

American Indian Child Resource Center (AICRC)

More than 35 years ago, a group of American Indian nurses founded what is known today as AICRC to address the feelings of isolation, disillusionment and disfranchisement that many Native Americans experience after moving to an urban setting from their reservations and communities. Today, the education agency and social service organization works with Native American children and their families to address issues within Indian communities, including literacy, low high-school graduation rates, social justice, tobacco awareness and poverty. AICRC confronts these issues with a strong educational program that is culturally appropriate, relevant and celebratory.

During the school year, more than 40 students participate in the afterschool program. AICRC is a critical link for American Indian families, and the school system also offers services to 250 self-identified American Indian students and families from Oakland Unified School District. "Students feel like this is a safe place, like somebody cares because there is so much follow-up," explains Rebecca Raymond, program manager.

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AICRC is committed to student success. This is demonstrated by its customized approach to academic support and enrichment programming to meet students' individual needs. Each activity is built on a solid American Indian cultural foundation. For example, through cultural arts, students engage in traditional arts such as dance, mosaics and making moccasins. Kraynal Alfred, a graduate student at Harvard University and program alum, says, "AICRC makes being Native American a priority. They keep the culture going; they keep many students in constant contact with the community and the culture."

The afternoon program is holistic and rich. After being shuttled by staff members to the afterschool site, students partake in sports & recreation and are given a nutritious snack before completing their homework. Students who may need extra help with reading and math receive individual tutoring at this time. The goal of the program is to get all students performing at grade level as quickly as possible.

Clorox support has helped AICRC continue providing a comprehensive academic program and cultural connection to Oakland's American Indian students.

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