



MEDIA ALERT--
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School for the Blind to Stage Heritage Festival with Support from Ward I, Long Cares, and Arizona Blind & Deaf Children's Foundation

(Tucson, Arizona)—Crafts, food, and entertainment representing five Native American tribes will be part of the festivities at a Heritage Festival on the campus of Arizona School for the Blind supported by Tucson City Council Ward I, Long Cares Foundation, and Arizona Blind & Deaf Children's Foundation. Aside from the special and personal nature of the festival, modeled after a Native American Pow Wow, what makes this event truly remarkable is that the crafts, food, and entertainment are all produced by blind and low-vision students on the ASB campus.

The Heritage Festival, slated for March 19, is the resurrection of a long-standing tradition that had been dormant since 1995, the year the last student organizer graduated. But determination, a coalition of willing student leaders, and a little help from committed funding partners and teachers will bring the tradition back to life.

Last July, Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation applied on behalf of ASB for funds from the City Council Ward I's Youth in Philanthropy grant program. The proposed Heritage Program was awarded \$5,000 by Ward I's student-led grant panel, one of only five projects to be funded. Later, Long Realty Cares Foundation also contributed to the project.

Throughout the school year, ASB students have studied various aspects of Native culture—their own, their fellow students', and even tribal traditions from as far away as Australia. While heritage studies have been woven throughout ASB's curricula this year, the expression of students' learning has taken place at the campus' art program, the Art Shed, headed by artist Dawn Smiddy. The final culmination of the year's efforts will be the Heritage Festival.

Led by a group of blind and low-vision youth on the ASB campus, organization of this event has been a study in learning leadership skills, as students have tackled the intricacies of staging a campus-wide event. The group has made a decision to keep the event comparatively small, focusing on students and their families this year, with the goal of expanding the program in the future, if funding permits.

The event will take place on Thursday, March 19 from 10am-4pm, at the Tucson campus of Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind. It will welcome students from throughout the campus of ASDB, their families, and select guests from the supporting Foundations and media.

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About Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation

Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation *invests in the future of Arizona's blind and deaf children.* A statewide organization headquartered in Tucson, the Foundation aims to serve more than 4,000 blind and deaf children throughout the state by making available experiential learning in art, fitness, literacy, and success skills. Within its areas of focus, the Foundation assesses needs, brings together collaborations to incubate and develop programs, and provides funding through a competitive process to schools and non-profit organizations serving blind and deaf children. For more information about Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation, log on to www.azblinddeafchildren.org.