



LAKHÓTA OYÁTE WĀN WĀPI NA WĪ
WÓCHEKIYE UN IGLÓPA OUNYKII



OYÁTE TÁKU YUTHÓKEČA

REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

WĀN WĀPI NA WĪ
WÓCHEKIYE UN IGLÓPA OUNYKII



SUSTAINING FOR THE FUTURE.

Mitakuyepi,

Iyuha cante waste nape ciyuzape. Tatuye Topa Najin Win Means emacyapiye. Sisitonwan Dakota na Oglala Lakota nakun Ihanktonwan Nakota winyan hemaca ksto.

Greetings my relatives! I would like to thank each of you for the positive thoughts, support and prayers you have given to our organization and our work over the years. I would also like to thank each of you for taking the time to learn more about how 2018 was for Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (TVCDC).

I came on board as the Executive Director in July of 2018 and since then we have prioritized: fostering healing through culture; building organizational connectedness and refinement; promoting community well-being through community engagement; advocating change through policy; and ensuring both environmental and organizational sustainability. Each of these strategic directions guides us in our vision for a liberated Lakota nation through language, lifeways and spirituality.

In the pages to follow, you will learn more about the work of our initiatives, all working collaboratively and holistically to create pathways to freedom—freedom from the vestiges of colonialism and oppression—pathways to liberation. We believe that true sovereignty does not lie within a government or institutions, rather, sovereignty is inherent in each individual. We are in an awakening of that inherent sovereignty and what we are building here at TVCDC is our expression of sovereignty and self-determination. It is our living example of what liberation can look like, feel like, and embody.

Again, thank you for being a part of our journey.

Pilamayaye,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tatewin Means'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Tatewin Means

LAKOTA LANGUAGE INITIATIVE'S DALLAS NELSON.

Dallas walks with a steadfast dedication towards Lakota Language revitalization. Reflecting back, Dallas recalls when they celebrated the first moving on ceremony, *Tʰokátakiya Mánipi Wičhóh'anj*, for our *Iyápi Glukínipi* immersion children in May 2018.

“For the staff and I, it was a massive step towards incorporating our Lakota perspective into these graduation events. We used the *chungleska*, medicine wheel, and we put the children in the middle to signify that they are the heart and center of our universe.”

Dallas is the Director of our Lakota Language Initiative (LLI) which offers a full immersion program for children, cultivating a new generation of fluent speakers.

One of these programs is Four Years to Fluency. It empowering parents, community members, and our staff to grow and learn the language. “We allow individuals to take that step forward in their language learning journey. Most of the staff who have come on board have little to no language at all. With a lot of cultural experience and knowledge, our program allows them to build their language proficiency, and in return, they are fulfilling something more than a day job, it is a life goal. A life dream.”

A significant accomplishment was the launching of a new child care site called *Wakinyanj Ophá Owáyawa Čík'ala*. “It sparked energy within our TVCDC and was a big moment for our organization because it is right in the middle of our development.”

Our *Owáyawa Čík'ala* (Lakota Immersion Childcare), gets visitors all the time, especially those from across the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota nations who become fascinated with the program and its efficiency. The curriculum and materials created to teach the language are openly shared, including with almost all local schools, our Youth leadership Initiative, and with our Food sovereignty curriculum. Additionally, the communications team here has moved in the direction where the outreach done normalizes exposure to Lakota Language by including it in our publications. The language aspect is crucial to our organization, “language interconnects thunder valley by working together in a way for each of initiative but also as an organization as a whole”

This coverage of the language is essential because “every community has fluent speakers, and every community has champions who want positive change.”

Looking ahead to the future, we are building the internal capacity of our staff and community proficiency in the language. Preparing for when we move forward onto the higher grades, right now we service 74 children and their families who are receiving Lakota immersion within our programming. This number is huge coming from a very humble beginning of just four in 2007, a considerable increase, and we are hoping to get more families included in these efforts.

Over 1800 hours of service at our
Owáyawa Čík'ala / Lakota Immersion Childcare

Up to 20 children receive early childhood education
through our Lakota language, culture, and philosophy

17 children in our *Owáyawa Tʰaŋka* / Lakota Elementary Immersion class
attend Kindergarten, First, and Second grades

Create 8 children's videos and about 30 books per month
in the Lakota Language

Wówahokúŋkhiye / Teaching of our Elders program—30 fluent Lakota
speakers recorded (audio and video)



PICTURED Dallas Nelson.



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY'S JORDAN WILSON.

Jordan Wilson has a quiet, focused and thoughtful demeanor. He joined the team in January of 2018 as part of our Food Sovereignty Initiative. The Initiative aims to revitalize a sustainable and regenerative food system on Pine Ridge by empowering the people to build regenerative food systems that improve health, protect the planet and create prosperity.

In his work, Jordan is hands on in our educational regenerative demonstration farm and poultry centered agroforestry food system. Alongside his team, he harvests the 2.5 acres of garden, pit-style geothermal greenhouse and manages the 500 chickens in the poultry palace.

“A regenerative chicken farm, as I understand it, is basically doing all this work in a healthy way. No artificial additives, just what the chickens want and need,” he says.

Growing up, Jordan had a small coop of 15 or so chicken. When he came to Thunder Valley, he was given the opportunity to learn so much more, including learning what goes into managing 500 chickens. “Working here has brought on a whole other level of knowledge,” he reflects. “I learned what goes into it. What you can do and can’t do with chickens. What they need and want. I learned more about space each chicken needs, inside and out.” Many companies keep chickens in confined spaces, but chickens in the regenerative farm are free range and live in what we call the “chicken place”—a sizable coop equipped with nesting beds, roaming room, climate control and powered by solar.

“When I first began, I remember seeing the chicken coop, and it was huge. My first thought was, that’s a lot of eggs.”

Beginning with limited knowledge, he gained so much and says he is still learning. His growth here at Thunder Valley has been supported by in-depth training and professional development around poultry centered agroforestry food systems and what it takes to have fresh produce for harvest.

Jordan says confidently that he believes “other communities can have something similar to this.” He says, “it is hard work, but it is doable no matter how old or young you are. Every community on the reservation should be able to handle this.”

A massive milestone for Jordan was receiving certification as an egg handler by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture in July of 2018. “I didn’t think it was possible. Now I am able to work with eggs, grade and process them.”

Jordan works hard every day so that our communities can benefit, and as he puts it, “This is their garden. I’m just digging it.”

Gave 350 chickens away to the community

Implemented the Food Sovereignty Curriculum into 13 schools

Create a Food Sovereignty Activity
Book for children grades 1st through 4th

Harvested 3,543 dozen eggs—donated and sold them to the community

An aerial photograph of a residential development. In the center is a circular area with a concrete curb, containing a large, shallow, muddy pond. Surrounding this central area are several houses with various roof colors: blue, red, grey, and white. The houses are arranged in a roughly circular pattern around the central pond. The surrounding area is a mix of green grass and sandy soil. A paved road is visible at the top and bottom of the frame.

FINANCIALS

Percentage of federal and private in grants:
Federal 10%
Private 84%

Percentage of grants outside of South Dakota:
South Dakota 3%
Outside Source 97%

Total grants:
\$5,967,098.80

Total donor dollars and total donor people:
Donor \$560,835.80 total of 264 donors.

Total Operating Income for 2018: \$10,335,925.96

Number of square feet of completed construction – 13,568 sf

Number of square feet under construction - 25,070 sf

Square Yards of paved road – 10,400 square yards

Amount of paved sidewalk – 6,493 sf

Number of Native owned sub-contractor companies employed - 19



PICTURED Chance Renville.

REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHANCE RENVILLE.

Chance Renville, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation, is passionate about serving Indigenous communities.

“Working here has engrained in me why it is so important to work for your people, relatives and family, especially with all the things we are faced with as a Native People. Often times, we wake up each day with our backs against the wall. At Thunder Valley, we are showing our relatives what is possible through self-determination and commitment. We are creating change and it is exciting!”

Chance joined the team in 2017 and spent most of 2018 as the Energy Program Manager for the Regenerative Community Development Initiative. Within that role he was responsible for the installation of solar power on the new homes.

“Even though I had an education, it was hard for me to find work in the area. Thunder Valley provided me a great job opportunity helping to create a sustainable way of life for our people.”

We are building an entire community from the ground up that embodies our Lakota culture and values. The regenerative community balances being a good relative with addressing ongoing community needs

“The whole idea here at Thunder Valley is to provide these sustainable homes to the communities while incorporating systems and, like passive solar, into them and taking advantage of the resources available.” He flashes that Hollywood smile, “the sun rises seven hours out of the day so why not use that energy.”

2018 brought big change for the Regenerative Community Development Initiative. We had our first homeowners move into their homes, we held our first events at the community center, we paved our roads and we transitioned leadership of the Program. Kimberly Pelkofsky took on the position of Director of Design and Planning, and Chance Renville has taken on the role of Project Manager.

Chance was also the recipient of the MIT Solve fellowship. This took him on a journey to Boston, Massachusetts where he collaborated with other global changemakers. “That space empowered me and it was one of many things this work has opened up for me. I’ve met a lot of great contractors, great people and I want to continue to work towards giving our local people the work we have here and it is important to think of local services first before expanding elsewhere.”

WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT'S CHARLES EAGLE BULL.

Charles Eagle Bull is the Workforce Development Initiative education coordinator—the purpose of the initiative is to build the capacity of our community's workforce by focusing on young adults and their overall development.

Charles says that his dedication to this program comes from his own experience growing up around the reservation, and he can relate to the position the participants are in.

The program focuses on four areas: social-emotional intelligence, physical health, spirituality, and professionalism. Charles advocates for a substance-free lifestyle for the Workforce participants by having different trainings to teach them coping mechanisms, providing accessible resources, and teaching them to be goal-oriented.

“The whole condition that creates success for our participants is them having goals, something to work for, and something to be proud of. They can say I have something to do today, and I can do it.”

Some participants don't have a high school diploma, and others haven't considered higher education. Charles advocates that education is the key to success, “I provide education opportunities by engaging them in college, for those who don't have a GED, we start the process.”

He provides them with the tools and resources they need so they can take that extra step further towards their future. “The whole goal and purpose are to put the responsibility on the individuals. Instead of us having the solutions, they figure out how to problem solve on their own, and they realize they can do it”.

The Workforce crew also gains some experience by assisting in the building of homes and various construction tasks, which provides them with a range of skills.

The program wouldn't be whole without the implementation of spirituality. It plays an essential role in grounding them in their lives. Charles does this by giving them the space they need to develop that area of their lives, “Every single word I try to say is influencing their mind and spirit to change and be better living. The affirmation words and statements affect them”.

This entire experience is personable between Charles and the Workforce participants because many young face struggles relating to their home life, poverty, difficulties with schooling, sobriety obstacles, and personal doubts.

“Our people are stuck in that survival mode and don't know how to live. We are teaching our young adults how to live and how to prosper and get their dreams and goals. We tell them that there is another lifestyle out there; you can be happy, you can be successful, and you can achieve your dreams and goals. It isn't just about surviving.”



PICTURED Charles W. Eagle Bull.

960 hours of GED work

864 hours of college classroom instruction

1200 hours of social-emotional instruction

1100 hours of on-site building



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