



PEGGY PEATTE/Union-Tribune photos

**Let's see:** Christina Gonzalez, 15, one of the artists of five anti-violence ads produced by kids from Indian reservations, watched with her grandmother, Patricia Agneta, as the public service announcements were shown.

## These cartoons carry serious message

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**R**INCON INDIAN RESERVATION — The animated images show a husband and wife arguing while their little boy cries. A jealous teen-ager threatening to punch his girlfriend. A bird getting drunk and knocking its egg out of a nest.

They are cute cartoons with serious messages, 30-second public-service announcements intended to be aired soon on San Diego television stations.

And they were conceived, drawn and animated by children.

Fifty youths, ages 9 to 18, from nine North County Indian reservations produced the ads — with help from a Los Angeles firm — as part of a grant-funded project aimed at curbing domestic violence and child abuse.

The five announcements were screened yesterday at the Rincon Tribal Hall, in a room festooned with balloons and filled with proud parents, children and tribal officials.

"I think it's great," Rincon tribal Chairman Ed Arviso said after the screenings. "When the children get involved, maybe the parents will learn something."

The project was coordinated by the Indian Health Council, an outpatient clinic at Rincon that serves nine North County reservations. It was undertaken as part of a three-year, \$315,000 grant from the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning. The clinic is using the grant for this and other programs intended to curb domestic violence and child abuse in local American Indian communities.

The ads screened yesterday had some Indian



**Animated:** This cartoon was one of several drawn by kids from Indian reservations that carried a message.

themes. In one, a boy whose parents are fighting picks up the phone and calls the tribal office. A message at the end reads, "Trouble at home? See the Tribal Council. It's good medicine."

But they are intended to be seen — and hopefully appreciated — by the general public. Dr. Gustavo Galindo, director of the health council's

Human Services Department, said the announcements are expected to begin airing within the next month or so on most San Diego stations.

The kids conceived the story lines and drew the figures with help from two professionals of AnimAction, a Topanga firm specializing in children's public-service animation projects.

Working start to finish in just two days in June at the Rincon Tribal Hall, children were divided into five groups of 10. First, they had to agree on a concept, then appoint the best artist or artists to do the main drawings.

Others traced and colored the 260 frames needed for each 30-second spot. Still others drew what animators call "in betweens," such as an arm moving from frame to frame while the rest of the figure remains intact.

At yesterday's screening — which began with a ceremonial prayer and ended with servings of cake and punch — participating children said they were happy to have taken part in the project.

"It was fun," said John Henry Cassell, 9, of Los Coyotes reservation. "We got to animate and we got to draw it ourselves."

Ashlie Cowie, 13, of Rincon, said she likes "to draw and stuff," but she also enjoyed helping to spread an important message: "You shouldn't be hitting."

Stephen Peters, citrus grove manager at the Pauma Indian Reservation, said he was proud of his 11-year-old daughter Pauline's contribution.

"Nowadays you hear a lot about domestic violence," he said. "Things like that help when it's coming from children."