

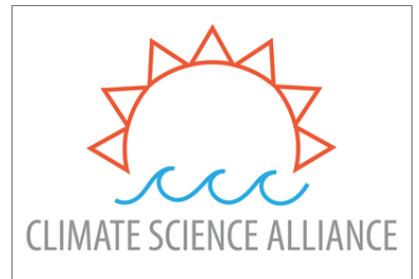
National

Climate Kids - Tribal, a Partnership of the Climate Science Alliance and the Pala Band of Mission Indians

The Climate Science Alliance: Bridging Communities

Dr. Amber Pairis founded the [Climate Science Alliance](#) (CSA) in 2014 to fill a gap in the conversation between scientists, natural resource managers and communities about climate change. The mission of the Climate Science Alliance is to safeguard natural and human communities in the face of a changing climate. The organization focuses on resilience and adaptation, aiming to help communities leverage the latest climate change information in order to make informed decisions for future planning. Based out of San Diego, the CSA collaborates with over 280 organizations stretching from the state of Washington all the way down into Mexico.

Alex Warneke was one of the founding partners and is now the CSA's Deputy Director. She oversees day-to-day operations, steering projects and partnerships forward. One of those projects is the flourishing [Climate Kids](#) program. Climate Kids offers programming based on three key experiences: hands-on scientific activities, art, and storytelling. The goal is to educate children about climate change in a positive and empowering way. By merging science, art, and storytelling, the CSA hopes to engage students with different interests and learning styles. Climate Kids - San Diego was the first program established and shortly after Climate Kids - Mexico followed. Climate Kids offers educational outreach activities, field trips, ambassador programs, climate challenges, and created a popular Traveling Trunks program.



The Carnivore Traveling Trunk at a community event.

The [Traveling Trunks](#) were designed to allow teachers, especially those with little-to-no exposure to climate change information, to become familiar with and teach the basics of climate science. Each trunk includes background information, lesson plans, powerpoints, props, and activities to increase climate literacy. Geared towards K-12th graders, the trunks offer a range of interactive science, storytelling and art curriculum aligned to Next Generation Science Standards. The trunks can be checked out by both school and community educators for up to two weeks at a time. There are currently three Traveling Trunks to choose from: Carnivores, Oceans, and Pollinators. Warneke notes that there is often a waiting list for the trunks which speaks to the need of this valuable resource. The trunks are housed at the San Diego Natural History Museum in the heart of San Diego.

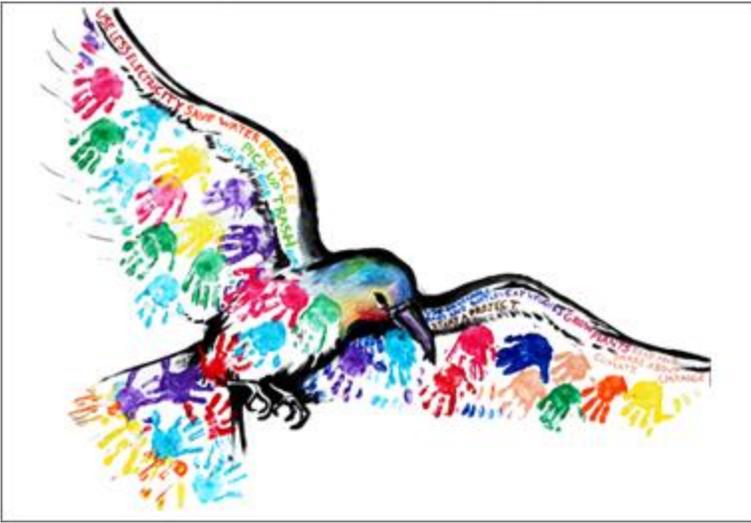
Expanding to Include Indigenous Voices

In 2015, Pairis met Shasta Gaughen, Environmental Director for the Pala Band of Mission Indians whose lands are located in northern San Diego County within an hour of San Diego. The two discussed how the CSA could better engage the 29 federally recognized Tribes and non-recognized Tribes across San Diego, Riverside, and Santa Barbara Counties. Gaughen invited the CSA to participate in the annual Intertribal Earth Day, a collaborative effort put on by eight southern California Tribes. Representatives from the CSA attended and a new connection was formed.



Pairis wanted to foster a stronger partnership with the Tribes. Working closely with tribal leadership, the CSA helped to initiate the [Tribal Working Group](#). With representation from 16 Tribes, the group meets monthly working towards its mission, “to safeguard the lands and cultures of southern California’s Indian Tribes from the threat of climate change.” The Tribal Working Group facilitates several projects. They co-host the biennial Southwestern Tribal Climate Change Summit (along with ITEP), participate in multiple community Earth Day events, provide support for Tribes who are drafting climate adaptation plans, and participate in forums tackling issues such as connected landscapes and health adaptation planning.

The Tribal Working Group also plays a leadership role within the organization, advising the CSA on projects, programming, and organizational leadership. One of the directives that came out of the Tribal Working Group was to expand the Climate Kids program into tribal areas. In 2016, in partnership with the Pala Band of Mission Indians, [Climate Kids - Tribes](#) was launched.



"Pala Bird" is an artwork created by Climate Kids - Tribes and is now featured in the Art of Change traveling exhibit. Artists: Audrey Carver and Pala Little Feathers Students

Making Connections

Kurt Broz, Tribal Wildlife Biologist for the Pala Band of Mission Indians, provided outreach to the Tribe on climate change matters and was well connected in his community. He became a key partner for the CSA and the Climate Kids - Tribes program. Warneke says, "Kurt took it upon himself to champion the Climate Kids - Tribes program. He included its messaging across Pala's environmental outreach efforts and communications."

Tribes began inviting Climate Kids - Tribes to host science, art, and storytelling activities at intertribal earth day events and summer camps. Community artwork created at these types of events have been included in the CSA's traveling exhibit, [Art of Change](#). Warneke notes that the artwork visually reinforces the message that Tribes are an integral part of the climate change conversation.

[Climate Kids - Tribes](#) began offering field trips that connected tribal youth to some of the many educational institutions that partner with the CSA. A recent [field trip](#) brought students from the La Jolla Tribe to the Scripps Institute of Oceanography to learn about the effects of climate change on the ocean from researchers working in the field.



Youth from the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians attend a Climate Kids - Tribes field trip to Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

As the Climate Kids - Tribes program grew, the CSA, with direction from the Tribal Work Group, realized the need to integrate tribal perspectives into the Traveling Trunks on a larger scale. The trunks were already tailored to the local ecology, but they aimed to update the trunks so they were regionally relevant and culturally significant. For example, the Carnivore Trunk (pictured earlier) examined the effects of climate change on coyotes and jackrabbits - animals the students might actually interact with in San Diego County.

Warneke began meeting with tribal educators. They made recommendations on books, videos, websites, curricula, and teaching kits that represented the Tribes of the southwest and beyond. Of the many additions, the Carnivore trunk now includes a Zuni children's book called, "Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest." The trunk also contains curriculum created by the Laguna and the Kumeyaay Tribes. A full list of tribal-related materials per trunk can be found [here](#).



Climate Kids - Tribes students participate in a traveling trunk educational experience.

Broz says that one of the biggest challenges was featuring perspectives that were specific to Tribes but general enough to be relevant to different Tribes across the southwest. Another challenge was creating educational materials that were suitable for multi-generational audiences. Warneke and Broz decided to expand the resource list beyond what would fit in a trunk. They created a living, online [repository](#). The repository encourages educators to contribute content in an ongoing manner, allowing the library to stretch and grow over time.

Warneke knew that proximity was important. Storing the trunks in the heart of downtown San Diego made it arduous for rural Tribes to access. The Pala Environmental Department volunteered to house a second set of trunks at their office. Broz now helps manage the trunks as part of his outreach efforts. They now travel far and wide across San Diego County, sometimes even personally delivered by Broz.



Youth Climate Challenge Presentations at the 2019 Southwestern Tribal Climate Change Summit.

The Traveling Trunks have been such a success, that two new trunks are currently under development: Food Systems and Atmospheric Chemistry. Meanwhile, the Tribal Kids - Climate program continues to grow. This August, five tribal student teams participated in the [Youth Climate Challenge](#) as part of the larger [2019 Southwestern Tribal Climate Change Summit](#) in Idyllwild, CA. After a week of educational and cultural activities, each team proposed a project to combat climate change back home. Following the conference, the CSA will provide support for the teams to realize their proposals.

Broz says, “The Climate Kids program and our partnership with the CSA has been a huge benefit to Pala, especially as far as educational opportunities go. Educating the youth is one of our most important jobs.”

Warneke says that working in the field of climate change education can be emotionally laborious. Coming together with the next generation gives her hope. She finds great value in the platform that the Climate Kids program provides for youth to learn about climate change, take the reigns, and move us forward.

Resources and References

- Climate Science Alliance:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/>
- Climate Kids Program:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/building-community>
- Traveling Trunks:
<https://www.climatekids.org/traveling-trunk>
- Tribal Working Group:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/tribal-resilience>
- Climate Kids - Tribes:
<https://www.climatekids.org/tribes>
- Art of Change:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/art-of-change>

- Tribal Youth from the La Jolla Tribe Visit Scripps for Climate Kids Field Trip:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/single-post/2019/08/19/Tribal-Youth-from-the-La-Jolla-Tribe-Visit-Scripps-for-Climate-Kids-Field-Trip>
- Tribal Perspective Modules:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K1iYRN1bm-JeAJyWZ9cXwJRC8ls0OmnM/view>
- Tribal Perspectives Repository:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XJUJ71ITFxtbuWfRx6mq4S6fVcpCHR7n2BEWlijl4N0/edit#gid=1664581274>
- 2019 Youth Climate Challenge:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/single-post/2019/01/24/Student-Teams-Invited-to-Participate-in-Youth-Climate-Challenge>
- 2019 Tribal Climate Summit:
<https://www.climatesciencealliance.org/tribal-summit>

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