Our Mission:
Providing transformative education, grounded in indigenous life-ways and a love of learning
Reflections

by Joseph C. Rice

Nawayee (Center School) began 45 years ago as a drop-in center. In the intervening years Center School has continuously evolved to address the needs of our students and community. Center originally began because Indian students appeared to be falling in the public school system. It was thought that a drop-in center could provide help with homework, studying for tests, and mentoring which would help address that perceived problem. What the staff at the Center soon discovered was that native students needed people who understood how to relate to them as much or more than they needed homework help. It wasn’t long before staff at the center realized that they hadn’t only resolved the attendance or failure issue, but they had also resolved or begun to resolve a relationship issue. Students spent more time at the drop-in center then they did at their respective schools and so it was decided that the center should become a full-time school. Over the last 45 years, we have evolved to better meet the needs of disengaged native students. The most important realization we have come to is that we have to educate our students not in the ways of the mainstream schools established since colonization, but in the ways of our traditions and traditional cultures which have evolved over thousands of years.

When a people have developed a culture and refined it over thousands of years you will find that all aspects of it are well adapted to the circumstances of their lives. Such is the case with indigenous education. We are successful at center school because we understand this basic truth, that in a culture rooted in relatedness education cannot succeed without relationships. At Center School the first aspect of relating to students is to listen to them. You must listen carefully, patiently. What our students have told us and continue to tell us is that they need to learn experientially with people who understand how to relate to them. They also tell us that they are in pain, that they feel alienated and misunderstood. Many of our students come to us traumatized by schools who minimize the importance of relationships. Our students are brilliant people with unlimited potential who have not been taught how to access that potential. That is the work that we do at center school, we do not fix our students, but instead we give them access to their own power and show them how to apply this power toward success in life. Our mission is to encourage them to grow into adults who cannot only memorize, and problem solve, but who can dream and intuit and create. We want our students to be brilliant rather than simply well-trained. We have spent the last 17 years refining our program and fine-tuning it to create the optimal educational experience for indigenous students in an urban setting. We know now that in addition to teachers who can present the four core subject areas, (math, science, language arts, and social studies), we also need indigenous Language teachers, who can teach the students and train non-native staff. Teachers who have a better understanding of indigenous worldview are better able to relate to our students. In addition, our students need an in-school therapist to help them heal from the pain caused by poverty, intergenerational trauma and colonization. Our therapeutic focus is to assist students in addressing their pain and healing themselves, helping them to move forward in life sure in the knowledge that there is nothing that they cannot accomplish.

We appreciate all the support that community partners, teachers, and board members have given and continue to give us. We also appreciate your patience and understanding that the work we do, while painstaking, is vitally important to the health of our communities. Without you we would surely fail. With you we will succeed where most others have failed. Our children, our sacred gifts, they are the most important and most precious presence in our lives. For the sake of the next seven generations to come, we cannot afford to fail, and so we will not.
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Gifts and Grants 2017-2018

Foundations & Corporations
ANA - Administration for Native Americans
Beim Foundation
Beverly
The Bush Foundation
Chapel Hills United Church of Christ
Dream of Wild Health
First Universalist
Gen YOUTH Foundation
Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches
Headwaters Foundation for Justice
Honor the Earth
Jacob's Well
James R. Thorpe
Kiwanis Club
Lake Country School
Minneapolis Foundation
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
Minnesota Women's Club
Nint Foundation
Northern Plains Reservation Aid
Pizza Nea
Project for Pride in Living
Seward Community Co-op
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
Archie D & Bertha H Walker Foundation
Six Degrees
Still Ain't Satisfied
Woman's Club of Minneapolis
WCA
Youthprise

Individuals/Businesses
Brittany Anderson
Holly B. Anderson
Rob Anderson
Anonymous
Shane Austvold
Sam Bauman
John Bennett
Brenda Bernardy
Mike Bonillas
Richard Chase
Katherine Coon
Carolyn Crane Fisk
Margaret Cullen
Maia Dalager
Steve Dalager
Chris Dart
Susan & Ronald Dimler
Hayley Doyle
Kiem Engelen
Michael Garrod
Clifford Thomas Gee
Flo Gold
Eileen & Wayne Grundstrom
Armilda Boone Harley
John Humleker
Kathleen & Paul Hunkins
Kelly Krantz
Bryce Larson
Lynne Lerberg
James Lorenz
Joyce McIntosh
Nina Norby
Mary & Jim Safgren
Sandra E Setterholm
Patrick & Elizabeth Steeber
Ashley Stewart
Niels Strandskov
Owen Turnlund
Lauren Weck
Nicole Weller
Molly Yoong

USE OF FUNDS
- School (Nawayee Center School) Program (47%):
- ANA (Administration for Native Americans)
- SABE, Mental Health Program for Native Youth (24%):
- MIAC (Minnesota Indian Affairs Council)
- Nawayee Center School Ojibwe Mowin and Dakota Iapi Language Program (10%):
- Admin (19%): Office support for Programs and Fundraising.

2017-2018 FINANCIALS

INCOME STATEMENT

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BALANCE SHEET

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2017-2018 Expenses

- MIAC 10%
- ANA SABE 24%
- School 47%
- Admin 19%
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2017-18

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE DURING THE LAST YEAR

Brittany Anderson
(Voting member)
University of Minnesota Dept. of Indian Studies

Naomi Farabee
(Board Chair)
Augsburg University

Graham Hartley
(Secretary/Treasurer)
Director of MIGIZI Programs

Karen McCall
(Voting Member)
McCall Design, Inc.

Patina Park
(Vice Chair)
Director,
Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center

Owen Turnlund,
(Voting Member)
Plymouth Christian Youth Center

Leo Whitebird
(Voting Member)

Stephanie Zadora
(Voting member)
St. Stephen’s Human Services

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