



Nonprofits Honored for Embodying Beliefs, Positively Impacting Community

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

March 27, 2014 (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 have made huge strides. 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 sixth annual Forging Hope Breakfast March 25 in San Bernardino.

The San Bernardino Valley College Foundation, 100 Mile Club, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and Silver Bullet Productions were the four nonprofits receiving San Manuel’s prestigious Yawa’ Award.

“It is incredibly uplifting to see year-after-year so many people who have answered the call to act for the benefit of others,” said San Manuel Chairperson Carla Rodriguez. “It is 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 San Bernardino Valley College Foundation in the area of education for the development and implementation of the Valley Bound Commitment Program (VBC) geared to support low-income students in 12 San Bernardino Valley College feeder high schools. Developed in response to the Inland Empire’s low college attendance rate of 25 percent, VBC has served more than 700 students since its inception in 2008. It aims to remove the economic barrier for high school graduates by covering enrollment fees, textbooks, college tours and college-related expenses for the first year of attendance.

Norco-based nonprofit 100 Mile Club was honored with the Yawa’ Award in the area of health for its work to improve the health and well-being of children at school through daily physical activity in a noncompetitive, supportive and inclusive environment. The program is simple: walk or run 100 miles during the school year. Today, the program is in more than 700 schools in every U.S. state as well as Japan and Australia.

“Thank you for believing in our spirit and vision,” said 100 Mile Club Founder Kara Lubin. “The concept of Yawa’ is what drives all of us, even kids.”

In the area of economic development, the tribe awarded Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians for the restoration of one of the three tribal buildings, which the schoolhouse is the oldest Bureau of Indian Affairs structure in the state of California. The buildings were forced to close in 1991 due to costly extensive repairs. The buildings located at the edge of the tribe’s ceremonial grounds stood as a reminder of a transition from a traditional world to a modern one. Although the buildings originally represented a period when the federal government directed the lives of Native Americans, they have over the decades become a symbol of self-determination and intertribal cooperation.

“These buildings symbolize where we came from and how we survived,” said Mary Resvaloso, Chairperson of Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians.

Lastly, New Mexico-based Silver Bullet Productions was recognized with the Yawa’ Award in special projects for encouraging educational achievement through a hands-on approach to film making projects. Evolving from the concerns of tribal educators in New Mexico about the loss of language, culture and community, Silver Bullet Productions teaches culturally rich workshops with subject matter that is relevant to Native American education.

“Over these last six years we have seen how collective action and support has helped us manage and get through some very difficult challenges,” Rodriguez said. “We applaud every program that has worked strategically to serve more children and families as needs have grown.”

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 Serrano 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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