

## Ogden Valley News, December 2012



*Pictured from left to right are **Becky Lewis** of Liberty, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe, SAIGE - UTAH Chapter President; **Coralee Mackay**, Iroquois Indian, SAIGE - UTAH Chapter Vice President; **Shan Montoya**, Northwestern Band of Shoshone Indians, SAIGE – UTAH Chapter Treasurer; and **Tresa Williams**, Northern Ute Indian, SAIGE – UTAH Chapter Secretary.*

### **SAIGE – UTAH Seeks Volunteers and Community Support**

SAIGE (Society of American Indian Government Employees) is a non-profit organization that looks to promote and retain American Indian people in government positions. It is a National organization with smaller chapters around the country. Becky Lewis of Liberty serves on the National Board as a Board member and represents Indian people throughout the country in various venues, such as NCAI (National Congress of American Indians), and other national and tribal entities. The organization speaks for American Indian/Alaskan Native government employee and works to encourage and educate agencies in ways that will help them to fulfill their trust responsibilities to the American Indian people.

SAIGE is composed of Indian people with varied backgrounds—some grew up on reservations and some are urban Indians who grew up far from the reservation. Lewis states, “No matter our background, we are looking to reach out to our people and want to support them in our small but sincere efforts.”

Each of works for the Federal Government and this organization is referred to as an (REO) Recognized Employee Organization. It currently has a small membership, but, according to Lewis, the organization is growing. “We are reaching out for support with a prize project that I guarantee will be well appreciated.”

SAIGE is the only REO that has a Youth Track that sponsors Indian youth in a leadership training session each year. It offers scholarships each year, and has sponsored Indian youth to allow them to participate in youth track where they learn from weeklong activities promoting leadership among Indian youth that are enrolled in higher education classes.

Currently, the local chapter is undertaking a project that leaders say they hope will turn into an annual event for this chapter. Lewis explains, "We are sponsoring what we call "Hopi Legacy" where we have been asked (we volunteered!) to sponsor Sub For Santa for eight Head Start classes that contain 122 children on the Hopi Reservation. This is the only event that brings needed items into the reservation for these children. They receive nothing else except what we provide them. We are currently gathering clothing, needed school supplies, art supplies, shoes and boots, toys (educational), and books, etc. We need all the help we can obtain, since we are a small group and feel that we can meet the needs of these hard-pressed families that live in a harsh area that has also been impacted by the current economic depression."

Lewis adds, "While the Valley has supported many praiseworthy humanitarian projects in the past, the most recent the large Zimbabwe project, which was also needed and praiseworthy, I always have a concern for those families within our own country who are also in such need. Many people have never even been to an Indian Reservation. I grew up in northern WI on a small Indian Reservation called Lac Courte Oreilles; today, it is still an area of poverty and depression, and high unemployment, etc. Many Indian people are exposed to environmental harshness of all kinds, and we don't even realize it.

"This is a project that we can get Scouts involved in, even for Eagle Scout projects, or Young Women recognition activities, even though SAIGE is a non-denominational organization that doesn't want to focus on any particular religious sect. It is inter-tribal, community-wide addressing the needs of a vast range of people. We need all kinds of people to become involved. We need all kinds of items. We need bodies to help do the work. We need trucks to transport donated items. We need financial support to purchase items and pay for gas to deliver these items. We are hoping that we will be able generate interest from the community.

A shipment of items is being taken to the reservation on December 14. If you can help, please call as soon as possible. Please contact Becky Lewis at [lewreb55@gmail.com](mailto:lewreb55@gmail.com) or call her at 801-648-7026.

For more information, you may also visit <[www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)>