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Phoenix Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library Gather \$30,000+ Worth of Supplies in Support of the Navajo Nation

Through the help of the community, more than 5,000 items were donated equating to thousands of dollars in desperately needed goods

PHOENIX (May 29, 2020) – Over the course of two weekends in May, Arizona Irish community members, neighbors, Native Americans, and generous good Samaritans donated supplies to help those greatly impacted by COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation. Through these efforts, the Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library served as a donation drop off point for more than 5,000 items equating to more than \$30,000.

Roughly 80 volunteers over the course of these two weekends gathered, sorted, and sanitized supplies that were then stored in the “Great Hall” at the Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library in Downtown Phoenix. Each item was disinfected before being brought inside and volunteers wore PPE suits provided by Intel in Chandler, Arizona. Members of the Navajo community, elected Arizona state representatives, Arizona Irish community leaders and Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library staff and board members were among those volunteers in attendance.

Donated items included:

- Roughly 150 cases of water bottles and 61 gallon-water jugs
- 108 units of hand sanitizer and soap
- 71 units of bleach
- More than 400 face masks
- More than 1,500 face shields for medical use
- More than a thousand units of food (including cereal, canned goods, rice, milk products, and baking goods)
- Hay, chicken feed, dog and cat food

People from around the world also donated to the Navajo Nation’s [official GoFundMe](#), which has since surpassed \$1,000,000, in response to this initiative.

“We are overwhelmed by the support of the community and grateful to have had such a positive turn out for this initiative,” said Leslie Thompson, President of the Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation board. “Irish people have experienced their fair share of trials and tribulations, but that makes us all the



more empathetic and understanding of other communities that are going through trying times. Any one can make a difference and every donation is so greatly appreciated.”

“My sincerest thanks to Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation board member Jason Ryan and Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library Operations Director Ciara Archer for their leadership and organization,” continued President Thompson. “We are all proud and humbled by this experience and look forward to working with other communities and organizations in the future to spread kindness and show support in times of need.”

The Arizona National Guard was called in to gather and transport these goods directly to the Navajo Nation. Some 20 individuals from the National Guard, plus an additional 15+ volunteers loaded the two trucks (equal to 93 feet of space), which were driven directly to and unloaded on the Navajo Nation on May 26.

Likewise, Guardian Air Transport, a Northern Arizona healthcare service, also donated the use of one of their aircrafts to transport urgent supplies on Wednesday, May 20.

The global Irish community has a long-standing relationship with the Native American community; during the Great Irish Famine in the mid-1800s, the Choctaw Nation raised funds to support Irish people suffering from the potato famine. In an act of thanks and repayment, Irish people around the world have rallied to provide much needed support to the Navajo and Hopi tribes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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About the Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library: The mission of the Irish Cultural Center is to Celebrate and promote Irish and Celtic Heritage and its influence on and partnership with other cultures. The goal of the McClelland Library is to make accessible a comprehensive collection of materials on Ireland and the Irish diaspora on the role of Irish-Americans in Arizona and the Western United States. The Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library are divisions of the Irish Cultural & Learning Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and are owned and maintained by the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department.