



KNOWLEDGE RESPECT  
COURAGE GENEROSITY

## 2007-2008 Annual Report

# Na-way-ee, Center School, Inc.

**Our Mission** is to provide American Indian youth with cultural and community-based education and work experiences that result in academic excellence, cultural understanding and responsible community membership.

## Letter from the Executive Director

Hello to all of Center School's friends,

It has been said that the longest journey we make as humans is the one from our heads to our hearts. Perhaps, that is the best way to sum the up work we are doing together here at Na-way-ee Center School.

Students, their families, and the staff work together every day to heal, grow stronger, and become wiser, because it is wisdom which we all need to make the best decisions. These decisions can be fairly simple, such as deciding not to do or say something hurtful, or they can be profound decisions about what our path in life should be.

Sometimes young people do not understand that it is wise to attend school or that we should always be learning, but I do believe that given the chance and the time, they will come to realize this. The secret of our success has always been that we really believe in the potential of our students. Their potential is limitless and when you believe this to be true, you do not have to say so for them to get it, because it informs your every action.

Because staff and board members see their work at Center School as part of that journey of lifelong learning, our program has improved every year that I have been here and I am confident that it will continue to do so.

In the past year we have added a holistic health component to our curriculum which encompasses all aspects of health according to our traditions, which tell us that the human entity has four parts (mental, physical, spiritual, emotional), and that you have to feed all four to maintain a balanced individual and community.

We have continued our journey into experiential forms of learning with our Garden Project, a new mural, and a fence around the garden, all built by students under the watchful eye of our teaching staff.

In partnership with cooperating agencies like Migizi Communications, Twin Cities Healthy Nations, the Native American Community Clinic, Division of Indian Work, University of Minnesota, and many others, we have improved the nutrition and activity level of students, conducted screenings for diabetes indicators, provided numerous adventure learning opportunities, provided empowerment trainings, and sent three students to the National American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Fair in New Mexico.



*Staff, front row: Jamie Barton, Patricia Welch, Cindy Ward.  
Back/middle row: Vicki Hollow, Matthew Byrnes, James Lorenz, Deborah Bruce, Randy Gresczyk, Ethel Bruce, Mary Cullen and Quentin Brown.*

To keep our building in operating shape, we recently tuck pointed the foundation. Also, thanks to The McKnight Foundation and The Shakopee Mdewakantonwan Sioux Community we installed brand new windows throughout the building for the first time in about 70 years.

While we are proud of our efforts and our accomplishments, we are also grateful to all of our brother and sister agencies in the Native Community, and the entire Metro Area, who have been so giving and generous hearted, helping us in every way imaginable.

Special thanks to the foundations and their staffs who have been so supportive and without whom much of the essential cultural aspect of our program would not be possible.

Sincerely,

Joe Rice  
Executive Director

# Staff

Joe Rice, *Executive Director*  
 Mary Cullen, *Lead Teacher*  
 Ethel Bruce, *Office Manager*  
 Debra Bruce, *Student Support Services*  
 Jim Lorenz, *Science Teacher*  
 Jamie Barton, *Language Arts Teacher*  
 Matthew Burns, *Math Teacher*  
 Randy Gresczyk, *Ojibwe Language and Culture, Social Studies*  
 Patricia Welch, *Indigenous Health Coordinator*  
 Vicki Bruce, *Security Officer*  
 Quentin Brown and Wendell Pemberton, *Maintenance*  
 Flo Golod, *Development Consultant*

## From Collaborating Agencies

Migizi Communications  
 Tedi Grey Owl, *PSPP*  
 Cindy Ward, *Science*  
 Learning Disabilities Association  
 Valerie Griffin, *Reading (LDA)*  
 Division of Indian Work  
 Louise Matsen, *Pregnancy Prevention*  
 Anita Gates, *Cultural Arts*  
 Minneapolis Public Schools  
 Kim Galloway, *Special Education*  
 Native American Community Clinic  
 Lydia Caros, Connie Norman, Judy Day, Shannon Fahey  
 Healthy Nations Program  
 LeMoine LaPointe, *Director*

*We would like to thank Brad Englund and Christine Sanguinet from the Metropolitan Federation of Alternative Schools.*

*We value our partnership with the Minneapolis Public Schools and wish to thank Mary Barrie and Diane Glawe for their assistance.*

# Statement of Financial Position

	2008	2007
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets:		
Cash	\$ 27,978	\$ 87,767
Accounts Receivable	2,891	2,541
Grants Receivable	57,500	37,500
Prepaid Expenses	5,721	4,194
Total Current Assets	94,090	132,002
Property and Equipment – Net	61,792	102,887
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 155,882</b>	<b>\$ 234,889</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$ 10,095	\$ 13,684
Line-of-Credit	24,464	26,275
Notes Payable	1,301	14,658
Capital Lease Payable	2,901	5,479
Accrued Salaries	3,227	9,763
Accrued Vacation	14,238	10,536
Total Current Liabilities	56,226	80,395
Notes Payable	–	2,379
Capital Lease Payable	–	2,330
Total Liabilities	56,226	85,104
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted	29,156	73,785
Temporarily Restricted	70,500	76,000
Total Net Assets	99,656	149,785
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 155,882</b>	<b>\$ 234,889</b>

# Gifts and Grants July 2007–June 2008

Beverly Foundation	Medtronic Foundation	St. Paul Travellers Foundation	Greater Twin Cities United Way
Otto Bremer Foundation	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	Seva Foundation	Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation
General Mills Foundation	Minneapolis Kiwanis Club	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	WCA Foundation
Headwaters Foundation, Fund of the Sacred Circle	Minneapolis Foundation, Martha Atwater Fund	James R. Thorpe Foundation	Lauren Weck
Honor the Earth	Park Nicollet Foundation	F. Owen and Muriel J. Turnland	The Frederick and Margaret L. Weyerhauser Foundation
Ronald and Devin McKinley	Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation	Two Feathers Fund, St. Paul Foundation	Woman's Club of Minneapolis
McKnight Foundation			

# Center School Achievements

Center School expanded programming and increased its commitment to an integrated culturally specific curriculum. This work resulted in marked improvements in student outcomes during the 2007-08 school year:



Our 2008 graduates.

## Cultural Enrichment

Continuous improvement of the Ojibwe language program, enhanced by Native cultural experiences that include drumming, sweat lodges, and participation in other ceremonies

Engaging Tobasonikwut Kinew, a respected Ojibwe elder, as a school leader and mentor.

Sponsorship of a weekly Ojibwe language table that attracted between 10 and 25 adults from around the state.

## Health and Wellness

Growing our **Healthy Choices Program** that provides exercise, health instruction and screening services to Na-way-ee students. A collaboration with Migizi Communications and the Native American Community Clinic, the program is designed to reduce the incidence of diabetes and other diseases among Native youth.

Our girls programs include classes, enrichment opportunities and individual mentoring. These combined efforts that we call **Children of the Seventh Fire** (after an Ojibwe prophecy), improved with the creation of gender-specific health and life skills classes for female and male students, increased hours of mentoring available to girls and support from the Division of Indian Work and NACC to meet specific needs of young Native women.

The school sponsored the second year of a very popular and successful **gardening program**, which became the focus of our summer school. Retaining students in summer school has long been a challenge. Last summer our retention rate was 65%, much higher than other summers.

Working with the Healthy Nations Program of the Minneapolis American Indian Center, we offered students opportunities for **extended field trips** that including canoeing, orienteering and a visit to sacred sites in South Dakota.

## Community Leadership

Center School coordinates the **Phillips Indian Educators (PIE)** network, which brings together educators who work in public, charter and alternative schools that serve Native American students. The school launched the PIE website with best practices posted and a list for communication among teachers. [www.pieducators.com](http://www.pieducators.com)

As part of our work with PIE, staff and board members actively participated in Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) discussions with the Minneapolis Public Schools. Our goal is to work with the District to create **better educational environments and outcomes** for all Indian students

## Student Success

Last year, **attendance improved** significantly with the Average Daily Membership (ADM) increasing by 17% over the previous school year.

Three students entered and took prizes in the **National Indian Science Fair**, with one student winning a first prize.

**Five students graduated** in June 2008. We are very proud of Renee, Lawrence, Josh, Bonita and Stephanie, who worked so hard for their diplomas.

## Organizational Growth

We continued the **Wisdom Recovery Project**, which documents our curriculum, providing assistance to new teachers. We are using this valuable resource to assist our new teachers and as a contribution to the PIE website.

With new staff and renewed energy, we hired **Jim Lorenz**, an experienced science teacher and **Matt Byrnes**, our new math teacher. **Mary Cullen**, who has over 20 years experience in alternative education, became Lead Teacher, providing leadership and overseeing new programs and student progress.



Extended field trips, including sacred sites in South Dakota, were done in collaboration with the Healthy Nations Program of the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

Three new community members joined our board of Directors: Dr. **Cecelia Martinez**, Director of the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, **Deatrick LaPointe** of the Division of Indian Work, and **Nancy Bordeaux**, Director of Indigenous Women's Life Net bring new ideas and energy to our governing body.

Volunteers from **Philadelphia Farms** supported our students by helping out with the garden and other projects.

**Volunteers** from many other community organizations such as NACC clinic, Indian Health Board, the University of Minnesota, Streetworks to name a few also supported our efforts to provide a more comprehensive form of education for our students.



Our gardening program, in its second year, was key to increasing retention during summer school.





# Board of Directors 2007-2008

Thank you to our board of Directors for their support and guidance during the last year.

**NANCY BOURDEAUX**

Indigenous Women's Life Net

**ANDREA CARLSON**

Graduate Student

**PAUL HEGRE**

Teacher on Special Assignment  
Minneapolis Public Schools

**ROBERT JIBBEN**

Director (ret.)  
Metropolitan Federation of  
Alternative Schools

**DEATRICK LAPOINTE**

Division of Indian Work

**LEMOINE LAPOINTE**

Director  
Healthy Nations Program

**CECELIA MARTINEZ**

Director of the Center for Earth,  
Energy and Democracy  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

**KAREN MCCALL**

McCall Design, Inc.

**OWEN TURNLUND**

Director (ret.)  
Plymouth Christian Youth Center

**Na-way-ee, Center School, Inc.**

2421 Bloomington Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404