

# PATHWAYS TO SPIRIT

Volume 14, Issue 1

WINTER 2010

## WORST WINTER ON RECORD IN THE DAKOTAS

### Many Join to Make a Difference

Storms have been pummeling the Dakotas since November. North and South Dakota have mostly remote reservation tribal lands. In late January, a blizzard hit the Cheyenne River and Standing Rock reservations that was severe and extreme. Tribal leader Joe Brings Plenty of the Cheyenne River reservation, in a recent radio interview, described the situation as beyond difficult. As of this writing, there are families still without electricity, water and heat. Many are using their kitchen stoves that run on propane to keep warm by turning on the burners and moving children and elderly close to the source of heat. This method gives off carbon monoxide poisoning and many have gotten sick stated Mr. Brings Plenty.

According to Joe, after having contacted the Army Corps of Engineers and being told to go through the long paper work process for help, the National Guard arrived and brought some generators to run the water pumps and left. The water pump's pipes burst and the water from the broken pipes blew out the motors on the generators. There are several pipes broken throughout the reservation. They have not been able to get running water out to the homes. There are no public shelter buildings or community buildings, but a small office that can accommodate four families. We have been told that there are as many as 6000 electric poles snapped and electricity may not be restored for up to 30 days. Luckily, no deaths have been reported. As soon as possible, Pathways sent as much propane to families as our funding allowed. At this time, we have exhausted our fund-

ing for propane and electricity.

We have been able to help more families this year than any other year. We raised \$65,000 to purchase propane and pay electricity bills. We want to publicly thank **The Sunshine Lady Foundation** for their donation of \$60,000 since October of 2009. We raised another \$5,000 from our newsletter and the help of volunteers. Since October 31, 2009 through the first week of February 2010 we have assisted 398 families with propane and electricity.

In thanking the following people we wish to encourage others who are close by or far away to volunteer. The internet has allowed us to connect with people all over the world – people who have talents and good hearts and wish to be of service in their lives. In reading about the following people, your heart may be touched and you may find a way to pass the word to your friends and email lists and experience the good feeling that comes from helping those that are less fortunate.

We would like to thank **Valerie Nunez** of California. For many years she has volunteered for non-profits and is a shining light to show all that no matter where you live you can make a difference. She emailed everyone she knows and they responded quickly and we were able to help more people. Valerie's Apache/Yaqui father taught her to "love and care for the plants, trees and the animals". She told us he had a special gift of understanding the harmony of life. Valerie also volunteers for the **Native American Team Foundation**, as well as supporting Indigenous ceremonies in many states. She has been involved in animal rescue for many years and because of her ef-

forts from far away, Pathways was able to provide hay for horses and dog food to many on the reservation who have trouble feeding their animals in the winter months. Valerie also volunteers in elementary schools in Los Angeles working with children in crisis using dog therapy.

We also want to thank **Don McFann** of Colorado as well as his grandson Phillip and long time friend Rodger for so generously assisting Pathways to transport a garage full of new toys to Pine Ridge for the children during the holidays. Don is a wildlife photographer and presented two of his framed photographs to a medicine man and an elder.

We want to thank the **Montessori Child Center** in Loveland, Greeley and Brighton for all the new toys and gifts they collected for the reservation for the holidays.

We want to thank **Carol Curry** of Bowling Green, Missouri and **Cecelia Stueber** of Honolulu, Hawaii for their amazing knitted items for the babies.

**Helen Riendeau** of Ft. Collins, Colorado contacted many friends and neighbors and along with her son, procured many new toys for the holiday gift collection. She made a difference and we are grateful.

As you continue to read this newsletter, we hope a project or two touches your heart. If you are able to help financially, we appreciate that and if you have expertise in other areas, please think about volunteering soon and pass this newsletter or our web site on to your friends. Thank you all.

# Native American Sewing Project

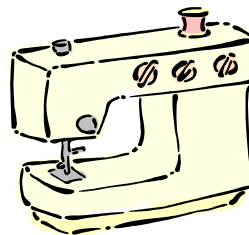
by Cynthia Cunningham

Pathways to Spirit send congratulations to the Sinte Gleska University Lakota Youth and Family Traditional Arts and Mentoring Center on its grand opening in August of 2009. Pathways has been a supporter in their efforts to create a center on Rosebud reservation in South Dakota. The center's opening program said: "Lakota people are known for incorporating beauty and pride into every aspect of their lives, their homes, clothing, regalia and surrounding environment".

The Lakota Youth and Family Traditional Arts and Mentoring Center seeks to reconnect youth and families with this life giving concept through the teaching and mentoring in traditional and contemporary art and crafts skills. It will also provide youth and adults with business development

skills and income generating opportunities.

Over the past decade, Pathways has contributed cutting tables, sewing machines, irons and ironing tables, quilt frames, beads, and other equipment suitable for beading, making dance regalia (shawls, jingle dresses, grass dance outfits, bustles, and drums), as well as fabric and teaching assistance to the Center. This center is now open and running sewing classes. They still need contribution of cotton calico fabric, cotton and cotton/poly backing for quilts (4 and 5 yard piece lengths) and funding for materials and



maintenance.

The sewing project is hearing from quilters on the reservations who are starting their own businesses and need support. We are seeking \$10,000 for a woman on the Pine Ridge reservation who is opening her own sewing business and is in need of some very specific items.

This woman is a life long quilter and plans to sell her finished quilts over the Pathways web site. This donation will provide her with a professional quilting machine and enable her to build a small workspace. If sewing is a meaningful part of your life please consider a donation for this woman.

Donations can be made through PayPal or through the mail.

**Remember to use your Albertsons Community Partners Card when shopping.**

**Call or email today if you don't have a card. They are FREE!**

## WATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS NEEDED

Michelle Salvatore has been working on a research project for her studies at Oglala Lakota College in Pine Ridge. She has been testing the water and wells with interesting results.

Several wells have been tested for having levels of uranium and arsenic. Though not high levels, Michelle tells us there are no acceptable levels. In

an area of the reservation called Potato Creek she found the levels to be off the charts.

According to Michelle, the tribe is not really acknowledging this problem and trying to fix things with a band aide.

We have found some Bureau of In-

dian Affairs statistics stating that the cancer rate on Pine Ridge is 6 times the national average.

If you have time to research a good water filter for us or donate funds for this project please contact us as soon as possible. All people deserve clean water.

## Growing Food for Kids and Elders

Last summer Pathways to Spirit was able to provide a family with a greenhouse and education on growing food. This family produced a huge garden and found that their children were healthier than ever before.

Some women on the reservation have stepped forward and have asked us for help in their desire to do the same. Their hope is to grow their

own gardens and produce food to feed the elders and diabetics. We would like to provide several of these women with a greenhouse, books, and seeds. They have requested that the seeds not be genetically altered.

A 10 x 10 greenhouse and the shelving costs around \$1000. We also would like to provide tools such

as tillers, shovels, garden gloves, and compost. We need people to volunteer to go to the reservation and construct the greenhouses as well as those who can teach organic gardening and natural pest control. If this is your passion please contact us as soon as possible. We will be needing a project leader.

**DONATE OR VOLUNTEER**

## Church Sorry for Displacing Indians

Members of one of America’s oldest Protestant churches in New York apologized recently for massacring and displacing American Indians 400 years ago.

“We consumed your resources, dehumanized your people and disregarded your culture, along with your dreams, hopes and great love for this land,” the Rev. Robert Chase told descendants from both sides. “With pain, we, the Collegiate Church, remember our part in these events.” The minister spoke on Native American Heritage Day.

# Generosity Benefits the Heart

We all have been told from every corner the social responsibility of being generous. Researchers have now found that being generous seems have to physiological benefits also.

According to Harold G Koenig, M.D., author of “*Kindness and Joy*”, “Altruism seems to be connected to a host of beneficial outcomes. There’s some evidence that it creates changes in blood flow that could help lower blood pressure. Being generous may also mitigate stress hormones such as cortisol.”

His research found that when you listen to another person describe suffering you give little unconscious sighs. Those breathy expressions of empathy along with touching someone soothingly appears to trigger powerful changes in the body to the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is the primary brake on our heart rate, helping to lower it to a more peaceful place and releases a natural chemical producing feelings of warmth, trust and devotion.

## ATTENTION CARPENTERS, PLUMBERS, ELECTRICIANS

If you are skilled in these areas and any kind of home repair, and would like to be on a volunteer list to work on the reservation to repair homes, please email or call as soon as possible.

## PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE ANIMALS

Life is hard on the reservation for animals too. As expenses for people increase in the winter due to the cold temperatures it makes it harder for people to feed their animals.

If you are an animal lover, we are asking at this time for donations for the purchase of hay for the horses and

food for the dogs and cats.

Valerie Nunez is working on getting a non-profit that spays and neuters animals to go to Pine Ridge in the summer to help.

We are grateful to have Michelle Salvatore, who lives on Pine Ridge,

distribute the dog and cat food to the families most in need.

Could you volunteer for this project also by soliciting dog/cat food from companies across the U.S. The need is great.

**Donate or Volunteer today!**

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

4307 Goldeneye Drive, Ft. Collins, CO. 80526 (970) 282-3819 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: Most Urgent Need \_\_\_\_\_

Native American Sewing Project \_\_\_\_\_ Propane \_\_\_\_\_ Sacred Voices \_\_\_\_\_ Greenhouse/Seeds \_\_\_\_\_

Hay/Dog/Cat Food \_\_\_\_\_ Water Filtration System \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY ADDRESS CHANGE.**

**BULK MAIL IS NOT FORWARDED!**



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## SACRED VOICES

### Preserving the Past for the Future

The more we travel to the reservation, the more we begin to see and experience the value of culture. We have had the honor and privilege of listening to the elders speak of the old ways before the reservation system- to hear of a respect for all life that was reflected in every action every day. A way that brought inner peace within themselves and their families-what they call a spiritual way of life. Today that is all disappearing as a modern way of life takes over and the old ways fade into the distant past.

We were once asked by some community leaders to help preserve what is left for the future generations-to help preserve the knowledge of the stars, ceremonies, language, food, clothing, medicines and herbs.

They say they are now at a crossroad in time. Many elders are making the

journey and with them goes the past and the future generation's connection to it. We now have the boarding school generation as elders and many do not know their language or the old ways.

We recently found an award winning videographer, Daniel Caimi, of Santa Fe, NM. Daniel has taught video production and editing at the University of New Mexico's Los Alamos campus and has a strong background in broadcast television. He received the 1998 Crystal Award from The Communicator's Awards for his documentary "*Pierotti's Clowns...A Softball Legend*".

Daniel along with Tricia Lea will be volunteering their time on this project. Tricia has spent many years in the advertising and television business and brings an expertise of her own to the project.

Our first interviews are already scheduled. When we see the first signs of spring in South Dakota, we will head to the Pine Ridge reservation first and begin our interviews. We have others to be interviewed on the Cheyenne River reservation next. We hope to accomplish a lot in a five month period.

When the project is completed, it will be presented to the Oglala people at a special event. Fundraising is ongoing and we would like to offer each of you the opportunity to sponsor the filming of an individual for \$150. You will be listed in the credits and receive a DVD of the individual you sponsored.

We are so grateful to have attracted Daniel and Tricia who have talent and dedication to the goals of this project.