

# Community Alliance Group, Inc. - Accomplishments 2024



## 2024 Accomplishments:

- Classes:
  - Quilting class that occurred in January and February on Sunday afternoons. A local elder taught participants the Star Quilt making process. We were able to get donated materials as well as sewing machines to utilize.
  - GriefShare Group classes in the spring for 13-weeks
  - Cultural Foodways Classes in September & October with weekly classes on canning tomatoes, pickling, making apple butter, using local plants for medicine and cold/flu remedies. plus held numerous cultural classes in the fall.
- Easter celebration - community egg hunt, worship service and meal in with bingo games and cake walk after meal
- Sober socials: Once per month, we had a sober social activity that allows a safe space for anyone to gather for fellowship along with usually games or activity of some sort plus snacks or a meal. It is now a Weekly Sober Social on Wednesday evenings.
- Parades:
  - In December 2023, we had the McLaughlin Christmas parade. We decorated our shuttle bus with beautiful outdoor holiday decorations and played Christmas music as we tossed candy to the crowds along the entire parade route.
  - 4th of July parade in conjunction with Bear Soldier District
  - Homecoming Parades - we took our shuttle van and tons of candy to participate in both the McLaughlin & McIntosh parades
  - Halloween Parade & House Contest - there was a wonderful turnout of entries for the spooky themed parade; 37 houses in McL/Bear Soldier were very well decorated too.
  - December 2024 Christmas Celebration Parade with CAG hosting Santa visits and winter items giveaway to children (provided by the ladies of Bethlehem Lutheran Aberdeen) followed by a Soup Meal and concert performed by Tangled Blue (Pastors Joel and Aimee Pakan).
- Prom Shop: We collected and prepared dress apparel and items for the youth prom shop. We worked to gather as many items as possible to have a great selection of styles and sizes for both youth girls and boys. The Prom Shop is open two days per week through mid-April and allows students that attend any school on Standing Rock the opportunity to borrow dress apparel to attend prom. Then they return it to us the following week after prom. The prom salon typically sets up in the McLaughlin school the day of prom to offer free hair and make-up services to the young ladies to get ready for prom, which is all offered by local volunteers. Wrapped up the prom activities. There was a group of volunteers that gathered on April 17 to create handmade corsages and boutonnieres for the youth to have for prom. The final day to come to the prom shop to borrow a dress or apparel was April 18. Students from all across

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Standing Rock utilized the Prom Shop this year.

- Baseball program: we partnered up with the McIntosh coaches to get more area kids involved in the area's baseball program. The CAG shuttle van transported players from McLaughlin to McIntosh for practices and also to attend games. Snacks and water bottles were provided to the players that we transported as well. Baseball players also got to participate in the parade.
- Play Days: We held multiple play day events near the baseball field in McLaughlin. We set up games and grilled hot dogs to give away along with water, popsicles, and chips. Also took our shuttle for anyone to attend the county fair events (youth rodeo and 4H fair show).
- Movies: We held movie night in the park, offering a free movie with popcorn too. Plus did a Christmas Break Movie Marathon to show five movies back-to-back while offering treats (popcorn, chips, oranges, apples and some candy, and pop) along with some PB&J sandwiches for lunch then the Soul Bowl meal overlapped the later showings.
- Youth trips: Numerous students were transported to attend the Sitting Bull College Summer Camp for two weeks and also the SBC Nasa Camp for one week.
- Revival Event: We provided a community meal during the revival event at the city auditorium.
- Stair Lift - the stair lifts for the split level staircases were installed in April. The community is very appreciative of this for anyone with a disability or that simply struggles with stairs.
- Soul Bowl & Food Pantry-
  - In January & February, we were busy preparing the space, advertising the program that'd be starting, and building up a food pantry of supplies. We did provide food supplies in January to the blue gym for feeding those in need or being housed at the blue gym during the frigid cold spell. We also provided food supplies occasionally to Daniel and Alexa Carson who prepare meals 4-5 times per week to help feed the hungry, and we will continue to partner with them to give supplies when possible. Our official launch date of The Soul Bowl soup kitchen was March 2, 2024 with meals served every Saturday which is open to anyone and everyone. Each week the numbers continue to increase for how many people come to eat and have fellowship.
  - Hosted the Easter Celebration meal serving approximately 400 meals.
  - Hosted the Soul Bowl Community Thanksgiving Feast offering a space of fellowship while enjoying a great meal, music, bingo and cake walk game serving approximately 250 meals.
  - In 2024, the total # of meals served was approximately 1,492!!!
- Resource Fair
  - Create the space for service providers, educational facilities and employers to offer information about programs, services, assistance, college or trade school programs, employment opportunities

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- CAG Wellness Center operation:
  - Provide a collaborative space offering total healing through Body, Mind and Spirit under one roof
    - Offers fitness equipment, mental health professionals/counselor services, massage therapist services, AA/NA group, Anger Management class, parenting classes, and worship services
    - Held Health Screening events for Blood Pressure reading, Type 2 Diabetes risk test, Blood Glucose testing and Diabetes education
    - A Chronic Stress and Boarding School Attendance study was held with a listening session to follow for those who participated in the study.
    - Held a Biggest Loser weight loss competition this year with Joelle Porras winning
- Thrift & Resource Center operation:
  - We added Heather CG as our new store manager. Kelsey remains as a CAG Board member and Thrift committee advisor.
  - Numerous volunteers offer their time to work in the processing of donated items
  - Open hours remain Thursday, Friday & Saturday 11-5:30pm MT
  - Nearly everything in the store is \$1.00 or less, unless specially marked.
  - We added an Assistance Request Form on our website for anyone in need of essential items to complete the request form and we will try to fill it to the best of our ability.
- Hosted the ELCA SD Northern Plains Conference rostered leaders for a worship service, meeting and meal.
- Offer various work opportunities between the Thrift, Resource and Wellness Centers
  - Work with the tribal workforce services and the state vocational rehabilitation program to provide work experience opportunities to area youth or adult participants to develop work skills and experience in real-life settings
  - Offer internships within our programs/facilities for Sitting Bull College programs
  - Offer social services programs (i.e. TANF) work site options for their eligible participants to meet volunteer hour requirements
  - Offer community service opportunities for community members with court ordered community service hour requirements
- Arts in the Park
  - Create the opportunity for vendors/farmers/gardeners/artists to showcase their goods, handmade arts, crafts, jewelry, produce, baked goods, etc.
  - Offer kids some fun with various games throughout the park
  - We had Chalk the Walk sidewalk chalk art contest for youth and adults with prizes given to the top 3 works of art per age group.
- Sponsorships:
  - Sponsored the Horse Nation Spirit Ride that rode through the communities across Standing Rock to smudge and pray for all within each community with the goal to begin healing future generations and it begins with the spiritual connection.
  - Covered the cost of our local Veterans cemetery "Wreaths Across America" in December with a ceremony to remember, honor, and teach about serving the

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community and country. A beautiful wreath was placed on every headstone at the All Nations Veterans Cemetery.

- Sponsored the McLaughlin Community Basketball Camp which was free to anyone to improve skills and learn from collegiate athletes through motivational talks, learn about the importance of preparation, inner strength, and workout/drills pamphlets to use beyond camp.
- Attended the WELCA Northern Plains Conference event in Aberdeen at Bethlehem Lutheran church in October as guest speakers for the gathering.
- Gratitude Gift Shop: Students from area schools are invited to come select gifts for up to two people they want to show their gratitude by giving them presents for Christmas. We arrange this as field trips with the schools to come at a set date/time. This was the first time for many of the students so it is always so much fun to have them come to the gift shop. They love walking through all the items and deciding which one(s) to select. And picking the gift wrap (bag or paper wrap) is always an interesting experience with each student! Each one is so unique and they have so much fun. We can feel their excitement give it to their loved one. They enjoyed a treat and hot cocoa or hot apple cider while also singing some holiday tunes as they waited to depart. Truly it's an experience we believe they'll remember throughout their life.
  - In December 2023, we had more students this year than before. We were able to include all elementary students from McLaughlin, Little Eagle Grant School, Rock Creek and McIntosh schools.
  - In December 2024, we included the elementary students from Wakpala Smee School plus Selfridge School in addition to those schools listed above resulting in helping 446 students each get to give two people of their choice gifts of gratitude.
- Carol Singing - on a Sunday evening in December, many of the CAG members and youth took the CAG shuttle out into the community to sing a couple of traditional Christmas carols by stopping at many homes. It was a very uplifting and joyous evening for all.
- Personal Care Kits were received and are available any time to those in need. They are also made available each week during the Soul Bowl meal. We're also working on a care kit project to supply the area middle school aged girls with essential hygiene products.
- Essential Household Items Gift Baskets were distributed to nearly 90 elders in the area. These baskets provided toilet paper, laundry soap, dish soap, and cleaning wipes.
- We assisted with the local Toys for Tots distribution so hundreds of children would receive at least one gift and one book.

### Progressive Goals:

- Work on collaborative efforts for developing or organizing various projects:
  - Youth camps
    - Learn about the outdoors and many cultural or spiritual experiences
    - Vacation Bible School
    - Softball/Baseball camp w/previous MLB Player John Poff connections

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- Community Garden
- Food pantry
- Snow Queen contest - provide a local contest for participants to earn a spot to attend the state festival for chance to win scholarships
- AED implementation and Public Access Defibrillation for increasing knowledge, awareness of AED & CPR to help improve the areas response to emergency needs with rural area limited access issues faced currently
- National Night Out - help support all law enforcement agencies, emergency response units with a fun night of a community meal, games, and demonstrations
- Gala - generate an annual fundraising event by providing a night out for adults to dress up, enjoy a formal dinner with live music and dance while supporting Community Alliance Group (possibly host at Prairie Knights Casino event center)
- Create a "Culture Fest" - bring all cultures living on the reservation together for an outdoor festival to showcase various cultural foods, music, arts, crafts, etc. Create the opportunity to truly learn who our neighbors are. There are over a dozen cultures to be represented that we know of so far.

### **AWARDS RECEIVED:**

- South Dakota Education Association/NEA Friend of Education Award 2023
- Prairie Knights Casino Selected C.A.G. for donation of a 2013 Turtle Top Shuttle Van
- 2023 Bayer America's Farmer's Grow \$5,000 Grant to the C.A.G. Wellness Center
- Joint Tribal Advisory Committee \$94,000 Grant to Community Alliance Group, Inc.
- Million Dollar Roundtable Foundation \$2,500 Grant to C.A.G. Youth Activities
- 2024 Bayer America's Farmer's Grow \$5,000 Grant to the C.A.G. Wellness Center