



2017 Walking Shield Annual Report

Education

Walking Shield's Educational program continues to grow each year. We have increased the number of scholarship recipients from the previous academic year from 32 to 56 this current academic year. This year we awarded over \$185,000 dollars in scholarships. In addition, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians renewed another \$60,000 grant to continue to provide wrap around services to keep students in college such as tutoring, books, bus passes, etc. In 2017, we had another 17 graduates with college degrees. Here is one of our student's story about her successful college experience.

OneSight Partnership

In collaboration with our OneSight partners, Walking Shield continues to provide free eye exams and a brand new pair of glasses for those who were visually impaired. Approximately 95% of the glasses are made onsite and dispensed before the clinic is over. We increased the number of clinics; in 2016 we conducted 2 clinics; and in 2017 we had 3 clinics.

The OneSight Vision Clinics coordinated by Walking Shield are reducing this gap by increasing access to better eye care. For a child, a pair of prescription glasses opens doors to a better education. Such a simple remedy can have a lasting impact, especially for students in elementary grades.

In April 2017, Walking Shield coordinated a OneSight clinic on the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota. Surrounding communities adjacent to the reservations were also invited to participate. We were able to provide 1,181 students and adults with an eye exam and approximately 73% needing prescription eye glasses.

In September, Walking Shield assisted Turtle Mountain Tribe leadership in coordinating a OneSight vision clinic on their reservation. More than 1,614 students and adults received eye exams. Of this group, 71 percent received prescription glasses.



"Walking Shield has been a tremendous supporter throughout my undergraduate career. I received help with tutoring, financial aid and books. They always reached out to me to make sure I was doing well at school. I cannot thank Walking Shield enough for what they have done for me."

Krystal Rose Lira
Laguna Pueblo/Barona Band of Kumeyaay Indians
2017 Graduate ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE, Billings, MT
BS in Psychology and BA in Communications Studies



Overall, 1,344 students and adults received free eye exams in October during a OneSight Vision Clinic on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington. From this group, 72 percent needed prescription eye wear.

“It lifted my spirits to watch our children see clearly—some for the first time,” Rick Winters, interim superintendent, Mary Walker School District said.

Healthcare

Through a unique relationship with the Department of Defense Walking Shield continues to provide healthcare support to some of the most impoverished reservations in the United States. Healthcare professionals from the Army, Air Force, National Guard and the Navy provides a myriad of services throughout the summer. Again, we had another increase of services from helping 8 reservations in 2016 to 9 reservations in 2017. They included Pine Ridge and Rosebud in South Dakota, Ft. Peck, Ft. Belknap and North Cheyenne in Montana, Round Valley, Santa Ynez and Hoopa in California and Leech Lake in Minnesota.

Known to the military as Operation Walking Shield, here is an example of what support was provided to the two reservations in South Dakota.

To help meet training and readiness requirements for US Army Reserve soldiers serving in a medical capacity, Operation Walking Shield coordinated a month-long healthcare deployment to support the work of Pine Ridge Indian health Service Hospital and the Rosebud Comprehensive Healthcare Facility.



A dental specialist prepares for patients at the Pine Ridge Hospital Dental Clinic.

An Army Reservist noted one of the most rewarding moments of the deployment was helping make dentures for a patient who had suffered from troubled teeth for years. She literally helped put a smile on the patient’s face.

Pine Ridge and Rosebud combined, the reservists worked with more than 900 patients and provided an array of healthcare services from immunizations to MRI’s.

Infrastructure

Operation Walking Shield also includes infrastructure support from all four military branches. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, the Blackfeet Nation and the Crow Tribe in Montana were assisted with a variety of infrastructure assistance. This effort took place from May 2017 to September 2017.



At Rosebud, the Army National Guard assisted with some road work and utilities. They help with some of the general housing construction needs. In addition, they were able to access in collaboration with the tribe plans for future engineering projects.

Like dinosaurs of a lost age, giant earth movers shape the landscape in preparation for a housing expansion and to improve road conditions for the Blackfeet Nation Reservation near Browning, Montana. Through the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT), US Army Reserve and US Navy Seabee personnel gain valuable experience in using their heavy equipment.

The soldiers came from bases throughout the country for hands-on practice in operating dump trucks, excavators and other construction machines. The work is a vital step for improving the quality of life on the rugged, wind-swept plains.

In another region of Montana, US Air and Army National Guard units finished the construction of new homes and refurbished others for military veterans as part of the IRT program. The homes are located in the Crow Agency Reservation near Big Horn, Montana. Operation Walking Shield coordinates these efforts that accomplish goals for the both the tribal communities and military branches.

Housing Relocation

Housing Relocation is the third and final component of Operation Walking Shield. Over the years, we have relocated 1,125 homes from military installation that were considered excess and slated for destruction. Once Walking Shield insures they are safe and ready for removal, local tribes by the military base are contacted to see if they are interested in these homes. As we reported in 2016, they Kickapoo in Kansas were interested in some homes slated to be released in 2017. This year the tribe were able to move several homes to their reservations.

Families of the Kickapoo Nation in Kansas are settling in their new homes made possible through the coordination of Operation Walking Shield with the Department of the Army, the Kickapoo Nation Housing Authority and Corvias Military Living. The tribe received the homes from the U.S. Army installation at Fort Riley, Kansas. Here is one of the homes getting ready to be relocated to the reservation.



“We are totally excited about this because we get to work with Fort Riley and Operation Walking Shield,” Kickapoo Tribal Council Chairman Lester Randall said. “What this does for us is it gives our reservation members living in multi-family households an opportunity to have their own home, whether it’s rented or owned, and that will help economically, help the tribe and allow members to move back to the reservation.”

Humanitarian Aid and Holiday Gift Program

Walking Shield started to provide humanitarian items since its inception in 1986. From serving the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1986, we have grown to helping over 55 tribes and off reservation Indian communities. Each year, we provide over \$300,000 dollars of donated products which are either picked up at our office or shipped to the reservations. Items include school supplies, blankets, mittens, baby accessory products, hygiene items to just name a few.



Soon thereafter to providing humanitarian aid to Pine Ridge the holiday gift program started in 1987. Well over 40 reservations benefit from this program. We distribute over 20,000 brand new gifts in 2016 and we expect to do the same if not more in 2017.

