



Santa Is Coming To Town



Santa and Mabel Blue Thunder with a Fruit Basket Santa stops at Rockyford School

Around the holidays, National Relief Charities helps ensure that “cheer” is the norm for American Indians living on reservations. A 501(c)3 nonprofit, NRC does this by partnering with reservation programs.

One example of partnering is that NRC helps bring Christmas to thousands of people on 25 Plains reservations. Their diverse programs – AIRC, SNRF, and NAA – ensure that Christmas cheer extends to all ages. AIRC provides Christmas stockings for Elders, children, and infants, while SNRF has Santa stops at several schools, and

NAA provides Christmas meals for reservation communities. Gift packs for teens and adults and fruit baskets for Elders are also provided through NRC programs.

This year, nearly 200 programs wanted to bring holiday cheer to reservation communities – including 45 different programs from the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations. They requested Christmas support from National Relief Charities. Ever mindful of our relief mission, “we made sure their holiday gifts are chocked full of gloves, hats, grooming kits, and other practical items, as well as toys, fruit, and nuts for the kids,” said Kelly Gibson, Director for all NRC programs.

“The distribution of Christmas stockings and Christmas community meals tend to be happy times that give our partners an opportunity to interact with their participants and families in a positive situation,” added Gibson. “We hope this reinforces and builds positive associations between our partners and their participants. When partners identify all of their participants and provide a good distribution of the gifts, we are helping the partners achieve their desired outcomes and also furthering our mission.”

Reservation programs that partnered with NRC throughout the year were eligible to request food for Thanksgiving, or holiday gifts or meals for Christmas, by the Sept and Oct deadlines.

NRC then reviewed the requests to maximize the available inventory. Their allocations of meals and gifts were based on the timing of the request, the needs in the requesting community, whether partners had current reports from prior services, and a review of other partners who might be serving the same people in the same community. NRC also looked at not duplicating holiday services being provided by the tribes.

Bringing such stewardship to the allocations helps NRC ensure that they spread as much holiday cheer as possible to the people in their service area. In 2009, turkeys and Thanksgiving trimmings were provided for over 11,000 people in the Plains, and holiday gifts are being provided for some 32,000 people. For Rosebud and Pine Ridge, this means about 6,000 Elders will receive Christmas stockings... nearly 5,000 infants, children, and teens will receive stockings or packages... over 1,000 kids will get stockings from Santa... and 500 people will share in community Christmas meals. We hope they enjoy them!!

To learn more about National Relief Charities and its programs, visit www.nrcprograms.org.