

American Indian Giving

Its many faces and forms

Fast Facts

Indigenous peoples have long and deep histories of giving.

- Giving in North Carolina's American Indian community is as diverse as the tribes represented: Coharie, Cherokee, Halawa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Sappony, Waccamaw-Siouan, and Tuscarora.
- Giving is considered an honor for the giver and receiver. Helping family, friends and community is considered a way of life, not an obligation.
- "Circular giving" is important -- receivers are expected to continue the gift by giving to others.
- "American Indian cultures believe that, 'generosity is more important than possession.'"
– *Emil Her Many Horses (of the Oglala Lakota tribe)*

Embracing Philanthropy's Roots

Broken down, the word *philanthropy* actually means "love of humankind." Every gift is valuable, including time, talent AND treasure. And everyone is a philanthropist ~ everyone gives!

- King William Lunalilo established the first of the Ali'i Trusts in 1873, to care for the Native Hawaiian elderly -- predating the conventional foundations that began to emerge in the early 20th century.
- As early as 1911, The Society of American Indians was one of the first organizations established by American Indians to advocate for their rights.
- Giveaways, potlatches (gift-giving festivals) and blanket dances are common giving traditions that tribes continue today.

Types of Giving

Individual giving is when one person contributes time, talent and/or treasure to a cause important to him or her. Examples include volunteering with the United Way or the NC Commission for Indian Affairs, giving money to a local domestic violence shelter or donating blood to the American Red Cross.

Collective giving happens when people make contributions to a cause together. Examples include:

North Carolina Native American Youth Organization ~ NCNAYO is a statewide Native American youth group representing all of the tribes, with a focus on giving and leadership development. Youth volunteer their time to their community, and use the treasure they receive to make grants to student-focused projects that strengthen community and culture.

NC American Indian Fund ~ This fund serves all tribal and urban American Indian communities in North Carolina, supporting the well-being of American Indian peoples in the state. Its current focus is education, helping American Indian youth defray the costs of books when they enter college.

NCGives is a statewide organization on a mission to celebrate and strengthen North Carolina's culture of giving, especially among women, young people and communities of color. NCGives has supported the NC American Indian Fund (NCAIF) through the **American Indian Circle of Leaders Giving Back** philanthropic initiative. This initiative is dedicated to promoting healthy, stable communities that support mutual self help among the state's American Indian peoples, and that encourage respectful, reciprocal relationships with conventional philanthropic institutions. (The initiative has resulted in the establishment of youth giving groups through NCNAYO, as well as support for the growth, incorporation and tax-exempt status of the NCAIF)

To learn about celebrating and strengthening a culture of giving in *your* community, visit www.NCGives.org or call (919) 256-6908.



Top-Bottom:
NCNAYO youth giving group; Haliwa Saponi elder; Haliwa Saponi pow wow; young adult from Eastern Band of Cherokees