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NIEA RESOLUTION 07-02

TITLE: SUPPORT UNITY IN A YOUTH-LED CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROMOTING ADVOCACY, POLICY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1969 for the purpose of advocating , planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, NIEA, as the largest national organization of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) is a national organization that is dedicated to fostering the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth, and to helping build a strong, unified, and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement, and

WHEREAS, thirteen UNITY affiliated youth councils from throughout the United States, through a project called Celebrate Native Health, are making investments in their local communities to address the national childhood obesity epidemic by promoting advocacy, policy, and environmental change in their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, American Indians and Alaska Natives have a disproportionately high prevalence of obesity and related health diseases, and

WHEREAS, adult obesity rates have increased from 15 percent in 1980 to 32 percent in 2004 and over the past three decades, rates of obesity in the United States have more than doubled among children ages 2 to 5 and more than tripled among those ages 6 to 11 (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006); and

WHEREAS, many obesity-related health conditions once thought applicable only to adults are now being seen in children and with increasing frequency, including high blood pressure, early symptoms of hardening of the arteries, type 2 diabetes, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, polycystic ovary disorder, and disordered breathing during sleep. (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2006); and

WHEREAS, emerging research suggests an association between overweight and obesity and lower academic achievement. (The Learning Connection, Action for Healthy Kids, 2006).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Indian Education Association hereby commits to advocate for the fight against childhood obesity ; strives to raise the level of awareness for environmental change in relation to childhood obesity and native communities; and encourages its members to advocate at the local, state and national levels for policy change pertaining to school menus, physical education requirements, improving access to affordable healthy foods, and creating more opportunities and safer communities for physical activity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Indian Education Association joins the efforts of United National Indian Tribal Youth Inc. (UNITY), the participating youth councils, the various agencies and organizations, and all others committed to promoting Native health and preventing childhood obesity.