



New Investigator Projects

Spring 2015

Resilience and Culture Through Sports

By Alisse Ali-Joseph

Halito, my name is Alisse Ali-Joseph and I am a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. My project is Resilience and Culture through Sport and it was a day-long program to promote health and culture, and focused on how sport fosters resilience. The purpose was to provide American Indian youth the opportunity to participate in sport as a cultural strength, as well as engage with Native American collegiate athletes, coaches and students. We had 30 youth from fourth grade to high school participate. A highlight from Resilience and Culture through Sport, was a talk by NAU football head coach Jerome Souers. Coach Souers is the only Native American Division I football coach in the NCAA. Additional highlights include participating in a tennis clinic hosted by the United States Tennis Association (USTA), running with Hopi High School cross country coach and former NAU All-American Juwan Nuvayokva, watching the Spring Football game, and meeting the NAU men's basketball team.



Karmen breaks free from the pack!

Since sport has long provided a means for people to exercise sovereignty, identity and balance, both individually and collectively, this program served as a platform upon which participants exercise resilience. Our hope is to instill the passion for sport by introducing American Indian youth to the power of movement. By exposing youth to a college campus, introducing them to Native American role models and allowing a safe space to exert energy, our goal is to ignite a spark that will guide American Indian youth to set goals and reach their dreams. We believe that sport has the potential to raise a generation of leaders.



Coach Souers is a member of the Lakota Nation and the Cheyenne River Tribe.