Hoop Dancers honor Native American Heritage at Tin Can Alley fundraiser

The sound of the drum and traditional hoop dancers are more than just an art form. It helps young kids learn about their culture and gives them confidence.

 **[Stephanie Muñiz](https://www.koat.com/news-team/6cda2f39-d99f-4a0b-aecf-5e7ba7386b3e)**

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**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. —**

Hoop Dancing is a traditional Native American and New Mexican dance form.

Steve LaRance, the co-chair at [Lightning Boy Foundation](https://www.lightningboyfoundation.com/), said, “We try through the dancing, through the Native American hoop dance, to create awareness about the fragility of our planet.”

One of the messages through the music and dance of happiness and unity.

"Many of them are champion dancers or champion competitors," LaRance said.

The Lightning Boy foundation was created in honor of Valentino Rivera, a young boy who loved hoop dancing but tragically passed away in 2016.

His father, George Rivera, said Valentino always had a love for hoop dancing.

“At four or five years old this guy was asked to go dance at pearl harbor and dance for the USS Santa Fe," Rivera said.

Valentino’s mom and dad wanted to keep his love for the dance alive by teaching other kids.

The sound of the drum and the traditional hoop dancers are more than just an art form.

"We are seeing some of the young kids just get a lot of confidence in their life and are not afraid to do anything," Rivera said.

The celebrations at [Tin Can Alley](https://www.tincanalleyabq.com/) also highlight Native American artists that make sculptures, jewelry and pottery.

“The artwork that the Native American people do, it's timeless. And it's very cultural. Each piece is made by hand so it's embossed with culture and the spirit of the artist,” LaRance said.