

Summer: A Long, Long List of Healthy and Fun Activities for Families and Children

By Gary P. Taylor, for SCTCA TANF



Children splashing on the Rincon Indian Reservation

Every summer- year after year, generation after generation - there comes a familiar cry from children of all ages: "I'm so bored- there's nothing to do!"

With school out, it's something that has been said to parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins or to any adult who will listen.

No school, no class, no homework, no schedule- so what is there to do in the summer? This is a question that can be especially difficult for Native American children, many of whom live on reservations far from any cities or towns.

As it turns out, though, there are many, many things to do in the summer for Native American families and non-Native families. So many things, in fact, that doing even some of these things will take hours. Some could take days. And some could even take weeks.

Cara Comini, who wrote online for *Health, Home and Happiness* for 15 years, compiled a list of *101 Healthy and Fun* activities for children and their families to do throughout the summer. A mother with several kids of her own, Comini was quite familiar with her own children's anticipation of free time in summer. But being out of school wasn't enough - they wanted something to do, she recalled.

So she came up with her list.

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At CSUSM, Seven Students Honored At American Indian Graduate Ceremony

By Gary P. Taylor, for SCTCA TANF

Seven California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) students received accolades at the American Indian Graduate Honoring Ceremony in May.

The graduates- six Native Americans and one American Indian ally- were honored in a 90-minute ceremony at the SBSB Courtyard on the eastern side of the CSUSM campus.

Nearly 100 family members, friends, tribal members and educators attended the May 15 event, which also included Bird Singers and a blessing for the graduates from Chris Devers Sr. of the Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians.

(Continued on page 2)



CSUSM Native American graduates Photo courtesy of CSUSM American Indian Review



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

Agua Caliente	Los Coyotes	Santa Rosa
Barona	Manzanita	Santa Ysabel
Cahuilla	Mesa Grande	Santa Ynez
Campo	Morongo	Soboba
Ewiiapaayp	Pala	Sycuan
Inaja/Cosmit	Pauma	Torres Martinez
Jamul	Rincon	Viejas
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Pala Tribal TANF:
(760) 742-8690 Toll-free: (888) 806-8263

Santa Ynez Tribal TANF:
(805) 688-1756 Toll-free: (866) 855-8263

Orange County Tribal TANF:
(714) 450-9240



CSUSM graduates and educators Photo courtesy of CSUSM American Indian Review

The graduates - five women and two men - heard remarks from Samantha Cypret (Mountain Maidu), Executive Director of Tribal Relations at the CSU Chancellor's Office. She congratulated and praised the students for their academic accomplishments. Remarks were also delivered by Dr. Joely Proudfit (Luiseño, Tongva), Director of the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CICSC) and Chair of CSUSM's American Indian Studies Department. Proudfit noted the personal contributions made by the graduates and lauded their determination and persistence in achieving their academic goals.

The six Native American CSUSM graduates included:

- **Virginia Aguilar** (B.A. American Indian Studies, Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians). She plans to work in Tribal government and with Native youth.
- **Samantha Calac** (B.A. Political Science, Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians). She is preparing for law school to advocate for tribal sovereignty and Native youth.
- **Richard Hood** (B.A. Criminology and Justice Studies, Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma). He plans to attend law school or graduate school.
- **Anysa Stewart-Vaughn** (B.S. Kinesiology, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) is pursuing a Master's in occupational therapy with a pediatric career in mind.
- **Alexandra Valle** (B.S. Kinesiology, Kumeyaay) is on her way to graduate school and a career as a physician's assistant.
- **Aiden Valverde** (B.A. American Indian Studies, lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel) plans to pursue conservation work and become a park ranger who strengthens relationships between Tribal Nations and local, state, and federal agencies.

The ceremony also honored **Emely Morales** (B.A. Literature and Writing) as the 2026 American Indian Ally Graduate, recognizing her dedication to the CICSC community and her plans to pursue a master's degree and doctorate to become an educator and college professor.

"Each of these graduates carries the CICSC's core values of Responsibility, Reciprocity, Respect, and Relationships into the next chapter of their lives," CICSC noted in a statement. "Their plans, from tribal government to tribal law, from pediatric clinics to park ranger stations, reflect a generation choosing to build their futures while never losing sight of the communities and lands that raised them. The Center is proud to have been part of their journey, and prouder still of where they are going."

As in previous years, at the end of the ceremony the graduates stood in front of the crowd and received their colorful traditional Native American stoles. After that, they took photographs with family and friends in the green meadow just west of the Courtyard.

NTIA Digital Training Facility Under Construction at Pala

By Nicholas Rajen, SCTCA Digital Training Center Coordinator

Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) is excited to share progress on the new Digital Equity Training Center.

The training center is a regional facility being developed in partnership with nine member tribes to expand access to technology, digital skills, workforce development, and telehealth opportunities.

Ground has been broken at the Pala campus, and the framework for the facility is now being set into place as planning continues for the center's classrooms, computer access, private-use rooms, and dedicated makerspaces. This new facility is being designed to serve as a shared resource for tribal communities and to support long-term access to training, services, and broadband-enabled opportunities.

As the project moves forward, SCTCA will continue working with partner tribes to shape the space and prepare for future programming. Nicholas Rajen (Diné, Oneida) has joined the SCTCA team as the Digital Training Center Coordinator and is ready to outfit the center with state of the art technology. Rajen is also planning sustained growth to prepare tribal communities for careers and solutions building from the soil to silicon.

Community members are encouraged to keep an eye out for upcoming trainings, classes, and other opportunities that will be offered through the center as it comes online.



“This new facility is being designed to serve as a shared resource for tribal communities and to support long-term access to training, services, and broadband-enabled opportunities.”

DISPATCHES NEW MEXICO



Deb Haaland, right, with her daughter

Five years ago, Deb Haaland became the first Native American woman to become Secretary of the Department of Interior.

Haaland- a Laguna Pueblo from New Mexico - served four years in that role, leaving in January of 2025. But that wasn't the end of her career in politics.

Now, she is on the campaign trail in New Mexico, seeking to become the nation's first Native American woman to be elected governor of a state.

She is running as a Democrat, and her current standing in the polls indicate she has an excellent chance of winning in the November election. If she does, it will mark another historic accomplishment for a woman who attended 13 schools (her parents were in the military) and worked in a bakery before graduating from UCLA.

Haaland's rise doesn't mean she's taking anything for granted, though. According to a profile of her published in the July issue of *Vogue* magazine she declared she's "running like I'm 20 points behind." Which is why she's traveling throughout New Mexico, speaking with thousands of people.

As noted in *Vogue*, covering Haaland at a town hall meeting in Las Cruces:

“In New Mexico public safety is a big issue— (but) Haaland tacks toward safety as care. “People don't feel safe in their neighborhoods,” she says. Heads nod. “We need to make sure that law enforcement has the tools they need.... And we need to address the root causes of crime. Substance abuse disorder, I think, is one of those root causes. We need more rehab centers. We need more of our behavioral health dollars to ensure that people can find the help they need when they need it.”

Running - both literally and figuratively - seems to be part of who Haaland is. She told *Vogue* she “ran to work in (Washington) DC to train for the Boston Marathon with her security detail in tow.” In a piece for *The Boston Globe* in 2021, Haaland, 61, drew a line from the city's race to her history: “Traditional foot races in our Pueblo villages honor those who were strong and fast,” she wrote. “I run because my ancestors gave me this ability.”

And she is running again, this time for governor of New Mexico, where Native Americans have lived for centuries.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

(Continued from top of page 1)

“When kids are out of school, it helps to carry on the routine of learning, doing, and following a plan for the day,” Comini explained. “We schedule camps, vacations, and visits first and then in the days between we establish a pattern. This helps everyone to know what to expect, and prevents us from trying to do too many things at once, or letting the summer go by without getting to our favorite activities.”

She cautioned that coming up with activities doesn’t mean everything will happen smoothly.

“If there is more grumbling than cheering when you do some of these activities, know you are not alone,” she said. “Children are still learning to connect the difficulty of a process with the joy of the reward... I absolutely love summer and it’s a priority for me to expose my children to the beauty around us. There is some fussing on nearly every trail and nearly every road trip from one or more children but we still keep on.

“We’re still building memories. And looking back, they remember the cool fort at the top of a hike that someone made, watching the huge water falls, or swimming in the hotel pool after 8 hours of driving. Every year it gets easier, and we are setting our children up for a lifetime of experiencing new things even if they aren’t sure they’ll love the end result.”

Comini’s list of activities are broken into 10 different categories. Some of these summer activities are easier in certain locations or situations. (And don’t forget- in San Diego County, there is the Zoo, Safari Park, Balboa Park, Sea World, water parks, the beaches and countless other fun places to go). There’s also traditional Native American events, including Powwows and Gatherings, on reservations throughout the summer.

Comini’s activities apply to both Native American and non-Native children of various ages and their families. The following are extended excerpts from her list, by category:

Around Town

1. **Library story time** – find out when it is and see if it’s a good fit for your summer schedule.
2. **Find bike-accessible loops and trails** and bike to a destination- lunch, a smoothie, or a fun park can all be fun destination hikes. See what parts of your town are specifically bike friendly.
3. **Make it a goal to visit every park** in your city. List them and check them off one by one.
4. **Visit the fire station.** (**Note:** several reservations throughout San Diego County have their own fire departments that can be visited by Native American children).

On the Trail

1. **Look for trails in your area** and choose five that are age and ability-appropriate. Try to do a mix of the same and new trails for different experiences every time. (**Note:** this is an activity that can be challenging for younger children, especially in the summer heat. Always bring water on any hikes).
2. **Keep a nature journal.** We purchased this book, blank sketch books, and colored pencils to share. They will pack easily on hikes.
3. **Learn about trail dangers.** Learn about grizzlies, mountain lions, spiders, snakes, and bugs- and how to stay safe, what to do if you encounter them, and precautions to take. Also explain how easy it is to get lost in the woods and the importance of sticking together on the trail. Learning about danger is both humbling for the children who have a tendency to think they are invincible, and empowering for the children who are more fearful.
4. **Learn basic first aid.** Being out of cell phone range and away from the city can be a good motivator to learn how to take care of ourselves. Learn about travel first aid kits for hiking and what to do in an emergency.
5. **Identify plants and animals** with a guide book. This goes well with your nature journal.





Road Trip Goals

1. **An atlas with the route** that you're taking highlighted so the child can follow along. You can print your route from Google Maps and help them to see where you're going and follow along with a highlighter.

Tip: Bring electronic toys out once everyone starts getting restless rather than letting them play with them right away. And when you're on a long road trip, you know how much longer it takes if you don't postpone those rest stops!

2. **Involve kids in travel plans.** Show them google maps and the different routes you could take, and how they take different amounts of time. Show them how you reserve the hotel room or camp ground.

3. **When packing, make a checklist** of everything that needs to go in the kids' suitcases, and help them to be responsible for making sure it is all there.

Lifetime of Learning

1. **Keep a reading chart** to keep up the habit of reading every day.

2. **Print out a calendar** and help kids learn how to follow along the days and look forward to special days like holidays, birthdays, and vacations.

3. **Use a prism** to learn about light.

4. **Set up a bird feeder** and learn about different bird seed and your local birds.

In the Kitchen

1. **Choose five easy-to-cook dishes** that are age appropriate, and learn how to make them from purchasing ingredients to assembling to cleaning up. (**Note:** this is a very good activity for teens and older children).

2. **Teach your kids** to use sharp knives safely.

3. **Let your children look** through cookbooks and choose treats to make- we make treats on Saturday, and I let them look through paleo cookbooks to see what they want to make.

4. **Make popsicles.** That's our 'snack' in the afternoon all summer.

5. **Set up a chore routine** for after meals – we go on a family bike ride after chores are done. I have my kids do one thing for a month, then switch, this encourages them to learn to do it well.



In the Water

1. **Go tubing-** is there a small creek or slow part of a river near you? Tubing doesn't need to be an all-day thing, or done behind a boat. Do a few 100-foot runs down a creek, running up to the top and tubing down to where a parent helps you get out. It makes great memories.

2. **Advance swimming skills-** you can see swim lesson plans here and use them to help your children improve. Lessons are fun and great for development too, but sometimes they don't fit in the budget or summer time frame.

3. **Skip rocks.**

4. **Make log boats** (whittling comes in handy here too!)

5. **Learn to fish.** Sometimes local rec departments will have a learn to fish program that doesn't even require a license... developing a hobby that takes minimal equipment and takes people to areas without cell phone reception is something greatly beneficial for our culture.

6. **At the beach, use a big adult-sized shovel** and help kids dig a huge hole. My uncle did this for my cousin and I every summer, and after a few minutes of work from him it was hours of entertainment for us.



Crafts without Clutter

1. **Whittling wood** teaches fine motor skills, safety, and makes cool figures for a doll house or nature table. (Note: beading, pottery and making jewelry are traditional Native American crafts open to children and teens as well as adults).

2. **Pressed flowers** make amazing stationary and reminders of hikes.

3. **Getting a canvas** on sale at the craft store and creating a painting with acrylics can be displayed in their room or your home.

4. **Take pictures** and put them in a scrapbook or picture album to remember the summer.

5. **Clay** can be played with and then put away.

6. **Learn to knit- dish cloths** are great to start with and are useful.

7. **Tie dye** makes wearable art (though this is a little stressful to do- we love it)



Thinking of Others

1. **Send a friend** a picture or a postcard.

2. **Visit an elderly neighbor** and bring cookies

3. **Raise money** for your charity of choice.

4. **Mow** someone else's lawn.

5. **Offer to walk** someone else's dog.

6. **Make** a happiness jar.



In the yard

1. **Glacier melt:** Freeze little plastic cars, dinosaurs, etc in a bowl full of water and then let the kids help them melt and discover them as they melt.
2. **Bubbles**– I love the no-spill bubbles that they have now! Older kids can have contests, either in number of bubbles in one blow or how big they get.
3. **Sprinklers** are always fun. Catching water in buckets and filling small water guns prolongs this activity.
4. **Getting scrap wood**, hammers, and nails (for older children) will provide hours and days of building and teach life long skills as well.
5. **Some longer pieces of wood** and a few stumps are great for toddlers and preschoolers who want to build, roll, and balance.
6. **Painting with paint brushes** and water on the side walk, deck or fence provides creativity without anything to clean up.

For the Future

Comini notes that “developing a good work ethic is something that comes easier to some children than others. Because it is so important to their future, I make a point to gently, but persistently, encourage good work ethic and an understanding (that) working equals paying bills AND having fun. When it’s framed right, children will usually pick up that this is something that we are excited that we get to do.”

All of these lessons can be taught (mostly by example) through her list, Comini believes. She concludes;

1. **Learning self-care.** Children should learn to wash their own hair, do their own laundry, make their bed well, even clean the bathroom. These are all skills that take time to master. (**Note:** children of all ages, including teens, can work together and help each other with some of these skills).
2. **Explore different occupations**, job shadowing or reading books about them (if age appropriate).
3. **Set up a lemonade stand** or other small business and learn about the cost of doing business and sticking through with a task.
4. **For older kids**, setting up a (parent-supervised) blog or website could be a small business opportunity and a great learning activity.

And remember - it’s summer. Have some fun!



Cara Comini



Moving Through Grief

Grief is a natural response to loss—whether it’s the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, a major life change, or another deeply personal experience. It can affect your emotions, thoughts, body, and relationships. There is no timeline and no single “right” way to grieve.

COMMON EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF

Grief often shows up in different ways over time:

Emotional: sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, relief, or numbness

Physical: fatigue, headaches, tightness in the chest, changes in sleep or appetite

Cognitive: difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, disbelief, or confusion

Social: withdrawing from others or, at times, needing more connection than usual

You may feel fine one moment and overwhelmed the next. These shifts are normal.

THE GRIEVING PROCESS

You may have heard of the “stages of grief” (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance), first described by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. While helpful for understanding emotions, grief is not a straight path. You might revisit feelings multiple times or experience them in a different order, or not at all.

WAYS TO COPE AND HEAL

- **Give yourself permission to grieve-** Don’t rush or compare your process to others. Your pace is valid.
- **Express your feelings-** Talk with someone you trust, journal, create art, or spend time in reflection.
- **Stay connected-** Even small moments with supportive people can reduce isolation.
- **Create routines-** Gentle structure, like regular meals or walks, can provide stability.
- **Take care of your body-** Sleep, nutrition, and light movement help support emotional resilience.
- **Honor your loss-** Rituals, memory boxes, anniversaries, or acts of kindness can help you stay connected to what you’ve lost.

WHEN GRIEF FEELS OVERWHELMING

Sometimes grief can feel stuck or all-consuming. You might consider extra support if you notice:

- Persistent inability to function in daily life
- Intense hopelessness or prolonged numbness
- Withdrawing completely from others
- Using substances to cope

Reaching out to a mental health professional, grief counselor, or support group can make a meaningful difference.

There is no finish line in grief, no moment where everything suddenly feels “back to normal.” Instead, there is a gradual softening—a learning to carry your loss with more ease and less pain. Be patient with yourself in this process. You are doing the best you can, and that is enough. With time, support, and compassion, light will begin to find its way back in.



If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please contact [Cyndie Gilliam LMFT TANF Therapist @ 760-330-3913](mailto:Cyndie.Gilliam@SCTCA.net) or cgilliam@sctca.net

Resources to Support Your Move through Grief

GriefShare

It is a free, international, Christ-centered 13 week support group program designed to help individuals navigate the emotional challenges of losing a loved one to death. Created by the Church Initiative ministry, it operates as a nondenominational program hosted both by local churches and online. For more information and to find a support group visit <https://www.griefshare.org>.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF)

They are a national self-help bereavement organization for families going through the natural grieving process after the death of a child. They welcome all bereaved parents (and guardians), grandparents, and adult siblings regardless of the age of the child who died or the cause of death. Their services are free.

San Diego County Chapter

Northminster Presbyterian Church
4324 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego CA 92117 Email: leaders@sdtcf.orgUrl: <http://www.sdtcf.org> Phone Contact: Chapter Phone Line (619) 583-1555 Meeting Info: In-Person: 1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm, Virtual: 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm

Scripps Grief and Loss Support Groups

This group is ongoing and is free to anyone. It is offered both in person and virtually. The in person sessions are Tuesday evenings - 6 pm - 7 pm at Scripps Mercy Hospital San Diego and the virtual meetings will take place via Zoom on the first and third Tuesday each month from 6 - 7 pm. RSVP by calling 619-260-7020 or email chaplains@scrippshealth.org.

Indian Health Council Behavioral Health Department

They provide Outpatient Care: individual therapy, group therapy, medication management, and psychological assessments. <https://www.indianhealth.com/behavioral-health> They also offer a 3 day Grief and Loss workshop "Mending Broken Hearts". The next one starts on 7/28/26. contact Cabrini Loredo cloredo@indianhealth.com (760)749-1410 ext 5313 to register.

Orange Coast/Irvine Chapter Lakeview Senior Center

20 Lake Road, Irvine CA 92604 Email: cfirvinechapter@gmail.com Phone Contact: Jeff (949) 628-9328 Meeting Info: 1st Wednesday of each month 7:00 - 9:00 pm

TCF of West Ventura County Livingston Memorial Offices

1996 Eastman Ave Suite 101, Ventura CA 93003 Email: lauralindsayvta@gmail.com Phone Contact: Laura (805) 561-3207 or Ana (805) 432-2066 Meeting Info: In Person: Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month. 6:30-8 pm - To attend, contact Ana Iraola-Baker at (805) 432-2066 or email: anabakercfvta@gmail.com - note new in person meetings. Online: First and Third Wednesdays of each month, 7:00 - 8:30pm - To attend, please send email to lauralindsayvta@gmail.com requesting ZOOM access to the next meeting - note new email to request ZOOM link for meetings

Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL)

They provides ongoing, peer-led support groups for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. They offer survivors a place where you can be comfortable expressing yourself. It a place to find support, comfort, resources, and hope in a judgment-free environment. These support groups are both online and in-person. . Visit <https://soslsd.org/> for more information and to register for their support groups.

The Elizabeth Hospice: Grief Support

Serving San Diego & Southwest Riverside Counties. Free or sliding-scale (for individual sessions) support available to everyone (no patient affiliation required). Adult Support: Individual counseling and loss-specific groups. Children's Support (Ages 3-17): Peer-based groups at centers in Escondido and Mission Valley, plus local school campuses. Contact: Edith Ruiz | (833) 349-2054 Web: elizabethhospice.org/grief-support

VITAS

Offers virtual support groups and a support session for those trying to manage their grief. Anyone can utilize these services and they are free of charge. The best way to access their program is online at <https://www.vitas.com/family-and-caregiver-support/grief-and-bereavement>. They offer different types of support so check it out online. You can also speak to admin in Orange County at (949) 255-6408 and San Diego County (619)205-8811

Books that might be helpful

- It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine LPC
- Bearing the Unbearable: Love, Loss, and the Heartbreaking Path of Grief. by Dr. Joanne Cacciatore and Jeffrey Rubin
- When Loss Comes Close to Home: Finding Hope to Carry On When Death Turns Your World Upside Down, by Charlie and Jill LeBlanc
- Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations For Working Through Grief by Martha Whitmore Hickman
- Healing Grief Card Deck: 55 Practices to Find Peace by David Kessler
- The Grief Recovery Handbook. The action program for moving beyond death, divorce and other losses. by John W. James and Russell Friedman

For Children

- The Invisible String by Patrice Karst
- The Memory Box: A Book About Grief by Joanna Rowland
- I Miss You: Grief and Mental Health Books for Kids by Pat Thomas and Lesley Harker
- Grief is a Mess by Jackie Schuld



In California, A Verdict - and Remembrance - Provide Some Comfort One Year Later

By Gary P. Taylor, for SCTCA TANF

In mid-May, I left my home in Nebraska for four days in California.

It had been almost exactly one year since the death of my oldest sister Brandie. She died in the early morning hours in her bedroom in her home on the Santa Ysabel Indian Reservation. She was found by her 18-year-old son Hunter, who lived with her, just as he had all his life.

I returned to the Santa Ysabel Indian Mission for the commemoration of her death. A headstone was delivered the day before the ceremony, and it rose next to the dark granite stone marking my mother Silvana's grave. She had died four years earlier, after much suffering. She was 70.

Unfortunately, Brandie also suffered in the year before she died. She was just 51.

Her death came less than a year after she was viciously attacked in her own home.

The man who attacked her in June of 2024 broke into her house, beat her, strangled her, and left her bruised and unconscious. Hunter confronted this intruder, causing him to flee and saving his mother's life.

There was nothing complicated about what happened to my sister. She was brutally assaulted, with no mercy and no regard for her life.

Three months ago, the man who attacked Brandie was convicted of the crime and sentenced to eight years in state prison. Phillipa Cunningham, from the San Diego District Attorney's office, represented Brandie in death. She had known her in life, working with my sister to prepare her case in the months after the attack.

Cunningham - cool, professional and poised - presented the evidence in court at a hearing on March 27. She noted the cruelty and viciousness of the attack, and asked the judge for a sentence of eight years. It was the most she thought she could get, Cunningham had told our family beforehand, even though she was appalled by the violence of the assault.

She got it. It was at once a verdict of guilt and a sentence that provided some measure of justice for my sister. There were tribal members from the Iipay Nation at the hearing, as they had been throughout the legal proceedings over the past year. No one wanted to forget what had happened to Brandie. She was a former Iipay Nation tribal Chairwoman, but more importantly, she had been a friend to so many.

Since Brandie's death, I have thought about her often.

In my grief I draw some consolation from a dream in which she came to me a few months after she died:

We were in her house on the reservation - just the two of us. She was sitting on the couch, in great pain and distress. She was dressed in black.

She asked me for a glass of water because she had to take her medication.

"So many pills," she said. "I am so tired of taking all of these pills."

I walked over to her, and just as I was handing her the glass of water, she suddenly looked up at me. "I don't want it," she said, waving it away and tossing her pills aside. "All the pain is gone."

At that moment, there was a knock on the door. It opened, and in walked our mother, Silvana. She was also dressed in black. She walked over to Brandie and held out her hand.

"It's time for you to come with me," she said.

Brandie grabbed her hand and stood up, following my mother to the front door and stepping outside. I quickly went outside to see them. As they continued walking, I shouted to my mother.

"Where are you going?" I said. "What am I supposed to tell everyone?"

My mother turned around. In that same sarcastic voice I had known all my life, she yelled, "Tell them we went to Oklahoma!"

Brandie turned around and looked at me. She held on tightly to my mother's hand, and they continued walking.

I watched them, and as they neared the top of the road, Brandie began to get smaller and smaller, and my mother started to look younger and younger. Then, at the very top, my sister turned into a little girl, as she was when she was two or three. Her black dress became bright yellow, and she jumped into my mother's arms. She held on tightly, and they disappeared over the hill.

When I awoke from this dream, I felt very sad. But as I thought about it, I understood that Brandie had come to me to let me know she was alright, that she was with my mother, and she was past all her suffering and anguish.

One year later, there is comfort in believing this, and knowing this.



My sister Brandie, with her son Hunter

Scan the QR code to view current SCTCA Tribal TANF Contractor Class Schedules and Calendars.
Schedules include training offered through our approved contractors.
Schedules are updated monthly.



Commodity Distribution Schedule JULY 2026

USDA FOOD DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE FOR JULY 2026

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>
JULY 6 TH , MONDAY	CAMPO	10 AM – 12 PM
JULY 8 TH , WEDNESDAY	SAN PASQUAL	8 AM – 12 PM
JULY 13 TH , MONDAY	LOS COYOTES LA JOLLA	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM
JULY 15 TH , WEDNESDAY	RINCON	8 AM – 12 PM
JULY 20 TH , MONDAY	PECHANGA PAUMA	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM
JULY 21 ST , TUESDAY	PALA	9 AM – 11 AM
JULY 23 RD , THURSDAY	MANZANITA OLD CAMPO	930 AM – 1030 AM 11 AM – 12 PM
JULY 27 TH , MONDAY	VIEJAS BARONA	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM
JULY 28 TH , TUESDAY	MESA GRANDE SANTA YSABEL	9 AM – 10 AM 11 AM – 12 PM

OFFICE CLOSURES: FRIDAY, JULY 3RD – OBSERVED FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

A HOUSEHOLD CAN NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE FOOD COMMODITY PROGRAM IF THEY ARE ON THE CALFRESH (FOOD STAMPS) PROGRAM. YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN ONLY ONE OF THE ABOVE PROGRAMS.

WRONG INFORMATION ON APPLICATION, DUAL PARTICIPATION, SELLING, OR EXCHANGING USDA FOOD COMMODITIES COULD BE A BASIS FOR DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE FOOD COMMODITY PROGRAM.

IF YOU DO NOT PICK UP ON YOUR SCHEDULED RESERVATION DAY, YOU MUST MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO PICK UP AT THE WAREHOUSE. CALL OUR OFFICE FOR AN APPOINTMENT.(760) 749-5608



Coming in August:

- Get Ready - Get Set - It's Back to School
- Childcare and School Attendance Planning
- End-of-Summer Recipes for the Family