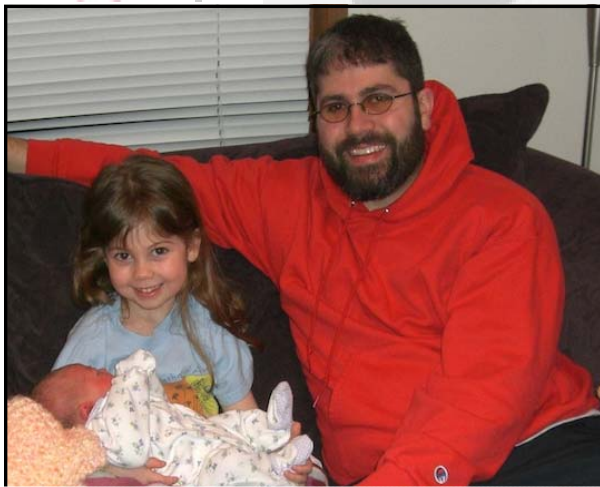


# The Four Winds

Newsletter of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA)

## Congratulations Crystal & Ed!

Giovanna Mary Leonetti was born at 9:53am on Monday, 3/30/09. She weighed 7 lbs, 7 oz., and is very healthy.



Giovanna, Audrey & Ed Leonetti

Please send articles on what is happening in your area. News stories, articles of interest, gatherings, pow wow's, whatever you want to share! Email to [membership@aiana.com](mailto:membership@aiana.com)

Winter- Niibin 2009

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty



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## Elder Quote

"Before our ways of life came to an end, our natural resources were sacred. Our ancestors prayed for the survival of their descendants, that they would keep their ways and protect their natural resources. We are those descendants."

*Ted Herrera, June, 2008.*

## Conference Info

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION FOR NRCS

2009 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

CO-SPONSORED BY THE: WISCONSIN TRIBAL CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

HOSTED BY: THE ONEIDA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF WISCONSIN

**VISION – “WE LOOK IN ALL DIRECTIONS”**

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN [RADISSON HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER](#)

**JULY 13-17, 2009**

- Monday, June 13 Special Emphasis Program Managers Training  
Working Effectively With Tribes  
Michael Jacobs, Singer/Storyteller  
Greeting Circle, Drum Blessing, Circle Dance
- Tuesday, July 14 Working Effectively With Tribes  
Special Remarks by the NRCS Chief  
AIANEA Visioning Plan  
“WTCAC history, organization, and working effectively with NRCS”  
USDA Tribal Consultation Guidance  
How new Farm Bill will impact Tribal Agriculture and Conservation Programs  
AIANEA Breakout Sessions  
Career Development IDP-Career Mapping  
Elder Breakout Sessions  
Banquet—Entertainment – Oneida Youth Singers/Dancers
- Wednesday, July 15 WTCAC Conservation Activities  
“Native Tribes of Wisconsin, Past and Present”  
NRCS Leadership Panel “Leadership Indian-Style”  
AIANEA Breakout Sessions  
Career Development –Detail Opportunities  
Tribal Liaison Networking Session  
AIANEA Business Meeting
- Thursday, July 16 TOURS  
Tour A: Oneida Sites  
Tour B: Forestry practices/Menominee  
Live Auction
- Friday, July 17 INCA, Strengthening Tribal Conservation Districts  
Patricia Leavenworth, Wisconsin STC

Please see [www.aianea.com](http://www.aianea.com) for a more comprehensive agenda

## A Special Thank You

Dear AIANEA,

I would like to say Askwali, which is a Hopi girl's "Thank You", for making my first AIANEA conference a very happy experience and something that I will always remember.

I had a fun time meeting new people that my Mom knows and also meeting new people that she didn't know. I had the chance to meet many special people, but one person that I never imagined I would meet is Marie Meade from Alaska. She is from a place very far away from me. Even though we didn't know each other before, it felt like she was always my Maurluq, which means "Grandma" in her language. I learned a lot during the time I spent with her.

I took notes during the sessions and learned a lot about NRCS and the natural resources that we have to protect. I listened to many good speakers from the AIANEA, APIO and NRCS people that work in Washington D.C.

I was included in the Visioning Summit that was held on one of the evenings. I was a little nervous to join in, but thanks to David Elliott and many others, I felt comfortable enough to help present our group's ideas during that session.

The Silent Auction was something totally new to me. Harold Bryant and his wife Judy invited me to help and I want to tell them Thank You for trusting me. I disappeared from my Mom a few times but she usually found me helping Harold with the auction.

Another highlight at the conference for me was being able to show my poster on Hopi Corn. My Mom always makes sure that I participate and learn in everything that I do. I am thankful to her for asking me to go with her to the conference and for asking me to show what I know about Hopi corn in my culture.

I'd like to say an extra special Thank You to the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council for the special scholarship that they gave to me for my poster. I was so surprised to get such a special award at the banquet from Art Muller and Carol Crouch.

I enjoyed seeing a little bit of Spokane, Washington and I hope that I will be able to go to the conference in Wisconsin this year. I'd like to tell the youth like me to participate in the conferences and to become a member of AIANEA. I will send in my membership dues for 2009. Happy New Year everyone!

Askwali,

*Mowana Koyiyumptewa*

Mowana Koyiyumptewa

6th grader in Flagstaff, Arizona

12 years old





# Elder Marie Meade: Yupik, Alaska

By Crystal Leonetti, Alaska Native Liaison/Cultural Resources Coordinator

Marie Meade, whose Yupiaq name is Arnaq (named after her grandmother), has an extraordinary life story. She was born in Bethel, Alaska but raised in the inland tundra village of Nunapitchuck. For three months every summer, Marie spent the summer at fish camp with her parents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. There are very strong connections in the Yupik tradition in her family.

Her early years were spent gathering food with her family. She ate all native foods growing up: fish, birds, berries, sometimes seal and ocean foods that were traded from the coast, sometimes moose. The first agricultural or store-bought food she ate when she was 15 or 16 years old was chicken. She remembered that she didn't like it as it had no taste.

Marie learned many things about taking care of the land through the way she was raised. Some of the "rules" are: never throw away food that could be eaten including fish heads and esophagus's – only bones, liver, and blood could be thrown away; don't just put food anywhere or throw it around; discarded parts were put in one place, usually a pit, and camp was kept very clean; don't step on fish parts. The Yupiaq word "qigcikluku nuna" means you must respect the land and have reverence. Her favorite native food is all of them! Her favorite agricultural food is chicken eggs.

Since moving away from the tundra, she now lives in Anchorage most of the year. Marie goes to fish camp on the Kuskokwim River to get her winter food each summer. Marie has 3 sons and 4 grandchildren. In the Yupiaq way, her mother's sister's children and her father's brother's children are like her own brothers and sisters. So her sibling's children's children are also her grandchildren, and she has many more than 4 grandchildren. They all call her Maur'luq, the Yupik name for Grandma.



Marie Meade and a young girl, with their winning trophies for the World Eskimo Indian Olympics regalia contest in 2007

Marie is a master teacher in her eighth year at the University of Alaska Anchorage teaching Yupik and Native Dance and Yupik Language and Culture. She has also spent 25 years documenting oral history and has produced/published four books. One of her favorite volunteer jobs is assisting one of the Grandmothers on the Thirteen International Indigenous Grandmother's Council. The Grandmother she assists is a traditional Yupik healer, Rita



Blumenstein. She works and travels with her at least twice a year to locations all over the world. Marie wears many other hats, including an advisory board member at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and organizer for events at the annual Alaska Federation of Natives conference.

Marie became an AIANEA Elder in 2005, attending her first conference in Polson, Montana. Her favorite conference thus far has been the 2006 conference in Alaska because she got to host the elders and got to know them better, bringing them to lunch at Eklutna. She remembers being so happy when they walked into the tribal hall in Eklutna when Elder Norman Lopez said, "I feel right at home." She met the youngest AIANEA member, Mowana, last year (2008) in Spokane, Washington. Mowana is the Hopi daughter of NRCS Engineer Blythe Koyiyumptewa. They instantly became great friends and still keep in contact by phone.

I asked Marie what she would like AIANEA Members and NRCS employees to know. Here is her response:

"Remember and maintain the ways of the people, stay focused on the teachings from elders and your people about maintaining and living healthy and stay strong. Keep your mental, spiritual, and physical self strong. Pay attention to how you hear the words. Nothing comes by mistake – there's always a reason. Live a

purposeful life. Pay attention. Do the best you can at your work. Live a healthy life. Go to the cultural ways and events that help you stay healthy. For example, learn the stories, the songs, and the dances. Learn from both the cultural ways and the other ways and be balanced. Find things that are familiar and feel



Marie skinning a seal in her backyard

right and apply that to your life. Be with people who are trying to do the same thing. There are many paths, but stay focused and do good for you and your community and family and culture. Sometimes criticisms are helpful. If you make a mistake, that is an opportunity to correct it and think about it. Stay connected to your culture, your people. Ceremonies are good. Breathe fresh air. Go out on the land and get energized just being there. Just being there, something happens. Be with your elders, even if they're not talking – you will still learn from them. Be with children – be connected to them and try to see things the way they see things. They can teach you a lot. They can teach you common sense."



Marie singing a prayer song at the conference in Montana

## **Member Spotlight: Ralph Goh, Civil Engineer (Area Engineer), Flagstaff, AZ**

### **Questions with The Four Winds**

#### **Tell everyone a little bit about yourself?**

Ya'at'eeh (all is well), my name is Ralph Goh. I am a Navajo (Diné) and am of the Tlilizani (Manygoats) Clan and born for Chishi (Apache) Clan. I am married to my beautiful wife, Taralyn, and we have a daughter named Raquel. They are both of the Bi't'ahnii (Folded Arm) Clan from Chilchinbeto (Sumac Springs), Arizona and they live in Kayenta, Arizona. Taralyn is a math teacher at Monument Valley High School, whereas, I work and live in Flagstaff during the weekdays. Other times, I split my time between Kayenta on the Navajo Nation and Black Mesa, which is within the Hopi Reservation, where my parents live and where I was born.

#### **How did you come to your current position?**

I earned my Civil Engineering Degree, Bachelor of Science, from Northern Arizona University in 1993 and worked for the Forest Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs in the late 1980s. I started my Civil Engineering career in 1994 with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Water Resources Planning Staff in Saint Michaels, Arizona. I came to the Flagstaff Area Office in 1999 as an Area Engineer.

#### **What was the most challenging obstacle you overcame to achieve this position?**

My first language is Navajo. I was sent to the BIA Shonto Boarding School located in Shonto (Sunlight Springs), Arizona to learn and live the western culture and then later attended Tuba City High School, named after a Hopi leader named Tuuvi. I have always refused to learn, speak and write the English Language. Writing and speaking the English Language has been an obstacle through my college and still is in my career. However, I use this obstacle to assist the agency by explaining and translating NRCS Program Delivery on the Navajo Nation. There are a lot of words that cannot be translated directly from English to Navajo.



#### **What is the most rewarding part of your current position?**

The most rewarding part of my career with NRCS is the people. My co-workers, my past supervisors, my native co-workers, and my colleagues are willing to understand my language and culture and it helps me to design and install some of the conservation practices across this beautiful land that we live on.

#### **Did you have a mentor or what person has the most impact on you as an employee?**

There are a lot of people that are my mentors within this agency and in my professional career. If I start listing the people I may forget someone on my list.



To avoid this, I have to look into past history, consider and select one and only one person, which is my father. His name is Hosteen Goh. He has limited education in the western culture but yet understands how most machines operate. He worked all over the country and he did very well in his career and retired from Union Pacific Railroad. If you have railroad tracks in your hometown, he may have walked across your hometown. He is a leader for his own relatives and his family. He led his sons throughout his career with the Union Pacific and other railroad companies like Southern Pacific, Rock Island, Santa Fe, and Burlington Northern.

**What is your favorite saying or quote? What is your favorite word?**

I have always respected my people, elders, kids, culture, religion, and language. There is a phrase, also my favorite phrase that we use at the end of each prayer in our language which is, “Hozho na’has glii”, meaning everything is in harmony within each other.

To illustrate this phrase: One early winter morning, my uncle was leading me in prayer to a Pinion tree for the offering. The surroundings had the exact match of the words used in the prayer. We were standing on the edge of an unknown small mesa atop Black Mesa overlooking one of the tributaries into Moenkopi (Munqapi, is a Hopi word meaning the place where water flows) Wash canyon. There was light snow on the ground, pure white fog rising off the ground, and the winter sun was just warming up the cool air. The winter birds were chirping to each other to meet the morning silence. At the end of the prayer the words, “Hozho na’has glii” was repeated four times.

While going about my work with NRCS, I only use these words when I am the last person off the construction site when a project is completed and closed out. This begins the healing process of the Earth. The last song that is presented in this ceremony is my favorite song, which does not have an English title or does not have an artist’s name or a copyright symbol. Every time this song is presented the song purifies my mind and my body.

**What is something that you are looking forward to in this coming year?**

To my native people and my native co-workers, if you go home to your family at the end of the day you have accomplished something although you may think that you didn’t accomplish anything. You have lived another day and I am looking forward to hearing from you at the end of this year, and each and every year.

Thank you for the spotlight and thank you for letting me share my background and thoughts with you. I will continue to see you along the pollen footprint path and see the old age with you.

# Winter Kids Day, Spirit Lake Nation, North Dakota

By Mauritz Carlson, Tribal Resource Conservationist, Ft. Totten, ND

The Third Annual Winter Kids Day for Spirit Lake was held December 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> 2008, at the Blue Building in Fort Totten. The event is sponsored by the Spirit Lake Fish & Wildlife and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This year the activity was building a birdhouse. The first day four purple martin houses were built. One is to be placed in each of the Spirit Lake Districts. The second day wren houses were built which the kids took home with them. Both days were filled with learning and team building experiences in order to assemble the houses. Noon lunch both days was provided by the Spirit Lake Tribe. A follow up

session is planned for sometime in March to prepare for the return of the spring birds.



Spirit Lake Nation Conservation Kids—Purple Martin Houses



Spirit Lake Nation Conservation Kids—Wren Houses



# NRCS Recruitment Success at the 2009

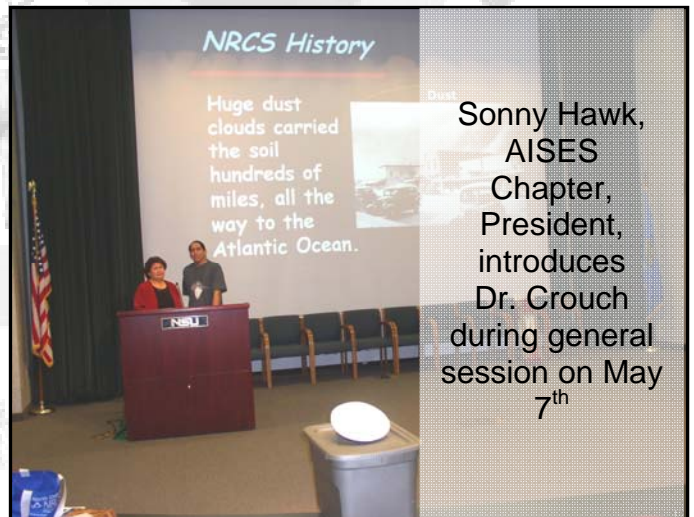
## American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Region IV Conference

Dr. Carol Crouch, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National Special Emphasis Program Manager for American Indian & Alaska Natives and District Conservationist in the Purcell, Oklahoma field office attended the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Region IV Annual Conference to recruit for NRCS. The AISES Region IV conference was held in Tahlequah, Oklahoma at Northeastern University on March 6 and 7, 2009. The Regional conference included Universities from Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas and Louisiana. There were 19 active High School AISES Chapters at the conference.

Dr. Carol Crouch was invited to the AISES Regional conference to provide the opening welcome for the conference on May 6<sup>th</sup> and make presentations on May 7<sup>th</sup> to the college and high school students on the career and student opportunities with NRCS. Dr. Crouch presented a PowerPoint presentation on the following; NRCS history, how to apply for a job with NRCS, opportunities for careers and the NRCS Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). All college and high school attendees received NRCS Career brochure, contact information for every NRCS Human Resources department, the link to the NRCS web page and a copy of the NRCS 2008 American Indian Heritage poster for the college and high school.



Dr. Crouch has an opportunity to answer career questions with college and high school student on May 6<sup>th</sup>



### Membership Dues

- Student - \$10.00
- Regular - \$25.00
- Tribal College - \$100.00
- Tribal - \$500.00
- Lifetime - \$250.00 1 x payment/or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Please mail payment to:

Harold Bryant  
Treasurer  
1510 29th Street  
Hondo, TX 78861

**PENALTY/  
FRANKED MAIL &  
OFFICIAL  
STATIONARY.  
YOU MAY NOT:**

Use official government envelopes (with or without applied postage) or official letterhead stationery for personal business.

# Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

[www.aianea.com](http://www.aianea.com)

Please make checks payable to AIANEA and mail your membership form and dues to:

Harold Bryant  
1510 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hondo, TX 78861

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_ New Address?

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal Affiliation (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of membership. (Membership is for one calendar year **January 1 to December 31**)

My membership is for the year 200\_\_\_\_.

Regular-\$25.00 Check here if this is a renewal membership

Student -\$10.00 full-time high school or college students

Lifetime - \$250.00 or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Enclosed is payment # 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal College-\$100.00



## The 2009 AIANEA National Council

David Wise –President

Tanya Meyer - Dideriksen - 1st Vice President

Ciro Lo Pinto - 2nd Vice President

Leota Burnett - So. Central Region Rep.

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Sharron Santure - Midwest Region Rep.

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