



Diamond Willow
Ministries



Winter Newsletter
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EMPOWERMENT – THE GIFT OF GIVING BACK

In the Dakota culture, folks that are affectionately referred to as “**Kunsi**” (grandmother) and “**Lala**” (grandfather) have a special place of honor. Several that have attained this station in life **have chosen to give back with their wisdom and skills** at Diamond Willow.

Junior McBride and Alsephine Joseph both serve at the ministries’ Ikce Oyate Christian Center through an employment program administered by the non-profit NICOA (National Indian Council on Aging). Sanford “Sandy” Gabe continues to volunteer and has since literally the first shovel of dirt was turned over to build the Ikce Oyate Christian Center. Gary Middleton who recently moved back home to Fort Thompson is also now volunteering several days a week. It is a blessing to the ministry as well as the community to have each of these individuals serving.



SUNDAY MORNINGS AND CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

It is not just the elders that are giving back. **The desire to love and serve continues to grow** within the walls of the new **Tokata Youth Center** and is overflowing. Staff members of the Tokata Youth Center, both adults and teenagers, volunteer on Sundays to lead the worship music at the Ikce Oyate Christian Center. It is especially encouraging to see the “**heart to serve**” expressed by young people. Bright shining lights.



Their desire to help was also on full display as they **stepped up and stepped out** to take the main roles in the youth’s “Manger to the Cross” play performed at Diamond Willow Ministries’ Annual Community Christmas Program.



NEW TOKATA YOUTH CENTER

The **youngest have also caught the spirit of giving back**. At the “old TYC” building, the youth wanted a box put up last year where they could donate funds to help get THEIR new Tokata Youth Center facility built. Well, now that the youth are filling the new building with joyful exuberance, they still want a way to give back... so the old box is back up. Daily kids with wide smiles are filling it with coins and an occasional dollar bill as they excitedly pass by on their way to programming.



The new Tokata Youth Center has been serving at near capacity since the Grand Opening in September. **Already 460 youth are now enrolled for TYC programming!** A meal is served at the end of programming and it is not hard to imagine the amount of food consumed by the average of 85 youth attending daily.



In October, the youth center's supply of hamburger was quickly depleted by hungry growing youth! The need for meat was mentioned to a few within the Crow Creek Tribal community and literally **within hours, donations of beef, buffalo and deer meat began arriving.** It is exciting to see the local community willing and excited to directly give back to the tiospaye - their extended family.



TOKATA INITIATIVE

Overwhelming Impact. We knew it would work and have an impact.... but the response and use of the new Tokata Youth Center has been more significant than we imagined. All hands are on deck as so many youths are coming to the new facility and experiencing life more abundantly!

In the Dakota language **Tokata** means future. This new year presents a way for EVERYONE to invest in the future of tribal youth as the 3-year TOKATA INITIATIVE is now up and rolling! The goal of this \$5.1-million-dollar campaign is to raise funds to directly support the youth of the new Tokata Youth Center. The campaign will cover the \$3.8M of facility construction and project costs and \$1.3M for the first three years of operation, maintenance and staffing. A priority is to pay off the construction debt of \$2.2M as quickly as possible so that the Tokata Youth Center can operate debt-free as it always has in the past. This will best serve and keep the focus on THE YOUTH themselves!



The Plan. A multi-channel approach has been launched. Already, much has been raised. The staff will be visiting partners and prospective partner churches and individuals throughout 2023.

How You Can Help.

- Arrange a Meeting. If you know of a church, Christian foundation, or philanthropic family who should hear the TYC story and you could arrange an informational meeting, please let us know.
- Become a TYC Ambassador. If you desire to personally share the TYC story with your network as a TYC Ambassador, please contact Valerie Vaughn at valerie.vaughn@d-w-m.org or 605-730-2990 for a packet of Ambassador materials.

Now is the time! You can help through **prayer** (for God's wisdom and provision), **promotion** (sharing with others this genuine opportunity), and **provision** (gifts of cash and non-cash assets) to reach the \$5.1 million goal.

To see what's happening at the Tokata Youth Center, use this QR code to view **the latest video.**



CHRISTMAS BLIZZARD

It may someday be referred to with a shudder as the “**The Christmas Blizzard of 2022**”. The snow is still piled high throughout the communities of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. High winds, drifting snow, and an extended period of wind-chill in the 40 BELOW range created a dire situation for many.

It also presented a time to physically serve in a very tangible way. It was encouraging and heartwarming, and in many instances life-saving, to see so many from within the body of the Ikce Oyate Christian Center family rising up to move snow with heavy equipment, shovel snow, haul firewood, and deliver propane bottles to those in desperate need to heat their homes.



Return Service Requested

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