

The Coming of the Blessing® 2010 Annual Report

March of Dimes is dedicated to improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We achieve our mission through community services, education, advocacy, and research.

The Initiative

The Coming of the Blessing® is a March of Dimes initiative for American Indian and Alaska Native families.

We provide prenatal education, training and resources that encourage women to include traditional beliefs, lessons from their ancestors and their partners in their circle of support during pregnancy. This circle of support can help women make healthy choices for themselves and their babies.



This initiative was created by the March of Dimes West Region American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Women's Committee. The committee is chaired by Margaret Anne YellowKidney, a women's health nurse working for Indian Health Service on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Committee members represent 10 different tribes from 10 states. The women believe that we can give babies a fighting chance by honoring the strong culture and traditions of Native people.

Designated as a PROMISING PRACTICE by Indian Health Service

Presentations & Training

Results of *The Coming of the Blessing*® pilot project were presented at the [Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs](#) (AMCHP) conference in March 2010.



Training was provided for 60 health professionals and community health workers to offer culturally-relevant prenatal education for American Indian families. Training was provided to tribes and tribal partners in the following locations:

- Arizona, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota

Our Donors

Funding for *The Coming of the Blessing*® is provided by the **March of Dimes Prematurity Campaign** and these tribal partners:
Governor Bill Anoatubby
 The Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma
Chief Gregory Pyle
 The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Forest County Potawatomi Foundation
 Wisconsin
Kodiak Area Native Association
 Alaska

Awards & Recognition

2009 National Perinatal Association Transcultural Award for enhancing awareness of diversity in the United States.

2010 National Indian Health Board Regional Impact Award for demonstrating a positive impact on the health of Native families through *The Coming of the Blessing*®.

2010 National Indian Health Board Local Impact Award presented to Denise Aragon, Vice Chair of AI/AN Women's Committee, for work on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

Prenatal Care & Education

Stipends were awarded to the following tribes to provide prenatal education through *The Coming of the Blessing*®:

- **Four Bear's Tribe** in North Dakota
- **Oglala Sioux Tribe** in South Dakota
- **Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe** in Wisconsin
- **Shoshone & Arapaho Tribes** in Wyoming

The CenteringPregnancy® model of group prenatal care for American Indian women was supported through the following tribes:

- **Blackfeet Tribe** in Montana
- **Oglala Sioux Tribe** in South Dakota



The Coming of the Blessing® prenatal education messages were promoted on the following radio programs:

- **Radio Bilngue**—La Paz / Flip Side Show
- **Native America Calling**
- **American Indian Living** - Life Talk with Dr. David De Rose