



**RUNNING STRONG**  
for American Indian Youth®  
AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH RUNNING STRONG®



# Who We Are



## Mission

To help American Indian people meet their immediate survival needs – food, water, and shelter – while implementing and supporting programs designed to create opportunities for self-sufficiency and self-esteem, especially for Native Youth.

## Programs

- Dreamstarter™
- Organic Gardens and Food
- School and Youth Centers
- Clean Water
- Culture and Language
- Safe Housing
- Women and Children's Health
- Seasonal and Emergency Assistance
- Basic Needs

## Board of Directors

Running Strong is governed by a seven-member volunteer Board of Directors

**James J. O'Brien, Esq.**, *Chairman Founder*,  
O'Brien Law LLC

**Emil Her Many Horses** (Oglala Lakota), *Treasurer*  
*Assistant Curator, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian*

## Running Strong Staff

### Our Home Team

Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), *National Spokesperson*

Bryan Krizek, *CEO*

Lauren Haas Finkelstein, *Executive Director*

Paul Krizek, Esq., *General Counsel*

Bieu Do, *CFO*

Cassandra R. Chee-Tom (Diné), *Grants Administrator*

Dave Frank, *Fulfillment Manager*

Jennifer Rivera, *Program Coordinator*

Julia Wejchert, *Program and Web Associate*

### Our Field Team

Tom Kanatakeniate Cook (Akwesasne Mohawk),  
*Field Coordinator*

Billie Rose Garreaux (Cheyenne River Lakota),  
*Food Distribution*

Stacie Lee (Cheyenne River Lakota),  
*Summer Food Service Program*

Dave Lone Elk (Oglala Lakota), *Field Coordinator*

Ken Lone Elk (Oglala Lakota), *Utilities Assistance/Water*

Rose Fraser (Oglala Lakota), *Field Coordinator/Oyate Teca Director*

Mary Little Sky (Cheyenne River Lakota),  
*Backpack Food Coordinator*



Running Strong's volunteer Board of Directors. @2016

**Ashley Wahiaronkwas Morris** (Mohawk of Kahnawake),  
*Secretary Youth Board Member*

**Clyde B. Richardson**, *Director*  
*Retired*

**Elayne Silversmith** (Diné), *Director*  
*Librarian, National Museum of the American Indian*

**Loretta Afraid of Bear Cook** (Oglala Lakota), *Director*

**Rear Admiral Eric C. Jones**, *Director*  
*U.S. Coast Guard Executive Assistant to USCG Deputy Commandant for Operations*



Cover photo: Year 1: Wellness Dreamstartes with Billy Mills, 2015  
Photo left: Running Strong Staff and Dreamstarters. 2016

## Letter from Staff

Dear Friends of American Indian Youth,

We at Running Strong for American Indian Youth® proudly present our 2015-2016 Biennial Report to share the good work that you make possible. Together, we invest in Native community-led efforts to provide safe water and housing, healthy food and organic gardens, essentials like backpacks filled with new school supplies, warm winter coats and boots, and dental care, for their children. We empower Native children to dream, share in their culture and language, and grow up healthy members of the next generation, RUNNING STRONG and proud of who they are.

Running Strong was cofounded over 30 years ago by Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) as a “giveaway” to Native people in celebration of his 10,000-meter Olympic Gold Medal. Billy still travels the country to empower Native youth to not give up and believe in the power of dreams. In 2014, we launched Dreamstarter™ to mark the 50th anniversary of Billy’s winning dream by identifying 10 Native youth nationwide each year to receive a \$10,000 grant to make a dream come true in their community. You will read more about our first two remarkable Dreamstarter™ classes and the power of these young American Indian leaders’ dreams in the pages to follow.

Our work continuously adapts to meet the needs identified by the Native communities we serve. Each year we face unique challenges. Rather than be discouraged, we seek new opportunities to help even more Native children. We strive for excellence and are committed to completing our mission with efficiency, transparency, and integrity.

We are in a time of rejuvenated strength in Native communities today. In 2016, Billy and Running Strong lent our strong support to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and thousands of Native water protectors and allies working to prevent the Dakota Access Pipeline’s crossing under the Missouri River. The proposed pipeline threatens Standing Rock’s water supply and sacred cultural sites. From the first of our 400 water wells drilled on Pine Ridge, safe water remains a Running Strong priority. We respect this growing movement’s values of Native sovereignty, protection of the sacred grounds, and belief in a better world for our children.

As you read, we hope you share our pride in the incredibly important work that we do to empower and care for these children. With Billy and all of us here at Running Strong, we thank you for your generous hearts and loyalty to our cause. You honor us with your support.



### Spotlight on Board Member Loretta Afraid of Bear Cook (Oglala Lakota)

**“Native peoples are calling for access to their sacred sites to get them back in our hands and so that we can share with the world the way that we provide stewardship and guardianship.”**

Loretta Afraid of Bear Cook is the faith-keeper and holder of the Afraid of Bear/American Horse Sundance Pipe. Fluent in Lakota, she serves as a Cultural Specialist for her people. She is an artist and advocate, motivated by her love for her grandson and all indigenous people.

Loretta and her husband, Tom Kanatakeniate Cook (Akwesasne Mohawk), worked for decades with Running Strong to support food sovereignty for Oglala families by planting community and family gardens.

Active environmentalists, they are leading a successful fight against a local uranium mine leaching radiation into the water table. They have fought this disastrous, water-poisoning mine for years and Loretta would like to see future generations grow up with the same pristine resources as their ancestors.

Loretta also serves other nonprofits and works on the He-Sapa (Black Hills) Initiative to negotiate the return stewardship of the Black Hills to the Great Sioux Nation.

For profiles of all our board members visit [www.IndianYouth.org/about-us/staff-and-board](http://www.IndianYouth.org/about-us/staff-and-board).

## Spotlight on Billy Mills *From Dreamer to Leader*

Growing up as an Oglala Lakota on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Billy Mills encountered the same challenges many American Indian youth continue to face today. Orphaned at age 12, he has never forgotten what it means to feel hunger and bitter cold and to watch your family and community struggle year after year.

Despite these challenges, Billy never gave up on his dream to win an Olympic gold medal which is emblematic of the challenge, strength, and beauty that many American Indian youth live today.

Billy continued to train through high school, college, and as a U.S. Marine. In true Olympic fashion, Billy won gold in the 10,000-meter race at the 1964 games in Tokyo with an Olympic record of 28 minutes and 24 seconds. His come-from-behind upset is considered to be one of the greatest moments in Olympic history.

In Lakota culture, someone who achieves great success has a 'give away' to thank the support system of family and friends who helped him or her achieve their goal. As a part of his effort to give back to his community, as well as Native Americans throughout Indian Country, Billy joined forces with Christian Relief Services President Gene Krizek to found Running Strong for American Indian Youth® in 1986.

For more than three decades, Billy has been the National Spokesperson

**“On the fiftieth anniversary of my gold medal win, I thought about what a gift my Olympic dream was, and how it transformed my future. That was my inspiration to give back through Running Strong. And I am so proud of our work over the past two years, from providing life-saving heat to Native communities, to sending healthy smiles around the country and bringing dreams to life for our Dreamstarters.”**

**“For me, the moment of a lifetime, for my Running Strong family, a medal I humbly accept on your behalf.”**

Billy Mills, receiving  
the Presidential Citizens Medal.



for Running Strong and we value his leadership and high standards. Today, Billy travels more than 300 days a year spreading the word about Running Strong, and inspiring thousands of Native youth to realize their own dreams. In addition, he visits dozens of American Indian communities throughout the U.S. and speaks to youth about healthy lifestyles and taking pride in their heritage.

In February 2013, Billy was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Obama in recognition of his service with Running Strong for American Indian Youth®. The medal is the second highest civilian award in the U.S. and is bestowed by the

President in honor of individuals “who [have] performed exemplary deeds or services for his or her country or fellow citizens.” Billy’s dedication to helping improve the lives of American Indians was also recognized in October, 2014 when he was honored for his work at the Anti-Defamation League’s annual Concert against Hate in Washington, DC.

Billy’s vision leads our work as we strive to inspire the next generation to find and follow their dreams as he did. It is caring individuals like you who make Running Strong and all we accomplish together possible – and making Native children’s dreams come true.

## Celebrating Billy Mills' Legacy through Dreamstarters

On October 14, 1964, Billy Mills realized his dream to be an Olympic gold medalist. On the 50th anniversary of his historic win Running Strong for American Indian Youth® announced our Dreamstarter™ program – enabling 50 Native American teens and young adults to have the opportunity to make a dream for their community come true.

Each year for five years, ten Native youth will receive Dreamstarter grants of \$10,000 each, making an investment in Native youth totaling over half a million dollars. The Dreamstarter™ program kicked off in 2014 with the theme of "Wellness," followed by "Arts and Culture," "Education," "Science and the Environment" and the final theme in Year 5 may be any of the above.

To help the Dreamstarters get started on their projects, Running Strong also organizes the Dreamstarter Academy where each selected youth and his or her nonprofit

mentor organization comes to Washington, DC to participate in a multi-day training program. The Dreamstarter™ Academy helps them develop leadership skills and teaches participants to tell their stories in person, in writing, and online. Workshops will train participants on utilizing media attention, public speaking, social media, storytelling skills and more. The Dreamstarter™

**"Pursuit of a dream can heal a broken soul. God has given me the ability. The rest is up to me. Believe. Believe. Believe."**

- Billy Mills

Academy is also the place for Native youth from throughout the country to meet other young leaders. A highlight of the Dreamstarter™ Academy is the opportunity to meet Running Strong national spokesperson Billy Mills to receive advice and mentorship.

Beginning in 2017, Running Strong will also award 50 Dreamstarter™ Teacher grants, totaling \$50,000 to educators who serve American Indian students. Dreamstarter™ Teachers will be able to use their grants between \$500 and \$1,000 to address an unmet need in their classroom and encourage Native students to follow their dreams. Grant funds may be used for resource materials, supplies, equipment, professional development, field trips/ transportation, and/or stipends to support bringing community liaisons into the classroom.

To learn more, visit [www.IndianYouth.org/Dreamstarter](http://www.IndianYouth.org/Dreamstarter).



# 2015 Dreamstarters Year 1: Wellness



To learn more and see videos of the Dreamstarters, visit: [www.IndianYouth.org/2015Dreamstarters](http://www.IndianYouth.org/2015Dreamstarters).

Year 1: Wellness  
Dreamstarters with Billy  
Mills. 2015

**Ronnie Godfrey, 14**  
**Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux**  
**Summit, South Dakota**  
*Summit School District 54-6*

Ronnie's dream is to initiate "Weights for Wellness" - to provide safe workout equipment and training for all members of the community to be able to use while making healthier lifestyle choices through activities such as weight training.

**"Our idea is not only to teach youth how to use weight equipment effectively, but to also educate adults as well and teach that it is never too late to learn a healthy lifestyle."**

-Ronnie Godfrey

**Cristin Haase, 24**  
**Cheyenne River Sioux**  
**Gilbert, Arizona**  
*A.T. Still University of Health Sciences*

Cristin's dream is to host a Pre-Admissions Workshop for Future American Indian Dentists" - as a dental student herself she is already well on her way to realizing her own dream, and wants to help other Native Americans become dentists as well.

**Noah Blue Elk Hotchkiss, 16**  
**Southern Ute/Southern Cheyenne/Caddo**  
**Durango, Colorado**  
*White Earth Land Recovery Project*

Noah's dream is the "Tribal Adaptive Organization" - to inspire, educate and bring adaptive sports to disabled Native Americans. Native Americans have the highest per capital disability rate in the U.S. and yet there are few programs on the reservations for adaptive sports.

**Nathaniel Christianson, 16**  
**White Earth Chippewa**  
**Callaway, Minnesota**  
*White Earth Land Recovery Project*

Nathaniel's dream is "KKWE Student Dream" - to develop a media room for high school students with help from a local radio station where they can learn public broadcasting, music editing, program production and positive work skills and ethics.

**"Young people such as myself will be given hope for the future and our elders will be given hope for the generations to come."** -Nathaniel Christianson

**Rashaun Nez, 20**  
**Diné/ Navajo Nation**  
**Lower Fruitland, New Mexico**  
*Capacity Builders, Inc.*

Rashaun's dream is "Navajo Youth Builders" - to improve the strength and well-being of his community from the eldest to the youth by creating wellness programs which address the community's dire health issues such as obesity and diabetes.

# 2015 Dreamstarters Year 1: Wellness

**Jacquelyn Nielsen, 17**  
**North Western Band of Shoshone Nation**  
**Vancouver, Washington**  
*Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.*

Jacquelyn's dream is "Discovering Yidong Xinag Mentoring Program" - to strengthen health and wellness, cultural identity and other resiliency factors among Native youth.

**"I want to bring hope and strength to youth, because they are not standing up for what they truly want to make happen for themselves and others. I want to give youth the opportunity to believe that they have voice."**

-Jacquelyn Nielson

**James Pine, 23**  
**Oglala Lakota**  
**Rapid City, South Dakota**  
*White Earth Land Recovery Project*

James' dream is "Lakota Forever Running Camps" - organized for young people on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and to provide a great start to get young people moving in a positive direction.

**"I have learned perseverance and dedication while running as it helped me cope with problems I experienced growing up. Pine Ridge is a very difficult place to grow up and it was no different for me. I turned to running to help me cope and I have been using it as a tool for life."**

-James Pine

**Breanna Potter, 20**  
**Cherokee**  
**Sallisaw, Oklahoma**  
*Brushy Cherokee Action Association*

Breanna's dream is to create the "Brushy Youth Dream Team" - to educate American Indian youth about prevention of diabetes by living a healthier lifestyle and motivating young people with information about healthy eating and physical fitness.

**"I have been given a lot of great opportunities and I feel it is now my responsibility to give back to my community in a way that is close to my heart."**

-Breanna Potter

**Darius Sparks, 19**  
**Standing Rock Sioux**  
**Bismarck, North Dakota**  
*Sacred Pipe Resource Center*

Darius' dream is "Spark Change Basketball Camps" - to teach youth in foster care, as Darius was for many years, how to develop positive life skills such as coping (defense), goal-setting (offense), relationship-building (teamwork), and perseverance (winning/losing) through the game of basketball.

**"I found peace in shooting a ball through a hoop. I found a sense of family within a team. I found order in the game and learning the basics of the game. When times got particularly hard at home, I would always go to the basketball court and things wouldn't seem so bad"**

-Darius Sparks

**Samantha Yellow Fat, 25**  
**Standing Rock Sioux**  
**Bismarck, North Dakota**  
*Youth Works*

Samantha's dream is to introduce the "Sacred Tree Support Group" - to create support groups for Native youth who struggle with how to effectively cope with grief and loss due to historical trauma and deculturalization and need the opportunity to process it with their peers within a safe, supportive environment.

**"Working with Native American youth, along with my own personal history of grief and loss, I have realized the devastation that grief and loss has on our youth."**

-Samantha Yellow Fat



# 2016 Dreamstarters Year 2: Arts and Culture



To learn more and see videos of the Dreamstarters, visit: [www.IndianYouth.org/2016Dreamstarters](http://www.IndianYouth.org/2016Dreamstarters).

Year 2: Arts & Culture  
Dreamstarters with Billy  
Mills. 2016

## **Rosalia Badhorse, 23**

**Northern Cheyenne  
Lame Deer, Montana**  
*The Bridge Foundation*

The goal of Rosalia's "Powwow Project" is to inspire Native youth in the community to embrace their identity and preserve their culture through the artistic elements of contemporary powwows. The project will do this by empowering the youth with tribal knowledge of traditional symbols and stories, and with the skills to bead and sew their own regalia, as well as how to dance.

**"My dream is to empower the native youth in my community with the knowledge and skills to carry on the artistic elements of their culture through contemporary powwows. This dream of mine consists of classes in story-telling, the history of traditional Cheyenne clothing, beading, sewing and powwow dancing."** -Rosalia Badhorse

## **Blaze Burrows, 16**

**Round Valley Indian  
Covelo, California**  
*Round Valley High School Native  
American Studies*

Kyin-naal-del' is a traditional Wailaki stick game played by males. Blaze's dream is to start the "Wailaki Kyin-naal-del' Training Program" to teach other young Native boys to play this traditional game. Participants will learn the cultural rules governing Kyin-naal-del' and learn to carve the sticks and tossels needed for the game. The program will culminate with a series of tournaments to showcase the revived native sport in the community.

## **Annie Chasing Hawk, 28**

**Cheyenne River Sioux  
Eagle Butte, South Dakota**  
*The Keya Foundation  
Lakota Youth Artistry Cooperative*

Annie's Dreamstarter goal is to start the Lakota Youth Artistry Cooperative to provide a way for Native youth to create financial wellbeing for themselves through their art. This will help them to know their self-worth, develop self-esteem and build their art businesses.

## **Jeremy Dennis, 25**

**Shinnecock & Hassanamisco Nipmuc  
Southampton, New York**  
*Pennsylvania State University*

The goal of Jeremy's "On This Site" Dreamstarter program is the preservation of culturally significant locations around his community in Long Island, New York through photography and providing insight into how the Shinnecock people and reservation were able to remain on Long Island. The project presents an opportunity to reflect upon archaeological and oral histories to answer these essential culturally defining questions.

**" This project is inclusive for many audiences, as it creates a dialog between indigenous and non-indigenous people on Long Island, and legitimizes the Long Island indigenous population beyond their borders on reservations. By presenting the archaeological research in the format of photography, it presents to the public a new understanding of communal awareness and cultural enlightenment, which leads to cultural critique, historical inquiry, and educational development."**

-Jeremy Dennis

# 2016 Dreamstarters Year 2: Arts and Culture

## JoRee LaFrance, 20

**Crow**  
**Crow Agency, Montana**  
*Trustees of Dartmouth College*

JoRee's dream is to promote cultural preservation through the use of traditional storytelling, creative writing and graphic design through her "Crow Voices" initiative. A traditional storytelling series will be organized in collaboration with local schools and tribal elders. High school students will acquire skills needed to create a children's book, which will preserve stories.

**"I want to use the storytelling series to orally preserve the traditional stories and create a space where tribal elders and youth can interact, students can ask questions, and elders can impart their traditional knowledge on our youngest generation. In a fast moving world, it is imperative that we actively create spaces where this type of traditional knowledge and storytelling can be shared and we purposely carve out time for our oldest and youngest generations to connect."**

-JoRee LaFrance

## Robert McRorie, 27

**Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians**  
**Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**  
*Malcolm High School*

The "Ojibwe Art & Cultural Initiative" is Rob's dream to establish a Native American Arts and Culture Class that will allow high school students to earn an elective credit towards graduation, while learning to produce the arts of their ancestors as well as the cultural teachings behind

the art. Students will enroll in a year-long course in which they will be taught how to create Native American art. Throughout the course students will be taught ceremonial and hand drum making, regalia/ribbon shirts and moccasin making, song and dance, beadwork, storytelling, tanning hide, leather work, and how to build Native American shelters and lodges.

## Charmayne Sandoval, 26

**Diné/ Navajo Nation**  
**Flagstaff, Arizona**  
*Native American for Community Action, Inc.*  
*Youth With Creative Minds*

Charmayne's Dreamstarter project is "Youth With Creative Minds," a series of workshops centered around different forms of art. Through art, Native youth will be able to tell of their struggles, ideas, and goals in life, give peer support or serve as a way to express themselves however they choose. Within their projects the young people will creatively tell what culture means and assess the needs and better understanding of their mental, spiritual, emotional and physical being.

## Jenna Smith, 29

**Osage**  
**Skiatook, Oklahoma**  
*Art Maker*  
*Dance Maker*

Jenna created her "Dance Maker" project to bring free ballet, and all its benefits, to local Native youth by offering free workshops in local schools. The classes are a safe place for children, where they can build not only dance schools, but also self-confidence.

## Kelsey Tortalita, 20

**Standing Rock Sioux**  
**Mandan, North Dakota**  
*Sacred Pipe Resource Center*

*Project BEAD (Building Engagement through Art & Dance)*

Kelsey's Project BEAD (Building Engagement through Art & Dance) aims to help American Indian youth learn about art and their Native culture through learning to bead. Youth who participate in the project will bead the basic components of an outfit, connect with other Native young people in the area, learn about the different types of styles of beading, as well as learn the different types of styles of dancing and singing.

## Ruben Zendejas, 21

**Omaha Tribe of Nebraska**  
**Provo, Utah**  
*Provo City School District*

The goal of the "Dancing Strong Youth PowWow" is to encourage more Native youth to learn about their Native culture through dancing. The program includes activities throughout the year to help youth understand and learn about powwows and the stories. And at the end of the year, holding a kids powwow, where educators would be invited to come learn with the kids.

**"Many of the kids have not lived on the reservation, and are not familiar with powwow dancing. They are excited to learn, however. If we want to pass down our traditions and cultures to our kids, we need to give them confidence and opportunities to learn. It will also be a chance for the community to learn about powwows. I want this powwow to be a place where if you come in, you will learn something"**

-Ruben Zendejas

# Youth

## Building the next Generation



## Youth Development

### Supporting American Indian Youth

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Running Strong for American Indian Youth® is working to transform the current state of Indian youth and create a new generation of young people who demonstrate healthy lifestyles and confidence in their heritage. We help communities develop youth centers that provide safe, nurturing spaces with healthy activities for American Indian children and teens. We also provide assistance to schools and youth centers who do not have the resources to adequately serve Indian youth.

We were proud to formalize a partnership with one youth center, the Oyate Teca Project, as a new program affiliate in 2016. Oyate Teca

Project is among the most widely respected organizations on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The nonprofit organization, launched in 1991, is committed to enhancing the well-being of children and families by offering effective programs and activities.

The Oyate Teca Project provides safe and constructive school enrichment programs where children can engage in social and recreational activities. These programs are extended into the summer and also offer mentoring support for children as well as their families. Rose Fraser is director and Running Strong's field staffer for the project. Whether they are meeting for art classes in the youth center, digging in the community garden or just having family fun, youth at Oyate Teca are engaged, respected and cherished.

Running Strong also continues to partner with the Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP) and provide

support for their youth programs. Recently, CRYP opened the Keya Café inside the Cokata Wiconi Teen Center. The café provides not only a healthy dining experience for the community, and also teaches Cheyenne River youth about running a business through the CRYP intern program. The CRYP internships that we support include those in the Keya Café, and also work in the Winyan Toka Win Garden, Leading Lady Farmer's Market, CRYP gift shop, and the new CRYP art park. Together these internships provide Cheyenne River youth with a chance to gain valuable job and life skills.



# Basic Needs are Critical Needs

Giving Native youth the tools  
they need to succeed



## Basic Needs are Critical Needs

### *Giving Native youth the tools they need to succeed*

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What many Americans consider to be “basic needs” such as coats, school supplies, blankets, and hygiene items can be unaffordable luxuries for many American Indian families.

These families are unable to meet their basic needs due to poverty, high unemployment, and remote living conditions. It can be a struggle to put food on the table every day, pay utilities, and keep a roof over their heads. Running Strong addresses this issue for thousands of families every year by supplementing these necessities for those who are most in need.

Each fall, Running Strong provides thousands of elementary and junior high students with backpacks filled with all the school supplies they need to be successful in the upcoming school year. At Running Strong, we don't want to see any Native child fail because they lack the “tools for school” and we don't want any student to be ashamed showing up for class and having the teacher ask “Where's your pencil?”

With your help, we also make sure Native children have the tools they need to stay healthy. One area that is a challenge in Indian Country is dental care. Limited access to oral health care means many Native children never see a dentist. To meet this need, in 2016 we started supplying SmileStrong kits to schools and youth centers to equip kids with the tools to take care of their teeth. Each kit contains toothbrushes, toothpaste, flossers, a two-minute timer and an instruction card. In 2016 and 2017, we distributed 3,145 kits to kids in need. SmileStrong provides children not only with the things they need to protect their teeth, but also teaches them healthy habits for lifelong dental health.

Come winter, when the temperature and wind chill is below zero, winter gear (coat, hat, scarf, gloves and winter boots) is essential. Each year we distribute thousands of winter coats, not only to kids who may be waiting for their school bus in only a hoodie, but also to adults. In 2016, we distributed 3,000 children's coats and 1,717 adult coats to our numerous partners in Indian Country. In 2015, we distributed 2,685 children's coats and 2,150 adult coats. We also distributed thousands of hats, gloves, scarves, and new in 2016, 3,215 winter boots to keep children's feet warm and dry.

We also keep families warm with our Emergency Heat Match each winter. Since 1997, our Heat Match program matches families from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation with grants up to \$100 to pay heating costs. Combined with \$100 they put in, families can raise the \$200 necessary to have a propane truck come and fill up their tank. This hand up can save lives during bitterly cold winters on the Great Plains.

During Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter holidays, a 25 plus year-long Running Strong tradition ensures that thousands of American Indian families on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservations do not miss out on a festive holiday meal. In 2015 and 2016, Running Strong provided a total of over 6,000 turkeys. Throughout the two years we also sent 16,600 food boxes to those in need, including boxes for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter containing “all the fixin's” down to a holiday pie. On Christmas Day, thousands of Native children received EXACTLY what they asked Santa for through our Toys for Tribes program.



# Organic Gardens

Providing  
Nutritious Food



## Organic Gardens

### Providing Nutritious Food

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Running Strong for American Indian Youth® has long championed organic gardening and food self-sufficiency programs on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Sioux Reservations. By providing seeds and assistance in tilling small plots of land, Running Strong has helped thousands of American Indian families have access to fresh vegetables and fruits grown in their own backyards. Running Strong has helped provide hundreds of these community and family gardens. The gardens ensure families have access to healthy foods as an affordable and sustainable resource.

Because of poverty and geographic isolation, many American Indian families do not have access to grocery stores with high quality fresh fruits and vegetables. Instead they must rely on highly processed "junk" food containing large amounts of salt and sugar, empty calories, and little nutritional value.

As a result, food scarcity, obesity, and diabetes have become epidemics in Indian Country. Our organic gardens coupled with food assistance programs tackle malnutrition by providing healthy meals and fresh produce to Native American children and families. In addition to establishing gardens, we also integrate educational and cultural aspects to teach families healthier habits and how to maintain their gardens. Our efforts have inspired many Native children to eat healthier and be aware of what they are putting into their bodies daily.

Each year, thanks to a generous donor who matches dollar for dollar up to \$5,000, we hold a Garden Match Challenge to benefit the Slim Buttes Agricultural Project on the Pine Ridge Reservation. To encourage gardening beginning at a young age we have a long-term partnership with the Cheyenne River Youth Project's Winyan Toka Win (Leading Lady) children's garden. This project partnership teaches children how to grow fresh, healthy food, and how to take care of Mother Earth with respect.

New for 2016, we were able to secure grants in excess of \$70,000 for the Medicine Root Gardening Project operated by the Oyate Teca Project on Pine Ridge. Oyate Teca offers gardening classes to help the inexperienced become successful gardeners.

Doug and Tanya Hernandez are one success story of the Oyate Teca gardening classes. The thought of starting their own vegetable garden never crossed their minds until they took several of the offered classes and decided to plant a few rows of crops in their backyard in Spring 2016. Their personal garden grew more than expected with over fifteen types of produce.

Even with a family of five, Doug and Tanya are growing more than they can consume themselves, even though Tanya is learning to can produce for the winter. That's why they are grateful that Oyate Teca has organized a farmers' market where they can sell their surplus. The self-empowerment and success of the Hernandez family is thanks to the hard work of Running Strong and the Oyate Teca project.



# Culture and Language

## Finding Strength in Traditional Ways



## Culture and Language

### Finding Strength in Traditional Ways

American Indian cultural ways and language are shared within generations by storytelling, ceremony, and practice. Running Strong believes that working within each community's cultural context is critical to the empowerment of Native youth, illustrated by our work with the Brave Heart Society.

Since 1994, Running Strong has partnered with the Brave Heart Society on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota. Brave Heart is a revived traditional society, free of federal funds with a focus on grassroots cultural foundations. The Society, overseen by Kungsi or "grandmothers," took the forefront in defending water by standing early against the KXL pipeline battle in 2012; then represented the women's voice as water protectors against the Dakota Access Pipeline on Standing Rock. At Standing Rock, Brave Heart conducted decolonized leadership

teaching to the Headsman of the Oceti Sakowin and the Women's Council. They will continue in this role as the rebirth of the Oceti Sakowin continues for coming generations.

A national leader in the revival of Coming Age Ceremonies for adolescent women and men, 131 Brave Heart girls have gone through this rite of passage so important for healthy female development. Brave Heart will host its 19th Coming of Age in July 2017. Young men who have grown up in this Society began their own Coming of Age Men's work in 2013. Their movement to bring home Lacrosse (known as "shinny," a traditional Lakota game) will celebrate seven years in June 2017 by hosting a regional camp for seven American Indian reservations.

In 2015, thanks to Running Strong, the Society now has a large multi-purpose Lodge in Lake Andes, South Dakota with three lots containing flower and box gardens to promote food sovereignty on site. The Lodge is a center of activity including language nests, trauma influenced care and healing, women's viewpoints on sacred sites and a

4 week "regalia making" session to make Powwow and ceremonial outfits that many local families cannot afford to make. In March 2017, Brave Heart will host its 13th Annual Waterlily Storytelling Institute; named after Yankton grandmother/anthropologist/author Ella Deloria. This Institute provides a traditional experience of four days of teaching of Dakota values and appropriate behavior intertwined into stories, which is how it was taught in old camp circles, and is severely missing in today communities. This annual event cooperates with area schools, serving hundreds of youth.

The guiding principles of Brave Heart are based on how traditional Native Societies served old camps in a decolonized way, with modern approaches integrated into a strong cultural base.



# You Can Make a Difference



## Thank You

**We wish to thank, the many individuals and organizations that contribute both money and time to help us meet the urgent needs facing American Indian children today and tomorrow.**

20th Century Fox Film Corp.

All Faith Chapel

Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Aquarius Marketing Services LLC

Baker-Root Family Foundation, Inc.

Chorus Foundation

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church-Youth

Christian Relief Services

Cree - Way Gas Ltd.

Crestwood Midstream Partners LP

First Presbyterian Church

Give with Liberty

Glenview Trust Company

Global Impact

Golden West Telecommunication

Google, Inc.

Greenwich World Hunger Association

H.B. Henson Fund- JPMorgan Charitable Giving Program

Heart Bridge of the Carolinas

Heartstands-Outreach, LLC

Honor the Earth Fund of the Tides Foundation

Hopa Mountain

InFaith Community Foundation

Intel Corporation

Interconnected Associates, LLC

Ketels Family Charitable Foundation

LaPalme Electric Inc.

Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen Foundation

Mariel Foundation

Mohawk Chamber of Commerce

Morgan Stanley

Mt Tabor United Methodist Women

National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)

Native American Rights Fund

Olivier J. Marie & Associates

Pinnacle

Prairie Island Tribal Council

PSEG

Random House

Red Canyon Water, LLC

Renaissance Society of California State University

Reuters Middle East Ltd

Saint Luke's Episcopal Church

San Pedro Presbyterian Church

Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

Shingle Springs Band Miwok Indians

South Dakota Community Foundation

Stitely and Karstetter

The Boston Foundation

The Church on The Cape, A United Methodist Church

The Emilie Welles Foundation

The Indigenous Rights Center

The M.R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation

The Ottmar Foundation

The Seligsohn Foundation

The United Methodist Church

The Wallace Foundation

Thunen Family Foundation

Tower 10 Marketing Group, Inc

Tree of Life Native American Fellowship

Trinity Lutheran Church, The Endowment Committee

TRUIST

University of Minnesota

USMC Command and Staff College - Marine Corps University

Walking Boston

Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign

York Daily Record

We are very grateful for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians for choosing Running Strong as one of the five charity recipients of the proceeds of their very successful Annual Charity Golf Tournament at the beautiful Indian Canyons Golf Resort in Palm Springs, California.

Our National Spokesperson, Billy Mills was grateful and honored to accept this generous donation of \$35,000 on behalf of Running Strong for two years in a row.

"The charities do such great work," says Tribal Chairman Jeff L. Grubbe. "We put on this tournament to help charities that work very hard throughout the year to help whatever the charity is designed for – children, people with special needs, health issues – they don't necessarily have all the money they need to have the impact they want."

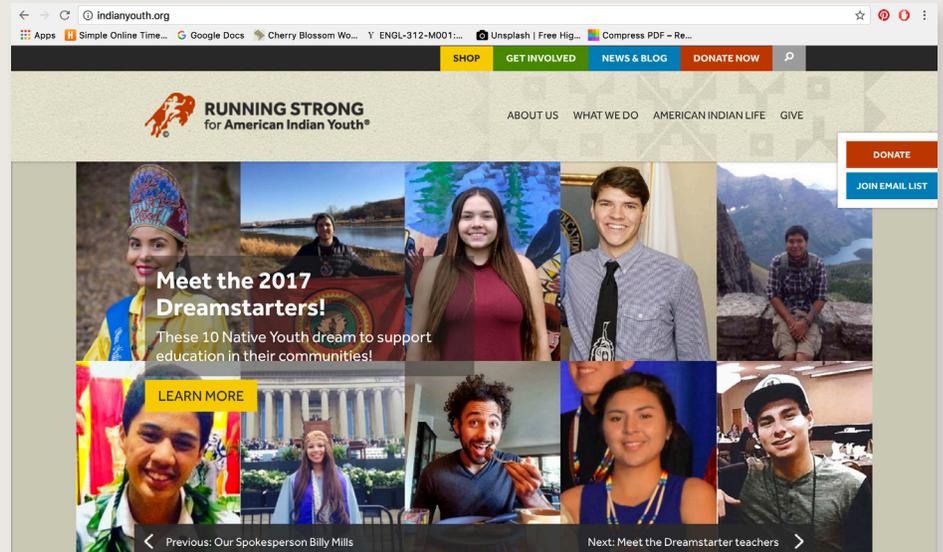
Wopila to everyone at Agua Caliente for their generous hearts and working together with us to build a strong future for American Indian youth!

***Billy Mills with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian's Annual Charity Golf Tournament. 2016***



## Visit Our Website!

Our website features information about all of our programs and easy to navigate, allowing you to effortlessly access the latest news and updates. Please check out our new site today at [www.IndianYouth.org](http://www.IndianYouth.org) – we welcome your comments and suggestions so we can continue to improve and meet your needs.



### Donate

Every donation—large or small—makes a difference in American Indian communities throughout the United States. Donating is easy at [www.IndianYouth.org](http://www.IndianYouth.org)! If you are interested in making an investment in a particular program, give the Running Strong staff a call at 1-888-491-9859.

### Stock

A gift of stock or securities can benefit both you and Running Strong. Please contact us at 1-888-491-9859 for information.

### Leave a Legacy

Please remember Native children and include Running Strong in your estate planning, through a bequest or gift of life insurance. For more information please contact [tracyk@IndianYouth.org](mailto:tracyk@IndianYouth.org).

### Match your Gift

Double, even triple the value of your donation! Many employers generously match donations of their employees. Check with your workplace...and see the impact of your gift double or more! Want to see if your company is eligible? Visit <http://IndianYouth.org/give/matchinggifts>.

### Visit

Join us on Running Strong's annual tour of the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservations and/or visit Native American events in your community like powwows, expos, and museums. You will be in awe of the natural beauty, the diversity, and the richness of American Indian culture.

### Learn

Read books about American Indian history or current issues affecting Native peoples today. Go to [www.IndianYouth.org/reading](http://www.IndianYouth.org/reading) for book recommendations from the Running Strong staff and volunteers.

### Native-made Art

Support American Indian artists by purchasing American Indian-made products. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the Running Strong store support our important programs in Indian Country, and the unique handmade items we sell are all Native-made and purchased at fair prices. Visit [store.IndianYouth.org](http://store.IndianYouth.org) to shop today.

## Share

Follow Running Strong for American Indian Youth® on social media. Stay up-to-date and voice your views and perspectives on American Indian-related issues. Become involved in the online community and connect with organizations and people doing valuable work in Indian Country.

When you share one of our posts on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, you help raise awareness about the challenges Indian youth face.

Ask your family and friends to like our pages and join our email list to learn about issues you care about. When we increase our followers, we increase our voice!



Follow us on Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/RunningStrongforAmericanIndianYouth>



Follow us on Instagram at  
<http://instagram.com/runstrong4aiy>



Follow us on Twitter at  
<https://twitter.com/RunStrong4AIY>



Join our email list at  
<http://IndianYouth.org>

## Tour Visit Indian Country

For one incredible week in September, Running Strong staff will guide you on a tour through the Pine Ridge Indian and Cheyenne River Sioux reservations in South Dakota, where you will see the impact of Running Strong projects and meet our field staff and partners. As you explore this fascinating region of the country you will receive an intimate taste of the beauty of Lakota culture

and learn about American history from their perspective.

For many tour participants, the highlight of the trip is the chance to meet and spend an evening with Running Strong national spokesperson Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills, an Oglala Lakota who grew up on Pine Ridge, and for 30 years has worked to give back to his

community and many other people throughout Indian Country.

The tour is not just about Running Strong programs – it also provides a chance for you to be immersed in Lakota life, attend a pow wow, and visit the Badlands and Bear Butte, a place sacred to many indigenous peoples.

**Come join us! The Running Strong Reservations Tour takes place each September.**

**Visit [www.IndianYouth.org](http://www.IndianYouth.org) for more information. Brochures will be available in May. If you have any questions about the tour, please call 703-317-9881. We'd be happy to assist you.**



## Legacy: Circle of Life

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Join Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills in leaving a legacy for American Indian children. By including Running Strong in your estate plan, you'll make a lasting difference—and be recognized as a member of the Running Strong Circle Society.

In 1986, Billy Mills co-founded Running Strong for American Indian Youth®, as a way to give back to his Lakota people on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and to Native Americans throughout Indian Country. But Billy realizes he cannot go on forever. That's why he became the very first member of Running Strong's Circle Society, whose generous members are shaping the future of our charitable organization by indicating Running Strong for American Indian Youth® as a beneficiary in their estate planning.

As a member of the Running Strong Circle Society, Billy and other members like you will help support our mission for years to come. "I became the first member of the Running Strong Circle Society in order to continue to give back in honor of those who helped me achieve my dream," says Billy. "My gift will ensure that I will continue to be able to give back even after I have left this earthly world and joined Wakantanka — 'The Father in the Sky.'"



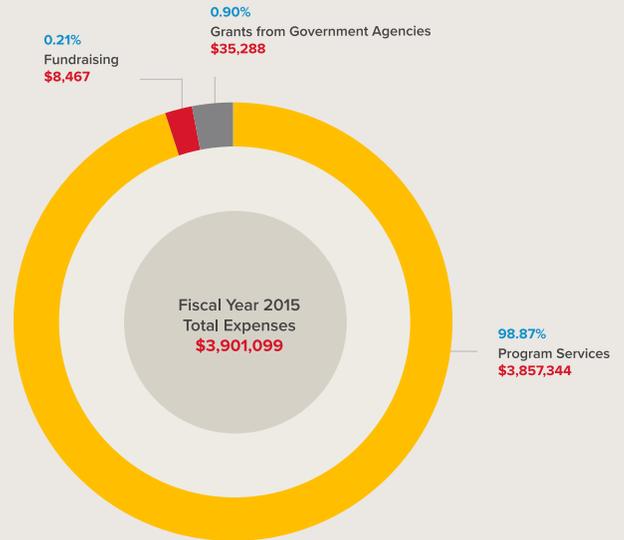
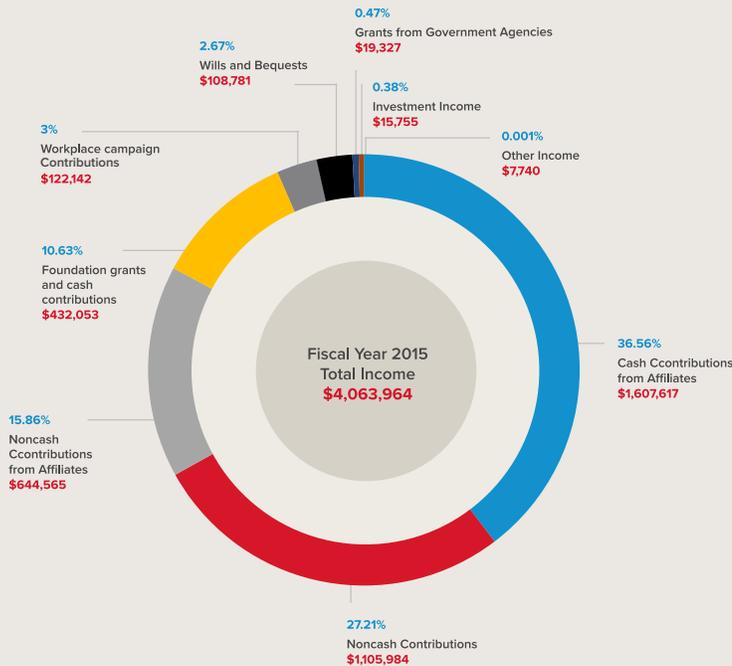
**Billy adds, "I ask you to do the same—leave a legacy of your own that will benefit Native American children for years, decades, to come. There is no greater gift, I know."**

**For more information contact Tracy Kelso at [tracyk@IndianYouth.org](mailto:tracyk@IndianYouth.org) or call (703) 317-9086 ext. 105.**

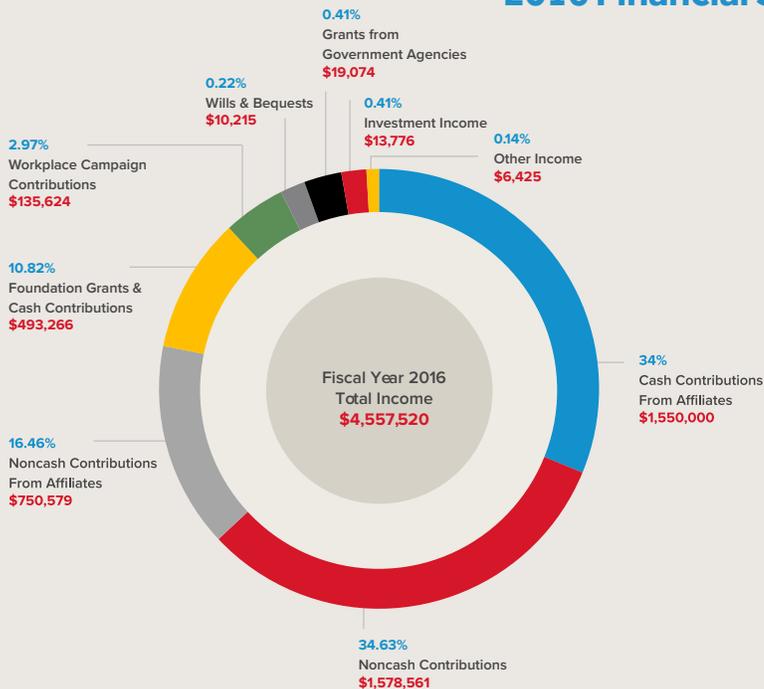
# Financials

The financial results depicted are derived from the Running Strong for American Indian Youth® June 30, 2015 and June 30, 2016 financial statements which contain an unqualified audit opinion. Our complete audited financial statements can be obtained online at [www.IndianYouth.org](http://www.IndianYouth.org) or by calling (703) 317-9881.

## 2015 Financial Statement



## 2016 Financial Statement



As a member (subordinate unit under an IRS approved group exemption) of Christian Relief Services Charities (CRSC), Running Strong for American Indian Youth® benefits in a number of ways from administrative and technical support as a cost-effective model in the areas of overhead, accounting, human resources, information technology, legal counsel and governance.



**RUNNING STRONG**  
for American Indian Youth®  
AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH RUNNING STRONG®

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**Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), National Spokesperson**

