



Albuquerque Indian Center



Multimedia Magic: Empowering Native Youth Through Digital Storytelling

A proposal submitted by:
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Albuquerque's Native American youth face many challenges today. Yet, even as problems for Native youth are on the rise, funding for prevention, rehabilitation and education programs in Indian Country are being drastically cut. Sadly, things will get worse before getting better. A recent article in the Native Times Online reports President Bush's FY 2005 budget calls for a \$200 million cut from tribal programs and services, which will leave serious financial woes for many tribal youth programs.¹

A statistical snapshot of America's Native population paints a depressing picture, especially for our youth:

- The U.S. Census Bureau reports in its 2000 Census that the American Indian poverty rate is twice the national rate.²
- Since 1995 there have been widespread and rapidly growing accounts of the scale and severity of youth gangs in Indian Country, according to a 1999 FBI survey.³
- The National Institutes of Health describes a 15% increase over ten years in the teen pregnancy rate among American Indian youth.⁴
- Depression for young people in Indian Country is a serious problem. According to Indian Health Services, the suicide rate for Native teens is three times the national average.⁵

Unfortunately, the American Indian youth population in Albuquerque is not immune to this national crisis:

- Albuquerque Public Schools reports the Native American dropout rate is the highest in the district.⁶
- Native American students' test scores on the Terra Nova standardized test for the 2002 school year were reported by the APS district to be below average in all core academic areas.⁷

- 45.6% of Albuquerque public school children receive free or reduced lunches with 24% living in poverty as reported by the New Mexico Department of Education.⁸
- New Mexico social service workers claim, "Native American gangs are the toughest in the world . . . they're hard to sniff out or get to understand that there is a better way." according to an article on gangs in the Albuquerque Tribune.⁹

Fortunately, not all the news is bad. Recent studies have identified highly successful practices in substance abuse prevention, gang prevention, and school retention programs for Native youth. The keys to creating successful youth programs in American Indian communities are:

- Planning tailored to the specific needs of the community served, created and implemented by the community, not developed outside the culture.
- Involving elders and the community at large.
- Incorporating cultural components and practices consistent with traditional values.
- Teaching traditional knowledge and values.
- Building bicultural competence in youth.
- Providing constructive activities for youth.
- Fostering caring, supportive relationships with one or more adults.
- Providing intervention for "peer clusters" rather than individuals or the entire peer group.^{10 11 12}

Currently Albuquerque has only three small-scale, on-going summer programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of its Native youth. Considering there are about 5,400 school-age Indian children in the city, it's clear additional services are needed. We know what works! Now, we need to implement these proven successful practices in a community based summer youth program for the children served by the Albuquerque Indian Center.

Our Plan: Establishing A Summer Youth Multimedia Program

In our efforts to support our Native youth in developing the self-efficacy and competence needed to surmount the challenges they face, the Albuquerque Indian Center has developed the innovative TeenTech Summer Camp program targeting Indian children ages 12 through 17. The TeenTech Summer Program was designed by respected Native American educators and social service providers to meet the specific needs of youth served by the Albuquerque Indian Center. Through the medium of digital storytelling, our program addresses problems plaguing Native American youth in

Albuquerque, which have roots in the greater community issues of poverty, hunger, homelessness, substance abuse, etc.

The Center's successful weekly "Powwow Academy" youth program has established the need for more youth-oriented activities in the Albuquerque Indian community. The TeenTech Summer Camp Program builds on the foundation established by "Powwow Academy" in providing culturally based engaging activities for youth in the safe and familiar environment of the Albuquerque Indian Center. Under the guidance of the Center's caring staff and community members, children will be given the opportunity to create their own stories using digital video and web authoring tools. The program will provide the following support for Native children:

- Teach technology skills and processes beneficial in a school and work environment.
- Teach traditional knowledge and values.
- Promote relationships with elders and community leaders.
- Build self-esteem through the creative process.
- Develop bonds with caring, supportive adult role models.
- Provide constructive activities.
- Provide a safe environment during summer vacation.

To meet these objectives the program will produce a video and companion website organized, written, directed, shot and acted entirely by its children, under the guidance of experienced adult staff, educators and community members. The primary advantage of this program is that it empowers the youth by giving them "ownership" of the project through control of the creative process and collaborative decision making in a hands-on learning environment.

Our plan will be executed in three main phases. (see Figure 1) First we will take care of the logistical and organizational issues involved in coordinating the program. Second will be the actual summer program implementation and third we will evaluate and promote the program and its dividends, the video and website developed by the children.

Phase I - Planning and Organization

Before jumping into the project it is necessary to carefully plan every management detail. In the Planning and Organization phase, our goal is to make sure everything is ready before the children walk in the door. As this is the first time this innovative program has been offered at the Albuquerque Indian Center, many details must be considered in order to lay the groundwork for a successful program:

1. Identify and obtain curriculum materials. - The rise in digital video and web development in education has produced a large body of materials on using multimedia as a learning tool with children. These materials need to be located, evaluated and procured for the program. By using existing curriculum, where appropriate, substantial time and resources will be saved.
2. Identify Participants - Fifteen children will be selected from the existing client base. Every effort will be made to ensure a balanced (male/female ratio) and diverse (age/ability) group.
3. Identify and train staff and volunteers - Familiarity with equipment, software and program expectations should be achieved by all staff and volunteers prior to implementation. This training will eliminate confusion and maximize productivity.
4. Obtain equipment and supplies - The Center will need to purchase five Mac computers (video editing software included), five digital video cameras and one DLP projector. This equipment is a one-time purchase that will support this project both now and in the future. Other miscellaneous equipment and supplies include: tripods, mics, headphones, lights, DV tapes, DVDs, HTML editing software, etc.
5. Procure food service - Children will need breakfast, lunch and snacks for the duration of the program. This service will be included in the Center's existing summer food program.
6. Procure participant transportation - Children will need to be picked up and dropped off each day as well as transported to shoot locations and research field trips.
7. Develop a project calendar - Each day of the program must be carefully planned in order to prevent unnecessary down time.

This phase will require two weeks. Once compiled, most of the materials, procedures, and resources developed can be archived for future use and made available to other organizations who wish to replicate the program. At the end of this phase the Indian Center staff will be prepared to begin the actual program implementation.

Phase II: Implementation

Using the project management plans developed during Phase I, we will coordinate project participants in researching, planning and producing the video and companion website for the project:

1. Determine topic: Participants will begin by discussing topics of concern to them that they would like to explore. The criteria for the project is to be

educational, culturally relevant and target a Native American teenage audience.

2. **Research:** Participants will visit local TV stations and interview experts in the field of video production and web development. This activity will give them an idea of what they will be doing when they get to the production phase of their project. They will also do Internet and library research focused on their chosen topic.
3. **Video pre-production:** During this stage participants will, first focus on planning and then shooting their video. They will learn storyboarding, scriptwriting and techniques for shooting video footage.
4. **Web design planning:** Participants will start by creating a practice website to learn the basics of web design. Once they are familiar with the process and software, they will proceed to storyboarding, content writing and preparing graphics for the project website.
5. **Video production:** Participants will shoot and edit the video.
6. **Website production:** Participants will create the companion website.
7. **Video preview:** Participants will present the video to the client and solicit feedback for revision.
8. **Website beta testing:** Participants will present the website to a small group of target-audience individuals and solicit feedback for revision.
9. **Video screening and website launch:** Participants will plan and coordinate a public screening of the final version of the video and launch the website.

Culture will play an important role in the project throughout the entire process. Children will be given opportunities to interview elders and community leaders on the importance of their culture in relationship to the chosen topic. Community members will also be consulted during the web development and video production stage to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of the cultural knowledge they contain. Additionally, staff and volunteers will model cultural values in their interactions with the children throughout the program.

An important feature of this program is the small weekly stipend for the program participants. The children are expected to arrive on time and perform their assigned duties diligently in order to receive their weekly "paycheck" just as if they were working a job. And, just like in the real world, if they don't perform adequately they face the risk of being "fired". This type of incentive is extremely motivational for the children. It teaches them responsibility as well as preparing them for future employment.

During Phase II, careful documentation (photographs, participant surveys, etc.) of all activities will be conducted. A progress report in the form of a PowerPoint presentation will be prepared by the children and provided to all primary stakeholders.

Phase III: Evaluation, Promotion & Distribution

In order to ensure the success of the program we will survey the participating children, parents, staff and community members both during and after the project to obtain their reactions and suggestions for improvement. A comprehensive evaluation report will be compiled from the data and made available to all primary stakeholders at the end of the project.

Once Phase II is complete, the video will be distributed, on demand, in both DVD and VHS format to local libraries and schools. Flyers will be mailed to schools and libraries offering the video. Additionally, the Indian Center's website will provide information for other interested parties to order the video and access the companion website. All project participants and project primary stakeholders will be given a copy of the finished product.

The final step in Phase III is promoting the project to the community and other organizations. Press releases informing the public of the project will be distributed during Phase II and after the completion of the project. Conference presentations at educational events such as the annual conference of the National Indian Education Association and Access Native America will be offered. Program materials and resources will be made available for other organizations to replicate this model program.

Albuquerque Indian Center Qualifications

The Albuquerque Indian Center is uniquely qualified to develop and deliver this distinctive youth program for the urban Indian community of Albuquerque. A closer examination of the Center, its history, experiences and the Project Team qualifications demonstrates this point:

- **History** - The Albuquerque Indian Center has over 25 years of experience serving the Albuquerque Indian population. Over the years the center has sponsored many events that impact the community as well as providing job placement, educational assistance, computer training, counseling services, food distribution and youth outreach. The dedicated and experienced Indian Center staff have earned a reputation in the Native community for

being caring, committed and dependable in it's services to American Indian people through providing:

- Legal services - AIC provides legal services through the Southwest Indian Law Clinic in collaboration with the University of New Mexico School of Law. (est. 1994)
- Albuquerque Indian Center's Community Garden Project - 4-H Share/Care with New Mexico State University. (est. 1999)
- Al-Anon for Native Americans - White Bison's Hoop Journey III with the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (est. 2002)
- Children's Banquet - A fundraiser for children's services with APS Indian Education Program. (1994)
- AIC Summer Arts Camp - A youth mural project with the Institute of American Indian Arts. (2000)
- Get Out The Vote Campaign - A public service campaign with the Navajo Nation. (2004)
- Food Outreach Project - Food pantry and commodities distribution. (ongoing)
- Expert Testimony - The Albuquerque Indian Center participated in a roundtable discussion as part of a Regional Community Meeting of the Presidents Advisory Board on Race. (1998)
- Home-Ownership Training and Housing Fair - A community education program for low-income housing programs. (2002)
- "Urban Indians of Albuquerque" - A video production on local urban Indian Professionals. (1979)
- **Project Team Qualifications** - Designing and coordinating a high tech, culturally-relevant educational multimedia project such as this, requires a variety of skills and abilities honed through years of experience working with both technology and Native youth. The Albuquerque Indian Center has assembled a team of experienced professionals with the knowledge and training to make this project a success:
 - *Katrina Coker* - As Education Technology Specialist, Katrina Coker (Muscogee "Creek" Nation), offers seven years of experience working with Native communities. Katrina worked with several youth programs while pursuing a bachelor of science degree in elementary education at Haskell Indian Nations University. During her senior year at Haskell, she was offered an internship with the 4Directions Technology Challenge Grant at Kansas University. For two years,

Katrina worked with 4D schools in developing culturally relevant, technology enhanced curriculum. From 1999-2002 she served as the Technology Coordinator of the Indian Community School of Milwaukee, Wisconsin where she provided support and training for 35 teachers and 360 students in computer skills and technology/curriculum development. Katrina is currently a graduate student in the University of New Mexico's Organizational Learning and Instructional Technologies Program where she works in the Technology & Education Center and teaches "Computers in K-12" to pre-service teachers. (resume attached)

- *Dale Waseta* - Award winning director/producer Dale Waseta offers eight years of experience in video production training of teachers and students in K-12 institutions. As sole Video Production Consultant to the 4Directions Technology Challenge Grant, Dale produced four videos including, "Students to Washington, DC Project" and the "4D Project" video. Dale provided video production services including purchasing recommendations, set-up and troubleshooting of equipment, full video production training and remote tech support for five American Indian schools in the last four years. Designing and delivering site-specific training for teachers and students in a culturally sensitive environment for Native communities is Dale's specialty. (resume attached)
- *Albuquerque Indian Center Youth Project Coordinator* - (insert bio)
- *Other* - Community volunteers and student interns will be recruited from the Albuquerque Indian Center's community base to support the program as needed.
- **Experience** - Both the organization and the individual project team members have extensive experience in working with Native youth in successful projects such as the one proposed in our plan:
 - *Garden Project* - Established in 1999, the Albuquerque Indian Center 4-H Garden involves kids in the planning, planting, weeding and harvesting of vegetables. The program also includes group games and discussions that emphasize life skills, setting goals and building self esteem.
 - *4Directions Summer Institute Youth Program* - 4D's Summer Institute 1999, included a special youth program for kids ages 7 - 17. Children were given an opportunity to build computers, develop web pages, design PowerPoint presentations and produce a video with the

assistance of professionals and students from Kansas University and the University of New Mexico. This program was designed, organized and implemented by Katrina Coker specifically for The 4Directions Technology Challenge Grant.

- *Laguna Middle School Video Production Class* - As a consultant to Laguna Middle School (1998 - 2003), Dale Waseta developed a Video Production Class for seventh and eighth grade students. The class was designed to teach students the skill of video production and editing as well as basic cinematic concepts including camera shots and composition. Students also learned to identify and explain pre/post production functions such as scripting, storyboards, sound and special effects editing.
- *Pow Wow Academy* - Albuquerque Indian Center's Pow Wow Academy is a youth outreach class held weekly to share the art and history of the Native community through mentoring. The program provides lessons in story telling, traditional dance and arts and crafts.
- *Indian Community School Summer Video Production Program* - An intensive two-week workshop conducted in the summer of 2000, was designed, organized and directed by Katrina Coker and Dale Waseta. Middle school students learned studio design, construction and broadcast by building a broadcast studio which was used to televise live news programs throughout the school campus. The children also learned how to plan (including script writing, storyboarding, etc.) and produce both live and taped shows in various formats.
- *Summer Arts Camp* - In July, 2000 the Albuquerque Indian Center with support of the Institute of American Indian Arts held a summer arts camp that included a large mural project created by 45 children. The project incorporated themes from the center's garden project.
- *Indian Community School Summer 2001 Web design Program* - Middle school students designed an anti-smoking web site targeted for Native American adolescents during this five-week summer program. The program was designed, developed and administered by Katrina Coker.

The expertise of the project team members combined with the Albuquerque Indian Center's long history of community service shows our exceptional ability to meet the needs of our community with this innovative program.

Costs and Benefits of the Multimedia Project

In conclusion, let's discuss the benefits of our Multimedia Project to the community and the associated costs. Research has shown that Albuquerque needs more successful cultural-based constructive activities for Native youth. The caring supportive adult relationships such programs foster are the keys to successful substance abuse prevention, gang prevention, and school retention. Research also shows that recent and impending cuts to tribal programs and services will increase the need for such activities. The Albuquerque Indian Center's TeenTech Summer Camp Project was specifically designed to provide just the kind of activities needed by our children. This Program reflects our belief that Native children thrive in the safe supportive environment provided by the caring adult role models of our community through traditional Native values.

The cost of implementing our Plan is an estimated \$0,000.00, as shown in the attached budget. Further analysis reveals a significant return on investment:

- The materials and resources produced by this model program will enable its success to be replicated by other organizations nationwide, thus significantly multiplying the programs impact on Native youth.
- The educational video and companion website produced by the children will be an invaluable educational resource for schools and tribal communities.
- Equipment purchased for the project will be used to support future projects at the Albuquerque Indian Center for years to come, providing a vehicle to help the community overcome the "Digital Divide."
- Staff and student training conducted during the project will enhance the employability of community members.
- Children will improve their self-esteem through the creative process and collaborative decision making. This positive self image is a key factor in good decision making.
- The program will foster relationships between the children and caring committed community members. This will help the children build the support necessary to resist negative influences in their lives and provide positive role models for them to emulate.

The TeenTech Summer Camp will enable the Albuquerque Indian Center to continue its long tradition of serving the Albuquerque Indian population specifically and, ultimately the city of Albuquerque and America's Indigenous peoples.

Albuquerque Indian Center thanks our supporters for considering this proposal. We look forward to hearing from you to discuss our plan in greater depth. Please feel free to contact our Director, Mary Garcia, at (505) 268-4418 if you have any questions.

¹¹¹ Lewin, Sam. More Fire Directed at Bush Budget, Tribes Suffer Disproportionate Amount of the Cuts. 2004. Native Times Online.

² Census Bureau Facts for Features. 2002. U.S. Census Bureau.

³ Research on Youth Gangs in Indian country. 2002. The Center for Delinquency & Crime Policy Studies (CDCPS) - California State University, Sacramento.

⁴ Snapshot Report on American Indian Youth and Families. 2000. OCB Tracker - California.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bird, Penny and Carroll, Roz. Albuquerque Native American Student Concerns - Bill Analysis. 2004. New Mexico Public Education Department.

⁷ Indian Education Unit. Native American Student Achievement Data. 2003. Albuquerque Public Schools.

⁸ Data Collection and Reporting Unit New Mexico Department of Education. Estimates of Students Living in Poverty. 1995. Northeast Regional Education Cooperative.

⁹ Krueger, Joline G.. Fashions Change, But Gangs Still Flare. 2002. Albuquerque Tribune Online.

¹⁰ Johnson, Sandie and Sanchez-Way, Ruth. Cultural Practices in American Indian Prevention Programs. 2000. Juvenile Justice Journal, Volume VII, Number 2.

¹¹ Native American Housing Resource Center. Drug Elimination Program Activities In Native American and Alaska Native Communities. 2000. National American Indian Housing Council.

¹² Research on Youth Gangs in Indian country. 2002. The Center for Delinquency & Crime Policy Studies (CDCPS) - California State University, Sacramento.