

PRESS RELEASE: 2020 National Urban Indian Youth Advisory Council Members Announced; 2019 Class Youth Council Announces Winners from Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign

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This year NCUIH received a record number of applicants for the Youth Council.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. (September 18, 2020) - The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) proudly announces the 2020 cohort of National Urban Indian Youth and Young Adult Advisory Council Members (Youth Council). The 2020 - 2021 class of NCUIH Youth Council members include **Elizabeth Alexander** (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma), **Taejonon Denetclaw**, (Navajo Nation), **Lauren Etcitty** (Navajo Nation), **Samuel Stollenwerck** (Cherokee Nation), and **Tia Yazzie** (Navajo).

“In a time of political and national unrest, promoting the voices of our Native youth is of tantamount importance. In a year of record applicants to our Youth Council, it is clear that our youth are yearning to connect with each other. We are proud of the Indigi-Wellness Healer campaign ran by our most recent cohort to promote healthy relationships and Native healing. We can’t wait to see what these five new leaders do in the next year when we all can benefit from resources during these challenge times,” said Francys Crevier, Chief Executive Officer of NCUIH.

Meet the 2020 Youth Council

Elizabeth Alexander
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Shawnee, OK

Taejonon Denetclaw
Navajo Nation
Albuquerque, NM

Lauren Etcitty
Navajo Nation
Flagstaff, AZ

Samuel Stollenwerck *Cherokee Nation*
Golden, CO

Tia Yazzie
Navajo Nation
West Valley City, UT

About the Youth Council

The NCUIH Youth Council (Youth Council) was created to uplift our Native youth and young adults and make sure they have a seat at the table to advocate for better access to prevention and recovery

services to address the challenges facing American Indian and Alaska Natives living in urban areas. The Youth Council consists of 5 young adults, between the ages of 18 to 24, who will be working over a 12 month period to advance prevention and awareness of youth suicide, substance misuse, and mental health challenges faced by urban American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth and young adults. Since 2018, the NCUIH partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has created opportunities for Native young adults to share, learn, and advocate for initiatives to address suicide and substance misuse in AI/AN communities, while providing a leadership experience to assist and support their professional development.

Selection Process

NCUIH's National Urban Indian Youth Council applicants were selected from a pool of highly competitive youth applicants, between the ages of 18 and 24, which provided for consideration a comprehensive application judged by an independent review committee of partnering organizations including the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY), United National Indian Tribal National Youth Inc. (UNITY), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) , the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) and THRIVE. NCUIH sincerely thanks the staff who supported the review of Youth Council applications.

2019 Class Youth Council Announces Winners from Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign

In addition to the selection of NCUIH's 2020 class of youth council members, NCUIH acknowledges the work of the 2019 Youth Council class in successfully completing their Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign using the hashtags #IndigiLove and #NativeLove. Winners

- **1st Place - Marina McDermott (Blackfeet Cree from Seattle, WA)**
- **2nd Place - Stevi Johnson (Absentee Shawnee from Oklahoma City, OK)**
- **3rd Place Mikail Melcher (Mi'kmaq) West Roxbury, MA**

As Native youth continue to struggle with wellness challenges because of COVID-19, NCUIH's youth council created a platform that amplifies youth voices and stories to the national level through its Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign (www.ncuih.org/indigiwellnesshealer). The Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign was a social media campaign by Native Youth for Native Youth consisting of two hashtag themes - #NativeHealing and #IndigiLove - to express the importance of mental & physical wellness and healthy Native relationships, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. The Indigi-Wellness Healer Campaign aimed to inspire Native youth to heal, to promote self- love, and love between family, friends, and partners. It is the 2019 Youth Council's hope that this will improve the overall health of Native youth for future generations. The campaign was conducted in partnership with UNITY, CNAY, WeRNative, and Healthy Native Youth.

NCUIH Youth Council Indigi-Wellness Healer Infographic

Learn more about the Youth Council [here](#) or contact Sebouh Kouyoumjian, MPA/HSA at (202) 544-0344 or skouyoumjian@ncuih.org.

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About the National Council of Urban Indian HealthThe National Council of Urban Indian Health

(NCUIH) is the national organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban settings. NCUIH envisions a nation where comprehensive, culturally competent personal and public health services are available and accessible to AI/ANs living in urban communities throughout the United States. NCUIH is the only organization that represents all 41 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) federally funded by the Indian Health Service.