

White Earth Sleep Safe Program Success Stories



The Sleep Safe Fire Safety Program is a Head Start-based fire safety program that provides curriculum, smoke alarms, and training to Head Start staff, parents, children, and community partners. During the first five years of this program, 70 Tribal Head Starts have participated, installing over 14,500 smoke alarms in American Indian homes.

The White Earth Head Start administers the Sleep Safe Program at its five sites in Northern Minnesota. This Head Start Program not only distributes smoke alarms through the Sleep Safe Program, it also distributes child safety seats and carbon monoxide detectors using funds from Bemidji Area IHS and Minnesota EMSC. During the four years White Earth has participated in Sleep Safe, It has distributed nearly 900 smoke alarms and 500 carbon monoxide detectors in Reservation homes.

The smoke detector worked as an early warning device and did save lives...

Success at the Elbow Lake Head Start Center

Robert L. Thelen, Sr., is a Family Service Advocate for the Elbow Lake Head Start and is responsible for making home visits to area families. During 2003 and 2004, Mr. Thelen installed smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in Elbow Lake homes during his home visits. He described the following success stories that resulted from his efforts:

The Smoke Detector Saved Lives: A couple of weeks after I installed the detector for the Thomas family, a fire broke out on the back side of the trailer in the middle of the day. The wood furnace had started the trailer on fire. The smoke detector did go off and the family (with two Head Start students) called 911 and got out of the home safely.

The Carbon Monoxide Detector Saved the Family: During the the initial home visit for the Bement family, I installed smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. About one month later the family started to experience headaches while they were in the home. The CO detector started to go off regularly with high readings, so the family called a furnace repairman. He found that the ductwork running through the upper ceiling in the trailer had collapsed and was causing the furnace exhaust to back up. The ductwork was later repaired.



Robert L. Thelen Sr., Elbow Lake Family Service Advocate

The Sleep Safe Program is funded and administered by the Indian Health Service, US Fire Administration, and IHS Head Start. For more information contact: --Harold Cully, Sleep Safe Coordinator, harold.cully@mail.ihs.gov; --Chris Allen, Sleep Safe Co-Coordinator, chris.allen@mail.ihs.gov or --Kay Sunram, White Earth Head Start Health, Nutrition, and Safety Coordinator, kays@whiteearth.com --Or visit: <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/InjuryPrevention/index.cfm>