

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S LEADERS

THE ZUNI YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROJECT NOVEMBER 2024

Dear Friend of ZYEP,

What kind of leaders do we need for our community and world? How can we develop these future leaders? What skills and resources will they need to thrive? These questions are at the heart of ZYEP's everyday work. We are intentionally investing in today's youth and developing tomorrow's leaders.

At ZYEP, we create spaces where youth can learn and practice new skills, including leadership. The strengths of our Zuni culture and community serve as our foundation. We provide opportunities for youth to have intergenerational mentoring, grow in their sense of belonging and purpose, have meaningful choices, and develop a positive identity.

We are so proud of ZYEP "alumni." We see them making an impact every day as they serve as hospital staff, teachers, program leads, environmentalists, engineers, artists, parents, and many more significant roles within our community. In them, we see our mission being fulfilled; resilient Zuni youth growing into strong, healthy adults connected to our traditions. When you turn the page, you'll find the words and stories from some of our emerging and current leaders.

Together, we can foster leaders who are passionate, respectful, intentional in their words and actions, and who care for others in our community and world. **Would you consider making a gift today, investing in Zuni youth and developing our leaders for tomorrow?**

From the bottom of our hearts, Elahkwa (Thank you) for your support, helping to elevate the strengths and gifts of our Zuni youth.

With gratitude,

Tahlia Natachu-Eriacho

Tahlia Natachu-Eriacho, M.Ed
Zuni, San Felipe, Navajo
ZYEP Executive Director





**MEET ZACK & DUKE,
AGES 11 AND 9**

What do you like about ZYEP?

Zack: I was just spending my summers in Albuquerque, watching my phone, and doing not such fun things, until my wowo [paternal grandma] introduced me to ZYEP. **You guys host all of these things. We get to come together, have fun, and make new friends.**

Traditional dance was so much fun—dancing with all the people, and seeing all the colors that we had on. **You guys taught Zuni language and a bunch of traditional things. That's what really connected me to the Zuni culture.**

Duke: At summer camp, we got to go on adventures with Wilderness Explorers and learn more stuff about Zuni land. This year my summer camp counselors were Kalil and Kiwi (Keely), and the year before it was Shelby and Sophie, and the year before that it was Derrick and Eliana. My favorite part of summer camp was the dance on the last day of camp!

Zack & Duke's wowo, Laura: When Zack and Duke lived in Albuquerque, they took part in sports like football and baseball. Both were able to go out to different cities to compete, but needed a summer activity. We signed them up for ZYEP's summer camp and with it being "lottery-style" registration, they used our cultural practice of offering cornmeal in the morning, hoping to be blessed with the opportunity to join the camp. Luckily, they were all selected. **They really enjoyed taking part in activities, learning Zuni culture, being around counselors, and making new friends. That's the reason why they all moved back to Zuni, including their sister.**

What are your goals and dreams for the future?

Zack: To make it past high school and to get into college.

Duke: To get a perfect score for my school test this year.

When did you first get involved with ZYEP?

I went to Summer Camp when I was around 10 years old. It was such a fun experience! I got to know other kids in the community, and ZYEP really helped me come out of my shell.

Have you participated in any other ZYEP programs?

Last year, I joined the sewing apprenticeship. Everything changed for me from that point on. I learned that if you take advantage of an opportunity, things will happen!

In the advanced apprenticeship, I worked for six months, one-on-one with a mentor. I was able to participate in the Grand-Canyon Cultural Demonstration Program, which showcased us as Zuni artists. It was so surreal and exciting, I cried. I got to meet people from all over the world and heard languages that I've never heard before. **I felt so much happiness being active in ZYEP.**

Since then, I've been a ZYEP summer camp counselor, a Running Medicine leader, a soccer coach, an after-school mentor, and have provided input for future ZYEP programming. Earlier this year, I went on the ZYEP camping trip to Moab. I didn't know Zuni has connections to Canyonlands National Park. It made me want to become a park ranger. I've already talked to the National Park staff about applying.

At ZYEP, everyone is happy, pushing to be a better person, and working on themselves, so we can grow together as a community. **I want to thank ZYEP. They believe in you and give you that boost of confidence. Believing in yourself goes such a long way.**

**MEET KEELY,
AGE 21**



**MEET KELLY,
AGE 33**

When did you first get involved with ZYEP?

I started with ZYEP summer camp in 2010. I was involved for three years: as a counselor the first year, next as a head counselor, and then as a co-coordinator. Today, I try to sign up for all the ZYEP family events with my kiddos—the walks, the festivals and whatever is going on.

What do you do today?

I am a physical therapist. As part of my job, I really like to reach out to high school students; I have gone out and given presentations in local schools. I plant the seed for kids to continue their education and follow their dreams.

What did you gain from your experiences being part of ZYEP?

Whenever I share my story, I always bring up how ZYEP shaped who I am today. **ZYEP really invested in us.** At the beginning, I was super shy. The camp counselor retreats helped me blossom and learn to work with others, especially my peers. Through the team-building exercises, we heard other people's stories. You realize, we all are trying to be better and improve ourselves. And once we gained those skills from the retreats, we were able to use that to lead the kids. It really opened up my potential. **Honestly, I think that ZYEP is where it all started. ZYEP saw potential in me and gave me opportunities for leadership.**

How does ZYEP serve our up-and-coming youth?

I think ZYEP does a great job teaching the culture, being respectful of the environment, and learning from our experiences, from each other, and from our elders. I would like to tell our youth and young leaders—whatever dreams or goals you have, you can do it! You've got a whole community behind you.

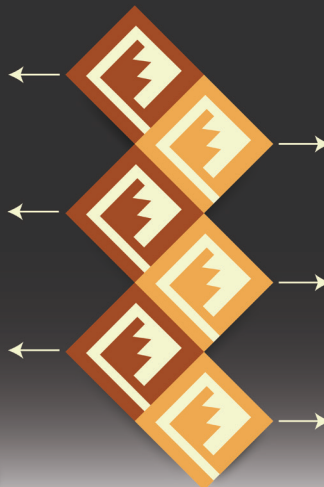
You can just see the positive impact ZYEP has on the community, starting from the young campers, to me. It is like a ripple. ZYEP has really grown. It started as a summer camp, and now you can see how ZYEP invests in our youth with a variety of programs, and the ZYEP building and park. It takes a community to do something like this. It's positive, and it's what our community needs.

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\$25
Ingredients for a
nutrition
demonstration

\$50
Art supplies for
one child in
after-school
programming

\$100
Gear for one
child in our
TeeBall League



\$500
Gardening
supplies for one
family in our
family gardening
program

\$1,500
One year
apprenticeship
for an emerging
youth artist

\$2,500
Paid position for
one Youth
Summer Camp
Counselor

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A WORD FROM OUR DONORS: KIRBY & KAYLENE GCHACHU

There are numerous reasons why we donate each month to ZYEP.

One important reason is we believe in ZYEP to instill pride in ho'n a:wan a:ts'ana (our Zuni children). The programs promote cultural lessons and teachings. Children can practice and experience who they are through their language, relations in our community, and Zuni core values. These aspects are integrated in the programming, so that each child learns them with ease. We are at a point in our cultural and historical develop-

ment that new approaches are required to develop leadership skills, and ZYEP supports that.

As retired educators, my wife and I believe in ZYEP to meet our children's and community's future needs.

- Kirby and Kaylene Gchachu



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