PATHWAYS TO SPIRIT

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Summer 2004

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

Be Part of A Miracle

It's time for me to remind you of the need for dignified housing for the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Over the last three years Pathways to Spirit has been able to fulfill the dream of owning a home to 152 reservation families. How? Through the generosity of individuals across the Front Range of Colorado and Mobile Home Park Managers. This year has been very amazing as the homes volunteers Donna and Friday Palinkx of Loveland, Colorado have found are in excellent condition. We often wish every one of you could be on a trip with us when a home leaves a park here in Colorado and makes the journey to South Dakota.

It all starts way before that day arrives. Donna and Friday have traveled the Colorado area telling the story of the homeless situation on Pine Ridge and asking for help to alleviate that situation by opting to donate a home rather than pay for it to go to a landfill - and at a high price to boot. Once the home is donated, they have to be sure that the hitch is welded on for a 400 mile journey, the axels and tires are put back on, skirting and porches must be removed as well as swamp coolers, and porch light fixtures, etc. Gas and electric must be unhooked from the trailer and hot water heaters emptied. The amazing beauty of this whole process is that most often the homeowners have been willing to do all this at their expense. All this happens before a home can be moved. All this is less expensive than having the home hauled to the landfill. In order to move a trailer, moving certificates must be obtained from county agencies and taxes must be paid.

Did I mention that many times dozens of homes must be looked at before one is found that is suitable?

Oh yes, there is another step. We must find the funds to pay for transport to the reservation. The average cost is around $875 now because of the rising cost in fuel.

We are blessed to have found a driver who feels like he is part of our organization and goes way beyond the call of duty to ensure the home arrives on the reservation with all its siding in tack, no broken windows and then placed where ever the family wants it. And let me tell you, they are not going into trailer parks. They are driven over hill and dale at actual peril to the driver and his truck to get to their desired destination.

For those who don't know, there are 40,000 Lakota on the reservation according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Pine Ridge. 80% are considered homeless and yet there is a high percentage of those who have land. With an average $3500 a year income, a family is certainly not able to build a home.

Most families live in what is called government cluster housing where upkeep is nearly unheard of and rent must be paid to live in a horribly overcrowded slum crawling with cockroaches coming up from the sewers. America is not a third world country and yet our native inhabitants are living like that. But we can do something about it even if it seems like an impossible task.

Because of your generosity, 152 families have moved to their own land. They are planting gardens and living with dignity. For a donation of $825 and or any part of that amount, you are giving a person a home. A person who could never dream of owning a home. Right now we have used all our funds to move homes and it is only midsummer. Please help us send more homes. Winter will soon be upon us.

MANY THANKS TO .....

Pathways to Spirit wishes to thank all who continuously remember us with there monthly donations. We wish to thank Sue & Vern Meyerotto for their search for library books and storage. Also, thanks to Tracy & Lois Perry for their driving our trailer to the rez, doing local pick ups and cleaning our trailer. Thank you to Cheryl Beckett for having us on her radio show at KRFC 88.9 FM, Fort Collins, Colorado

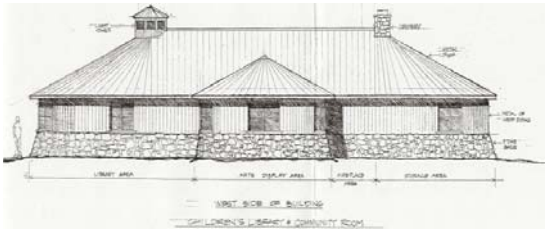
BUILDING THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

The Idea Grows

Pathways to Spirit's volunteers are just getting started with what they will be able to accomplish because of the enthusiasm and support of our generous donors. Since our last newsletter, several have stepped forward to fulfill our request for research assistants but the need is still there. We want as many people involved as have the desire. So later in the newsletter you will find an article listing all the help that is needed for our organization as a whole.

We have entered into a partnership with the tribal members of the town of Porcupine on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Pathways will erect the building and furnish it while the tribe will then take on maintenance, insurance, staffing, etc.

It has become very important to the people of Porcupine to help their children have pride and dignity in who they are as Lakotas. Therefore we have decided to put a museum in the lower level of the building. We have been advised that there are many elders in the community who have artifacts and an oral history of their ancestors. With this information housed in the lower level, the children will be able to see photographs and hear the voices of those who came before them. They will learn about a time when they lived in harmony with nature and had freedom to roam the Great Plains in search of the Buffalo. They will learn of the struggles and bravery of their people in an attempt to remain free and hold on to their spiritual way of life.



Original plans of the Children's Library/Museum
to be built in the town of Porcupine
on the
Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
South Dakota

This summer, Cheri & Mark Franke of Iowa, Devon Parker and Carmeen Klausner of Colorado, will travel to Porcupine to begin the taping and photographing of the elders. Some of the information gathered will be housed in the museum part of the library.

Also, in the museum will be arts and crafts made by the people of Porcupine. It is the hope that this Library/Museum will become a place of great pride for the community and tourists traveling across the reservation on their way to the Black Hills (Paha Sapa), will stop by and learn something about the Great Lakota Nations that once roamed the Great Plains.

We have now secured a piece of land near the Porcupine Year Round School and have full support of the tribal leaders as well as the School Board and community members.

We want anyone who would like to be a part of this historic event, to go on to our web site and click on the library and look at all the jobs that will need to be done and fill out the *"Library Commitment Form"* and send it or email it to us as soon as possible. We seriously need your help. We are writing the grants and must determine how much of the labor costs will actually be donated.

Do you have a fundraising idea? We need them so don't keep them to yourself. Can we give a talk at the church, club or organization that you belong to? Just call us.

What a blessing it would be to participate financially or physically to make this dream come into reality!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- **Skilled workers to build the library**: Plumber, electricians, drywallers, cement workers, landscapers, framers, roofers, painters, masons and finish work.
- **Research Assistant** - Help our grant writers find the proper foundations to fund our projects, especially the library.
- **Donation Coordinator** -Help pick up furniture, etc. from elderly people or those who cannot deliver it to us.
- **Photo Gallery Coordinator** - Organize the thousands of photos into albums in a professional way.
- **Power Point Presentations** -Update our power point demos with general and project specific profiles.
- **Assistant to General Contractor** -Assist our General Contractor regarding all aspects of coordinating the volunteers and builder of the library in South Dakota.

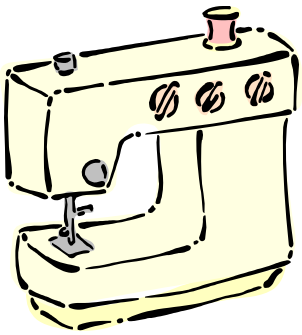
NATIVE AMERICAN SEWING PROJECT

Twelve years ago, Cynthia and John Cunningham took a used, reconditioned sewing machine to the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. It was a gift for a Lakota elder and friend. Soon after that Cynthia was asked if she could get more of them and that was the beginning of an amazing journey filled with years of building relationships and self-sufficiency.

Next came a joining of forces when Cynthia and John decided to become part of Pathways to Spirit.

Over the years, 500 used, reconditioned, and new sewing machines, sergers, sewing tools, quilting frames, and fabrics have been distributed in a very systematic way to established sewing groups on the reservations of South Dakota and other cities around the west. Elderly Hopi ladies on Third Mesa in Arizona have an established group now and many of their Star Quilts have been sold in New York City.

A well functioning sewing machine is a highly valued tool in the Lakota culture. On the reservation many women sew, often in family groups. A sewing machine is at the heart of a household, usually in the center of the living room, where it's used almost continually. Grandmother and great-grandmothers, aunts, mothers, cousins, and daughters come together around the sewing table to talk, listen and share sewing. Those who know how to use the machines teach the newcomers. On these reservations, having a sewing machine means being able to make the dance outfits, star quilts and ribbon shirts that are traditional to the Lakota way of life.



While some Lakota women sell their beautiful homemade star quilts, many others sew to give their quilts and dance outfits as gifts for graduations, memorials, births, marriages and honoring ceremonies.

According to Marlies White Hat, Human Resource Developer at the Sinte Gleska University in Mission, SD, "*We are always looking for ways to revive and restore Lakota culture and traditions. We have found that one of the best ways to do this is to offer classes and workshops that teach people to make dance outfits. Having an outfit encourages one to participate in Pow wows and traditional ceremonies. Dancing also helps one to stay physically fit and to be an active member of Lakota society.*"

A donation of $25 pays for reconditioning and delivering a used machine. $200 buys a new sewing machine, purchased wholesale. $800-$1000 buys 4 new sewing machines, the gift of which will begin a new sewing circle.

SOME EASY WAYS TO GIVE

If you shop at **Albertsons** for your groceries or pharmacy, call or write us asking for an Albertson's Community Partner Card. Every time you shop, present the card, and we will receive credit for your purchase. Every three months the totals from across the country are added up and we receive a percentage. What a great and easy way to gift us and not put out an extra penny. Last quarter our amount dropped by $75. So we give you this reminder in case you forgot or lost your card.
Another easy place to shop on the internet for just about everything is: **www.igive.com** Just sign up and purchase your gifts and we receive a quarterly check in the mail.
Another way to give without writing a check is to sign up on **www.paypal.com** Through very simple registry directions you will be transferring funds from your account into ours. It's all under a secure system. Many supporters use this method.

YES! PLEASE COUNT ME AS A SUPPORTER OF PATHWAYS TO SPIRIT

4307 Goldeneye Drive, Ft. Collins, CO. 80526 (970) 282-8573 www.pathwaystospirit.org email: pathways@webaccess.net
Please make your tax-deductible donations payable to: Pathways to Spirit

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____

Enclosed is my contribution of _____**$25** _____**$50** _____**$100** _____ **Other**

Earmark my contribution for General Operating Budget _____ **Moving Mobile Home**_____ **Native American Sewing** _____

Library Building Fund _____

PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR NEW ADDRESS WHEN YOU MOVE AS BULK MAIL IS NOT FORWARDED!

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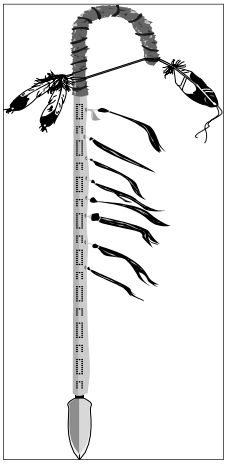
"SACRED VOICES"

Honoring the Wisdom of the Ancestors



This project is very dear to the hearts of our volunteers as it honors the wisdom still carried from generation to generation.

Through a generous donation from one of our supporters we have been able to purchase the necessary equipment to carry on with this project.

Cheri and Mark Franke of Ely, Iowa, long time supporters of Pathways, and Devon Parker of Ft. Collins, Colorado will join Pathways Executive Director, Carmeen Klausner in traveling to several reservations and photographing and taping the wisdom of the elders.

The first stop will be in Porcupine where we are building the Library/ Museum. We will slowly over time make our way across the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations and then move much further north in South Dakota to the Cheyenne River Reservation.

We will be doing all this in a respectful manner towards the cultural traditions of the Lakota. That means bringing gifts in exchange for their time as well as letting them share the wisdom in their own way .

Once the photographs are taken, matted and framed, and the tape is transferred to CD's, we will begin to put together a museum quality presentation to be used in several ways.

The first will be for reservation use by schools and other groups. The second is for a traveling type of museum to go around the country for students pursuing Native American Studies Programs. The third and highest goal is to have this put up in museums across the country. The photographs will be hung and people will receive a CD player and listen to the voice of the ancestors.

This is a simple project that can have very profound effects on future generations as there will be a place where the children and the ancestors of chiefs and spiritual leaders can continue to have a voice.