

Harrah's Ak-Chin, a Community HERO

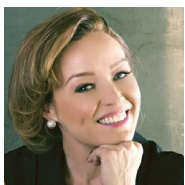
Founded on the importance of People – Planet – Play

by Tyler Butler

IMPORTANCE OF PLANET

The Ak-Chin Indian Community has deep roots in farming and agriculture. Protecting and sustaining the land, air and water is part of the fabric of the Community. Harrah's Entertainment takes that pledge seriously. Through Harrah's enterprise-wide Code Green program, the Ak-Chin community is empowered to continue its long-standing commitment to sustainability.

Code Green's sustainability programs are focused on reducing the property's carbon footprint and its energy and water consumption, and recycling. Through these efforts, Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino supports civic programs vital to the Maricopa community's success, including organizations involved with education, children and families, adults, the environment, healthcare, and the arts.



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► People. Planet. Play. Service to these fundamentals is integral in the long-standing traditions and culture of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, which has a commitment to preserve and impact not only the tribal community but neighboring communities in a positive way. So, when the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) in 1988, the Ak-Chin Indian Community recognized the potential benefits to tribes and the opportunity to build a business while aiding society.

Ak-Chin was strategic in deciding how to go about launching these endeavors, looking to Harrah's, a part of Caesars entertainment. This established, respected entertainment brand joined as their management partner and, together, Harrah's and the tribal leaders built a successful gaming enterprise. This alliance provided an opportunity for economic self-sufficiency and secure financial resources to invest in infrastructure and social services programs for the community.

"We chose to partner with Harrah's, part of Caesars Entertainment, in part because of their long and successful history managing quality gaming and entertainment venues, but also their commitment to work alongside our tribal leaders and invest with us were deciding factors," says Ak-Chin Indian Community Chairman Robert Miguel. "And now, more than 25 years later, we continue to reap the benefits of this very successful partnership."

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino places great importance on corporate social responsibility and, along with the other Caesars Entertainment brands, places an emphasis on a diverse workplace that provides opportunities for professional growth, a commitment to the community through acts of service and financial support, and an environmentally responsible operation as well as an economic impact that is felt throughout the region. From the beginning, corporate social responsibility has been at the core of the casino's business.

The partnership's most successful social impact campaign could be its Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino HERO Program. The goal of HERO is to strengthen organizations and programs in the communities where employees and their families live and work. The employee-based volunteer program enables Harrah's staff and their families to make noteworthy and visible contributions to the community by donating their time, skills, expertise and compassion to dozens of volunteer projects throughout the community.

In addition, the HERO Committee funnels in-kind and monetary donations into the community. In 2020 alone, the committee gave \$50,000 to worthy causes.

Volunteerism is at the core of a lot of these efforts. HERO volunteers work tirelessly throughout the year, providing hands-on experiences for Harrah's team members. This work has afforded the company the honor of being included in the *Civic 50* as one of the country's most community-minded companies. To achieve its PEOPLE PLANET PLAY goals, team



members and senior leaders alike are empowered to support their local communities.

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino employees are active, ongoing volunteers in the community. Despite the pandemic and decreased in-person volunteer opportunities, 90% of Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino employees still volunteered more than 9,000 hours in 2020 to such organizations as Sun Lakes Lions Foundation, Maricopa Lions Club, Casa Grande Roller Derby, Maricopa Police Foundation, American Cancer Society-Maricopa Relay for Life, HHHOHP Stand Down for Veterans, United Services Blood Drive, Area Agency on Aging, Pat Tillman Foundation, F.O.R. Maricopa Food Drive, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Maricopa Against Abuse, United Way of Pinal County and Feed My Starving Children.

"We're proud that we've established a reputation for giving back to the community," says Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Senior Vice President and General Manager Michael Kintner. "I believe, and hope others agree, that our partnership with the Ak-Chin Indian Community is a proven model for how casinos can ultimately be a catalyst for positive change in a community." This ethos, brought forth by the casino's Code of Commitment, is the guide that governs the conduct of the organization. It is Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino's public pledge to guests, team members, communities, business partners and all those they reach that it will honor the trust they have placed in it. The Code outlines the robust platform of corporate governance, ethical conduct and integrity. PEOPLE PLANET PLAY is the framework underpinning the Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. ■

