

Charity Slot Tournament Raises \$13,000 for Spirit of Sovereignty at NIGA Tradeshow



Native American students and youth were the real winners April 13 as participants in the Tribal Leaders Charity Slot Tournament in San Diego raised \$13,000 for the Spirit of Sovereignty. National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Chairman Ernest Stevens, Jr. hosted the event during the 2017 Indian Gaming Tradeshow and Convention in partnership with NIGA associate member Everi.

The top three finishers in the Tournament were able to donate \$8,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively to their choice of tribal college or reservation-based programs serving Native youth. “It was a terrific event,” said Spirit of Sovereignty coordinator David Garelick. “The 13 players were so enthusiastic and the crowd that gathered to watch was impressive. We can’t thank everyone enough for participating.”

Spirit of Sovereignty is a NIGA-advised fund at the Indian Land Tenure Foundation. The program provides scholarships to students at 37 tribal colleges and universities. Spirit of Sovereignty also supports the Native Children’s Holiday Program, an annual campaign that provides toys, clothing and food for American Indian children.

“Chairman Stevens and his staff were instrumental in the success of the event, along with the great people at Everi and Urban Expositions,” Garelick said. “The funds raised will help many more young people in Indian Country achieve their dreams.”

\$40,000 From Pechanga Fountains to Feed More than 1,600 Hungry Students

Spring cleaning at Pechanga Resort & Casino washed up \$40,000 that will go toward food for Riverside County children without enough to eat. One hundred and one five-gallon buckets filled with coins totaling \$40,000 were recently donated to Feeding America Riverside-San Bernardino Counties. The millions of coins were fished out of Pechanga Resort & Casino’s water features recently. Food bank representatives joined Pechanga’s leaders at the North Entrance waterfall feature for a “big coin” presentation. Feeding America Riverside-San Bernardino already has plans for the sizable donation. They will be launching three school pantry programs at low income, high need elementary schools in Lake Elsinore and Temecula.



Feeding America representatives collect a coin check for \$40,000 from Pechanga Development Corporation board members, Pechanga leaders and Pechanga team members.

“This gift from Pechanga will help alleviate child hunger in our region through the provision of food to children and their families at school,” said Stuart Haniff, Chief Philanthropy Officer for Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino.

Feeding America estimates the new school pantry program will provide 1,600 students in need with food they would otherwise not have access to, totaling more than 16,000 pounds of food per month. Pechanga has donated the money collected from its fountains to charities in Southern California for more than 15 years.

“Every coin collected represents a wish, a chance of good luck, a hope for improved circumstances or outcomes,” said Edith Atwood, President of the Pechanga Development Corporation. “These wishes are making those hopes a reality for hundreds of children and their families by putting proper, nutritious food on their tables, positively impacting their growth and development.”

Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino Counties was selected to receive the coin windfall thanks to Pechanga Resort & Casino team members. The Pechanga board put the call out to team members to elect the winning charity. More than 600 people voted and Feeding America won with a 31-percent margin over seven additional worthy charities.

Pechanga has several water features throughout its resort property including waterfalls flanking the North Casino Entrance, the two-story rainfall chandeliers in the hotel lobby and the water wall outside the high limit gaming salon. Coins were collected from each, as well as from the serene koi pond formerly located outside the hotel entrance. Fountain coins are typically collected and sorted approximately every two years.

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic Receives \$30,000 Grant from Oklahoma City Community Foundation

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC), a nonprofit clinic providing services to American Indians in central Oklahoma, recently announced it has received a \$30,000 grant from Oklahoma City Community Foundation and its Wellness Initiative grant program. The grant will be used to assist in funding the “Fitness Family Feud” program, which will allow OKCIC to increase its level of service to the native population.

Redding Rancheria's Largest Fundraiser Goes Circus Themed



Shasta Senior Nutrition with Chairman Jack Potter Jr. and Chief Executive Officer, Tracy Edwards from the Redding Rancheria Tribal Government.

Over 500 community members came together and helped the Circus Themed Celebration for the 2017 Redding Rancheria's "A Year to Remember" annual fundraiser dinner.

"We are grateful for the community support at our annual fundraising event," said Tracy Edwards, CEO of the Redding Rancheria. "This year we had a circus theme. The building was transformed into a big top and the guests were in costume. The event raised over \$46,000 to be given back to the community through the Redding Rancheria Community Fund (RRCF), that has granted more than \$2.8 million to the community since its inception."

During the Circus themed dinner, an additional gift of \$5,000 was awarded to the Shasta Senior Nutrition and FaithWorks. Executives from the Redding Rancheria Tribal Government & Win-River Casino performed a dance entertaining the crowd with their "circus" moves.

All proceeds from the Redding Rancheria Community Fund Dinner will benefit the 2017 RRCF. The RRCF has donated over \$2.8 million since its inception in 2002. Seventy-nine local organizations in Shasta and Trinity Counties received funds in 2016 totaling more than \$190,000.

Sewakatho Recovery Center Receives Support from Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council

Sewakatho, a safe and nurturing place for continued sobriety, received a \$7,500 contribution from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council through its Community Partnership Fund to support their Family Empowerment Camp being held from July 28-30, 2017. The facility welcomes individuals recovering from drugs or alcohol and provides them with a safe, sober and supportive environment. Their services are free and can be accessed in Akwesasne, NY.

"We are so pleased to have received this grant," said Michelle Dennison-Farris, RD/LD, Director of Health Promotion Disease Prevention. "With our 'Fitness Family Feud' we will be able to challenge families to become more active and



L-R: Heather Jacobs, Sub-Chief Michael Conners, Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance, Sub-Chief Shelley Jacobs, Debra Martin, Tribal Chief Beverly Cook and Sub-Chief Cheryl Jacobs.

practice better eating habits. We appreciate the support of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation."

The "Fitness Family Feud" program is for OKCIC patients. This program will be held three times throughout the year: summer, spring and fall. The program will give families opportunities to earn points by attending certain classes and are measured on their improvement (or maintenance of good health). At the end of each session, the family with the highest average score will receive an incentive. ♣

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