

[American Indian Community Development Corporation](#)

Kola means friend: Dr. Ken's Story

Sometimes on foot, sometimes on bike, Dr. Ken McMillan, M.D., delivers the most basic of primary care to patients on the streets of Minneapolis.

As director of medical services for the [Kola program](#), which also provides some social services and mental health care, Dr. Ken does everything from patching up wounds, to ordering prescription refills, to treating sore feet, to screening for hypertension and diabetes, to dealing with the consequences of chronic alcoholism and living on the street.

Kola means "friend" in the Lakota language. And since 1999, the KOLA program has been just that to many homeless American Indians in the Twin Cities. Often chronically inebriated, these patients get culturally specific supportive services including case management, healthcare outreach, daytime activities, and health screening and referral services.



Most of Dr. Ken's patients are men in their middle 30s who are distrustful of drop-in center and shelters, but show extreme loyalty to one another. Many have served their country, and some suffer from depression and other mental illnesses, along with chemical addiction. Kola helps these individuals help themselves by providing urgent medical care, education regarding HIV, Hepatitis C, and Tuberculosis, access to existing programs and services that meet their basic needs.

Total TC LISC support: **\$592,242** in grants and loans since 1998

Our COACTION Fund grantees share real life stories about the impact of their community development work on local residents. [COACTION Fund](#) is a \$3.3 million capacity-building effort to support 15 high-impact, local community development initiatives. The Fund focuses on new and existing partnerships between Twin Cities organizations working to connect physical improvements in neighborhoods to economic opportunity for residents.