



# NATIVE COMMUNITY DAY

## TOOLKIT



# HONORING NATIVE HERITAGE

The month of November marks a special time of year to reflect on our unique cultures, histories and roots as Native people and to celebrate with those in our community. This November, we are urging Boys & Girls Clubs across the country join together to celebrate National Native American Heritage Month with their community! Historically, this month has been a time to remind Club members that they can and should be proud of who they are and commemorate Native people, history, and practices. Boys & Girls Clubs on Native Lands are uniquely positioned to bring communities closer together through celebrating culture, and we need your help to make this year a year to remember.

## BRINGING THE COMMUNITY INTO OUR CLUBS

Hosting a Native Community Day can be a simple but effective way to demonstrate the impact your Club is making, the way it is honoring and observing important traditional cultural practices, and to show ways in which other community members can get involved in making a difference in a child's life. This toolkit will help you know where to start, who you should try to get involved, ideas on what content to include as part of the event itself, and how to follow up afterward to have a powerful and lasting impression.

## GETTING STARTED

Oftentimes knowing where to begin can be the biggest barrier in setting up a noteworthy Native Community Event at your Club. Coordinating a few initial steps can help put your organization on the road to success for welcoming the community into the Club in an unforgettable way.

- **Choose a time, place, and duration that is conducive to your event**  
We want to feature the Club space as the center of the Native Community event, but be sure to know exactly where in the Club community members will be, what seating arrangements will be needed, and other accessibility needs that may arise
- **Coordinate internally with Club staff**  
Make sure that all staff at the Club are made aware of the plan for the community event and work together to figure out which roles will be needed such as staff to welcome community members and guests, youth leaders, speakers, cooking staff, etc.
- **Make a comprehensive agenda for the whole event**  
It is a good idea to put the elements of your event on paper for everyone involved in the coordination process. It should be acknowledged that the agenda may change as you continue to plan, but it establishes an exact starting point for planning. The agenda will be a useful guide when managing the timetable and flow of various elements for your Native Community Day.







# TARGETED OUTREACH

As evidenced in the name, the community is the central feature of any notable Native Community Day Event. Similar to recruiting for a Club program or initiative; **planning ahead, knowing your audience, and conducting targeted outreach** can make a substantial difference for how your Native Community event comes together.

- **Set Realistic Goals**

Anticipate a specific number of community members you would like to see come into the Club space for your event and begin your outreach early to maximize the chances of high attendance. Use the number you collectively come up with to gauge your efforts for inviting attendees.

- **Seek out Community Support**

Having Native community organizations present at your event can help build a sense of unity, deepen the message of taking pride in Native Heritage and bolster the positive youth development at your Club. A good way to ensure buy-in and generate excitement from community partners is to make small realistic requests things they might be able to bring to the event itself. Examples of requests could be samples of traditional Native foods, materials (cups, plates, chairs, tables, etc.) and information about their own services that might benefit the youth and community. Be sure to emphasize that you can both gain from participating.

- **Solicit Participation from Elders**

As the carriers of tradition, Community Elders are ideal people to invite to your Native Community Event. Beyond their attendance, it is advisable to offer Elders a chance to speak to the community members and youth if they wish. Additionally, having a small gift for Elders as part of the cultural celebrations honoring Native Heritage can express your Club's tangible honor and respect toward your community's Native roots and traditions.

- **Get your Tribal Council Involved**

Bringing in members of your Tribal Council to a Native Community Day can bring a level of reputability and prompt interest from other potential partners. Establishing or strengthening your Club's affiliation and relationship with the Tribal Council also often leads to additional opportunities and partnerships that can support and sustain Club programming. When approaching your Tribal Council with an invitation, be sure to have as many details about the event as possible on hand and reach out well in advance. It is also recommended to ask Council Members if they would like to have a part in your Native Community Day by addressing the attendees during the event or helping coordinate a special Native activity.





# PROMOTION

Once the details of your Native Community Event are mostly settled, it is important to direct your efforts toward promotion. Every Native community is unique and will require an equally unique strategy for effective promotion. However, below are some of the most common and helpful tactics for ensuring high levels of community attendance and engagement.

## FLYERS AND POSTERS

Hanging flyers or posters around the community is a straightforward and effective way to generate attention for your Native Community Day. Be sure to focus on placing posters and flyers around areas where there is a lot of opportunity for people to see them. Also consider the placement of the posters in areas where your target audience spends time such as the local Tribal offices, community centers, clinics, restaurants, and local businesses.

## LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS

Whether it is a local Tribal radio station, TV station, or newspaper, media outlets are a valuable way to quickly disperse information to a large number of people. Take stock of the organizations that exist in or around your community that may allow you to promote your Native Community Event and generate interest. Do not be afraid to get creative and seek out additional opportunities such as promoting your event on a Reader Board at a Tribal Casino, or on your Tribal Government's website. When making any kind of promotion request, be sure to stress the positive impact of the celebration and, if allowable, invite the staff of the agency to attend as well.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Utilizing the connections that your Club already has with families of youth participants is an obvious and powerful tactic to enhance turnout at your event. Sending home flyers, advertising the event via word-of-mouth as youth are picked up from the Club, and urging members to share information with both their immediate and extended families are all recommended for making your Native Community Day the best it can be. Again, be sure to underscore the fun, festive, and positive elements of the event to motivate potential families and community members to attend.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

If your Club already has a social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), you are encouraged to utilize it for promotion of your event. If your Club is not on social media, launching a new page at a large community event can be an excellent way to kick things off. Social media platforms allow the organizers of a Native Community Day to reach an expansive local audience in an easy, affordable and accessible way. Remember to use #NativeClubs when sharing content to

# ACTIVITIES AND CONTENT

Club staff should feel empowered to be as creative as possible in celebrating Native Heritage and the way of life of the local Native community. As a starting point, below are some useful ideas for what activities and engagement your Native Community Day could entail.

- **Keynote Speaker**

Bringing in a local celebrity or well-known personality can strengthen attendance and create some buzz around your event as well as leave a strong memory for those in attendance. Ideally, coordinate with a speaker who will be able to highlight Native culture and add to the celebratory message of the event.

- **Cultural Performance and Activities**

A cultural performance or activity such as traditional or hoop dancing, beading, singing, or weaving is a proven method for engaging with all different age groups at a community event. Having an engaging cultural component also works well in tandem with other elements of a community event such as special guests and visitors. For example, organizing a traditional song or dance with Club youth as an opening ceremony and welcome to the attendees and special guests (such as the Tribal Council or local Elders) can leave a lasting impression and highlight the central aspect of the event; commemorating Native Heritage.

- **Games and Activities**

Any worthwhile event at your Club will typically include ways in which families, youth, and visitors can come together and interact to fortify community bonds. Having a series of prearranged games and activities related to Native culture offers that opportunity as well as providing an increased level of accessibility for anyone needing child care to attend the event. Organizing games and activities that the youth regularly engage in also grants the community a window into the youth development and celebration of Native culture that happens on a daily basis within the Club.

- **Traditional Meal**

Serving a traditional meal at your Native Community Day is highly recommended for boosting attendance, showing the way in which your organization is upholding Native Heritage, and for sending a clear message that your Club is a space for building community. Encourage Club members to participate by providing opportunities for them to help set up for the meal, decorate your space, and assist staff with serving the food.

- **A Call to Action**

A positive and energizing element of a successful Native Community Day could entail a call to collective action on the part of the attendees. One example of this could be a request for donations to make sure there is continued support for educational opportunities related to cultural preservation. Another idea could be simply encouraging community members to take pictures or write posts on social media about the event and use the unifying hashtag **#NativeClubs** to spread the message of how your Club is honoring Native Heritage.





## SHARING YOUR STORY

After your Native Community Day has come to a close, there are a few important steps that can be taken to make sure it has a lasting positive effect. Below are a few simple steps that Club staff can take after wrapping up the event.

### NEXT STEPS

- Send a thank you letter, pictures, and a short write-up of highlights from the event to the attendees and staff who participated within a week.
- Follow-up with attendees, families and community members on any information or questions that were raised during the visit.
- Follow-up with any potential media inquiries resulting from the event. Make sure that any relationships you built with local media for promotion are given continued attention.
- Use your Club's social media platform(s) to recap the event and spread the celebratory message of Native Heritage to an even wider audience.

## MAKING A LASTING IMPACT

The strength of Native Heritage is demonstrated everyday in our Native Clubs. The celebration of our culture, customs, and traditions is the foundation of what keeps our Native youth and communities sustainable. Let's make sure that this November we continue to make a lasting impact by bringing our wider communities into our Clubs to see the wonderful work we do for Native youth everyday!





## **BGCA NATIVE SERVICES**

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