

Casino Team Members Donate \$24,000 to United Way



Agua Caliente Casino Team Members William Bursell, Ninette Sierra and Elizabeth Montoya.

Team members at Agua Caliente Casino and Spa Resort Casino have donated \$24,000 to the United Way in an annual Team Member donation drive. Twenty team members recently manned “donation stations” at each casino, encouraging colleagues to reach into their pockets and give back to the community.

Team members at Agua Caliente Casino and Spa Resort

Casino know the \$37,306 they collected this year will make a difference. Altogether, they’ve given \$128,469 to the United Way over the past four years.

Bob Hester, Executive Director of Human Resources, says the annual drive is a “win-win” for all involved. “We are so pleased to help facilitate this wonderful sense of giving exhibited by our team members. Not only do local charities benefit, but our team does as well, knowing they make a difference in our community.”

Navajo Agricultural Products Industry presents \$500,000 check to Navajo Scholarship Office

Navajo students will soon benefit from a \$500,000 contribution to the Navajo Scholarship Office from Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI).

Last month, the NAPI Administration, Board of Directors and the Navajo Economic Development Committee (EDC) approved a \$500,000 dividend to the Navajo Nation for scholarships. The dividend check was presented to the Navajo Nation Scholarship Office at a meeting of the EDC.

“On behalf of the NAPI employees, we wish to share our profit with the Navajo Nation to help our children pursue their higher education endeavors,” said NAPI Board Chair Ervin Chavez. He and NAPI CEO Tsosie Lewis presented the check to the EDC, and credited the Navajo Nation Council for its earlier support of NAPI, which made the profit possible. “We are grateful for your leadership and support of the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry,” Chavez said.

Prairie Island Indian Community Donates \$10,000 to the Ethnobotany Project at the Science Museum of Minnesota

The Prairie Island Indian Community recently presented a check for \$10,000 to the Science Museum of Minnesota in support of the Ethnobotany project. This project studies indigenous plants and how specific regions’ particular culture made use of them throughout history. The Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Council supports this project because of its focus on Native agriculture and its community outreach to local Native youth.



L-R: Eric Jolly, President of the Science Museum of Minnesota; Ron Johnson, Prairie Island Tribal Council Secretary/Treasurer; Johnny Johnson, Prairie Island Tribal Council Secretary; Audrey Bennett, Prairie Island Tribal Council President.

A priority of the Ethnobotany project, based out of the Anthropology Department at the Science Museum, is to stabilize, revitalize and curate the museum’s permanent collection of 167 different varieties of Native American seeds that are indigenously cultivated and are genetically pure specimens dating back hundreds of years.

The museum houses three separate exhibition gardens that serve as a means to educate visitors about Native American agriculture and allows for active research in revitalizing the seed stock. The gardens include the Three Sisters Garden that utilizes a planting technique of corn, beans and squash in one mound; the Turtle Effigy Garden that focuses on herbal uses of native plants; and Changing Gardens Through Time that shows how planting has changed along the Mississippi River over the past 2000 years.

Paul Mohrbacher, Community Relations Manager at the Science Museum of Minnesota, expressed great appreciation for the contribution from the Prairie Island. He feels it reinforces their long-standing relationship with the Science Museum and their commitment to furthering the cultural education of Native youth. “This contributes to our ability to provide stewardship; to take the treasures of a prior generation into the future,” stated Mohrbacher. “We use the gardens and the growing process as a way to inspire next generation of Native Americans.”

St. Croix Chippewa of Wisconsin Coins for Cans Food Drive Program Tops 150 Tons

The annual Coins for Cans food drive, held at the St. Croix Casino in June, collected 14,000 pounds of food from 7,249 St. Croix Casino guests and employees. During the past 15 years, the Coins Cans program has distributed 308,000 pounds of food—more than 150 tons—to food pantries in the six-county area surrounding Turtle Lake.

Casino employees Bill Selle, Mike Rogers, Wayne Rogers and Judy Warmanen delivered the collected food to 19 food pantries in Barron, Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, Sawyer and Washburn counties the week of June 11 and during the delivery process reconnected with a group of dedicated volunteers whose mission it is to feed the hungry in their communities.

“The casino food drive helps us get through the summer,” said Duana Bremer, director of the Somerset Food Pantry. “Summer is the most problematic time for us because children aren’t eligible for a meal at school every day.” Duana went on to explain that the Somerset Food Pantry is attacking the problem of child hunger with an innovative program this summer. “We’re offering a backpack program. On weekends,



Chick Stauffer (center) of We Share Food Pantry in Rice Lake with the delivery of food she received from Mike Rogers (right) and Bill Selle of the St. Croix Casino.

we’re sending a backpack filled with sandwich fixings home with area children. Children then return the backpack to us on Monday so that we can repeat the process for the next weekend,” Duana said. “Parents have told us that the program has been a godsend. At least they’re sure that their children will have one good meal every weekend.” ♣

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