TANF Newsletter

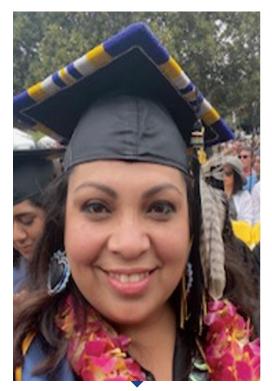
Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association

In Santa Ynez, A Determined Mother of Three **Earns Degree from UC Santa Barbara**



By Gerri Massey, Case Manager, SCTCA Santa Ynez TANF



Christina Cerna

Christina Cerna (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash) graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara in December, 2023, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a minor in psychology.

Christina completed her degree while being a participant at Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) Santa Ynez TANF. She is a single mom to three children- two sons, Caden, 16, and Mason, 13, and daughter Laraya, 7.

Christina stated her children were her biggest motivation for going back to school for her bachelor's degree. "I want to be a good role model and help to support them with their dream- and I also want to help my Native community," she said. "I felt like the more education, I can help them better."

The determined mother stated that she chose sociology and psychology because she has a passion for psychology and mental health. Christina said, "Growing up on the reservation, we were poor. I saw of lot of mental health issues and addiction. I want to help my community with my degree."

Several of Christina's family members struggle with mental illness as well. She discussed how mental health is prevalent in Native communities, but that there is a lack of Native therapists. Additionally, one of her sons was diagnosed with Autism and ADHD. Christina stated he was her biggest motivation because she wanted to develop the tools to help and guide him on his own life's journey. She also (Continued on page 2)

At Pala TANF, Caltrans Flagger Training Course Provides Participants an Opportunity – And Ideas

By Lucy Luna, Career Development Specialist, SCTCA Pala TANF

On Friday, January 19, 2024, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) Pala TANF hosted a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Flagger Training course.

The course-taught by Joe Larson of Safety and Leadership Training (SALT)- began promptly at 10:00 a.m. in building M at Pala TANF. The session had a total of seven participants: Jocelynn Chaloux (Rincon), Catrina Christman (Santa Ysabel), Andelina Chaparosa (Rincon), Shawnee Reed (Mesa Grande), Denise Adams (La Jolla), Andrew Parada (La Mesa) and Ryan Bower (La Mesa), a 17-year-old homeschooled minor who is preparing for work when he graduates from high school in June.



(Continued on pages 4 & 5)













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The purpose of the Tribal TANF Newsletter is to provide the tribal communities with information about services provided by the TANF Programs and other important issues concerning our rural/urban communities and families.

SCTCA provides services to San Diego, Orange and Santa Barbara counties and the following reservations:

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Barona	Manzanita	Santa '
Cahuilla	Mesa Grande	Santa
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Jamul	Rincon	Viejas
La Jolla	San Manuel	
La Posta	San Pasqual	

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Orange County Tribal TANF: (714) 450-9240 Toll-free: (866) 728-2230



(Continued from page 1)

wanted to have a better mental capacity for herself to be a better advocate for her son and her Native Community.

While she was in school, Christina juggled being a single mom and full-time student. She drove an hour each way to attend classes. She made sure that her children's lives did not suffer while she was in school. All three of her children maintain at least a 3.2 Grade Point Average and have had exceptional school attendance. They are also involved in many extracurricular activities, including through the Chumash Cultural Center.

Christina stated that she could not have done this without the help of her mom, who helped her with childcare. Her biggest struggles while in school were time management, stress, finances, raising three children, helping them with homework and trying to maintain her overall health. All of this was very challenging.

After graduation, Christina interviewed with Cottage Hospital and was offered a fulltime position as a as a Post-Acute Care Management Coordinator. Previously, Christina was a medical assistant. Both her medical assistant certification and her degree helped her to secure this position. She is currently in the process of applying to graduate programs. She would like to obtain her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology and eventually, complete a doctorate program.

At Santa Ynez TANF, Christina's case closed at the end of January. As sad as we are to see her go, we are so proud of her success and what she has accomplished!



Above: Christina Cerna with her mother at graduation; right, Christina with her three children

Christina's children and her mom are equally as proud. Her son Mason said he is proud of how hard- working his mother is - and he's also excited she will be making more money. He stated his mother's new job encourages him to establish a good career when he gets older. Her son Caden is happy that she got through schooling in one piece! And her daughter Larava said her mother's determination and success makes her want to become a doctor so she can help the sick.



Four Years After Covid Pandemic, School Absenteeism for all Students Continues at 'Alarming Rate'

By Gary P. Taylor, SCTCA TANF

Nearly four years after the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the year-long closure of almost all public and private schools in California, two things have happened: First - schools are open – and have been – for nearly two full years. Second - the number of students consistently attending those schools has dropped off a cliff.

Whether a child is white, black, Hispanic, Native American, girl or boy, high income or low income – all categories of students from K-12 are now missing school at alarmingly high rates. And nearly all students - Including Native Americans – have suffered steep academic losses and declining test scores. According to statewide statistics, chronic absenteeism at public schools across California rose to 30% during the 2021-22 school year, more than twice the level in 2018-2019. Eligible students are determined to be chronically absent if they were absent for 10% or more of the days they were expected to attend, according to *Cal Matters*, an education website.

The highest absentee rates were among kindergartners who are Black, Pacific Islander or have disabilities. Those children had all had rates of 50% or higher (there were no specific statistics for Native American children). And in 2022-23, an estimated 30% of students in California's public schools were once again chronically absent, an all-time high and more than three times the pre-pandemic rate. Advocates fear that unless schools can reverse the trend, so many students will fall behind that they may never catch up.

"This is a crisis, and it's not going to change until we do everything we can to get kids back in school 100%," Heather Hough, director of Policy Analysis for California Education, told *Cal Matters*. "What we all fear is that this will become the new normal."

Before the pandemic, about 10% of students in California's public schools missed at least 10% (or 18 days) in a school year, which the state defines as chronically absent. But COVID-related school closures, remote learning and quarantines have created a new habit for millions of families: optional, not mandatory, daily school attendance, according to *Cal Matters*. Absenteeism has myriad negative impacts. For students, they're more likely to fall behind academically, drop out and not graduate. For schools, lower attendance means less revenue from the state, which bases its funding on how many students show up every day. For teachers, poor attendance means half–empty classrooms, with some students who are weeks or months behind their peers, noted *Cal Matters*.



Great Plains

"Fully grown, an American buffalo can weigh more than a ton; stand taller than six feet at the shoulder; and stretch more than ten feet long, not including the tail. But they are deceptively agile, capable of running thirty-five miles per hour – nearly the speed of a top racehorse, yet with the endurance to maintain that pace for more than ten miles."

- The first sentence in the first chapter of the book, Blood Memory: The Tragic Decline and Improbable Resurrection of the American Buffalo



The story of the near-annihilation of the American buffalo has been told many times. In its simplest, most brutal telling, it goes like this:

Once – not that long ago, actually – millions of buffalo roamed North America, especially in the vast grasslands of the Great Plains. Native Americans relied on them for food and shelter. And then the white man came, and in the late 19th century, slaughtered the buffalo by the millions, until

they were virtually gone. And in their wanton killing of this great animal the white man also destroyed the way of life of Native Americans who had, with the buffalo, roamed the Great Plains for thousands of years.

In the book *Blood Memory* - written by Dayton Duncan and famed film documentarian Ken Burns - the story is again told, but somehow the brutality is even more stunning. That's probably because the 329-page book (published in 2023 by Alfred A. Knopf) is illustrated with dozens of historical black and white photos, colorful paintings, drawings, posters and illustrations depicting the slaughter of the buffalo.

It's one thing to read about the endless killing, but it's another to actually see a photo from the 1880s of a vast field of buffalo carcasses, slashed and gutted; or to see a man standing in front of an enormous pile of buffalo skulls, stacked into the shape of a small mountain.

The first two-thirds of *Blood Memory* is filled with such images and stories – at certain points, it's difficult to believe the buffalo survived. But they did. And so did Native Americans. That's what the last third of the book recounts: the unexpected resurrection of the once-decimated animal- and the revival of Native American culture.

The book's title comes from remarks by Kiowa poet N. Scott Momaday: "So much of my blood memory has to do with buffaloes. We have regard for each other, and we are friends. We are brothers. We are related. I think of them in a particular way, and it's always with reverence."

Blood Memory is the story of that connection.

🛩 - Gary P. Taylor

(Continued from page 1)

A lovely blessing given by Paul Miranda started the class off on a good note. Racheal Bentancourt, Pala TANF Site Manager, introduced herself and reminded participants we at Pala TANF are always here to help them grow and succeed.

Lucy Luna, Career Development Specialist, then introduced herself and thanked the attendees for responding and showing up on time, ready to learn new things. We went around the room, each participant introducing themselves and sharing why they decided to participate in the Flagger course. Larson wanted to introduce himself last so he could share his backstory of how he got to be the owner of SALT. It was a good reminder to the participants that even when we have hurdles and negativity in our lives, we can overcome them and be successful because it's never too late.

Larson started class explaining what a Flagger is, what and who they're responsible for - and why it's important to learn how to flag correctly. He explained distractions can cause accidents and deaths. He also shared personal experience stories of lifeand-death situations (and even some funny stories) that he's experienced over the course of his career as a Flagger. Many of the participants laughed at Larson's stories. They were engaged and asked questions to clarify their understanding.

During the lunch break, a conversation began that included everyone. It was about what they would like to do once they are certified as a Flagger. It came up that maybe the women could get together and start an "all- women Flagger crew." Larson highly encouraged that because, he explained, when a Flagger crew bids on a job, an all-women Flagger crew would be able to check multiple boxes, including "women-owned" and "minority." That could give them an edge that would allow their company to grow, he said.

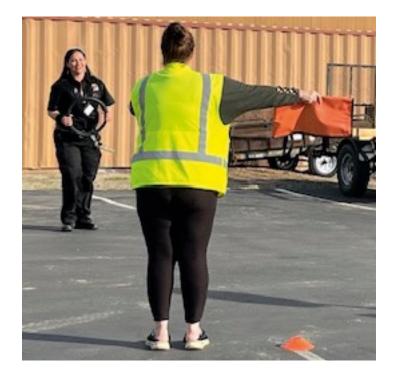
Several of the female participants got excited about that possibility. Luna reminded them that California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) awards small loans for startup businesses. She noted that if the participants completed a business plan together, they could apply. The one adult male participant joked about the females hiring him and giving him a fair wage.

The minor who attended was very excited about attending this training. He's currently home-schooled and works in a fast-food restaurant. He told Luna during the break periods he would like to be a lifeguard this summer. He then asked about any classes or training sessions TANF has that could hel him. He also expressed enthusiasm about the Flagger training because Larson had offered to help him get a job once he turns 18. In fact, Larson offered to help each participant get a job if they reached out to him.

After classroom training was complete, a written test was taken by all, with a 100% pass rate from all participants. Once all tests were graded, participants were moved outside to the Pala TANF parking lot area to practice the correct method of Flagging. The trainees laughed with each other as a steering wheel cover was used as a pretend car and they had to walk/run to mimic a car driving towards the Flagger. They cheered each other on and encouraged each other. Each trainee also passed the hands-on portion of the class.









The difference between the pre- and post-training surveys showed each participant began the class a little skeptical about what they were going to learn. By the end of the course, though, each participant walked away with a new skill set and a sense of empowerment.

At the start of the class, 85% of the trainees were uncertain of what exactly a Caltrans Flagger is and does. However, by the end of the class, 100% of participants completely understood the roles and responsibilities of a Flagger. And 71% of the class felt confident enough in the training they received that they believed they could go out and apply for a position immediately.

This particular skill may have been out of their comfort zones, but many participants expressed gratitude to Pala TANF for exposing them to different job opportunities so they can determine if it's something they are really interested in. Many participants asked about any upcoming workshops and requested classes for CPR and first aid, security guard training and fire training.

When asked to describe in their own words what it means to be certified in a specific skill, one participant noted, "to be seen as someone who is aware and familiar with the requirements, knowledge and skill needed to acquire the certificate." Another said "having certifications shows you have specialized training in a specific field."

The class seemed to be processed without any challenges. Overall, participants' willingness to learn new skills has carried over to their normal TANF requirements. Trust and rapport with Pala TANF staff was also strengthened because of this training. Lastly, we believe our Pala participants will have a more competitive edge with applying for jobs in the community because they can put this non-traditional training on their resumes. We also believe that it empowered them to be more open to participating in future activities with TANF.

SCTCA Pala TANF staff in attendance at the training session included Bentancourt, Luna and Nus'un Schlater, TANF Security Officer.

Flagger Jobs

Recently, Pala TANF hosted a Roadway Flagger training class. Here are some job listings to show that yes, there are jobs out there for you and with training, they can be obtained.

- Lucy Luna



Statewide Safety Systems, Poway

RoadSafe Traffic Systems, Lake Elsinore



Workforce Solutions, Oceanside

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, San Diego

SCTCA Orange County TANF Provides Families With *Kindness Rocks* Activity

By Laura De La Torre Baeza, Eligibility Specialist/Education Coordinator, SCTCA Orange County TANF

On Tuesday January 23rd, 2024, each Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) Orange County TANF family received a packet containing the *Kindness Rocks* Activity agenda.

The educational material – which included the decoration of actual rocks - discussed kindness and the benefits it has on social and emotional health development. The *Kindness Rocks* great kindness week challenge included a list of family activities and provided families with a list of positive/affirming phrases examples. Each child also received an age-appropriate book on the topic of kindness to promote literacy. Lastly, each participant received a participant survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Kindness Rocks* activity.

The goal of the *Kindness Rocks* Activity Agenda was met with this activity, as verified through the various TANF participant surveys that were submitted. Most of the feedback from participants and their children stated that decorating the rocks with kind words or sentiments encouraged family communication regarding the topic of kindness.

Additionally, most of the feedback expressed how the activity encouraged bonding and family togetherness. All families reported learning new ways to be kind to themselves and others. Some families mentioned they would be more kind to themselves through self-care. Other families mentioned being kinder to others with their words or actions.

Overall, the participant surveys demonstrated how all participants were able to learn how kindness benefits their social emotional development. Participants noted that learning kindness behaviors will enable them to form relationships to the world around them- and support their greater health and wellbeing in life.

Based on the feedback from the participant surveys, TANF youth are interested in doing hands-on activities, but also activities that require everyone to participate as a family.

The *Kindness Rocks* activity was considered a success by the Orange County TANF Education Coordinator.



















SCTCA Santa Ynez TANF Families Complete Vision Boards

Gerri Massey, Case Manager, SCTCA Santa Ynez TANF

On January 4th, our Santa Ynez TANF office participated in the Vision Board Workshop, hosted remotely by SCTCA Therapist Cyndie Gilliam. Our families learned how to work together cohesively as a family unit to complete their board. The vision board included goals they would like to achieve in 2024. Two families from the Santa Ynez office participated in the workshop.

The families seemed to enjoy working together in order to create their vision board. They were able to be creative and make it personal to them. One family would like to travel in 2024. Both families wanted more family time together. Each vision boards showed how truly unique each family is with their wants and desires. Most importantly, they had fun creating goals as a family.









SCTCA Food Distribution Creates Its First Recipe Calendar

By Gary P. Taylor, SCTCA TANF

Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) TANF Food Distribution in Rincon has created its first-ever annual Recipe Calendar.

The 2024 calendar includes a wide range of recipes spanning all 12 months, including stews, salads, mixed vegetables, drinks and desserts. The calendar also includes recipes for traditional tortillas, frybread-and Chuck Wagon Bean Pot from a 1985 Weewish Book.

Several of the recipes were submitted by participants in the commodities program, said Susie Linton, Director of Food Distribution. Each recipe includes a picture of the dish and the name of the person who submitted it, she said.

In January, for example, there is a recipe for *Atole De Avena* (Oatmeal Drink) from Maria Rodriguez. The recipe features a picture of the drink in a stylish green mug, with cinnamon sticks and two small pieces of bread on a maroon cloth (*see Commodities photo on page 15*). Underneath the picture the ingredients are printed, along with preparation, cooking time and serving directions. There is also a Nutrition Facts box to the right of the recipe, listing in detail all the calories, fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates and vitamins.

Each month is designed in the same format (with the exceptions of July, August and September, which have two separate recipes and two smaller Nutrition Facts boxes). Other Food Distribution participants who sent in recipes included Mary Arviso, Emma Rodgriguez, Cheryl Contreras, Robin Wakanojajan, Lorraine Villalobos and Mirna Orozco.

Linton also has a recipe in the calendar – in March, 'My Brother Buck's Green Salad,' is featured. And so does Albert Contreras, Food Distribution Certifier and Nutrition Educator - his Chickpea Curry Stew appears in October. "Even if you don't like coconut or Kale, I guarantee you'll love this stew," Contreras wrote at the end of his recipe. "Enjoy with a piece of crusty sourdough bread!"

Linton said participants have responded enthusiastically to the calendar. She said the idea of printing such a calendar had been considered for years, but 2024 is the first time it's been done. She credited Contreras with working hard to get the project completed.

"Albert had a lot to do with coming up with the recipe calendar," Linton said. He helped gather the recipes from participants and aided in the design, she noted.





10 thoughts for Improving your Self Esteem

1 Be Kind to yourself

Things you say to yourself are very powerful in inflating and deflating your self-esteem. Challenge the negative thoughts you might have. If you wouldn't say those things to a friend then don't say them to yourself. To practice this write down 3 things you can do to take care of yourself.

3 Mistakes are okay

Always strive to be the best version of yourself but remember, no one is perfect. Understand that you will ,make mistakes along the way. The best thing to do is to learn from those mistakes and try to do better. To practice this write down 3 things that you have learned from a mistake you have made recently.

5 Find a good support system

Look for people who encourage you and help you to feel good about yourself. Stay away from people that belittle you or who make you feel bad about yourself. To practice this, make time to spend with others that support and uplift you.

7 Do what makes you happy

If you spend some time doing things that you enjoy you will have a more positive outlook. Try to schedule some "you" time every day. It doesn't have to be a lot. Maybe take 30 min to read a book you have been wanting to, watching a tv show, taking a walk or dancing to your favorite song. If it makes you happy then make some time for it. To practice this write down some things that make you feel happy and try to do at least 1 of them each day.

9 Get Active

Exercise is a great way to feel better physically and emotionally. Not only does it help to increase your motivation it can also release endorphins that make you feel better mentally. And, if you get active in the sunshine this can help give your body Vitamin D that is another mood booster. So it is a win win for you. Practice this by writing down some ways you can get active and include this in your daily routine.

2 Accept yourself

Focus on your own goals and achievements. Try not to compare yourself to others. Often times what you see on social media etc. is not a true representation of what is actually going on. No one is exactly like you. To practice this write down 3 things you like about yourself.

4 Forgive Yourself

You will make mistakes but those mistakes help you to grow. Be kind to yourself. Try not to beat yourself up for those mistakes. Practice this by trying to catch your negative self-talk and replace it with something positive.

6 Focus on what you can change

Ask yourself, is this something within my control? If it is not in your control then let it go and focus on the things that are. You will be able to see positive change in the things that are in your control. A way to practice this is to write down something that you are unhappy with and 3 things you can do to change it.

8 Celebrate small steps

Celebrating the smallest achievements is a great way to build your self-confidence and help you to continue to feel good about yourself. You can practice this by writing down 3 things that you did well. Remember it can be a small achievement like getting the kids to school on time, making time for yourself or even doing a load of laundry. The more you notice the small steps the more you will be encouraged to move forward.

10 Do something for others

Being helpful to someone else not only makes that person feel good but it can also help you to feel good as well. You can practice this by writing down 3 things that you can do to to help others and try to incorporate it into your daily or weekly routine.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please contact Cyndie Gilliam LMFT TANF Therapist @ 760-330-3913 or cgilliam@sctca.net

As of 1/1/2024 CAF is OPEN to those aged 18 and older





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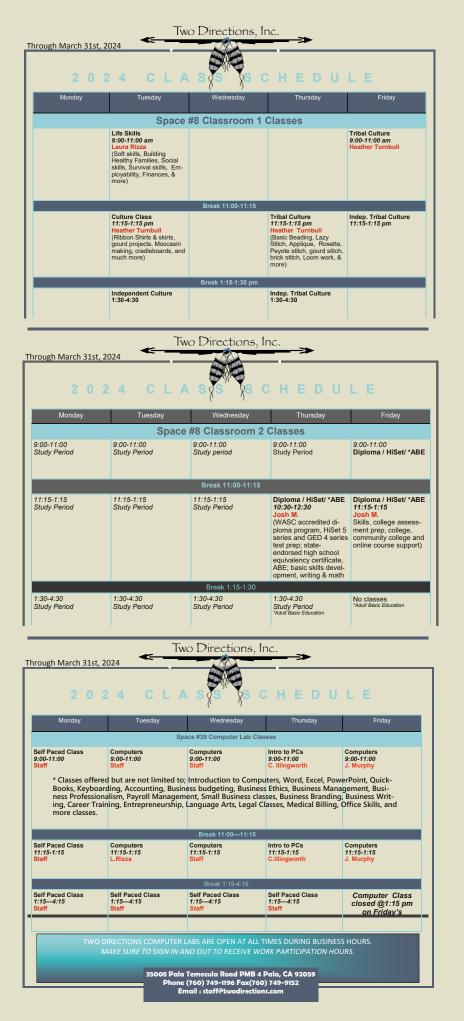
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Class Calendars



OFFICE CLOSUR Friday, March 29, 20 Good Friday. Happy Spring	24 for PH: (760) 737-0113 FX: (760) 737-0581 FOR CLASS II KGUAC	RCH 2024 CALEN BG ASSOCIATES INC. 210 S. JUNIPER ST., SUITE 212 ESCONDIDO, CA 92025 WWW.BGASSOCIATESINC.COM NFORMATION, CONTACT HENA@BGASSOCIATESIN	MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30AM-4:00PM KAYLEIGH at IC.COM.	PROVI ACC SCH P CLA SUE	ASSOCIATES INC. DES INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING TO COMMODATE THE EDULE & NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS. ISSES & TIMES ARE BJECT TO CHANGE.
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MARCH 2024

SCAIR Weekly Calendar Serving the Native American Community Since 1997

MONDAY 8:00am-4:30pm	TUESDAY 8:00am-4:30pm	WEDNESDAY 8:00am-4:30pm	THURSDAY 8:00am-4:30pm	FRIDAY 8:00am-4:30pm
Daily services: Career Training Computer Training Academic Tutorial Cultural Education Emergency Supportive Services Life Skills Training Youth Services	Daily services: Career Training Computer Training Academic Tutorial Cultural Education Emergency Supportive Services Life Skills Training Youth Services Coffee with the Director 3/5-10-10:30am 3/19 - Career Workshop		Daily services: Career Training Computer Training Academic Tutorial Cultural Education Emergency Supportive Services Life Skills Training Youth Services	Daily services: Career Training Computer Training Academic Tutorial Cultural Education Emergency Supportive Services Life Skills Training Youth Services
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MARCH 2024

Santa Ynez

Santa Ynez – SCTCA TANF • 185 W. Highway 246, Suite 102, Buellton, CA. 93427 Phone: (805) 688-1756 • Fax: (805) 688-6827

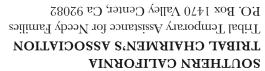
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Job Search**	Career Development 10am - 1pm*	Parenting 1pm - 3pm*	Career Development 10am - 1pm*	Job Search**	
	Job Search**	Job Search**	Job Search**		
* By Appointment Only ** Must be Pre-Approved Manzanita SCTCA Tribal Training Program • 39 A Crestwood, Boulevard, CA Phone: (619) 766-3236					
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Culture/ Entrepreneurial Class 9AM-12PM	GED Prep 10ам–1рм	World of Work 9am–12pm	GED Prep 10ам–1рм	Tutorial 9ам–12рм	
Native Arts & Crafts 12:30pm–3:30pm	Computers 10ам–1рм Parenting Class 12:30рм–3:30рм	GED Prep 12:30рм–3:30рм	Computers 10ам–1рм		

Commodity Distribution Schedule March 2024



Recipe submitted by Maria Rodriguez

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 2024				
DATE	LOCATION	TIME		
MARCH 5, TUESDAY	CAMPO	10 AM – 12 PM		
MARCH 7, THURSDAY	SAN PASQUAL	8 AM – 12 PM		
MARCH 11, MONDAY	LOS COYOTES LA JOLLA	8:30 AM – 9:30 AM 11 AM – 12 PM		
MARCH 13, WEDNESDAY	RINCON	8 AM – 12 PM		
MARCH 14, THURSDAY	PECHANGA PAUMA	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM –12 PM		
MARCH 18, MONDAY	PALA	9 AM – 11 AM		
MARCH 19, TUESDAY	MANZANITA OLD CAMPO	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM		
MARCH 21, THURSDAY	VIEJAS BARONA	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM		
MARCH 26, TUESDAY	MESA GRANDE SANTA YSABEL	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM		









Coming in April:

- Sharpening Job Interview Skills

- Child Abuse Prevention Month

• Archives: Native American Art