



# EMPOWERING LAKOTA YOUTH AND FAMILIES



PROGRESS REPORT  
2007-2013

## ABOUT THUNDER VALLEY

**T**hunder Valley is located in the northern part of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Oglala Lakota Nation between Sharps Corner and Rockyford. We are just a few miles off of being physically located in the geographic center of the Oglala Lakota Nation. The heart of this winding valley was formed over thousands of years as Porcupine Creek carved its way through the grass-covered hills at the edge of the badlands of South Dakota. It was long ago in this region the Lakota people, originated, having spread out and flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries. The origins of the name Thunder Valley have long been forgotten, and until recently, only the elders and old ranchers still used the name Thunder Valley. Now the name is synonymous with an amazing renaissance of traditional values and cultural pride.

In 1998 the rebirth of the ancient rite of traditional Lakota Sun Dance was reintroduced in the Thunder Valley community. This celebration of sacrifice, life and rebirth lay the foundation for change offering culture, tradition

and a renewed sense of responsibility toward family and community. As this circle of change grows larger with each passing season, more and more individuals and families have become involved creating the energy and passion needed to set a powerful path forward.

The organization of Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation was created in 2007 using this same energy of resiliency and community values. Nurtured from conversations voiced by youth to elders who realized we honor the best of our past by utilizing new tools, new ideas and new strategies as we create the opportunities of the future, Thunder Valley CDC came into being.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a Oglala-led, Native American 501(c)3 non-profit public charitable organization based out of the Thunder Valley community of the Porcupine District on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

## OUR MISSION

Empowering Lakota Youth and families to improve the health, culture and environment of our communities, through the healing and strengthening of cultural identity.

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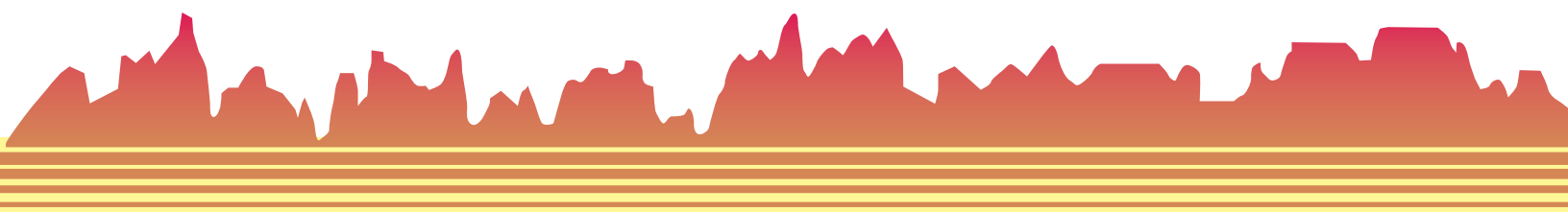
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Donors .....27

*“The dream I want for my people, do something wonderful and something that matters in their life. I want them to achieve something and keep reaching for something that could change their lives”*

**—NIKKI HIGH HAWK, 8TH GRADE**



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hau Mitkuyapi (*Greetings, Relatives*)

2013 marked the seventh year of existence for Thunder Valley CDC. A concept that started as an idea and a prayer has turned into a local grassroots institution, paving a bright future for the Oglala Lakota Nation. Thunder Valley CDC was inspired by the Lakota way of life. It is part of a generation of young Lakota people who have begun to reconnect and reclaim our Lakota cultural and spiritual identity. Through building a foundation of cultural identity, a sense of responsibility for the current and future generations has been instilled in us. We honor our elders and ancestors that have come before us and fought for our way life, held on to our lands, and built the very foundation we stand on today.

Thunder Valley CDC looks out into our communities and we see our people in struggle. We see the harsh impacts of poverty, lack of housing, lack of jobs, poor education and many who have lost hope. Our work is dedicated to changing that struggle and making a difference. Our approach is from the bottom up not from top down. We strongly believe that the solutions for changing our communities on Pine Ridge are here, amongst the people, in our spirits, in our innovations, prayer, creativity and hard work.

Thunder Valley CDC was started by a group of Lakota Men and Women who came together to make a stand and create a vision for the future. For a few years we talked about creating an organization. We shared all the things we could do and the change we could create. Finally, through our ceremonial way of life, our ancestors proposed to us a call to action.

**“How long are you going to let other people decide the future for your children? Are you not warriors? Don't come from a place of fear, come from a place of hope. Start talking and start doing!”**

Since then, we have hit the ground running. In our founding meetings held at the Porcupine Clinic in late 2006 and in 2007, the community said they wanted action. They discussed creating opportunities for youth, building homes for families, creating jobs for people so they can provide for themselves, healing from the past and building toward the future. That vision has now manifested into the creation of building a community that will provide opportunities for youth, homes for families, jobs and a pathway out of poverty for many. We are choosing models of building that create the opportunity to build the capacity of our local families and workforce. We have designed a way to build a community that adapts to the changing climate, and will create new repeatable models for combating poverty.

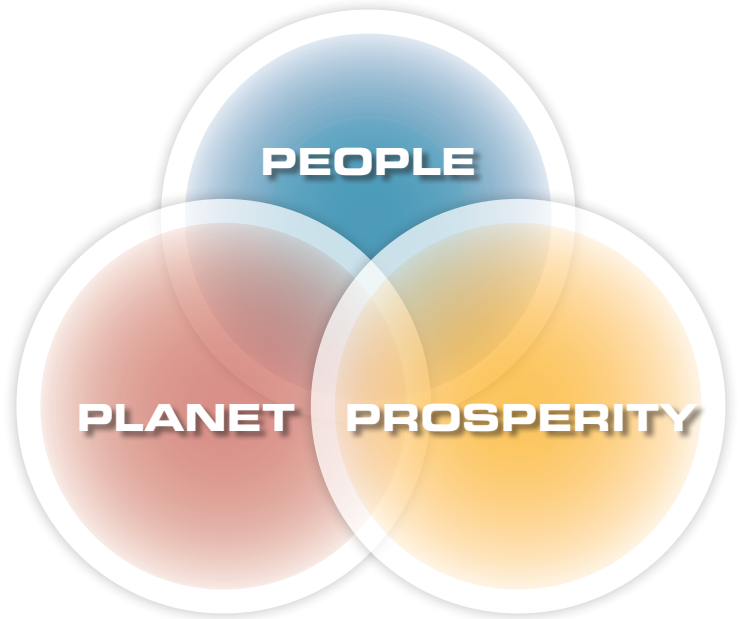
Thank you to all the people who have made prayers, attended a community meeting, given your words of encouragement, participated in our programs and have made a commitment to this work in some way. I say thank you to the foundations, donor's, consultants, government agencies, current and former employees, board members and partners who have made this work possible. This organization is the work of many and it will continue in that way.

This is the most exciting time since the founding of this organization. The momentum has grown and we are now focused on building more homes, creating more jobs, training more youth and families. Join us in this work. Continue to participate in meetings, sign up for the programs and home ownership opportunities and continue to engage in our work. We can do anything we put our minds to, we can overcome any challenge that has come before us and we can build a bright future for the Oglala Lakota Nation.

Mitakuye Oyasin (*We are all related*),  
Nick Tilsen  
Executive Director

## OUR MODEL

**T**hunder Valley Community Development Corporation's approach toward sustainability is firmly rooted in the concept of the *Triple Bottom Line*. *The Triple Bottom Line* dictates that sustainable communities must consider social needs (People), environmental responsibility (Planet), and economic vitality (Prosperity). This concept nurtures a vibrant, healthy community that embraces its cultural heritage while also celebrating its role as community, ecosystem and marketplace.



*I'm hopeful because of young folks like Nick Tilsen. Day by day, family by family, community by community, Nick and his non-profit have helped inspire a new beginning for Pine Ridge. Nick says, we've decided as a community to take ownership of our own future. See, that makes me hopeful.*

—PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

## SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES 2007-2013

### 2007:

- Held Series of Community meetings at Porcupine Clinic about what the vision is for the future of our Nation & Community
- Thunder Valley CDC is born & Non-profit status attained

### 2008:

- Started Youth Entrepreneurship Project
- Community meetings continue about designing and building a new community
- Community decides to pursue resources to purchase land for the development of a new community
- Large scale Community outreach at annual Lakota National Invitational Basketball Tournament

### 2010:

- Thunder Valley Purchases 34 acres of land and creates initial plan to purchase a modular development office for planning and headquarters
- Site visits to Sante Fe Youth Shelters and Black Hills Children Home and begin 1st schematic design of an Emergency Youth Shelter
- Sets up modular Office building, and bring basic infrastructure to building for water, road and sewer.

2007

2008

2009

2010

### 2007:

- Youth Leadership Development Program created, started taking youth to Sacred sites in Black Hills
- Built Thunder Valley Community House, for gatherings, ceremonies and trainings

### 2009:

- Thunder Valley E-Tanka Café Grand Opening
- Thunder Valley E-Tanka operates as a social enterprise managed by Youth in the community
- Secured Resources for to purchase land for the development of a new community
- Found 34 acres of land north of Sharps Corner in the Porcupine District and begin Environmental, Cultural and Archeological Assessments & Survey's

### 2010:

- Organized and Created the Oyate Omniciye Consortium, 23 organizations committed to creating a regional plan for Sustainable Development for the Oglala Lakota Nation





**2011:**

- Kick off meeting of the Oyate Omniciye Oglala Lakota Planning Project over 80 participants, held at Piya Wiconi Oglala Lakota College
- Move into new Thunder Valley CDC Headquarters on the 34 acres of land
- Hold Reservation wide listening and vision sessions for community and regional planning purposes. This created the vision for the Oglala Lakota Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and informed the development taking place at Thunder Valley

**2012:**

- Oglala Lakota Regional Panning Project is fully underway Tribal leaders, program directors and community members engage in the Process
- Thunder Valley Community House, Youth Leadership Project and community engagement process continues. The 34 acre development is a priority in the Regional Plan as an Implementation Project.

**2013:**

- Thunder Valley Community Design Charrette takes place over 50 participants, architects, engineers, planners, investors and community ascend on Porcupine SD to move to final design of 34 acre development
- Sustainable Housing Research Project is underway and first house at Thunder Valley is under construction.
- Preliminary Engineering Design of the community is underway

**2011****2012****2013****2011:**

- Did community design Charrette and came up with the vision and basic design for the 34 acre development
- Started Thunder Valley Community Garden Project

**2012:**

- The Oglala Lakota Regional Plan For Sustainable Development Officially is adopted by the Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Thunder Valley CDC's work is acknowledged by President Barak Obama at the White House Tribal Nations Conference and Executive Director Nick Tilsen meets with the President.

**2013:**

- Thunder Valley CDC, continues to partner with federal agencies and philanthropic institutions on the financing structure of the development and programs to build the capacity of the local community
- Thunder Valley explores worker owned enterprise as a community wealth building model with the Northwest Area Foundation, the Democracy Collaborative and 5 other Native American organizations.





# THUNDER VALLEY IN THE NEWS

**Rapid City Journal**  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2012

**FAITH COWBOY EARNS A TRIP TO NATIONAL FINALS RODEO**

**Testimony continues in alienation of affection case**

On the Web [rapidcityjournal.com](http://rapidcityjournal.com)

Today High 42 Low 23  
Weather: C1

Read about Cole Elshere's first trip to the NFR on Page B1

A publication of Lee Enterprises

**Obama recognizes Native progress on Pine Ridge**

Aaron Oriowski  
journal staff

Nick Tilsen is working to bring affordable housing to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and somebody has taken notice — the president of the United States.

President Barack Obama invited Tilsen to the fourth White House Tribal Nations summit on Wednesday.

More inside  
Obama officials try to reassure tribal leaders over fiscal cliff A7

had a chance to meet the president. "I said on Pine Ridge there's a lot of our people that are suffering," Tilsen said. "There's a lot of people that are experiencing hardships but we are ready for the future and we are ready to rebuild our communities."

Tilsen encouraged other Native Americans to seize this moment to unify and make their communities better, especially with a supportive administration. "He looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Let's do it together,'" Tilsen said.

transforming 32 acres on Pine Ridge into affordable housing while building the infrastructure necessary to allow entrepreneurs a foot in the door. Thunder Valley is also starting on a clean energy program.

Tilsen said he was not solely responsible for the work at Thunder Valley. Rather, it's a continuing group effort between indigenous and institutions, as is all the work on the reservation.

"What we're trying to do is elevate the whole region of Pine Ridge," Tilsen said.

The president cited Tilsen's work as a positive example of change on the reservation.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corp. executive director Nick Tilsen was recognized by President Barack Obama at the White House Tribal Nations summit Wednesday for his efforts to bring affordable housing to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Tilsen is seen here in November showing a green housing development.

Photo courtesy Thunder Valley

**ENERGY SERVICES BULLETIN**  
The energy and planning resource for Western utilities

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THE ADVANCED THUNDER VALLEY

**Lakota nonprofit plans sustainable community on Pine Ridge Reservation**  
Posted on February 25, 2014 by Kasey Burt

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) is making one of the poorest communities in the nation to try a very different approach to economic development, one that takes time, commitment, willingness to learn and above all, planning.

From the ground up  
The grassroots nonprofit organization in Porcupine, S.D., recently released its ambitious plan to create a sustainable model community on a 34-acre parcel on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Building a Reproductive Community  
Community envisions more and better housing on the reservation, developed infrastructure, improved health care, and more job opportunities for residents.

By "scratch," Tilsen means electricity, manage its own reservation and beyond, too, since the nearest large town is 100 miles away.

Having nowhere to go but to innovative development approaches, proposed projects, such as a

Students and staff members are participating through the South Dakota Sustainable Housing Initiative program.

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Planting orchard at Thunder Valley CDC  
Photo from Progress Report 'Trees for Tribes Final Report'

large | medium | small | original

**Trees for Tribes**  
by Fruit Tree Planting Foundation

United States | Environment

Trees for Tribes helps Native Americans through the provision of fruit trees for families living in their orchards and provides and provide northern Plains and the

**TIM JOHNSON**  
UNITED STATES SENATOR from SOUTH DAKOTA

Newsroom | Press Releases

Recent Press Releases

May 01 2012  
**Senator Johnson Visits Pine Ridge Economic Development Group**  
Meets with Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation  
Contact: Sean Chelak/Sam Gilford, 202-294-7991

PORCUPINE, SD — U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-S.D., Chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, met today with representatives of the Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) to discuss their work to create a coordinated regional plan for the Pine Ridge reservation.

On the reservation creates many unique challenges, and the Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation is doing great work to face these challenges by coordinating to develop a plan that will help drive economic development, promote safe, stable housing and improve public transportation options," said Senator Johnson.

Jobs on the reservation creates many unique challenges, and the Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation is doing great work to face these challenges by coordinating to develop a plan that will help drive economic development, promote safe, stable housing and improve public transportation options," said Senator Johnson.

**THE BLOG**  
Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

Stephanie Woodward  
@stephaniewoodward

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**Pine Ridge Rising: Community-Based Development Project Gets Underway**

Posted: 01/31/2011 9:03 am

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Ogala Lakota community leader, Nick Tilsen, envisions a vibrant future for his people. He sees elements of that transformation already in place on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. However, they are diverse and colorful pieces are scattered — uneven and uncoordinated — all over the Ogala Sioux Tribe's homeland in southwestern South Dakota. "There's been economic activity around the reservation, but no way to pull it together," said Tilsen (at left).

Until now. A new Housing and Urban Development grant will help the four-year-old organization Tilsen runs, **Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation**, do just that. HUD spokesperson Brian Sullivan called the project "exciting" and "a well-rounded regional plan." The funding — nearly a million dollars — comes out of HUD's **Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities**, formed to reduce bureaucratic barriers and involve local people in the development process, said Sullivan. The office encourages grassroots innovation, and Thunder Valley is delivering that right out of the gate, according to Tilsen.

For starters, Tilsen and his colleagues have taken the power dynamic. "This is not just work for us," said Tilsen. "It's a vision of the Ogala people. This is their land, their take-over of it."

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NEWS WEATHER SPORTS BUSINESS COMMUNITY

**Congressional Staffers Tour Pine Ridge Housing**  
Reported on 12/22/2011 by Derek Olson

CORNER, SD - Professional staff members for the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees have spent the past few days on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation touring various projects.

places are community housing projects more important than to go see it like we did yesterday (Wednesday), Minority House Appropriations Committee Professional Staffer Joe Car

pletely different to hear that in Washington and then to go see it like we did yesterday (Wednesday), Minority House Appropriations Committee Professional Staffer Joe Car

ederal government makes an investment into poor communities to begin to create jobs and new opportunities here. When they cut that funding it negatively impacts that Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation Executive Director Tilsen said.

raw bale home is part of a project to bring more energy-efficient and sustainable housing to the reservation. It's a goal that hinges on continued support from the federal government.

seventy-five percent of our funding comes from the government right now. The other 25 percent comes from philanthropic grant makers," Tilsen said.

Thunder Valley has already used around a million dollars of grants to formulate a development plan for the reservation. But with future funding on the congressional chopping block, it's a goal that hinges on continued support from the federal government.

"We need congress to appropriate monies to allow us to do that work and give us the money," Tilsen said.

"It's really important to actually be here to see what's needed so we can actually make good policies and funds need to be given," Carlie said.

The straw bale home under construction is one of four different energy-efficient designs being built on the reservation. The structure will serve as a model for future housing in the Thunder Valley community.

For more information, visit Thunder Valley's website.

WFN CONSULTANTS OFFERS ANALYSIS OF CMB

**peaco**

**Lakota Y**

With an average per capita income of \$10,000, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is one of the poorest places in the United States. The school dropout rate is nearly 95% of families.

"But our focus is not just on the 3-year-old Lakota Y, but on the entire reservation. We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation. We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation. We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation."

LAN began as a benevolent society for the aged. It was a place where the elderly could find a sense of community and the future of the Lakota Nation. "We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation. We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation. We have a vision of a sustainable future for the reservation."

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## REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**B**eginning in 2010, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation coordinated a regional planning process for the Oglala Lakota Nation on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation through the inaugural grant of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Program. This regional plan is called Oyate Omniciye (Oglala Lakota Plan), and has since been adopted by two successive tribal councils.

The Thunder Valley community is the first implementation project of the Model Community Development initiative. The goal of this initiative is to create sustainable and interconnected communities that provide better housing, places for business to thrive and a healthy supportive environment for youth, elderly and families. Model communities are living laboratories to build skills, knowledge and capacity for residents. This project will explore and refine new ways of living that build on traditional Lakota values to develop innovative, homegrown Native solutions to a variety of challenges.

The project is driven by the need for jobs, housing, facilities and new opportunities that do not currently exist on the Reservation. It emphasizes the need to create new systems that foster and bolster proposed development. Thunder Valley CDC is located on fee-simple land, deeded land, which will help enable it to secure financing. Ultimately the site will feature single family, multi-family residences, youth shelter, childcare facility, and commercial and industrial buildings.



### THUNDER VALLEY MASTER PLAN

- 1 Empowerment Center (55,000 sf, 1.5 stories)
- 2 Central Plaza / Market (100' x 250')
- 3 Visitor Parking / Bus Drop-off
- 4 Business Incubator / Retail / Apartments (40,000 sf, 2-stories)
- 5 PowWow Grounds (100' diameter)
- 6 Youth Shelter
- 7 Skateboard Park / Ropes Course
- 8 Studio Space / Apartments (1 @ 30,000 sf, 1 @ 18,000 sf, 2-stories)
- 9 General Parking (50 stalls)
- 10 Light Industrial (30,000 sf, 1-story)
- 11 Loading Dock Area (160' x 190')
- 12 Flex Space / Office Space / Retail (30,000 sf, 1-story)
- 13 Townhouses (3 @ 10,000 sf, 8 units per building, 24 units total)
- 14 Outdoor Basketball Court
- 15 Single Family Housing (27)
- 16 Co-housing Cluster (equivalent to 4 single family houses)
- 17 Aquaponics Greenhouses (2 @ 6,000 sf ea.)
- 18 Outdoor Garden (15,000 sf)
- 19 Bunkhouses (1,600 sf, 3 buildings)
- 20 Spiritual Spaces / Traditional Medicinal Plants



**SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE**

Arranged on quarter acre lots, this development composition allows for shared outdoor space, gardening, and the development of a trail system

**SPIRITUAL SPACE**

Tucked behind the ridge line from the main development area, this space will provide a more secluded space for traditional ceremonies and medicinal plant cultivation

**COHOUSING MODEL**

This housing model consists of a cluster of single family residences spaced closer together in a half moon. The form is traditional to the Lakota people and offers a protected shared space and stronger sense of community

**ROPES COURSE**

**BASKETBALL COURT**

**WIND TURBINE**

**YOUTH SHELTER**

Adjacent to many of the activities available at Thunder Valley, this facility provides youth guest rooms and counseling services

**ARTIST STUDIOS AND LOFTS**

The lower floor opens out onto the central green and provides flexible space for artists and other activities, and the second level has apartments.

**GYMNASIUM**

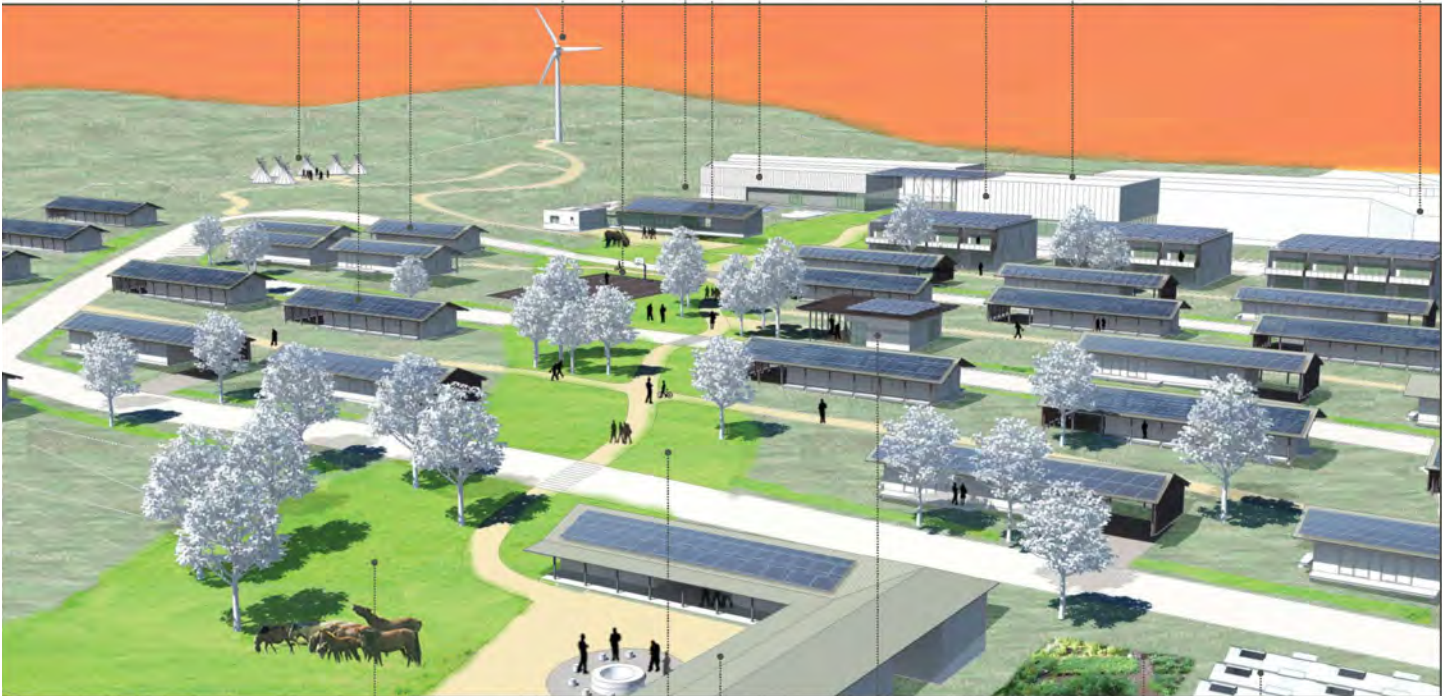
This indoor basketball court, doubles as a storm shelter, and this facility is connected to the Empowerment Center / Fitness Center.

**TOWNHOUSES**

These units are of similar size to single family houses and each have their own front door. These units will provide a less expensive option for ownership.

**DAY CARE FACILITY**

Connected to the Empowerment Center and adjacent to the outdoor playground, this facility is located to provide easy drop off and pick up



This conceptual illustration shows a view of the residential area. The view is centered on the main green shared space and highlights the many community uses in that space and surrounding buildings. The surrounding structures showcase the range of residential options available on site.

**CENTRAL GREEN CAMPING SITE**

**RAIN GARDEN / CISTERN**

Water from the neighborhood is cleaned through swales and rain gardens and collected in underground cisterns for use on gardens

**COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

Centrally located in the residential area, this facility provides a large gathering place for community members to eat together and host celebrations

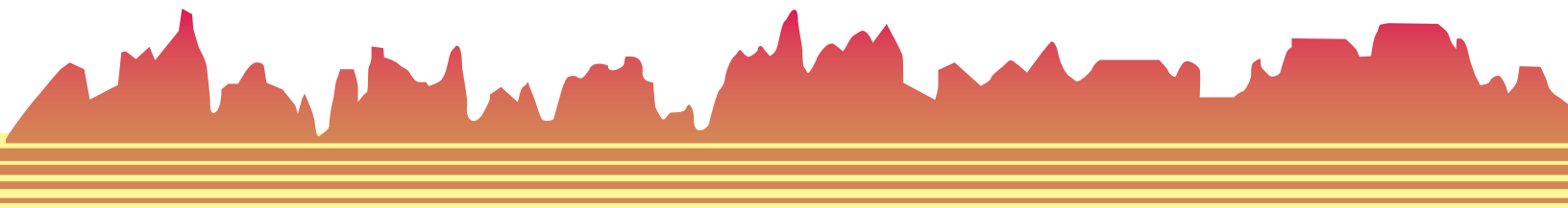
**GARDEN**

**AQUAPONICS GREENHOUSE**

Aquaponics is a method of food production which combines raising fish with growing vegetables. This method produces the greatest amount of food in the smallest footprint and each waste product fuels a needed input, creating a harmonious system

**BUNK HOUSE**

Available to visitors and volunteers of Thunder Valley. This building houses two sleeping quarters and a shower house



## SUSTAINABLE HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

**W**e are building four sustainable housing prototypes as a part of Phase 1 of Thunder Valley Regenerative Community Development. These four houses will have the same layout and use the same technologies to achieve comfort and cost savings, but will have different construction types:

Straw Bale Infill  
Compressed Earth Block  
Structural Insulated Panels  
Advanced Wood Frame

The energy usage, air quality, durability and occupancy of each house will be monitored over a 12-month period in order to gain an understanding of the best performing construction type specific to the culture and climate of the Oglala Lakota Nation, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

These activities are achieved through an academic service learning partnership between Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, Oglala Lakota College, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, CU Environmental Design - University of Colorado Boulder and Native American Sustainable Housing Initiative (NASHI).

The service learning approach seeks to reach across disciplines and combines multiple methodologies with the goal of creating an inter-organizational method of applying work through action and education or “community engaged teaching”. Using real world projects as the foundation for transmitting knowledge beyond the traditional classroom through teaching, mentoring and other curricular activities that serve our community in meaningful ways, students acquire the critical skills needed to address the social and environmental challenges facing numerous local and global communities.

*We have to teach the next generation how to build sustainably, to help create a future for our people, and maybe they will carry this on...*

**LENNY LONE HILL,  
INSTRUCTOR, OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE**

*They are looking at homes that will really meet the needs of the population, particularly youth.*

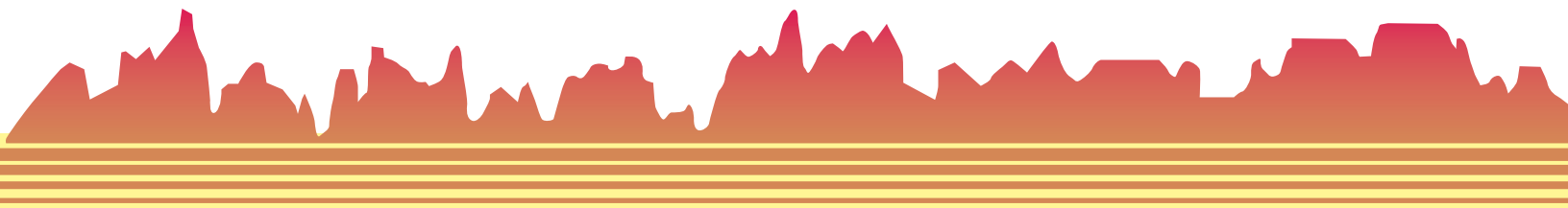
**EMMA “PINKY” CLIFFORD,  
DIRECTOR OF OGLALA SIOUX  
PARTNERSHIP FOR HOUSING**



### SUSTAINABILITY: STRAW BALE HOUSING

- The straw bale house offers an energy efficient alternative to the existing houses and trailers around the reservation. This design is built to be net-zero (producing more energy over the course of a year than it uses).
- The home includes cost effective passive strategies like natural ventilation and passive solar orientation. This homes is designed using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Homes rating system criteria.





## YOUTH SHELTER

**T**hunder Valley Community Development Corporation will construct and operate a youth shelter to serve at-risk children between eight and twelve years of age on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Considered underserved by the existing OST Youth Shelter (for ages 12-18), youth in this age group are harder to place than older teens. This target population is comprised of youth involved in suicide attempts, truancy, drug/alcohol abuse, and violence. These youth typically come from multiple living situations due to parental problems.

The shelter will serve eight children (four girls and four boys) at one time, providing emergency housing for a period of up to 21 days. The 3,300 square foot shelter will provide comfortable spaces to sleep, eat, study, and recreate for the youth. The shelter will have office and administrative spaces to aid in counseling, life skills training, and reuniting the children with a permanent home.

The youth shelter design utilizes a southern orientation to maximize passive solar heat gain during the winter, shading devices during the summer, and sheltered outdoor spaces to protect against the prevailing winds. Residential sleeping areas are built to be tornado resistant.

The Thunder Valley Youth Shelter will serve as a safe, nurturing, and culturally connected place for the youth shelter to reside. The facility will have access to equine therapy, ropes course, eco-machine, and open walking trails. The Youth Shelter will meet the needs of one of the most vulnerable populations in the community.

*“I want a community I can proud of with no garbage anywhere and nice homes and a park with a nice pow wow grounds.”*

**—SELMA, 5TH GRADER, PINE RIDGE**







## SUSTAINABILITY: YOUTH SHELTER

- The youth shelter facility will incorporate the most current practices in creating greener structures using the U.S. Green Building Council LEED criteria.
- It is designed to increase self sufficiency, reuse materials, and reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment.
- The facility will efficiently use energy, water and other resources to reduce waste, pollution, and environmental degradation.

*It was clear in today's meeting that Thunder Valley CDC is working very hard and making significant progress toward building a sustainable community that will improve the quality of life on Pine Ridge.*

**- SENATOR TIM JOHNSON,  
SOUTH DAKOTA**

## EMPOWERMENT CENTER

**T**he Thunder Valley Regenerative Community Empowerment Center is not just a place for future residents to find entertainment, learning and shared activity. It will serve as a destination for all the community of the Oglala Lakota Nation and beyond.

The Empowerment Center will be centrally located on our 34 acre regenerative development with spaces for an open air farmer's market and out-door vender's space for community entrepreneurship. Housed within the Empowerment Center will be the Thunder Valley CDC administration, leasable office space, business/workforce center, educational space, all-ages gathering space, guest expert/visitors quarters, all creating space for learning and creativity.

The Empowerment Center will be adjacent to our highly energy-efficient home ownerships, rental units, central green zones, out door pow-wow grounds, light industry spaces and near plenty of new retail spaces which have the potential to house everything from a small coffee house, food co-op, to a large scale grocery store.

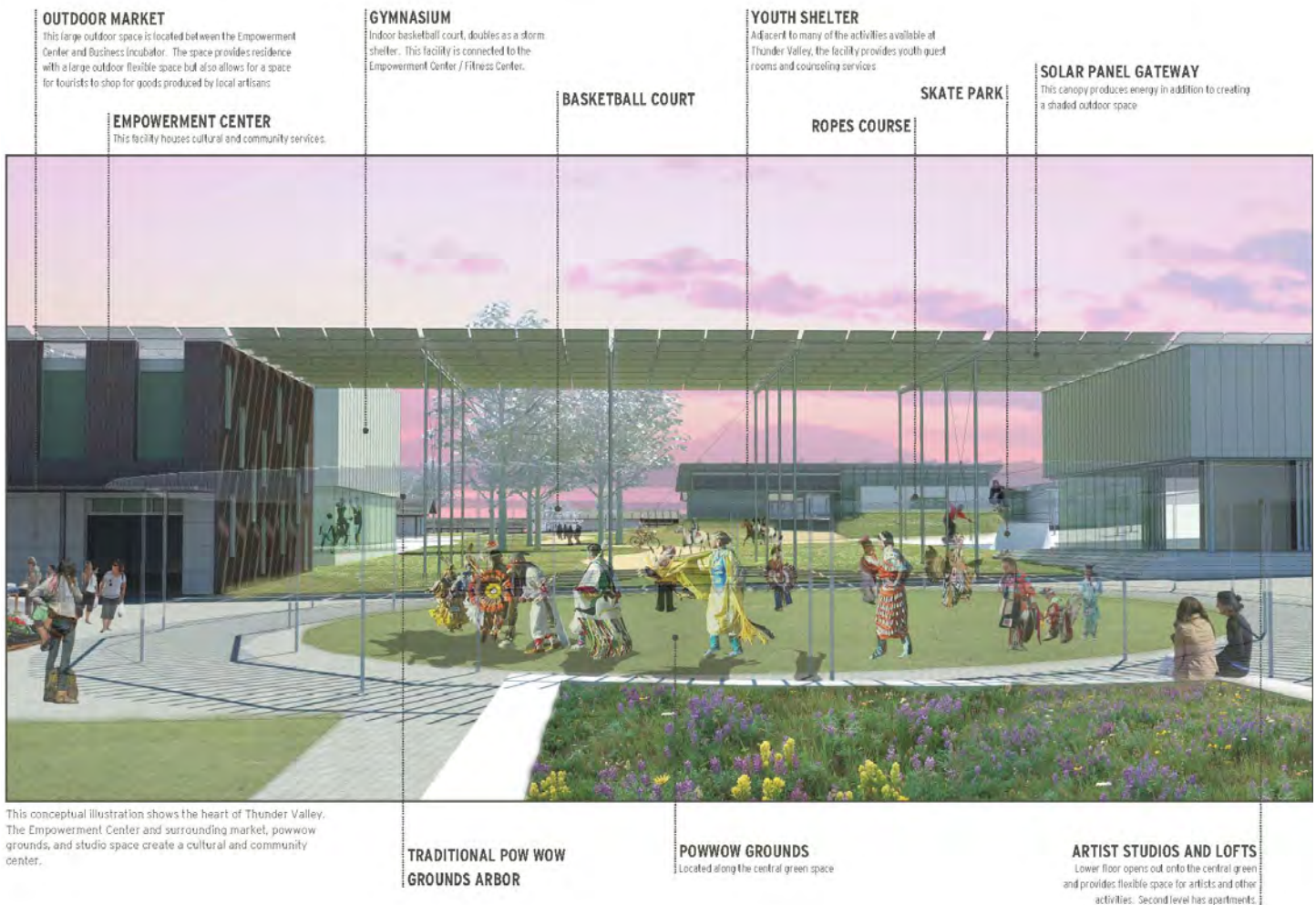
Potential activities at the Empowerment Center will be, but not limited to, job training, technical education counseling, teaching kitchen, health care services, children's day care, computer lab/library, audio-visual history/future lab, and possibly law enforcement sub station/triage unit. The Empowerment Center will offer a unique opportunity for our community to have hands-on influence toward designating what programming, entertainment and learning opportunities will happen.



## SUSTAINABILITY: EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Center piece of the community, the Empowerment Center will maximize function and sustainability through meeting LEED Platinum design ensuring energy efficiency, efficient water usage, and healthy indoor spaces. This mixed use, community facility offers life-long education programs, workforce training, diverse meeting and community spaces, fitness

training, Thunder Valley CDC Administrative offices and a cultural arts center. The Empowerment Center with it's central location in the heart of the Oglala Lakota Nation offers all in the region a destination where dreams, vision and opportunity come together to nurture a strong and sustainable future for our community.



**OUTDOOR MARKET**

This large outdoor space is located between the Empowerment Center and Business Incubator. The space provides residence with a large outdoor flexible space but also allows for a space for tourists to shop for goods produced by local artisans

**EMPOWERMENT CENTER**

This facility houses cultural and community services.

**GYMNASIUM**

Indoor basketball court, doubles as a storm shelter. This facility is connected to the Empowerment Center / Fitness Center.

**BASKETBALL COURT**

**YOUTH SHELTER**

Adjacent to many of the activities available at Thunder Valley, the facility provides youth guest rooms and counseling services

**ROPES COURSE**

**SKATE PARK**

**SOLAR PANEL GATEWAY**

This canopy produces energy in addition to creating a shaded outdoor space

This conceptual illustration shows the heart of Thunder Valley. The Empowerment Center and surrounding market, powwow grounds, and studio space create a cultural and community center.

**TRADITIONAL POW WOW  
GROUNDS ARBOR**

**POWWOW GROUNDS**

Located along the central green space

**ARTIST STUDIOS AND LOFTS**

Lower floor opens out onto the central green and provides flexible space for artists and other activities. Second level has apartments



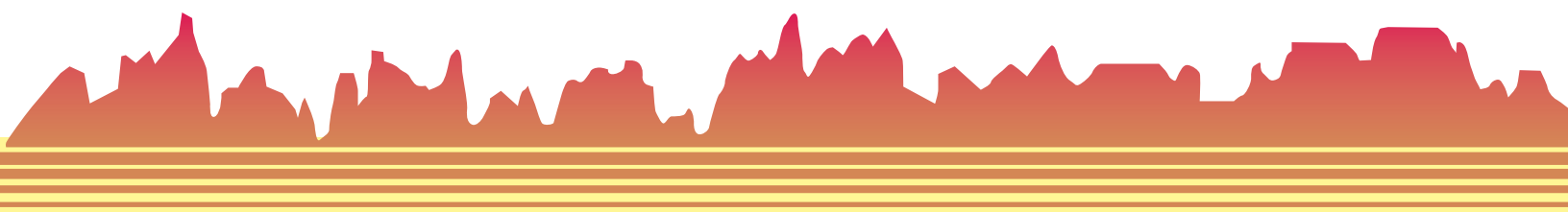
## WALKING, HIKING, AND BIKING TRAIL

**T**hunder Valley CDC has a one-mile walking/hiking trail. Follow the designated path around the perimeter of our fence line - one lap equals one mile. This trail is open to the public. There is no fitness center within thirty miles of Thunder Valley CDC, leaving community members with little to no options for physical activity.

This is one cause leading to the high rate of diabetes on the Pine Ridge Reservation. By creating this one-mile trail, Thunder Valley combats this issue, by providing a safe place for community members to do physical activity with their family.

*We need to seize the moment here, The President of the United States talked about some important things our people put together with hard work and determination. He chose Pine Ridge for a reason. This tells me that our voice has been heard and we must continue to share this vision.*

**BRYAN BREWER SR.,  
OGLALA LAKOTA NATION PRESIDENT**





## OYATE OMNİCIYE' REGIONAL LAKOTA PLAN

In October of 2010 Thunder Valley CDC was awarded a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. We were 1 of 45 successful regional applicants awarded nearly \$100 million in new grants from the Office of Sustainable Housing & Communities.

Oyate Omniciye' began with conversations involving a small circle of Lakota elders who talked about what Lakota people do when getting together to “plan” for something important. During conversation, a dialogue emerged about whether the Lakota language had a word for “sustainability”. Ultimately, the group came to the simple words: Oyate Omniciye - Roughly translated, “The Circle Meetings of the People”. The phrase carries deeper meanings. First, “Oyate” refers not only to humans, but to all living beings. Secondly, calling for an “Omniciye” is not to be taken lightly. This word signifies that very important things are to be considered, and in the way of the Lakota, the ultimate goal is to seek consensus for all who wished to remain in the conversation.

The goal was to create a Regional Plan, developed through communication and partnerships of those living and working within this ‘Region,’ which encompasses the boundaries and jurisdiction of the Oglala Lakota Nation.

Thunder Valley CDC facilitated community conversations. These conversations included input from children, elders, elected officials, community leaders, all those vested in building a healthy and sustainable tribal community. This collaboration of committed citizens, organizations, tribal and outside agencies took an in-depth look at existing systems that affect everyday lives of those living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. An honest and collaborative conversation about the challenges our tribal communities face and what lies in the future, was made possible by information gathering and community outreach.





## LAKOTA IMMERSION CHILDCARE—İYAPI GLUKİNİPI

**W**e know how important the Lakota language is to the overall wellbeing of our communities. When the U.S. government and affiliated groups worked for over a century to stamp out Native American languages in the name of assimilation, they were tearing the heart out of cultures that had existed for thousands of years. In looking at the social issues that we deal with on a daily basis on the reservation, the elders and others in the community are in agreement that the loss of the language is both a symptom and a cause of the collapse of a strong, functional Lakota society.

We believe that the language revitalization movement is important not just to save a language, but to create a sense of self for the young people. Language is impera-

tive to create a sense of pride in one's heritage, and a foundation on which to build a solid inner fortress of emotional wellbeing.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation serves as fiscal sponsor and financial administrator to the Lakota Immersion Childcare. The Executive Director of the Lakota Immersion Childcare stated, "We believe this [immersion] initiative has tremendous potential to help in the important work of revitalizing the Lakota language, so that it may continue strongly for future generations". Thunder Valley CDC has reviewed this concept and feels that the WakDáDyeža OkáDtaDwiDhayapi project is in line with our mission and we are happy to support its efforts.

*In just a short time they have taken hold of what could be seen as insurmountable challenges and turned them into opportunities and symbols of hope for the future.*

**SHELLEY POTICHA,  
FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

*"I wish I had a nice house and could play football in my yard"*

**—JEREMY, 2ND GRADE, PINE RIDGE**



## THUNDER VALLEY COMMUNITY HOUSE

In the summer of 2006 we had a vision of building a community house that would serve as a living cultural empowerment center and the foundation for our future work. This community house would provide a place for traditional Lakota ceremonies on the weekend, and would be a center for youth to gather on weekdays to learn songs, language and culture. There need for space for community gatherings on Pine Ridge, and we wanted to build a place that could be owned by the community and used for their needs. The community house started as a simple idea, was embraced by the community, and turned into a reality.

One year later, in late summer of 2007, we completed the 1,750 square foot Thunder Valley Community House. The project was a 100% volunteer effort, built by local people. It contains a huge 1,100 sq ft community gathering space, two bathrooms and large community kitchen. Today it is used at least five days a week for ceremonies and community gatherings.

Building the Community House was an amazing accomplishment for us as a community and an organization. We made it a point to keep the project 100% volunteer because we wanted to show ourselves that we can accomplish anything we put our mind to. We also wanted to show our donors and supporters that we are invested into this work and it is a collective effort by the entire community. Since we have built the community house, we have had ceremonies and community gatherings with over 200 people in attendance. The success of the Thunder Valley Community House has set a precedent for us and it will be the foundation that we will grow from.



*To partnerships with Thunder Valley, between Native American tribes, the work has been really remarkable, it has really begun to shift to a new paradigm of cooperation.*

**SHAUN DONOVAN**  
**HUD SECRETARY**



## THUNDER VALLEY E-TANKA CAFÉ

**T**he Thunder Valley E-Tanka Cafe was a partnership between the Thunder Valley Community Development Corp. and Native American Natural Foods, the creator of the Tanka Bar. In this project, youth had the opportunity to work for two organizations that are dedicated to improving the lives of Lakota people through increasing skills for young people.

The Thunder Valley e-Tanka Cafe project provided a hands-on youth entrepreneurship program that gave youth “real life” skills to carry with them to higher education or in starting their professional careers.

Youth from the Oglala Lakota Nation helped to create the cafe, which served healthy food and drinks, including the brand new Tanka Dog, a 100% Natural Buffalo Hot Dog. In the project, the youth workers got hands-on experience in customer service, Internet marketing and the selling of goods and services.

The youth employees were also trained in financial literacy. They opened bank accounts and participated in an individual development account (IDA) savings program.

The heart of the Thunder Valley-Native American Natural Foods partnership aimed at giving reservation youth the opportunity to learn entrepreneurship skills, get financial education, receive on-the-job experience and to contribute to creating positive change in the local community. It also focused on helping youth become healthier physically, mentally and emotionally.

The Thunder Valley e-Tanka Cafe project was funded by the Administration for Native Americans, Native American Natural Foods and the Thunder Valley Community Development Corp.



## LOOKING FORWARD

### PROJECTS

2014 marks an exciting time for Thunder Valley CDC as all of our ideas and plans will start turn into implementation and action. In 2014, we plan to complete the following projects:

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

We will secure the financing for infrastructure of Phase 1 of the development. We will begin construction of infrastructure systems including:

- Sanitary Sewer System
- Fresh Water System
- Reuse Water System
- Roadway and walking paths
- Electrical System

#### SUSTAINABLE HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

In 2014 we will continue our Partnership with the Native American Sustainable Housing Initiative, CU Boulder, Oglala Lakota College and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to finish the Straw Bale Demonstration House and begin construction of the Structured Insulated Panel Demonstration House, which are all part of the Sustainable Housing Research Project. The other two homes in this project will be built in 2015.

#### MOVING OUR OFFICE/SET UP OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CENTER

Thunder Valley CDC will move our office north to be out of the single-family house portion of the development. We will expand our headquarters to include an additional 2,000ft of training and community gathering space for our new Youth Build and Workforce Development Training Programs.

#### THUNDER VALLEY COMMUNITY HOUSE IMPROVEMENTS

In the spirit of staying committed to our roots as an organization we will make improvements on the existing Thunder Valley Community House. The community

house is currently used for community, ceremonial, and cultural gatherings. We will make roof repairs, install new flooring, and other needed improvements.

### PROGRAMS

2014 will also be an exciting time for the implementation of new programs. These programs seek to continue the mission of Thunder Valley CDC with additional community investment. These programs include:

#### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SUSTAINABLE GREEN HOME CONSTRUCTION

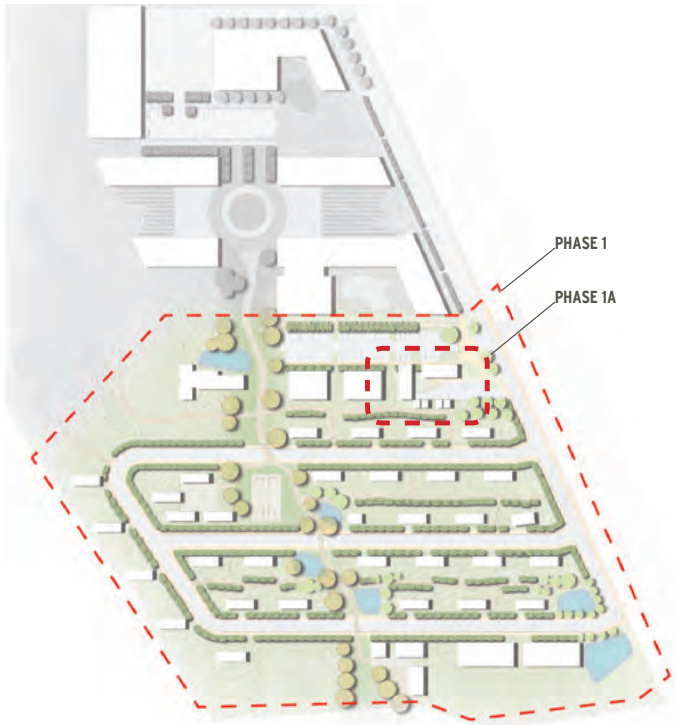
This is a new program inspired by the Youth Build Model, but is open to all adults and all educational backgrounds. Each participant will participate in an occupational training program. This program will include classroom time to reach their individual educational goals, life skills, and leadership development tools to improve their basic life skills in financial literacy, debt education, and basic life planning. Lastly they will learn occupational construction skills in on the job training. They will actively build green sustainable homes within the development at Thunder Valley CDC.

#### YOUTH BUILD-DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PROGRAM

This is a nonresidential, community based alternative education program. It provides classroom instruction and occupational skills training to at risk individuals ages 16-24. Participants have been in the juvenile justice system, are aging out of foster care, are high school dropouts, and are otherwise at risk of failing to reach key educational milestones and opportunities that lead to career fulfillment. Participants learn valuable skills as they build affordable housing for low income or homeless individuals and families in their communities. Non-construction skills training will include leadership development and community service elements to ensure that youth maintain a connection to their communities, through service and volunteerism.







### **SUSTAINABLE HOME OWNERSHIP PROJECT (SHOP)**

The beginning stages of this partnership will happen in 2014. Thunder Valley CDC is playing a lead role in the creation of the Sustainable Home Ownership Project. SHOP will be a new system used to get families prepared for home ownership on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This partnership includes Thunder Valley CDC, Mazaska Oweecseo Otipi Financial, OST Partnership for Housing, The Lakota Funds, The Lakota Federal Credit Union, and Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing.

### **SELF-HELP USDA HOUSING PROGRAM**

The planning stages for this program will take place in 2014, so that it will be implemented within the next five years. The Mutual Self-Help Housing Program (Section 523) makes homes affordable by enabling future homeowners to work on homes themselves. With this investment in the home, or ‘sweat equity’, each homeowner pays less for his or her home than if it were build by a contractor. This enables very-low and low-income families an opportunity to own their home.

## **RESEARCH**

With the beginning stages taking place in 2014, Thunder Valley will actively research the following so that implementation will take place in the next five years:

### **LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS**

Thunder Valley CDC will explore the option of using Low Income Housing Tax Credits to build five single family homes and sixteen townhomes to be included within Phase 1 of the development.

### **WORKER OWNED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**

We will explore the idea of creating a worker owned construction-company to build parts of the development and compete regionally in the construction industry. Thunder Valley CDC will complete a market study and feasibility study that will inform the decision to move forward with the creation of the company and a community asset and wealth creation model.

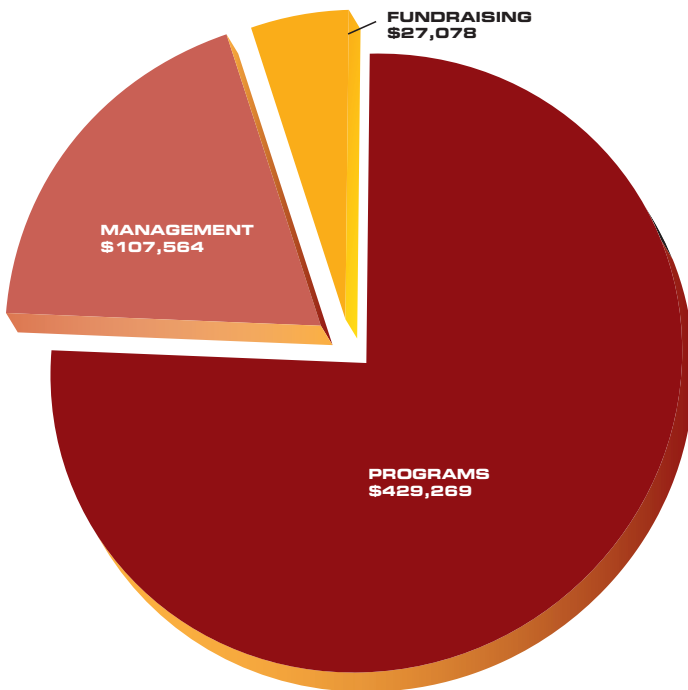
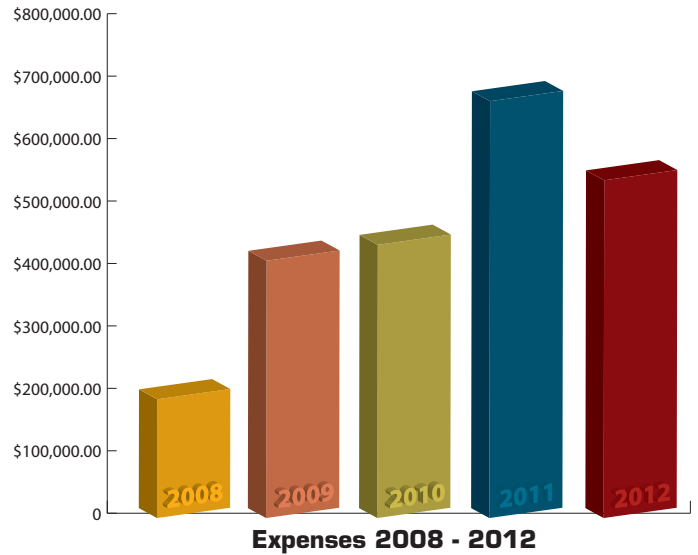
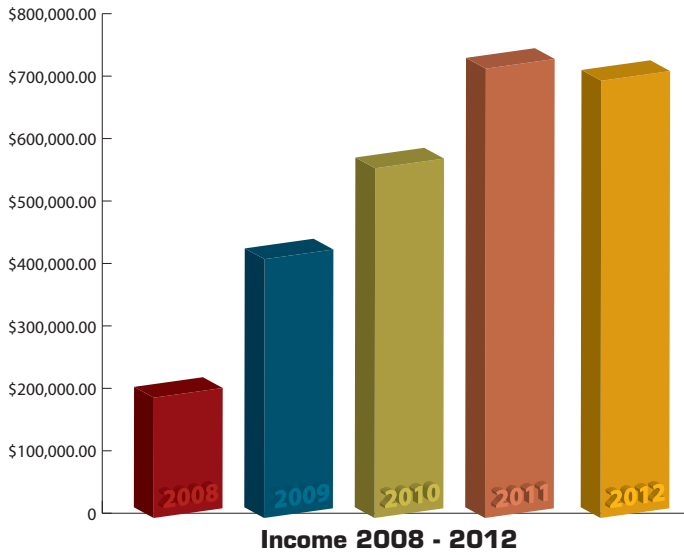
### **COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS STRATEGY**

Thunder Valley CDC will acquire resources to look at community food systems strategies for the region to increase food security and food sovereignty issues. This study will look at the dollars that flow off the reservation for food and where that food comes from. This research will directly inform a strategy to create a better food system for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which could result in a grocery store, food distribution center, a food hub, commercial green house, and other projects within the development at Thunder Valley.

*Thunder Valley’s really taking a look at a really good model through creating jobs and giving Tribal members the opportunity to actually achieve home ownership.*

**LEROY ‘JR.’ LAPLANTE,  
S.D. SECRETARY OF TRIBAL RELATIONS**

## FINANCIALS - 2007-2012



*“If we respect ourselves, we will respect our homes, our environment, our relatives and community.”*

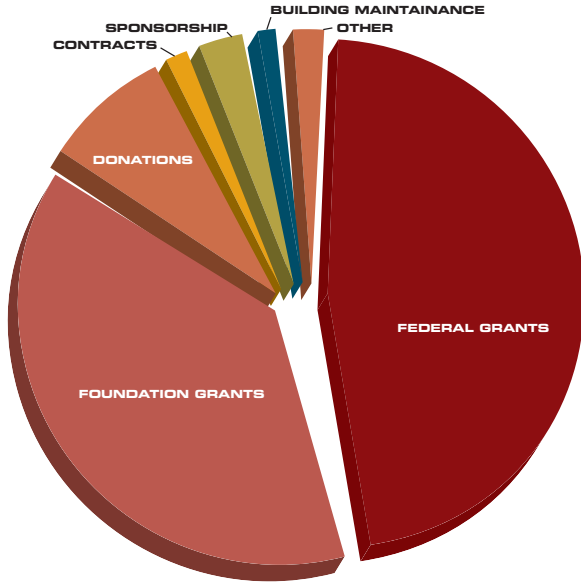
—PARTICIPANT, AUG 2011  
OYATE OMNICIYE’ LISTENING SESSION

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL  
EXPENSES FOR 2012  
(AUDITED)





# FINANCIALS - 2013



## REVENUE - 2013

(UNAUDITED)\*

Federal Grants .....	\$344,697
Foundation Grants .....	\$278,155
Contributions / Donations .....	\$59,493
Contracts .....	\$10,250
Sponsorships .....	\$21,330
Building Maintenance .....	\$7,000
Other Income .....	\$13,433

**TOTAL REVENUE .....** \$734,359

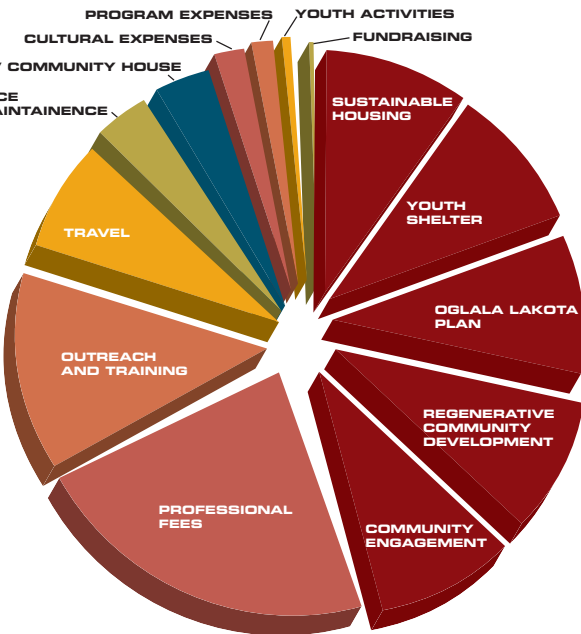
## EXPENSES - 2013

(UNAUDITED)\*

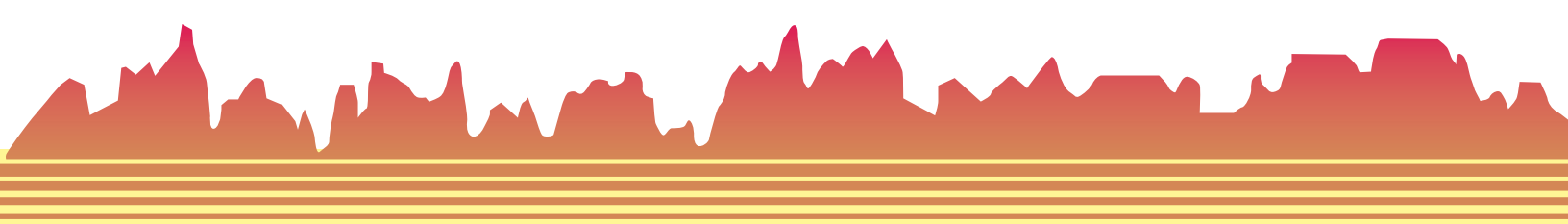
Salaries and Benefits:

Sustainable Housing Project .....	\$41,284
Youth Shelter Development .....	\$41,284
Oglala Lakota Plan .....	\$41,284
Regenerative Community Development Project .....	\$41,284
Community Engagement .....	\$41,285
Professional Fees .....	\$99,608
Outreach and Training .....	\$58,237
Travel Expenses .....	\$33,535
Office and Maintenance .....	\$16,973
Thunder Valley Community House .....	\$15,689
Cultural Activities .....	\$8,470
Program Expenses .....	\$6,875
Youth Activities .....	\$1,950
Fundraising .....	\$1,031

**TOTAL EXPENSES .....** \$448,789



\*All audited financials are available to the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribal members, and the general public. These can be downloaded at [www.thundervalley.org](http://www.thundervalley.org)



## SPECIAL THANKS

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of Foundations - Donors - Agencies and Individuals. "Movements for positive change aren't about institutions, organizations, governments, or jurisdictions. They are about people...people coming together for the benefit of each other and the willingness to sacrifice in order to lift each other up. As human beings we can accomplish anything we put our minds to." We say Wopila, thank you to all those who support us now, in the past and those yet to join us in meeting the goals of our community on the Oglala Lakota Nation.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Barbara Lane LeBeau: *Secretary*  
Morris Brewer: *Member*

Robert D. Ecoffey: *Vice President*  
Evelyn Weston: *Treasurer*  
Cordelia White Elk: *Member*

## PARTNERS

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation can not do it alone. From the beginning, every step forward was achieved by the efforts of many. Community volunteers, community leaders, folks from every level of support have had hands on of our shared success thus far.

We acknowledge our partners, our relationships with many talented individuals and organizations, many powerful and passionate spirits who are changing the story. Owning the story and directing what the future chapters may hold for our future generations on our own terms.

*Thank you for your continued support.*



Environmental Design  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER



SOUTH DAKOTA  
**M**  
SCHOOL OF MINES  
& TECHNOLOGY



**NASHI**  
Native American Sustainable Housing Initiative  
Building Sustainable Communities





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Mennonite Central Committee	United States Environmental Protection Agency
SEVA Foundation	Environmental Justice Program
Administration for Native Americans	State of South Dakota
- Administration for Children & Families	Hill-Snowdon Foundation
Bush Foundation	Enterprise Foundation
HOPA Mountain	North West Area Foundation
Seeds of justice	First Nations Development Institute
Groundspring.org	Peace Development Fund
South Dakota Community Foundation	Minnesota Housing Partnership
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Seven Power Foundation
Office Of Sustainable Housing & Communities	Hancock Lumbar Company
Rural Housing & Economic Development Program	Mainstreet Resources



Your Gift to Thunder Valley will help us create a better world for Lakota Youth & Families. Native Communities like ours need support from people like you. Together we can work towards creating a healthier way of life for all. Please consider making a recurring donation of \$500 dollars or more. We are in this systemic work for the long term. Please join us in this struggle.