

IMPACT STORIES FROM PARTNERS & PARTICIPANTS

Throughout the year, NRC hears about progress from our Program Partners and participants on the reservations. This, along with quantitative measures, helps us know that our guidelines and services are working in reservation communities. Here is a running list of their stories and some related facts about volume of distribution.

1. Partner & Participant Impact: Zuni Senior Center

Karen Leekity serves as the Supervisor at the Zuni Senior Center in Zuni, New Mexico. In addition to making sure that Zuni Elders eat at the center or receive their meals through home delivery, she also takes care to look out for other things they may need assistance with, such as transportation or housing. With one Elderly couple – Neal and Shirley Natewa – she had tried to help make their home more accessible and their daily lives less stressful. Neal is diabetic. He's recovering from his second stroke and is facing a possible kidney transplant. Shirley is diabetic with complications and undergoes dialysis three times a week.



Shirley's dialysis visits are highly stressful because the ramp leading from the house to the car is very challenging for her and Neal to navigate without assistance. The Natewas had been in need of a ramp and other home repairs for the past 8 years. Yet wherever they sought help, the response was always, "We're short on materials" or "We're short on funding" or "We don't have the manpower."

About 40% of reservation housing is considered inadequate and one in five reservation homes lack plumbing. On the Navajo Reservation, 85% of the homes lack utilities and many lack running water. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, 39% of the homes lack electricity. Often, these housing conditions put the health and well being of the Elders at risk.

Working with NRC as a Program Partner, Karen was finally able to secure the crucial home repairs needed by these Zuni Elders. The ramp up to their home is now accessible and safe. Shirley's wheelchair doesn't get caught up in the rips and tears of the old linoleum; the flooring has been replaced. Their bathroom meets ADA needs now. Our Native American contractor, Curtis Morgan, even installed drywall in their entry to seal the room and save on utility bills. He did this at no charge; he just felt compelled to contribute something with his own money and resources.



It was this spirit of partnership and giving that enabled the Natewas to celebrate their anniversary in a safer and less stressful home environment and freed them up to concentrate on their health. Our partner says that years of roadblocks are gone, and the Natewas are thankful for the assistance. Shirley said, “I was happy someone came... someone thought about us.”

To further reduce health risks to Elders, NRC funded over \$440,000 worth of home repairs and other weatherization services on the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, Rosebud, Pine Ridge, Spirit Lake, and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservations.

2. Partner & Participant Impact: Hopi Senior Center

Raymond Namoki is the head cook at the Hopi Senior Center in Kykotsmovi Village (Third Mesa) on the Hopi Reservation. This senior center serves congregate meals to Hopi Elders, who are very proud of the fact that they are dry farmers. Against all odds (rough land, harsh wind, low rainfall), they manage to eek out a crop every year with knowledge handed down from generation to generation.

Although it's important to have enough food, it's also important to have nutritious food. A lack of protein and fresh vegetables are known to have a direct relationship to the high rates of diabetes and other health issues in Indian country. For Hopi, dry farming is their main source of food, and their main crop is chili peppers. Unfortunately, 2009 was a bad year for farming.

NRC began delivering a standard food package to Raymond each month. He receives beans, canned fruit and vegetables, oatmeal, flour, and other items that will help keep down the food center's costs and ensure more nutritious meals for the Elders. These provisions also supplement Raymond's traditional staples of roasted peppers

and blue marbles (dumplings made with blue corn mush). Food boxes were also provided for Hopi Elders to take home. These included cereal, breakfast bars, water, tea, soup, and fruit, along with some personal care items.



Altogether in 2009, NRC provided staple foods to 118 food banks, senior centers, and soup kitchens on 33 reservations – enough food for over 86,000 people.

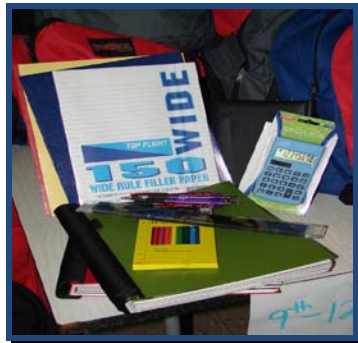
3. Partner & Participant Impact: Eagle Butte School District

Chip Gunville is the Title I Director at the Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. She was thrilled when she learned she could request enough school supplies for the 1000+ students attending kindergarten through high school in her community. She was also thrilled that NRC could provide supplies that were relevant for different grade levels. Chip was concerned because, like NRC, she believes that education is key to positive change in Indian country.



On the reservations, many students are discouraged from attending school because their families are unable to provide supplies for them. Unemployment ranges from 35% to 85% and the cost of school supplies burdens the family budget. Affordable stores with the needed school supplies are often an hour or more away, and transportation or funding for fuel is often limited. Without school supplies, children fall behind in school quickly. This attributes to the high school dropout rates that also reach as high as 70% on some reservations.

As a Program Partner of National Relief Charities, Chip received backpacks, notebooks, pencils, crayons, glue sticks, rulers, and other items to help her students be more successful from day one of the fall semester. She used these Backpack and Basics products to entice families to come in early and register their children before school starts. Boosting early registration helps the school be more prepared for their student body once the doors officially open. School Superintendent, Dr. Edward Slocum, shared the registration challenges they face each year as school approaches. After the school supplies were distributed, we asked Dr. Slocum whether his goals for increasing early enrollment were met. His appreciation was clear and he said “NRC’s school supplies help Native American students start the first day of school on a level playing field.”



In 2009, NRC provided school supplies for nearly 19,800 Native American students in 62 reservation schools.

4. Program Partner Impact: Desert View Animal Clinic

Dr. Carol Holgate is a veterinarian who operates the Desert View Animal Clinic in Tuba City, Arizona. This partner coordinates a family foster program to place puppies with a volunteer family for 10 to 12 weeks. During this time,

the foster family cares for the animals and provides their food, shelter, and water. They also bring the puppies to the clinic for check-ups and vaccinations. At one point, Dr. Holgate had 13 foster families caring for animals and 3 puppy litters awaiting placement.

Like many clinics on the reservations, this clinic recruits additional foster families, but the number of litters typically outweighs the number of volunteers. While the puppies remain in the clinic's care, they feed and treat the animals, typically on meager budgets. To make matters worse in 2009, some clinics lost their donation of puppy food from a large supplier, and their foster homes were footing the bill for the food. Situations like this can discourage families from volunteering for foster care.

During the year, NRC provided four shipments of dog food and supplies to Dr. Holgate's clinic and subsidized the cost of several mobile spay and neuter clinics. This support helped cut operational costs for the clinic, eased the burden on volunteer foster families, and eased the rate of animal proliferation in and around Tuba City. Dr. Holgate is a dedicated partner who is working to improve health conditions for the four-leggeds and the people in her community. Without her, there would be many more strays and infected animals roaming the Navajo Reservation and many more people facing animal-related health risks.



In 2009, NRC also partnered with the Blackhat Society, McKinley County Humane Society, and Navajo Nation Veterinary & Livestock Clinic. We provided nearly 13,000 lbs of food and hundreds of feeding bowls, collars, blankets, towels, treats, and cash grants to help these partners encourage foster care, adoption, and healthier communities.

5. Program Partner Impact: Crownpoint Division of Public Health

Eli Bighthumb is a School Health Coordinator in the Navajo community of Crownpoint, NM. Eli requests support from NRC for Just Move It (JMI), an annual health project of the Navajo Nation. The purpose of JMI is to encourage people to be physically active for better health.

Healthcare and access to healthcare is a major concern for Native Americans in NRC's service area. The rate of type 2 diabetes is 4 times higher on the Navajo Reservation and 3 times higher on Pine Ridge Reservation than the national average. The cervical cancer rate on Pine Ridge is 5 times higher than the national average and cancer-related disparities are higher for Natives than for any other minority group in the U.S. Native Americans die at higher rates than other Americans from tuberculosis (750%), diabetes (420%), and suicide (190%), and access to preventative healthcare on the reservations is typically limited to Indian Health Service emergency rooms or clinics.

By working with health partners such as Eli, and providing basic necessities such as shampoo, soap, and toothpaste for health classes, or bottled water, sunscreen, and hats for community health events, NRC is helping our partners encourage Native Americans to take a more proactive role in their own healthcare. We are encouraged to see that participation for JMI has grown from 500 to 36,000 participants in roughly a decade.

In 2009, NRC provided basic necessities to 1,227 health programs, CHRs, and residential facilities. This helped them serve over 300,000 participants and increase participation at health classes, health fairs, screenings, health appointments, and home visits. We also granted about \$140,000 to health programs.



6. Partner & Participant Impact: Bennett County Community Action Program

Mary Thomsen works at the Community Action Program (CAP) on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The purpose of CAP is to make a positive impact on the causes and effects of poverty and the 200 individuals who qualify for their assistance. Over the past 6 years, Mary has participated in NRC's health, incentives, and holiday services to make a difference for the people she serves.



At no time are the disparities between Indian country and the rest of America as noticeable as during the holidays. Poverty, the lack of transportation and shopping, isolation and despair run high on the reservations and their impact is heightened when families go without a Thanksgiving meal or a single Christmas gift and Elders feel forgotten.

Creating opportunities to participate in the holidays helps our partners support a sense of well being in their communities. NRC provided Mary with Thanksgiving meal boxes for 50 Elders and their families. Each family received a turkey with stuffing, potatoes, corn, pie crust and filling, as well as a pumpkin from a local church. Mary felt that the meal boxes were more responsive and respectful to the needs of Elders in Bennett County: "I think they (the Elders) enjoy this better because they can do it themselves" and provide a meal for their loved ones without having to worry about the cost.



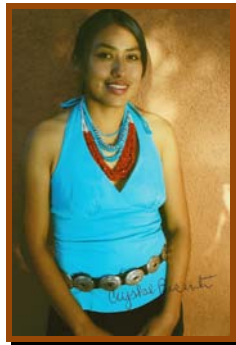
In 2009, NRC ensured that Native Americans in 517 communities participated in the major holidays, along with the rest of America. We provided Program Partners nearly 38,500 Christmas stockings for children, nearly 13,000 Elder gift bags, Easter eggs and toys for over 16,000 children, and holiday food boxes or community meals for about 57,500 people.

7. Participant Impact: Crystal Becenti

Crystal Becenti is a master's degree student who is studying Clinical Psychology, a field she can use back home on the Navajo Reservation. Crystal believes that her first-hand experience with the challenges of living on the reservation, cultural competence, and college education will come together to help her provide a balanced approach to mental health care for reservation youth. Crystal maintains 3 part-time jobs in order to stay in school and still finds time to mentor American Indian high school students.

College degrees are somewhat scarce in Indian country. Only 17% of American Indians who graduate from high school make it to college, and only 11% attain a college degree. Despite the positive potential of American Indian students, the obstacles they face in getting to college and staying in college result in other Americans being 3 times more likely to have a college degree.

NRC awarded Crystal Becenti one of our first-ever graduate scholarships. Because she demonstrated certain key traits such as motivation, determination, community service, and concern for others, she fit the profile of our other scholarship students – over 95% of who complete the college year for which they were awarded.



In 2009, NRC invested over \$1.5 million dollars in scholarships, emergency funds, and grants to support Native American college students and to challenge our partner colleges to raise more funds earmarked for Native students.