

Flutes for Hope Mission Report

November 2015 – Waniyetu Project



At the request of the Wounded Knee School we decided to start our clothing drive earlier. Our contact at Wounded Knee School, Cindy Giago, started a special room to store goods and had taken a key interest in getting coats for the children. So, we sent an early shipment of 26 children's and youth coats to Manderson, SD. The next shipment was as we had done in previous years.

In addition to the cold weather items, a scroll saw and drill press were donated to the wood-working class at Takini School. All items were well received by the students and put to use. During our April visit we learned of some of the impact on the community at large. Our host in Cherry Creek, SD, who helps to provide coats for that community during the winter months, shared that one person didn't need a coat this year because she already received one at Takini.



A student at Takini uses a scroll saw donated during the Waniyetu Project



Un-packing and distribution of coats and other items at Takini School



April 2016 – Flute-Making Trip



Theresa and Marilyn Marsh (middle) look on as a student works on his flute

In this trip, our fifth year running, we were joined by our friends, Joe and Marilyn Marsh from our home church, Lamb's Chapel. Joe and Marilyn are children's pastors with multiple years of teaching experience. Joe is a multi-talented craftsman and took to flute-making immediately. Marilyn, a seasoned teacher, served in various capacities and was available to help in whatever need arose.

Theresa and I really appreciate their hearts for children and service.



Ken and Joe Marsh (middle) work on a student's flute while Bryan Charging Cloud observes

Takini/Cherry Creek (Cheyenne River)

In addition to our fourth flute-making workshop at Takini, Theresa teamed-up with Clea Brott to organize an after-school flute playing workshop for all ages in Cherry Creek, SD, a small community nestled on the banks of the Cheyenne River about 18 miles from Takini. Clea and her husband coordinate a food bank in this village, where the sole business is a tire/auto service shop. When Clea gave us a walking tour, it became quite clear that she is well known and respected for her efforts. While stopping at the local clinic, Joe Marsh, who is an EMT and certified CPR instructor, donated some first-aid items. He also discussed ways in which we could help with other medical supplies.



Makrista made a flute at Takini School, then, joined us in Cherry Creek to learn some songs.

We prepared several flutes beforehand for the workshop participants to take home, which were well received. We also, along with Clea, served an afterschool snack to the children. This event was a great opportunity to encourage flute playing and minister to the needs of the community. On several occasions we were able to pray for people with special requests.

One of our students at Takini, Makrista, showed-up and learned to play several songs very quickly. We were also able to learn the lyrics to "The Lakota Courting Song" from, Mary, a grandmother, who recognized it as one which she had learned as a girl.

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Wounded Knee (Pine Ridge)



The past several years were difficult for the people in Manderson, SD. During our 2015 visit we discovered that several children had been lost to suicide in a year in which the Pine Ridge reservation saw 103 suicide attempts. Others were lost in the previous year. After some discussion and prayer with Mr. Charging Cloud, he asked us to spend some special time with the 5th and 6th graders -- the ages hardest hit with suicide. In October, we also heard that Mr. Charging Cloud had suffered a heart attack and needed to be out for several months.



Upon our return this year we were happy to see Mr. Charging Cloud back in the classroom and also very glad to hear that there were no suicides since our last visit. The school is also engaged in a new program of suicide intervention which appears to be effective. Cindy Giago, the counselor for Wounded Knee school is also a social worker and strives to identify the needs of the community at-large. As we prepared for this year's trip we asked her what items we could bring. She expressed a need for flip-flops for the students. So we appealed to our friends at Lamb's Chapel who generously donated well over 180 pairs. One pair was immediately given to one of our students who needed shoes.



Mr. Charging Cloud also requested that we have another time of sharing and prayer with the older grades, which we were honored to do. Mr. Charging Cloud and I shared on the red road and what is involved when we choose to walk down it. Joe shared on forgiveness and expressed his regrets for the actions of our ancestors in the massacre that occurred in 1890 just a few miles south of the school. Each student in the circle was prayed for individually.

This year is one of recovery and healing for the kids in Manderson, SD. It's clear that these children are still seeing the pressures of everyday life and are emotionally cautious. But they are still eager to make flutes. There is a glimmer of hope that peaks through their eyes at the experience of making a stick sing or when the perception of failure is replaced by the reality of success.



Theresa and I thank you all for your support and prayers.

Ken and Theresa Grut - Flutes for Hope
www.flutes-for-hope.org