

American Indian Partnership / Blackfeet Children Christmas Fund

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For Immediate Release

Press Release

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5th Annual Blackfeet Indian Christmas Fund Announces Plans for 2014

BROWNING, MT. The 5th annual Blackfeet Children Christmas Fund has finalized its plans for 2014. A program of the American Indian Partnership, Browning, MT (www.AmericanIndianPartnership.org), the Fund raises almost all its money off-reservation, but exclusively serves on-reservation children. For five consecutive years the Fund has provided Christmas presents and events for the most vulnerable, displaced, and neediest kids on the Blackfeet Reservation.

Each year the Fund tries new things and over five years has evolved from throwing large come-one-come-all parties in large venues with thousands of gifts, to having police and firefighters deliver the gifts door-to-door, to focusing more and more on individual group homes, protective homes, individual distressed households, and hospital and other healthcare scenarios.

These changes were designed to make an ever more personal connection between donors and the Indian children whose Christmases were made so much brighter thanks to generous, kind hearted people the world over. Donors can learn more about the program on the website, which includes slideshows and press coverage.

This year the Fund is already in the process of identifying several group homes and care facilities and engaging house parents and caretakers to find out what major gifts would be just right for individual children and what supplies and decorations are needed to make Christmas morning exciting and memorable. Those gifts will be under the tree by December 23rd. Then after Christmas and into January, gifts to communally benefit the entire household –e.g. big screen TVs with gaming consoles, PCs, outdoor play equipment, playhouses, etc.-- will be delivered and set up by our volunteers.

“What’s unique about us, I think, is that a person can donate \$10, \$100, or \$1,000 dollars during the holidays, and within 2 or 3 weeks they can see exactly what their donations were used for by visiting our website,” said Gregg Paisley, AIP spokesman. “Our donors are our partners, and I don’t know of any other American Indian charity where donor dollars are put to such fast, transparent, efficient, and high impact use –I think we do more good work, faster with a dollar than anyone else.”

Donor / partners say they like that Indians operate AIP, donors are treated like the valuable partners they are, and AIP is separate from Tribal government. In fact, the Fund has never asked for, or received, any money from the Blackfeet Tribal Council or government. This means AIP is free from interference and does not get caught up in the sort of Tribal political dysfunction and infighting that made unfortunate headlines for the Blackfeet from 2012 through mid-2014.

“On reservations, like everywhere else, it is the adults that make the problems, but it is the children that pay the highest price for it,” added Paisley. “We don’t ask for money to help adult Indians --us grown-up Indians should be able to fend for ourselves and at AIP we reject victim mentalities. ALL we care about is helping the true victims --our children. Many of the children we serve don’t even have parents in the picture, and many have been abused and neglected in unimaginable ways. Giving them what every child deserves, a happy, joyous, exciting Christmas from caring, loving adults is what we are all about.”

Donations through January 31st, 2015 will appear on the 2014 donor list and will be used for further communal gifts to this year’s households. Donations can be made online, by check, or at any Wells Fargo bank. Details are on the website www.AmericanIndianPartnership.org or call 406-845-8986