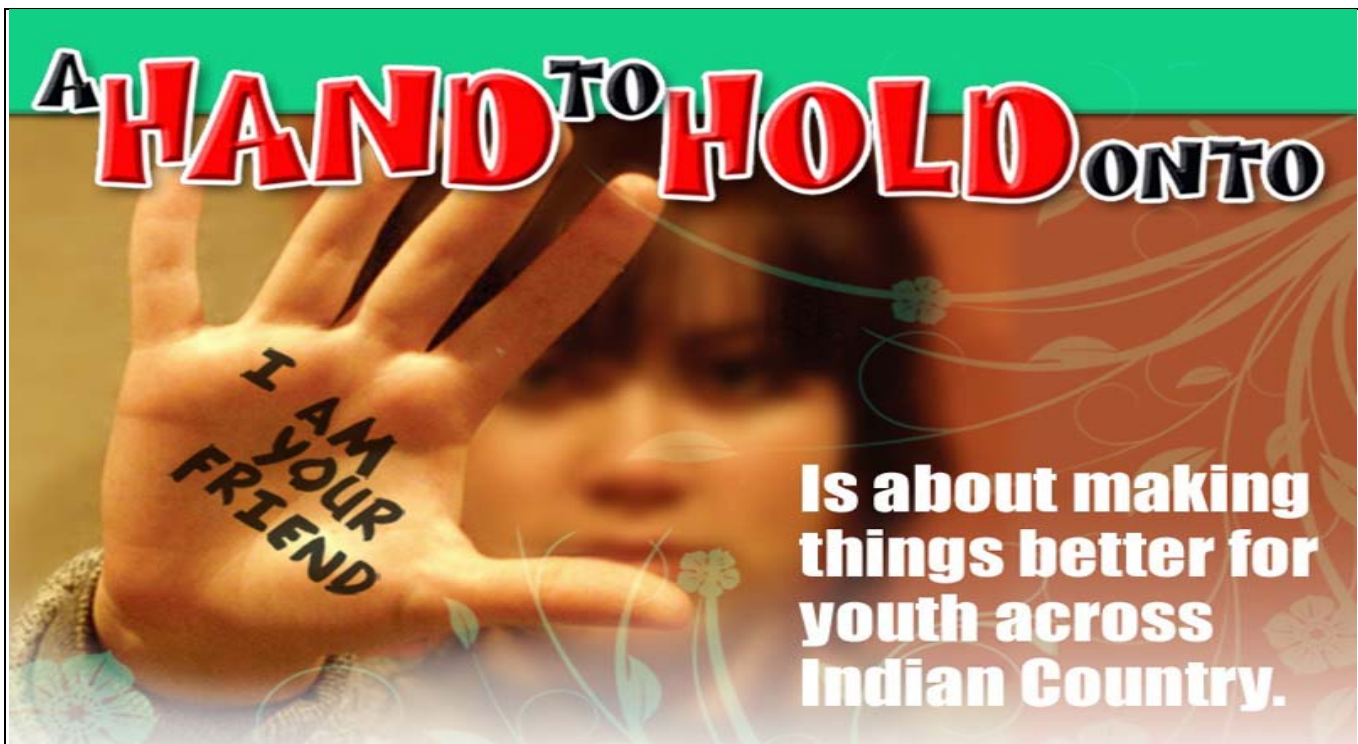




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"A Hand to Hold Onto" opened to American Indian/Alaska Native young adults via confidential online survey

After two years of youth input and field testing in Native communities, the survey website "A Hand to Hold Onto" was launched from Rapid City, South Dakota, during the National Congress of American Indians' Mid-Year Conference.

Representatives from the three nonprofit and educational organizations behind the project were at NCAI to present the survey to tribal leadership and to present the survey's initial findings to the NCAI Youth Council. They are the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), the Calumet campus of Purdue University, and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America).

"A Hand to Hold Onto" is a research project created to better reflect the nature of child abuse and other types of victimization across all of Indian Country. The project's main goal is to survey 1,000 young adults about victimization, its consequences, and protective factors they experienced prior to age 18.

Youth, between 18 and 25 years of age and of American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) descent, can sign up for the survey at www.ahandtoholdonto.org, and later complete the survey, which takes approximately 30 minutes. The survey is anonymous, and participant's answers cannot be linked to the person. A \$10 online gift certificate for Amazon.com is provided to each survey participant, limited to one per person. The survey ends approximately August 15, 2010.

"American Indian and Alaska Native people have programs based on old data, and we were left with no choice but to accept it. This survey project is our way to have our voices heard and to tell our governments what our lives are, in truth," said Patricia Carter (Nez Perce), NICWA youth board member and NCAI youth leader. "Please participate in this survey, and encourage your friends and young relatives to do the same."

"You can speak the truth about these issues-how many times have we really been asked? And how many times can we, Native youth, directly help what resources our communities receive?," Patricia said.