

## GONA-SCAIR-TANF-2012

By Roy Cook



Traditionally, from earliest times, Native American communities would gather together and renew family ties, meet new friends and participate in spiritual experiences as a group at the spring time Tribal event.

Today at Gathering of Native American, GONA, there is plenty of good cheer, comfortable facilities, games, surprises and entertainment to be enjoyed from 10am to 3pm, in the Alpine community center at Alpine, California. There are many happy rabbit activities for the children: fun crafts, face painting, balloon creations and happy



games for the Indian children and many photo opportunities for all.

Osiyo, Hello, my Native American relatives. Southern California American Indian Resource, SCAIR, Executive Director, Wanda Michaelis welcomed our Native American families and San Diego Urban Tribal TANF participants to the April 4, 2012 Springtime Gathering of Native Americans – GONA, career training activity. She told us what, where and when the activities would be. Also she introduced the SCAIR staff from Alpine and San Diego offices. She was particularly pleased to recognize the community service volunteers: Brittany Kuhl, Tristen Kuhl, Alex Contreras and Sammi Johnson.

Lynne Ray Smith, SCTCA on-site TANF Tribal manager also introduced the TANF staff in attendance.



SCAIR Board President Bill Johnson called upon SCAIR Senior Advisor Randy Edmonds for a traditional blessing to open the GONA proceedings.

This is a special day for our SCAIR Senior Advisor, Randy Edmonds. It is his 78<sup>th</sup> Birthday. He received many cheerful songs and gifts in appreciation of his contribution to the greater Native American community and the SCAIR organization. Randy is also a presenter this day. His theme is the BIA Relocation program and how many of the out of state Native American Tribal population came to be a part of the Southern California dynamic addition to song, language, culture and Traditional tribal life.



Additionally, he spoke to the value of the family unit. Hugs are important. Respect your parents and never talk back to them. These are values he learned as a Kiowa-Caddo child at home and in tribal boarding school.

Presenter, Bonnie Edmonds brings a long history as a job developer in Indian programs. One of the most effective results have been when she has taken the time

to talk to the employer and thereby effectively advise her job seekers more confidently.

GONA Training presenter Sarah Hernandez has been a job developer since she was 19 years of age working for SD county offices. She has had some bumps in the road of life but since recovery she has been clean for 8 years and is happy being a single mom to her two boys. She feels her life experience greatly aids her in reaching the aspiring job seeker with empathy and honesty. Further she states that the SCAIR program is vital to the Native American community.

Following the speakers presentations, Wanda restated that SCAIR is all about family. Each needs to find their passion. Opportunities exist each day if one is ready to see them. This is a fine bridge to the next adult participation activity: the



raw egg drop. Success or spatter depends on the protection determined with the supplies provided. Many perished but two were successful from the 15 feet drop. This was a fun group project presented by Kameka Smith and Heidi Beckenbach.

Following the Nutritional experience all are invited for activities in the outdoor park

and the warm sunshine.

Tug of war, hula hoops and a fun parachute group activity made this day active, healthy and happy.





From all of us at SCAIR-TANF, our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to participate at this springtime GONA gathering today.



Finally, to all our Kumeyaay and Native American families thanks to you for being there: Wado, Aho, and Mehan.