

## CHARITY

# Help Make Christmas Merry for Native American Children

NewsUSA

(NU) - Many Native American children living on Reservations in the United States are growing up in unimaginable poverty. High unemployment means limited job opportunities and no income source for their parents, so multigenerational families often live together in small, dilapidated houses. Many of these homes lack running water and telephones. Electricity is scarce, and utility bills often take priority over food and rent.

The generosity of the American public has allowed Toys for Tots to purchase and deliver gifts to Native American children on 60 Reservations. In 2020 alone, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation purchased \$2.2 million in toys, books, and other gifts for children on remote Reservations in 13 states across the country.

“With your help we can help bring joy and hope to even more Native American children this holiday season,” says Lieutenant General Jim Laster, USMC (Retired), President & CEO of the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation.

This season marks the 41st year of the Toys for Tots Native American Program. When the Program began in 1980, the local Reserve unit had only two pickup trucks full of toys. Last year, local campaign Coordinator, LtCol Pete Tagani, USMC (Retired) and his team distributed nearly half a million toys to Native American Children thanks to the generous donations from Toys for Tots supporters. The impact of these donations is far reaching and supports more than 180,000 Native American children annually.

Russ Miller, Marine Corps League National Vice Commandant, experienced the impact of the



Toys for Tots Native American Program firsthand. Growing up in a missionary family on a Navajo Reservation, Russ still recalls the arrival of the Toys for Tots Christmas boxes, spilling over with toys, games, and books for the children living on the Reservation. Russ loved the opportunity to “play Santa,” distributing gifts to the children whose families came to the mission for other essentials such as clean drinking water and donated clothing -- this experience became an inspiration for Russ. He and his brother went on to join the Marine Corps, and Russ is still making a difference today as a Toys for Tots Coordinator.

The Native American Program has provided new toys, books, and games to children living on Reservations for the last four decades. The support from the American public will help us meet the growing need again this year.

Please visit our donation page to support our Native American program at [https://www.toysfortots.org/donate/native\\_american\\_program.aspx](https://www.toysfortots.org/donate/native_american_program.aspx).

Be sure to follow “Gunny Bear” on the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation Facebook page, where the Toys for Tots spokesperson shares examples of how your support makes a difference.