Every holiday season, Americans nationwide gather with family, friends and neighbors to enjoy a hearty meal and give thanks. Unfortunately, such a special meal during the holiday season is a luxury many American Indian families living on reservations simply cannot afford.

That is why each year, with the help of generous supporters like you, Running Strong for American Indian Youth® is able to deliver turkeys with all the fixings (including a delicious pumpkin pie for dessert!) to thousands of American Indian families on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations. Friends like you ensure that families have a wholesome meal to gather around and be thankful for.

This year, with your help, we can deliver 3,000 Thanksgiving and Christmas food boxes (plus another 3,008 turkeys) to Native families. The generosity of Running Strong supporters has made Operation Turkey Dinners possible every year since 1988! On behalf of those children, parents and seniors, we say thank you for helping us to make holidays warm and bright on the reservations.

“Thank you Running Strong for the turkeys, there are a lot of happy thankful people that were in need of a turkey. I’m very thankful!”

- Billie Rose Garreaux, Food Distribution Coordinator, Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, South Dakota

Food and Warmth for Winter

Many American Indian children face the harsh winter months each year lacking warm coats to wear to school and blankets to keep them warm in bed at night, and without nutritious food to keep them healthy and focused. Our program partners have told us about kids walking to school in freezing temperatures wearing only sweaters to fight off the winter chill.

Last winter, you helped Running Strong for American Indian Youth® distribute 1,716 blankets, 4,743 coats with hoods, and 4,500 food boxes to American Indian families. You also helped us provide new scarves, gloves, and hats for children.

This year, with your help, our “Operation Christmas Joy” program will again supply families with food boxes, blankets, coats, scarves, gloves and hats, and will include fleece jackets for kids for an additional layer of warmth. Together we can help keep these precious kids safe and warm through another frigid winter.
The 25th Tour Recap

“It was special with Billy’s 50th anniversary gold medal, the 25th anniversary of the tour, and the weather. The weather made for a brand new educational experience.”

Karen Walter, Ypsilanti, MI

The Running Strong for American Indian Youth® 25th Anniversary Reservations Tour in September was not only a huge success, it was also a very special tour. This year, the sold-out trip celebrated both the 25th anniversary of the tour, and the 50th anniversary of Billy Mills’ olympic gold medal win. See a new video of Billy at www.IndianYouth.org/anniversary.

“Unique, unusual, life-changing.”

Barbara Leonard, Alexandria, VA

Our large tour group of 38 participants celebrated these special anniversaries with a wacipi (powwow) honoring Billy that brought together members of the community young and old alike! Everyone enjoyed a traditional meal, visited with each other and made new friends, and continued dancing into the early morning hours. We saw many different types of powwow dancing, including a “switch dance,” in which the men dress and dance like women and the women dress and dance like men!
During our trip we also got to see a new program with great potential. For the first time, we visited the Oyate Teca project, a youth center and garden on the Pine Ridge reservation. The project even sells fruits and vegetables from its garden in a small farmer’s market. Oyate Teca director Rose Fraser and her team are doing great work to support American Indian youth and families, and we hope to collaborate with them more in the future.

“We mended that hoop for at least one night.”
Ken Lone Elk talking about the joy at the Billy Mills’ wacipi.

Our weather was not ideal. The temperature got down to 30 degrees, not including the wind chill and we even suffered through a brief hail storm! But it did give our participants an idea of some of the challenges people face on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations. Amidst the extra layers of clothing, the tour participants experienced many exciting activities that created wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

We hope you will join us next year for our 26th Annual tour to be held September 13–19, 2015. Check www.IndianYouth.org in May 2015 to make your reservation.

“Lakota Sunflowers”
By Doug Daetz, Sunnyvale, CA

Stands of sunflowers shivering look hopefully toward the grey sky.
Providing Emergency Heat for Families

Each winter, the residents of South Dakota face treacherous weather. Last year, the first blizzard hit in October, and the last one was in May. As do many people living on Indian reservations on the western plains, Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian reservations residents experience a dangerous combination of brutally cold winters, poor housing conditions, and little money to pay for utilities. **Forty percent of reservation housing is considered substandard, and almost 30 percent of Indian homes rely solely on firewood for heat.** Too often, families are forced to choose between paying for heat to keep from literally freezing, and other necessities of life including food and medicine.

Last year, thanks to you and our other generous supporters, the Running Strong for American Indian Youth® Heat Match program helped more than 1,344 families on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River stay warm. Running Strong Field Staff Coordinator Dave Lone Elk and his father Ken Lone Elk said that people travelled from even the distant parts of Pine Ridge to request help from the heat match program.

It almost goes without saying that the beneficiaries were so grateful to have help keeping their children and themselves warm. And with winter fast approaching, Ken and Dave, on Pine Ridge, and our partners on the Cheyenne River reservation, are getting ready to help American Indian youth and families stay warm again this year.

Dreamers Past, Present, and Future

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Billy Mills’ Olympic gold medal win, Running Strong for American Indian Youth® has started Dreamstarters, a new program, to help kids achieve their dreams. Billy was able to make his dream come true, and now, in his honor, we can help kids achieve their dreams for themselves and their communities.

Running Strong just launched Dreamstarters on October 14th—50 years to the day after Billy won his gold medal. Visit www.IndianYouth.org for stories about the young dreamers we can help together!

### Join the Legacy Society

Did you know you can build a legacy that can change the lives of our country’s Native children for generations to come?

Through your support you are a steadfast friend of Running Strong for American Indian Youth®. Over the years, your generosity has provided meals for hungry families, shoes and warm winter coats for children, school supplies and education programs for students, heat for those suffering in the cold during the harsh months of winter, and so much more.

Please consider including Running Strong in your estate plans with a bequest or a gift of life insurance. Your thoughtfulness will live on, better allowing Native American children not only to have a dream…but to realize those dreams.

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