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Indian Center Inc.

Press Release

Indian Center leaders asking for help to rebuild programs and make building improvements

Lincoln, Nebraska, November 9, 2018: Leaders at the Indian Center Inc. are asking the local community to help them reclaim the struggling community center and identify new programs and events, including fundraising opportunities.

Georgiana Ausan, interim executive director for the center and a member of the Navajo Nation, said the center is facing an uncertain future and has begun implementing systems to put the center back on solid financial footing. Among those changes was establishing the Lincoln Community Foundation as its fiscal sponsor and administrator of future donations that may be given to the Indian Center. The Foundation has set up a donation page for Indian Center Inc. at mylcf.org/indiancenter.

“The path that we’re taking right now to try and gain the community’s trust back is by being transparent first and foremost but also by being fiscally responsible going forward,” Ausan said.

The center serves Lincoln’s Native American community through social programs such as its elders luncheon, youth program and Foodnet distribution, as well as providing a site for regular meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and events hosted by the Lincoln Indian Club and the Southeast Nebraska Native American Coalition.

Ausan said the center’s board of directors has established an advisory council made up of nearly 20 community members that will help the board ensure fiscal responsibility and rebuild its slate of programs through fundraising and other efforts.

She said she would also like to start hosting community events to bring people back to the center.

“The last few months at the center have been really quiet and there hasn’t been as much going on,” Ausan said. “That needs to stop. We need to bring life back to the center. To do that, we need to start having events and ceremonies here for youth, for teens, for adults, for elders.”

She said she is considering hosting a hip-hop show for Native artists, affordable haircuts for elders and a Thanksgiving meal for the community in the coming weeks.

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However, much work remains to rebuild the programs at the center and to renovate the aging center. The center was founded in 1969 and moved into its current location at 1100 Military Road in 1980.

The building needs a new heating and air-conditioning system, and as winter approaches, is seeking help to repair the center's current furnace. The center also needs new plumbing.

She said the center is calling for volunteers to help address the building's needs and to help rebuild its programs.

"I think a lot of people have talents that we can use here," Ausan said. "I think there's an opportunity here to really get the community involved and help improve the center."

She said the Indian Center is a vital part of the Native American community in Lincoln. It has served as a place for funerals, baptisms, powwows, cultural ceremonies and youth empowerment.

"The Indian Center has a legacy in so many people's lives here in the community," she said. "It helps grow our next generation of youth into the adults and leaders and successful people that they can be in the future. It has the potential to touch the lives of so many more people."