



Building Strong, Self-Sufficient American Indian Communities

For Immediate Release

October 24, 2012

Media Contact

Helen Oliff, National Relief Charities
877-281-0808, holiff@nrc1.org

Funders Are Supporting a Survival Kit for Native American Youth

Sherman, TX and national offices — National Relief Charities (NRC) is combating obesity and diabetes among Native youth with a "Cooking on the Rez Survival Kit" that is gaining the attention of funders.

Native American people living on reservations are the poorest minority group in the US and they suffer some of the highest rates of food insecurity, diabetes, obesity, and other nutrition-related illnesses. According to the USDA, almost all Indian reservations are located within a [food desert](#). A new "Cooking on the Rez Survival Kit" by [National Relief Charities](#) aims to help Native American youth address these challenges with basic kitchen tools, recipes, nutritional information, and skills on how to locate and access food resources in the local community.

National Relief Charities is a nonprofit dedicated to quality of life for Native Americans living on poverty-stricken reservations. NRC has offices in SD, AZ, TX, and VA and provides services year-round to 75 reservations in 11 states.

On many Indian reservations, youth do the food shopping for themselves and their families. This is often linked to the high poverty on reservations, high numbers of children living with grandparents, lack of transportation to isolated food stores, and other socio-economic ills. In addition, when youth shop, they tend to purchase foods that are locally accessible, familiar, and convenient to prepare but expensive and lacking in nutritional value. Many such youth lack the skills and tools to shop for and prepare healthy, balanced meals at home. This contributes to malnutrition, obesity, nutrition-related diseases, and a pattern of poor eating habits.

The "Cooking on the Rez Survival Kit" is a holistic approach to equip Native teens with the skills and information they need to work around their resource constraints and eat healthy. Youth will learn about basic cooking techniques, smart food shopping, cooking with government commodities, and using resources from the local community (such as bison, fish, and traditional foods) to create healthy meals for themselves and their families.

"The Rez Survival Kit is expected to stretch resources while decreasing poor food choices and resulting health challenges," said Kelly Gibson, NRC Program Director. "Native American youth who receive and use the kit will also build valuable life skills for self-sufficiency."

The Rez Survival Kit project is being supported by the [Cigna Foundation](#) and [Newman's Own Foundation](#). National Relief Charities is continuing to seek additional funding, which would allow them to expand the scope of the project and its impact.



NEWMAN'S OWN
FOUNDATION

To inquire about the "Rez Survival Kit," call 866-556-2472 or email Operations@nrc1.org.