

AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND- Newsletter Special Edition- Summer 2016

The college fund has recently launched a new Public Service Campaign to share the staggering statistic that less than 1% of college students are American Indian. During our first 25 years, your gifts have empowered the American Indian College Fund to support tens of thousands of students by providing more than 100,000 scholarships. And each year we've been able to raise more funds to meet the needs of even more students. But American Indian education is at a critical crossroads. Your support has helped thousands of students stay in school and graduate and yet the reality is less than 13% of American Indians have a college degree- 115% lower than the national average. Circumstance and opportunity demand that we accelerate our progress. Currently 40% of American Indians are under the age of 18. When you couple that with the number of students that are either in college or on their way, we are in a position to effect real change. This is why we've launched our #StandWithNativeStudents movement. The immediate goal is to increase the number of students we send to college this fall by 100. Our second goal is to raise awareness of the disparity between American Indians holding degrees and the national average. With your help, we can send 100 more students to college this year. We also know that providing scholarship support to students does more than provide financial relief. Your support inspires students to succeed. I want to share a story from one of our scholars that demonstrates exactly how your support can completely change the outcome of a student's journey. "I often compare my educational journey to a quest in my canoe. At first, I thought I traveled alone. Determined to succeed I paddled, only to find the currents moving against my canoe. I worked full time and went to school full time, only getting 3 to 4 hours of sleep every night. Once I woke up crying because I was so tired and still had homework to complete. I had reached my breaking point. I felt like my canoe was sinking. Not long after, I applied to the American Indian College Fund for help. When I received my scholarship, a feeling of relief came over me. I felt like there was Si-am (well respected people) to help heal my leaky canoe and paddle with me through the tides. My scholarships have been a safety boat watching out for my well-being in my journey. With the support I've received, I will be completing two bachelor's programs in the spring of 2016. And so, as I come to the end of this journey, I raise my paddle, waving it side to side, with the sun flickering off the blade, signaling to you, the donors who have supported me, encouraging words and my thanks."