

# MacKenzie Bezos gifts \$20 Million of unrestricted funds to the American Indian Graduate Center

*Enabling the organization to provide scholarships to thousands of Native American students nationwide*

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, USA, July 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- MacKenzie Bezos has gifted \$20 million of unrestricted funds to the [American Indian Graduate Center](#), the nation's largest provider of scholarships to Native American students seeking higher education. With this donation, the organization can significantly expand its reach, providing further educational access to Native American college students across all 50 states.

This donation comes at a critical time for Native American communities which, like other minority groups and those in low-income areas, have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. When the pandemic hit, the American Indian Graduate Center worked with key stakeholders and donors to redirect funds to the emergent needs of scholars impacted by university closings. Since then, the Center has also funded relief efforts such as food and supply distributions directly to tribal communities, some of which were organized by American Indian Graduate Center scholars themselves.

"This generous gift truly exemplifies the humanity, compassion, and unity that still exists in the world today. At a time when we are all experiencing a racial justice awakening and the severe health concerns impacting our country, this gift reminds us that we are more connected than ever," says Angelique Albert, the organization's Executive Director. "One of the greatest gifts a person can give is access to education, and this gift will provide that for thousands of Native scholars and transform the landscape of higher education for Native people. The impact of this gift, not only on Native students but on Indian Country as a whole, is so profound that we will feel its effects for generations to come."

Throughout its 50 year legacy, the American Indian Graduate Center has empowered 16,000 students from over 500 tribes in all 50 states by providing individual scholarships with amounts ranging from \$250 to \$30,000 annually, as well as offering support through academic advisors that work to connect students with their campus resources and other services. Scholars enrolled in the American Indian Graduate Center programs graduate at significantly higher rates than the national average for Native students. Bezos' unrestricted funding honors the expertise of the American Indian Graduate Center leadership and Board of Directors, allowing those working

closest to the issue to manage the gift's distribution in the most effective way for Native student recipients, an approach which is in alignment with Bezos' core philanthropic values.

In 1969 there were only 38 Native lawyers, 15 Native doctoral students, and 30 Native medical doctors. As of 2019, the American Indian Graduate Center has contributed to over 2,000 law degrees, 1,700 postgraduate degrees, and 450 medical degrees for Native students. With this generous donation, the organization is committed to realizing its mission and vision of fulfilling the unmet need of every Native American student.

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#### About American Indian Graduate Center

American Indian Graduate Center is a national private 501(c)(3) non-profit providing scholarships to American Indian and Alaska Native undergraduate, graduate and professional students throughout the United States. American Indian Graduate Center and American Indian Graduate Center Scholars are the largest scholarship providers to Native students in the United States. They award on average \$15 million in scholarships annually and have awarded more than \$350 million in scholarships since inception. They are proud to empower Native students from over 500 Tribes in all 50 states with educational funding and academic support services.

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