

Great Plains Indian Gaming Association Receives SMSC Grant

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community has made a grant in the amount of \$125,000 to the Great Plains Indian Gaming Association (GPIGA) of Bismarck, North Dakota. Founded in 1997, GPIGA currently is composed of 28 Indian Nations within the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Wyoming, and Montana. The grant will be used to assist the GPIGA in protecting, preserving, and expanding their treaty rights through legal representation.

J. Kurt Luger, GPIGA's Executive Director, commented on the donation, "This gift from the SMSC supports their brothers and sisters in the Great Plains, who like virtually all of Indian Country are experiencing an attack on their treaty rights. The vision of the SMSC is the realization that Indian Country is only as strong as its weakest link concerning the protection of our sovereignty. GPIGA is comprised of large, land-based tribal nations who have long suffered the symptomatic problems of high unemployment, deplorable health care, and market isolation."

He continued, "The assistance that we received from the SMSC is a large part of our ability to protect the tribal enterprises that we are currently operating or those that are planned for the future from state and federal legislative attacks. The ongoing generosity and leadership shown by the SMSC is a tribute to our traditional beliefs that we must look out for one another. Without this assistance our voice, our needs, our treaty rights would be diminished."

Kalispel Tribe, Northern Quest Casino Partner with Operation Spokane Heroes for 300 Holiday Morale Gift Bags for Military Families

For seven years, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and Northern Quest Casino teamed up with Operation Spokane Heroes to prepare special "Holiday Morale Gift Bags" to lift the holiday spirits of hundreds of families of troops that are deployed throughout the world. The boxes contained movie cards, popcorn, playing cards, fast food coupons, a variety of snacks, and more. The gift bags were presented to Col. Bob Thomas, Commander of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing as well as senior representatives of other branches of the military. The gift bags were distributed to the families.

Port Madison Enterprises Holiday Giving Reaches New High

For seven years, Port Madison Enterprises has adopted hundreds of children and families struggling to make ends meet during the holidays. Adopted families are invited to share a holiday meal with Santa, where each child is given age-appropriate presents and a festive stocking. Families are also given gift cards for groceries to help with added household costs during the winter season.

"We compile a list of families in need from a variety of community resource programs throughout the county and



focus on those living closest to us in North Kitsap," said PME Human Resource Director and Holiday Outreach Coordinator Barbara Griffin.

This year, 68 families and 169 children were adopted for the event that Griffin and other volunteers from PME spend weeks planning for. The families were invited to Kiana Lodge on Sunday, December 14 where Santa arrived with his elf by stretch limousine. "This is the reason we work for weeks in preparation for the event. To see children waving at Santa, eagerly decorating sugar cookies and scrambling for a front row view of the stage. It makes it all worthwhile," said Griffin.

In addition to their annual Holiday Outreach program, PME also purchased toys for 239 more children this year. Griffin, hearing that the Toys for Tots program was suffering under the weight of the current economic crises, asked for additional funds to purchase gifts for donation.

PME volunteers spent an afternoon in December traveling to area toy and department stores where they purchased more than \$6,000 worth of additional gifts for the program. "Between Holiday Outreach and our Toys for Tots run, we were able to give gifts to more than 400 children this year," said Griffin.

Pelco Donates 70,783 Toys to Toys for Tots

Employees of video and security systems manufacturer, Pelco, presented 70,783 Toys for Tots to the U.S. Marine Corps on December 24, during a fun-filled ceremony at the company's Clovis, California, headquarters. The company's cumulative contribution since 1993 has exceeded more than one million toys.

The festive occasion included the presentation of a toy representing the overall donation to members of the U.S. Marine Corps, live music and the singing of the national anthem by Pelco employee Lorraine Christiansen. Hundreds of Pelco staff attended the campus event.

Toys for Tots has grown steadily since 1993's modest donation of 808 toys to become Pelco's "flagship" charity, with the company matching one-for-one the number of toys donated by employees. Employees raise money throughout the year with dozens of activities such as bake sales, raffles, voluntary payroll deductions, and solicitations from suppliers and customers. Fundraising efforts this year also included the first-ever Toys for Tots Fun Run.

St. Croix Casino Gifts from the Heart Toy Drive Benefits Area Charities

Ever since 1993, the St. Croix Chippewa of Wisconsin have helped to bring Christmas cheer to thousands of children through their Gifts from the Heart toy drive. During this year's drive, co-hosted by the St. Croix Casino in Turtle Lake and the Hole in the Wall Casino in Danbury, 3,300 casino guests donated more than 5,000 toys.

Sharing the Christmas spirit through the Gifts from the Heart toy drive is a cooperative effort. Casino guests, who donate the toys; the casinos, which give \$5 to each guest donating a toy; and countless casino staff, who box and deliver toys, all work together to make the toy drive a success.

But the ultimate success of the casinos' toy drive depends on the most important people of all – the staff and volunteers at Turtle Lake area charities. Without their dedicated service, none of the toys collected in the Gifts from the Heart drive would ever reach a child. Area Moose Clubs, Lions Clubs, school organizations, civic clubs and charities mobilize to make sure that every child in their community receives a toy or gift for Christmas.

“We’re privileged to be a part of such a worthwhile community effort,” said Mr. Oustigoff. “We hope that in some small way we can lighten the load of all of the community volunteers



Left to right: Kelton Splatt, Dylan O’Connell, Reed Molls and David Sollman of Turtle Lake, WI, of High School’s SOS (Students Offering Support) show off some of the toys received from the Gifts from the Heart toy drive.

who work together to bring Christmas cheer to area families.”

St. Croix Casino personnel delivered the donated toys to 15 charities in Barron, Burnett, Polk, Rusk, Sawyer, St. Croix and Washburn counties. Over the past 16 years, more than 80,000 toys have been collected and distributed to charities in northwestern Wisconsin through the Gifts from the Heart toy drive. ♣

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