

WINTER 2022



MISSION

ST. BONAVENTURE

Messenger

INDIAN MISSION & SCHOOL



## The Director's Desk

### YOUR RIPPLE EFFECT

Dear Friend of St. Bonaventure,

I find the image of Mother Teresa standing on the shores of the Ganges, smooth circular stone in hand, a comforting one. Reflecting on her own limitations, Teresa knew her life's work would, in one way or another, have a lasting impact on those she encountered along the way.

Suffice it to say, the ripples of Mother Teresa's stones continue to disturb the waters of our hearts to this very day. Perhaps you, too, can envision yourself on the shoreline standing next to the diminutive nun, ready to create your own ripples in the water?

Indeed, you already have.

Even amid the turmoil of this pandemic, you have continued to generously cast your stones in the troubled waters of the Eastern Navajo Reservation. And the ripples of your goodness and charity in support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School have touched the lives of impoverished Navajo children, elders, and families with happiness and hope.


In this issue of the Mission Messenger, I am pleased to offer you an in-depth look at our effort to refurbish the old well in our neighboring community of Baca/Prewitt. As you will see, the well project was an extensive and costly one, but also one whose ripples will touch the lives of its 1,500 residents with clean drinking water for generations to come.

Next, you will find enclosed a copy of our 2021 Impact Report. The report is packed with facts and figures about the many Outreach Programs you make possible. Finally, on pages six and seven, I offer you

ideas to consider how you can help safeguard the long-term future of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School.

As Mother Teresa also noted, we cannot change the world alone.

Your partnership with St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School is a testament to what is possible when people work together to bring about positive change in our world. And your continued commitment to the Navajo people is a sign they are not facing lives of extreme poverty and hardship alone.

"I alone cannot change the world,  
but I can cast a stone across the waters  
to create many ripples." 

Mother Teresa.

Thank you for continuing to cast stones in the turbulent waters of the Navajo people and touching their lives with ripples of hope and the promise of a better tomorrow.

Blessing and Peace,

Chris Halter

## Luck of the Irish. . . NAVAJO?

We all hope to impart positive change in the world. Unfortunately, even with the best intentions in our hearts, the ripples of our actions can sometimes lead to unintended and unwanted consequences.

Such was the case with Patricio “Paddy” Martinez.

Little did Paddy know when he discovered uranium in nearby Grants, New Mexico, nearly seventy years ago, that it would one day lead to the largest environmental clean-up settlement in U.S. history.

As local legend has it, Paddy, the child of a Navajo mother and Irish trader, was resting in the shade beneath a tree when a bright yellow rock caught his eye. After taking the unusual stone to a nearby trading post, and subsequent testing in a lab in Kansas, it was confirmed that Paddy had discovered uranium ore.

From the late 1940s to the 1980s, the Kerr-McGee Corporation would go on to mine more than seven million tons of uranium ore on or near the Navajo Nation. But as the number of new nuclear power plants fell and imports from other countries grew, demand for domestic uranium plummeted. The price of uranium fell to an all-time low in 2001, at just \$7 a pound.



**PADDY MARTINEZ (1878 – 1969)**  
LEFT BEHIND A REMARKABLE LEGACY,  
BOTH BY HIS DISCOVERY OF URANIUM  
AND AS THE FATHER OF 14 CHILDREN,  
SEVERAL OF WHOM RESIDE IN  
BACA/PREWITT AREA TO THIS DAY.

Today, more than 500 uranium mines located in the Grants Mineral District are closed. But what remains is a legacy of contamination from the abandoned mines, homes built from contaminated mine waste rock, and contaminated water wells.

In 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led the development of a federal Five-Year Plan in conjunction with the Navajo Nation to address the contaminated homes, water sources, and abandoned mines. Finally, in 2014, the United States District Court approved the Tronox settlement, awarding the Navajo Nation \$45 million and the EPA with almost \$1 billion in restricted funds to clean up more than 50 mines operated by Kerr-McGee, including the Haystacks Mine site in the Baca/Prewitt community.

As for Paddy, you could say things turned out well for him. After discovering uranium on Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, he secured a well-paying job with the company as a uranium scout.

He was also able to negotiate a \$250 per month payment for the rest of his life from the railroad. Paddy died at the age of 91 and was survived by his wife and fourteen children. In 1992, Paddy Martinez was officially inducted into the National Mining Hall of Fame for pioneering the most important uranium-producing era in U.S. history.

While it is impossible to ignore the environmental impact of Paddy's fateful discovery all those years ago, it is also necessary to acknowledge the great good he helped bring about for his community and country. The uranium rush of the 1950s saw the population of Grants swell from 2,200 people to more than 50,000 within a few short months. And the more than \$25 billion in uranium

extracted from the region proved invaluable to supplying our military and fueling our nation's nuclear power plants for half a century.

Paddy cast his stone across the water. We feel his ripples still.

## A Well of Hope

The nearly 1,500 residents of Prewitt, NM, know a thing or two about living with a limited supply of water. For most of the Navajo families living there, hauling water to bathe, drink, cook, or even clean around the house is just a part of everyday life.

But as awareness of ground water safety has increased and the impacts of a decades-long megadrought continue to worsen, the people of Prewitt are finding it increasingly difficult to find enough clean water to survive.

That is precisely why the well St. Bonaventure Indian Mission helped to restore last summer is so important. With many local water sources deemed unsafe for human consumption and record low levels of mountain snowpack offering a dwindling supply of runoff, every single source of safe water makes a difference.

Following a year-long process of planning and securing the necessary permits, construction of the Baca-Prewitt began in the spring of 2021. Less than six months later, the well now stands ready to supply the community with a steady source of clean drinking water.

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission wishes to thank our generous benefactors, once more, for casting stones of love and hope in the lives of the Navajo children, families, and elders living in Prewitt. The ripples of your goodness and charity have secured a safe supply of water for them for generations to come.

St. Bonaventure would like to extend our special thanks to the members of the Baca-Prewitt Chapter House, the engineers at Souder, Miller & Associates, the construction team at Anchor Built, Inc., and our partners at Dig Deep for their invaluable support to making the well project a reality.



2021

# IMPACT REPORT



**In 2021, you helped** St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School navigate the unprecedented challenges of another year of pandemic life and bring HOPE to the Navajo people we serve. In this **2021 Impact Report**, we are pleased to share with you the impact - by the numbers - of the Outreach Services you made possible through your generous partnership with our Mission and School.

**You make everything we do possible. Thank you!**

**WATER DELIVERY: The Need:** Approximately one-third of Navajo households still do not have access to running water.

**200+**

Families currently on our water delivery route

On average we deliver:

**14,000**

GALLONS DAILY,

**70,000**

WEEKLY

**280,000**

MONTHLY, AND

**3.36 Million**

ANNUALLY

This does not include the hundreds of gallons clients and community members haul M-F during business hours



Refurbished old Baca/Prewitt Well to increase access to clean water to more than **1,500** residents.

Total cost **\$190,000+**

Cost to construct new pump house, purchase 10,000 gallon water tank, and labor.

**40+**

1,200 gallon water cisterns installed

**\$100,000+**

Invested in cistern tanks and accessories

**\$45,000**

In maintenance costs, well costs, or any fuel charges for water trucks.

**70+**

Solar pump systems installed to carry water from cisterns into homes.



**FOOD INSECURITY: The Need:** Navajo households are among the most food insecure in the country. There are currently fewer than 15 grocery stores on the entire Navajo Nation.

**3,500**

Food boxes distributed from our **Native Hope Food Pantry**

**170**

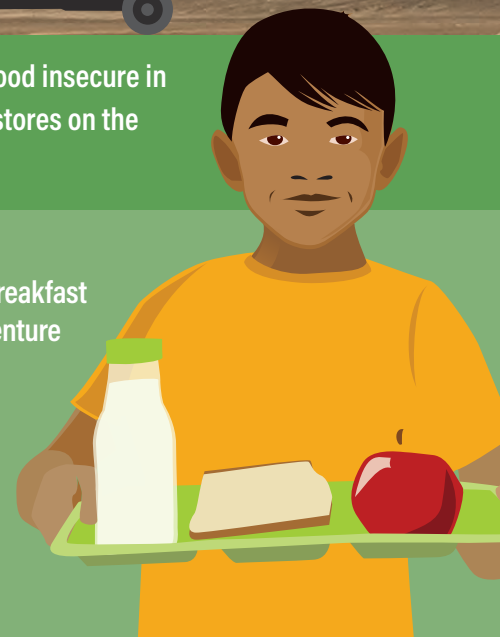
Children received breakfast and lunch daily at St. Bonaventure Indian School

**300+**

Food deliveries every month to families facing hunger during this pandemic

**900+**

Backpacks with food for SBIS students facing hunger on weekends



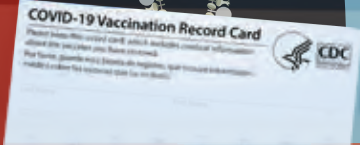


# How your help IMPACTS lives

When we caught up with Harold and Shirley, it was impossible not to notice the tattered condition of their home. The exterior panels were battered and worn from years of high winds, extreme summer heat, and bitter cold winter temperatures. But like so many impoverished families on the Navajo Nation, Harold and Shirley have gone years without being able to afford supplies to maintain their home or make urgently needed repairs. Thankfully, with your help, the St. Bonaventure Outreach Team was able to lend Harold and Shirley a helping hand and make the urgent and long-overdue repairs to make their home safe and secure. Know that your continued financial support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School makes stories like Harold and Shirley's, and hundreds more, possible.

## COVID RELIEF

**The Need:** The Navajo Nation was among the hardest-hit areas during the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, with infection and death rates higher than anywhere else in the country at one point. Many communities continue to report uncontrolled spread of new variants



**1,000+** Community members vaccinated at vaccine site set up at St. Bonaventure Mission office.

**300+** Distributed more than 300 boxes of sanitation products, including masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, disinfectant spray, and other cleaning supplies.

**\$35,000+**

In cleaning supplies purchased and distributed

**50 families**

Expanded water and meal delivery services to **50 more families**

## HOUSING

**The Need:** The Navajo people face some of the worst housing conditions in the entire country. More than 60 percent reported having incomplete bathrooms and kitchens. More than half reported living in dilapidated structures or homes requiring serious repairs.

**\$65,000+**

In-home repair projects - roofing, new siding, additions, etc.

**50+ Families**

Provided low-income housing for 50+ families at the St. Bonaventure Mobile Home Park

## EDUCATION

**The Need:** The Navajo achievement gap is at a critical point. While other minority groups continue to see gains in core subject areas like reading, math and science, Navajo scores have remained stagnant. Graduation and college enrollment rates also lag behind.



**170+**

St. Bonaventure Indian School offers **tuition-free education** to more than 170 preschool through eight grade students, more than 90 percent of whom live at, near or below the poverty level.

**\$25,000+**

In **scholarships** offered to St. Bonaventure Indian School alumni continuing their high school or college education at private institutions in New Mexico.

## UTILITY ASSISTANCE

**The Need:** Nearly one-third of all households on the Navajo Nation still have no electricity. Of the households who do have electricity, only about a quarter use it to heat their homes. Most homes within the Navajo Nation are still heated by wood or pellet stoves.

**40**

Woodstoves purchased

**45**

Truckloads of firewood purchased

**\$10,000**

Provided in heating assistance

**\$250,000**

Purchased new **propane-fueled school buses** to provide needy children with free transportation to and from school. Many of these children would have no means of getting to school without our buses.



## MISCELLANEOUS ASSISTANCE

**1,500**

Christmas gifts purchased for impoverished Navajo children

**\$55,000+**

Invested in Community Development, Medical, Rent, Funeral

## EMPLOYMENT

**The Need:** The unemployment rate on the Eastern Navajo Reservation is well above 50 percent.

**65+ Jobs**

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School is the largest employer in Thoreau, NM, providing jobs to more than 65 employees, most of whom are Navajo.

## *A Hidden Treasure*

Believe it or not, you may have a hidden treasure tucked away in a file drawer. If you are surprised by this news, be assured you are not alone.



Many of us own assets that are no longer needed for our financial security. We held on to them for a variety of reasons. Surprisingly, one of those assets might have even been forgotten.

When was the last time you took an inventory of your savings bonds? It's quite likely that some of those bonds go back to your childhood, perhaps received from a grandparent to celebrate a special occasion. Since saving bonds take a number of years to mature, we tend to put those bonds somewhere for safe-keeping, only to be forgotten as the years go on.

If you are one of those people, you may be surprised to discover that a number of your savings bonds have stopped earning interest. But did you know that there is a way to bring new life to those bonds? They can be used to make a gift to Saint Bonaventure, perhaps in a way that can also benefit you.

Unfortunately, savings bonds cannot be given outright to a charity. They must be redeemed, which will create some taxable income. However, the proceeds can be donated to Saint Bonaventure, for which you would receive a charitable deduction to help offset the taxes owed on the redemption (as long as you itemize on your income tax return).

Another idea would be to use the proceeds from the bonds' redemption to fund a charitable gift annuity. The gift annuity will bring new life to this asset because the annuity will start making payments to you (and/or a loved one) that you cannot outlive. An added bonus is that a significant portion of the gift annuity payments will be tax-free.

Finally, did you know that savings bonds left in your estate are subject to income tax, even if your estate isn't large enough to owe estate taxes? The tax would be owed either by your estate or the person who receives the bonds. However, if your will or living trust specifies that the bonds are to pass to Saint Bonaventure Indian Mission and School, all income tax would be avoided. Please keep in mind that your estate plan must specify that the bonds come to us; you cannot leave it up to your executor or trustee to make that decision. The good news is that we can put the full amount to use in our programs without paying any income tax!

We would be happy to tell you more about how this "hidden" asset can provide truly important support for our programs. Contact Marie Torivio at 505-862-7847 to learn more.



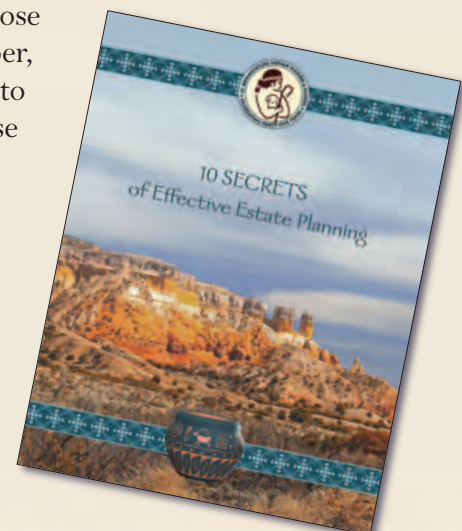
## Special Planning Tips for Those Who Live Alone

According to one estimate, approximately one-third of people over the age of 75 live alone. Women form the majority of this group, since they have longer life expectancies than men, but many men also live by themselves.

People who live alone may have special planning needs, relating primarily to the challenges of aging, end-of-life care and estate planning. Special attention may have to be paid to providing for assisted living, nursing home care and medical expenses. Here are some strategies that singles and survivors should implement to ensure their future security:

- Seek out a trusted adviser. If you do not have a will, start by contacting an estate planning attorney. You may also need the help of a financial planner or tax adviser to get all of your affairs in order while you are still mentally sharp.
- Plan for someone to handle financial matters if you become disabled. A general durable power of attorney enables a person you trust to take over the job of paying your bills, monitoring your savings and investments and making financial decisions. Another option is a revocable living trust in which a trustee would provide these services if you become incapacitated. Your trustee may also need a power of attorney to deal with assets that are not in the trust.
- Plan ahead for the time when you may no longer be able to live independently. Plan some “field trips” to local assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities. Ask home health care providers about services that may enable you to stay in your home even if you require help with daily activities.
- In your estate plan, you may want to make a bequest to benefit Saint Bonaventure Indian Mission and School, considering us as part of your extended family. A gift of any size will matter.
- Make sure that in the event of an emergency, it will be clear to those who are there to assist you whom to contact (family member, attorney, etc.) Keep in mind that sometimes it will be difficult to communicate while under stress, so it’s a good idea to have these instructions written out and placed in a prominent location.

To help you with your planning, we are pleased to offer our friends a free booklet: **“10 Secrets to Effective Estate Planning.”** Call Marie Torivio at 505-862-7847 to request your copy.





# JOIN THE CIRCLE OF LOVE!

## JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND WE ARE HIS SHEEP

But Jesus calls all of us be to be good shepherds.

*“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them -not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;”*

*1 Peter 5:2*

As a member of the Good Shepherd Circle, YOU will be God's shepherd, caring for the most impoverished, isolated people among us - our Navajo elders, children and families who have been lost and forgotten for so long.

You will make a real difference in people's lives. Even the smallest regular gift, will support our mission to:

- **PROVIDE CLEAN WATER** - to over 200 families through our water delivery program.

- **FEED THE POOR** - provide two meals a day to our school children and deliver emergency food boxes to elders and families in crisis.
- **GIVE SHELTER** - and provide home repairs to families living in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- **EDUCATION** - help provide Navajo children with tuition-free Catholic education and a chance at **A BRIGHTER FUTURE.**
- **FIGHT COVID** - purchase and distribute PPE, disinfectants, and other life-saving supplies to Navajo frontline health workers and families.

Please consider offering monthly gift as a member of the Good Shepherd Circle to ensure St. Bonaventure Indian Mission can meet the demands of this emergency and continue to reach out to those most in need.

**REMEMBER** WHEN ORDERING GO TO **SMILE.AMAZON.COM** AND ENTER ST BONAVENTURE INDIAN MISSION AS YOUR CHARITY ~ SHOP AS ALWAYS!



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

Please accept my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in support of St. Bonaventure Mission & 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  
GOOD SHEPHERD CIRCLE • St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School • P.O. Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323-0610