

Circle of Hope

Looking Beyond Graduation: *Nylana, Tasha, and Kasa*

Three exceptional American Indian scholars. Three women who are able to pursue higher education, thanks to your generosity. Three American Indians who are starting to see the sphere of their influence and impact grow.

Meet Nylana, Tasha, and Kasa. Their stories are a concrete example of how your support of the College Fund can impact lives in ways we can't predict or even imagine.



Nylana (Navajo Nation)

Nylana, of the Navajo Nation, is pursuing her bachelor's degree in applied science at Navajo Technical University. She will be the first member of her family with a technology degree.

"A lot of people told me that Native women can't do this, but I'm proving them wrong. I love that I'm showing little girls that they can also be an information technologist, computer scientist, or anything else they put their minds to."

Though she still has a year to go before she obtains her diploma, Nylana is already looking past graduation and to the future she can provide for herself and her community. With her passion for technology as her driving force, Nylana's dream is to help her community thrive technologically. Once she graduates, Nylana will be making a positive impact on places like her community's hospital, schools, and anywhere else she can.

*Students with big dreams
seek even bigger impact.*

Tasha, of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, has already achieved one of her educational goals - she earned her bachelor's degree in tribal governance at Northwest Indian College, thanks to her College Fund scholarship. But like Nylana, her eyes were already focused on life after graduation. She's applying for her master's degree in tribal governance and business administration at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. And for a very good reason.

"As a people, we're not taking enough risks to sustain ourselves because we're so dependent on federal funds. I figure if I learn how to take the right business risks, we will generate our own income to provide funds for things like schools. I want to see my tribe thrive, keep our language alive, keep our ceremonies alive, and keep our food that has grown in our areas for thousands of years, sustainable."

(continued on page 2)



Tasha (Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)



Shattering the Glass Ceiling

I recently read a report about the gender gap in the technology sector.¹ The findings, though not surprising, should give us all pause for concern. The study found that women continue to be chronically underrepresented in every stage of the tech journey. *Especially women of color*. In fact, Black, Latina, and Native American women make up only about 4% of the computing workforce.

We at the American Indian College Fund are working to educate and equip students for successful and profitable careers in technology, finance, economics and other sectors where women and minorities continue to run into the proverbial glass ceiling.

You are helping us change that - because that's how your dollars are being invested. More American Indians are achieving college degrees than ever, though the gap is still wide. And our students are acutely aware of the lack of women in key areas of opportunity, like technology. Together we are here to ensure success, no matter what career path calls them.

To meet the future needs of Indian Country while providing Native youth with hope for a better future, we must increase the number of skilled professionals in Native communities! And we do this by increasing the number of Native students who are able to stay in school, graduate, and start a career they are passionate about.

And we couldn't do all we do without friends like you who support our mission! Since 2004, more than 31,000 American Indian scholars have graduated from tribal colleges. Hundreds of teachers, human-service providers, managers, technicians, health care providers, and entrepreneurs are now in the work force.

In this issue of *Circle of Hope*, you will read about the ambitions and aspirations of three Native American women who are looking forward to making their own impact in the workplace.

Nylana, Tasha, Kasa, and so many other Native American students have friends like you to thank for providing them with the financial and moral support they need to achieve their higher education and career goals.

Pilamayayapi (thank you) for your support and friendship,

Cheryl Crazy Bull

Cheryl Crazy Bull
President & CEO, American Indian College Fund

¹ Pivotal Ventures and McKinsey & Company, Reboot Representation, © 2018, rebootrepresentation.org

Looking Beyond Graduation: Nylana, Tasha, and Kasa continued

Kasa, of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota, keeps a very special picture close at hand - it's of her with her children on graduation day when she earned her associate's degree. As a first generation student, Kasa wants to pave the way for her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to follow their dreams and obtain college degrees. In that way, she is looking beyond graduation - but she's also doing so in a much more personal way.

"Having completed my associate's degree, I'm now pursuing my bachelor's of science in business administration. But I don't plan to stop there. I want to earn my master's in public administration and a Juris Doctorate of Indian law."

As her education continues and supplies her with the knowledge and expertise she'll need, Kasa looks to open doors of opportunity for economic growth within Indian country - specifically, bringing jobs back to reservations, creating infrastructure, and building commerce opportunities within external networks outside Indian country.

These three scholars represent thousands of others who will make their own mark on their communities, and the world, after graduation.



Kasa (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota)

With friends like you by our side, we can make sure they not only have the opportunity but also the tools and skills needed to become leaders in their fields.

In Their Own Words

by Paul Pierce, Patience Milrod, and Darrow Pierce

In the past, we have made what we called *charitable contributions* to the American Indian College Fund. We now are now making *reparation payments*.

We feel that the most effective and consistent way to do this is with monthly giving, so that is the method we choose.

Our giving is based on our increased awareness and acknowledgement of the indirect and direct harm, violence, and injustice that we and our ancestors have perpetrated on indigenous people in what is now the United States. We have for quite a while recognized this situation and felt a responsibility to address it.

Become a monthly donor! Visit collegefund.org to set up monthly giving today!

Have you set aside money for charitable giving through a donor-advised fund, charitable giving account, or trust? If so, you can easily and conveniently make a designation to the American Indian College Fund today.

Visit www.collegefund.org/DAF to get started.

What Supporting American Indian Education Means to Us



Therefore, our ongoing contribution to the work that the American Indian College Fund is doing is in response to a debt owed. It seems impossible to quantify the exact nature of that debt.

Since we are at present unable to identify, acknowledge, or compensate the descendants of those whose lives, land, and culture were taken by our ancestors, we as a family are committed to remedying this harm to the extent we are able, and in ways that will have the most impact on this injustice.

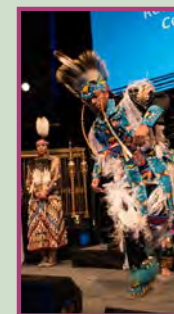
It's All About the Students

The American Indian College Fund's first-ever student-hosted Flame of Hope Gala was the perfect way to celebrate 30 years of service to Native communities

This year's Flame of Hope Gala at New York's famed Gotham Hall was an unparalleled success. The event drew more than 300 guests, including celebrities like Bette Midler, Margaret Colin, and Katherine Grody, and raised almost a **half-million dollars** for the American Indian College Fund!

Native dancers from the Redhawk Native Arts Council entertained the guests, followed by a land acknowledgement:

"In honor of those who came before us, we would like to recognize that this evening we are on the lands of the Lenape, Mohican, and other indigenous people."



This led to an insightful student couch discussion where College Fund scholars addressed topics such as sovereignty and what they envision for their Native communities.



The College Fund honored Board member Kim Blanchard with the *Yuonian Yatanpi* Award. This award was created to honor outstanding



lifetime supporters. The name *Yuonian Yatanpi* is Dakota and means "With Highest Honor." Over the past 14 years, Kim has contributed nearly \$750,000, providing nearly 250 student scholarships and supporting 400 Tribal College and University faculty through professional development and recognition.

The evening's headline entertainment included a performance by Brooke Simpson, an American Indian singer who is passionate about songwriting and people. Brooke was a finalist on NBC's *The Voice* and has released two singles - "2am," which charted on the iTunes pop chart, and her most recent release, "Perfect," which is now available.



The evening was capped off with guests participating in a round dance.

A big thank you to all those who made the evening a success by showing your love and commitment for Native communities.



Bette Midler joined by student speakers (L-R) Blue, Celina, Jasmine, Roland, and Robin



An Epicurean Engagement

When asked if you are familiar with traditional French or Italian cuisine, perhaps a specific entrée, a favorite restaurant or recipe might come to mind. But how many of us are familiar with the first American cuisine – the type of food that not only uses locally sourced ingredients, but ingredients indigenous to the region we live in?

Our new interactive event, Epicurean Award to Support Scholars (or as we like to call it, E.A.T.S.S.), engages guests in tasting, learning about, and experiencing the history of original America Indian foods and revitalizing them in today's world.



On February 7th, our inaugural event was held in Minneapolis. With the help of our hosts, famous Native American Chefs Sean Sherman and Ben Jacobs, we challenged four Twin Cities chefs with creating and preparing a signature dish incorporating two of three ingredients indigenous to the Midwest: Native Squash, Choke Cherries, and Staghorn Sumac.

Anne Andrus, Co-Owner and Chef of Honey & Rye Bakery said, "I have experience cooking and baking with squash, yet when I received the native heirloom squash for this event, it almost felt new to me! The variety was so lovely and very rich in color, texture, and taste; a reminder to pause and enjoy the beauty that exists naturally in indigenous foods grown right here in Minnesota."

DID YOU KNOW?

In the **2017-2018** school year:

- **5,896** American Indian College Fund scholarships were distributed
- **4,353** students were assisted financially
- **36%** of all recipients were first-generation students
- **184** different schools were attended by our scholars
- The **top six** major fields of study, in order, were: BUSINESS, EDUCATION, FINE ARTS, HEALTH, LIBERAL ARTS, and STEM



But the real celebrity chefs of the evening were our student scholars enrolled in culinary programs from Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (Hayward, Wisconsin) and Navajo Technical University (Crownpoint, New Mexico).

One of the evening's favorite foods was the Puffed Wild Rice and Berry Coulis, courtesy of our students at Lac Courte Oreilles.

The next E.A.T.S.S. event will be held on September 17 in Denver, Colorado at Mile High Station.

To learn more about our E.A.T.S.S. event series visit www.collegefund.org.



**IN THE
NEXT ISSUE...**



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE OF CIRCLE OF HOPE, WE'LL BE KICKING OFF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR AND PREPARING A WHOLE NEW CLASS OF FUTURE GRADUATES TO SUCCEED.