

## Dear Churches:

Our staff, and the members of our community are so very grateful for the news that the Peach Springs School has been selected as a recipient of the “Christmas in August” campaign.

Peach Springs, Arizona is located one mile south of the rim of the west end of the Grand Canyon. The school, which serves a Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade population, consists of 200 Native American students and one Hispanic student. Students who attend high school are transported elsewhere. There is a 65% drop-out rate among our population.

In the early 70s, Peach Springs (on old Rt. 66) was bypassed and isolated by the completion of Interstate 40. After that, the economy declined drastically. Besides the bypass and resulting financial devastation, the number of Hualapai people is still recovering from the Trail of Tears march and massacre of 1874, where the majority of the Hualapai people perished.

As a resident teacher here in Peach Springs, I witness defiance, defeat and desperation on the one hand, and a great effort towards healing and recovery on the other hand. While Native American populations are still plagued with problems rooted in the past, there is a significant movement within the Hualapai community toward recovery. Community leaders are proactive, and are endeavoring to re-establish dignity and health among the members of their nation. The Creator - God - and prayer is a very large part of that. Prayer is so powerful, and we are overwhelmingly grateful for the prospect of having so many hearts join us in our daily prayers for the Native American people!

The children of the Hualapai are, without reservation the most resilient people I have ever walked among. Even though many of them come from (live in) homes that would appear to be condemned buildings, they arrive at school clean, neatly dressed, and with a smiling face. I genuinely love the children of the Hualapai. Working with them has significantly developed my faith in God and my awareness of God’s need for *me* to do his will. Each day, my heart is filled with gratitude for the opportunity to touch the lives of these severely disadvantaged youth.

I want to say that we are so very appreciative of any gift large or small, that we will receive. And again, we are truly blessed by receiving the focus of prayers. Thank God!

Blessings,

Jocelyn Barnhart