



SIoux YMCA SUMMER 2015 GUMBO GAZETTE



General Convention of Sioux YMCAs

PO Box 218 Dupree, SD 57623

Summer 2015

OUR MISSION IS TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN OUR RESERVATION COMMUNITIES SO THEY CAN FULFILL THEIR GREATEST INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SPIRITUAL, MENTAL, AND PHYSICAL POTENTIALS.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FIVE YEARS LATER

Yes, it has been five years, and now I am saying: Just where did the time go?

It went to many things, writing job descriptions, grants, and reports, creating policies and procedures, attending conferences and meetings, visiting with the kids to see how and what they are doing, in other words, the usual YMCA work.

But there have been other things, like attending funerals, honoring someone or the memory of someone at a pow wow, watching camp staff learn how to set up a tipi, cleaning toilets and houses, finding someone to tow a broken down pickup truck sitting on the highway, washing dishes at the Y after a long day of programming, teaching camp staff strategies for interacting with the kids here, standing in a pasture near Thunder Butte with staff watching a small herd of antelope run directly at us and then suddenly swerve and run around us. That was amazing!

As we are fond of saying: "Never a dull moment at the Sioux Y". We may spend months waiting for things to happen or we may have to turn on a dime and have ten minutes to get on the road to camp, which is 70 miles from Dupree, because the Game, Fish, and Parks guys are on their way down there to put the dock in the water. Or the company delivering the new refrigerator for camp neglected to call us before leaving the eastern part of the state as asked, and calls us at 4:30 on a Friday afternoon to say that they are 20 miles from Dupree with the fridge in their truck, oh, and that we had to find a way to get it off their truck! That didn't happen, but we finally did get that fridge down to camp with the help of a long-time volunteer.

Working here stretches us, makes us use our imaginations and our creativity, forces us to be patient, listen, and reflect, and strengthens our confidence in our abilities. Watching the staff grow and learn over the years has shown me that our reach is much further than we had envisioned. I know that our YMCA impacts children's lives; I had not thought about how much it impacts the lives of our staff. Almost all, whether they are Tribal members or from NY, RI, MA, AL, CT, IL, IN, WI, Scotland, Brazil, or other places around the globe, are transformed by their experience here. They, too, grow in self-confidence as they learn to do things they would never have envisioned themselves as capable of doing, like killing rattlesnakes, fixing broken pipes, consoling a homesick child, programming with minimal resources, changing plans quickly as the weather changes, or cooking for 50-60 people.

We all feel it, the change inside ourselves, and we know we are receiving a gift.

Julia, on visiting the Sioux Y: "The visit not only opened my eyes to Native American culture, but also brought me back to why I originally wanted to work for the Y."



If you are interested in receiving Gumbo Gazettes **electronically**, please send your email address to

amanda.held@siouxymca.org

We do our best, but we couldn't function without friends like you. The Y operates almost entirely from donations as there is no source of steady income in our area. To view our wish list, please visit

<http://siouxymca.org/Wish%20List.html>



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Onspewicakiyapi Wojupi

[Own-shpeh-we-cha-key-yah-pee whoa-zhu-pee]

The Sioux YMCA's Learning Garden Project

Outfitted with six garden beds and tools donated from Tim Kroening of Brookfield, WI, dirt from Dupree residents, a \$20,000 grant from Seeds of Change, and a \$10,000 grant from the South Dakota Community Foundation, the Sioux YMCA set out to establish an Onspewicakiyapi Wojupi [Learning Garden]. With the grant monies, the Sioux YMCA was able to create a new full-time, paid position, Health & Wellness Coordinator/



Volunteer Coordinator, which was filled by former long term volunteer, Amanda Held. As Health & Wellness Coordinator, Amanda directs all happenings in the garden and will teach healthy cooking and nutrition classes in the fall. As long term volunteer coordinator, she will work to recruit volunteers who are interested in gardening and food desert issues, non-profit work, or working with youth.



From a partnership with the South Dakota State University Extension Office, the Sioux YMCA received additional garden beds, plants, and a drip irrigation system. Southern Exposure Seed Exchange also donated seeds. We have quite a variety growing in our wojupi, which the kids worked in for an hour each day as part of our Summer Day Camp programming. On the menu at the Sioux YMCA are tomatoes, corn, beans, squash, peas, peppers, watermelon, strawberries, pumpkin, onions, broccoli, kohlrabi, lettuce, spinach, basil, and rosemary—all from our garden. The children have really enjoyed having something to take care of.

The Sioux YMCA would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the wojupi:

The Sioux YMCA would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the wojupi:

- Tim Kroening for the donation of tools, gloves, lumber, and especially time to visit Dupree and help build us raised beds
- Tom and Sue Held for gardening tools and gloves
- Peter Held for building us trellises
- Andy Corley for the donation of our 10th garden bed
- Jesse Olvera for ceaselessly delivering us dirt

Quotes from the Garden:

La Shayne: Are we going to eat these once they're grown?

Amanda: Yes, that's the plan!

La Shayne: YAY!

Noah, when upon arriving late to Garden Hour was told it was time to head back to the YMCA for supper, "Eeezzz, but I just got here!"

If you would like to support our Onspewicakiyapi Wojupi project, please email Amanda at Amanda.held@siouxymca.org

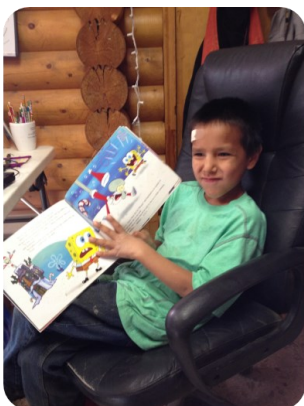




Watering the wajoju



Archery at Day Camp



Reading is fun



Volunteers=new friends

Volunteer Spotlight: Stacy Bowen

Stacy Bowen, from Alexander, North Carolina, volunteered with the Sioux YMCA from May 26th -June 26th. Stacy was a valuable asset of our team who had a natural ability with the children. During her time at the Sioux YMCA, she worked as a counselor in our Summer Day Camp, worked in our wajoju [garden], and was a big help in fixing up the staff house. Her flexibility, eagerness to serve, and Southern spunk will be greatly missed! THANK YOU STACY, for the donation of your time and skills!!



The Sioux YMCA has a new long term volunteer program. If you are interested in applying, or would like more information, please email [Amanda at amanda.held@siouxymca.org](mailto:amanda.held@siouxymca.org).

Be the Change

The Change Agent program is a program of the World Alliance of YMCAs. It has as its focus the molding of today's young leaders to reach their fullest potential. The Sioux YMCA is participating in this second cohort of Change Agents as our Site Director, Andrew Corley, was accepted into this cohort. He represents not only the Sioux YMCA but is also the only YMCA staff person from the US involved. As a part of the program there are two global gatherings. Andrew just returned from his first Global Gathering on September 7th. The Change Agents met in Japan to board the Peace Boat. Here they focused on ten days of training, discussion, and empowerment. The Peace Boat left port in Yokohama, Japan on August 21st. After four days they landed in Cebu, Philippines. Here the group of 150 Change Agents, representing over 60 countries, was welcomed by a crowd of over one thousand. The Agents led sessions for the youth in classes of fifty or more on youth empowerment and how to speak up against injustice. The final stop for the Peace Boat was in Singapore. Here Andrew was able to venture into the city and explore what the Singapore YMCA has to offer. It was an amazing journey that will allow the future of the YMCA to be stronger in its work as a global movement.



The Sioux Y needs you, Ali Canino

Five years ago, a young woman from Rhode Island decided that she wanted to spend the summer in South Dakota on a reservation, so she googled her criteria and up popped the Sioux YMCA. She wrote, asking if this Y had internships for college students. We replied by asking her if she wanted to be a counselor at a summer camp. That was the beginning of a long term relationship between Ali Canino and the Sioux Y.



She spent her first summer here as a counselor though she had never worked at a camp before. She and five others helped to revive our resident camp, working hard to prepare the facilities and then ensure that the campers had a safe and caring environment each week for six weeks. She returned to college at the end of that summer to finish her undergraduate degree and then came back as our camp director and community program director the following summer. Ali spent that second summer setting up and directing camp and then stayed for the next year. As program director, she helped reorganize the After School program, supervised the part-time program staff, developed teen night activities, and organized activities for the visiting alternative break college students. She wrote grants that helped fund the purchase of new equipment for the Y such as tables, chairs, program supplies and supplies for camp.



She then spent her second summer as camp director, creating the LIT (Leaders in Training) program and refining the camp structure and daily activities. She left us at the end of that third summer to attend graduate school in Massachusetts.

The fourth summer, she came back as camp cook, and the fifth summer, as a camp counselor, thus coming full circle!

She finished her graduate program in May and will start a full time position with a community mental health facility in Oregon this Fall. Ali, called "Grandma Ali" this summer at camp by the campers, because she has a few gray hairs and has been at camp so many summers, has watched the kids grow and change over the years. To see campers who were eight years old that first summer and then this summer when they are now old enough to be LITs has been rewarding for her.

We wish her all the best and will miss her next summer at camp, but now that she is officially a member of our Board of Trustees, Ali will stay connected to this Y for the long term. YAAAY!

Thank you, Ali, for all you have done and will do for this Y!



Girls' cabin



The beauty of camp



Boys will be boys



Canoeing at camp



Camp is for making friends

What's New at the Sioux Y

- We have a new eating pavilion at camp thanks to **Strickland Construction of Olathe, KS**. A group came up from KS to set up the building at the end of May, just in time for camp this summer. We are very grateful to all of the folks at Strickland Construction for this amazing gift.
- We have a Chevy Suburban, a very nice one. It is a 2013 and can hold 8 people which means that we can now take a few kids on field trips. We managed to acquire the vehicle in time for camp this summer, so we had a way to transport our camp staff to and from Dupree when needed. It is another very welcome addition to our "fleet" of vehicles! (Our other vehicle is a 1993 Ford Econoline van which we can use only to haul stuff, not people.)
- We have a garden now, as you know from the article in this issue of the Gumbo. It has been a lot of fun watching the kids work in the garden and get excited about seeing everything grow.
- Another new addition is our Garden/Long Term Volunteer Coordinator position. This is a one year position that was created by our first long term volunteer in a long time, Amanda Held. Amanda also wrote the grants to fund this position. It is our goal to use this year to refine our new long term volunteer program and recruit volunteers to supervise the gardening next summer. If all goes according to plan, we will have volunteer(s) in place to oversee the garden program, among other things.
- We now officially have a Long Term Volunteer program, complete with application, FAQ sheet, and manual, again, thanks to Amanda. She created these documents this past year and also emailed hundreds of colleges about our program. We intend to find other ways to reach out and find volunteers, too.
- Junior counselors worked at resident camp and day camp. We received a small grant from a non-profit organization in Montana called Hopa Mountain. We are part of a project they have called Strengthening the Circle which is designed to support and strengthen Native non-profits. One of the projects available to us was the opportunity to write a grant for \$3,000, and we used this opportunity to create four junior counselor positions. We let the teens we hired decide where they wanted to work, and three chose resident camp. We plan to look for a grant to do this again and expand it to include more teens as it was incredibly successful.
- Though we have not yet reinvigorated our capital campaign for our much needed volunteer housing, we have a committee composed of Trustees, Board members, and staff who are working on putting together a plan for the campaign. One step in the process has just been completed. Available land in Dupree is very scarce, but we have managed to purchase the four lots located directly south of our staff house where our camp director lives. The lots are small, but with all four we will have space for the new facility. We have been extremely fortunate in finding and then being able to purchase these lots.





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Sioux YMCAs**
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Summer 2015

**WO OHITKA (COURAGE) * WACANTEOGNAKE (GENEROSITY)
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