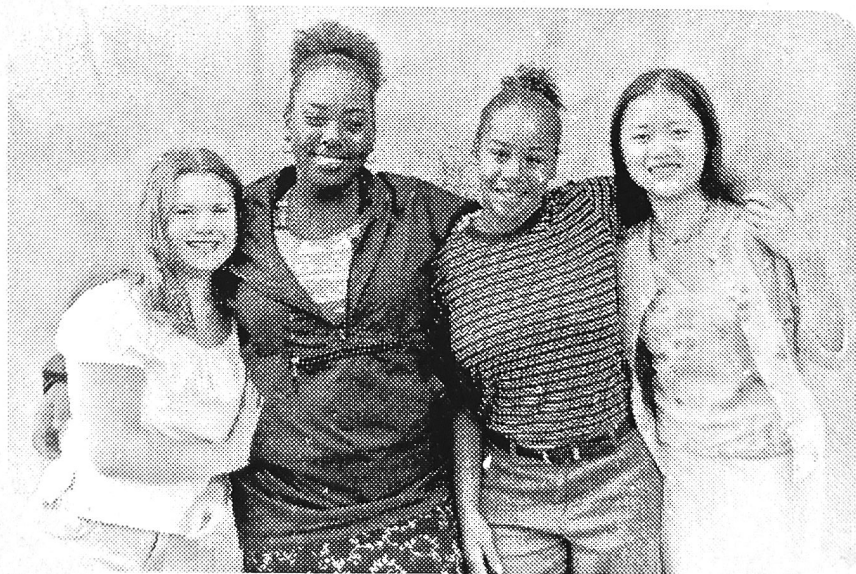


“WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

The community of women create the circle



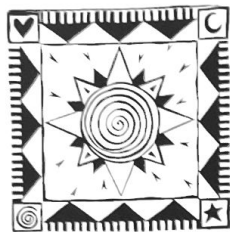
CREATED BY THE YWCA/COME INTO THE SUN GIRLS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
PHOTO/JOURNAL STUDENTS

Under the direction of Ruth Morgan, Director, Community Works
and Janet Clinger, YWCA/CITS

Book design by Rachel Arnold

"WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

PRESENTED BY COME INTO THE SUN/YWCA GIRLS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY WORKS



WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE 1999 HONOREES

NORMA HOTALING

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Exploitation), community activist

BERNICE LAWRY

Educator, volunteer with
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ANN MARIE SAYERS

Spokesperson/advocate for
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1999 PHOTO/JOURNAL PROJECT STUDENTS

ALEXIS BROUSSARD

CHRISTINE DOUGLAS

HANG LAM

PATRICE SANDERS

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, young women participating in Come Into The Sun's Photography/Journal Writing Project conducted a series of interviews with outstanding women in our community and photographed each subject. They also each chose a female family member or mentor from the previous generation to interview and photograph. They were asked to develop questions about the life experiences of the subjects and record their reactions to the answers.

"Women Making A Difference" reflects a series of concentric circles encompassing family, mentors, and the community of women. CITS believes that connections between generations of women foster resiliency, self-esteem, and hope for the future.

With the fragmentation of family and the resulting impoverishment of women and children at the heart of many problems young women face, we offer another possibility: connection with the community of women. The young women are inspired by learning about the accomplishments and struggles of these successful, creative women in our community. By talking with female family elders and mentors, they develop an appreciation for the women who preceded them on the trail and a stronger sense of their own historical roots.

The community of women represents healing old wounds, sharing across the barbed wires of color, class, and age, and reaching toward a new era defined by cooperation, harmony, and equality.

OUR STARS, OUR INSPIRATION

These women glow in our midst. They inspire awe. We are amazed by their beauty and courage when we listen to their stories, their struggles, their triumphs. We follow their lights, gathering strength and purpose to continue this journey, knowing we are moving toward sanctuary, toward “the quietness of the spirit, the freedom of the soul”.

They inspire awe.
beauty courage
struggles
triumphs



ANN MARIE SAYERS }

O ON OCTOBER 13, 1948, Ann Marie Sayers was born in Indian Canyon, California where her ancestors lived for thousands of years. After experiencing urban life as a young adult, she returned to Indian Canyon determined to build on her great grandfather's homesite. After a protracted struggle, she was able to secure the actual homesite.

SPOKESPERSON/ADVOCATE

FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Ann Marie serves as a spokesperson for indigenous people within the Costanoan/Ohlone territory. When archaeological sensitive areas are disturbed by development, she is "on-call" to oversee the handling of indigenous artifacts, burial sites and village sites. She is the tribal chairperson of Indian Canyon Nation, a living Indian heritage area where all indigenous people and "those of like mind" are welcome to use Indian Canyon for ceremonial purposes. She is the founder of Costanoan Indian Research, Incorporated and a contributing author of The Ohlone: Past and Present.

Q: WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR CULTURE THAT MAKES YOU HOLD ON TO IT?

A: IT IS IN MY BLOOD. MY DAUGHTER SINGS A SONG:
[IN THE MUTSUN LANGUAGE]

*pire kan'ama
sii kanpatytyan
hittew kannosow
sottow kannosow*

—IT MEANS EARTH MY BODY,
WATER MY BLOOD, AIR MY

BREATH, FIRE MY SPIRIT. WHAT MAKES ME WANT TO HOLD ON TO MY CULTURE IS THE WISDOM OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO STILL WORK WITH THE EARTH, WHO ARE STILL SURROUNDED BY THE PLACE THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN. THAT WISDOM CAN PREVENT OUR SOCIETY FROM BEING DESTROYED BY THE EFFECTS OF OVER-POPULATION.

Anne Marie Sayers is a well grounded woman not only because she is so spiritually connected to nature, but because she also acknowledges the history of her people. Life gleams in her eyes the way it only does in a few women. She teaches through example that it is possible to fulfill our dreams but it takes a lot of Hell before we can get there.—*Hang*

Honoring and respecting the ancestral spirit, our ancestors, is my reason for being. Regardless of where I may be in the world, I want to honor the original people whose ground I happen to be on. In our culture that is extremely important. Ceremonies are very important. My mother believed that when the ceremonies stop, so does the world. I know when I stop participating in ceremonies it is because no one is left. —Ann Marie Sayers

I felt comfortable talking with her and being around her. I could tell by how she talked to me that she has a real kind heart. She fought long and hard to get what rightfully belonged to her people: Indian Canyon. No matter how hard it was, she never gave up. She is a really strong person. I want to thank her because she inspired me.—*Alexis*

*earth my body,
water my blood,
air my breath...*"

I was born and raised in Indian Canyon and so was my mother and her grandfather and his mother and my mother's mother. We have always been there since the time that man starting walking on the earth. At the entrance of Indian Canyon there's the old village site that goes back tens of thousands of years. We have the allodial title. The majority of university professors don't know what you are talking about. The allodial title is pre-feudal which means before fee simple deed, before the European way of owning land. It is that connection we have with our mother, the earth that we have developed generation after generation after generation. It's a cultural resource, that connection we have with the earth. Growing up, as a child, I thought we were the richest people in the entire world. It wasn't until I was a senior in high school or the first year of college when I realized, from an economic point of view, we were really very poor. We had so much, primarily knowing what sacredness is, how to hold life sacred, how to care for people and for the life that surrounds us. Just to be free, just the openness. My godmother lived in Piedmont where she had just purchased a new house with a swimming pool, a tennis court, a big lawn. She asked her son to show the backyard to me. She was very proud. I am expecting this spectacular backyard and all I saw was the fence around it and it was so small in my mind's eye. I was nine years old at the time and it looked very enclosed. I was used to thousands of acres, the entire canyon. It's very open, rocky, hilly, but you can go for a several mile hike there. I loved it.

I'm living my dream right now—I love where I am right now, but I would go back to my childhood in a second! When I left the Canyon, I moved down to Beverly Hills. I wanted out of the Canyon. I wanted pavement. It was two miles of dirt road to get to the cabin. I wanted electricity. We still don't have electricity in Indian Canyon. I wanted out! I had no idea I'd have to work so hard to get back. I'm sure that Canyon, my daughter, is going to go through the same thing. She'll come back when it's time for her to come back. I will support my daughter in whatever she elects to do with all my heart, because I had that. I hope I am as unselfish with her

as my mother was with me. One of my dreams was to build on my great-grandfather's homesite. It wasn't until the 1980's that I was in the position to actually build a log cabin there. This is way out in the country, 15 miles south of Hollister, in the Gavilan Mountain range, in an area that is very difficult to get to because it's in the Cienega Valley. Cienega means swamp. During the Mission Period, at the Mission of San Juan Batista there were a lot of native peoples who did not like the restrictions at the Mission. They would go back to their own village and were usually brought back and one or two were killed to set an example. That is what happened to runaway Indians in the late 1700's and early 1800's. The native peoples who did not want to experience this went to Indian Canyon because no one could ever find it. You will definitely get lost even with a map and directions getting to Indian Canyon. That's why it is still there. It's "Indian country".

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Indian country is a legal term. That means it is in trust by the U.S. government for the California native peoples. It has the same status as a reservation. It's the only Indian country for 350 miles! That's from Santa Rosa to the North and to Santa Barbara on the coastal side of California. Honoring and respecting the ancestral spirit, our ancestors, is my reason for being. Regardless of where I may be in the world, I want to honor the original people whose ground I happen to be on. In our culture that is extremely important. When we had the property surveyed, the site of my great grandfather's cabin was 300 feet from our boundary, so it wasn't on our property. It took eight years of jumping through hoops, using the Indian Allotment Act of 1887 to reclaim it so I could build on my great-grandfather's homesite, with the help of a lot of people. It was not until 1988 I was able to fulfill that dream. At one point, I didn't think it was ever going to happen. There's nothing like believing in something with all your heart that you know is right and then people telling you no, it can't be done. I knew it was the thing I had to do. I had that passion to make it come true, because it's not hurting anyone. When I got so frustrated, I would go back into the Canyon and listen to the water, and then just start crying. The sound of water in our language, the Mutsun language, is rumme. It means water; it's the creek that holds that water; it's the sound of the water; it's the movement of the water. They are one and inseparable. It's a term in our language—not only does it mean water, but it's so much more. It's not just H₂O. That is the blood of the earth. I can remember when I would feel sorry for myself as a child, I would run up to the waterfall and cry. My dog would lick my tears and I listened to the water and would be okay. Water is very therapeutic. It would have

been so easy to say, "Forget it, I don't need this!" Listening to the water balanced me. I was back knowing what was right and fair. I involved a lot of people.

When I started out wanting to build a log cabin I was 29-30 years old. I finally had enough money in 1980. I had to show that I could generate revenue in this canyon. The canyon is very beautiful but it is a canyon, very rocky and hilly. You can't graze anything. It will support five cows for three months. I came up with raising West African pygmy goats. There are mountain lions, bobcats, raccoons, critters that live in the country. I could not leave the goats up there until I lived up there for fear of something happening to them. I met all the requirements placed on me and made a lot of the improvements. I purchased all my livestock, put in a corral in, put two miles of road in. I had already put the footing in and the barn was completed. I get a call from the Bureau of Land Management. "I'm sorry Ms. Sayers, but because of a lawsuit that the National Wildlife Federation has against us, we can never guarantee that we can issue you a trust patent to that land." I spent all this money and time and effort and then I am possibly not going to ever get this land. I could drop my application, but I'd already put out \$17,000 for 50% of the log cabin that was being cut and had to pay the balance when it arrived. I could continue, but be aware that I may never get a trust patent to this property. When I walked out of the BLM office, my legs were like rubber. I don't believe this! I'm going to need an attorney! I obtained an attorney with the California Indian Legal Service and we appealed their decision, the injunction that the National Wildlife Federation had against the BLM. We got testimony that showed Indian Canyon was inhabited pre-1934 and was not subject to classification under the BLM. We were exempt from the lawsuit.

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The legal system can be used in a good way when you find yourself between a rock and a hard place through no fault of your own. I had really good attorneys who specialized in Indian law and knew the appeal system with different government entities so that was relatively easy. After the land went into trust, three or four years ago, I went through 18 months of litigation with an upstream neighbor who, illegally, put in a dam and stopped our water from going through the Canyon to water his vineyards upstream. We were in six years of drought and he was taking all the water for his vineyard and leaving us with no water downstream. That eighteen months is when I got all my grey hair. I'd never been deposed before. You cannot put a dam on your own property when the consequence is creating

difficulty for others. You cannot stop water. You have to let it run its natural course. The attorneys kept demanding that I supply so much information. Every word, every sentence you say, you have to be able to substantiate it 100% in written documentation. You can do it when you know you're telling the truth, but substantiating it can be difficult and time consuming and wondering, where am I going to find it. Since we had a good law firm too, they were doing the same to our upstream neighbor. We opened up my great-grandfather's trust patent to all indigenous people, to all people who are in need of traditional lands for ceremony. We have a lot of Native Americans from the Bay area, from all over, who use the land. There are six different sweat lodges. They use the land for vision quest, for talking circles. We have an arbor and we're building a village house, a tupenta-ruk, a round house used for different ceremonies. We host a lot of different activities and events. The Peace and Dignity runners, who left Alaska and the tip of South America at the same time, ran all the way and met October 12 in Mexico City. Along the way they spent a night here and a night there. When they got to Indian Canyon, their first real stop, they spent four days and three nights. There were about 70 of them. Every year we put on the California Indian storytelling event. We've had people from France, Maori people from New Zealand. About two months ago, we had Saami, the indigenous people from Norway, as visitors. They are still very tribal. They have a ceremony similar to our sweat lodge. Blond hair, blue eyes, really beautiful. Aborigines come up to the Canyon for ceremonies. The Maori people, who came over to San Francisco for a conference, asked, 'Where are your traditional lands?' They ended up in the Canyon. When we had ceremony out by one of the waterfalls, Titamu, a Maori, was hitting the drum and singing. The back of your hair stood out because all these birds just started chirping at the same time. Titamu said, "Those are my ancestors who guided us to North Island in New Zealand." It was real special. It's "Country". My mother believed that when the ceremonies stop, so does the world. I too believe that. I know when I stop participating in ceremonies it is because no one is left. To us ceremonies are extremely important.

Q: What is it about your culture that makes you hold onto it?

Ann Marie: It's in my blood. My daughter sings

a song:

pire kan'ama

sii kanpatytyan

hittew kannosow

sottow kannosow

--In the Musun language it means earth my body, water my blood, air my breath, fire my spirit. What makes me want to hold on to my culture is the wisdom of the indigenous people, people who still work with the earth, who are still surrounded by the place they always have been. That wisdom can prevent our society from being destroyed by the effects of over-population.

Recently I was asked to speak and show some slides on Indian Canyon at the Natural Resource Conservation Service. We were the tribal hosts last year for their harmony workshop. Eighty District Conservationists were listening to California Indians to know how to implement our knowledge into their existing practices. Another speaker showed slides of downtown Santa Barbara and along Highway 101 where 986 coastal oak and live oak trees were growing. Then, 6 months later, he showed a slide of the same place with only 43 oak trees left. It was all put into vineyards. Do you know how much energy oak trees provide? It's all going away for what—money! The return on the acre that grapes will produce. It seems that everywhere I am looking there are more vineyards coming up. Soon, there will be so many grapes that they will never get their money back.

Right on San Francisco Bay is a place called Crissy Fields. When the military had it, it was an airport runway. The National Park Service is putting everything back the way it was pre-contact, before the Spanish, De Anza, Portola, came up here. They are recreating the marsh and Strawberry Island and bringing in the Bay. It is going to be beautiful. They are planting indigenous plants, like mock heather, lupin, plants that grew here naturally. It is amazing how they are doing it. When they got down about 6 to 8 feet, they came across midden, a real dark soil. When archaeologists see this midden, they know it is

concrete evidence that American Indians lived here. They bring in the Costanoan Indians because now they are dealing with our heritage. The National Park Service is working very successfully with the descendants who are monitoring the archaeologically sensitive areas at Crissy Fields.

We watch the archaeologists work to make sure that when they come across any cultural materials, the possibility of even a burial, that it is done respectfully and in the manner we feel is right. When they do come across burials, this is how they have to address it.

Q: What do you see in the future for yourself and your people?

Ann Marie: Right now, I'm living my dream. It is emphasizing the importance, particularly of California Indians, because 50% of California Indians are not federally recognized. Many people believe we are all dead. This government paid five dollars a head, five dollars bounty to kill California Indians! In excess of one million, one hundred-thousand dollars was distributed for bounties for California Indians.

In the 1840's, 50's and 60's, particularly during the Gold Rush days, to say you were an Indian was issuing your own death warrant. When California became a state in 1850, the state issued a 450,000 dollar bond issue, referred to as "the genocide policy", to kill California Indians. They couldn't move them West because West was out in the ocean! That money was reimbursed by the federal government. The policy was 100% genocide. Many of us who survived. We're still here.

There are a lot of American Indians who don't believe that California Indians are still alive. We're always talked about as being in the past. The first day of school my daughter came home crying. 'Mama, a boy in school told me that if I was Indian that I was dead.' I tickled her on both sides and she started laughing. I said, 'You don't seem dead to me!' It's just what people think. We're just making our presence known out there.

At Indian Canyon we don't have electricity and there are two miles of dirt road to get to where

we are, but we've had our website for the last four years!

[For those interested in contacting Indian Canyon: <http://bob.ucsc.edu/costano>] We've won three or four gold medals for having one of the best political websites globally. Slowly, we're getting out there.

Q: *What do you think is the biggest challenge facing young women today?*

Ann Marie: Population. There are just more people and more people and more people. We're at 6 billion people globally. It took a million years just to reach 1 billion, then 110 years to reach 2 billion, then 30 years to reach 3 billion, then 15 years to reach 4 billion, then 12 years to reach 5 billion, that was in 1988. We are at 6 billion right now. That's going pretty damn fast! The biggest challenge facing young women today, the realization of population. If you have children, only have one.

Q: *What are you the most proud of?*

Ann Marie: I enjoy young people seeking the truth. What you are doing right now, finding out other people's points of view. The way I think and the way you think may be different about some things. For example, we have a lot of college students who come up to the Canyon. I ask everyone to smudge themselves, to purify themselves with sage ceremonially. Then I give them the history of Indian Canyon. I have a staff, a walking stick with a piece of fur rapped around it tied with leather and then some shells hanging.

This particular day the sun was shining down through the arbor, through the big live oak trees. I said, "In my culture the wisdom of the elders is so sought after." I'm holding up the staff. I'm looking at it and can see that the fur is brown and white with some grey hairs in it. "If I had an elder tell me that this fur around my stick is purple, I'm going to say it's purple. I'm not going to argue with them. I'm not going to tell them, it's not what I see, because I know they see more than I do. In time I will understand why they say that it is purple." After lunch I had eight of those students come up to me and say, "Ann Marie, you know when you

were holding up the staff, the way the sun was hitting it, from where we were standing, it was purple!" I know if I have an elder tell me something that I don't see, I must agree with them because they have the wisdom where I have yet to be. I am most proud of that wisdom being respected. It's young adults, just like you, going out and looking for other perspectives, that's what I love.

Q: *What do you think a young woman needs today?*

Ann Marie: I believe our society is absent of the sacred, understanding the true value of holding life sacred. If you've never been exposed to what sacredness is, it's difficult to understand it. For me, life is sacred, all life, particularly human life.

As a child I can never remember wanting for anything, because it always seemed to come. Everything was always shared. My mother would feed 20 or 30 people every weekend. She put so much time and effort into it. People would bring down cases of sardines, tuna or if they were working in the fields pulling garlic, they'd bring a lug. When people left, she handed out something they didn't bring, that someone else had brought. Watching my mother and other people cook on a huge granite rock barbecue, I remember thinking, "I'm not going to do this when I get older!"

I don't cook for other people every weekend as my mother did, but there are so many ceremonies that I participate in, the food is all brought in and there is a feast that is shared. What I share is what is the most sacred to me and that is the canyon so people can have ceremonies there.

Last weekend we had the Bear Ceremony, a very sacred ceremony. We had the calling of the ancestral spirits of the canyon. Basically it is asking for guidance so they accept the Bear Ceremony. Over four days it takes place, it is done in the manner that will honor the ancestors of that land. This woman had a black tee-shirt with a bear on it. I said, "Wow, that bear is coming right out of the tee-shirt!" It was really beautiful. After the ceremony, there were three or four families who came up to the cabin, to my home, about a mile from where the arbor is where the ceremony had taken place. We

had coffee and iced tea, that's my dinner I share! When the woman came down from the waterfall, she gave me the tee-shirt. It was so spontaneous. I was so moved.

I was driving home from Tucson, Arizona. I got as far as Casa Grande where they were having the Autumn-tosh festival. They have a rodeo and a parade and there a lot of vendors selling different items. I went through the entire town and not one hotel had a room. When I stopped at a little diner where there were local indigenous people I asked them why every room was taken. One of the girls said she was a student at Arizona State and was not going to be there that weekend. "You are welcome to stay in my dormitory." I said, "How can you offer your own room to someone you've never met before?" She looked at me, "Well you're a skin." She took me to her dormitory and I had a place to stay. We communicated for many years after that. It was beautiful. The giving is part of life, part of who you are. Sharing what you have with others. I may not share my cooking with others, but the canyon I share with as many people as I can.

Q: What advice would you give young women today?

Ann Marie: To live their dream. Remember, whatever it is that you want to do, it can be done. It may take longer. It may cost a hell of a lot of money, but if it is right, and that passion is there, and enough compromises are made along the way, it can be done. Don't ever lose your integrity, but live your dream. Make your dream come true. That's what I'm doing.

Q: What do you like to do for fun?

Ann Marie: When I'm working, I'm doing what I like to do, so that is my fun too. I enjoy monitoring. I like coming across concrete evidence of our existence of the California Indians in Crissy Fields that confirms why I am here. Watching the archaeologists, Matthew Clark, the director of the dig at Crissy Field, in particular, treat some of the materials with such excitement and such sacredness is exciting. Paul Scolari, the liaison with the National Park Service, gave me a copy of our agreement,

what the native peoples requested and what the National Park Service is trying to accomplish. It was almost like a treaty signing. Paul had a little ceremony that was very special. His goal is to firmly connect the local indigenous people and their most likely descendants with the National Park Service in this project. I said, "Good, I'll help you. Let's do it!"