

## July Workshop in Manderson South Dakota



After a short break Theresa and I spent some time making flutes for some friends and preparing for our second workshop which we just conducted during the first week in July. Mr Charging Cloud prepared us to expect local participants and visitors to the school who were coming every week from all over the country.



What we didn't expect was that these visitors were from Youthworks, an inter-denominational organization that sends youth out to help communities by doing odd jobs and helping with educational services. A special thank-you needs to go to this team who were at the school helping with Mr Charging Cloud's Lakota Language summer program. They helped to supervise the kids in the workshop while learning a little about flutemaking themselves.



They also stepped-in Thursday to bring about 20-25 additional local children from the Manderson area so they could see the overall presentation. It was truly a blessing to see all those faces in the classroom.



In all, we prepared several flutes for the kids. Most of the core group were from a single family in Manderson. While time was constrained toward the end we were able to fill the hallways with the sounds of flutes once again (music to my ears).



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On Friday, we got a chance to meet Mrs. Eileen, Janis, formerly with the Sweetgrass Project, at an event she sponsored in Allen, SD. She is now working with Anpetu Luta Otipi, a substance abuse program through the Tribe's Health Administration. Part of her new responsibility is to get the local communities involved in intervention rather than have a single organization (with limited resources) cover an area the size of the State of Connecticut.



The Sweetgrass project has experienced some cutbacks and is reorganizing in a similar manner. The key is to educate local individuals to be first responders to a case of substance abuse or suicide. Eileen is starting her efforts in the areas with the most urgent need. Her next event will be in Manderson as it has more of a need for intervention than other areas in the reservation.

Manderson is plagued with gangs from outside the reservation and has high rates of substance abuse and alcohol related deaths. In a recent conversation with Mr. Richard Iron Cloud of the Sweetgrass Project, he observed that alcoholism is a slow form of suicide. An individual turns to alcohol (and drugs) because it deadens the emotional pain of day-to-day life. Although alcohol is prohibited in Pine Ridge, bootlegging is a major influence in the people's lives in Manderson.



Much of the alcohol comes from White Clay, Nebraska. This small town has only a handful of business, a liquor store and several lounges within walking distance of the Pine Ridge city limits.



More than 4 million cans of beer are sold in this town per year; approximately 13,000 cans per

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day! The towns of Wounded Knee and Manderson are the closest towns to Pine Ridge, so it's logical that these towns would be affected by bootlegging.

One of those on the frontline is Mr Joseph Brings Plenty. We met him in our first visit and were able visit with him this time again. In addition to being the Dean of students and Counselor at the Wounded Knee school he coaches the youth to box. This activity gives the kids a much needed boost to their self-esteem and gets them away from drugs and alcohol. The kids learn early that they can't perform physically with all the junk in their system. So to be able to box (without getting sick) the kids need to be clean. After a while they realize how much stronger and empowered they feel.



In, all we had a great time in Manderson and the surrounding areas. We continue to learn how the people, young and old, in this region are eager to recapture the craft of flutemaking. And we also received some insight into the Lakota peoples's relationship with God (the Creator). Mr. Charging Cloud has already asked us if we would return again. There was also some discussion about inviting other schools. So we are tentatively planning another trip for next spring.