

Giving Back

2021

MDSP Cultural Activities Coordinator Brian Foley is pictured presenting a check for \$3,362 to staff at the River City Domestic Violence Center in Yankton.

The money came from an inmate food fundraiser with Pizza Ranch. Inmates were allowed to purchase two pizzas and one order of chicken strips from money in their commissary account. An extra fee is added to the cost of each order, with the money going to an area charitable organization.

Photo courtesy of River City Domestic Violence Center.



SDSP Deputy Warden Troy Ponto is pictured at left presenting a check for \$2,000 to Lou Voigt, Executive Director of the Family Connection in Sioux Falls.

Inmates raised the money during a food fundraiser. The money is then distributed to assist a charity or program in the area.

Family Connection serves and supports individuals and families with loved ones in prison. They operate two hospitality houses in Sioux Falls, making it possible for them to visit family members who are incarcerated. They also oversee Children's Connection, which provides support for children with a close family member in prison.

A recent fundraiser at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield raised \$3,160 for the Bon Homme Snack Pack Program.

Gary and Connie Hawks (pictured at right with MDSP Cultural Activities Coordinator Brian Foley) described the program. “The Bon Homme Snack Pack program was organized in 2015 and has been providing weekend meals for students in grades K-5. The first packing took place on February 24, 2016.

In March 2020 when Covid 19 closed the school classrooms, we packed for 66 students at home. We packed larger bags to help the students through longer periods without school. This was a huge challenge because supplies were in very short supply. But luckily, we were able to get through that difficult period.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Snack Pack program provided meals for 32 students every weekend. The 2021-2022 year has 42 students currently taking part in the program.

Each student receives a pack including 2 entrees, 1 white milk, 1 chocolate milk, 2 fruits, 3 breakfast items, and 2 snacks. Since we have received great donations such as those from Mike Durfee State Prison, we have increased what is offered to each student by including an extra entrée, breakfast food, or snack and sometimes all three items.”

The state prison in Springfield holds fundraisers each year. The inmates purchase pizzas and chicken strips. Pizza Ranch in Yankton provides excellent service and food. Each purchase provides two dollars to charity. Previous donations have gone to River City Domestic Shelter, United Way, Yankton VFW, the Special Olympics and several others.

The current fundraiser has the distinction of being the largest fundraiser ever. The donation to the Bon Homme snack Pack program is the largest donation to date. The staff and inmates at the prison look forward to exceeding that amount in the future.



Nine minimum-security inmates from the Yankton Community Work Center worked on a project to help address sinking headstones/markers at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Viborg October 16.

Inmates from the Rapid City Community Work Center assisted with the Auburn Fire near Rapid City in early October.



SDSP Deputy Warden Troy Ponto is pictured presenting checks to Julie Becker, Executive Director of the St. Francis House, left, and to Tamera Jerke-Liesinger who is the Executive Director at the Banquet, right.

Each charity was given a check for \$2,000. Inmates donated the money from recent pizza fundraisers.



Two inmates from the Rapid City Community Work Center were deployed Sept. 28-Oct. 1 to assist the Division of Wildland Fire with the Hat Mountain Fire in the Black Hills.

Officer Jim Binder is pictured at right gathering produce from the Yankton Community Work Center garden.

Produce that was grown in the garden has been donated to 10 local non-profit organizations so far this year.





An inmate pizza fundraiser at MDSP is benefitting the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 791 of Yankton!

A check totaling \$2,430 was presented to Post 791 on June 9.

Pictured left to right are Abby Spiecher, Dan Klimisch, MDSP Cultural Activities Coordinator Brian Foley, and MDSP Associate Warden Alex Reyes.

SD DOC K9 Handlers and their dogs pose with 1,500 confiscated cell phones that will be donated to Cell Phones for Soldiers, a national, non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing cost-free communication services and emergency funding to active duty military members and veterans.

Pictured left to right: Chris Happe, MDSP K9 Handler with Toby, SDSP K9 Commander Mark Kannenberg with Sadie, and Matt Geppart, RCCWC K9 Handler with Sadie.



DOC staff donated more than \$1,150 to help defray travel and other costs for another DOC staff member who is assisting their spouse with a medical emergency.

Pheasantland Industries delivered some refurbished bicycles from Springfield Vocational Industries to the Promising Futures Fund in Sioux Falls April 9!

The Promising Futures Fund provides support to 12 elementary and two middle schools with the highest rates of poverty in Sioux Falls. The bikes are being distributed to the kids in those schools and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire.

KELO-TV aired a story on the bicycle donation April 13:

<https://www.keloland.com/news/positively-keloland/promising-futures-fund-working-with-doc-to-distribute-bikes-to-kids/>

Inmates at the Women's Prison donated \$212 in February to Paws Animal Rescue in Pierre. The money came from a food fundraiser.

Corrections Secretary Mike Leidholt, Chief Warden Darin Young and SDSP Deputy Warden Troy Ponto traveled to Mission, SD on Feb. 24 to donate items from state prison inmates to the Tree of Life Ministries, a non-profit relief agency. Inmates from the State Penitentiary donated \$4,000, hand-knit stocking caps and hand-made toys. KELO-TV documented the donation. You can watch their story here:

<https://www.keloland.com/news/local-news/rosebud-reservation-receives-an-unexpected-donation-from-inmates/>

Inmates at the Rapid City Community Work Center recently donated \$352 to The Black Hills Children's Home as the result of an inmate pizza fundraiser January 29, 2021.

Pictured at right are Abby Sharp, the Volunteer Program and Development Coordinator for the Children's Home Foundation, and Hugh Foreman, Unit Coordinator for the Rapid City Community Work Center.

The Black Hills Children's Home is part of the Children's Home Society of South Dakota. It is a psychiatric residential treatment center and education school for children, ages 4-14, with severe emotional and behavioral needs. Many of the children are victims of domestic violence, neglect, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The Children's Home Society also partners with caring parents to serve children with emotional or behavioral needs. Most children are discharged from CHS/BHCH into a family setting including birth parents, relative placements, a foster family or an adoptive family. All funds received through donation are used for the children in the treatment center and to help with clothing the children and helping with the families learning how to manage the children.





Chief Warden and Director of Prison Operations Darin Young, left, and Native American volunteer Mary Montoya, right, presented a check for \$500 to Amy Carter, center, Director of Operations for the Children's Inn of Sioux Falls, Jan. 7.

The Lakota, Dakota and Nakota (LDN) inmate group at the State Penitentiary donated the money, which originally was earmarked for a powwow at SDSP. But the powwow was cancelled due to COVID-19 and the LDN group wanted the money to benefit others. The Children's Inn provides free services to victims of domestic violence, stalking, elder abuse, sexual assault and child abuse or neglect.

Along with the monetary donation, Children's Inn received a painting of a woman and child done by an anonymous Native American inmate.