

‘Forgotten People’ Reach America for Christ in Warrior Leadership Summit

A new study confirms Black and Native populations are at higher risk of COVID-19 complications than their White peers.

Some researchers claim minority communities are at higher risk of COVID-19 complications because they have previous health issues like cancer, heart disease and obesity—problems known in the medical community as “comorbidities.” The latest study disputes that claim.

“In fact, when we compared Blacks, Native Americans and whites who had the same number of prior conditions, Blacks and Native Americans were still at higher risk of dying or being put on a ventilator,” says Fares Qeadan, lead author of the study and an assistant professor of biostatistics at the University of Utah.

Hope seems like a lost commodity in Native communities across the United States.

“We all had our lives turned upside down by this past year and a half. But on the reservation, you’re talking about an infection rate and a death rate that is three times that of any other people in this country,” Ron Hutchcraft of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries explains.

“It’s been a real tragedy.”

On Eagles’ Wings, a division of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, wants to infuse young people with the hope of Christ at Warrior Leadership Summit.

A Critical Time for Warrior Leadership Summit

Warrior Leadership Summit is a five-day leadership conference that equips and empowers young Native leaders to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus. Festivities begin July 1. Watch Native leaders explain why this event matters.

“We had one leader last year [who] said, ‘This is the only week of the year that our kids have hope,’” Hutchcraft says.

Last year, the pandemic forced Warrior Leadership online. It provided a much-needed connection during a season of isolation, but nothing replaces in-person fellowship.

“This is the critical nature of this moment—to bring young people together [who have been] locked down more than most of our communities; [who have been] disconnected and in difficult situations. They can look around a room full of Native young people and go, ‘I am not alone,’” Hutchcraft says.

“At a time when grief has been laid [upon] grief on the reservations, we have a chance to convene [at] a place that is all about hope,” he adds.

Sometimes, Native young people encounter the gospel for the very first time at Warrior Leadership Summit. For Native believers like Sarah,* the conference provides space to recharge and refocus.

This young woman found Christ through the On Eagles’ Wings team. In a recent communication with the team, she wrote:

“I struggled with the pandemic just like everyone else. There were times where I questioned myself and my life. But in the end, I was clinging to the Lord. I lost many loved ones to COVID and a couple of cousins to suicide. We lost people in my community. My mental health wasn’t the best. But God has done some good things in my life, [and] there is a lot to look forward to.”

Give Hope

When lockdowns and other restrictions took place on reservations last fall and again this spring, Native youth lost most of their traditional fundraising opportunities. They cannot attend Warrior Leadership Summit without the proper funding, but you can help by sponsoring their trip here.

“It’s \$100 a day for them to be at Warrior Leadership Summit, including everything that we give to them and provide for them. We have about 100 [sponsorships] right now, [and] we have about 400 to go,” Hutchcraft says. “Maybe you could help us get one more Native young person to Warrior Leadership Summit.”

Most importantly, pray. Use the prompts listed alongside this article to guide your intercession. “Your prayer for this conference beginning on the first of July would mean so very much,” Hutchcraft says.

“These first people of our land [are] the ones that Billy Graham called ‘the forgotten people.’ He said, ‘Remember these forgotten people,’ and that it wouldn’t surprise him if one day, the original Americans become the evangelists who would reach America for Christ. Let’s take a step in that direction,” he finishes. {eo}

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