

# Yellow Band

## May/June 2017



### **We are a “Volunteers In Mission” Destination**

Each year over 1,000 volunteers from across the United States come to meet and serve the Lakota and Dakota people, bringing assistance to the poorest racial group of people in the nation. In 2013 we had volunteers from 22 states, 10 different denominations and 6 difference colleges.

### **The work of our Ministry includes:**

**Work Projects:** repairing homes and community buildings with special projects such as playgrounds, Economic Development, Food Distribution, Clothing Distribution, Free Hot Meal Site, community activities, child care, and assistance to tribal programs. While adults may work in any of our construction or alternative-work ministries, the primary assignment of youth aged 16 and under will be painting projects (insurance rules limit the types of work for such youth). Rain may interfere with painting projects.

**Special Activities:** Christmas gifts for children and elders, an Easter Meal, distributing school kits, winter coats, blankets, emergency assistance, and a prom dress give-away to name only a few.

**Education: For volunteers**, we present cultural events that are presented by the Native Americans who live on the Reservations we serve. Subjects discussed include Sioux history, culture, poverty, health issues, social issues, Lakota/Dakota games, dancing, and regalia, among others.

**Education: For the Lakota/Dakota**, we seek to improve the perception and effectiveness of the Christian Church by striving to respect the wisdom, common sense, traditional values and sovereignty of the people. We want a Cooperative effort to grow among the ministry and the tribe. We offer our services seeking guidance and accountability through the appropriate tribal Agencies. Thus, education by action—not by talk.

Tree of Life Ministry is a part of the working hands and feet of God to the Lakota Nation residing on the Rosebud Reservation serving body, mind, and soul. We feed, cloth, shelter, and love. We demonstrate His love, power, and grace to a broken, hurting society.

The purposes for which the 501(c)(3) corporation is organized are as follows.

1. We are here in a ministry of service and presence in furtherance of the missions and outreach of the United Methodist Church.
2. To provide opportunities to raise awareness of Lakota culture and foster relationships with the Lakota People.
3. To help the most vulnerable members of the community meet their basic human needs in the Rosebud Lakota Reservation (Sicangu Oyate) and surrounding communities and rural areas.
4. To facilitate communication between various service agencies and organizations as their activities pertain to charitable and educational purposes and to encourage community involvement in outreach projects.

To the naked eye our service may look like a handout or a hand-up, however to God it may look like an answer to prayer. A much needed witness of love toward salvation.

The **Soup Kitchen** has provided and served 35,520 hot meals, given out 3,180 elder boxes, and over 35,520 boxes of food to help supplement the evening meal, 400 Thanksgiving dinners, and 600 Christmas meals. We call this ministry the Warm Welcome feeding the hungry. We serve breakfast, lunch for free and for a dollar donation you are able to pick out a personal hygiene item and receive food to help supplement the evening meal. We serve about 150 -185 meals a day and about 25-45 of those meals go to the homeless. We serve; children 15%, elderly 20%, homeless 25%, those that just have enough to get bills paid but no more (the disabled and working poor) 40%. The Warm Welcome has a new flow and feel to it. Changing the physical flow of our service has increased our ability to give more with better services to staff and patrons. We've increased space, sound and traffic control and quality of food for our soup kitchen. A once chaotic space, has been replaced by conversation, laughter and rest. Feels new and alive with color, we painted a vanilla crème, with an accent of smoked cooper and antiquated olive through the building. Updated the kitchen, went from a one electric four burner stove, to two gas ranges, thanks to the donation of Christ's Evangelical Lutheran who purchased the gas ranges. Now we have 10 burners and four ovens to properly prepare food with ease. We added a heat and cooling tables to better serve hot foods hot and cold foods cold. And for a summer reprieve we now have an ice machine, to offer ice water to the thirsty. We now collaborate with faith base and community events that promote education, health and wellness.



**Thrift Store** had 12,480 patrons this year. We get donations from men and woman of God from all over the east and west, north and south who have an ear to hear, a heart to give and a desire to serve. Good 360, Native American Heritage Association and Partnership With Native Americans nonprofit organizations have

Patrice, Sonny, Daran

help provide; house hold goods, furniture, and appliances, gently used and new clothing for: baby's, children, teens, men and woman clothing. Why do we sell? We want to give a family, a mom or dad an opportunity to buy at a very low cost and have the pride of knowing they have provided for them selves (a hand up, not a hand out). We have seen a mom layaway a \$3 bag of cloths for her child and take a

month to pay it off and to see the joy, pride and satisfaction on moms face, when mom tells her child I bought this for you (we do not want to take this act of love away from her) and to provide this ministry staff, supports, and infrastructure it takes capital investment from donors as well as local support. We have the most generous, kind and loving men and woman of God and nonprofits that over and over give beyond our expectations. However not beyond our requests, we serve an impoverished community with high unemployment and few resources to meet their very real needs. With that in mind we purchased a building that doubled our floor plan to provide twice the inventory needed to get supports out. We now have a beautiful efficient Thrift Store that the staff loves to work in and the patrons love to frequent. This move has decreased our overhead and increased our revenue. We additionally provide services to community members that are not able to get to our home base in Mission. We have created a mobile thrift store that goes out twice a month to one of the 20 communities.



**Construction Projects** We completed 40 projects, working on homes that needed repair, related to health and wellness issues. To us, it's not about being poor; it's about being an answer to prayer. To those that have cried out to God with a need, and some way some how God has in trusted, provides the materials, and Godly Men and Woman to come and work along side us, to answer that prayer in a real way that changes the quality of a family's life through home repairs. We have aided in the disabled to return home, grandmothers to keep her grandchildren, and the elderly to be safe. We no longer

have a construction manager, we contract out all projects therefor we are able to provide a greater number of projects, increase quality of work, and control our expenditures. Which saves money, being a good steward is vital to the success of our programing. Habitat of Humanity has a great model of sweat equity, which we have adopted into our program. We have a mobile construction trailer fully equipped for our teams to provide professional service to the most remote communities.

**Visitor In Mission** 1,126 servants of the Lord, worked along side us this year. Together we are making a difference, toward the Kingdom of God, project by project. In turn we impart a greater understanding of the communities pedagogy. We provide a cross-cultural experience second to none.

We have updated our VIM dorms for beauty, comfort and safety. We have added new and exciting activities to our cultural mix. I would like to highlight the ***Lakota Star Knowledge*** learn Lakota Star Nation stories while in a planetarium, work with the ***Horse Nation*** learn how the Lakota work with horses toward emotional healing, learn stories and see the regalia it is breath taking, learn ***Lakota Spirituality*** by men and women that teach customs and beliefs of the Sicangu Lakota Nation. God is not a respecter of man so nor are we. We would like to see more men and woman of God visit us so they can experience the magnificence culture of the Sicangu Lakota Nation and to be a part of and witness the redeeming power of God to a nation.