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National Relief Charities

“Aid for 20,000 American Indian Students”

Aug 17, 2009, Rapid City, SD and Phoenix, AZ – This year, 20,000 Native American students in need will have National Relief Charities in their corner.

NRC’s education office just finished reviewing over 1,000 scholarship applications from Native American students. Some 300 applications were passed on to their American Indian Education Foundation (AIEF) scholarship committee for final review and selection.

NRC is set on serving Native American students who are enrolled members of their tribes, and who live on, have lived on, or whose parents have lived on reservations. NRC looks for Native American students who already have a letter of acceptance from a college and who plan to attend full-time. National Relief Charities and its AIEF program support undergraduate students in their choice to attend a tribal college, community college, university, or trade school. The school and degree of choice are always self-determined by the students. AIEF scholarships also support graduate students who attend part-time or full-time.

Only 11% of Native Americans have college degrees, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. This is less than half the national average and largely due to poverty or limited access to the resources and tools needed for college. National Relief Charities wants to make college scholarships available to more Native American students and thus looks for students in a wider range of ACT scores and grade point averages: 14 to 24 ACT scores and 2.0 to 3.5 GPAs.

NRC and the AIEF scholarship committee also look for Native American students with a track record for overcoming obstacles. This is important. The completion rate for first year of college among Native American students is only 21.6%. Yet the completion rate of first-year students selected by AIEF is over 95%. This comes from a solid selection process, AIEF mentoring of students throughout the school year, and motivation and commitment on the part of the students.

In addition to scholarships, NRC and AIEF fund emergency grants that are earmarked for Native American students, initiate challenge grants (i.e., matching grants) with colleges that raise extra funds for Native American students, and provide school supplies for every child in more than 60 K-12 schools. Altogether, NRC and the AIEF program serve 20,000 American Indian students a year. Students in South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico, and 6 other states are prioritized.

National Relief Charities is a nonprofit dedicated to quality of life for American Indians living on remote, poverty-stricken reservations. NRC has been serving Native Americans for 20 years and is supported by a strong network of reservation partners. NRC works on over 75 reservations year-round. For more information, see www.nrcprograms.org.