COVID-19 Update

We Will Rise

By Linda A. Myers, Executive Director

In early March, Rodger and I traveled to the reservation to attend the funeral of his uncle, John Hardy. It was our first trip to the land in 2020. We also wanted to visit some of our Elders and their families. The weather was warm at their homeland.

After the funeral, large tents were set up and many of our Elders and their families were there for the gathering. I enjoyed laughing and sharing with them. A person mentioned that someone had tested positive for a virus in a community 30 miles away. No one knew exactly what the virus was except that they had heard it had come from China.

Later that day, we went to the nursing home to visit two of our Elders. It was good to see them looking healthy and happy. Elizabeth Clah was very glad to see us. Zonnie Tsinjinnie was busy coloring a picture when we sat and visited with her. After we left, we went to visit other families. I had plans to return to the reservation two weeks later for the spring Food Runs in southern Utah.

Before we made it back to Utah, the nursing home had closed down. The virus had spread quickly in a small community that had brought many people together for a prayer meeting. The area was close to Utah and as we were finishing packing all of the food boxes and other items for the spring Food Runs,

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we started hearing reports of illnesses of some of the Elders who had gone to the prayer meeting. Many of our support people were planning on flying in from around the county to help with the spring Food Runs. We began the process of calling and requesting they cancel their flights. We made an alternative plan to use fewer people to take food boxes and other sponsor-ordered boxes to the reservation and to have the Elder’s pick up their boxes at designated sites. Within a few days, even that was not a possibility. It was no longer safe to take people to the reservation. Shelter in place orders had been issued in Utah and Arizona. With great sadness, we began to lose Elders to Covid-19.

As the days went by, all of the Food Run areas became hot spots. Daily, I have felt great sadness for the families. For 36 years I have been on the Food Runs twice a year. I had never missed a Food Run before.

Unfortunately, everything had to be put on hold until we return for the fall Food Runs. We decided that since we couldn’t deliver the sponsor-ordered Rainbow Food Boxes, the best way we could make a dif-

Some of the Elders we sadly lost to COVID-19

Jean Dejolie, from Navajo Mountain was the first of our Elders to pass from COVID-19. Jean was very well-known and loved by her community. She loved attending the Food Runs. She would so kindly gift all of the volunteers with small items at each Food Run.

Mary Ann Welch, from Navajo Mountain, passed from the virus. She enjoyed going to all of our Food Run gatherings. Tragically, she and four of her family members also passed.

Grandma Gertrude Hijoe succumbed to the virus. Gertrude attended the Birdsprings Food Runs for over 30 years. Several of her children have since tested positive for the virus.

Alice Tso from Big Mountain passed from the virus. Some family members also are ill with COVID-19.

Julia Fat from Navajo Mountain recently passed from COVID-19. She loved riding horses and will be missed.
ference would be to replace the Rainbow Food Box sets with $100 Food Certificates and mail them to all of the Elders. We also mailed all of the Firewood vouchers that sponsors had purchased, $25 Basha’s Food Certificates and yarn boxes.

At the Adopt-A-Native-Elder office, we had to divide working hours for the staff into separate part-time shifts to ensure employees weren’t working together at the same time in the same space. Our staff did an amazing job at filling out Food Certificates, revising letters to the Elders, and getting everything mailed out as quickly as possible. They made it all happen for the Elders.

Like stores throughout the world, Basha’s grocery stores on the reservation have challenges in staying supplied. Staples for the Elders, such as potatoes and Blue Bird flour have vanished from the shelves. Food shortages have become a real issue. Senior Centers struggle to feed the Elders. We have sent assistance to the centers so that they can continue delivering sack lunches to the Elders.

Many of the Elder’s sons and daughters have lost their jobs and have returned to live on the reservation. Having enough water and food has been a real trial for Navajo Nation.

We are needing to fundraise to mail out additional Food Certificates in the ensuing months. We ask everyone to please share your support for Adopt-A-Native-Elder with your friends and co-workers. We need to get additional Food Certificates to more to Elders in very remote areas.

Bessie Begay Yazzie wrote, “We miss you, Linda. Tell all of your good people we pray for them.”

Through the hardships and struggles, little notes have been coming in from the Elders.

I have had many heartfelt moments when Elders or their family members have called me to check on us and to see if we are OK. Some have mailed us photos of themselves asking that we remember them in our thoughts and prayers.

There have been many challenges over the last 36 years of serving the Elders. This year, I am very concerned that we will lose still many more Elders to the virus. We want to express our gratitude to each of you who have prayed for the Elders, sent extra donations to help us serve many more Elders and provide $100 Rainbow Food Certificates for Elders whose sponsors weren’t able to donate this year.

We are also grateful to all of you who have kept things running at stores, hospitals, and through whatever line of work you are in. You have all adjusted your lives to help the world continue to function during these unprecedented times. In loving gratitude, thank you for all you give and for all you share. Your contributions make a difference. We send you our love. And to those who have lost their loved ones or friends and are grieving, we send you our blessings of peace, comfort and strength to carry you through this time. For those of you who have lost jobs and are struggling, we bless you. The Elders have their ceremonies and beliefs that have helped them through many hardships. I pray each day the Holy Ones will protect them.

We will rise.

May you be blessed and kept safe,

Linda Myers
The Elders are so thankful for help they have received. Here are some sweet notes from them. (some are translated with the help of the Elder’s caretaker)

You have really helped me with food and firewood. The firewood is much needed during the winter months. I’m very thankful that the program helps us elders in my community and the sponsor that takes care of us. You are all a big help.

Thank you,
Florence Nelson, Teéto

The Food Runes help Nancy with food, especially during the winter. She loves the food and supplies and thanks Adopt-A-Native-Elder very much. She appreciates the gift certificates for food, especially during this time. She is always looking forward to the gifts she receives.

Thank you so much,
Nancy Begay, Many Farms

This is a great experience in my whole life. All my life I’ve weaved rugs, sheared sheep, took cattle to the trading post to trade for food, fabrics to make my clothes and kid’s clothes by hand. There is no electric, we haul water. I appreciate all the kindness and loving care. This Adopt-A-Native-Elder program has really help me.

Pauline Davie, Teáile

Linda and the Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program have been very helpful especially with the food certificates and wood money. Everything I received, I have used. Also, I look forward to seeing all the sponsors during the Food Run. I am so sad now that I couldn’t get to see them because of COVID-19. I always appreciate you supporting me.

Thank you very much,
Bernice James, Teáile

Adopt-A-Native-Elder has helped with firewood and food. Firewood is very essential. It gets very cold in the house during the winter. This year winter was longer. The food is needed thru the year too. It’s very helpful.

Roger Kanuho, Dilkon
The Program have help me with food for the Food Runs and sometime firewoods and Baahae gift certificates. They are very kind, loving, care every visit to Robertson resident in Big Mountain. It do made me feel good and freedom. Thank you and God Bless, Theodore Bedonie, Big Mountain

You have provided a better way of life. In many ways you have help. Firewood for cooking and for heat, wool to make rugs for money to buy necessities, vouchers to buy food when I run low and food boxes to keep me healthy. I am grateful to have this program, helps me to be less stressed. Thank you and God Bless, Marie D. Nez, Many Farms

The program helps me with food. Good food that I can’t afford to buy on my own. It help when you provide. I really appreciate help with firewood. I usually have a hard time buy firewood on my fixed income. Thank you all for the help and support. I always feel cared for and loved. I love you all. Jennie Todechine, Many Farms

The food boxes and flour really helps our food budgets. Food certificates help with fresh meat and groceries like fresh veggies and fruits. It comes at the most crucial time. I am very grateful for being in this program. Aha’hee very much! Mae T. Chee, Pinion

You support helps us lots. Every year you help us. We really appreciate what you people do for us. I just thank you. Lord is going to bless you more. God bless you, Rena B. Lane, Big Mountain

The supplies I get are all useful and last me quite some time which is great. I do not live near grocery stores or any kind of stores so anything I get helps. I make use of everything I get and helps me save money for propane and hay. The wood help me tremendously. Betty B. Begay, Big Mountain
Getting support to the Elders during COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated changes to our traditional Food Run schedule and our 2020 plans. In order to do our best to support, care for, and protect the Elders we serve, we were forced to cancel our spring deliveries to the reservation to ensure that the vulnerable health of Elders is not put in jeopardy. In addition to canceling our spring Food Runs, we are proactively changing our plans for the fall Food Runs with the health of the Elders and the volunteers who make our work possible our primary concern.

We continue to pack and label all Food Run orders and currently have more than 396,000 pounds of assistance ready to be delivered in the fall. All sponsor-ordered boxes from the spring Food Run (Medical boxes, Grandma boxes, Grandpa boxes, Mother’s Day boxes, Forgotten Feather boxes, and Children’s boxes) will be delivered on our fall Food Runs along with fall Food Run orders. All Firewood vouchers, yarn boxes, and food certificate that sponsors have ordered have been mailed to the Elders. We have mailed $28,000.00 in yarn and $92,000.00 in firewood vouchers since the beginning of the pandemic shut downs in early March. As long as this pandemic prevents us from serving them in person, Adopt-A-Native-Elder will be sending Food Certificates to all 720 Elders in the program. In addition to mailing the Food Certificates, Basha’s grocery stores on the reservation are instituting Elder-only hours for shopping in the morning. This should also allow the Elders to shop while the store is stocked instead of at times when grocery shelves are low on food.

Adopt-A-Native-Elder has successfully advocated with Basha’s to allow the Elders family to shop for them with the Elder’s Food Certificates as long as they present the Elder’s identification at checkout along with a letter from us.

Since March 12th, Adopt-A-Native-Elder has mailed more than $250,000.00 in Food Certificates to the reservation. This includes converting all sponsor-ordered Food Boxes for the spring Food Runs to $100 Food Certificates and converting our planned program giveaways to $50 Food Certificates for each Elder. We have also begun supporting Elders over the age of 75 across the reservation who are in desperate need of help during the pandemic. These Elders are not
being put into the program. They will receive Food Certificates throughout the pandemic provided through grants and fundraising efforts.

We are planning to hold Food Runs this fall with the hope that it will be responsible to do so. We will let our Utah volunteers know when we plan to deliver food so that they have an opportunity to take part. This delivery will require a huge number of vehicles and strong volunteer support in order to move and distribute all of the supplies we have packed for the Elders. It is our plan that the fall Food Runs be a drop off only delivery where we will only take volunteers and drivers from Utah in order to limit the amount of travel that volunteers are exposed to.

Many Elders are extremely high risk due to the existing epidemic of diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease that they already face. We want to keep the Elders safely isolated at home for the fall Food Run drop off so we plan to send letters to all of them inviting their family members to drive to the Food Run location with their Elder’s letter so that we make sure they receive the correct boxes.

We will do our best to provide as much assistance to the Elders as we can through the mail. We are prioritizing the distribution of food certificates but are also working to mail as many firewood vouchers and yarn bundles as we can.

We also support many Elders whose family members and caretakers are among the count of dead and infected. Navajo Nation has surpassed New York City as the highest per capita rate of Covid-19 infections in the world. It is imperative that now, more than ever, we keep the Elders and their families in our thoughts as they face a battle not only for their health and well-being but for their traditional way of life.

One way you can help support the Elders is by sharing our A.N.E. social media posts and your own stories of service to the Elders with your friends and families. For the well-being of the Elders, it is vital we do what we can to increase awareness of the crisis facing Navajo Nation and our efforts to support our traditional Navajo Elders.

Thank you for your dedication and service to the Elders. Take care of yourself and each other.

C.J. Robb, Assistant Director
Ways To Support Your Elder
During the Pandemic

Over the last two months, we have received many calls from sponsors asking what the Elders need during this time. The Elder’s lives are very simple. There are several ways you can help your Elder during these difficult times.

Things you can order now for your Elder through Adopt-A-Native-Elder:

Order Food Certificates so that your Elder can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, and other healthy items.

Order Yarn Boxes to help your Elders stay busy and earn additional income by selling their rugs.

Order Firewood Vouchers so that your Elder can cook healthy meals. The vouchers can also be used to pay any Navajo Tribal Authority utility bills they may have.

Things you can purchase from your store and mail to your Elder via U.S. mail:

- Hand Sanitizer
- Nitrile Gloves
- Unscented Soap
- Sanitizing Wipes
- Toilet Paper
- Laundry Detergent
- Lotion
- Bandages
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Spray Cleaner
- Wash Cloths
CHARITY NAVIGATOR 4-STAR RATING

Adopt-A-Native-Elder is committed to transparency and accountability. We consistently receive top ratings from Charity Navigator. Only a small percentage of the nonprofits it rates achieve this highest distinction. We're very proud to be good stewards of your gifts and hope you will continue your generosity.

December 1, 2019

Linda Myers
Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program
328 West Gregson Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

Dear Linda Myers:

On behalf of Charity Navigator, I wish to congratulate Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program on attaining the coveted 4-star rating for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The nonprofit sector is advancing and expanding. As our organizations evolve, so do the desires and interests of our supporters. Astute donors are yearning for greater accountability, transparency, and for concrete results from us. With more than 1.5 million American charities, Charity Navigator aims to accentuate the work of efficient and transparent organizations. The intent of our work is to provide donors with essential information to give them greater confidence in both the charitable decisions that they make and the nonprofit sector.

Based on the most recent information available, we have issued a new rating for your organization. We are proud to announce Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program has earned our fifth consecutive 4-star rating. This is our highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work. Only 14% of the charities we evaluate have received at least 5 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.

Forbes, Business Week, and Kiplinger’s Financial Magazine, among others, have profiled and celebrated our unique method of applying data-driven analysis to the charitable sector. We evaluate ten times more charities than our nearest competitor and currently attract more visitors to our website than all other charity rating groups combined, thus making us the leading charity evaluator in America. Our data shows that users of our site donated more than they planned to before viewing our findings, and in fact, it is estimated that last year Charity Navigator influenced approximately $10 billion in charitable gifts.

Your achievement and the 4-star rating will enhance your organization’s fundraising and public relations efforts. Our favorable review of Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program’s financial health and commitment to accountability & transparency is now visible on our website.

We wish you continued success in your charitable endeavors.

Sincerely,

Michael Thatcher
President and CEO

www.charitynavigator.org
MEMORIALS

Adriana Tamayo made a donation in memory of her ancestors, great-grandparents, and grandparents
Janet E. Schill sent a Memorial Blanket to Louise Begay in memory of her mother
Rev. Emily B. Preston made a donation in memory of Wat Stearns
Peter & Janet Snyder made a donation in memory of Oscar Merz
Kathy Pope made a donation in memory of A.N.E. volunteers Orin Shepherd, Cindy Schwandt, and Oscar Merz
Paula Deanda made a memorial blanket donation in memory of Michael Kobrzycki
Frances Carr made a donation in memory of Gordon Tzinichini
Frances Hill made a donation in memory of her mother, Beatrice Orlando, for her birthday, February 25th.
Kelly & Linda Dickerman made a donation in memory of Oscar Merz
Gerrye Sams made a donation in memory of Harris Cody from Leupp
Russell & Patricia Kermeen made a memorial blanket donation for Mary Black in memory of Jefferson Black
Lori Lambert made a donation in memory of Rosemary Killian
An anonymous donation was made in memory of Oscar Merz
Jan Prideaux made a donation for a memorial blanket for an Elder in memory of Lenore Boyce
Cori Lennox made a donation in memory of Alba Lennox
Jeanne Dickey made a donation in memory of Bob Garff
Sara Zustadt Abel made a donation of a memorial blanket to be given to an Elder at a Food Run in memory of Ernest Fettinger
Pete & Donna Lattin made a donation in memory of Sarah Billy
Stella Drake of Navajo Mountain had donation made from her life insurance policy after she passed
Karen Kauffeld, Melyssa Holbrook, and Claudette Haskell each made a donation in memory of Betty Benally on behalf of Jim Holbrook to thank him for his donation of face shields to the clinical staff at Chinle Comprehensive Care Facility
Arlene Horvath made a donation in memory of her late Elder Ruth Blackmountain

HONORINGS

James Martin made a donation in honor and in thanks to Ed Kulsick
Susanne Belovari made a donation in honor of Doris Swan, who took care of her Holocaust survivor friend until her death in March, 2020
Steven Sargent made a birthday donation of adopting an Elder in honor of Marcia Gentry
Libby Peterson made a donation in honor of Jill E. Meyer for being a great Friday Team Leader
Hugh & Cathy Zumbro made a donation in honor of Jill Meyer
George Kirkland made a donation for firewood for the Elders in honor of Susan Beteler, RN
Gary Kettelle made a donation in honor of the friends he met on the fall Food Run: Beverly, Bobbie, Mary and Nancy Linder, Rodger, and all the crew
Tobi Simon made a donation in honor Pamela Berg, who is a strong supporter of Adopt-A-Native-Elder
Ann Voda and Carol Ashton made a donation in honor of their special friend, Dr. Juanita F. Murphy on her 90th birthday. The donation is to help support the Navajo Elder during the COVID-19 pandemic
Stephanie and Barry Kogan made a donation towards food for a forgotten Elder in honor of Beth Eden
Denise Henning made a donation in honor of loved ones
Andrea Barrish made a donation to honor the first birthday of her great nephew Logan
WHEN EAGLES FLY

In special remembrance to the wonderful Elders we loved.

Many Farms
- John Hardy
- Wilson Yazzie
- Ella Horseherder
- Rita Benally
- Essie Nez
- Emma Seaton

Oljato
- Mary Parrish
- Albert Benally
- Gloria John
- Bernice Jensen
- Jack Woody
- Betty Benally

Big Mountain

Kayenta

Pinion

Birdsprings

Navajo Mountain

Confirmed Elders Passed Due to COVID-19

Oljato
- Daisy Pelt
- Ruth Blackmountain

Navajo Mountain
- Mary Ann Welch
- Julia Fat
- Jean Deloie

Big Mountain
- Alice Tso

Birdsprings
- Gertrude Hijoe

Sanders
- Henry Doctor
All Public Events Are Currently Canceled

June 19th Between 10am-12pm:
Pick up Craft Day Ornaments and Supplies To Create At Home

July 14th 9am - 11am: Tentative Date To Resume Warehouse Tuesday & Friday Volunteer Activities

August—September: We will need Utah Drivers For
Drop Off - Only Fall Food Runs

Tentative Fall Food Run Dates
August 24-27: Oljato, Navajo Mountain, Kayenta
September 16-19: Many Farms, Pinion, Tsaile
September 20-23: Sanders, Big Mountain, Teesto
September 23-25: Dilkon, Leupp, Birdsprings

“Grandma, how do you deal with pain?”

“With your hands, dear. When you do it with your mind, the pain hardens even more. Our hands are the antennae of our souls. When you move them by sewing, cooking, painting, touching the earth, they send signals of caring to the deepest part of you and the soul calms down.”

“Are hands really that important, grandma?”

“Yes, my girl. They get to know the world thanks to their touches. When you look at the hands of older people, they tell more about their lives than any other part of the body. Everything that is made by hand is made with the heart because hands and heart are connected.”

“How long until my hands work like that, grandma?”

“Move them, my girl. Start creating with them and everything in you will move. The pain may not pass away, but you will be creating the best masterpiece... your essence.”

- Elena Barnabe