

Fire Threatens Ministry Property God's Protection on Full Display



Diamond Willow
Ministries



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PROTECTED BY GOD'S HAND

At 2 a.m. on **July 18**, Rod Vaughn, Executive Director of Diamond Willow Ministries, was awakened by an urgent phone call. The first word he heard was **"FIRE!"** Moments later came the even more chilling report: **"The church is burning down!"**

A carelessly discarded cigarette, combined with **drought conditions** and **high winds**, had sparked a fast-moving wildfire, one racing directly toward the Ikce Oyate Christian Center (IOCC) in the middle of the night.

Neighbors and staff quickly went into action, utilizing the neighbors' fire flappers (flat, heavy rubber tools used to smother grass fires) to hold back the flames until the Tribal Wildland Fire Crew arrived to take over. Together, they stopped the fire's advance and **saved the church and surrounding buildings.**

Only after the blaze was extinguished did it become clear how close disaster had come. The fire had skirted the very edge of the ministry grounds, coming **within 20 yards of the playground** and just **100 yards from staff housing** – the church and all were saved!

No property was lost, and no lives were harmed. **We thank God for His protection** and praise Him for the prayers of the saints that serve as a hedge around our property. This event stands as a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness in every circumstance.



Meal & Fellowship

FEEDING THE HUNGRY – DWM

Matthew 25:35 says, *"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..."* – Jesus Christ

Within the Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Nation, **sharing food is part of the culture.** Gathering around a meal gives people time to connect, share stories, and build trust. It also **meets a very real physical need.** Poverty here means that many families rely on the food they receive from the pantry and the meals shared at gatherings to have enough to eat or to stretch their groceries farther.

At the Ikce Oyate Christian Center, this happens in several ways: our food pantry, the meals shared before worship and during Bible study, a monthly potluck after worship, and other special gatherings throughout the year. In 2024, the pantry served **720 households** (2,107 individuals), and more than **2,000 meals** were shared at DWM gatherings, each one an opportunity to meet needs, build relationships, and share the hope of Christ. By mid-2025, we have already served 463 households (1,299 individuals). We praise God for continued opportunities to share the love of Jesus.



Sharing Food, Sharing Hope



**Invest in Hunkpati Youth & Families
Give Today!**

FROM GARDEN TO TABLE - TYC

At the Tokata Youth Center, meals are much more than food on a plate. In 2024, **over 12,000 meals** were served to **K-12 youth**, each one a moment to nourish bodies, build friendships, and point young hearts toward Jesus.

The youth center offers **after school and summer programming**, providing a safe and welcoming space for K-12 youth to find mentorship, discipleship, life skills, academic support, and shared meals. An **evening meal is served each day** the youth center is open, ensuring that every young person has access to a nutritious dinner.

Many of these meals are enriched by produce from our own garden. Youth help with every step: **planting seeds**, watering, pulling weeds, **harvesting vegetables**, and helping prepare and serve the food — even caring for culturally important native plants in our Grandmother Medicine Plant Garden (Kunsi Pejuta Garden), often called the Grandma Garden. Along the way, they learn where food comes from, the value of hard work, and the joy of sharing what they have grown with others.

Eating together is part of Dakota culture, and it is also a tool for building trust, mentoring youth, and **meeting real physical needs**. For some, a meal at TYC is the most substantial food they will have that day. Each plate served is an opportunity to **feed both body and soul**.



Planting Seedlings



Watering Grandma Garden



Sharing the Harvest

Over 20,000 Pancakes!

That's a lot of pancakes served, but it's how many have come off our griddle over the past 23 years at the annual **Crow Creek Powwow and Fair** in Fort Thompson. **Since 2002**, Diamond Willow Ministries has **provided a free breakfast** on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. It has become a tradition that many local families, campers, dancers, and singers look forward to each year. Serving breakfast is one way we show love to the community, offering not only food but also fellowship.

There is also a **spiritual "meal"** on Sunday mornings as powwow weekend is the one Sunday each year we do not worship at the Ikce Oyate Christian Center. Instead, we gather for **worship beside the powwow arena**, where **Dakota language hymns** are sung and God's Word is preached. Hearing the old hymns sung outdoors in Dakota is a beautiful sight and sound, a powerful witness, and a meaningful part of the powwow tradition.



Powwow Dancer in Regalia



Pancakes Hot Off Griddle



INTRODUCING THE ABUNDANT LIFE CIRCLE

Diamond Willow Ministries is launching the Abundant Life Circle, a **community of monthly givers** making a lasting difference by helping youth and families on the Crow Creek Reservation experience the hope and love of Jesus.

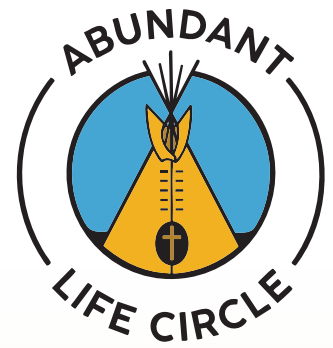
The name comes from **John 10:10**: “I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.”

Being part of the Abundant Life Circle means you are helping ensure youth and families experience the love of Jesus **in both practical and life-changing ways** every month.

Monthly gifts, no matter which fund they support, provide steady, reliable resources that keep ministry strong all year long. They **allow us to plan ahead**, respond quickly to urgent needs, and sustain programs that bring spiritual, emotional, and practical help to families and youth.

When you give monthly, you are automatically part of the **Abundant Life Circle**. Your monthly commitment places you in this **vital community of partners**. (You will not see this name listed as a separate fund on the giving form — it’s simply the name for our community of monthly givers.)

Thank you to everyone who gives so generously — your partnership is bringing hope and abundant life to youth and families.



The Abundant Life Circle

Our monthly giving community is called the Abundant Life Circle. When you set up a monthly gift to any fund, you're automatically part of this vital group bringing the hope and love of Jesus to youth and families all year long.

JOIN TODAY!



Return Service Requested

Before you move, please send the mailing label with a copy of your new address to:
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