

### ST. JOHN'S MISSION

Gila River Indian Community  
Cleanup Grant

### Reusing Idle Land in Ways that Best Serve a Community

<b>ADDRESS:</b>	10060 West Pecos Road, Komatke, AZ 85247
<b>PROPERTY SIZE:</b>	40 acres
<b>FORMER USE:</b>	Mission (a church, convent and school run by the Roman Catholic Church)
<b>CURRENT USES:</b>	Diabetes resource center with open recreational space; Boys & Girls' Club

#### EPA GRANT RECIPIENT:

The Gila River Indian Community Department of Environmental Quality received a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Petroleum Cleanup grant in 2004, and nearly \$75,000 in EPA USTfields funding in 2002



The new Boys & Girls' Club, redeveloped on the Mission's former gymnasium.

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Located just south of Phoenix, the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) is the fourth most populous Indian Reservation in the United States, with approximately 16,000 tribal residents. Unemployment rates are more than six times that of the state's, and 65 percent of GRIC households have incomes below the poverty level. Located on more than 160 acres in the heart of the Community, the St. John's Mission began operating as a Catholic school sometime around the 1920s, and continued operations all the way to the late 1990s. With awareness that the property might be contaminated due to underground storage tanks (USTs) related to school bus operations, the owners donated the land and dormant school facilities to the GRIC in 1997. Two USTs were removed the following year. As the GRIC has the highest adult diabetes rate of any community in the U.S., at over 50 percent, cleanup and redevelopment of this property into a diabetes resource center was seen as a way to help address the Community's health issues while generating much-needed jobs. A total of \$74,830 in EPA funds from the Agency's USTfields grant program awarded in June 2002 enabled detailed environmental assessments to be performed, and a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant awarded in 2004—as well as \$11,642 from the GRIC—paid for cleanup of petroleum and VOCs found in areas of the property's soil and groundwater.

#### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Allowed for assessment and cleanup of a large, idle property at the heart of the Gila River Indian Community
- Created a new Boys & Girls' Club, redeveloped from the idle site's former gymnasium
- Provided a much-needed diabetes resource center for a Community with the highest rate of adult diabetes in the U.S.
- Redevelopment leveraged more than 10 new jobs

#### OUTCOME:

Following transfer of the property to the community, the Mission's former gymnasium was converted to a Boys & Girls' Club for Community children. With assistance from a \$6 million Congressional appropriation awarded to the GRIC, the new diabetes resource center was completed in 2004. To ensure protection of those using the Center, a vapor intrusion barrier was installed on the building's foundation. The new Center created more than 10 jobs and provides invaluable assistance for those living with diabetes. The redeveloped site also features a 10-acre, landscaped recreational park with public gathering spaces and barbecue pits.