



40TH ANNUAL

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN CONFERENCE

**AGENDA BOOK
APRIL 4-6, 2022**



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

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VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



Monday

- 8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m.** Opening General Session
- 10:30 a.m.–Noon** Workshops A
- 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.** Workshops B
- 3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.** Membership Meeting



Tuesday

- 7:30 a.m.–8:15 a.m.** National Day of Prayer for Native Children
- 8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m.** General Session
- 10:30 a.m.–Noon** Workshops C
- 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.** Workshops D
- 3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.** General Session



Wednesday

- 8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m.** Closing General Session and Champion Native Children Awards
- 10:30 a.m.–Noon** Workshops E
- 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.** Workshops F



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WELCOME LETTER

Dear NICWA Members, Sponsors, Donors, and Friends,

Cama'i. On behalf of our board of directors, board of trustees, staff, partners, and the families we serve, welcome to the 40th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference. For 40 years, we have met in April, Child Abuse Prevention Month, to gather together and share our collective wisdom about how to draw on our cultural traditions and teachings to strengthen American Indian/Alaska Native families and children. This year's theme, "Homecoming: 40 Years of Connecting for Our Children," is a celebration of our commitment to our communities and families.

Our ancestors, in their villages and camps, often traveled to neighboring places to visit relatives, replenish supplies, celebrate seasons and hunts, and visit to enjoy each other's company and share news. This physical movement was part of the cycle of their calendars, something to anticipate and look forward to. Through these relationships and interdependence, our peoples were sustained over generations. Similarly, today, no matter where we work, travel, or live, home remains the place where we feel connected. For 40 years, the Protecting Our Children Conference has been a home for those who serve our children and families to gather.

This conference gives us the opportunity to step back from our day-to-day work serving Native children and families to learn from one another. In plenary sessions and in workshops, we'll have the opportunity to hear about diverse models and practices across Indian Country that are meeting the needs of our communities and producing better outcomes for children and their families.

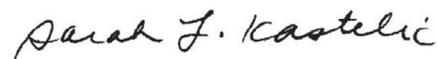
In a virtual format, we'll be joined by many more people than are ordinarily able to travel to our physical location to attend our conference. While I'll miss being together in person, especially at this 40th anniversary conference, it is a gift to be able to welcome so many more people to our event to share in this experience.

I'm grateful to the many presenters who have agreed to join us online to share their work with all of us. I look forward to seeing you online and engaging with you in all of the amazing ways we can connect while being apart. Please chat with us in the conference platform and use it to connect to presenters and participants. I hope the content we provide and the spirit of support in being together will inspire and sustain you for the work you do all year long.

Finally, I have the distinct honor of acknowledging our host sponsor. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank the Seminole Tribe of Florida for making the work we do at our annual conference possible. For nearly 15 years, Seminole Tribe of Florida has provided generous support for this conference. We heartily thank representatives from Seminole Tribe of Florida, along with our many other sponsors, for their unwavering support of our mission: strengthening the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

At NICWA we look forward to being together again, and until then we commit ourselves to work together virtually to make the structural changes that will enable us to transform our helping systems and services to better support and heal children and families. Quyanaa for participating in the NICWA annual conference!

Sincerely,



Sarah L. Kastelic (*Alutiiq*), PhD, MSW
Executive Director



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME LETTER

Dear NICWA Members and Conference Attendees,

On behalf of the National Indian Child Welfare Association Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome you to the 40th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference. I hope you enjoy your time with us.

Though the last few years have been difficult for many of us and our communities, I am grateful that we are able to gather together virtually for this year's Protecting Our Children conference. Throughout the plenary sessions, workshops, and opportunities for relationship-building during the virtual conference, I hope you are able to learn from and connect with each other. Our conference theme, "Homecoming: 40 Years of Connecting for Our Children," speaks to the powerful pull that home has on all of us. It is my hope that this conference can be a professional home for all of us who work for a better future for Native children and families, a future where Native children can grow up connected to their homes, their communities, and their culture.

I am grateful for the opportunity to thank the many people who have worked hard to make this year's virtual conference a success: our presenters,

sponsors, board members, staff, and especially all of you, our conference attendees. Your efforts on behalf of Native children and families, especially during times as challenging as the last few years we've experienced together, are important acts of service for our people. Together we are improving practice and expanding service delivery in Indian Country, and together we are strengthening the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children, families, and communities.

As I share each year, I am honored to serve this organization, and you, as NICWA's board president. I sincerely hope you find our time gathered together virtually valuable, enjoyable, and beneficial to the vital work that you do, and I hope that you leave the Protecting Our Children conference inspired to carry our work forward in service of the well-being of our children, families, and communities.

Thank you,



Gil Vigil (*Tesuque Pueblo*)
President, Board of Directors
National Indian Child Welfare Association



40 YEARS OF PROTECTING NATIVE CHILDREN

Established in 1982 by Anita Chisholm, the Protecting Our Children Conference was gifted to NICWA, known then as the Northwest Indian Child Welfare Association, by the American Indian Institute at University of Oklahoma. NICWA will be forever grateful for the hard work and vision that Anita and her team put into launching this important conference.

Since its establishment, the conference has played an essential role for NICWA to facilitate information-sharing about American Indian and Alaska Native child welfare practice issues, help tribal communities proactively respond to the needs of children and families, advocate for adequate funding for tribal programs, and ensure proper implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Over the years, hallmarks of the conference have included the Positively Indian Art Action, intergenerational dialogues and relationship building between youth and elders, and international exchange with First Nations presenters and participants. One special year, the conference was held in a traditional way. All general sessions were held “in-the-round” with our audience in a circle and spiritual leaders stationed in the four directions. We’ve celebrated policy wins at our conference, like the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act in 2008. A culmination of 20 years of advocacy work, the Act brought tribes first-ever access to Title IV-E funds to help strengthen tribal child and family systems and services.



NICWA board, staff, and volunteers stuffing tote bags in 2009



NICWA's founding board



Yvonne and Gary Peterson sharing their culture in 2015



Drum group at culture night in 2008

40 YEARS OF PROTECTING NATIVE CHILDREN

Each year, an amazing array of presenters come together from across the US and Canada to share their knowledge, experience, and wisdom, some long-time favorite presenters and some welcome first-timers. NICWA's conference always includes a space for healing as well as emotional and spiritual support, like talking circles, in the event of a triggering subject matter or presentation.

As we prepare to celebrate our 40th anniversary, NICWA embraces our theme "Homecoming," with our steadfast mission of being dedicated to American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

Homecoming, or coming back to our place of origin, implies connecting to our past in appreciation of where we've come from, the people whose hard work and perseverance made this community life possible, and gratitude to the Creator for our existence and daily experience. This conference is an opportunity for reflection and stock-taking. We can observe where we are now, the characteristics of this place, —both literally and figuratively, and the status of our people. This is a chance to affirm what we do and to adjust practices so that we may serve families better.

No matter where you work, travel, or live, may you be at home, and may you feel connected at NICWA's Annual Protecting Our Children Conference.



Sarah Kastelic (NICWA's executive director) and Terry Cross (NICWA's founder and senior advisor) at a donor reception in 2014



Sandy White Hawk presenting a workshop in 2018



Keynote speaker Cindy Blackstock in 2010



KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

MONDAY, APRIL 4, 8:30 A.M.–10:00 A.M. PT

Homecoming: Our Journeys and Experience

Homecoming, or coming back to our place of origin, implies connecting to our past in appreciation of where we've come from, the people whose hard work and perseverance made this community life possible, and gratitude to the Creator for our existence and daily experience. Three panelists will share their homecoming journey and reflect on what this year's conference theme means to them.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 8:30 A.M.–10:00 A.M. PT

This plenary session consists of two panels.

Homecoming: 40 Years of Connecting for Our Children

First hosted by the University of Oklahoma, the Protecting Our Children Conference was gifted to the National Indian Child Welfare Association to steward and grow. This year, 2022, represents the 40th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, a home for those who serve our children and families to gather for four decades. Presenters will share the rich history of this gathering and celebrate our advocacy for and service to Native children, families, and communities.

Trauma-Informed Work with Children

Sesame Street in Communities builds on Sesame Street's almost 50-year commitment to addressing kids' developmental, physical, and emotional needs. It supports parents and community providers, part of the "circle of care" that surrounds the families and kids who need it most. It supports uniting communities, fostering families' and kids' resilience, nurturing their physical and mental health, and providing critical early learning opportunities. Hundreds of bilingual multimedia tools to help kids and families enrich and expand their knowledge during the early years of birth through six, a critical window for brain development, are available online. These resources engage kids and adults in everyday moments and daily routines. In the last several years, NICWA has served as an advisor to Sesame Street in Communities. Panelists will discuss trauma-informed approaches to working with children and families and preview a variety of resources on topics like foster care, parental addiction, racial justice, and the Clutes Family, a traditional Mohawk family.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 3:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. PT

Child and Family Policy Update

Presenters will share updates about policy that affects Native children and families. Litigation, legislation, and administrative policy and priorities will be addressed. Updates about *Brackeen v. Haaland* will also highlight communications strategies and how you can play a role in growing the network of support to protect the Indian Child Welfare Act.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 8:30 A.M.–10:00 A.M. PT

Indian Boarding Schools: Working Together for Meaningful Change

An essential part of the colonization process, separating Indigenous children from their families through boarding schools and then the public child welfare system is a sordid history that the U.S. shares with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other nations. Several organizations, dozens of communities, and federal government bodies are working to create opportunities for truth-telling and individual, family, and community healing from the century of Indian boarding school policies implemented in the U.S. Speakers will address their efforts to compile records; identify boarding school sites and human remains; collect testimony from survivors, tribes, and subject matter experts; make recommendations for legislation and administrative actions to address the impacts of federal Indian boarding school policies; and facilitate healing.

Champion for Native Children Awardees

CONCURRENT PROGRAMMING

Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual NICWA Membership Meeting is a place of connection, celebration, and recognition. NICWA is a membership-based organization, so we look to you, our members, for guidance, and we are grateful for your direction and support. The **40th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference** is in its third year being virtual. You are invited to join us for the Annual Membership Meeting, which will feature the following:

- ▶ Updates on the new slate of board members
- ▶ Recognition of NICWA's Member of the Year
- ▶ Networking opportunities
- ▶ Raffles!

As is tradition, we will be raffling off a couple of amazing items. We will also be raffling off a Pendleton blanket for members who complete this **survey**.

Thank you for supporting NICWA with your membership! Please join us at **3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 4, 2022**, for the membership meeting; we hope to see you there.



National Day of Prayer for Native Children

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022 | 7:30 A.M.-8:15 A.M.

As advocates for Native children gather for NICWA's 40th Annual Conference, we invite Native communities and our partners nationwide to join together in a National Day of Prayer for Native Children. Please join us online for this respectful gathering, or host a safe, socially distanced event in your community to demonstrate support for all Native children.

CHAMPIONS FOR NATIVE CHILDREN

2022 Champion for Native Children (Individual): Cristi Heath (Choctaw)



Cristi Heath is a member of the Choctaw Nation and has worked for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for over 17 years, where she currently supervises Oklahoma's shelter team and several group homes, oversees a portion of the intellectual disability process, and participates in a multidisciplinary team.

Cristi's primary focus is kinship, and her passion is to re-establish Native youth with

family whenever possible and at every stage of a case.

Though Cristi is not an assigned tribal worker, and she does not carry or oversee caseloads, her organizational leadership and advocacy of kinship care creates positive change for Native children who are able to be placed with family thanks to her efforts, and she models fierce advocacy for Native children for other social workers, encouraging replication of her successful work.



"Ms. Heath's number-one laser-focus goal is kinship. This means placing Native youth with family; culture, language, and ways of knowing must be preserved. Ms. Heath uses her position to advocate for Native youth fervently and unapologetically, and her work enhances ICWA by defining and continuing active efforts—specifically kinship placements—through each step of a case. Ms. Heath's advocacy and leadership reaches every region in Oklahoma and may even reach beyond the state's borders through her role in kinship placement development with partner organizations."

—Marsha Johnson, Supervisor, Oklahoma Department of Human Services

2022 Champion for Native Children (Organizational): Carrier Sekani Family Services



Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) was founded with the intent of advancing the self-governing of human services by the Carrier and Sekani First Nations peoples, and for 30 years, the agency has offered culturally relevant services to children and families of 11 member nations in Northern British Columbia. CSFS

operates through a community-based model

that works with First Nations leadership to meet the needs of Carrier and Sekani peoples as well as non-Indigenous peoples who live in the vast region of Northern BC. CSFS is renowned for its development and provision of culturally responsive and accessible services that promote the well-being and self-determination of the nations it serves. It offers a broad array of family and health services that work collaboratively to improve holistic care coordination and wraparound preventative services, its child welfare model honors Carrier and Sekani approaches to raising and caring for children, and its research programs

work to protect and revitalize Indigenous knowledge. CSFS's culturally safe, innovative, and holistic services make it a center of excellence for Indigenous service provision in and beyond Northern British Columbia.

"I was a young child welfare worker in Prince George when Carrier Sekani Family Services was founded, and remember Warner Adam and his then-small team opening their doors for the first time and visioning a thoughtful and holistic future for their children and other children in Northern BC. Now, some 30 years later, when people ask me for an example of a high-quality First Nations holistic and culturally based service provider, I refer them to Carrier Sekani Family Services."

—Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society



SWEEPSTAKES

Grand Prize Sweepstakes

Our sweepstakes raises mission-critical funds to support our work. Thank you to our Four Directions Sponsors for making this Grand Prize Sweepstakes possible:

- **Choctaw Nation**
- **Eaglesun Systems Products, Inc.**
- **Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians**

Grand Prize: Hawaiian Vacation

Back by popular demand, the 2022 grand prize is a trip for two to Hawaii! Enjoy a room at **Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa** during your five-day, four-night stay. Two round-trip tickets from **Alaska Airlines** will get you there to enjoy everything Hawaii has to offer. Purchase tickets and learn more about this fantastic trip online at <https://www.tapkat.org/national-indian-child-welfare-association/xk0Rp5>

With a virtual event, anyone can enter, so please share the link with your friends and family. We have also extended the length of time before the drawing. You can enter the sweepstakes anytime between now and April 29, 2022, at 12:00 noon Pacific Time.



SWEEPSTAKES

Runner Up Prize: Microsoft Surface Pro

Our second prize is a **Microsoft Surface Pro 8** with keyboard and screen protector donated by **Eaglesun Systems Products**. This tablet is incredible powerful and the best laptop replacement by far, which makes it a great piece of tech to take with you wherever you go. This tablet features a beautiful 12.3-inch touch screen and 13.5 hours of video-playback battery life.



Runner Up Prize: Pendleton Blanket

Our third prize is a beautiful **Pendleton blanket** designed by renowned artist **Preston Singletary** (Tlingit). This blanket has a story to tell. The image represents Raven, a shape shifter and trickster. In the story, the old chief who lived at the head of the Nass River kept his precious treasures—the sun, the moon, and the stars—in beautifully carved boxes. Raven steals the boxes and makes his escape into the night sky, carrying the sun in his mouth. The sun is a metaphor for enlightenment or knowledge. The ombre background shades meet at the center in vibrant colors of sun and light.



Enter to Win the Grand Prize Sweepstakes Online

To enter the sweepstakes and view the full rules, visit: <https://www.tapkat.org/national-indian-child-welfare-association/xk0Rp5>

Entries start at \$10.00, and the drawing will take place on April 29, 2022.

Acknowledgement:

A special thank you to our Grand Prize Sweepstakes donors: Alaska Airlines, Eaglesun Systems Products, Pendleton Woolen Mills, and Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort and Spa.

WELCOME FROM HOST SPONSOR



For more than 15 years, the Seminole Tribe of Florida has partnered with NICWA as a Host Sponsor of this conference.

This year, the Tribe wishes to celebrate its collaboration with 17th Circuit Court Judge Izquierdo.

Dependency Judge Jose Izquierdo has worked in tandem with the Seminole Tribal Court to ensure ICWA is upheld, and the tribe's sovereignty is respected. One step was to schedule ICWA hearings at the Tribal Court on the Seminole Tribe Reservation. Conducting the hearings on the Reservation was very significant, in that it provided tribal members a level of comfort being in familiar surroundings at their Tribal court house. As Judge Izquierdo points out, "Dependency court is therapeutic in nature and has as its goal, the reunification of children and their families."

Thank you Judge Izquierdo for your work and thank you Seminole Tribe of Florida for your support.



UPCOMING EVENT OFFERINGS

2023 Annual Conference Save the Date

April 3–5, 2023
Reno, Nevada

**41st Annual Protecting
Our Children Conference**

For more information visit

www.nicwa.org/conference

We look forward to seeing you there!

Mark your calendars for NICWA Training Institutes

APRIL 18-21, 2022

**Virtual Training Institute featuring
Positive Indian Parenting**

JUNE 6-9, 2022

Training Institute: Palm Springs

SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2022

Training Institute: Niagara Falls

Visit www.nicwa.org/training-institutes for more information on in-person and virtual trainings as well as community-based services.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE ARTWORK



About the 2022 Artwork

Before cars, Seminole families would travel by foot from camp to camp, while canoes were used for longer travels and hunting. Because of this, it was a blessing to have a family member visit you because they made the time. This Seminole Indian camp scene shows how it would have been in the past. The art depicts an elder Seminole woman on the left forefront of the painting. She is just returning from visiting another camp. Walking was our form

of transportation prior to the introduction of vehicles. Now, vehicles take us everywhere. We still have Seminole craftsmen, who make canoes and camps, who are visited by families today. I enjoy capturing my Seminole past, culture, and traditions through my art, while sharing it with my children in the present. My watercolor is an appreciation piece for our ancestors' way of living and their dedication to family.

2023 Call for Artists

NICWA is excited to once again provide an opportunity for artists to showcase their talents in support of the 2023 Annual Protecting Our Children Conference. The selected artist will be awarded \$1,500 for the use of their work in promotional materials for our 2023 conference. Submissions are due May 2, 2022.

Visit www.nicwa.org/call-for-artists/ for more information.

SPONSORS

Host Sponsors



Four Directions



Sacred Circle

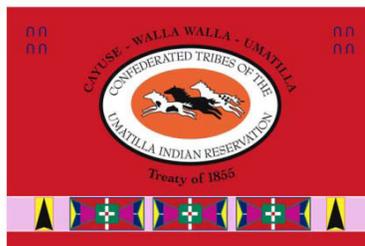


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