

WINTER 2018



MISSION

ST. BONAVENTURE

Messenger

INDIAN MISSION & SCHOOL



The Director's Desk

KEEPING THE JOY OF GIVING ALIVE IN 2018

Dear Friends of St. Bonaventure,

Philanthropy is by no means a new concept. But it is a fragile one.

The origin of the word *philanthropy* dates back to ancient Greek mythology, where it said the Titan Prometheus secured the survival of the earliest humans by empowering them with the gifts of fire and optimism. And so, *philantropia* or "the love of humanity" was born.

To varying degrees, philanthropy has continued to exist as one of the cornerstones of civilized society throughout modern history. The idea of loving ALL humanity being a critical starting point for how laws are created and those in power govern.

As I write this article, the final version of The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is being hammered out in Conference Committee. Many in the nonprofit world worry changes proposed in the legislation will have the unintended consequence of doing away with incentives for making tax-deductible gifts.

Fire and optimism are needed once more.

You and I know the act of philanthropy, today, is as much about our own deep-rooted need to be part of the greater good as it is about improving the quality of life of those in desperate need of our help. As Christians, we call this fire the Gospel. It is a fire that burns intensely in our hearts, and one we hope radiates the Love of God brightly to all those we encounter.

I've spent the better part of the past 30 years of my

life working to improve the lives of those less fortunate than myself. I simply find it impossible to ignore their needs. I also do it because I delight in the joy of giving.

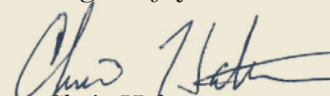
Feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked; I pray this will be my legacy long after our loving and merciful God calls me to my eternal rest.

As I look ahead to another year of challenges and joyful service to our Navajo brothers and sisters, I want to thank you for continuing your own legacy of philanthropy through your generosity and prayers in support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School.

It is people of faith, like you, who are keeping philanthropy alive in today's age by making the joy of giving a central part of your own life. Please know that all of the good work we accomplish through St. Bonaventure's outreach programs is an extension of your legacy of love for all humanity, especially the people of the Eastern Navajo Reservation.

God bless you now and throughout the New Year.

With great joy,


Chris Halter



Creating Christmas Memories

34TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

After much planning, organizing and help from volunteers, staff and other dedicated partners, the 34th Annual St. Bonaventure Indian Mission Community Christmas Dinner took place on Saturday, December 9. The annual holiday event is open to the public and, this year, more than 1,100 friends, families, and children joined in the holiday fun.

The dinner took place in the St. Bonaventure Indian School cafeteria, which was decorated from wall to wall and converted into a Christmas banquet hall. Following a delicious turkey dinner and tasty treats, children were invited to choose from a supply of donated toys, stuffed animals and, more practical items, such as shoes and coats. Adult guests also had the opportunity to select from blankets, clothing, shoes and other donated items.

The Annual Community Christmas Dinner is always a wonderful opportunity to host and in the holiday spirit with many of the families and children served by St. Bonaventure's many outreach programs. We were delighted by the positive feedback and look forward to putting on the 35th Annual Dinner next year!

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission would like to offer our wholehearted thanks to everyone who helped make this 34-year-old tradition a success, especially our caring volunteers for setting up and decorating the cafeteria, cooking the meals, and ensuring everyone at the dinner was well taken care of.

Of course, no Christmas party would be complete without Santa! Our thanks to this year's Santa(s), Mr. Bert Cooper and Mr. Thomas Silva, for spending the day with all the little ones as they eagerly lined up for photos and gifts.

St. Bonaventure would also like to express our appreciation to our local law enforcement and firefighters for being on hand and ensuring everyone at the event was safe on the day.

Finally, a big thank you to YOU, our faithful donors and friends, for sharing in this 34-year-old Christmas tradition through your financial support and prayers. Your goodness helps bring to life the love and joy of the Christmas season. Thank you for making our Community Christmas Dinner possible once again this year!



Stewards of the Earth

TEACHING CHILDREN THE ROOT OF HEALTHY EATING

St. Bonaventure Indian School offers a variety of extracurricular activities aimed at preparing students for a healthy and happy future. Among them is the school's small garden project, now in its third year.

The garden project hopes to be part of the solution to severely limited access to nutritional food on the reservation by teaching students how to get the best out of the barren New Mexico soil with as few resources as possible.

Students begin by taking scraps and other vegetable left-overs from the school's cafeteria kitchen and, through the magic of composting, turning them into rich, fertile soil. In the process, students learn about soil composition as well as which insects are beneficial versus those which might harm the fragile desert garden ecosystem.



Additionally, students are taught methods of harvesting rainwater run-off from school buildings as well as conserving the little water available on tap. Many of the vegetables and herbs grown are drought tolerant and hearty, to suit the high-altitude climate such as peppers, tomatoes, beans, zucchini, cantaloupe, corn, and peas.

Students who participate in the project can be proud of their efforts in the garden! And they can also take some of the produce they helped grow home to share with their family and friends.

St. Bonaventure would like to thank our dedicated teachers and staff for going above and beyond. Thank you for volunteering your time at the school garden and teaching our young ones how to grow their own supply of fresh fruits and vegetables – even out here in the desert!

OUR FIRST CROP OF TOMATOES, PEPPERS, BEANS, SQUASH & A FEW HAPPY SUNFLOWERS WAS A BIG SUCCESS.



Donor Spotlight

BENEFACTOR TONI STRICKER-ASKINS VISITS THE MISSION



My husband Lee and I began supporting St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School in 2010. Last summer, we arranged our first ever visit so we could attend the Grand Opening of the St. Bonaventure Mission Fitness Center and Thrift Shop.

We felt the excitement surrounding the Grand Opening right away as the Mission Director, Chris Halter, greeted us. The event was like a pageant with Navajo veterans raising the American flag, various speakers and a feast for all to enjoy. The parents of Sgt. William Stacey, who lost his life in Afghanistan, were also present to witness the Fitness Center being named in honor of their son. I was delighted to speak with many of the Schools teachers who were there on that beautiful Saturday afternoon.

The Grand Opening was a wonderful experience as was the opportunity to be present to the community we regularly support. For years, we had seen the pictures and read Chris' letters telling of a mission in great need of love and kindness. We saw the meager facilities, the hogans with no heat or running water and the hungry children in their dust-ridden clothes.

Once, after receiving one of Chris' letters about the needs of the Navajo school children, I called the mission and spoke with one of the teachers to ask what the kids needed most. Sr. Marietta Brown told me, "I could use twenty dollars to buy detergent to wash the clothing of my students." As a retired teacher myself, I expected a different answer. After the call, I remember crying and then sending her the money.

Lee and I never dreamed we would get to see the mission, but we're so glad that we did. The people at St. Bonaventure, Chris, the teachers, and staff lead their lives serving the Navajo people who so desperately need our help. They depend on us and our donations to help the people of Eastern Navajo Reservation.

Beyond writing a check in support St. Bonaventure, there are several other ways you can help the Mission. Send tangible goods like laundry supplies, cleaning supplies, dishes, pots and pans, paper products, toiletries, etc. Or, you can send school supplies like pencils, paper, glue, scissors, folders, erasers, crayons, colored pencils, etc. You get the idea!

These items and much more can be purchased online at www.smile.amazon.com and shipped directly to the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission address.

You might also consider joining the Good Shepherd Circle to offer your support on a monthly or quarterly basis, and you can support special projects that come along. For example, my husband was keen on providing solar panels used to provide heat and running water to Navajo homes.

Lee and I pray you will join us in helping make life better for our fellow citizens. These people and their children live in America and are proud of their heritage, but they should not have to live in poverty.

God bless you for your caring spirit!
Toni Stricker-Askins

Wood stoves – instead of metal barrels.

FIFTY FAMILIES WILL BE WARM & SAFE THIS WINTER

Nearly one-third of households on the Eastern Navajo Reservation still lack electricity. That means many of these homes also have no heating system whatsoever. This makes for particularly harsh living conditions, now, in the dead of winter, when night-time temperatures drop in the teens and even single-digits.

Sadly, families in these homes turn to far riskier methods to stay warm. For example, by burning wood and other flammable materials in large metal barrels right inside their homes. As you can imagine, the potential of life-threatening fires in these homes is extremely high.

Because of friends like you, St. Bonaventure Indian Mission can offer these families a safer, more reliable source of heat. Through our community outreach program, we are delivering modern wood-burning stoves, firewood and, whenever possible, propane tanks to Navajo families struggling to stay warm this winter.

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission has distributed more than 50 new stoves so far, this year, but there are



still many Navajo families with no heat and little shelter.

The cost to purchase and install one stove is close to \$500. Please consider your best gift to this year's heating appeals and help St. Bonaventure keep as many of our Navajo brothers and sisters warm this winter as possible. Thank you!



Everyday ESSENTIALS

With the school year nearly half over the children are running out of their school supplies. Pencils, pens, notebooks, glue, crayons, hand sanitizer...the children go through them so fast we can't keep up!

As always, hygiene products are in high demand here... toilet paper, tissue, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant, soap and shampoo as well as cleaning supplies like laundry detergent, dish soap, paper towels, all the things we use and take for granted every day.

The Mission's Thrift Shop provides the children and their families with clothing and some household items but donations are always welcome and very much appreciated!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING US PROVIDE ANY OF THESE SUPPLIES YOU CAN SEND A DONATION BOX VIA UPS OR FEDEX TO:

SHOP ONLINE AT SMILE.AMAZON.COM

Thank You for Supporting the Children!



St Bonaventure Indian Mission & School
25 Navarre Boulevard West
PO Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323

Update on Smith Lake Well

A LETTER FROM DIGDEEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *George McGraw*

Together, just three years ago, we set out to dig a well in Smith Lake, New Mexico as part of the Navajo Water Project. This new well would serve as one of several access points for our water trucks. After years of careful planning, lengthy engineering studies and fundraising, we recently completed a 1446' pilot hole and found that there's no water.

Prudently, we drilled a pilot hole first, because we knew this was a possibility. The geology in this area is very tricky, and though our consulting engineers gave us the green light to dig, we knew finding clean water here would be an uphill battle.

Still, our fight together isn't over.

Our common goal, made possible by your generous support, has always been to find enough clean water to serve the needs of these incredible Navajo families, our neighbors. We need to find about 14 acres of additional water to sustain our work. Another well in this area was one option, but there are other options too.

We've begun to explore those alternatives with a team of dedicated professionals – hydrologists, engineers and water supply specialists. Our next step is to **Repair, Replace, and Reinvest**. We'll begin by studying the health of St. Bonaventure's existing well in the Thoreau area, and planning rehabilitation work to ensure that the water lasts. We'll also begin exploring alternate water sources to replace our planned well in Smith Lake. We've already identified



several new projects of interest. One way or another we will find enough water to meet the needs of the community we serve together.

Of course, we are disappointed that the Smith Lake well was not a success. This goal united so many people in beautiful and unexpected ways. Fortunately, we've taken that momentum and used it to grow the Navajo Water Project in ways we never thought possible. When this project first took shape, building the Smith Lake well was our only focus. But because of your support and enthusiasm, we've bought and refurbished new water trucks, optimized delivery routes, and begun installing systems that will bring clean, running hot and cold water into 228 homes.

We're committed to the Navajo People. We're focused on finding enough clean water to make sure our clients' water tanks are full and their lives are healthier and happier. We will not stop until every single home in this area has the clean, running water every American deserves. When we've finished here, we'll continue this work in other communities that need our help.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible effort. We need your help now more than ever.

Gratefully,

George McGraw
Executive Director DigDeep

Chris Halter

A Gift That Pays You

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES OFFER A SIMPLE & SMART WAY TO GIVE

After 11 years as Director of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School, I know how faithfully you care for the Navajo children, families, and elders who need you.

Your faithful support has helped to provide the necessities of life they so desperately need – like clean water, food, and safe shelter. But even more, you offer them hope for the future by giving the children an education, the families support and encouragement.

You have given all that and more! So, maybe you'd consider another way we might work together for the good of the Navajo and at the same time save for your own future in the bargain.

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School has offered charitable gift annuities to our friends since 1995. This simple investment benefits you by giving you lifetime, guaranteed payments on a regular schedule. A portion of your gift is tax-deductible and a portion of the payments you receive is tax-free as well. You may start an annuity with a charitable gift of \$1000.00 or more. The size of your regular annuity payments is determined by the amount of your investment and your age.



While this is a secure investment for you, it is also a beautiful gift to us. And when you no longer need the income, the remainder of your charitable gift annuity will be used to continue your generosity and legacy through the ongoing ministries of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School.

The simple and wonderful truth is that a charitable gift annuity could truly help you secure your retirement income while benefitting the beautiful Navajo people who are among poorest of the poor in our country today.

If you like, I would be happy to send you a personal and confidential example of how an annuity would work for you. All I need to know is your age, how much you would like to invest and if you want one or two beneficiaries. Just fill out the form below and send it back to me.

Thank you for your every act of charity and gift of faith in support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School. If you have any questions, please free to call me at **505.862.7847**.

Please send me a confidential illustration of a Charitable Gift Annuity based on the following information:

Name _____ Birth date _____

Note: If you are not the person to receive payments, please indicate that person's name here:

Projected gift annuity amount \$ _____

Type of asset (check one): Appreciated Stock Cash

Name of additional person (if any) to receive payments for life: _____

Relationship _____ Birth date _____

I have questions, please call me: Telephone _____ Best date/time _____

Return completed form in the enclosed envelope to: St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School
PO Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323-0610



Join the Circle of Love!

Are you a committed donor to St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School? Do you believe in the good work we do to improve the lives and futures of Navajo children and their families? Would you like your donations to go further and work harder for these families?

Lastly...are we sending you too much mail?

If you answered YES to any of those questions I ask you to please consider joining our Good Shepherd Circle.

It's easy to join. Just fill out the form below, tell us the amount you'd like to send, monthly or quarterly, by mail or you can charge it directly to your credit card.

As a Good Shepherd, you will see a lot less mail from us. That helps decrease fundraising expenses so more funds go to serving the needs of the Navajo people.

A Good Shepherd Circle member receives a letters from the mission expressing how your generosity is helping the mission, school and the Navajo families that live on our reservation. Also you will get the MISSION MESSENGER keeping you updated on everything that is going on at the mission and school.

I hope you will consider this vital and easy giving option.

May God bless you always!



IT'S EASY TO GIVE ALL YEAR LONG!
JUST GO TO SMILE.AMAZON.COM ENTER OUR NAME AS YOUR CHARITY AND SHOP LIKE ALWAYS.
BUT REMEMBER ONLY ON SMILE.AMAZON.COM

YES! I would like to join the Good Shepherd Circle.

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ in support of St. Bonaventure Mission and School.

Monthly Quarterly

I would like to charge my gift to: Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Card # _____ Security code _____

Join by Phone: 505.862.7847 or call Toll free: 877.989.4100

Mail to: GOOD SHEPHERD CIRCLE

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School • P.O. Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323-0610