Half A Story Is Worse Than None At All

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my grave disappointment with the story “Officials See Child Welfare Dangers on a North Dakota Indian Reservation” by Timothy Williams. The story is an unfortunate example of the bias against American Indians that happens when stories are unsupported by the facts. Mr. Williams contacted me with regard to some data on the rates of child abuse on reservations. As the director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association I provided information to him that refutes his misleading claims of rampant child abuse on “reservations.” We also offered to provide data from published studies which help illustrate the complexities of Indian child welfare in reservation communities. The reporter chose not to pursue the facts but instead chose to paint all Indian tribes with the same brush. I expected a higher standard of reporting from The New York Times.

Terry Cross
Executive Director
National Indian Child Welfare Association
Weds 11:14PM

Dylan Woodward I think it is an important article and that when there are officials within any organization for whatever reason are impeding the protection of the communities children and vulnerable they need to be called out, prosecuted, and removed from positions where they are doing harm. The children of Spirit Lake deserve this equally to the children in Fargo or any other community. I applaud the article.
Tuesday at 9:54pm · 1

Loretta White It is the reality of what is happening. It is horrible that political power can corrupt and endanger helpless children. But I know we have seen it in our tribe.
July 9 at 6:34pm · 1

Helen Littlejohn this is long overdue reporting that will hopefully make things better for all the children in Indian Country. I pray that this revelation starts some
much needed dialogue that results in positive change.

July 9 at 7:35pm via mobile · 1

Yvette Elliott MacDonald These children are the next generation, and the cycle of abuse needs to stop with them!
Tuesday at 4:41am

Gwen Barton Recent media coverage of Native child abuse cases are not necessarily fair. The focus seems to be taken from the Federal Government/BIA point of view, with little or no input from the Tribes. All child welfare departments carry large caseloads, Tribal departments are similarly overloaded. Unfortunately, the very children they are supposed to be aiding become lost in the bureaucracy. The problem of child abuse in Indian tribes is often the result of Teen pregnancy, alcoholism, and poverty. Teens are not adequately prepared for their parental role, most are unmarried, thus unable to handle the stress of raising a child. Oftentimes, these teens were the product of teen pregnancy also. Along with this, many live in poverty--no skills, no job. Inevitably, they succumb to addictions, i.e., alcohol or other drugs to escape. One point that should be explored is to provide parenting and life classes to teens, life perspectives from role models (whether local or celebrity), and increased interaction between Child Welfare departments and the community. There is a separation of us/them between Indian tribal government departments and communities they are supposed to be serving. Perhaps more interaction would benefit all. Social workers become so enmeshed in the processes that they forget about the human(s) they're supposed to be helping.
Tuesday at 11:08pm · Edited

Elrae Dawn Potts I'm from Spirit Lake and the little baby girl that recently died was my relative. I think although the NY Times article may have sounded biased to allot of Natives... it is the TRUTH!!! On my reservation we need this truth to set us free!!! Other tribes may not be in this corrupt state like mine is but the Spirit Lake tribe is in a state of emergency at this time! Instead of acting like the NY Times did an injustice by reporting this story the way they have... extend your help to my people!!! This is a plea for help from a tribal member who is fed up!!!

Debbie Tremblett Anderson Sorry, but while I respect NICWA and its purpose, I am appalled Terry, that the only response your organization offered to this article was to discredit it! This in itself is a huge disservice to your organization and the people who support you. What about the actual subject of the article? The actual child abuse and subsequent coverup? One case of child abuse is one to many, and for there to be proof of more, and proof of covering it up, whether the percentages, numbers etc were correct or not ABUSE is ABUSE. Sadly you are partially correct that this report does not help the views that non NA peoples have of life on reservations. If the shoe fits.... In all honesty you cannot deny that
MANY of the reservations across this country suffer from disproportionate rates of child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, spousal abuse and epidemic health issues. My mother is NA and my three adopted children are NA. I have deep respect for NA culture and for the continuos plight of its people. I am as I have said appalled that an organization such as yours that purports to be for Child Indian Welfare, would respond as you did rather than focus on the actual issue of the child abuse and coverup. As Elrae Dawn Potts noted in her post on Wednesday "the truth will set us free" and "Instead of acting like the NY Times did an injustice by reporting this story the way they have... extend your help to "YOUR PEOPLE"

Friday 8:00 AM