



Center for Native American Youth, Native Wellness Institute, We R Native, and Tribal Health Reaching Out Involves Everyone Announce Native Youth Are Medicine Campaign



Washington, DC: September 10, 2020—The Aspen Institute’s [Center for Native American Youth](#) (CNAY) is proud to announce a collaborative effort during September’s Self-Care Awareness Month called the Native Youth Are Medicine Campaign. This campaign aims to spark conversations around mental health, self-love, and to create youth-centered spaces to share practices that promote healing, wellness, and tools to live in balance. CNAY, the [Native Wellness Institute](#) (NWI), [We R Native](#), and the Tribal Health Reaching Out Involves Everyone (THRIVE) project will host a variety of virtual gatherings, including webinars, resource sharing, and discussions to promote wellness for Native American youth.

“Every day we are inspired by the young adults and sister organizations that are doing this work,” shares Stephanie Craig Rushing of We R Native, “we have so much to gain by joining our voices to elevate these messages.”

The organizations created this campaign to honor the sacredness of life. “Together, it is our hope to normalize conversations on mental health, self-love

and self-care among our Native youth and empower them to seek support through encouraging and culturally-resilient practices,” says Nikki Pitre, Executive Director of CNAY, “we aim to inspire and encourage youth to understand the importance of their being.”

The campaign’s three primary initiatives are: 1) Celebrating Self-Love: We will launch a call for Native youth to share what self-care and self-love look like to them. Every youth who participates will receive a healing kit from relatives at NWI, We R Native, THRIVE and CNAY; 2) Inspire Communities of Healing: We will host youth-led discussions which advocate and normalize mental wellness and promote healing; encouraging youth to turn to cultural values, practices, and healing within their families and their communities; 3) Self-Love & Healing Bundle: As a collective, we will create a guide to connect Native American youth with ancestral knowledge and other culturally-relevant resources for those who are seeking support.

“Healing is the answer to trauma,” says Jillene Joseph, Executive Director of the Native Wellness Institute, “when we heal, our ancestors smile and celebrate and that love trickles down around our hearts and further strengthens us.”

The Center for Native American Youth, We R Native, THRIVE, and the Native Wellness Institute want to emphasize that Native youth are medicine, that they are important, and they are scared.

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About Center for Native American Youth

[The Center for Native American Youth](#) is a national education and advocacy organization working to improve the health, safety, and overall well-being of Native American youth ages 24 and under. Founded by former US Senator Byron Dorgan, Center for Native American Youth is a policy program within the Aspen Institute, headquartered in Washington, DC. While a part of the Aspen Institute, Center for Native American Youth is also overseen by a Board of Advisors. We strive to bring greater national attention to the issues facing Native American youth while fostering community-driven solutions, with special emphasis on youth suicide prevention. To learn more, visit www.cnay.org

About Native Wellness Institute

[The Native Wellness Institute](#) exists to help create an awareness of where our negative behavior comes from, provide opportunities for growth and healing and most importantly to help our people move forward in a good way. The Native Wellness Institute does this by providing training and technical assistance based in Native culture that promotes the well-being of individuals, families, communities and places of work. The Native Wellness Institute lives and promotes the “Warrior’s Spirit” which means paying the greatest respect to our ancestors by being as positive, productive and proactive as we can, every day of our lives. For more information, please visit www.nativewellness.com

About We R Native and THRIVE

Housed at the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, [We R Native](#) is a comprehensive health resource for Native youth, by Native youth, providing content and stories about the topics that matter most to them. We R Native strives to promote holistic health and positive growth in local communities and the nation at large. The mental health project at the NPAIHB is THRIVE (Tribal Health: Reaching out InVolves Everyone). We R Native and THRIVE have released a youth-led campaign – #IndigiLove Begins with I – a campaign created by Native youth to destigmatize mental health, promote self-love & self-care, and ways to reach out for help. To learn more about the work of We R Native, visit www.wernative.org

[The Center for Native American Youth](#) is a policy program of The Aspen Institute, located in Washington, DC. Created by former US Senator Byron Dorgan, CNAY believes Native American youth should lead full and healthy lives, have equal access to opportunity, and draw strength from their culture and one another. CNAY focuses on the resilience of Native youth and supports them through youth recognition, inspiration, and leadership; research, advocacy, and policy change; serving as a national resource exchange; and by developing strengths-based Native youth media opportunities. Learn more at www.cnay.org.