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## From Executive Director Mark Hall

This winter marks the close of an important chapter in Red Feather's history and the dawn of a new era. I can't help feel some personal sadness that our Board President, Jeff Pratt, has reached the end of his second 3-year term and will be transitioning to our Board of Advisors. Jeff's impact to Red Feather cannot be overstated. Jeff personally introduced me, and many of our current and past board members to Red Feather and was unwavering in his efforts to educate potential donors and funders of our mission. From volunteering on straw bale builds to managing Executive Director transitions, Jeff touched many facets of the organization and we are stronger because of his contributions and leadership.

While I will miss Jeff's mentorship dearly, I am very excited about our new Board President - Sarah EchoHawk. Joining our board in 2014, Sarah's background and connections could not be better suited to our organization and this important leadership role. She is currently the CEO of [American Indian Science and Engineering Society \(AISES\)](#) and held previous leadership positions at First Nations Development Institute and American Indian College Fund. She holds a Master's degree in Non-Profit Management and is an enrolled Member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. I expect Sarah's wisdom and experience will allow Red Feather to make an even larger impact on the housing crisis that continues to plague Indian Country.



**Sarah EchoHawk is the new President of the Red Feather Board**

And finally, we can all breathe a sigh of relief that our long vacant Board Treasurer position has finally been filled. Jake Lansche, a 20-year veteran of

Microsoft, who held positions as a financial analyst and controller there, and currently works as a management consultant, has recently joined the Red Feather Board and will take on the role of Treasurer. Having personally worked with Jake at Microsoft, I know his expertise will have an important influence on Red Feather's fiscal discipline and health. With these and other recent additions to our board, we will be convening in Seattle for a joint Board and Board of Advisors strategic planning conference this month. I look forward to all the fresh and new perspectives.



**Jake Lansche joins the Red Feather Board as Treasurer**

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## **Navajo Code Talker is Home for Good**

On Saturday, February 6th, Sergeant Major Dan Akee, one of 10 remaining Navajo Code Talker's from WWII, got to go home to the house he built 60 years ago. Six years ago Dan and his wife Margaret were forced to move into a mobile home after the 4-bedroom house had become uninhabitable due to a leaky roof and broken windows. The national hero had expressed a wish to his eldest son and care-taker that the house in which he had raised 12 children and several grandchildren be restored for him to live out his remaining years. Red Feather, the [Western Agency of the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs](#) and hundreds of volunteers came together to completely renovate the home, making Dan's dream come true.

After watching the project from the outside, when Dan finally went inside his "new" house, he couldn't believe what he saw. Both he and Margaret were moved to tears. Dan thanked a large group of volunteers, donors, family and friends who had come to bless the house and celebrate this special moment. Among them, [Russell Begaye, President of the Navajo Nation](#), also thanked everyone and especially Red Feather for completing this ambitious project in just 3 months. The President also shared how the Tuba City community had set an inspiring example for the rest of the Navajo Nation, that when people work together amazing things can happen. Nearly \$50,000 was raised from individuals and corporate sponsors, over 2,200 hours of community volunteer time was donated as well as many building materials and all the appliances. The list of people to thank is far too numerous to mention here, but you can find



**Dan Akee sees his new kitchen for the first time with Russell Begaye, President of the Navajo Nation.**

many expressions of our gratitude on our [Facebook](#). If you contributed in any way to this wonderful project, THANK YOU!

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## **New Home Health Assessment Pilot Launched on Hopi Reservation**

During the first week of February, Red Feather with financial support from the [Center for American Indian Resilience \(CAIR\)](#) initiated a pilot of Home Health Assessment Training Program on the Hopi reservation. In partnership with the Hopi Department of Health and Human Services and Northern Arizona University, Red Feather has developed a state-of-the-art home health assessment program. Research indicates that when families get sick, one clear component of improving their health is their housing conditions. Families that participate in the program will receive a comprehensive home health assessment, health education training, and a healthy home kit with materials and information that empower homeowners to take actionable steps toward creating a healthier living environment. Red Feather expects to serve over 40 families in the coming year through this program.



**Participants learn how to properly use a fire extinguisher.**

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## **Pathways to a Healthy Home for Northern Cheyenne Tenants**

Our Education Director John Marian in Montana has been strengthening Red Feather's partnership with the [Northern Cheyenne Tribal Housing Authority](#). The Housing Authority invited John to help educate over 300 tenants of their low income housing program about home maintenance, indoor air quality and energy efficiency. The seminar is called "Pathways to a Healthy Home" and touches on several subjects such as how to reduce heating bills during the winter, how to improve the air quality of a home and how to make low cost natural home cleaners. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive as tenants have said, "they enjoyed the learning process". We plan to reach all the tenants by the end of summer.



**John Marian engages tenants to think about the linkage between their health and their apartments.**

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## Red Feather receives a contract from APS to weatherize reservation homes in Arizona

The Red Feather team has been furiously putting plans together to begin weatherizing up to 50 homes on the [Hopi](#) and [Navajo](#) reservation due to a new service contract awarded by Arizona Public Service ([APS](#)). Last fall, Red Feather delivered 5 [weatherization workshops](#) and weatherized 12 homes which served as hands on learning laboratories for the students. APS was so impressed with the results of our work that they awarded Red Feather with this contract which will allow us to improve the lives of many more Navajo and Hopi families. Joe Seidenberg, Red Feather's Program Director is leading the implementation of this new program and is looking to hire a local tribal member to qualify applicants and perform energy audits on the homes. Additionally, we intend to hire local crews to implement the weatherization measures and are actively looking for funding to be able to address additional health and safety risks in these homes. Creating jobs for people who live on the reservation and also creating healthier living environments is going to be a double benefit for these communities.



**Workshop "learning labs" where students practice what they learn.**

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