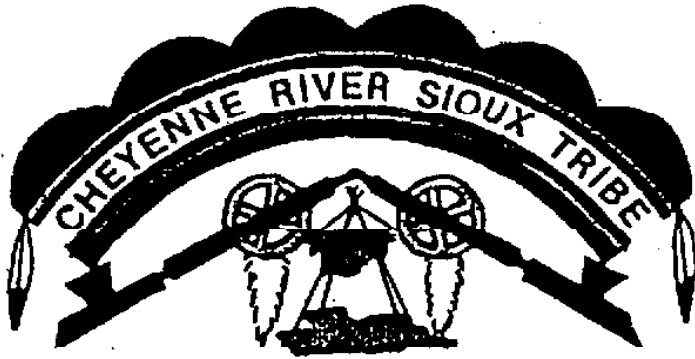
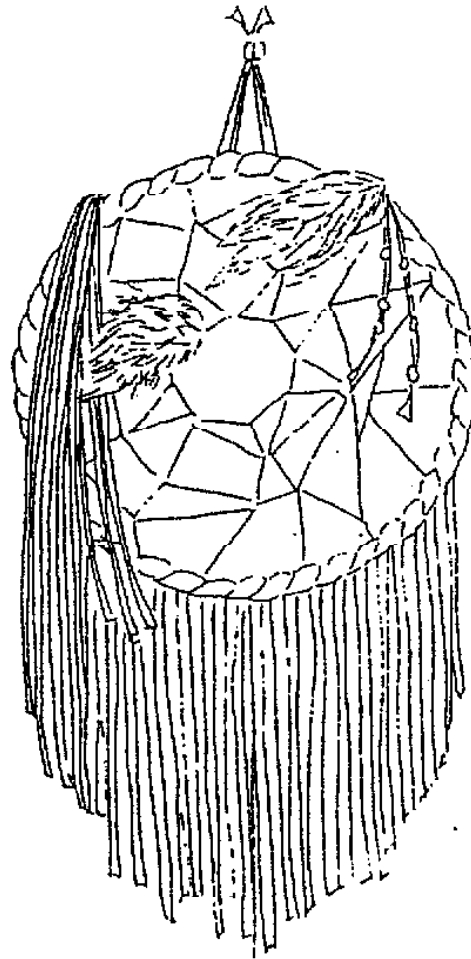


Proposed W.L.S.E



LAKOTA CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Here in my hours of sleep,
I am dreaming.
Catch all my dreams, **Dream Catcher.**
I'll dream of wisdom
and I'll dream of knowledge.
I'll dream of nature and peace.
Catch my dreams.



How The Relationship Began...

Dr. Ron Robinson, then Youth Minister, was searching for sites within the United States for youth mission trips. Ron spoke with Frank Watson, MPUMC member, and was put in touch with Charlie Warren, friend of Frank's, who had a relationship with the Lakota family, of Raymond and Billie Rose Uses the Knife. They resided in Thunder Butte, South Dakota. Out of this, the relationship with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation and Myers Park United Methodist Church began in 1993. In the summer of 1993, youth and leaders from MPUMC took their first mission trip to the Reservation. In 1996, there were both youth and adult mission trips. In the summer of 1999, the youth returned on a mission trip, with the Young Methodist Singles following in September. In 2001, a Heart and Hand church-wide team and a youth team each took their mission trips to the Reservation.

The Lakota Children's Ministry

For about a year Billie Rose Uses-the-Knife had thoughts of beginning an on-going children's ministry for kids from 3 to 12 years old. It would include a Sunday night meeting of games, Bible lessons, videos and refreshments, as well as holiday events including family meals at Christmas and Easter. Since there is so much drug and alcohol abuse on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation, Billie felt teaching the children about God and the Bible would help provide them with a stronger upbringing. Her goal was to work with the children so they would learn of a better life.

Wa'ohola, is a Lakota word meaning *respect*. Billie Rose wanted to teach the children respect for themselves, their parents, elders, the land and God.

Billie Rose knew she would need financial and spiritual support, so she prayed about her dream for the children's ministry and its beginning. With MPUMC's relationship with the Tribe since 1993, Billie Rose turned to us for assistance and guidance.

The Lakota Children's Ministry's first session was Sunday, November 7, 1999, in the Dupree, SD, Community Center. 21 kids ages 4 to 11 and a few parents attended. The ministry met weekly, with as many as 38 kids and as few as 12 kids. Refreshments were provided. The children loved participating in planned activities, Bible lessons and discussion. Birthdays were celebrated on a quarterly basis, and children with the most attendance were recognized. The kids loved the recognition!

There was also an effort to involve parents in this ministry.

Costs for this ministry included: \$10 weekly rental fee for the Dupree Community Center; approximately \$10 weekly for refreshments as an incentive for kids attending (kids love it!), money for quarterly curriculum, crafts and activities costs and gas money (Billie Rose had to travel 40 miles each meeting). (The company Billie Rose ordered the first curriculum books from gave her the curriculum to get started.)

The annual Christmas dinner is now a part of the Lakota Children's Ministry. The children put on a play for their families and the "Feather Tree" gifts from MPUMC are distributed to the children. This meal and presents

may be the only Christmas some of the children have.

For Christmas 2001, the event occurred in the new Dupree Community Center. Money to build the Center is something Raymond Uses-the-Knife worked on for 7 years to get and now his dream is a reality. It is a huge building with a gym, lockers and showers, as well as offices and a conference room.

Funding

The Adults Plus! group was approached to accept the Lakota Children's Ministry as an on-going project. Their financial and prayer support was requested. The Adults Plus! Council approved this October 20, 1999, and presented their plan to the group members at the November 17 meeting. Their program that day was, "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse: Culture and Traditions of the Lakota People".

"Dreamcatcher" was the theme presented to the Adults Plus! group as a way of supporting The Lakota Children's Ministry. Billie Rose had the dream, Adults Plus! caught the dream and made the dreams of the Lakota Children come true.

In addition to the Adults Plus! support, the children's Vacation Bible School project in 2000 collected over 100 children's coats and sweaters and sent to the Lakota Children's Ministry. They also contributed their offering from the 4 days of VBS. Receiving the winterwear was wonderful as the winter temperatures there on the Reservation can get to a wind chill factor of minus 20 degrees. Many of the children do not even have winter outerwear.

The MPUMC Jubilee Committee granted the Lakota Children's Ministry funding for sending 3 kids to camp in June, 2001 and 3 kids in June, 2002, and for 2001 helped with the Christmas gathering in the new Dupree Community Center. 2001 expenses included rent and heating costs, and 4 months ministry work.

The Dream Continues

Because of Billie Rose's love for the Lakota children, she dreamed of how she could help even more. In 2001, she purchased a very run-down house in Eagle Butte (in town where the schools and Tribal Office are located) with the sale of a small lot of land she inherited from her father. Being in Eagle Butte, the main town of the area, Billie Rose felt she would be nearer to a larger number of children and to her church building.

With lots of "elbow grease", and with the assistance of two mission teams from MPUMC, the Uses-the-Knife family was able to get the house livable, and Billie Rose was able to begin a small day-care service. She felt this need because many times the working parent has no one to keep their child because of a spouse with an alcohol problem or because the sitter cancels because she's been drinking as well.

Parent cost for the baby-sitting service is \$1.00 an hour, because this is the most people can afford. Billie Rose teaches the children Bible verses and lessons, and basic Lakota language. The children are fed breakfast, lunch and 2 snacks a day. This "day care" is taking the place of the Sunday night gathering in Dupree in reaching the younger children. On New Year's

Eve Billie Rose kept the day-care open all night until noon New Year's Day to provide a safe environment for the children, knowing some of the horrible situations the children would be placed in otherwise.

The MPUMC youth and Heart and Hand teams that visited in 2001, summer, were able to clean up the outside of the house, paint the outside, tear down the front porch, build a new one suitable for children.

When Billie Rose visited here in Charlotte in September, 2001, she received assistance with some of the paperwork involved in running a day care. This help included such things as guidelines, a contract, fee schedule, and medical authorization forms.

Currently, Billie Rose is working to get the day-care accredited for government grants to add additional rooms on to the house so more children may attend. She is also seeking government subsidy for fees parents have to pay and for making the day-care a non-profit organization. She needs much assistance with this.

Being in Eagle Butte, Billie Rose sees much of what goes on with the early-aged teenagers. Some Friday nights a hot-dog/hamburger supper or fry bread tacos are prepared and taken to "The Wall" on Main Street where the teens gather, or they gather at the "day care" or at the church location. MPUMCs first project on the Reservation included upfitting and painting "The Wall." It subsequently received a "Point of Light" recognition from the President.

An Easter meal gathering, similar to the Christmas gathering, occurs for the children and parents in Dupree at the new community center. Their activities include an Easter egg hunt which the children really like.

Since 2000 there has been a "back-to-school" children's gathering, with lots of publicity, to make the children and parents aware of the Lakota Children's Ministry.

For the summer of 2001, the Lakota Children's Ministry was able to sponsor a few children for summer camp in Kansas, thanks to the Adults Plus! support. This was the first time some have even been off the Reservation, much less getting to go out of state. What a blessing for these children to have that experience! There is hope that this experience will be repeated for many summers to come.

Whenever and wherever possible, Billie Rose witnesses to her faith and makes disciples among the Lakota people. There are joyous moments, as well as many frustrations, yet her dream remains for the Lakota Children's Ministry to provide a better way of life.

Billie Rose Uses-the-Knife sends her many "thank yous" and hugs for your support! She and her family feel blessed to have the support of MPUMC. Billie Rose and Raymond say they can "feel" the prayers being sent to them. They appreciate the financial support so much, as it enables them to go into the community to help the Lakota children.

Someone has said, "If you never have a dream, you never have a dream come true!" Billie Rose had the dream, and the people of MPUMC have helped it come true.

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