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Native American Advisory Committee Newsletter

The NAAC newsletter is intended to update and inform ICN's Native American Advisory Committee, USDA, and partners of ICN's accomplishments and activities. It also features NAAC members to enhance relationships among the committee and provide recognition for each members' accomplishments.



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Photo by NAAC member, Sarah Miracle

This edition of the newsletter features:

- Native American Initiative's (NAI) goals for the New Year
- Upcoming NAAC Hangout Presenter
- Next NAAC meeting
- Introduction to a Native American Initiative Team Member
- Changes to the Native American Initiative and the Native American Advisory Committee
- Report on conference activities

ICN looks forward to starting the New Year with renewed enthusiasm. We look forward to attending conferences, conducting site visits, and holding an in-person NAAC meeting in Oklahoma.

The NAAC Hangout



ICN hosts quarterly, informal Zoom meetings called NAAC Hangouts. At these Hangouts, ICN and NAAC members share their perspectives on Native American/Alaskan Native child nutrition, as well as personal stories and concerns about Native American communities and schools in their part of the country.

The 2022 first quarter Hangout will feature NAAC member and USDA partner Sarah Miracle. She will be the featured speaker on **Thursday, February 17, at 12:00 p.m. CT**. Zoom credentials will be emailed the week prior to the meeting.

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the Oklahoma Tribal Engagement Partners (OKTEP) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) program. The program utilizes multiple education avenues to reach individuals and families in need of financial assistance and positively influence health through innovative teaching strategies.



Sarah was honored with a 2016 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Equity Award. She currently serves on the Native American Advisory Committee Board for the Institute of Child Nutrition. With her OKTEP team and Tribal Partners, she works to attain health equity by conducting research in Native American nutrition and health disparities, translating and disseminating research information, promoting and supporting the training of a diverse research workforce, and fostering innovative collaborations and partnerships throughout Indian Country.

Sarah also served on the inaugural 2017 and 2018 planning committees for the Seeds of Native Health Native American Nutrition Conference. She is a lifelong resident of Oklahoma, which is home to 39 federally recognized tribes. Sarah's family home of Okemah is in the Muscogee Nation reservation, and she now lives in the Chickasaw Nation reservation. Sarah would like to thank all the sovereign nations for providing leadership and services to tribal citizens as the communities within their boundaries and beyond during the COVID pandemic.

The Next NAAC Meeting

In the April 2021 NAAC meeting, the group recommended that ICN hold NAAC meetings twice per year instead of hosting one annual meeting. Unfortunately, with COVID still affecting many regions of the country, NAAC members were unable to meet a second time in 2021. In a poll conducted by ICN last year, members unanimously expressed that virtual meetings are not as effective as in-person. With that in mind, everyone is looking forward to an in-person meeting in June 2022, if public health guidelines allow. ICN's goal is to hold the meeting in Oklahoma, which is centrally located for all members and the site of many tribes.

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Introducing Our Newest Member of the Native American Initiative



Robbie Ethridge is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Mississippi and joins ICN's Native American Initiative as a Subject Matter Expert. She provides guidance in cultural matters, helps craft our language, and recommends new ways to build relationships in Indian Country.

Professor Ethridge is a prolific author, having edited four anthologies and written numerous articles and book chapters on the history and ethnography of Native peoples of the American South. She is the author of *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World, 1796 – 1816* (2003) and the Mooney Award-winning book *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540 – 1715* (2010).

She is best known for her work on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial disruptions in the American South and the resultant shatter zone that transformed the Southern Indians. However, her forthcoming book with the University of Oklahoma Press and co-authored by Robert Miller, (tentative title) *A Promise Kept: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the McGirt v. Oklahoma Case*, examines the history and jurisprudence of the landmark 2021 McGirt v. Oklahoma Supreme Court case, which confirmed the Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation in Oklahoma.

Changes to the NAAC and the NAI