

The Reporter (<http://www.thereporter.com>)

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation gives Solano County health programs \$1M

By Melissa Murphy, The Reporter, Vacaville

Thursday, October 5, 2017



The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, a sovereign Native American government, gave Solano County \$1 million to support programs that promote healthy living and stable families.

During a special ceremony Thursday morning, members of the Yocha Dehe Tribal Council presented the enlarged check to the Solano County Board of Supervisors in front of the county's mobile Medical Clinic and Dental Clinic, and a truck from the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

"Solano County has taken important step to strengthen the community. ... We're so excited to do more," said Leland Kinter, chairman of the tribal council.

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, owners and operators of Cache Creek Casino Resort, has a long history of working closely with its neighbors to promote and advance the needs of the broader community, according to county officials.

Kinter explained that a renewed compact with the state of California allows the tribe to distribute "compact credits" or revenue generated from gaming to local organizations. The counties potentially benefitting from the revenue include Colusa, Lake, Napa, Sacramento, Sonoma, Solano, Sutter and Yolo.

"The land is part of our tribe's history, it's a connection we hold very dear," Kinter said and added that the tribe has a history of helping the impoverished, those that lack access to healthy food and basic healthcare.

"When we heard about the opportunity, we knew we had to get involved," he said. "We're so happy to partner with you guys."

James Kinter, Leland's brother, agreed.

"It's an opportunity to come together to help as many people as we can," he said.

Matthew Lowell Jr., tribal councilman who works with the youth, also presented the check.

As part of the intergovernmental agreement, Solano County programs, including VibeSolano, the Mobile Food Pharmacy, and a series of basic needs and safety-net services, will each share a portion of the \$1 million revenue agreement:

- VibeSolano Campaign and Initiatives, \$400,000: Designed as a multi-pronged public health campaign, VibeSolano works to prevent and reduce chronic disease by increasing access to healthy choices, places and messaging. Programs include increasing access to free water bottle filling stations, increasing the number of safer, smoke-free places to live and play, healthier food and beverage options at local convenience stores and more walkable neighborhoods.

- Mobile Food Pharmacy, \$400,000: The “We’re all Family” Mobile Food Pharmacy project will bring healthy and nutritious food to low-income, food-insecure patients served by the Solano County Family Health Services Medical Clinics who are affected with or at-risk of chronic disease. Patients will receive a prescription for fresh produce, including fruits, vegetables and recipes that they can pick up from the Mobile Food Pharmacy at Family Health Services Primary Care and Mobile Medical Clinics.
- Basic Needs and Safety-Net Services Support, \$200,000: First 5 Solano will provide for the immediate basic needs of families in crisis so families can focus on stabilizing and strengthening themselves to avoid crisis situations in the future. These basic needs and safety-net services will be provided through existing partnerships with Family Resource Centers located in every city throughout Solano County.

Solano County Supervisor Erin Hannigan, who visited the tribe at their reservation near Cache Creek in 2016, said she’s known about the funding since June, but had to keep it a secret.

“I’m humbled,” she said of the Yocha Dehe Tribal Council reaching out to Solano County. “This will improve the health and wellbeing for many Solano County residents. ... You are making a difference in Solano County. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and your generosity. This is just the beginning of the partnership.”

Leland Kinter shared that Hannigan’s presentation to the tribe “gave me goose bumps.”

“It was exactly what we were looking for,” he said.

Hannigan explained that this partnership goes along with her theme of promoting health, whether through smoke free county campuses and parks or getting shoes for seniors to promote walking.

“This fits in line,” she said and added that she likes to “look at health from the inside out,” not necessarily always looking to medications, but for alternative opportunities that “support healthy outcomes and stable families.”

California Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Solano, said he’s been working with Yocha Dehe for three years.

“What they do in the community is nothing less than phenomenal,” he said. “What they’re able to do in the compact allows them to do more with their money.”

Moving forward, Kinter explained that the tribe will create a board to administer the funds that will be put in “buckets” to benefit the state government and Native Americans, government programs and local folks. It will be called Doyuti Tuckama, which means giving the acorn.

Visitors to the ceremony were able to explore the mobile clinics, receive free flu shots, free health and dental screenings and a chance to ride the Public Health blender bike.

Solano County Supervisors attended the ceremony, except for Supervisor Skip Thomson.

During the supervisors’ meeting Tuesday, he was the lone vote that dissented to accept the \$1 million. He explained that there is a possibility that a different tribe might be interested in building a casino in Vallejo and that accepting the funds today might be “influence peddling on this issue.”

He added that if the casino issue in Vallejo is resolved by next year, he would reconsider his position.

Supervisor Jim Sperring, who voted in favor of receiving the funding, said he was glad the issue was on the table so that he could make it known that this wasn’t committing him to a casino one way or the other.

“I believe this was given for the right reason,” he added.

Hannigan agreed.

“The intent is not to play favorites,” she said. “This is a gift.”

URL: <http://www.thereporter.com/general-news/20171005/yocha-dehe-wintun-nation-gives-solano-county-health-programs-1m>

© 2017 The Reporter (<http://www.thereporter.com>)