

# MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## CREATIVE RECOVERY LA VISIBLE RELATIVES PROJECT REPORT

LA County  
**ARTS &  
CULTURE**



*So'oh-Shin'ali*  
SISTER PROJECT

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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This project included three circles/gatherings developed to raise awareness, provide support, and identify resources for community members impacted by the ongoing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) crisis. We need to provide a trigger warning to audiences reading this report as wordage and content related to the MMIP epidemic is explicit and upsetting. Native American and Alaska Native (AI/AN) experience rates of murder, sexual violence, and violent crime at higher rates than national averages (U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs). The National Institute of Justice reported in 2016 that more than four in five (84%) AI/AN women experience violence in their lifetime. Sexual violence and genocide towards Indigenous peoples dates back hundreds of years throughout U.S. history and the current MMIP advocacy movement is a call to action for No More Stolen Sisters and Relatives.

This project focused on engaging and supporting Indigenous community members impacted by the MMIP epidemic within Los Angeles County. The project promoted MMIP resources with the goal of increasing awareness and increasing access to local, state-wide and national supportive services. The project implemented traditional ways of healing through cultural art activities (beading, painting, and candle-making). This project supported local BIPOC artists and small business owners within Los Angeles County, ranging from graphic design, custom printing, photography, videography, to catering.

# MMIP EVENT 1



*Facilitators: Keely Linton (Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians) with Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc.; Brigid Pulskamp (Diné) with June Beach Designs; Robyn Gomez (Mexica-Huichol/Xicana), Licensed Psychotherapist with Indigenous Circle of Wellness*

## Visible Relatives: Power in Beading

In our first MMIP gathering, we honored our stolen sisters and relatives in a supportive community beading circle. The beading art activity (bracelet) was designed for community members to complete during the allotted time of the workshop. The event promoted beading as a traditional method of healing to support community when discussing experiences/trauma associated with MMIP topics. This beading circle worked towards creating safety, building connections, and strengthening supports. Our community partner, Keely Linton, facilitated our discussion to increase awareness about the MMIP epidemic, AB 1314: Feather Alert, and resources. We shared a community meal together.



# MMIP EVENT 2



## Visible Relatives: Painting in Recognition

In our second MMIP gathering, we honored our stolen sisters and relatives by creating a community canvas dedicated to MMIP. Bertha shared her ongoing experience navigating grief and advocating for MMIP voices within various systems. Bertha taught community about local, state-wide and national resources. Our facilitator, Cherine Mendoza, supported community in processing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions through the art of painting. Cherine led community in an expressive painting activity where each participant painted their handprint, had the opportunity to share their experience and intentions creating the artwork, and conjoined all of the handprints together as symbolism of collective healing and support to MMIP voices. We shared a community meal together.

*Facilitators: Bertha Fraire (Cherokee Nation and Chicana); Cherine Mendoza (Chicana) with Shop Cherine; Kylee Jones (Multi-cultural), Licensed Psychotherapist with Indigenous Circle of Wellness*



# MMIP EVENT 3



*Facilitators: Dr. Joely Proudfit (Luiseño/Payómkawichum and Tongva); Ely Valdivia with Earthy Corazon; Monique Castro (Diné/Xicana), Licensed Psychotherapist and CEO of Indigenous Circle of Wellness; Susan Lowe (African American, Cherokee, and Creek), Licensed Psychotherapist with indigenous Circle of Wellness*

## Visible Relatives: Keeping Our Light Strong

In our final MMIP gathering, we honored our stolen sisters and relatives by engaging in a community discussion/call to action and candle-making workshop. Dr. Proudfit highlighted Indigenous strengths, resilience, and empowerment when facilitating our MMIP discussion and identified tangible next steps for community to engage in local, state, and national MMIP advocacy and activism initiatives. Ely Valdivia led community in practicing self-reflection, intention-setting, and grounding techniques through a hands-on candle-making workshop with plant medicines. We shared a community meal together.



We developed a series of flyers to promote the MMIW circles to distribute electronically, as well as, physical copies. We shipped flyers to local organizations and shared flyers with community members when tabling at local events throughout Los Angeles County.

**Soo'h-Shinálí**  
SISTER PROJECT

**MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

MMIWG2S circles focused on advocacy, sharing, and healing!

Register Today! [sssp.la/MMIWG2S](https://sssp.la/MMIWG2S)

**March 9, 2024 from 10:00am–2:30pm**  
**May 4, 2024 from 10:00am–2:30pm**  
**July 13, 2024 from 11:00am–3:00pm**

Questions Contact **Eva Powless**, Director of Community Relations at [Eva@ssisterproject.org](mailto:Eva@ssisterproject.org) or via phone at (323) 916-6415 ext. 1

**Soo'h-Shinálí**  
SISTER PROJECT

**Saturday, March 9, 2024**  
**10:00am–2:30pm**

**Visible Relatives:**  
**Power in Beading**

**Autry Museum of the American West**  
4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Event brought to community through partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and Community Partners

**Facilitators**

**Keely Linton, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians**  
Works with other community and local artists in the vintage and modern bead market for over 20 years. She is the Chairperson for the Judicial Council of the National Court of Southern California and Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation and currently works as the Executive Director for the Strong Inherited Native Women's Coalition.

**Brigid (Birdie) Pulskamp, Diné**  
is an artist and the creator of June Beach Designs. She facilitates multiple spaces within the local Indigenous community to create space for the art of beading, and teaching of beading to children.

**Indigenous Circle of Wellness**  
Individual, couples, family counseling

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**Soo'h-Shinálí**  
SISTER PROJECT

**Saturday, May 4, 2024**  
**10:00am–2:30pm**

**Visible Relatives:**  
**Painting in Recognition**

**Autry Museum of the American West**  
4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Event brought to community through partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and Community Partners

**Facilitators**

**Bertha Fraire (Cherokee Nation and Chickasaw)**  
Bertha is a mother, writer, and fierce advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples. She has advocated for the community, advocating regarding HIV/AIDS and mental health and safety for children, women, and families. Bertha has offered her expertise working with law enforcement, judicial systems, social services, and communities impacted by MMIW.

**Cherine Mendoza, (Chicana)**  
is a Chicana artist with several years of experience facilitating Indigenous art and culture, offering a safe space for art and social justice conversations and meaningful pieces celebrating BIPOC focus.

**Indigenous Circle of Wellness**  
Individual, couples, family counseling

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**Soo'h-Shinálí**  
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**Saturday, July 13, 2024**  
**11:00am–3:00pm**

**Visible Relatives:**  
**Keeping Our Light Strong**

**Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center**  
7810 Quill Dr, Downey, CA 90242

Event brought to community through partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and Community Partners

**Facilitators**

**Dr. Joely Prouditt, (Luiseno/Chachiwotom and Tongva)**  
is a scholar, activist, and media maker. Dr. Prouditt serves as the Director of the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CISCC) and as the Department Chair of American Indian Studies at California State University, Fullerton. She was recognized as the 2023 National Indigenous Advisory Council on Indian Education and in 2023 was recognized by Governor Newsom as the first Indigenous woman to serve on the Governor's Board of Advisors.

**Ely Valdivia, (she/they)**  
is an Indigenous Mexican queer artist and artist. Business owner of Barite Canyon in East LA, Ely's work is a labor of love to make meaningful gifts for their friends and to build connections to their community. Ely creates jewelry, ceramics, quilts, and body care as a way to support their art and healing practices for community as a whole.

**Indigenous Circle of Wellness**  
Individual, couples, family counseling

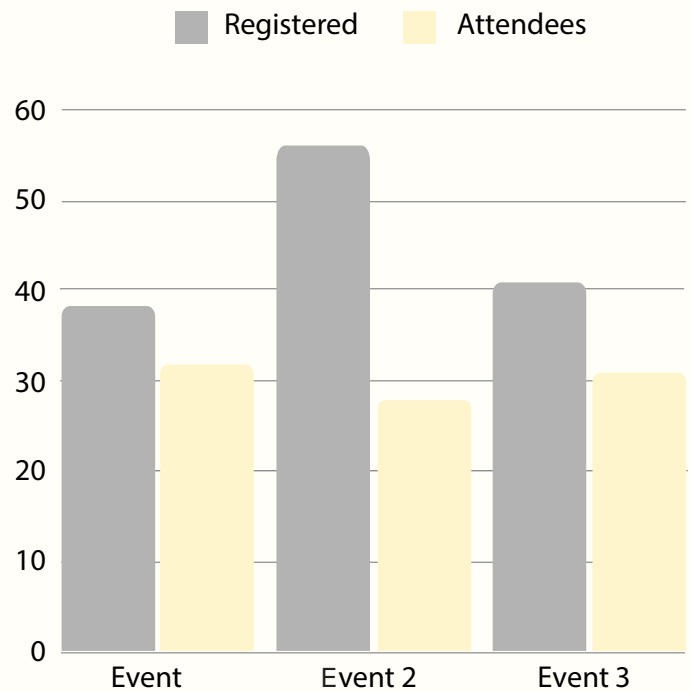
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# OUTREACH

We used various outreach approaches throughout this project, including: email correspondence, phone calls, social media engagement, flyer distribution at local community events, and printed t-shirts. There were a total of 135 community members that pre-registered to the events and a total of 92 attendees across the three circles, the breakdown is as follows: MMIP Event One had 38 pre-registrations and 32 attendees; MMIP Event 2 had 56 pre-registrations and 28 attendees; MMIP Event 3 had 41 pre-registrations and 32 attendees.





# SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH



We utilized social media as a primary engagement tool for promoting the MMIP series. We have included metrics estimated from Instagram regarding the number of unique accounts reached that have seen each post. The metrics included below were updated and collected as of August 15, 2024. Our first flyer, outlining the 3 gatherings, that we posted to Instagram on January 24, 2024 reached a total of 1, 554 accounts on Instagram.

The second flyer, promoting MMIP circle #1, that we posted on January 25, 2024 reached a total of 826 accounts on Instagram. We also distributed Instagram carousel posts following each event, the post consisted of 10 photos from the MMIP circle. The carousel post on March 21, 2024 recapping MMIP event #1 reached 820 accounts. Following each carousel post, we shared videos/reels on Instagram. Our first reel, recapping MMIP circle #1, that we posted on March 27, 2024, reached 1,386 accounts.

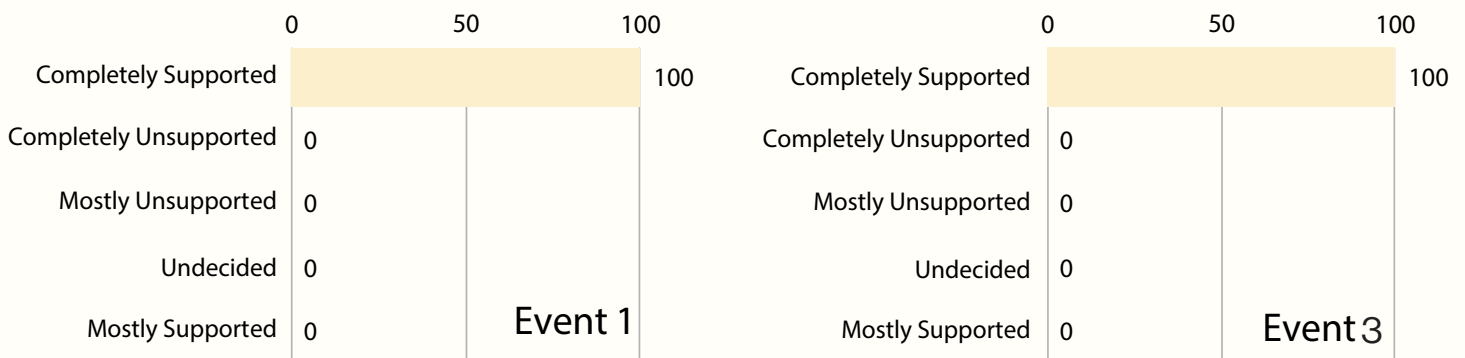
The third flyer, promoting MMIP circle #2, that we posted on March 25, 2024 reached a total of 822 accounts. The carousel post on May 23, 2024 recapping MMIP event #2 reached 481 accounts. Our second reel, recapping MMIP circle #2, that we posted on May 29, 2024, reached 849 accounts. The final flyer, promoting MMIP circle #3, that we posted on May 30, 2024 reached a total of 1, 357 accounts. The carousel post on July 29, 2024 reached 1, 114 accounts. Our final reel, recapping MMIP circle #3, that we posted on July 31, 2024, reached 392 accounts.



# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

We developed a post survey of three questions to engage community members and encourage feedback following the events. We facilitated the post-survey via virtual platform; this way of collecting feedback allowed for community members to access the survey by internet browser or text message. The virtual platform provided an option for anonymity and to share the feedback live/in real time.

## How supported did you feel during today's event?



# POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Everything- from the beginning - learning that we really have each other and stories heal one another as well as taking action.

I was very intimidated by the beading but it felt like my Ancestors were guiding my hands. I feel like I made them and myself proud!

Making the environment feel safe to open up. Expressing one self for the purpose of healing.

Loved connecting with community and would love more opportunities to network

I love that you send us home with resources.

Osiyo, thank you all for the emotional support as a mother of an MMIP.

Entire event went extremely well, I love and enjoyed the space and activities of today!

We appreciate all your work, thank you for the knowledge, and hands on experiences.

Appreciate all the care and opportunity to be in community

Thank you! My cup feels full now.

