everyone appreciated the opportunity to learn from Bobby's journey. We are grateful for his time and generosity and look forward to welcoming him back for another Youth Paint Night in the future.







WHAT YOUTH ARE UP TO

IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.....

PYEI had the an amazing time at the Halloween Carnival where youth came and did a limbo station. Everyone enjoyed and had a blast.

Then on Oct 12th had the opportunity to take youth to the annual Indigenous Peoples Day celebration hosted by the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. This event brings together Native American communities each October to celebrate Indigenous cultures, traditions, and heritage.



Indigenous Peoples Day



Halloween Carnival



Youth activities



San Pasqual hosting





ACORN GATHERING

This October, the Pala Youth Empowerment Initiative (PYEI) had the opportunity to visit Palomar Mountain to gather acorns during the traditional harvest season. It was a meaningful experience to see multiple generations of gatherers come together to share their knowledge, stories, and traditions with our youth.









After the harvest, the youth had the opportunity to sit together and crack the acorns in preparation for the Wiiwish season. This hands-on experience allowed them to learn about traditional Native foods and the important role they have played in our culture for generations. Through activities like these, our youth continue to strengthen their connection to their culture, traditions, and community while learning from the knowledge of their Elders.

PHRC 2026

PALA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INTIAVTIVE

WE ARE OPEN NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday 10:30 am-7 pm
Closed 11/11, 11/26,11/27

FOR ANY QUESTIONS

Contact Maria Villegas
(760) 315-0104



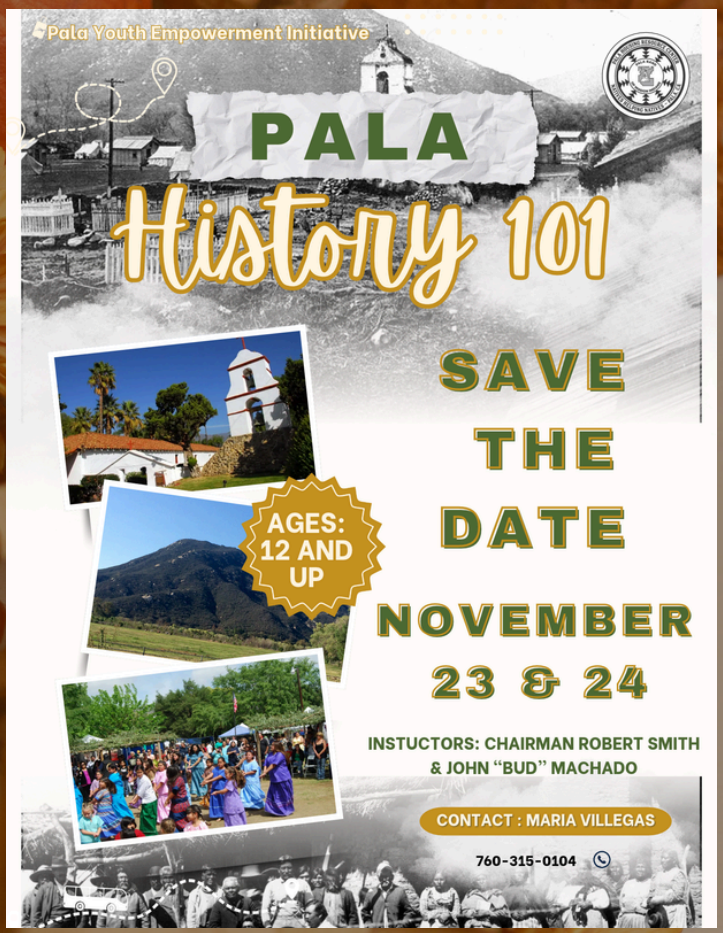
REGISTER NOW

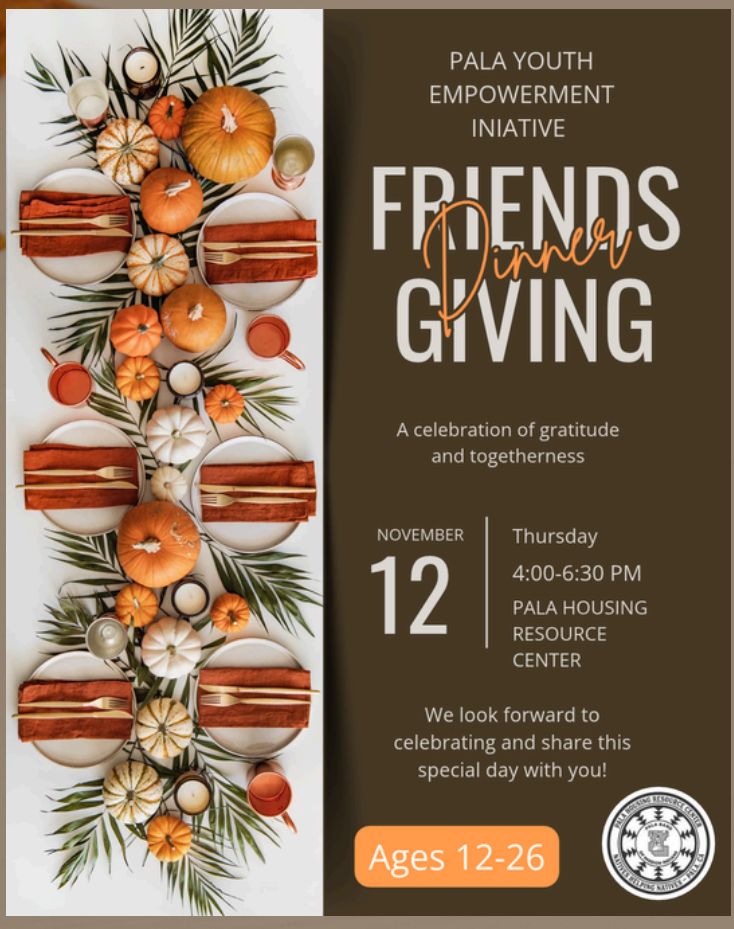
The Pala Housing Resource Center is calling all youth 15 and up to join the waiting list for driving school. Let's work together on getting our youth safely on the road.

PHRC EVENTS 2026









EVENTS 2026


VETERANS DAY
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2026
BREAKFAST CELEBRATION
OPENING CEREMONIES 9:30AM
Breakfast Served at 10:00 AM
All are welcome
12196 Pala Mision Rd Pala, CA 92059
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED
For More information contact Tim Ravago (760)644-1320


CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH COMMISSIONS
3RD ANNUAL VIRTUAL FALL YOUTH SUMMIT 2026
"SPEAKING UP FOR CHANGE"
Julie Lythcott-Haims
Palo Alto City Councilmember Author
Brooke Jenkins
San Francisco District Attorney
Michael Brownrigg
Burlingame Mayor
Janet Lindow
Rural Behavioral Health Institute CEO
Saturday, November 14, 2026
9:00am - 11:30am
Virtual/Zoom
Speakers also include: Hillsborough Vice-Mayor Leslie Ragsdale,
Topics & Youth-Led Workshops: AI and Youth in Daily Life, Civic Engagement, Art of Compromise and Coalition, Juvie Crisis, Youth State-level Lobbying, Compassion in Communication and Advocacy, Youth Commission Idea Exchange, and more!
RSVP NOW for FREE!
californiayouthcommissions.org/


Southern California Native Learning Camp
Restoring a Harmonious Relationship with the Land and Each Other
November 7, 2026
Los Coyotes Reservation Campground
• Learn about native tobacco and other sacred plants
• Strengthen your understanding of ceremonial fire
• Enjoy traditional arts and crafts, gifts, food, and prizes
• Share a meal around the campfire and participate in a community forum
Register: Bit.ly/SCNLC
TRIBAL COMMUNITY COORDINATING CENTER
CALIFORNIA FIRE FOUNDATION


THE PALA TOBACCO PROGRAM
Pala Tobacco PROGRAM
Medicine Bag Workshop
Join us for a special day of learning, creating, and sharing! Youth will have the opportunity to make their own medicine bags and sage bundles to gift to family and loved ones.
16 NOV, 2026
Pala Housing Resource Center
Ages 12-24

EVENTS 2026

VIVIAN BANKS CHARTER SCHOOL

PICKLEBALL



ADULTS
$80
TEAM BUY IN

YOUTH
$50 TEAM
$25 SINGLE
YOUTH DIV.

NOV. 8TH
8AM

ADULT
50+ DIVISION
36-49 DIVISION
15-35 DIVISION
YOUTH DIVISION
14 AND UNDER

Fun CHARITY
TOURNAMENT

AT JIM BANKS SPORTS COMPLEX
12194 PALA MISSION RD
PALA, CA 92029
Contact: John Machado "Bud": 760-420-2265

EagleForce Presents

HONORING TRADITIONS

HOSTED BY TRUJILLOO CREATIONS



Get ready for 2 weeks of fun Ribbon shirt and skirt making classes!

Join us for an exciting two-week experience filled with creative activities, hands-on learning, new skills, and plenty of fun! Whether you're looking to explore something new, express your creativity, or learn something you've always wanted to try, this class is the perfect opportunity to learn, grow, and make lasting memories.

This class is open to all current and future enrolled Eagle Force Students. Everyone is welcome, and no experience is needed—just bring your curiosity, creativity, and willingness to learn!

We can't wait to see you there!

NOVEMBER 2ND -13TH | 3:15PM TO 6PM

Classes are Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday. Thursday will start earlier

---

PALA YOUTH CENTER PRESENTS:

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

December 4, 2026
9am- 4pm
11772 Pala Mission Circle

Find Unique Gifts, Handmade Crafts, and Festive Treats

Vendors Contact April
760-638-6462

PALA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS ANNUAL

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony



For Tribal Members and their immediate family only

2026
NOVEMBER, 28TH
4:00PM

PALA PARK
(IN FRONT OF THE MISSION)

Dress warmly for the snow!
Cookies, Cocoa, & Water

Presented by the Pala Senior Program
760.891.3507

PALA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

EVENTS 2026

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL

Púyily 'Áy'enish

(Big Meal, A Great Feast)

TRADITIONAL FEAST

NATIVE FOODS OF NORTH AMERICA

NOVEMBER 21, 2026

12:00 P.M.
TO 3:00 P.M.

PALA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
12196 PALA MISSION ROAD
PALA, CA 92059

FAMILY EVENT

MENU

- Locally Harvested Venison
- Turkey
- Roasted Seasonal Vegetables
- Wíiwish
- Mushroom Soup
- Tepary Beans
- Salmon and Berry Salad
- Coal Bread
- Honey Mesquite Cookies
- Refreshments

Menu subject to change.

SPECIAL SCREENING

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL SCREENING OF THE FIRST PART OF AN INDIGENOUS SERIES.

SCAN TO RSVP

RSVP REQUIRED
Limited seating

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
CHRIS NEJO AT CNEJO@PALATRIBE.COM

PROUDLY HOSTED BY THE
PALA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS
& PALA CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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 INITATIVE

"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@palatribe.com

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, trainings, podcasts and activities.

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