

Fundamental Needs Awarded \$50K Grant to Expand The Oasis Project on Navajo Nation

Written by Mallory Gleich

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Mercy Care has awarded [Fundamental Needs](#) a 2025 Mercy C.A.R.E.S. Community Reinvestment Grant totaling \$50,000 to support The Oasis Project, an initiative bringing running water and new opportunities to families across the Navajo Nation. The program not only installs solar-powered water systems in remote homes but also provides paid, hands-on training for high school students who help build and install the systems themselves.

"On the Navajo Nation, many families live without the basic comfort of turning on a tap. Showers are a luxury, cooking and cleaning require planning, and water is hauled several times a week. The Oasis Project changes that reality," Justice Ramos, executive director of Fundamental Needs, said.

The innovative systems are fully off-grid and self-sustaining, featuring a 550-gallon water tank, solar-powered pump, three-stage filtration system, and tankless water heater. Beyond infrastructure, the project's greatest impact lies in empowerment—students at schools like Rock Point Community School gain practical experience in plumbing and solar energy while earning income and serving their communities. To date, The Oasis Project has installed 184 systems across the Navajo Nation.



"This work isn't just about infrastructure, it's about empowerment," said Trisha Stuart, director of community relations at Mercy Care. "Each system they install, and every student that they mentor is creating lasting change. Our support not only empowers The Oasis Project to reach more families, but to build healthier homes across the Navajo Nation and create lasting pathways for youth to lead in their communities."

Mercy Care, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2025, partners with organizations statewide that advance health equity and improve community well-being. "Through grant funding like this as well as sponsorships, volunteer efforts and board participation, Mercy Care has invested over \$38 million in community reinvestment projects that help manage chronic conditions; support mental health and well-being; address housing security; and empower recovery from substance use," Stuart added.

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Founded in 2020, Fundamental Needs is a nonprofit organization working alongside underserved and tribal communities to bridge critical gaps in clean water, electricity, education, and economic opportunity. Through programs like The Oasis Project, the Cortez Makerspace, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, the organization equips communities with the tools and skills to drive sustainable, locally led change. Learn more at fundamentalneeds.net.