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## **Donation from Coeur d'Alene Tribe Feeds Post Falls Students in Need** ***Tribe contributes \$35,000 to food bank program***

**For immediate release**  
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**Plummer, ID** – Chief Allan, Chairman of the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council today announced a donation in the amount of \$35,000 from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to the Post Falls Food Bank Weekend Nutrition Backpack Program, which will benefit students in the Post Falls School District who do not have reliable access to food on weekends.

“Hearing about kids who go without food all weekend really tugs at your heart, so when we heard about this program, we just had to help. We want our donation to ensure that the food bank can continue to feed the kids who have already been identified for this year’s program and that the program will be financially able to feed even more children if the schools uncover a greater need,” said Allan. “This program provides such a vital service to the community and we want to make sure that it is on solid footing for years to come,” he continued. Allan will make the official donation announcement at a press event on Friday, December 16 at 10 a.m. at Prairie View Elementary School in Post Falls.

Through the Weekend Nutrition Backpack Program, supplemental food items are provided to students in the Post Falls School District to reduce weekend hunger and provide additional nutritional assistance. “We are absolutely overwhelmed by the Tribe’s heartfelt generosity - it is truly a Holiday Miracle. This incredibly generous gift will allow us to feed our current program participants for multiple years to come. It also allows the Backpack Program to build upon a sizeable financial foundation that will help hundreds of the neediest families in our community. Our deepest, most heartfelt thanks go out to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Tribal Council for this incredibly moving and unexpected gift to our community,” said Sherry Wallis, Executive Director of the Post Falls Food Bank said of the program.

Wallis added that there is a significant need in our community for this program and that the program is likely just scratching the surface of kids in need of weekend hunger relief. This year’s program is at capacity and those children who are most at risk are being identified by school counselors. The programs’ participants do so confidentially; school staff members identify students who do not have dependable access to food when they are not at school and notify the food bank each week the number



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of backpacks needed. Each Friday, approximately 75 elementary students and their siblings are sent home with a backpack filled with non-perishable, child friendly, nutritious food for the weekend.

State Representative Bob Nonini, Chairman of the Education Committee in the state legislature, was key in identifying the Weekend Nutrition Backpack Program as a worthy recipient in need of funding. When asked about the donation to the program, Nonini commented, "I kept hearing stories about malnourished and even homeless school kids - reports about our students sleeping in the trunks of cars - and it really breaks your heart. Too many of them are eating lunch at school on Friday and don't get to eat again until they return to school on Monday. I applaud the food bank and the school district for recognizing the problem and finding a solution. Our unending gratitude goes out to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe for their incredible generosity in providing the funding to feed these students."

Mark Jones, a member of the Post Falls Food Bank board of directors and the coordinator for the Alternative to Suspension Program for the Post Falls School District, was instrumental in helping to create the program. "This very generous show of support from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe will help us remove some physiological obstacles for our Post Falls students that are at 'nutritional risk' and give them a better chance to succeed in school and in life," said Jones. He added that hunger leads to many problems for children including physiological, behavioral, and illness issues, but that the immediate benefits of regularly providing a child with food include improved health, increased attendance at school, and better academic and participation performance in the classroom. "The reality is that this program can make a tremendous difference in the lives of these struggling kids and families," said Jones. "We encourage others to join us in contributing to this program to make sure that no student in Post Falls ever goes hungry at home."

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