Pine Ridge Gets Ready for Spring!

The Slim Buttes Agricultural Development program is a community-based organic gardening project that addresses the persistent and rising problems of obesity, diabetes, and low nutrition among the families of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Over 10% of the population on Pine Ridge is enrolled in gardening programs. Thanks to your support, the tractor crew tilled 416 gardens last spring across Pine Ridge and distributed 20,000 vegetable seedlings.

Fresh healthy food is so important for young and old! We pray that this spring will begin a bountiful year for all gardens on Pine Ridge!

Need help with your own organic garden? Download some organic gardening tips at www.IndianYouth.org!

“We honor people’s call for help in a matter of life itself through growing food, and by working with nature, not against it. Culture is at the core of social change in all the issues: economy, health, environment, and all others.”

-Albert Red Bear

Gardener and tractor operator who tilled 46 gardens in the Pass Creek district of the Reservation.

Save Your Spot on the Running Strong Tour

Visit the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservations with Running Strong! Running Strong’s 24th Annual Reservations Tour is taking place September 8-14, 2013 — come join us!

For one incredible week, join Running Strong staff and volunteers as we visit the programs you care about. See with your own eyes the daily miracles that you make possible. Together we will travel in comfort with a guide through unique parts of the country rarely visited and get to understand why your support matters. While on the tour you will visit our water wells, gardens, food programs, meet Billy Mills, enjoy a Lakota wacipi (pow wow) and meet the American Indian children that you help every day.

But hurry, the tour fills up quickly! Check the box on the enclosed reply form to receive the tour invitation to register when it is available in early May. You can also visit www.IndianYouth.org to register and pay online.
Running Strong supplies backpacks full of nutritious healthy food every Friday for Menominee children from Pre-K to 3rd grade at Menominee Primary School for the 2012-2013 school year. Together, we feed 300 kids each week! That’s 9,000 total Smart Sacks for this school year! Along with healthy food, these students learn about nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The staff works with the school nutritionist to develop menus and include a Smart Sack newsletter about healthy eating each week.

The Smart Sack contains healthy foods like milk, sunflower seeds, chicken noodle soup, beef stew, fruit and grain bars, oatmeal and raisins. School volunteers pack and distribute the sacks at the end of each week. By buying in bulk, $35 will provide each child a Smart Sack for the entire school year! Times are tough and we need your support to keep this important program going. Special thanks to the Riverside Church’s Densford Fund and the Creative Artists Agency for their generous support for this program!

“Our school district suffers from a high rate of poverty. As a result, children come to school having not eaten over the weekend. Our teachers have documented that this lack of food causes fatigue, absenteeism, and poor health, and is impacting the children’s ability to learn.”

Heather Conway, Collaboration For Kids, Menominee Indian School District, Keshena, Wisconsin

“Dear Billy Mills,
I am writing to thank you for the 2013 Pocket Planner and blanket that you sent to me recently. I love and appreciate both of the gifts.”

Y.B. in New Jersey

“Dear Billy and Pat,
Congratulations on your 51st wedding anniversary! The years go by so quickly. In my recent member-in-good-standing card it reminded me that I have been with Running Strong since 1991! I have found great peace knowing that I have helped over the years. I want you to know that Running Strong for American Indian Youth is remembered in my will.”

R. S. in Florida.

“Dear Billy Mills,
The children mean a lot to me. I pray every day for all of them. I lived thru the Depression so I know what being poor is like. We lived in a 2 room house with no electricity and the plumbing was outside. My mom took in washing and ironing for a dollar a day.”

Mrs. C in California

Thank You for Helping us Reach our Goal!

In December, Billy sent an email to our online supporters with a goal to raise $25,000 to heat homes and youth centers this winter. We are excited to announce that through your generosity, we surpassed our goal and raised $33,300.88!

We can’t thank you enough for helping us start 2013 on solid ground. May your generosity be returned to you and your family in many ways this year.

Want to get email updates from Billy? Go to www.IndianYouth.org, look in the top righthand corner, and join our email list today! Or write your email address on the enclosed reply form and we’ll add you to our online community.
Your support helps Running Strong deliver 25 lb. food boxes to hungry families during the holidays and throughout the year. Thanksgiving boxes had turkeys and all the sides down to the pumpkin pie, followed by Christmas boxes with roast chickens and sides and candy canes! At Easter, we provided hams, sides and jelly beans for the children. Thanks to you, this year we’ve donated 6,950 food boxes to hungry families on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River! Here’s what some of our recipients had to say:

“Wopila to all of you, your family and Running Strong for thinking of us when we needed it the most, the turkey and food box will feed my large family again this year.”

Ellowyn L.

“Wopila (woh-pee-lah) means thank you!

“Thank you, this year we’ve donated 6,950 food boxes to hungry families on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River!”

“A big wopila to Dave and Running Strong for the food box, it has all the fixings for a good meal, I am very thankful for this kindness.”

Harold T.

“We are very thankful to Running Strong for thinking of us during these difficult times, the turkey will feed our family, we can supply the other items needed to complete our meal, again a big thank you.”

Francine R.S.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the food box I received for my family, it came at a time when I did not have any food for my family for this special day, thank you.”

Amanda I. B.

**Team Running Strong is Filling up, but There’s Still Time to Join!**

Have you or anyone you know ever wanted to participate in a marathon and make a difference? You can on Billy Mills’ charity team, Team Running Strong! Join a friendly group of Native and non-Native Team Running Strong runners and walkers at the Marine Corps Marathon™ on October 27, 2013 in Washington, DC! Team Running Strong members meet Billy Mills and enjoy a weekend of special events including a team honoring and the big race, all while raising at least $722 (Billy’s Olympic number) to help American Indian children in need.

Secure your spot today by registering online at www.IndianYouth.org or writing to marathon@indianyouth.org for more information on how you can run strong for American Indian youth! Please help us spread the word and tell the runners (and walkers!) in your life about Team Running Strong. 26.2 miles... you can do it!!
Billy Mills Honored for His Service with You and Running Strong

Presidential Citizens Medal Goes to Running Strong’s Spokesperson, Billy Mills

On February 15, our very own Billy Mills was honored to receive the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Obama at a White House ceremony for the important work Running Strong is doing for American Indian Youth.

This honor is the second highest civilian award in the United States, second only to the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The ideal nominee for a Citizens Medal is a person whose work has had a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of others.

“I am humbled and honored to be recognized by the President in this extraordinary way. The most powerful thing you can give to a child is a dream. I hope every child in Indian Country knows what is possible if you follow your dream,” said Billy.

YOU are the reason why Billy was recognized by the President in this extraordinary way.

You have used your talents and successes to make life better for your people, who are the true Americans. The award you are receiving is well-deserved. Congratulations!

--Tanya from Pennsylvania

As a supporter for many years, I am so happy to see you and the organization being officially recognized in such a visible way! Running strong!

-Marianne from Connecticut

The Presidential Citizens Medal honors an individual:

• Who has a demonstrated commitment to service in their own community or in communities farther from home.
• Who has helped their country or their fellow citizens through one or more extraordinary acts.
• Whose service relates to a long-term or persistent problem.
• Whose service has had a sustained impact on others’ lives and provided inspiration for others to serve.

Join Billy Mills as a Legacy Society Member!

By including Running Strong for American Indian Youth, a project of Christian Relief Services, in your will or other estate plans, your legacy gift becomes a lasting tribute of your commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of American Indians and their well-being. Legacy gifts provide an estate tax deduction and have a tremendous impact on Running Strong’s ability to continue to fulfill its mission. For more information on how to include Running Strong in your charitable giving plans, please call Sandra Oba, Director of Development, at 1-888-337-3543, ext. 125.