

San Manuel Honors Four Non-Profits at 12th Annual Forging Hope Yawa' Awards Ceremony

May 24, 2022



The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, honored four non-profits for their work in education, health care, essential services, and empowering Indigenous communities during the 12th Annual Forging Hope Yawa' Awards at the new Yaamava' Theatre.

HIGHLAND, CA – The 12th Annual Forging Hope Yawa' Awards, hosted by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, recently honored four non-profits for their work in education, health care, essential services, and empowering Indigenous communities. Each of the non-profit organizations recognized serves its communities in ways that fulfill the tribe's philanthropic Pillars of Giving.

Yawa', which means "acting on one's beliefs," is a concept that the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians have embodied throughout their history. Today, the tribe continues to practice Yawa' through preserving and protecting the tribe's ancestral territory and its inhabitants by seeking out non-profits to support its stewardship goals. The Yawa' Awards highlight organizations that are outstanding partners with the tribe in uplifting communities.

This year's Forging Hope Awards ceremony was held at the new Yaamava' Theatre at Yaamava' Resort and Casino. The ceremony was held for the first time since 2019 due to the pandemic.

"We are proud to have partners who answer the call of Yawa' by meeting the basic needs of at-risk groups, helping students onto the path of education, supporting Indigenous communities, and addressing health care disparities in our region," said San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena.

The recipients were:

- **Victor Valley College Foundation** (Victorville, CA) for comprehensive firefighter training, certifications, and degree programs.
- **Assistance League of San Bernardino** (San Bernardino, CA) for connecting children in need with essential dental care and oral health resources.
- **Time for Change Foundation** (San Bernardino, CA) for providing housing and employment opportunities for low-income individuals.
- **Cheyenne River Youth Project** (Eagle Butte, SD) for bringing innovative programming, including internship opportunities and arts education, to the Lakota community.

The Yawa' Award itself is an encased Serrano gourd rattle created by San Manuel youth. The gourd rattle is the percussive instrument of the Serrano people, who use music to share social customs and the history of the tribe.
