

DWM Facts

The significance of the name Diamond Willow Ministries

The name Diamond Willow is quite significant. Diamond Willow is a particular type of willow, a small bushy tree, that has unique and beautiful naturally occurring "diamond" shapes in its wood. Although it used to be found in abundance along the Missouri River, the construction of federal hydropower dams almost completely destroyed this species. It is only now starting to make a limited comeback. In the same way, unknown to most, there was a movement to Christianity among the Dakotas at the time they were first forcibly interned on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation (1860s). In fact, it is recorded that the first structure built on the reservation by the Dakota people themselves was a large willow arboretum for Christian worship. Unfortunately over the subsequent years, due in large part to government policies, and regrettable even by many that came in the name of God, this revival faded. However, it is clear now that God is doing a work here to restore hope and empower the Dakota people once again. Thus, like the Diamond Willow, the hope that comes through Jesus Christ is once again returning to the reservation.

Pronunciation DWM Words

Cantemawaste (Youth Camp that we have in the summer) Chun-tay-maw-wash-tay; emphasize first and fourth syllables. Cantemawaste means my heart feels good. When Christ is in our hearts, it makes us feel good. There's nothing better this side of heaven than that feeling.

Ikce Oyate Christian Center (DWM's main building) Eek-chay, Oh-yah-tay) Emphasize 2nd syllable in Ikce, and emphasize 2nd syllable in Oyate. Ikce Oyate means "common people" or "grassroots". It is a place where everyone is welcome and on the same level.

Tokata Youth Center (The program of DWM that is in town and open every weekday) To-kah-ta; emphasize 2nd syllable. We named the TYC with the word future to remind us daily that the youth we reach out to today are the leaders and influencers of the near future!

How and when was DWM founded?

The following timeline's purpose is to outline the start of Diamond Willow Ministries. It doesn't include everything, nor does it give great detail on the events that have unfolded. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to know more about how we got to where we are today! We'd love to share more with you. Pictures on our "Throwback Photos" album under "Media" correspond well with this Timeline.

May 1999: Rod and Valerie Vaughn Family moved to the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation west of Fort Thompson

2000: The Cantemawaste Youth Club formed and began meeting at the Boys and Girls Club in Fort Thompson

2001:

- The number of youth attending the CanteMaWaste Youth Club continues to increase
- May: With an increasing number of people of all ages being served, it was decided to legally form Diamond Willow Ministries as a non-profit 501c3 Christian Relief Organization. Rod and Valerie Vaughn, along with Terry Quilt, were the original Board of Directors and founders.
- A Dakota singing and Bible study group was started at Mary Manor during the week.
- Sunday worship services are held at the Vaughn home and their house is the center of much activity

2002:

- August: A tent is set up at the Annual Crow Creek Pow Wow to serve the community with hot coffee, ice water and a pancake breakfast. This tradition continues every year.
- November: A group of Christians from across the country met with community members to discuss the possibility of building what was to become the Ikce Oyate Christian Center.

2003:

- May: Kingsway Christian Church comes to assist with construction of the first onsite structure, the bunkhouse
- The bunkhouse immediately becomes a gathering place for picnics and fellowship.
- The first work group came onsite to assist with youth programs.
- November: the walls to the Ikce Oyate Christian Center were built by volunteers at the national Missionary Convention in Cincinnati, OH

2004:

- Early Spring: upgrades to the bunkhouse were made, waterlines and electrical lines run to the site, and the access road was constructed.
- June 5: the construction on the Ikce Oyate Christian Center begins! "Ikce Oyate" is a Dakota language phrase that means, "Common People"
- Services, classes, and programs begin in the unfinished building.

2005:

- Construction on the Ikce Oyate Christian Center continues.
- A horse barn/ garage is built. This building in later years has become the Mato Family Center. It is a multi-purpose building used for gatherings, services, parties, and meetings.

2007:

- Construction of the onsite housing duplex begins (now the home of Gail Griner one side and Bryan Johnson)