

THE ADOPT-A-NATIVE-ELDER PROGRAM



The mission of the Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program is to create a Bridge of Hope between Native Americans and other cultures, reaching out to one another to mend the broken circle of our relationship with the Land and the Native Americans who hold it in sacred trust.



Food runs are the core activity of the Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program. Since its founding twenty-eight years ago, ANE volunteers have made the journey to the Navajo reservation multiple times a year to deliver food and supplies to Diné (Navajo) Elders, helping them to live out their lives in a traditional manner.



ANE is a non-profit, humanitarian organization whose sole purpose is to serve and support traditional Elders. Rainbow Food Boxes, gift boxes, clothing, and simple medical supplies are gathered at our warehouse in Salt Lake City. Twice yearly in the spring and fall these items are taken to the reservation by volunteers who provide their own transportation and pay for their own lodging.



Under the leadership of Linda Myers volunteers assemble at a variety of locations on the Navajo reservation to distribute this support to over five hundred Elders. These locations are primarily in northeastern Arizona where the bulk of the reservation exists while two are in extreme southern Utah.





Food Run Basics

What is it like to participate in a food run?

Currently ANE conducts food runs to 11 locations on the Navajo reservation. These are grouped into four sets, each of which has a logistical base where volunteers have lodging, and some of the produce is acquired for the food runs. For example, the food runs to Many Farms, Tsaile, and Piñon are based out of Chinle, AZ, where we stay at the Best Western Canyon De Chelly motel.



Here is a typical schedule for one of the longer sets of runs, such as the one based in Chinle: Volunteers arrive on Tuesday and have a late afternoon orientation meeting with Linda followed by an informative program and meal. Each morning we gather for breakfast at which time important organizational information is shared. Wednesday morning we pick up produce from Basha's, the local supermarket, and take it to Elder Elizabeth Clah's homeland at Many Farms north of Chinle. In the afternoon we return to Elizabeth's

for the ceremony which initiates each food run. Following this a meal is served. Thursday everyone moves in a convoy to Elizabeth's where volunteers work in assigned groups to set up everything for the food run. After the Elders have arrived the food run program starts followed by a meal and then Elders' vehicles are loaded with the food boxes, produce, gift boxes, and other items they receive. This food-run-day sequence is then repeated Friday for Pinon, and Saturday for Tsaile.



At the conclusion of each food run volunteers have an opportunity to purchase handmade rugs, crafts, and jewelry that Elders and their families have brought to the event.

The other food run sets follow this same general scheme with some modifications. The shorter journeys, Oljato-Navajo Mountain and Dilkon-Leupp-Birdsprings, have less opportunity for free time.

Who should consider participating in a food run? Although many people might have the right motivation, there are other considerations to take into account. The Navajo reservation is a remote place which lacks many of the conveniences we take for granted. Road conditions may not be ideal, and we sometimes have to travel on more primitive dirt roads.

Prospective food run volunteers should have a truck or SUV, preferably with four-wheel-drive, and should plan to carry a load of food boxes or other material from the warehouse in Salt Lake City.

Some food runs are held in indoor locations, but several are held outside where factors such as heat, cold, wind or weather can

affect personal comfort. Participants need to be able to walk safely on uneven terrain, and it is helpful if men can lift boxes weighing up to 35 pounds.

Despite these cautions, a wonderful world of opportunity awaits food run participants. Navajo culture is one of the few Native American traditions being actively lived by its people. We share this experience with the Diné people on their Homeland, where we meet the people, touch their hands, and hear their language. Many food run volunteers return over and over to repeat this unique opportunity to serve.



FOOD RUN DATES FOR 2014

	SPRING	FALL
Oljato-Navajo Mountain	March 25th-27th	August 19th-21st
Dilkon-Leupp-Birdsprings	April 29th-May 2nd	Sept 23rd-26th
Many Farms-Pinon-Tsaile	May 6th-May 10th	Sept 30th-Oct 4th
Sanders-Big Mountain-Teesto	May 11th-15th	October 5th-9th

If you are interested in participating in a food run and have additional questions call Linda at 435-649-0535. Driver's applications can be obtained from the newsletter or downloaded from our web site, www.anelder.org (go to the food run section of the Volunteer Activities Page).



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