Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) popular family literacy program, FACE, will be expanded to seven BIA-funded schools in the 2003-2004 school year. The Family and Child Education program, which is administered by the Bureau's Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP), provides early childhood and adult education programs to American Indian families at home and in school. The FACE program has served over 15,000 infants, children and adults since its start in 1991.

"The ability to read and comprehend information is vital to a lifetime of learning," said Assistant Secretary Martin. "The FACE program is creating a new generation of readers in Indian communities across the country and bringing new hope to adult students who want to improve their lives through education."

The seven schools are: Beclabito Day School, Shiprock, N.M.; Mescalero Apache School, Mescalero, N.M.; Oneida Nation Elementary School, Oneida, Wisc.; Santa Rosa Boarding School, Sells, Ariz.; Seba Dalkai Boarding School, Winslow, Ariz.; St. Francis Indian School, St. Francis, S.D.; and Tiospa Zina Tribal School, Agency Village, S.D. The addition of these schools expands from 32 to 39 the number of BIA-funded schools providing family literacy services through the FACE program.

FACE provides early or pre-literacy experiences for infants and families in the home as well as early childhood and adult education programs in school. An important facet of the program is its support of parental involvement in a child's reading experience. Since 1991, over 8,000 children from ages birth to five have been served by the FACE program. [In December 2002, FACE enrolled all children from birth to age 5 in the Imagination Library program sponsored by the Dollywood Foundation in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Through this national reading program, all FACE children will receive a new age-appropriate book each month for a possible total of 60 books.]

FACE also provides opportunities for adults to complete their secondary level education and obtain workplace skills such as computer training. Since 1991, over 500 adults have earned their high school or general equivalency diploma (GED) and approximately 2,000 adults have found employment by participating in FACE.

Schools are selected through an application process and on-site visits to gauge each school's commitment and ability to supporting a FACE program. Once selected, a school receives ongoing training and technical assistance to ensure that it will successfully implement the FACE model.

The BIA school system has 185 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools located on 63 reservations in 23 states and serving approximately 48,000 students. In School Year 2001- 2002, the BIA directly operated one-third of its elementary and secondary schools. The remaining two-thirds are tribally-operated under BIA contract or grant.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of the 562 federally recognized American

Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is responsible for providing services to approximately 1.4 million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.

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