



Walking Shield, Inc.

Summer 2007

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Walking Shield Unites Partners at Annual Conference Celebrating Twenty Years of Service

After careful planning, Walking Shield hosted a highly successful, two day conference in Las Vegas. Tribal members, military leaders, and representatives of elected officials gathered at the Tropicana Hotel on March 22 and 23 to learn about Walking Shield's many services and programs.

Thanks to generous contributions from Southern California Edison, the Wells Fargo Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this year's conference proved to be a wonderful experience for both the presenters and attendees.

Presenters gave first hand accounts of their experience working with Walking Shield. Speakers such as Diane Erickson, from the Red Cliff reservation in Wisconsin, Daryl Brockie from the Fort Belknap reservation in Montana, and Rudy Ballon, from the San Pasqual reservation in



Actively Engaged—Guest attentively listen to Major W. Scott Corliss' presentation about the 804th Medical Brigade's collaboration with Operation Walking Shield.

California, all gave moving presentations on how to best benefit from the services offered by Walking Shield.

Susie Hay, who works for the Chippewa Cree Housing Authority on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana, had a wonderfully detailed presentation explaining how she has successfully

(See Conference on page 2)

Several Medical and Infrastructure Projects Currently Taking Place



Clear the Way—Military personnel prepares for road improvements on the San Pasqual reservation

Through continued partnership with the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) Program, 2007 Operation Walking Shield projects have begun across the country. Much needed roads are being built by the Air Force and Navy Seabees on the San Pasqual reservation in San Diego County, Ca. The Seabees are also busy repairing lagoons on the Crow reservation in Montana.

The National Guard has begun three months worth of medical deployments at the Indian Health Council which provides health care to nine local tribes in San Diego County. The

(See Projects on page 5)

Native Dance Troupe Enchants Guests at Conference

(Conference continued from page 1)

provided over 180 houses to her community through Walking Shield's Housing Relocation program. This program allows reservations to obtain excess housing units from Air Force bases that would otherwise be demolished. The conference evaluation forms came back with rave reviews on Susie's presentation.

"[Susie] was very knowledgeable in all requirements in order to get the project done," one respondent commented, "She is creative in her thinking!"



Leadership—Susie Hay tells of her fascinating work addressing dire housing needs in her community.

Long time Walking Shield

friends Major Kenneth Shedarowich from the California National Guard, and Major William S. Corliss from the 804th Medical Brigade in Massachusetts, both gave energetic presentations and provided guests with the military perspective of the unique services Walking Shield offers through the Medical Support Program.

Walking Shield was also very fortunate to have representatives from of the offices of Nevada State Senator Harry Reid and Congresswoman Shelley Berkley of Nevada's first district as guests.

The Color Guard of the Las Vegas Paiute Colony opened the event with a moving flag presentation and prayer including a special American Indian rendition of "taps." In addition, the first day of the conference concluded with an entertaining social mixer that fea-



To the Beat of the Drum—Children of various ages from the Intertribal Native Dance Troupe display traditional attire and dance moves that impressed Walking Shield's many conference guests.

tured performances by an Intertribal dance group representing numerous tribes. The performers were children of various ages and showcased a variety of Intertribal dances.

If you are interested in participating next year, please contact us with suggestions on dates and locations that would work for you.



Southern California Edison Continues its Support of Education Initiative

In our increasingly competitive work force, a college education is instrumental in searching for a well-paid career. Walking Shield is making sure that American Indian youth have the tools necessary to get to college.

Several Native youths in the local community have already made use of Walking Shield's college consultation services. Our program helps college bound students navigate the complex financial aid application process and identify funding sources to help pay for college.

While American Indian students can take advantage of wonderful opportunities available for youth at large, Walking Shield is working to ensure that local universities and colleges develop and sustain programs that specialize in specifically attracting Native youth to pursue a college education. Enrollment rates rarely reach more than 1% for Native youth at Orange County universities such as University of California in Irvine (UCI) and California State University Fullerton (CSUF). To address barriers, Walking Shield is working closely with both UCI

and CSUF in identifying innovative ways to attract Native youth to these schools.

In summer 2007, UCI will host a summer program for American Indians High School students. In the past, UCI was home to the successful American Indians in Computer Science program. This year's summer program will feature presenters from various fields of study. Students will engage in social and cultural activities, attend seminar

(See *Education Program* on page 3)

Education Program Collaborates with Local Universities

(Education Program continued from page 2)



Ready to Help— Nikishna Polequaptewa, UCI alumn, and Yolanda Leon, UCI specialist for American Indian recruitment, help Walking Shield by talking to students about the university and the summer program for American Indians.

style classes lead by university professors, and develop a group project addressing important issues in the Native community.

Walking Shield has also met several times with University Outreach and Academic Affairs representatives from UCI and CSUF to develop ways to instill the value of college at an early age.

Walking Shield would like to co-sponsor field trips and other activities with the university with students as

young as elementary school.

The relationships and partnerships Walking Shield has developed with local universities and Indian education programs have laid the foundation for increased educational opportunities for Native youth. Our purpose is to continue to strengthen and enhanced these associations. Please contact our Education Program Manager, Brenda Gonzalez, for further information at bgonzalez@walkingshield.org.

Walking Shield Staff Surprises Many in Local Outreach Efforts

Walking Shield works diligently on educating the public about the living conditions and tremendous need of our nation’s first people. Staff members recently participated in two events in Orange County: the “Faces of Fullerton” community fair and the “San Juan Capistrano Unified School District Education Fair.”

By participating in these events, Walking Shield’s purpose was not only to showcase the work of the organization, but to debunk common misperceptions often held by the public at large. For instance, many believe that all American Indians are equally benefiting from the success of Indian gaming when this is far from the truth..



Ready, Set, Go— Participants get to spin the wheel for a prize at the “Faces of Fullerton” event where the public learned about Walking Shield and American Indians.

government spends on federal prisoners versus American Indians when it comes to healthcare services. The answer, which is 50% more according to a 2006 Indian Health Service report, dismayed nearly all visitors to our table. This firmly displayed the great need facing our nations reservations.

Participants of all ages were surprised to learn facts like poverty is a far too common reality for our nation’s American Indian community and that access to quality health

care or educational opportunities is often lacking. In fact, only one participant answered all four questions correctly; a very bright eight-year-old named Austin. Many people were eager to learn more after taking the “Walking Shield Quiz.”

It is hoped that through these efforts, individuals are eager to help Walking Shield and be part of the positive impact its programs make. If you would like to learn more on how you can help, please contact us today!



Shocked— Participants were awed to learn of deplorable living conditions on many American Indian reservations.



Winner— Austin, 8, from Fullerton was the only participant to answer all of the quiz questions correctly.

Walking Shield Distributes Over 30,000 Items During Christmas 2006

Each holiday season staff is extra busy at Walking Shield because of our successful Holiday Gift Distribution program. For nearly 20 years, thousands of children have received new items during the Holidays thanks to this program. Last Christmas, Walking Shield distributed over 30,000 toys and other items to 40 different tribes across the United States.

Countless volunteers and contributors partnered with Walking Shield throughout the year by gathering school supplies, toys, blankets, and other items in preparation for the holiday



Thank You—Youngsters from the Winnabego Reservation thank Walking Shield for the new toys they received through our Holiday program.

season. Christmas 2006 was yet another successful year for our program thanks to the generosity of several foundations, civic groups, and corporations.



Searching for Goodies—Little ones from the White Earth reservation look through an array of toys.

Dr. Leland Shapiro and the Pre-veterinary Science Program at Pierce College, gathered backpacks filled with school supplies and clothing as well as Barbra Bradford and Diamond Bar High School. Hasbro, Inc. donated over twenty thousand, brand new, popular toys. Other generous contributions were made by Cassidy and Breana Lemon of Mazda Trix, Toys for Tots, the Orange Grove Quilters Guild, OCB Trading Post, the Saddleback YMCA Friendly Spirit Nation, Peter Tagni and the West Valley YMCA. A number of smaller donations were also made from many of our long time supporters.

Walking Shield gathers items throughout the year. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact our office.

Staff Visits with Crow Reservation Representatives in Montana

Along with representatives from the U.S. Air Force, Walking Shield staff visited the Crow reservation this past April to discuss both current and future Operation Walking Shield projects and to tour the reservation. Numerous tribal representatives including Chairman Carl Venne, Micheal Stewart of the Housing Authority and Legal Advisor, Urban Bear Don't Walk attended this important gathering.

Chairman Venne specifically shared his appreciation for the role that Walking Shield and the IRT military units played on the reservation this past year. In 2006, the U.S. Navy Seabees completed two new septic lagoons replacing a previously hazardous one.

Talks of future IRT projects included the restoration and con-

version of a historical building into much needed office space; the expansion of six miles of roadways to ensure emergency vehicles access to sick and elderly tribal members in remote areas; well drilling and the laying of underground pipes as well as roof repair on a large building needed to house a tribal enterprise program.



A Piece of History—The restoration of this historical building on the Crow reservation is slated as a future Operation Walking Shield project.

Crow representatives also expressed an interest in Walking Shield's highly successful Housing Relocation Program that has moved nearly 1,000 homes from military bases onto reservations in the

Great Plains area. The Crow Housing Authority would like to partner with Walking Shield to discuss the possible acquisition of homes that the Malmstrom Air Force Base will have available in the near future.

Thousands Receive 'Gift of Sight' due to Special Partnership

The Lenscrafters Foundation's Give the Gift of Sight Program, in partnership with Walking Shield, will be on numerous sites this summer providing free eye exams and glasses to needy American Indian Children across the country. This program was established by Lenscrafters' parent com-

pany the Luxottica Group in 1988 based upon the belief that clear vision is a basic human right and not a luxury. Through this amazing program Vision Vans bring free services to needy children in inner cities, rural



Seeing is Believing—For over a decade, Walking Shield and LensCrafters have teamed up to bring free eye exams and glasses to thousands of Native youth across the United States.

outposts and Indian reservations.

Walking Shield became an agency partner in 1996 and works with the foundation and participating tribal representatives to identify potential projects sites and assist with the identifi-

cation, prescreening, transportation and scheduling of participating children. Since 1996, Walking Shield-coordinated Gift of Sight projects have provided 14,164 exams and distributed 11,284 glasses, at a total value of nearly two millions dollars.

Confirmed Gift of Sight locations for 2007 include the United American Indian Involvement in downtown Los Angeles as well as the Native American Health Center, Inc., in Oakland, CA. Other sites are currently being planned for later this year.

Projects Currently Underway

(Projects from page 1)

Hoopaa reservation of Northern California will receive two rotations of National Guard medical units to augment their medical services. Numerous Air force medical personnel will visit the Blackfeet and Northern Cheyenne reservations in Montana as well as the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota.

The overall objective of the IRT program is to enhance military deployment readiness through participation in healthcare and infrastructure projects located in underserved areas of the country. The Operation Walking Shield program is designed to match these military resources to underserved reservations. Operation Walking Shield is a highly innovative approach designed to address the historical insufficiency of quality healthcare and infrastructure services on our nation's reservations. To date, Operation Walking Shield has coordinated projects benefiting thousands.

Help Walking Shield Make a Difference

There are many ways you can help Walking Shield assist Indian families in need. As a charitable 501(c)3 organization, any donations given are tax deductible.

Monetary donations enhance and support the organization's operation. Even a seemingly small amount can go a long way in making a difference.

Walking Shield also has an established partnership with Albertsons grocery store chain. Contact our office to obtain a Community Partners Card. Every time you make a purchase in one of the numerous Albertsons locations a portion of the money spent will come directly

back to support our vital programming.

Throughout the year, Walking Shield also gathers new, in-kind donations for distribution including: hygiene products, clothing, blankets, toys, baby supplies, computers and educational items. You can help by organizing a supply drive at your school, place of employment, where you worship, or in your neighborhood. For the summer months, Walking Shield's humanitarian aid efforts focus on the approaching school year. Items such as backpacks and school supplies are particularly welcome.

(See Make an Impact on page 6)

Walking Shield Receives Continued Support from Two Long Term Funders

In March 2007, Walking Shield received a generous \$50,000 grant from the Henry E. Niles Foundation as well as a \$7,000 award from the Milken Family Foundation.

With the support of the Niles Foundation funds, Walking Shield is poised to continue its efforts to address some of the most devastating health problems that plague our American Indian communities. A new Operation Walking Shield health program focus will serve impoverished American Indians living on reservations by locating and securing military medical personnel to assist with childhood obesity, diabetes prevention and treatment through the U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program. In addition to these specialized services, Operation Walking Shield will provide much needed routine primary care as well. The overall objective of the IRT

program is to enhance military deployment readiness through participation in healthcare and infrastructure projects located in underserved areas of the country.

Through collaboration with the Niles Foundation, tribal representatives and IRT military liaisons, Walking Shield will leverage existing military resources to bring quality medical services to reservation healthcare facilities across the country over the period of one year. Numerous tribes will receive vital services as a result of this endeavor including the nine tribes serviced by the Indian Health Council located in rural San Diego, CA. Overall, this this healthcare effort will reach over 35,000 individuals on reservations with an average poverty rate of 42%.

The Milken Family Foundation has partnered with Walking Shield for the past

10 years. In addition to its strong support of the Medical and Dental Program referenced above, the Foundation also focuses its Walking Shield funding to enhance Walking Shield's Humanitarian Aid and Educational Program efforts. In 2007 it is planned that 20% of the funds received by Walking Shield be utilized to support the implementation of the educational and humanitarian aid project elements including the collection and distribution of thousands of backpacks, school supplies, hygiene items, books and toys.

Walking Shield is honored to be one of the organizations that falls in line with the vision of both the Henry E. Niles and Milken Family Foundations.

Through the generosity of these contributions, Walking Shield is better able to carry out its mission of improving the lives for American Indians both on and off our nation's reservations.

Numerous Ways to Make a Positive Impact

(Make an Impact from page 5)

In addition to individual and community group support, much of Walking Shield's long term funding is derived from private corporations, foundations and government agencies. Many of our corporate sponsors encourage their employees to give to Walking Shield and often match these initial donations. Walking Shield is always looking for opportunities to develop new grant partnerships. If you have a connection to a possible funding source through a

friend or family member introduce them to our staff.

One final way to assist Walking Shield is to simply help spread the word about

our agency and the essential services we provide. Provide a link to our website from your organization's webpage.

Send e-mails or share this newsletter with friends and family so they can learn more about our organization and what we do.

These are just a few ways you can support Walking Shield in improving the quality of life for our nations American Indians. Please contact us today for any further information you might need. Thank you for your support and consideration.



Good Deeds—Representatives from Pierce College donate new back packs filled with supplies and clothing which are then distributed to American Indian children.

Local Schools Make a Difference by Donating to Walking Shield

In March, elementary students from two local schools participated in supply drives to benefit Walking Shield's Humanitarian Aid and Education Support Programs.

The entire student body of Concordia Lutheran School in Cerritos gathered school supplies and other educational items to donate. Mrs. Gardiner's first grade class of Christ Lutheran School in Costa Mesa, CA gathered numerous hygiene, clothing and school supplies as well.

Both schools initiated their support in light of National Lutheran Schools Week which promotes servant events among other activities. A Walking



Eager to Help—Students of various grades from Concordia Lutheran School show the many educational items they gathered to donate.

Shield staff member visited each school to share about American Indians and to personally thank the children for their important contributions which will be distributed to various needy reservations across the country.

Please consider organizing a supply drive in your school or community. Currently, Walking Shield is gathering new school supplies for distribution for the upcoming 07-08 school year. New items such as backpacks, notebooks, and art supplies, are greatly appreciated. Contact Walking Shield if you would more information on how you can also make a difference in the lives of American Indian students.



Cheese—Mrs. Gardiner's class and Dr. John Castillo, Walking Shield Executive Director, pose with the items they gathered for donation.

A Special Thanks to All Who Help Walking Shield

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Serving American Indian Families Since 1986

Walking Shield, Inc.



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Walking Shield, Inc.

Walking Shield Inc., is a charitable 501(c)3 organization established in 1986. Our mission is to improve the quality of life and create positive futures for American Indians who live both on and off our nation's reservations by managing programs that provide shelter, healthcare, educational assistance, community development assistance, and humanitarian aid.

Through a unique partnership with the military, Walking Shield has brought medical, dental, infrastructure, and housing support services to American Indian reservations. This partnership is made possible through the Innovative Readiness Training program funded by the Department of Defense.

Walking Shield has several additional highly successful programs that serve the American Indian community at large including:

- The Housing Relocation Program
- The Education Program
- The Holiday Gift Distribution Program
- The Humanitarian Aid Program

Please help support Walking Shield. Your donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.