

Nebraska Department of Education

November 2009



September 15, 16 & 17th marked the 5th annual Dream's of Eagles Native American Indian Education Days for the Omaha Public Schools. This is a time of sharing and celebration between the Native American community and all fourth grade students from the Omaha Public Schools; and for the first time, a small number of students from Millard, Bellevue and Lincoln Public Schools; a total of nearly 4,200 students, along with their nearly 400 teachers and chaperones. This year's theme: "Honoring Native America: Past-Present-Future" brought together over 40 Artists, Community Leaders and Tribal Elders from throughout the Midwest representing tribal members from the Ponca, Santee Sioux, Yankton Sioux, Winnebago/Ho Chunk, Omaha,



Cheyenne River Sioux, Rosebud Sioux ; including Faculty from Sinte Gleska University, one of the oldest tribally controlled colleges in the country; as well as, tribal presidents and council members from all of the Indian Nations of Nebraska.

During each of the sessions, students were guided to be part of the large circle where they were given a traditional welcome of drumming and dancing. Then they were lead to one of the 32 learning stations that made up the larger circle. During their session students were able to experience approximately eight hands on learning stations where they had opportunity to listen to brief cultural presentations and ask questions about the information they received. After completing their rotations, students were again asked to gather in the circle and dance together with the presenters. All in

Dreams of Eagles

Tami L. Maldonado-Mancebo
Director of Native American Indian Education
Omaha Public Schools

attendance were edified as they took time to open their hearts and minds to the messages that were shared.

This celebration has helped to build greater understanding in the Omaha area about the Native American culture. Great credit for the success of this wonderful event must be given to Cleo Frazier, the President of Dreams of Eagles; an intertribal diverse cultural organization, and her team members. Her vision has been to help native people living in an urban setting to maintain their cultural traditions. Through her, the community is able to enjoy this wonderful annual educational event, as well as powwows, hand games, classroom enrichment and the ability to maintain the skills necessary to carry on many of the traditional art forms.



Receiving a blanket, Dr. Breed, Commissioner of Education

Are the terms *American Indian* and *Native American* essentially synonyms, in the same way that the terms *black* and *African American* are often used interchangeably?

Or is using the term *American Indian* instead of *Native American* the equivalent of using *Negro* instead of *black*—offensive and anachronistic? Is the insistence on using *Native American* to the exclusion of all other terms a sign of being doctrinaire?

Culture Wars

While these were once raging questions in the culture wars, they have now happily sorted themselves out. Over the

years, the people whom these words are meant to represent have made their preference clear: the majority of American Indians/Native Americans believe it is acceptable to use either term, or both. Many have also suggested leaving such general terms behind in favor of specific tribal designations. As the publisher and editor of *The Navajo Times*, the largest Native American-owned weekly newspaper, puts it, "I . . . would rather be known as, 'Tom Arviso Jr., a member of the Navajo tribe,' instead of 'Arviso, a Native American or American Indian.' This gives an authentic description of my heritage, rather than lumping me into a whole race of people."

A Medieval Misnomer

As we learned in grade school, *Indian* was the name Columbus mistakenly applied to the people he encountered when he arrived in what he believed was the "Indies," the medieval name for Asia. Introduced in the 1960s, the term *Native American* offered a way of eradicating confusion between the indigenous people of the Americas and the indigenous people of India. The term *American Indian* also served that purpose, but raised other problems: the use of *Indian* in any form had begun to be seen by some as pejorative.

Doing Away with Cowboy-and-Indian Stereotypes

Particularly in academic circles, the term *Native American* became the preferred term of respect, and a remedy for avoiding dehumanizing stereotypes, whether of the bloodthirsty savage or the Tonto-like Noble Savage. For a time, using *Native American* signaled a progressive and enlightened consciousness, in much the same way that using

Asian instead of *Oriental* does. Use of *Indian* struck some as out of touch, or worse—a mark of ignorance or bigotry.

A "Generic Government Term"

But objections to the term *Native American* also arose. The term struck many as dry and bureaucratic, in much the same way that some dislike the Census Bureau's use of *Hispanic* as an umbrella term to cover the whole of the U.S.'s diverse

Spanish-speaking population. As the Bureau of Indian Affairs elaborates:

The term, 'Native American,' came into usage in the 1960s to denote the groups served by the Bureau of Indian

Affairs: American Indians and Alaska Native (Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts of Alaska). Later the term also included Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in some Federal programs. It, therefore, came into disfavor among some Indian groups. The preferred term is American Indian.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions, from the Bureau of Indian Affairs

[Russell Means](#), the Lakota activist and founder of the [American Indian Movement](#) (AIM), has strongly rejected *Native American* in favor of *Indian*:

I abhor the term Native American. It is a generic government term used to describe all the indigenous prisoners of the United States. These are the American Samoans, the Micronesians, the Aleuts, the original Hawaiians, and the erroneously termed Eskimos, who are actually Upiks and Inupiat. And, of course, the American Indian.

I prefer the term American Indian because I know its origins . . . As an added distinction the American Indian is the only ethnic group in the United States with the American before our ethnicity . . . We were enslaved as American Indians, we were colonized as American Indians, and we will gain our freedom as American Indians, and then we will call ourselves any damn thing we choose.

["I am an American Indian, Not a Native American!"](#)

statement by [Russell Means](#)

Peaceful Coexistence

As *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* points out, "the acceptance of *Native American* has not brought about the demise of *Indian*. Unlike *Negro*, which was quickly

stigmatized once *black* became preferred, *Indian* never fell out of favor with a large segment of the American population."

Now almost every [style and usage guide](#) describes these terms as synonyms that can be used interchangeably. In recent decades, other terms have also come into use, including *Amerindian*, *indigenous people*, and *Native*, expanding the vocabulary for referring to indigenous people of the United States rather than circumscribing it. Many people will no doubt favor one appellation over another—and will have strong reasons for doing so—but such choices are (or should be) no longer accompanied by a sense of righteousness that one term is superior to the other. This simply isn't true.

"We Will Call Ourselves Any Damn Thing We Choose"

No doubt the most significant reason that an inclusive attitude toward these terms of identity has developed is their common usage among Native peoples. A 1995 [Census Bureau Survey](#) of preferences for racial and ethnic terminology (there is no more recent survey) indicated that 49% of Native people preferred being called *American Indian*, 37% preferred *Native American*, 3.6% preferred "some other term," and 5% had no preference. As *The American Heritage Guide to English Usage* points out, "the issue has never been particularly divisive between Indians and non-Indians. While generally welcoming the respectful tone of *Native American*, Indian writers have continued to use the older name at least as often as the newer one."

The criticism that *Indian* is hopelessly tainted by the ignorant or romantic stereotypes of popular American culture can be answered, at least in part, by pointing to the continuing use of this term among American Indians themselves. Indeed, Indian authors and those sympathetic to Indian causes often prefer it for its unpretentious familiarity as well as its emotional impact, as in this passage from the Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday's memoir *The Names* (1976): *'It was about this time that [my mother] began to see herself as an Indian. That dim native heritage became a fascination and a cause for her.'*

["Names and Labels: Social, Racial, and Ethnic Terms: Indian", The American Heritage® Book of English Usage, A Practical and Authoritative Guide to Contemporary English, 1996.](#)

As Christina Berry, a Cherokee writer and producer of the website All Things Cherokee, counsels:

In the end, the term you choose to use (as an Indian or non-Indian) is your own personal choice. Very few Indians that I know care either way. The recommended method is to refer to a person by their tribe, if that information is known. The reason is that the Native peoples of North America are incredibly diverse. It would be like referring both a Romanian and an Irishman as European. . . . [W]henver possible an Indian would prefer to be called a Cherokee or a Lakota or whichever tribe they belong to. This shows respect because not only are you sensitive to the fact that the terms Indian, American Indian, and Native American are an oversimplification of a diverse ethnicity, but you also show that you listened when they told what tribe they belonged to.

When you don't know the specific tribe simply use the term which you are most comfortable using. The worst that can happen is that someone might correct you and open the door for a thoughtful debate on the subject of political correctness and its impact on ethnic identity. What matters in the long run is not which term is used but the intention with which it is used.

Bibliography

The American Heritage® Book of English Usage. A Practical and Authoritative Guide to Contemporary English. 1996. "Names and Labels: Social, Racial, and Ethnic Terms." [Indian](#)
[American Indian](#) [Native American](#)

["American Indian vs. Native American: Which is the proper term?"](#)

["Watch Your Language: Words Have Power"](#)

Tom Arviso

Jr., Society of Professional Journalists

["What's in a Name? Indians and Political Correctness"](#)

by Christina

Berry, All Things Cherokee

["A Statistical Analysis of the CPS Supplement on Race and Ethnic Origin," Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau Survey, May 1995.](#) (PDF)

TOHAJIILEE, NEW MEXICO-[Golf in America](#), an original series for the Golf Channel, recently traveled to New Mexico to visit with Notah Begay III and highlight the work of the Notah Begay III (NB3) Foundation. Todd Lewis, an anchor and reporter for the Golf Channel's Program *Golf Central*, visited the NB3 Foundation and the Tohajiilee High School Golf Program to explore Notah's greatest contribution to the game of golf, far away from the limelight of the PGA -- his work for the NB3 Foundation. The half-hour news magazine also explored the numerous obstacles faced by Native American youth in accessing and participating in the sport of golf. The show will be aired nationwide in June 2010 on the Golf Channel.

Golf in America had a unique opportunity to visit with some Tohajiilee students and tribal members, who constructed a three-hole golf course on the reservation, using little more than coffee cans, sticks, the desert and their sheer passion for



the game of golf. The Tohajiilee Indian Reservation is a non-contiguous section of the Navajo Nation and the closest public golf course that the students can access is more than 45 minutes away in Albuquerque.

Aside from challenges of access to facilities, poverty proves to be among the greatest obstacles for Tohajiilee youth to participate in golf. The Navajo Nation's unemployment rate is 44 percent and over 56 percent of Navajos live below the poverty level. Limited resources for families make it difficult for Tohajiilee youth to participate in the game. Despite these obstacles, Tohajiilee youth, their coaches, the Tohajiilee Community School and the NB3 Foundation, have built an increasingly successful and growing golf program.

The NB3 Foundation partnered with the Tohajiilee High School to develop the golf program in 2005. This program is designed to not only provide Native American youth access to

The Golf Channel Explores Obstacles Faced by Native American Youth & Pathways Forward

Notah Begay III

the game of golf but more importantly to use golf as a way to teach leadership and life skills that go beyond the course. Notah Begay III has also enlisted the help of corporate partners like Callaway Golf and Antigua Apparel to help outfit the program and players with equipment.

The NB3 Foundation has set its sights on increasing the access and opportunities for Native American youth to be able to participate in the sport of golf at recreational and competitive levels as well as to explore the potential academic and career pathways that the world of golf has to offer. These opportunities for Native American youth are growing in Indian Country with more than 70 tribally owned golf facilities now in existence.

The NB3 Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c)3 organization, was founded in 2005 by Notah Begay III. For more information about the NB3 Foundation, its golf and youth sports programs, and to learn about how you can support our work, please visit www.nb3foundation.com.

Golf in America is an original series for the Golf Channel that travels coast-to-coast, capturing the spirit of the game and the people who play it. From the marshes of Florida to the canyons of Arizona, tune in each week as *Golf in America* discovers hidden talents, the best courses, and the inspirational stories that make golf the great sport it is today. *Golf in America* is a 10 episode, half-hour long news magazine covering a wide-range of stories about golf and its connection to America.



Parade float honoring Columbus

As I look forward to the Annual Trail of Tears walk honoring our ancestors, some of whom were actually relatives of mine, I think about how this event has affected not only my life, but the lives of all Indian people.

Most people who know about the Trail of Tears think that the story of removal only happened with Southeastern tribes. However, the story of forced removal of Indian people from their homelands is one that has been repeated across America

Fall – A Time of Remembrance and Reflection for Indian People

by
Jeff Watkins, Wichita Public Schools,
Native American Program Director

and virtually no tribe has been exempt.

This is also a time that America celebrates two holidays that had a great affect on Indian people. The first holiday is Columbus Day. The holiday has changed a great deal since my childhood when I was taught in school about the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria arriving in the Americas in 1492. How a triumphant Christopher Columbus was the first European to set foot in the Americas. Since those days I don't hear as many people using the word "discovery", maybe because they are realizing; "How could Columbus have discovered America if there were already people living here?" Although lessons vary, many teachers are trying to present a more balanced perspective of what happened after Columbus reached the Caribbean and how his arrival began an onslaught of genocide on Indian people. The myth is still prevalent that Indian people were savages and that the arrival of the Europeans brought civilization to the continent. We still have a lot to do to counter the stereotypes taught to our young children about Indian people. Teachers must provide accurate instruction not only about the history but about the contemporary lives of Indian people.

The second holiday we celebrate during the fall is Thanksgiving. There really was a true story of Thanksgiving. The problem is that part of what I learned in my childhood about the 'Pilgrims', 'Squanto' and the 'First Thanksgiving' is a mixture of both history and myth. Adam McMullin, a member of the Seminole tribe of Oklahoma and a spokesman for the National Congress of American Indians, said "school children should get an accurate historical account."

Teacher Bill Morgan of Long Beach California walks into his third-grade class wearing a black Pilgrim hat made of construction paper and begins snatching up pencils, backpacks and glue sticks from his pupils. He tells them the items now belong to him because he "discovered" them. Some would see this as extreme but Morgan, a teacher for more than 35 years, said that after conducting his own research, he changed his approach to teaching about Thanksgiving. He tells teachers at his school this is a good way to nurture critical thinking, but he acknowledged not all are receptive. I hope this fall that these holidays don't just become for you an interruption in postal service and an opportunity for shopping. I trust that we will examine the meaning of these holidays and search for the truth behind them and the effect they have had on an entire culture.



Children dressed up as Pilgrims and Indians

New Inquiry-Based Curriculum Available Free

Schools across the country now have free access to an innovative set of teaching tools designed to increase the understanding of science, health and diabetes among American Indian and Alaska Native students from kindergarten through the 12th grade. The comprehensive new curriculum, called Health is Life in Balance, funded by NIDDK/NIH, CDC, and IHS, was launched in 2008 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

The curriculum integrates science and Native American traditions to educate students about science, diabetes and its risk factors, and the importance of nutrition and physical activity in maintaining health and balance in life. Applying an inquiry-based approach to learning, the curriculum builds research skills in observation, measurement, prediction, experimentation, and communication. Furthermore, the curriculum has healthy lifestyle messages and innovative science activities for all students, not just Native Americans.

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC) located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is one of eight tribal colleges that have worked with National Institute of Health, Indian Health Services, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a K-12 diabetes prevention curriculum entitled Health Is Life in Balance.

We are asking you for your help in getting the word out to teachers in your area. We would appreciate any suggestions or comments you have about spreading the news of this free K-12 diabetes prevention Health is Life in Balance curriculum. We would also welcome letters of support for the curriculum after you have had a chance to review it. Please visit the websites for more info. Phone 906-353-8151 or email us at <diabeteseducation@hotmail.com> if you have any questions. Thank you for your time!

Lynn Aho, Principal Investigator
Mary Hindelang, Curriculum Specialist
Stephanie Pinnow, Curriculum Coordinator

Health is Life in Balance curriculum is now available on the IHS online catalog:
<http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Diabetes/index.cfm?module=toolsCurriculaD>
ETS

Eagle Books: For more information and to order free copies, please visit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/eagle.htm>

NIH website about the curriculum and an overview of the units for each grade level. <http://dets.niddk.nih.gov>

Viewable Downloadable K-12 Curriculum and Copymasters <http://www.kbocc.org/dets.htm>

Teaching Tools Foster Science and Diabetes Education

<http://www.indiancountrytoday.com/living/health/34886734.html>

Health Is Life in Balance: A K-12 Inquiry Based Curriculum Celebrating Scientific Knowledge and Traditional Wisdom <http://www.msta-mich.org/index.php/publications/journalArticle/209>



The Eagle Books series

by the CDC Division of Diabetes Translation's Native Diabetes Wellness Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/eagle.htm>

What are the Eagle Books:

The Eagle Books are a series of four books that are brought to life by wise animal characters, Mr. Eagle and Miss Rabbit, and a clever trickster, Coyote, who engage Rain That Dances and his young friends in the joy of physical activity, eating healthy foods, and learning from their elders about traditional ways of being healthy.

The books were developed by the CDC Division of Diabetes Translation's Native Diabetes Wellness Program, in collaboration with the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee and the Indian Health Service, in response to the burden of diabetes among Native Americans and the need for diabetes prevention materials for children. The series, written by Georgia Perez (who served as a Community Health Representative for 19 years in Nambe Pueblo, New Mexico) and illustrated by Patrick Rolo (Bad River Band of Ojibwe, Wisconsin) and Lisa A. Fifield (Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, Black Bear Clan), includes four books:

Through The Eyes of The Eagle introduces the characters of Mr. Eagle and Rain That Dances, the American Indian boy he befriends. Mr. Eagle reminds the young boy of the healthy ways of his ancestors. In *Knees Lifted*

High, the second book, Rain That Dances introduces Thunder Cloud, his best friend, to Mr. Eagle who encourages the boys to be physically active every day.

The third book, *A Plate Full of Color*, introduces Miss Rabbit and the boys' friends, Little Hummingbird and Simon. Miss Rabbit teaches the value of eating a variety of colorful and healthy foods.

Tricky Treats, the final book in the series, introduces the character of Coyote, a trickster, and encourages children not to be tricked by coyote when choosing foods to eat.

How to order the Eagle Books and the animated series? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For a set of Eagle Books and the animated series visit <http://www.cdc.gov/pubs/diabetes.aspx> or call 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-888-232-6348 TTY

American Indian and Alaskan Native Programs

For K-12 teachers working with Native American children, multiple copies of the Eagle Books and animated series are available through the Indian Health Service <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Diabetes/RESOURCES/Catalog/rde/index.cfm?module=catalog&opt=2>

Public Health Foundation

The Eagle Books are available in bulk supplies through the Public Health Foundation at <http://bookstore.phf.org>

American Indian Perspective on Thanksgiving



FOR TEACHERS GRADES 4-8

Each November educators across the country teach their students about the First Thanksgiving, a quintessentially American holiday. They try to give students an accurate picture of what happened in Plymouth in 1621 and explain how that event fits into American history. Unfortunately, many teaching materials give an incomplete, if not inaccurate, portrayal of the first Thanksgiving, particularly of the event's Native American participants.



The First Thanksgiving 1621
J. L. G. Ferris. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Most texts and supplementary materials portray Native Americans at the gathering as supporting players. They are depicted as nameless, faceless, generic “Indians” who merely shared a meal with the intrepid Pilgrims. The real story is much deeper, richer, and more nuanced. The Indians in attendance, the Wampanoag, played a lead role in this historic encounter, and they had been essential to the survival of the colonists during the newcomers’ first year. The Wampanoag were a people with a sophisticated society who had occupied the region for thousands of years. They had their own government, their own religious and philosophical beliefs, their own knowledge system, and their own culture. They were also a people for whom giving thanks was a part of daily life.



Tohono O’odham elder Danny Lopez and Isabell Johnson (daughter of TOCA farm manager Noland Johnson) bless the first squash plant of the season.
Courtesy of Tohono O’odham Community Action

Like the Wampanoag, thousands of Native American nations and communities across the continent had their own histories and cultures. Native peoples were and continue to be an integral part of the American story. It is our hope that this poster will encourage you to teach about Thanksgiving in a new way—one that recognizes the country’s original people and gives real meaning to November as American Indian Heritage Month. We thought that the agricultural practices and traditional foods of Native people would be a good starting point, since the ubiquitous Thanksgiving feast of turkey, cranberry sauce, and mashed potatoes would not exist if not for the knowledge and ingenuity of the Native peoples of the Americas.

In this poster, we take a look at just a few Native communities through the prism of three main themes that are central to understanding both American Indians and the deeper meaning of the Thanksgiving holiday. The themes are:

- ✓ **Environment:** traditional knowledge about and understandings of the natural world.
- ✓ **Community:** the role that group identity plays in Native cultures.
- ✓ **Encounters:** how interactions between cultures have affected those cultures.

It is within these fundamental areas that we begin to see the innovations and contributions of American Indian peoples to the world at large. The combination of community systems and an understanding of the natural world enabled Native cultures to adapt and change over time—as all cultures do—both before and after encounters with newcomers. By acknowledging this, it is possible to bring a new perspective to the Thanksgiving holiday.

This poster is a resource for teachers to use as a jumping-off point for more in-depth discussion. Discussion and other classroom ideas are included in each section. Before you jump into the content of this poster, we recommend that you introduce your students to the “real Thanksgiving story” found in “Harvest Ceremony: The Myth of Thanksgiving,” which can be downloaded from www.nmai.si.edu/education/thanksgiving. There you will also find an image gallery and other resources

Native American Heritage Month website resources:



Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov/topics/nativeamericans/>

Smithsonian Education
http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/heritage_month/aihm/index.html

infoplease
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihm1.html>

Education World
http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson209.shtml

The American Heritage® Book of English Usage. A Practical and Authoritative Guide to Contemporary English. 1996. "Names and Labels: Social, Racial, and Ethnic Terms."

[Indian](#)
[American Indian](#)
[Native American](#)

["American Indian vs. Native American: Which is the proper term?"](#)

["Watch Your Language: Words Have Power"](#)

Tom Arviso Jr., Society of Professional Journalists

["What's in a Name? Indians and Political Correctness"](#)

by Christina Berry, All Things Cherokee

["A Statistical Analysis of the CPS Supplement on Race and Ethnic Origin." Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau Survey, May 1995.](#) (PDF)

Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihmterms.html>

Honoring Native American Veterans



Native Words, Native Warriors is an interactive educational program about how American Indian code talkers used their

Native languages to serve their country and continue the

Nebraska Tribal Veterans Ceremony

The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs ([NCIA](#)) invites you to attend our Second Annual Tribal Veterans Ceremony to be held on the 14th floor of the Nebraska State Capitol on Thursday, November 12 at 10:30 a.m.



Native American Heritage Month

Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Joseph Medicine Crow shows a drum to President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama during a reception for recipients and their families in the Blue Room of the White House on Aug. 12, 2009.

(Official White House photo by Pete Souza)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary



October 30, 2009

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, 2009

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The indigenous peoples of North America -- the First Americans -- have woven rich and diverse threads into the tapestry of our Nation's heritage. Throughout their long history on this great land, they have faced moments of profound triumph and tragedy alike. During National Native American Heritage Month, we recognize their many accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices, and we pay tribute to their participation in all aspects of American society.

This month, we celebrate the ancestry and time-honored traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives in North America. They have guided our land stewardship policies, added immeasurably to our cultural heritage, and demonstrated courage in the face of adversity. From the American Revolution to combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, they have fought valiantly in defense of our Nation as dedicated servicemen and women. Their native languages have also played a pivotal role on the battlefield. During World Wars I and II, Native American code talkers developed unbreakable codes to communicate military messages that saved countless lives. Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars. Our debt to our First Americans is immense, as is our responsibility to ensure their fair, equal treatment and honor the commitments we made to their forebears.

The Native American community today faces huge challenges that have been ignored by our Government for too long. To help address this disparity, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocates more than \$3 billion to help these communities deal with their most pressing needs. In the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, my Administration has proposed over \$17 billion for programs carried out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, and other Federal agencies that have a critical role to play in improving the lives of Native Americans. These programs will increase educational opportunities, address the scourge of alcohol abuse and domestic violence, promote economic development, and provide access to comprehensive, accessible, and affordable health care. While funding increases do not make up for past deficiencies, they do reflect our determination to honor tribal sovereignty and ensure continued progress on reservations across America.

As we seek to build on and strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship, my Administration is committed to ensuring tribal communities have a meaningful voice in our national policy debates as we confront the challenges facing all Americans. We will continue this constructive dialogue at the White House Tribal Nations Conference held in Washington, D.C., this month. Native American voices have echoed through the mountains, valleys, and plains of our country for thousands of years, and it is now our time to listen.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2009 as National Native American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate November 27, 2009, as Native American Heritage Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA