

American Indian Service Project Continues for the 3rd year

The American Indian Services relies on volunteer help each Christmas to provide gifts and other necessities to needy American Indians in several western states. Large trucks of donated candy arrived at a church in Provo that needed to be unloaded, and presents for needy families needed to be wrapped. Later that day, trucks from several states, including Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona and Nevada arrived and were loaded with these items to be taken back to families for Christmas. Usually, this has taken an entire day to get everything done. With the help of the Provo Canyon Boys this work has been done in record time for the past three Decembers.

The second Saturday of each December, is normally a day to sleep in and relax a little after a busy week. But twenty-four boys decided that serving others was a good enough reason to get up at 5:30 a.m. and put in a day of work. The boys were told two weeks ahead of time that if they wanted to participate in the service project, they had to do well in school, be off home-work removals, and otherwise be approved by their team coaches to participate. Twenty-four boys met the mark.

The boys unloaded the large trucks then wrapped gifts and other items and placed them in places to be picked up. Those people involved in the program expressed amazement at how hard the boys worked and how polite and helpful and dependable they were. Expressions of gratitude flowed freely and frequently for the selfless work done by the boys.

The boys were also touched by the experience. One boy said, "I never knew work could be so much fun." Another said, "It made me feel good to know that I was helping someone else." Service to others is not always easy or convenient. Often it takes effort and risk. But, as these boys discovered, you can't help but feel good about yourself when you do something good for others, and that is what showing care and concern is all about. It's a strange but true thing: you seem to always get more by giving to others than by expecting others to give to you.

For a period of time on a Saturday, twenty-four boys ceased being boys in a treatment center and became men ... very special men who are much appreciated by volunteers and families in many states.

Over all, this project has helped approximately 70 different reservations and Indian communities. Most of the people helped live in economically depressed areas on the Reservation. For many of them, this is the only form of Christmas they have.