

Engaging & Empowering Young Native Men

By Cheyenne Francisco-Grabiec



Salt River Canyon rafting trip - Courtesy of Native Men's Prayer Circle
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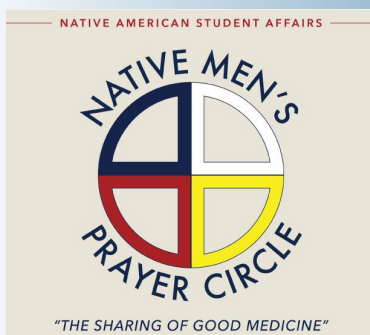


The Native Men's Prayer Circle engages, supports, and empowers young Native men on their journey through higher education and through life. The Prayer Circle, hosted by the Native American Student Affairs (NASA) at the University of Arizona (UA), offers a safe gathering space on campus for Native American men to share struggles and issues they face both in their studies and everyday life.



NASA director, Steve Martin (*left*), a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation, and Arizona Assurance & Cultural Learning Communities Coordinator, Derwin Begay (*right*), Diné, began the Prayer Circle in fall of 2016 to give Native men at UA a sacred place to share, heal, pray, and build community to address the challenges they experience in higher education. The Prayer Circle consists of Native men from diverse tribal backgrounds, from different walks of life, and in various stages of their undergraduate and graduate studies.

All attendees at the Prayer Circle understand the sacredness of the words shared and are always supportive of one another in the struggles they go through in their lives. The circle offers a support network for young men to discuss and work through social, personal, and educational issues that ail them. Additionally, undergraduate students have the opportunity to network with one another, with graduate students, and other professionals. The circle provides the opportunity for young men to mentor one another as well as find their own mentor.



Hosted by: Native American Student Affairs
Location: Wasaja Lounge, Nugent Building
Who: Native men affiliated with the UA
When: Every other Thursday from 6-8pm
<http://nasa.arizona.edu/>

"I have been provided the opportunity to mentor other students in the prayer circle. I have been practicing to be a traditional healer. It has allowed me to help heal others who are also feeling that disconnect from home." - **Detroit James**, Diné from Low Mountain, Arizona on the Navajo Nation.

Major: Dual degree, Physiology & Learning, Literacy, and Leadership.



Photo by Amanda Cheromiah