



Nonprofits Honored for Embodying Beliefs, Positively Impacting Community

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and nonprofit partners celebrate “acting on beliefs” at seventh annual Forging Hope Breakfast

April 1, 2015 (SAN BERNARDINO, CA) — Creating positive and meaningful change in the community is never easy but through strong partnerships with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, area and regional nonprofit organizations are making a significant difference in Southern California and across the nation. To recognize the amazing achievements its nonprofit partners have made in the last year, the tribe honored four organizations that embody and demonstrate the time-honored Serrano concept of Yawa’ – to manifest one’s beliefs through action – at the seventh annual Forging Hope Breakfast March 24 in San Bernardino.

The Children’s Fund, Mary’s Mercy Center, Crafton Hills Foundation’s Increasing Engagement, Employment & Knowledge (ISEEK) program and Indian Youth of America were the four nonprofits receiving San Manuel’s prestigious Yawa’ Award.

“Year after year these organizations continue to amaze us with the incredible actions they take to better all of our communities,” said San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena. “They bring to life the call to act for the benefit of others and are a true testament to the life-changing power of Yawa’ that we celebrate today.”

Awards were presented in four philanthropic focus areas – education, health, economic development and special projects.

The tribe recognized Children’s Fund in the area of health for their commitment to provide key support to at-risk children. Since its inception in 1986, Children’s Fund has served more than 1.4 million local children to help meet the needs of the region’s most vulnerable youth and give them the chance in life they deserve.

Mary’s Mercy Center was honored with the Yawa’ Award in the area of economic development for its work to provide the less fortunate with essential needs through two programs. Mary’s Table provides hot lunches, clothing, health screenings and other services. Veronica’s Home of Mercy and Casa Merced I, II and III offers women and their young children an alternative to abuse and/or homelessness with the opportunity to regroup and get a start on a better life than they have known.

In the area of education, the tribe awarded Crafton Hills College Foundation's Increasing Engagement, Employment & Knowledge (ISEEK) program that combines scholarships and student employment opportunities to help students stay connected to school, succeed in their classes and reach their educational goals. While on-campus student employment helps students pay for school-related and other expenses, scholarships encourage student success, offer inspiration and validate the importance of an education.

Lastly, Indian Youth of America (IYA) was recognized with the Yawa' Award in special projects for improving the quality of life for Indian children. Since 1976, IYA has served Indian youth from 192 tribes and 33 states through various programs including summer camps, Christmas programs and backpack and school supplies programs. Embracing the belief that "they are young once but Indian forever," IYA's goal is to enable Indian youth to establish a self-supporting life while always remembering that their background will be their strength and pride.

"We recognize these four organization's for their tireless efforts in the community and look forward to continuing our work together in our own and other communities," Valbuena said.

To learn more about the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the tribe's Charitable Giving Program, visit www.sanmanuel-nsn.gov.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. As an indigenous community the origins and history of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians stem from our relationship with the land and to all who share it. Since ancient times we have expressed ourselves through a culture of giving. Today, San Manuel is able to answer the call of Yawa' (Serrano word meaning "to act on one's beliefs") through partnerships with charitable organizations. We have drawn upon our history, knowledge, expertise and cultural values to direct our philanthropic giving in our local region, as well as to Native American causes nationwide. For more information, visit <http://www.sanmanuel-nsn.gov>.

About San Manuel's Charitable Giving Program

San Manuel's charitable giving program supports organizations that provide services in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Applications are also accepted from Tribal Governments and Tribal nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Resources are directed within four areas of program focus to benefit these communities and improve quality of life for adults, children and families. Giving priorities include Education, Health, Economic Development and Special Projects. Applications in each area are considered through the lens of demonstrated community need, and an organization's capacity to meet that need.

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