

CANGLESKA WAKAN OWAYEWA HAS STARTED

Oglala, SD. June 8, 2007. After many years of giving in time, effort, assistance by many individuals and organizations, and of recent months of hard work in coordinating this event to happen, this date has finally arrived.

The Sacred Circle School or Lakota Circle Village Lakota Language Learning Center, was actively started with the arrival of the Mission of Love volunteers from Youngstown, Ohio. The team of 20 volunteers led by Founder/Director, Kathleen Price, arrived in a caravan of vans escorting two large semi trucks arrived onto the site at approximately 11 am, June 5, 2007. Arriving earlier was Rusty Puckett, a Lakota building contractor, and owner of Prairie Ranch Resort of Kyle, SD, with his crew and equipment to began the foundation work.

The group was met by Leonard Little Finger, Founder and Director, of Lakota Circle Village, Richard Broken Nose, Spiritual Leader, and Johnson Bear Robe, a family member of Sitanka Tiwahe, Chief Big Foot family. A short welcoming talk was given by Leonard After introductions of all present a prayer was offered by Richard.

Upon the group's arrival, a young spotted eagle, *Wanbli Teca*, suddenly appeared, circling high above the site. The eagle came from the east, circling to the south, then to the west, and finally after circling to the north disappearing into the same direction. It was indeed, "A Good Day", "*Anpetu wan waste ca oyate ki Tunkasila eyohiye wicakiye*"

Work began after the short gathering, with the heavy equipment beginning to dig the crawl space area, while the volunteers began to unload the building materials, purchased and transported in a semi truck and smaller truck, driven 1500 miles to the site by Mission of Love team members, Michael Antila and John Rosensteel.

By nightfall, not only was the crawl space completed, the forms had been built, and the cement trucks had dropped their loads, completing the base for foundation. At around 9 am, the group left for their first day to the Prairie Ranch Resort, located near Kyle, SD., a journey of 80 miles, to rest in quarter provided by Rusty Puckett. As the sun disappeared two night shifts were planned to watch over the equipment and building materials, Johnson Bear Robe to take the first shift, and later Charles Janis and wife, Emma, to stay in the cars, assuring the security.

Wednesday morning, the second day, was greeted with an ominous warning of possible tornado conditions later in the day for the entire Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Undeterred, but wary, the group proceeded to take inventory, sort the materials, and began to build the wall studs, carefully measuring, cutting, and nailing together the wall frames. While this activity was taking place, the Puckett Crew, led by Rusty, completed the frame for the final pouring of the foundation, using a new material consisting of Styrofoam blocks, interlaced with hard plastic to hold the cement.. Portable toilets arrived before the Mission of Love crew arrived, happily greeted since the crew was without the onsite luxury the day before. Before noon, clouds gradually began to appear over the

site, giving relief from the sun that had been bearing down during the early morning. But, there was also high humidity in the air, causing the anxiety levels to rise amongst the local volunteers who had joined the Mission of Love team. A nearby carpentry school, training young Lakota men, had arrived on the scene, to offer their volunteer help, while gaining experience in carpentry work. The group was led by Mission of Faith, an organization providing the training. This was also complemented by Albert Red Bear and his crew. Albert was a previous recipient of a home built by Mission of Love. By mid-afternoon, a lunch prepared by Nadine Red Cloud, wife of Henry John Red Cloud, also recipients of a home built by Mission of Love organization.

By this time, the clouds quickly began to become heavier, traveling in a direction from southwest to northeast. The first tornado warning upgraded from a watch came at 3 pm, for the entire southwest part of South Dakota. Suddenly, by 3:45 pm, a dark cloud came rolling into the Oglala area. The crews began to work frantically to secure the recently finished foundation forms, still unsecured, and capable of blowing away. Heavy lumber was placed upon the foundation to prevent the possible destruction of the forms. Suddenly the high winds hit, as they were doing the final laying of timber. A cloud of dust being fed by high winds that were clocked by a weather station 15 miles south in Pine Ridge at 60 miles per hour. Volunteers felt the sting of the dirt as it blew into their faces and eyes. The lightning was horrific at the same time, driving the volunteers to seek shelter in their cars. A call from Leonard to go to his home which had a basement, prompted the group to travel 1 ½ miles to his home. Here the group found some safety.

The National Weather Service said several tornados touched group at 15 miles from the site, 20 miles and 50 miles from the work site. The tornadoes were said to be EF-1 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale and had wind speeds of 86 mph and 110 mph. In all 6 tornadoes were reported within the Pine Ridge Reservation. The storm carried 70 mph straight winds and hail about one inch in diameter across southwest South Dakota. The tornado and high winds caused a power outage to about 1500 people on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The electric company serving the area said the outage occurred about 4 pm. The towns of Kyle, Allen, Batesland, and Porcupine were hit destroying power lines, trees, and a few structures, The damage was estimated to the power lines at \$30,000 to \$50,000.

A tornado touched down across the street from the Prairie Ranch Resort, where the Mission of Love team is staying, but the group was not there at the time. They were in the safety of the home of Leonard Little Finger. Also, their cabins had electricity while the homes across the street remained without electricity until late afternoon the next day.

This report will be updated, as the work continues.