Announcing a New Project!

The Denver area has seen an overwhelming rise in housing costs, yet 90% of the families we serve in the Native community report an income of less than $14,000 for a family of four. We believe that housing is a major factor to the overall health and well-being of those we serve. We are also aware that there are many Native homeless individuals and families within the Denver metro area. Therefore, Denver Indian Family Resource Center is proud to announce that we will be seeking a potential Permanent Supportive Housing project.

We are partnering with Cardinal Development and Lebeau Development to create a Native urban cultural center that includes 50 units of affordable housing. These units will vary in size and space based on future analysis of the community needs. We envision a center where dental care, parenting classes, diabetes programs, family services, youth empowerment programs, healthcare services, and resource and referral services are available in the building on the main floor area. Currently these services are available to Native families in the Denver metro area; however, each service has independent location that causes families difficulties in getting to each service. Difficulties could include such things as time available to use multiple types of public transportation, cost of transportation, transporting multiple children to various sites, weather elements, and then trying to navigate this system while wondering where you might sleep that night. Our interviews with families indicate that preventative services and preservation services often are prioritized the least when Native families are seeking an affordable place to live. It is also important to note that many Native families lose housing, services, or both due to non-compliance on their specific case plan. This housing-first structure would support an environment where all families living there would have equitable access to all the healthcare and family services named above, while not having a fear of losing their housing over one potential bad decision.

Our agency will continue to seek funding partners, community partners and supports, and focus on obtaining the most appropriate land opportunity for this venture. We are excited to travel this journey into the next step with creating a space for families to not just be ‘ok’ in poverty but to actually get out of the cycle of poverty. We believe that by creating a permanent supportive housing project we can achieve such wonderful goals.

If you any additional questions or would like to inquire about how to become involved, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Dennis Swain
Executive Director
DIFRC holds successful Annual Meeting and Fundraiser Dinner

We had a great time hosting many of our supporters at our second-ever Fundraiser Dinner this past April. We talked about our activities over the past year, announced our new Permanent Supportive Housing project, and introduced our board members. At our dinner, DIFRC successfully raised almost $20,000!

DIFRC would like to thank all of our supporters, as well as our event sponsors for making this possible.

We also look forward to our next event in April 2018!

Cultural Humility Trainings

Denver Indian Family Resource Center is currently engaged with several agencies to provide Cultural Humility training for their staff and community partners. Community service agencies have a long history of civil engagement with traumatized populations; however, very few have taken the approach to understand historical trauma. Most agencies develop diversity and cultural awareness training to help support their staff without providing a deep rich history of generational trauma regarding the communities and people they serve. Agencies must also take into account the trauma that their employees also carry internally. Understanding how history, trauma, and one’s individual behaviors interact with those we serve is vital to understanding cultural humility. We believe that there is a clear difference between “Cultural Humility,” which requires a personal investment of changed behavior, and other similar workshops.

Core components to Cultural Humility workshops are:
1. Understanding the difference between “Cultural Humility” and other cultural trainings such as cultural competency or cultural diversity.
2. Providing rich history of traumatized communities and how that creates internalized oppression and generational trauma.
4. Supporting employee development when engaging with communities that are traumatized.

The in-person class is an opportunity for participants to experience a more interactive approach to identifying traumatized communities, understanding the differences in individual, institutional, and systemic culture, racial and ethnic identification (REI), self-reflection, and building capacity of cultural humility. The in-person class alternates from educational sections, to class interaction and/or group activities. All portions are strength-based approaches to involve the participant in a healthy positive discussion around building their own capacity towards self-reflection and awareness.

If you or your agency is interested in this training, please contact Dennis Swain at dswain@difrc.org.
Winter Holidays… in July? Why Not?

As many of our clients and supporters probably know, DIFRC hosts an annual holiday party in December. Each year, approximately 100 American Indian and Alaska Native infants, children, and families who have received services with our agency over the past year come together to enjoy a warm holiday meal and multiple family-friendly activities, including pictures with Santa, picture frame making, cookie decorating, and other fun activities.

DIFRC’s Annual Holiday Party costs approximately $8,000 to put on each year. A large portion of this cost comes from purchasing age-appropriate gifts for each child that attends the party. DIFRC typically receives donations for these items in the months before the event, but we know that many people have started buying gifts for the coming holidays in the summer months, when these items cost less. We want to do the same thing this year! During the summer months, DIFRC is seeking the following tax-deductible donations to support our annual holiday party:

Unwrapped, new gifts for infants, children, and youth ages 0-18 — Unwrapped, new baby items, including sensory toys, teething rings, books, and bottles — $25 gift cards for movie theaters, Starbucks, or Best Buy to provide to teens — Gift cards to local bakeries to provide desserts — Gift cards to coffee shops to provide beverages — Monetary donations to support space rental and catering costs.

Donations can be mailed or dropped off at our office.

Learn more at difrc.org/donate-now/holiday-giving/

Upcoming Events

Learn more details at difrc.org/calendar!

Social Connections
First and third Monday of the month 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Receive a $10 King Soopers gift card on May 22!

Nurturing Parenting Program
Thursdays 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.; pre-registration required

Culture Night—Storytelling!
May 30 - 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Chipotle Fundraiser
June 25—4:00—8:00 p.m. (tentative)

Culture Night—topic to be announced
June 26 - 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Our Vision
Generations of healthy, strong American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

Honoring the tradition of strong Indian Families.

7596 W. Jewell Ave. Suite 305
Lakewood, CO 80232
Phone: 720-500-1020

DREAM CATCHER
NEWS • UPDATES • COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Our Staff
✦ Dennis Swain, Executive Director
✦ Whitney Kizer (Choctaw/Washoe), Finance Coordinator
✦ McKenna Ganz, Development Manager
✦ Kathryn Redhorse (Lakota/Navajo), Family Services Supervisor
✦ Verla Howell (Pawnee/Flandreau Santee Sioux), Family Engagement Specialist
✦ Wilma Yellow Cloud (Oglala Lakota), Family Engagement Specialist
✦ Ceriss Blackwood (Navajo/Taos Pueblo), Resource and Referral Specialist
✦ Rachel Bryan-Auker, Resource and Referral Assistant
✦ Katie Brown, Community Program Coordinator
✦ Madeline Pielert, Family Services Intern
✦ A.J. Myers, AmeriCorps VISTA

Our Board
✦ Deborah Esquibel Hunt (Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama), Chair
✦ Jack Soto (Diné /Cocopah), Vice Chair
✦ Veronica Lane (Navajo), Treasurer
✦ Michael Johnson (Arikara/Hidatsa/Ojibwe), Secretary
✦ Del Nutter (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)
✦ David Weiden (Sicangu Lakota)
✦ Emily Petoskey (Odawa)
✦ Teresa Bernie (Ihankthunwan Nakota)

DIFRC currently has open staff positions. Learn more at: difrc.org/announcements/
Want to volunteer? Check out difrc.org/volunteers/