2014 Annual Report
Dear Friends of the Denver Indian Family Resource Center (DIFRC),

2014 was a very busy year for DIFRC. The center saw a transition of leadership from one of our strongest advocates and supporters Lucille Echohawk, to another community leader in Isabelle Medchill. I would like to thank both for their dedication and support through my growth into the Executive Director position.

DIFRC had many successes in 2014 that helped reaffirmed our commitment to the community. The Summer Youth Leadership Program led by Terra Her Many Horses and Daryle Conquering Bear help support our youth in their leadership development and eventually to forge the Mile High UNITY youth group. Mile High UNITY has already received some national recognition and has been a constant volunteer group for our community. DIFRC continues to be the proud partnering agency for such beautiful young people.

When we reflect back on the DIFRC work in 2014 it is our continued commitment to support families in our community through a strong cultural presence that makes us most proud. We have served over hundreds of youth and families in 2014 with programs like Nurturing Parenting, Cooking Matters, Zumba, Youth Sports, Youth Leadership, Trauma Based Therapy, Community Gardening, and Intensive Case Management. We remain committed to providing culturally supportive services for American Indian and Alaska Native families.

We very appreciative to the many volunteers, nonprofits, business agencies, public sector, government agencies, and community leaders who have supported us in varies ways. We look forward to a bright 2015 and continuing to improve our quality of services.

Sincerely, Dennis Swain
Executive Director
Our Mission

To strengthen vulnerable American Indian children and families through collaborative and culturally responsive services.
Our History:

Denver Indian Family Resource Center (DIFRC) was founded in 2000 as a child welfare agency dedicated to meeting the diverse and emerging needs of Indian children and families in the Denver metropolitan area. Our goal is to assist families to avoid involvement with the child welfare system and to support and advocate for families already involved. We provide a variety of services that build up the strengths of our Indian families and that help children thrive.

Our definition of family reflects the reality for most Indian families and includes relatives and close friends. When families have already encountered child abuse or neglect charges, our approach is to actively advocate for and refer to culturally appropriate services, and to provide intensive case management and active effects for family reunification. Our services are strength-based and empowerment orients. We work together with our families and other agencies to help promote responsible healing by restoring balance, nurturing pride and recognizing the extended family and community.
DIFRC provides the community a variety of services to support our mission

Family Support and Prevention: to prevent referral of vulnerable families to the child welfare system. The goal of these services is to access resources to meet basic family needs, develop family coping skills, help restore family harmony and promote family stability. Services may include prevention education, support, counseling, multi-agency staffing, advocacy, legal referral, transportation, and involvement of the extended family.

Family Reunification: provided when families have children removed to out-of-home placements. Outreach to county human service workers seeks to build collaborative relationships and ensure that active and culturally responsive rehabilitation efforts are taken. The goal is to reunify children with families prepared to provide safety and nurture emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual well-being. DIFRC may also assist with supervised visitation, family decision-making meetings, advocacy, expert witness testimony, and accessing tribal resources.

Resource and Referral: provided to families who are at risk of involvement with the child welfare system. Other families may be served who are not at risk on a one-time basis. The goal is to provide resources and referrals for immediate needs, such as housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, childcare and other support services.

ICWA Advocacy: Under ICWA, in cases of child abuse and neglect, families with children eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe are entitled to services to ensure family preservation through treatment that is focused on active rehabilitation and treatment. DIFRC’s goal is to interface with county human services and tribes to ensure that higher standards of proof are applied prior to child removal or termination of parental rights. When families do not qualify for ICWA, DIFRC advocates for the same standards of care in order to ensure that Indian children’s cultural and family ties are maintained in the placement and reunification process.

Life Skills Group: This group is designed to help American Indian families succeed in an urban environment by focusing on skills needed in four main domains: work, practical living, personal growth, and social.
Program Philosophy

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Advocacy

Statewide Training on Culturally Responsive Practices & ICWA

Colorado Child Welfare System Improvement and Change

Family Reunification
Intensive Case Management designed to support American Indian Families Currently Involved in the Child Welfare System

Family Preservation
Intensive Case Management designed to prevent American Indian Families from Entering the Child Welfare system

Parenting Education

Home-Based Services

Kinship Support Group

Health Advocacy and Healthy Living

Family & Group Therapy

VISION
Generations of Healthy, Strong, American Indian Children and Families

MISSION
The mission of the Denver Indian Family Resource Center is to strengthen vulnerable American Indian children and families through collaborative and culturally responsive services.
Healthy Living Programs: Aimed at reducing disparities in health for AI/AN families, DIFRC provides a variety of programs to promote healthy and strong families. Preventative in nature, these programs offer a culturally responsive approach that has produced positive results within our community. We plan to sustain and grow more programs in this area. Below is a short synopsis of each program.

**Cooking Matters Eating Right:**
DIFRC works in collaboration with Cooking Matters to bring healthy cooking classes to the AI/AN community free of charge. Each session is six weeks long with two hour classes. Participants receive nutrition education and hands-on cooking using healthy recipes with affordable ingredients. In 2014, this program served 65 community members and continues to serve more families going into 2015.

**ZUMBA Classes:**
These hour long sessions are aimed at increasing healthy lifestyles and physical health for community member of all ages. The popularity continues to grow and we are fortunate to have dedicated instructors to facilitate classes. Each participant has one on one time to meet with instructors and get tips on how to incorporate healthy habits into their diet and exercise routine. Participants track progress through monthly “weigh-ins” (optional of course) and continue to report success in losing weight and becoming healthier overall. In 2014, this program served over 103 community members and remains very popular for members to maintain healthy physical exercise.
Nurturing Parenting Program: Evidence-based program for families with children birth to 12 years old, classes are provided for both parents and children. The American Indian Nurturing Skills for Families Program is designed to strengthen families through a focus in 5 areas:

- Building Self-worth and appropriate expectations through an increased understanding of child development
- Developing increased empathy and a sense of caring in parents and children
- Utilizing positive, non-violent discipline practices and techniques
- Exploring family roles and increasing self-awareness
- Developing personal power in both adults and children

In 2014, this program served over 60 community members and graduated 24 members.

Community Garden: DIFRC works in collaboration with The Denver Indian Center and Woodbine Ecology during the months of April – September (2014) to bring gardening classes to the community. Aimed at offering access to locally grown fruits and vegetables through the planning, maintenance, and harvesting of a shared community garden. Participants learn gardening techniques, receive seeds of their own to plant at home, as well as weekly handouts. Topics have ranged from “Our Connection to Water” to “Minimizing Our Ecological Footprint Through Zero Waste”. We are happy to announce a new partnership with Four Winds American Indian Council will be the host for the 2015 Community Garden program. In 2014, this program served over 215 community members and had 60 regular participants.

Summer Youth Leadership Program: A summer program dedicated to supporting youth in their journey through youth leadership development. This programs combines a community based approach with focus on responsibility, well-being, leadership, and cultural connections. The 2014 Summer Youth Leadership Program graduated 12 youth. Each of these youth played a key role into helping develop the first Native focused UNITY youth group.
Another very popular program is the **Youth Sports Program**. In 2014 this program supported over 125 youth from the community. The Denver Indian Family Resource Center partnered with the Grizzlies Basketball Program to help support and develop youth through teamwork, physical exercise, and competition.
**MILE HIGH UNITY** is a group of youth ages 11-18 in the Denver Metropolitan area, that meet once a week for 2 hours to discuss events, network, and HAVING FUN!

**MILE HIGH UNITY...** participated in a Summer Youth Leadership Program that help support their:

- Understanding of Indigenous Permaculture and their connection to the land
- Developing awareness and service to the community by sponsoring events like the 2014 New Year’s Eve Pow Wow
- Learning about their own wellness through youth sports and Healthy Living Programs.
Denver Indian Family Resource Center

2014 Financial Overview

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<th>REVENUE</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<td><strong>$1,148,509</strong></td>
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*Other identifies

* For information on grants and gifts and to review DIFRC’s complete audited financial statements, please contact Whitney Kizer at 720-500-1020
Meet the Staff

- **Dennis Swain**  
  Executive Director

- **Stevi Gray**  
  Intensive Case Manager

- **Verla Howell**  
  Intensive Case Manager  
  (Pawnee/Flandreau Santee Sioux)

- **Sarah Nelson**  
  Project Supervisor  
  (Sault Tribe of Chippewa)

- **Madonna Rogers**  
  Resource & Referral Specialist  
  (Hunkpapa Lakota)

- **David Welch**  
  Psychotherapist  
  (Eastern Band of Cherokee/Mohawk/Catawba)

- **Terra Her Many Horses**  
  Healthy Living Program Supervisor  
  (Taos Pueblo/Meskwaki/Ojibwe)

- **Daryle Conquering Bear**  
  Healthy Living Program Assistant  
  (Oglala Lakota)

- **Elizabeth Jaramillo**  
  Office Manager

- **Whitney Kizer**  
  Finance Coordinator  
  (Choctaw/Washoe)

- **Diane Waters**  
  Development & External Affairs Coordinator
**Turquoise Funders** are identified in a special way because they are those who have generously donated $5,000 or more.

The following are community partners who have generously donated in 2014:

- Caring Connection
- **Casey Family Programs**
- Charter Software
- Chipotle
- Church of the Risen Christ
- Comcast
- Kaiser Permanente
- One Nation Walking Together
- Rudy & Alice Ramsey Foundation
- **Running Strong for American Indian**
- SAFSF
- Southern Ute Growth Fund
- Starbucks
- State of Colorado
- Wells Fargo Foundation

DIFRC would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone on this list for their support to help keep our community thriving.
*Turquoise Funders* are identified in a special way because they are those who have generously donated $5,000 or more.

The following are individual supporters who have generously donated in 2014:

Aboud, Angie  
Adamson, Rebecca  
Allen, Brenda  
Amiotte, Iya  
Aron, Aimee  
Baxter, Betty Kay  
Blomberg, Art  
Bullington, Sam  
Bussey, Marian  
Casey, George  
Casias, Bruce  
Catterson, Shelly  
Christiansen, Amy  
Collins, Richard  
Couts, Wilford & Betty  
Dacres, Joan  
Dern, Rhonda  
Duffy, Nancy  
**Echohawk, Lucille**  
Enarson, Elaine  
Esquibel Hunt, Deborah and Antonio  
Fenton, Beverly  
Fleming, Candace  
Francke, Jackie  
Graf, William  
Her Many Horses, Terra  
Horn, Jeanney  
Horner, Anita  
Iron Cloud, Sonia  
Jacka, Jon  
Jacobs, Jan  
Kiyoymia, Lonnie  
Kizer, Whitney  
Lake, Donald  
Lohman, Terence & Patricia  
McGuire, Rose Marie  
Messer, Donald  
Narine, Nirmala  
Nelson, Patrice  
Redhorse, Kenneth  
Reese, Tania  
Rivera, Linda  
Rogers, Madonna  
Sage Musser, Grace  
Slater, Matthew  
Svarstad, Claudia  
Swain, Dennis  
Terry, Jacqueline  
Timmons, Frank  
Traudt, Jeanette  
Trusty, Madeline  
Van Fleet, Jennifer  
Waddell, Mark  
Wagner, Deborah  
Waters, Diane  
Weaver, Edward  
Whiting, Marsha  
Whittemore, Dan S.  
Wienbarg, Lana  
Williams, Marla  
Wilson, Laura  
Wright, Vicki  
Yorty, Margaret  
**Zinn, Mary**

DIFRC would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone on this list for their support to help keep our community thriving.
2014 Board of Directors

Bruce Casias, Chair
Deborah Esquibel Hunt, Vice Chair
Anita Horner, Secretary
Iya Amiotte, Treasurer
Del Nutter
Marsha Whiting
Donald Lake
Isabelle Medchill

Denver Indian Family Resource Center
Looking towards 2015

The Denver Indian Family Resource Center is excited to move into the new year in our new office at 7596 West Jewell Avenue, Suite 305, Lakewood, CO. We look forward to seeing you there.