

## **An Open Letter to Concerned Grocers and Retailers**

The information you are about to read is unfamiliar and shocking to many Americans, yet sadly true. As a regular patron of your store, I am asking that you please take the time to read it.

Hundreds of thousands of Native American people were removed from their traditional way of life, homelands and resources on which they relied, displaced as a result of westward expansion. This history and continuing oppressive policies have now placed many tribal communities in the pathway of hunger, poverty and geographic isolation, making food insecurity an everyday issue on the reservations PWNA serves. In fact, one in four Native Americans struggles with uncertain access to sufficient, affordable foods for proper nutrition, including fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food choices.

This is coupled with the reality that Native Americans endure one of the highest rates of impoverishment in the U.S. In fact, Native American households are 400 percent more likely to report not having enough to eat, compared with other U.S. households. As a result, nutrition-related disease rates are high, with Native Americans suffering from the highest prevalence of diabetes in the country and nearly twice as likely to die from diabetes as other Americans.

### **Realities on the Reservations**

- Native Americans endure a legacy of healthcare disparities, leading to disproportionate disease rates for diabetes, cancer, tuberculosis and infant mortality. In addition, the average lifespan of Native American men on some reservations is 20 years less than that of other men in the U.S.
- About 90,000 Native Americans are homeless, and 40% of reservation housing is considered sub-standard.
- 23% of Native families experience low food security, meaning reduced quality, variety, or desirability of food intake for a healthy life.
- Up to 70% of Native students drop out of high school and only 13% earn college degrees.
- Up to 35% of Native children live in poverty, and 29% of employed Native Americans live below poverty level.
- Suicide rates for Native Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 are 3 times the national average — and the second leading cause of death for their age group.

To learn more, visit [www.nativepartnership.org](http://www.nativepartnership.org) or download this information about access to healthy food on the reservations: [www.nativepartnership.org/foodnews2](http://www.nativepartnership.org/foodnews2). I hope you will feel like I do and want to do something about this.