

For Immediate Release

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Sam McCracken Youth Project Strengthens Board with Three Leaders Committed to Advancing Opportunities

August 12, 2026 – The Sam McCracken Youth Project (SMCYP), a Native-led nonprofit dedicated to advancing the mental, physical and cultural well-being of Native youth, today announced the appointment of Kathy Baird, Charles W. Galbraith and Mary Hiratsuka Mazilo to its Board of Directors.

The appointments come at a pivotal moment in the organization's first year as it expands partnerships, deepens its work in community and builds a strong foundation to invest in the next generation. Collectively, Baird, Galbraith and Hiratsuka Mazilo bring expertise spanning business, law, public policy, communications, organizational leadership and community engagement strengthening SMCYP's ability to grow its impact while remaining rooted in values.

"Throughout my life, I've learned that our greatest strength has always come from our people. When we bring together leaders who are deeply connected to our communities, grounded in our culture and committed to creating more opportunities for the next generation, we create lasting change," said Sam McCracken, founder and CEO of the Sam McCracken Youth Project.

"Kathy, Charlie and Mary are united in their understanding of the challenges and the possibilities facing Native youth and believe that culture is one of our greatest strengths," continued McCracken.

As members of the Board of Directors, Baird, Galbraith and Hiratsuka Mazilo will help guide the organization's long-term strategy, strengthen partnerships and advance its mission to improve the mental, physical and cultural well-being of Native youth.

Kathy Baird serves as U.S. Chief Impact Officer for McDonald's where she leads the company's U.S. Impact Strategy across communications, government relations, sustainability and community impact. She brings over 25 years of leadership experience spanning Fortune 500 companies, media and government with roles including the Chief Communications Officer at The Washington Post and senior leadership roles at Nike. An enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Baird is Sicangu Lakota and Oneida and also serves on the boards of the American Indian College Fund, Indian Country Today and Nia Tero.

Charles W. Galbraith is Co-Chair of Jenner & Block's Native American Law Practice and a nationally recognized attorney representing Tribal governments and Native

organizations. A citizen of the Navajo Nation, he brings extensive experience in Tribal law, public policy and government, including service in the Obama White House leading engagement with Tribal Nations, as well as previous roles as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and legislative advisor to a United States Senator.

Mary Hiratsuka Mazilo is the founder of Malii LLC and brings more than 15 years of experience across public policy, talent strategy, organizational performance and enterprise transformation. Her career includes leadership roles in Congress and Blackstone's Portfolio Operations team where she helped organizations drive growth and transformation. A Curyung Tribal Council citizen of Aleut and Yup'ik heritage, Mary also serves as a director and shareholder of Choggiung Limited and is a shareholder of Bristol Bay Native Corporation.

"I am honored to welcome Kathy, Charlie, and Mary to the SMCYP Board of Directors. Each brings a unique depth of experience, perspective and leadership that will strengthen our organization as we build this work together," said Angelique Albert, CEO Native Forward and Vice Chair of SMCYP. "I look forward to the wisdom, energy, and vision they will bring as we continue building SMCYP and investing in the next generation."

These appointments reflect SMCYP's commitment to build early momentum and ensure the organization has the leadership and expertise to expand its impact in Native communities from the very beginning and for years to come.

About the Sam McCracken Youth Project

SMCYP is a Native-led nonprofit grounded in Indigenous values, lived experience, and community leadership. Guided by founding board members: Sam McCracken (*Fort Peck Sioux*) Chair, Angelique Albert (*Salish & Kootenai*), Vice Chair, Janee' Kassanavoid (*Comanche*), Eric Sprunk (former COO Nike, Inc.) Secretary, and Governor Stephen Lewis (*Gila River Indian Community*), the organization advances culturally responsive wellness programming through four integrated pillars: (1) Native youth wellness summits and community activations; (2) community capacity building (3) policy and advocacy; and, (4) strategic partnership and field education.

SMCYP seeks to build relationships with tribal communities, address the needs of community, and support new partnerships to advance wellbeing of Native American youth. Over its first five years, the organization aims to serve 5,000+ Native youth across 30 tribal communities.