



4th ANNUAL AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH DISABILITY SUMMIT

Strength in Numbers: A Celebration of Indigenous Youth Resilience

10:00 a.m. – Welcome and Opening Prayer

Prayer: Mateo TreeTop

Introduction: Kimberly Yellow Robe, Banner University Family Care; Agnes Attakai, UArizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities; and Zoe Irwin, Jr. student at ASU College of Health Solutions and 2024 American Indian Youth Disability Summit Emcee.

Opening remarks and presentation of the Jim E. Warne, Jr. Youth Tribal Leadership Award to Zoe Alexis Irwin of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

10:15 a.m. – Keynote: My Brain Tumor Journey

Presented by: Kenny Dodson and Trudy Billy

Kenny will talk about his diagnosis of a brain stem tumor at the age of 17 and how the diagnosis has changed his life. Trudy will share her parents' perspective of this journey.

10:45 a.m. – Supporting Holistic Wellness for Tribal Youth Experiencing Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression

Presented by: Adene Karhan

This session will provide an overview of the differences between “normal” feelings of stress and sadness and symptoms of depression and anxiety conditions. The presenter will share tips for finding

support from others when you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression and don't know who to talk to. Youth will also be invited to share their own experiences and observations of factors that impact the wellness of Tribal youth from a holistic perspective. Self-advocacy strategies will be shared for ensuring that counselors and other mental health professionals understand your cultural values and how these values can be incorporated into your support plans.

11:45 a.m. – 5-Minute BREAK

11:50 a.m. – (Lunch)-Arizona's Voting Disability Process and Accommodations

Presented by: Dr. Millicent Michelle Pepion and Maricopa County Elections

This session will first cover the various accommodations offered in Maricopa County, including the Special Election Board for immobile voters. Next, Dr. Pepion will review how Native people are being accommodated, for example, how Native people can use their Tribal identification cards, and the various languages that are available in certain counties.

12:20 p.m. – Connecting the Heart and Mind: An Introduction to School Based Behavioral Health Services

Presented by: Jennifer Blau

Banner-University Family Care (B-UFC) is dedicated to being part of a trauma-informed community that strives to create a school environment where students feel safe, respected and are encouraged to reach their fullest potential. As part of our collaboration with schools and community partners, B-UFC is committed to increasing the accessibility of behavioral health services in schools. This training is an opportunity to learn more about who is a community partner, the benefits of school partnerships and the positive outcomes that can be accomplished by working together.

12:50 p.m. – Finds Their Way: Transition to Employment

Presented by: Rosa Rojas Franco, Mateo TreeTop, Gabe Martinez

In collaboration with tribal, state, and community partners, the University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities has created Finds Their Way. The goal is to increase access for Native students with disabilities to skill development, knowledge, services, and supports to participate in long-term competitive integrated employment careers. One of our more recent collaborations highlights Pre-Employment Transition preparation through Work Based Learning Experiences.

These Experiences have allowed us to design unique frameworks catered to each community's needs. From the success of Work Based Learning Experiences, Native youth are able to give back and contribute to their local community.

1:20 p.m. – Youth IEP/Sports Injuries Prevention

Presented by: Chloe Yellow Robe

Chloe will share her IEP experience and also provide some tips about sports injury and prevention.

1:35 p.m. – Living in Hozho with My ADHD, Anxiety, and PTSD

Presented by: Joy Henry

Navigating life after college as a young adult with mental health conditions. Exploring traditional coping skills, cultural identity, and community involvement.

2:05 p.m. – 5-Minute BREAK

2:10 p.m. – PRE-Employment Transition Services

Presented by: Veronica Mendoza

Have you heard of Pre-ETS, but not sure how the service can benefit students with disabilities? The Rehabilitation Services Administration Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program offers FREE Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities statewide. Pre-ETS are specific career exploration and job readiness services that help students with disabilities prepare for future employment. Please join us for an overview of Pre-ETS.

2:40 p.m. – Youth Panel: Braiding Culture, Disability and Purpose for Youth Resilience

Moderator: Virginia Rossel | Panelists: Audie Makil, Audra Paletta, Virginia Rossel, Mateo TreeTop
Disability is just one part of who we are that makes us unique and impacts our life experience. Join our panel of Arizona Young Adult Leaders as they provide insight into what disability means to them and how their disabilities and other diversities affect their self-perception and identity. The panel will share their thoughts on how young adults can manage bias in an empowering way, celebrate all their diversities, and embrace all aspects of their self-identity.

3:25p.m. – Closing and Poem by Mateo TreeTop

The Fight for the Eighth Generation

Speaker Information



Zoe Alexis Irwin

Zoe Alexis Irwin is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She will be graduating from ASU studying Speech and Hearing Sciences. Ms. Irwin has supported the Tribal Youth Disability Summit and the Arizona American Indian Disability Summit volunteering at the events. She has worked as a Behavioral Health Tech providing Early Intervention to Children diagnosed with Autism. Ms. Irwin has served as the 2022, 2023 and 2024 Tribal Youth Disability Summit Emcee. Hobbies include daily workouts, attending tribal cultural events, and she enjoys long visits with her Grandmother Rosie Irwin.

Her Lakota name is “*Runs-Close-To-Village*”, her Maternal Great-Great Grandmother’s name. She is the eldest daughter of Dr. Kimberly Yellow Robe and Christopher Irwin and resides with her family in Mesa, Arizona. *Institution/Organization: Arizona State University*

Kenneth (Kenny) Dodson

Kenny is Navajo and Hopi from Tuba City, Arizona. He is 28 years old and was diagnosed with a brain stem tumor at the age of 17. Kenny currently lives independently in Flagstaff, Az and is a student at NAU majoring in Graphic Design with a minor in Disability Studies. *Institution/Organization: Northern Arizona State University*

Trudy Billy

Trudy is a mother of two sons and works as the Director of Outreach and Tribal Programs at Raising Special Kids, a non-profit that supports families who have children with special health care needs. Trudy is of the Biihbitoodnii Clan born for the Tl’asshchi’l Clan, her maternal grandfather is of the Hopi Sun Clan and paternal grandfather is of the Todich’eenee’ Clan. Trudy works and resides in Tuba City Arizona. *Institution/Organization: Raising Special Kids*



Adene Karhan

Adene Karhan is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and an Extension Associate at the K. Lisa Yank and Hock E. Tan Institute of Cornell University. Adene lives in the York, PA area and has worked in the field of social work for over 25 years, with a focus on supporting individuals and families who have experienced adversity and trauma. Adene’s experience includes a blend of private practice mental health counseling and work in the fields of foster care, adoption, intellectual and developmental disability, and higher education. Adene has a passion for increasing awareness and information

around mental health and wellness and holistic approaches to employment. *Institution/Organization: Yang-Tan Institute, Cornell University*



Dr. Millicent Michelle Pepion

Dr. Millicent Michelle Pepion is Bitter Clan born for the Blackfeet Nation. She was born in Tuba City on the Navajo Nation but currently resides in Mesa, Arizona with her two children. In October of 2023, Dr. Pepion was selected to serve as Outreach Coordinator and Tribal Liaison for the Arizona Secretary of State’s office. Her job involves coordinating statewide outreach efforts with Native leaders, Native organizations, and other Arizona community members to ensure that all phases of the electoral process are accessible.

Institution/Organization: Arizona Secretary of State and Maricopa County Elections

Jennifer Blau

Jennifer Blau is dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of children and families. Over the past 19 years, Jennifer has worked in a variety of sectors of the child welfare system beginning with work at a children’s shelter for victims of abuse and neglect. It was there that she developed the deepest understanding of how important advocacy, compassion and access to safe and supportive resources were for some of the most vulnerable children in the state. This drove her passion to transition into a variety of roles within the children’s behavioral health system. Jennifer spent many years supporting children and families as a high needs case manager and later as a supervisor to a team of behavioral health professionals. With ongoing interest in systems work at a higher level, Jennifer began her current role as a Children’s System of Care Specialist with Banner Health Plans. Jennifer has several unique populations and initiatives that she oversees, including birth through five, autism spectrum disorder, school based behavioral health services and Child and Family Team process. It is within this role that she is able to use her skills and experience to develop processes within the Children’s System that will enhance the outcomes for members and increase the knowledge of AHCCCS requirements for system providers and community partners. *Institution/Organization: Banner University Family Care*



Rosa Rojas Franco

Rosa Rojas Franco is an enrolled member with Tohono O’odham Nation. Rosa has been working in youth transition for over 6 years, with her most recent focus on Pre-Employment Transition Services within the Sonoran’s Center’s Employment team. Rosa has recently taken on the new role of project coordinator for the *Finds Their Way* project. She is also a full time student at

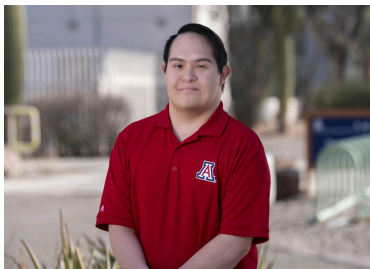
UArizona pursuing a degree in Leadership and Learning Innovations. *Institution/Organization: UArizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities*



Mateo TreeTop

Mateo TreeTop, Project Partner, is an Arizona Youth Leadership Engagement Initiatives Alumni and a Key Native Peer Navigator with Diverse Ability Incorporated. As a member of the Standing Rock Lakota Nation, Mateo is very attuned to his culture and is passionate about enhancing life for all Indigenous People. Mr. TreeTop, a person who has a Traumatic Brain Injury, is a graduate of Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (2015), Arizona Youth Engagement Academy (2017),

and graduated college in 2022 with two associate degrees, one in graphic design and another in theater. He is thoughtful, respectful, and wise beyond his years. *Institution/Organization: Diverse Ability Incorporated and UArizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities*



Gabriel Martinez

Gabriel is an Administrative Support Assistant and a Peer Mentor at the University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities in Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Martinez is a 216 graduate of the Sonoran Center's Project Search and has great insights and ideas on assisting youth with disabilities. Mr. Martinez was born and raised in Southern Arizona and is

an avid Wildcat fan. In his current position Mr. Martinez is a regular speaker and trainer for webinars, course guest lectures, and high school student classroom presentations. In 2021, Mr. Martinez was appointed by President Biden to the National President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities and is serving his second term on various committees. He is a confident and rallying advocate for inclusion and involvement. *Institution/Organization: UArizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities*



Chloe Yellow Robe

Chloe Yellow Robe Begay is 15 and enrolled with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Ms. Chloe is in 9th Grade and attends Dobson High School. Chloe enjoys playing softball, and golf. She earned her high school sports letter playing on the Varsity Golf Team as a high school freshman. Chloe is the daughter of Dr. Kimberly Yellow Robe and the late Warren Begay. *Institution/Organization: Dobson High School*

Joy (Joyletta) Leeanna Henry

My name is Joy (Joletta) Leanna Henry, and I am enrolled with the Navajo Nation. I am born for the Bitter Water clan (Todichii'nii), my paternal clan is the Clamp Tree (Tsin Sikaadnii), and my maternal grandfather's clan is the Red House (Kin Lichii'nii), and my paternal grandfather's clan is the Red Bottom People (Kin Lichii'nii). I was born in Shiprock, NM, and currently reside south of Farmington, NM, on the Navajo Nation Checkerboard reservation. I received my B.A. in Anthropology at Northern Arizona University back in 2022. I am currently the Inter-Tribal Disability Advocacy Council Project Coordinator and Intake Specialist at the Native American Disability Law Center. During my free time, I will attend to my duties at my grandparents' place (we own sheep and rescue rez dogs). I love to garden and cannot wait for planting season. My favorite item to grow is tomato varieties. I like to game on my PS5, travel, attend concerts, or read when I am not busy. *Institution/Organization: The Native American Disability Law Center*

Veronica Mendoza Williams

Veronica Mendoza Williams is the Statewide Pre-Employment Transition Coordinator for the State of Arizona Rehabilitation Service Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation program. She earned her Master's degree in Counseling and Human Relations from Northern Arizona University. She has 21 years of experience working with the young adult population, helping at-risk youth and students with disabilities obtain their educational goals. *Institution/Organization: State of Arizona Rehabilitation Service Administration*

YOUTH PANELISTS

Our panel consists of Indigenous and other AZ young adult leaders who have successfully completed leadership, self-advocacy, and facilitator training programs through Diverse Ability Incorporated, including the Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLF) and Arizona Youth Engagement Academy (AZYEA). These leaders give back to their communities and other young people by serving as facilitators

and peer leaders for the many programs provided by Diverse Ability Incorporated and its Arizona Youth Leadership & Engagement Initiatives (AZYLEI), including grant funded Indigenous Initiatives.
Institution/Organization: Diverse Ability Incorporated



Audie Makil



Audra Paletta



Virginia Rossel



Mateo TreeTop

