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This Mothers Day Weekend Alternative Celebration: An Indian Powwow At East Los Angeles College.

East Los Angeles, California, 4/15/03 - **East Los Angeles College (ELAC)**, will be host to the ninth annual **Northern Southern Winds Powwow “*Recognizing No Borders*” & “*Honoring Our Mothers*.”** This event celebrates the wonderfully rich and diverse cultures of First People Nations living in Southern California. By way of competition and exhibition dancing and singing, Indigenous cultures through out North America will be represented. The powwow festival takes place on Mothers Day weekend, **May 10th & 11th, 2003**, on the college soccer field. The times are from **10am to 10pm, Saturday** and **10am to 6pm, Sunday**. Organizers for the event are **M.E.X.A.**, the Chicano Student Movement of ELAC, and the **Iron Circle Nation**, a non-profit Native American spiritual circle.

Essentially, the powwow festival is a social gathering for Native American people, though all cultures are invited. It originates from the Great Plains where dancers in traditional *regalia* compete for top honors in their particular dance style categories. They dance to live music performed by several groups of “drum singers”. Spectators sit around the arena and have the opportunity to watch the dancing and program from there. At given times, even the public is invited to participate in dances. Furthermore, the “head staff” handles formalities and protocols during the gathering.

This year’s head staff will be: the M.C., **Roy Track (*Lakota*)**; the Head Man Dancer, **Barry Brown (*Otoe/Pawnee*)**; the Head Woman Dancer, **Pam James (*Chickasaw/Menominee/Sioux*)**; the Arena Director, **Warren Aunquoe (*Kiowa*)**; the Host Northern Drum, **Bear Springs (*So. Cal*)**; and the Host Southern Drum, **Dark Horse (*Tempe, AZ*)**. Guest Celebrity Actress, **Irene Bedard** of “**Smoke Signals**” and “**Lakota Woman**” will be on hand Sunday to greet the public and sign copies of her new cd recording. Additionally, on Saturday from 5pm to 6pm there will be inter-cultural exhibition performances by the Aztec/Mexika Dancers, **Huehuetotl (*Santa Fe Springs, CA*)**.

Another aspect to the powwow is the encompassing market place. ELAC will feature over forty vendors selling authentic Indigenous Peoples arts and crafts, as well as, four food booths with menus consisting of Indian fry bread, *tamales*, *tacos*, roasted corn, and much more. Attendees are strongly encouraged to bring along some spending money.

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Mothers Day Powwow...

In reference to one of the themes of the powwow, “**Recognizing No Borders**,” Frank Gutierrez, M.E.X.A. Faculty Advisor, says, “The gap between the northern and southern Indigenous People was established in 1848 by to foreign governments. Overnight there were Mexican Indians and American Indians. Many nations were divided and many families were separated. In reality, the people of the U.S. Southwest and Mexico’s North are the same, sharing a common and complete socioeconomic, cultural and ecological area and identity. Therefore, our powwow acts as a way to exemplify this truth.”

John Funmaker, spiritual advisor for the Iron Circle Nation, is pleased to bring the Indian powwow to the community of the East LA. According to him, “It’s a wonderful experience and a great way to bring people together in an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation. Moreover, our powwow exposes the rich and beautiful Native heritage of the North and South... It’s a fun and educational way to raise funds for scholarships and provide financial assistance for the Iron Circle Nation.”

With regards to the powwow’s other theme, “**Honoring Our Mothers**,” all mothers present on Sunday the 11th will be gifted with flowers, treats, and special dances. It can be a great alternative way for people to celebrate with their mothers on Mothers Day. So, no mom should be left at home.

The greater Los Angeles community is warmly welcome to come see, hear, taste, touch, and smell the magnificent and diverse attributes of Indigenous cultures to be presented at the ELAC Powwow. Over three thousand participants and observers are expected at this year’s celebration. Admission is free and so is parking in the stadium lot.

ELAC is located at **1301 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez, Monterey Park, CA 91754**. For further information call **(323) 377-3523** or email elacpowwow@hotmail.com. For vendor spaces and prices, call **(323) 265-8753**.

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