

PATHWAYS TO SPIRIT

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Fall 2006

EARTH SHELTER WORKSHOP

It's August 27, 2006, and we are all gathered in Porcupine, SD., on the Pine Ridge Reservation. It's raining hard and we are about to embark on a new project to teach the Lakota people how to build their own homes from materials found on the reservation. We will also use recycled materials such as doors and windows. We have five days to complete the house. With this weather and the forecast we know we have a challenge ahead of us.

Twelve people have joined us from around the country - all of whom are excited to learn straw bale and cob construction. Some are experienced builders. Also joining are 6 Lakota eager to learn.

This home is very small - a prototype to be used as a learning tool. It will have a composting toilet, wood stove and lots of passive solar to help with heating in the winter.

We are all welcomed to the reservation in a ceremony with a spiritual leader and a feast. Of course we all prayed for good weather.

On the first day we start digging and putting in a drainage system. It was so amazing to see all working together for the good of the whole. The rain kept coming and we kept working in spite of the difficult circumstances. Many tons of small rock were shoveled into the drainage area and the foundation. Bags were filled with a mixture of dirt, cement, small stone and water and the foundation

was complete.

Bales were the stacked and window and door frames installed. Others made the cob mixture to plaster the bale walls and a roof went up. It was



actually turning into a house.

For the Lakota who took this class a kind of hope emerged that was very fulfilling for us. We all saw how working together, a family could actually put up houses for themselves and their elders.

Much was learned from this class. Some things would work better than others. We'll have to see how this particular building style holds up through a South Dakota winter.

One of the class participants, Dave Hanson, a builder in Washington State, believes we can do something even better. So he and a colleague have been working on a new type of structure that will be stick and straw bale.

Our plan is to go back to the reservation in the summer of 2007 and teach another class to Lakota people who would like to build their own homes. Again, the idea is for whoever gets a home to help the next family get a home and so on. These homes will be a more permanent solution to the housing problem than used trailers and certainly will last much longer.

Also, this process has shown that when people build their own home there is pride and building of self-esteem in knowing one can take care of themselves.

Dave feels the first cottage will cost under \$5000. We will once again be using recycled materials as much as possible.

Many of our readers are contractors and we are now ready to accept your donations of used windows, doors, sinks, toilets, etc. All the things you may tear out of a remodel and send off to a landfill can be used. Call us if you can help with any of these items. Also, if you have experience in building and would like to be a part of this project, let us know.

All these projects require your support through financial donations or your time.

We invite you to be part of the solution to a problem with a long history. (970) 282-8573

DONATING IS SIMPLE WHEN YOU USE PAY PAL

Your 2006 Tax Deductible contribution is greatly appreciated. Go to our website at: www.pathwaystospirit.org

The Native American Sewing Project

By Cynthia Cunningham

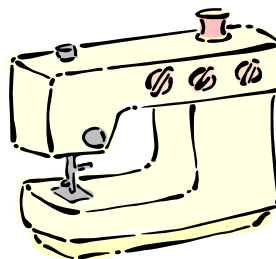
The sewing project has been full to overflowing with activity this fall. We've sent new and used machines, fabric and sewing tools to the Sinte Gleska University Lakota Studies Department on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, for use by their Traditional Lakota Arts sewing classes. We have also sent materials to individual quilters on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservation. An embroidery machine, donated by Studio Bernina in Boulder, CO., was given to a youth program on the Rosebud Reservation.

We're now buying four new Bernina machines at a time because we can get them with free shipping in sets of

four. We have four machines now and hope to gift them to women living on the reservations who are developing home businesses sewing traditional star quilts. **We are in need of \$500 to pay for three of the new Bernina machines. Your financial help would be very much appreciated at this time.**

We've sent several boxes of cotton calico fabric, queen-sized cotton sheets and quilt batting to a skilled

Lakota quilt maker in St. Francis, SD. The financial donations and fabric given in support of this woman's quilt making were a gift of the Studio Bernina women's sewing class. We are very grateful to the women of this class.



The woman who received these supplies has completed three hand-quilted star quilts that will be photographed and put on our web site as soon as possible.

Please contact us if you are interested in purchasing a hand made star quilt from a woman on the reservation.

Words from a Receiver and a Giver

Angie Stover, a Lakota woman who teaches sewing on the Pine Ridge Reservation, who recently received two new Bernina sewing machines wrote us the following:

"When I was young, I learned to sew on a treadle machine. My mother was quite the seamstress. I learned to make Barbie Doll clothes. As time went on, my mother graduated to an electric machine and I was the only one she let use it because I knew how to take care of it and was becoming quite a seamstress myself. Time still moves on and I learned to make my own clothes. I am quite tall and could never find clothes that quite fit properly and we could never afford the more expensive shops so I custom tailored my own clothes. I used to really enjoy making bell bottoms. I was very stylish during the late sixties and seventies. When I got married, our resources were very limited. I knew that a sewing machine would afford me lots of clothes and provide clothing to my children. I bought a really old clunker of a machine for a few bucks. It sewed a straight seam and a zigzag and that is all I needed.

I continued to make clothes for my sons. I had no girls so I did not get to make any pretty frilly dresses, but I patched lots of blue jeans and made a suit once for my oldest son when he graduated 8th grade. I made dance (Pow Wow) outfits for my sons, my sister and then my nieces. Since children grow really fast I was always making new outfits because they would quickly out grow the old ones. Now I try to keep up with the ever changing, ever growing outfit for my oldest granddaughter.

When my youngest son was born I could finally afford a newer machine. I used that machine for 17 years. I was sewing a sun dance skirt for my oldest and the machine gave out. I took it for repair and was told it could not be fixed. I was desperate for a machine and could not afford one. I told the salesman I was in the middle of a project. He let me buy a walk away with a new machine and pay him in two payments. I was so grateful that man trusted me. I have sewed everything from quilts, baby clothes to blue jeans and jackets. I have used a number of different

brands and kept them all in fair working condition.

I tell you this bit of history in the manner that my people tell things. It should give you a better picture of not only my commitment to making the most of these machines, but of my qualifications to make sure that they are used properly. You can share any part of my story if it helps to maintain your program.

Pila maya (thank you), Wopila Tanka (Big thank you), Angie

Upon receiving this thank you note, the donor wrote us this note.

"Thanks so much for sending me the message from Angie. Wow! That makes it all worthwhile. I am so thankful that I can help. **It is such a blessing to have a really good machine and to be able to enjoy sewing. I am glad Angie is teaching people how to use and take care of machines. A little training can make all the difference.**

Winter's Harsh Reality

Winter brings another harsh reality to the people on the reservations of South Dakota. The tribe is unable to supply propane for the many on the reservations who are unable to purchase it with their limited incomes.

As we have shared with you so often, the homes are drafty and cold. Many live in mobile homes that are not skirted or properly insulated. Often we see windows with blankets stapled over them and no glass or even plastic.

We do our best to provide materials needed to keep things warm. We

need your help to provide propane to the elders and single moms.

Many of the programs of Pathways to Spirit help with these basic needs. While people struggle to make a decent living on the reservation, we are committed to helping with the heating needs.

The average yearly income on the reservation is \$3500 a year. The unemployment rate is around 80%.

As of this time, we are unable to provide better jobs. We're doing our best to provide better housing. But

we are a small organization with a big heart.

Please remember while you are warm and cozy and maybe even sipping hot chocolate in front of your fireplace, that just several hundred miles north there is great suffering in the winter.

Please help us with your financial donations for propane. We want to raise **\$15,000** for this project. Reach deep into your hearts and help with as much as you can.

Thank you!

We have a family of ten in great need of a new gas range. We can get one for \$300. Can you help. They are cooking on a camp stove. Maybe you could help this family have an easier life with your donation!

Emergency Youth Shelter by Jeaneen Lonehill

The Pine Ridge Reservation Emergency Youth Shelter is a new program that provides housing for youth ages 12-18 that are in need of a home environment during transition into residential treatment programs, boarding school or foster care. These young people are often homeless and without adult supervision for a variety of rea-

sons. At the present time many of these youth are housed in the Juvenile Detention Center for lack of better resources. Many of these youth do not belong there as their only crime is that of being homeless.

The Emergency Youth Shelter is attempting to open its doors the

first of December to provide this much needed and valuable service to the youth of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. We are asking for assistance to enable us to provide some new or newer computer systems for the children we service. Please, we want up to date computers so they can play games and do homework. Can you help?

Thank you to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Tribe for the \$10,000 grant to move used mobile homes!

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: pathwaystospirit@comcast.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 Homes

Native American Sewing Project Propane Electricity New Gas Range

Coleman Marshall Scholarship Fund Earth Shelter Workshop Computer

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY ADDRESS CHANGE.

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Why Volunteer?

Because One Person Can Make a Great Difference.

So what's holding you back? Volunteer for Pathways to Spirit today. Don't just stand there. Volunteer. Do the right thing. Volunteer.

A volunteer is a person who is a light to others, giving witness in a mixed-up age, doing well and willingly the tasks at hand—namely, being aware of another's needs and doing something about it.

A volunteer is a person who remembers to do the thing to make other people happy, who takes the loneliness out of the alone by talking to them, who is concerned when others are unconcerned, who has the courage to be a prophet and to say the things that have to be said for the good of all.

George H. W. Bush said, "A volunteer is a person who can see what others

cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens - citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization."

And Bill Clinton said, "Citizen service is the very American idea that we meet our challenges not as isolated individuals but as members of a true community, with all of us working together. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed sense of obligation, a new season of service."

The projects of Pathways to Spirit are varied and many. All require a huge amount of effort. Things sometimes move slowly because we do not have enough volunteers for all our projects. We truly need your help as soon as possible. Maybe one of your New Years resolutions could be to

help us with your time and expertise. We welcome you and need help in the following areas:

- Grant writer
- Library Project Manager
- Mission of Mercy Project Manager
- Public Relations
- Marketing

Please call or email us if you have qualifications for these projects. Remember, we are all volunteer and these are not paid positions. With the internet we are now able to receive your help from anywhere in the country or world.

(970) 282-8573