

JULY 2021



# RED FEATHER

RED FEATHER DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
SUMMER NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT- 2

EVERYONE DESERVES A HEALTHY HOME - 3

VOLUNTEER SHOUT-OUT- 3

RED FEATHER IN THE NEWS -4

SCAN TO DONATE- 4

FROM THE GROUND- 5

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS- 5

FROM THE DESK OF THE ED- 6

UPCOMING EVENTS- 6

**HELP NAVAJO AND HOPI COMMUNITIES BUILD AND RECOVER**

You can donate online at [www.redfeather.org/donate](http://www.redfeather.org/donate) or by scanning the QR code on page 4 of this newsletter.

Check donations can be sent to:  
**PO BOX 907, Bozeman, MT 59771**



**THIS JULY, WE'RE REVIEWING WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ...AND WHERE WE'RE GOING**

**First things First: THANK YOU**

The record amount of donations we received this past year made our response to the urgent needs on the reservation during the pandemic possible. We are so grateful for the support our community helped provide, and so inspired by the resilience and strength we've been witness to. Though we've all battled through a lot, the road to recovery is a long one.

**Requests to Red Feather for handwashing stations, emergency firewood, and help with home heating and safety services are still INCREASING.**



## THE BIG PICTURE

Red Feather Board President Chrystel Cornelius' recent article [published on the NDN Collective website](#), [BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN IMPACT INVESTING AND NATIVE AMERICA](#), highlights the need for capital flow to Indigenous communities, and the fact that **less than 0.5 percent of all philanthropy goes directly to Native America.**

"Even before COVID-19, investors were already shifting the definition of economic success to include how wealth, resources, and goods flow to everyone and how to steward our natural world and resources for the future. **Indigenous wisdom on putting these socially responsible investment principles into practice** is increasingly being acknowledged. However, the philanthropic and investment world still lags behind; over nine months into the pandemic, the conversations our organizations have had with investors, business owners, movement leaders, tribal leaders, healthcare workers, policymakers, and many others on how to sustain underserved communities through (and past) COVID-19 feels like trying to put out a blazing fire with a bucket of water. This pandemic has only exposed and widened the gaps in health, educational, and economic disparities that existed for decades, and the **\$8 billion CARES Act funds for tribes** translates to less than \$140,000 per federally recognized tribe. We need a forward-thinking mindset to prevent these kinds of devastating impacts in the first place through resilient and robust local economic systems..."

The full article can be found at [www.ndncollective.org](http://www.ndncollective.org)




### FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT


"It has been an honor to serve on the board of Red Feather and to now act in the capacity of Board President. The critical mission of Red Feather Development Group in partnering with Tribes and working with tribal members to promote the advancement of healthy homes and healthy living conditions has been an incredible endeavor to support. It has been my distinct privilege to witness and endorse the amazing impacts Red Feather provides to our Native people on an annual measure with the number of educational workshops provided, home inspections and weatherization projects accomplished. Red Feather changes the lives of one family at a time through their support and educational efforts which builds true self-sustainably while also always recognizing and honoring our cultural values as Indigenous peoples. I continue to be humbled by the commitment of the staff and feel incredibly privileged to have the ability to serve on the board of such an amazing organization. **Chii miigwetch** (thank you very much)."



**Chrystel Cornelius**  
Red Feather Board President  
and CEO of Oweesta First Nations



The closing of the local coal mine in 2018 left many coal-reliant families without an affordable heating source this past winter. Red Feather received a record number of requests for firewood, and reports of people resorting to burning furniture to stay warm. We are working to expand our firewood program as we head into fall 2021, anticipating continued need.



Hard hit by the pandemic, Hopi and Navajo communities were locked down for significant portions of the last year, putting a hold on some Red Feather workshops and in-home services.

Responding to the situation at hand, we turned to providing handwashing stations to areas without running water. Using non-profit partner Lavamaex's design, we delivered over 560 stations.



## EVERYONE DESERVES A HEALTHY HOME

### ELENA HONIE'S HOME ON FIRST MESA

Elena Honie's house is a traditional home located at Tewa on First Mesa. Her entire ceiling was damaged by mold. At the time of her home assessment for Red Feather's Weatherization and Home Preservation Grant program, she had already removed the ceiling drywall and insulation in one bedroom by herself.

Red Feather was able to assist in replacing all the insulation and drywall. Red Feather then leveraged our USDA HPG program to finish drywall work and paint the ceiling and walls. Windows were replaced and removed, and the wood stove piping upgraded. Elena also made the extra effort to remove all the furniture out of the home during the repairs to make maneuvering easier for the work crew.

With our combined efforts, we were able to provide Elena with the healthy and safe home she deserves. [#StrongerTogether](#)



**GRATITUDE.** THAT IS WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN WE THINK OF OUR VOLUNTEERS.

The age difference in our volunteers is amazing. We have volunteers in their 80's and volunteers just finishing elementary school. They have grown up in completely different times, but they have come together with the same goal in mind. To help others through this pandemic. We are truly blessed to work with so many wonderful people.

**Want to join Red Feather? You can submit a volunteer inquiry form at [redfeather.org](http://redfeather.org)**

## VOLUNTEER SHOUT-OUT

### ALEX RAISED \$5000 AND BUILT 40 HANDWASHING STATIONS FOR HIS EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



Alex Palomo, a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 526 in Glendale, AZ, worked with Red Feather in 2020 to build handwashing stations for local Navajo & Hopi elderly community members and their families, building 40 stations for his BSA Eagle Scout project. He started a legacy. In June 2021, Eagle Scout Ashwin Sundaram partnered with Red Feather to raise more funds for handwashing stations. His goal is \$7000.

You can support Ashwin's campaign at [redfeather.org/donate](http://redfeather.org/donate).



## SUPPORT OUR WORK



### OUR ASK TO YOU, OUR RED FEATHER COMMUNITY:

Help us turn this year's "lightning in a bottle moment" into longterm success. **Because real peoples' needs don't come and go with the news cycle.**

Choose **Monthly** or **Quarterly** when giving. Recurring donations allow us to budget, extend the resources of our Native Home Resource Network program and allow us to react to on-the-ground needs.

Scan To Donate Now:



## RED FEATHER IN THE NEWS

**Nonprofit Group Brings Handwashing Stations To Hopi, Navajo**  
By MELISSA SEVIGNY • JUL 16, 2020



"... many homes on the Hopi and Navajo Nations don't have access to clean, running water. KNAU's Melissa Sevigny reports, a nonprofit group is working on that problem with do-it-yourself handwashing stations. The Red Feather Development Group has built more than 100 handwashing stations so far for Hopi and Navajo families. They're constructed from two large trash bins and operated with a foot pump. Joe Seidenberg of Red Feather says they make it easier for people to wash their hands frequently, 'and that's what we need to do during the time of COVID, is give people 20 seconds of handwashing multiple times a day. It's going to encourage better hygiene and hopefully keep people healthier' Seidenberg says."

**Turning air into water: how Native Americans are coping with water shortage amid the coronavirus pandemic**  
**Many Navajo and Hopi families live without access to running water, but that's changing.**  
By Anagha Srikanth | Aug. 3, 2020



Photo courtesy of Zero Mass Water

"... a nonprofit that developed low-cost handwashing stations for the homeless population in California is teaming up with community nonprofit Red Feather to bring this potentially life-saving infrastructure to Native American communities. ...With 170 stations distributed to Navajo and Hopi households, more than 600 people now have access to these handwashing stations, with 250 more on a wait list. Red Feather is also organizing workshops to train Hopi and Navajo community groups how to build the systems themselves. LavaMaex's DIY prototype is free, but each handwashing station costs Red Feather \$230 in materials, not including installation. In addition to a \$5,000 grant from LavaMaex, the nonprofit has raised more than \$50,000 and engaged 67 volunteers to provide 100 units to Navajo and Hopi households..."

Read the full articles and other media coverage at [www.redfeather.org/media](http://www.redfeather.org/media)



**Poor indoor air quality** remains a health risk in many Hopi and Navajo homes. In addition to our clean stove change-out program, Red Feather has been delivering HEPA filters across the reservations to mitigate the risk factors for respiratory illness. Especially in homes using wood or coal stoves for heat, unhealthy indoor air quality can lead to chronic conditions and make the long term impacts of COVID-19 worse.

## **2018-2021 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- 27 Accessibility Ramps
- 133 Home Weatherizations
- 130 Firewood Deliveries
- 150 General Housing Repairs
- 171 Heating Replacements
- 560 Handwashing Stations
- 34 Education Workshops
- 236 Workshop Graduates and Healthy Home Kits Dispersed
- 478 Client Consultations
- 231 Home Inspections

# FROM THE GROUND

## WHY WE DO THIS WORK

"I want to share a story with everyone about the firewood program. We receive calls every day from people requesting firewood. Many are no less dire than this one: A woman called the office, desperately asking us to deliver firewood to her neighbor. He was burning his furniture because he was out of wood and would never ask for a hand-out. He was elderly and physically unable to go out to gather, cut and split his own wood.

The woman said she had reached out to other organizations for assistance with the situation but found that it was a problem finding any wood, even though many organizations had been trying to help with the firewood issue.

This is not an uncommon story that we hear. I have heard of clients burning worse things than furniture. Some have burnt clothes, lumber, combustible debris or any other thing they can, just to stay warm for a few more hours. Of all the programs that are on my plate, it is this one that makes me take phone calls at any time of day, from 7:00 in the morning to 10:00 at night from clients and vendors. It is what makes me say, I will pay any price to get wood to people. It's what makes me say, thank god that I am a part of this organization. It is the most tangibly good and direly needed program that this organization has asked me to participate in."

- Darleen Cortez, Red Feather Program Coordinator

**It is important to** recognize that Native communities were America's first land stewards, holding a deeply interactive and impassioned connection to the natural world. With the onslaught of colonization, land management practices changed hands and so did the conditions of our forested landscapes. Today, for a variety of reasons, we are now seeing unprecedented, large wildfires across the western United States as well as coordinated efforts to solve that problem. Thus, Red Feather's collaborative effort to provide firewood to Native families in need is part of a holistic solution to reduce wildfire risks and restore some level of socio-ecological balance. **As a housing organization, we could not stand idly by as families faced freezing to death, due to inadequate heating fuel.**

Recognizing that firewood alone is an imperfect solution to keeping families warm and healthy, we have continued to expand related aspects of our work, such as our retrofits and repairs of roofs, windows, and doors. We have also greatly expanded our heating system improvement program, which has included replacing older, inefficient potbelly-style stoves with modern EPA-certified, clean-burning devices. Additionally, we have installed more than 50 mini-split heat pumps, which produce zero emissions and have the added benefit of providing air conditioning--a growing necessity that few Native families have historically been able to enjoy. We are also installing solar heating furnaces as a supplemental heat source that improves air quality and reduces heating expenses.

Our flexible, adaptive programming **has allowed us to be quick and nimble during these unprecedented times.** When the pandemic swept across Navajo and Hopi lands, we promptly responded by providing hand-washing stations to families without running water in hopes that improving access to hand hygiene would slow the spread of the virus. We have also been able to re-envision our educational classes by developing an on-line suite of videos and instruction materials. Now students can stream or watch DVDs that provide practical strategies for creating healthier living environments. To further advance this work, we are distributing customized, healthy home kits. These do-it-yourself kits can include items such as carbon monoxide and smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, chimney cleaning brushes, and aging-in-place items.

The one constant in all these efforts is the generous trust that all of you place in us. Your continued support of our work allows Red Feather to keep evolving and supporting those in need. **For that, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.**

With Gratitude,



Joe Seidenberg, Red Feather Executive Director



## FROM THE DESK OF THE ED

"It is important to recognize that Native communities were America's first land stewards, holding a deeply interactive and impassioned connection to the natural world. With the onslaught of colonization, land management practices changed hands and so did the conditions of our forested landscapes."

**Joe Seidenberg**  
Red Feather Executive  
Director

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### MNA Heritage Festival 2021

#### Every weekend in July

Red Feather will have a booth at the annual Museum of Northern Arizona Heritage Festival. The Festival runs Fri-Sun in July.

More info and tickets at:

<https://musnaz.org/all-upcoming-events/heritagefestival/>



### Indigenous Peoples' Day Benefit Concert

#### October 10th 2021

Organized by Buddha Farms, this concert will bring together music and community in support of Red Feather's programs. **Contact us for info or to volunteer.**



# RED FEATHER

You can donate online at [www.redfeather.org/donate](http://www.redfeather.org/donate)

Check donations can be sent to:

PO BOX 907, Bozeman, MT 59771

[www.redfeather.org](http://www.redfeather.org) | [info@redfeather.org](mailto:info@redfeather.org) | [@rfdg\\_tribe](https://www.instagram.com/rfdg_tribe)