

MEETING THE UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AMERICAN INDIAN SCHOLARS... continued

Your gifts support these vital programs and are an investment in American Indian scholars. Be assured that every dollar you give results in a life-changing outcome for a student. With your help our students:

- Develop a life-long love of learning at an early age through our early childhood education programs
- Navigate the complex college application and financial aid processes, opening the door to achieving their dreams
- Persist and graduate at higher rates because they receive needed academic support
- Become leaders among their peers and in their communities; and
- Are awarded internships that help develop their skills for successful transition to employment.

Your support of both scholarships and these much needed support programs are the foundation for our students' success. Every day we receive letters and emails from our students telling us how the College Fund's support creates the pathway for them to achieve their dream of a college degree and a lifetime of freedom from poverty and insurmountable adversity.

One such student is Robin, who is currently attending Salish Kootenai College. You will meet her in this newsletter's Student Spotlight. I know you will share my feelings of pride and amazement at what this young woman has been able to accomplish, along with my excitement about all life has in store for her in the future.

As the College Fund continues to respond to the growing needs in Indian higher education, we are inspired and bolstered by your support and knowing that we are working together to create a brighter tomorrow for all American Indian people. As always, I welcome your thoughts and perspective on our goals and plans.

I thank you for your commitment and support.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Crazy Bull

Cheryl Crazy Bull

Attention Charitable Giving Account Holders!

Have you already set aside money for charitable giving through a donor-advised fund or other charitable giving account or trust?

If so, you can easily and conveniently make an impact on American Indian education by making a designation to the American Indian College Fund today.

Transform a student's life by making a grant to the American Indian College Fund today!

You can visit our website at http://www.collegefund.org/content/how_to_donate to get started.

Become an American Indian College Fund Ambassador!

If you know someone who might be interested in the work we do, please introduce us by:

- forwarding the email you receive from us
- posting on your social media accounts with the tags @CollegeFund and #standwithnativestudents
- sharing our videos with your network

Help us get the conversation rolling by telling the world about our mission!

Visit us on these social media outlets...

 [facebook.com/collegefund](https://www.facebook.com/collegefund)

 twitter.com/collegefund

 [youtube.com/TheCollegeFund](https://www.youtube.com/TheCollegeFund)

 plus.google.com/+collegefundorg

Visit www.collegefund.org/subscribe and sign up for our email and mobile communications.

Save the Date!

2017 New York City Flame of Hope Gala
April 25, 2017 Gotham Hall, New York, NY



Twin Cities Luncheon
Coming Soon: June 2017

For more information on an event near you, please contact Hannah Urano at hurano@collegefund.org or give her a call at (303) 426-8900.

For more information on future events, you can also visit www.collegefund.org/events.

Circle of Hope


AMERICAN
INDIAN
COLLEGE
FUND
EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

UNIQUE PROGRAMS HELP MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AMERICAN INDIAN SCHOLARS

Our mission at the American Indian College Fund is simple - to ensure that every American Indian who wants to attend college has the opportunity to do so.

There is no question that thousands more American Indians want to attend college. This is demonstrated by the **almost 400% increase in scholarship applications we've received over the past five years!** We have a large gap to close. Currently only 13% of American Indians have a college degree - **that's less than half the national average.**

While a College Fund scholarship creates the path to college, we know we also need to continue to support our students while they are in school in order to increase graduation rates and the number of American Indians with college degrees. To put this in perspective, for every 25,000 American Indians who graduate, the 13% increases by half a percent. That means we need to increase both the number of students attending college **AND** the graduation and persistence rates.

We know where we need to be, and we'll do whatever it takes to get there. Our action plan includes not only opening the door to college through scholarships, but also providing nationally recognized student support programs that have consistently demonstrated increased graduation and persistence rates.

Research shows that programs to help students navigate the complex application process, providing mentors, having on-site child care for students with children, teaching leadership skills, and providing career readiness support have increased persistence and graduation rates among students - particularly those who are first generation students and come from impoverished communities.

▶ **We are one of the few college networks in the United States that consistently provide these support services to all of our students who need them.** ◀

(continued on page 4)



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ROBIN

"As an American Indian and a young woman, it often surprises people that my passion and professional aspirations are in cutting-edge technology."

Like many young American Indian women, Robin grew up receiving mixed messages about her Native identity. On the reservation she wasn't Native enough because she was exploring ideas and areas of study that fell outside the norm. Off the reservation she became the resident "Indian expert" at her high school, where she was the only American Indian.

The pressure of not being able to just be herself was too much for Robin to navigate - so she dropped out of high school and ran away. She became convinced that school was not for her and she simply didn't belong. She spent the next few years wandering

(continued on page 3)



Fall Edition | In this issue

Letter from the President Pages 1, 4 | Student Spotlight: Robin Pages 1-3 | Support Programs Mean Success for American Indian Students Pages 2 & 3

SUPPORT PROGRAMS MEAN SUCCESS FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

Our support programs have a real impact on American Indian student success. Studies show that students who have programmatic support have higher graduation and persistence rates.

Studies have also shown that when these programs are offered together, the impact on graduation and persistence rates was even higher.

Life After College

A college degree is important, but what about life after college? The American Indian College Fund has relationships with numerous corporations and foundations, and takes an active role in pairing and placing scholars with internship opportunities so they can get real-world experience and open their minds to possibilities they might never have imagined.

Additionally, we help students with cover letter and resume preparation, interview tips, business etiquette, and more so that when the time comes to start the job search, they are better prepared to represent themselves and what they have to offer employers and the world.

Helping Students Get a Leg Up

For students who require a little extra help, we make tutoring available. Studies have shown that students who receive tutoring have a 12% higher rate of graduation than those who do not, and higher persistence rates as well.

And our scholars know this better than anyone. The College Fund's tutoring component proves what these national studies have demonstrated. Scholars who are tutored are more likely to graduate and persist.

▲ Students who receive tutoring have a 12% higher rate of graduation than those who do not.

Creating the Leaders of Tomorrow Today

Leadership programs are designed to instill confidence and self-assuredness in American Indian students. These programs often help students mature, take the initiative, and be role models for other students, molding them as the leaders of tomorrow.

With our goal of helping more students than ever attend college and earn a degree, having student leaders is critical.



"To reference video games, higher education was like unlocking new levels in life. I was still me, still had the same morals, and still had the same roots. But I also suddenly had access and opportunity, which, combined with passion, created an exponential sort of effect on myself and those around me."

– Robin, Salish Kootenai College

"I think education is just an incredible tool to be able to better both yourself and to give back to others. That's what I saw when I was a teacher, how much potential my kids had and how much I wanted them to be able to grow up and be able to do whatever they wanted."

– Katie, Yale Law School



"Thank you for believing in me. By investing in me, you invest in my entire community and Native youth across the United States. This investment has a huge impact on my family, and on my young daughter. At 9 years old, she knows she needs to focus on her education because it will prepare her for college. She knows she can shine her light to lead our people into thriving futures."

– Johnny, Northwest Indian College

"In order to address recruitment or retention, it is imperative that students feel comfortable and welcomed because transitioning from high school to college or going back to school after several years can be nerve-racking. I can summarize my college in one word: opportunity."

– Tada, Oglala Lakota College



The Power of Positivity

Mentoring promotes students' sense of well-being by challenging the negative opinions they may have of themselves.

Mentoring helps students stay in school, and improves their self-esteem and confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Mentors can help set career goals and lay out the steps to meet them. Young people with mentors are less likely to get involved in risky behavior because mentors can serve as role models, advocates, friends and advisors. A mentor can let a young person know that they matter and can accomplish anything.

Mentoring doubles the likelihood of persistence among minority students—48% of students who have mentors are able to improve their grades.

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Building Bridges to the Future

Bridging programs are partnerships between colleges that allow students in a particular field of study at one school to be recognized for their work at another. They also allow us to reach out to high school students and ensure that they are properly prepared to enter college, in effect creating a college-going culture.

Students who participate in bridging programs persist at a rate 12% higher than those who don't.

▲ Students who participate in bridging programs persist at a rate 12% higher than those who don't.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Robin... continued

the country, working odd jobs. To help her work through her feelings of being an outsider, she created a blog where she shared her experiences and her thoughts as she tried to figure out where she belonged.

Unable to afford a computer, Robin spent lots of her time using the computers in public libraries. It was there that she really discovered her love of technology and, specifically, coding. For the first time in her life she felt a sense of purpose and direction. But she was missing one very important thing – an education. Both her head and her heart told her she needed to return to school.

Once she made up her mind to complete her education, Robin purposefully chose Diné College, a tribally run college. "That's where things really started to change for me," she says, "because suddenly I had options and opportunities."

Robin was learning and growing in ways she couldn't have imagined. She knew she had to find a way to stay in college – she paid for her first semester of school by selling her car. As she says, though, "I only had one car, so I needed to figure out what to do for the second semester, and the third and the fourth and the rest!" That's when Robin found the American Indian College Fund.

"The support from the College Fund helped me stay in school," Robin says, "and the first time someone called me a scholar, I was floored. No one had ever called me a scholar. When you've been told discouraging things your whole life, finally having people believe in me gave me the confidence to keep going."

Robin is on track to graduate from Salish Kootenai College in 2017 with her degree in Psychology with a minor in Information Technology. Once she completes her education, Robin wants to pursue a career in tech policy so she can help empower underrepresented communities through the use of technology. And as for that blog that started Robin down her current path? It's been shortlisted by the United Nations Global Partnership for Youth.

College opened up so many opportunities and experiences for Robin, as it does for all American Indian youth. Through the support of the College Fund, Robin, and the additional 4,000+ students who receive scholarships and support services annually, are able to find themselves, channel their interests and succeed.