

# San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Donates \$12.6 Million to 228 Deserving Causes

September 17, 2024



HIGHLAND, CA – The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (SMBMI) has awarded 228 grants, totaling over \$12.6 million, to support crucial initiatives in the Inland Empire and across Indian Country. This year, the tribe has targeted 50 percent of its grant funding for programs benefiting Native American communities, underscoring their dedication to preserving cultural heritage, strengthening tribal communities, and empowering tribal nations.

“The Spirit of Yawa’– acting on one’s beliefs – is at the heart of everything we do and has guided us since the days of our ancestors to serve those in need,” said Lynn Valbuena, Chairwoman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. “It is our honor to make a difference for communities across the region and Native people across the nation.”

SMBMI is committed to addressing needs as the data shows that less than one percent of U.S. philanthropic funding reaches Native American communities. Non-profit organizations in the Inland Empire receive significantly less support than all other regions of the state receiving only \$26 in per capita funding, compared to the California statewide average of \$262 per capita.

One of the tribe’s major grants this cycle is \$100,000 awarded to the Native American Land Conservancy (NALC) in Southern California. NALC is dedicated to preserving Indigenous heritage and biodiversity by acquiring lands where sacred sites are located, then preserving and protecting the sites from desecration. The grant will support maintenance of two sacred sites, Mamapukaiv and Coyote Hole, and increased accessibility of Morongo Canyon.

“The Native American Land Conservancy is thankful to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for their financial support, as well as the other ways in which the tribe assists in

our management of sacred sites,” said Michael Madrigal, Native American Land Conservancy Board President. “We could not do what we do without such support.”

Among the notable gifts made by the tribe are:

- **Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians:** Awarded a \$2.4 million grant to enhance the tribe’s capacity to supply adequate power to the new Bad River Health and Wellness Center, which will provide services to 2,400 tribal community members.
- **Time for Change Foundation:** Awarded a \$500,000 grant to increase emergency shelter capacity and access to affordable housing, enhance employment development programming, and expand access to mental health assistance while serving the homeless.
- **Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire:** Awarded a \$450,000 grant to fulfill at least 78 wishes to children living with a critical illness in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, reducing the number of children who are waiting to have wishes fulfilled due to a lack of funding.
- **Native Forward Scholars Fund:** Awarded a \$100,000 grant to advance educational goals and opportunities for Native American students by providing scholarships.
- **Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians:** Awarded a grant of \$83,000 for the Mesa Grande Youth Regaining Cultural Identity Program to expand language and cultural programming year-round.

Since 2003, SMBMI has donated more than \$400 million to causes that align with the tribe’s giving pillars: Inspiring Our Future Through Education; Empowering Lives; Reinforcing Healthy and Resilient Communities; and Preserving Cultural Traditions and Empowering Indian Country.

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