



2016 Accomplishment Summary

Healthcare

Walking Shield's work with many tribes and reservations across the country in 2016 continues to have an impact in the lives of American Indian families. In collaboration with the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Program, Walking Shield coordinated healthcare deployments to several American Indian reservations this year: California (Round Valley, Hoopa Valley, and Santa Ynez), Montana (Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne), Minnesota (Leech Lake – Cass Lake), and South Dakota (Crow Creek-Fort Thompson).



These healthcare deployments continue to bring healthcare services to American Indian communities that include physicals, dentistry, physical therapy, pharmacy services, lab work, radiology, optometry and women's healthcare services.

"The IRT Medical Program leaves a positive impact on the people we treat as they see we are committed to the community, we are committed across the board...."

Major Tracy Jones / AFRC IRT MEDICAL Project Manager

OneSight Partnership

Walking Shield's partnership with OneSight Program provided eyesight services to thousands of children from reservation and rural communities across the nation this year. In coordination with Walking Shield and tribal leaders, OneSight deployed doctors, technicians and employees to Ft. Belknap in Montana and to the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, where a total of 3,483 children and adults received eye examinations. Over 70% of those tested received new eyeglasses.



As proclaimed by an elder at Ft. Belknap: "I never thought there would be this many people here to help us. The mobile eye clinic's impact is enormous and deeply appreciated by all who received the gift of improved sight. A OneSight employee recounts her experience:



On Thursday evening, the Native Americans put on an incredible event for us. We shared a meal together of buffalo, pork, potatoes, blueberry soup, and fry bread. After dinner, we moved to the gymnasium to watch several traditional dances, and listen to traditional drum songs. The booms from the drums reverberated through the gym; it was an awe inspiring experience. The dancers invited the OneSight team to join in a dance, and then we all did a circle dance together.

Afterwards, each team member was presented a certificate from the tribe and a braid of sweetgrass, which is burned traditionally when you want to feel good, and one of their sacred items.

Many of the tribal council leaders spoke, expressing their heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude for our work. "Words will fall short to show our gratitude for what you did for our people," the vice president of the council told us. "We open our door to you anytime." It was a humbling moment when they told us how these new glasses would help their children succeed in the world.

Education

Walking Shield's Education Support Program contributed to the educational achievement of 16 students that graduated from college this year. Walking Shield provides educational support in the form of case management that encourages and supports students along their journey through college. Walking Shield provided \$150,000.00 in scholarship funds in 2016, in addition to \$60,000.00 for tutoring, books, tuition, bus passes, computers and college-related needs.



Ray Alvarado /
Coastal Gabrieleno,
Diegueno Band of
Mission Indians



Skylee Escobedo

Consider the testimony of one of our scholarship recipients who is well on the way to graduate this school year:

“My name is Skylee Escobedo. I am currently a senior at Cal State University Long Beach. Since my freshman year, Walking Shield's scholarship program has helped me tremendously on my educational journey. With the help of Walking Shield's scholarship funding I have been able to purchase a new laptop for my studies, cover college costs such as my books, in-class materials, and parking passes, and most importantly study abroad. I wouldn't have been able to accomplish all that I have during my college experience without Walking Shield's scholarship program and the help that those working for the program have provided me with since I began college. Studying abroad will definitely be my greatest memory looking back on my college years. It was always a dream of mine but Walking Shield's scholarship program made it a reality. Now I am in my last year of college and so close to reaching my dream of graduating. It is incredibly important that I be granted a scholarship this year so that I can have a means to cover my college costs including fees for the Honor's Society, Alumni Association, and graduation. Not only is graduating extremely important to me but graduating from Cal State University Long Beach is even more important to me because it is where my grandpa and mom graduated from, as well. With additional help from Walking Shield I hope to be able to have the final year in college that I always dreamed of and graduate with a little less stress on my shoulders.”

Skylee Escobedo / Northwestern Band of Shoshone Indians

Infrastructure

Walking Shield continues to address the substandard housing issue so prevalent in many American Indian communities. Through collaboration with the Department of Defense, housing intended to be demolished will be relocated to reservations in need. This year,



more than 100 houses from Fort Riley in Kansas have become available. The Housing Authority of the Kansas Kickapoo Tribe, with the assistance from Walking Shield, has explored accessing several homes. The Leech Lake reservation in Minnesota is another possible beneficiary. Turtle Mountain in North Dakota renovated an additional 10 homes this past year and families have since moved in. The “before” photo shows the trailer that one Turtle Mountain family had been living in for years. They recently moved into the 3 bedroom/2 bathroom trailer (“after”) that was relocated from the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Humanitarian Aid fuels our Holiday Gift Program

Children and young adults from over 50 tribes and urban organizations participated in Walking Shield’s Holiday Gift Program this year. Age specific items were pulled, palletized and sent to all corners of the United States by volunteers and Walking Shield staff members. Once again, our generous donors came through. Toys, games, sports equipment, clothing, blankets and backpacks with school supplies and hygiene items were donated by Hasbro, Native American Toys for Tots,

Carter’s, Common Ground, Huntington Landmark Toymakers Club, Gymboree, Westminster Yarn Spinners, Pierce College Pre-Vet, Crazy 8, as well as many individual donors. A highly anticipated event, we look forward to this cherished tradition every year.

