

# Earth Day At Ak-Chin Indian Community

by Amy Weisbaum

April 22 of each year is Earth Day. The SWEHSC outreach team attended many Earth Day events in 2016. One such event was held by the Ak-Chin Indian Community at the Elements Center in Maricopa, Arizona. The event boasted a wide array of booths and participants from the Him: Dak Museum where you could make bird feeders, to the wild bird rescue where you could see and learn about rehabilitated falcons and other birds.

This Earth Day event brought the community together for a day full of fun, sharing knowledge and spreading awareness on topics such as climate change, renewable energy, and even sustainable fashion with a trash-to-treasure type of fashion show and contest. Something that made this day so spectacular was seeing all of the incredible things people are doing to help educate, protect, and inspire their communities. One such individual is Shaina White, a Tribal Air Environmental Specialist with the Tribal Air Program of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. She leads by example, and thought outside of the box in the process of creating something both visually capti-



*Ak-Chin community gentleman marking what environmental issues effects his community (Photograph by Marti Lindsey).*

ating and educational. Her visual display entitled “Air Pollution on a Board” is shown below with an explanation from the artist herself.

Ralph Gomez, Air Specialist, is another motivated individual doing important things in his community. He attended this event and ran a booth on behalf of his projects with the environmental department. Gomez uses various pieces of equipment to capture and analyze data. The machine used for PM10 is a continuous monitor called the bam1020.

There’s also an ozone-collecting machine from Eagle Tech and a data logger that collects all of

the data. From there, the data is brought in, and Ralph can log into it from anywhere to see what exactly is going on. They also have a rain gauge – for the few times it rains in Southern Arizona.

The air monitor shelter was recently moved from the top of the museum over to the environmental department because the machines need to be in a cool environment in order to provide accurate data. (It was put on top of the museum in 2007.) “Our data was fluctuating a lot, but now everything is more consistent and with the bigger shelter we can do all of our work from the inside of it”.

He even brought solar ovens with him and made cornbread outside to share with everyone at the event.

Because he does outreach for the community itself, he has made brownies, cookies, cake, stew, steaks, fish and Mexican cornbread – all in the solar ovens! You’re not using electricity and you’re not heating up your house, and the kids can use it! You don’t have to worry about them burning the house down.

## Air Pollution on a Board

“I decided to create the 3-D model for tribal Earth Day events because I wanted to capture the children’s attention. Kids love seeing visual things and the model engaged the kids to ask questions. Let’s face it, air pollution is not an exciting topic, but with the model it was easier to educate the kids. I used a variety of items ranging from moss to active wire to miniature trees and cars. It took a total of about 5 hours over the course of several days to create the model. The internet is an amazing tool when you need creative inspiration.” – Shaina White



*A model of outdoor air contaminate sources, such as methane, trash and wildfire emissions (Photograph by Marti Lindsey).*