



# **RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

Rural America Initiatives  
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Hau Mitakuyepi... Hello Relatives:

“Life is good and all is well.” That is how we began our last annual report. Shortly after that a global pandemic hit and the world changed.

Yet we still feel blessed and optimistic for the future. Our beautiful new building opened as planned in 2019. What an inspirational environment for our children! We endured, and life is getting back to normal. If you have not had an opportunity to see the new building, and can safely do so, please call for a visit. We’d love to give you a tour.

Our fundraising momentum paused due to Covid, so we still have some money to raise to retire our mortgage. Our goal is to accomplish that this year. And we have been so successful we are already at student capacity! To keep pace with our community’s needs we plan to build four new Head Start classrooms. To protect our busses in this surprisingly windy location, we would like to enclose our bus barn too. Combining those goals will result in a new Capital Campaign, to launch later this year.

The funding for our Ateyapi mentoring programs ended, so programs were temporarily suspended. This is especially tragic because the drop out rate for high school seniors in our program had been reduced from 63% to 31% over the last seven years due in large part to our Ateyapi programs. We have been successful in finding funds to keep the programs running at a reduced level. We will apply for the next rounds of funding as soon as we can. We are committed to bringing all programs back within two years.

We closed the building when the Governor mandated that schools close in March 2020. Long distance learning was a challenge since so many of our families are without easy access to wi-fi. We met the challenge with old-fashioned pencil and paper worksheets, delivered each week to our families along with a week’s supply of food. Completed work sheets were picked up and new sheets were delivered every week. Through the generosity of the JT Vucurevich Foundation, the Black Hills Area Community Foundation and United Way, by August we were able to provide our students with Chrome books, loaded with curriculum so that wifi was not required. Pre and post tests allowed us to measure student success. It was a challenging time for sure!

Through it all, the way we ended our last Annual Report letter still holds true: “We are moving forward with Optimism, Hope, and Strength to face the future. In short, we have been blessed,”

Wopila Tanka Icicupi! Thanks to all of you for your help and goodwill!



RAI Board Chair-  
Carol Marshall-Coon

RAI Executive Director-  
Bruce Long Fox



## MISSION

RAI seeks to create community change by role modeling positive, healthy, alcohol and drug free lifestyles incorporating Lakota/Dakota values. Families and children we teach now will have a lasting impact on future generations. We seek to strengthen individuals, families, and the Native community in Rapid City.

## VISION

Rural America Initiatives provides the highest quality services to eligible Native American families acting as a catalyst for the development of healthy, sober, self-sufficient Native American families.

## MOTTO

Envision your grandchildren. Walk the Red Road today!



2019 Lakota Nation Invitational Hand game Tournament  
Ateyapi Wicozani 1st and 2nd Place Champions,  
Middle School Division



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson: Carol Marshall-Coon, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe  
Home Health Care Provider

Vice-Chair: Kati Pechota Oglala Sioux Tribe,  
Teacher Wilson Elementary Rapid City Area Schools.

Treasurer: Sharon No Heart, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
Owner, Ancestors' Art of the Black Hills

Secretary: Jacquie Arpan, Oglala Sioux Tribe  
Community Health Education, Sioux San Hospital

Denise Murphy, Three Affiliated Tribes of ND  
Indian Child Welfare Expert

Charles Durrell Robertson, Jr. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe,  
Attorney

Kathy LaBonte, Oglala Sioux Tribe  
Registered Nurse



## OUR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



Bruce Long Fox  
Executive Director



Anne Reddy  
Head Start Director



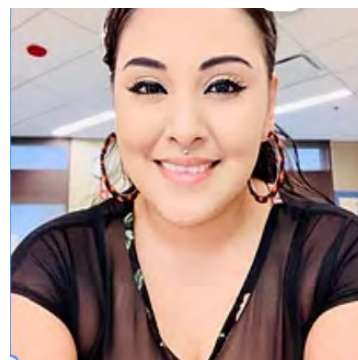
Priscilla Yellow Horse  
Lakota Site  
Supervisor



Penny Marsh  
Dakota Site Supervisor



Larae Arroyo  
Head Start Manager



Jessica Yellow Boy  
Early Head Start  
Education Manager



Rhonda Yankton  
Project L.A.K.O.T.A  
Coordinator  
Master Speaker



Stephanie Savoy  
Project Coordinator:  
Youth Engaged in  
Sports (YES) and  
Tokata Eyucgan Po  
(Thinking About the  
Future)



Robert Yellowhawk  
Assistant Business  
Manager



August 2020, Ateyapi programs' tipi set up on the grounds of the RAI building

**RAPID CITY LOCATIONS  
HEAD START AND  
EARLY HEAD START**

2112 South Valley Drive  
Rapid City, SD 57703  
605-341-3339

**LAKOTA LANGUAGE**

612 Crazy Horse St.  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
605-791-0387  
and in individual schools

**ATEYAPI PROGRAMS**

Held in individual schools

**CROW CREEK SIOUX  
RESERVATION  
HEAD START AND EARLY  
HEAD START**

1008 Burton Stepp Loop  
Ft. Thompson, SD 57339  
605.245.2337 or 2185





## **RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES ...**

### **CHANGING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION SINCE 1986**

**WHAT IS RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES (RAI)?** A Native American-led 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit organization formed in 1986 to help the most in-need Native American families in Rapid City, South Dakota. RAI employs over 100 people, 95% of whom are Native American, is led by Executive Director Bruce Long Fox and is governed by a 7 member Native American Board of Directors.

**WHO DOES RAI SERVE?** Approximately 1100 at-risk children and their families in Rapid City, as well as Head Start and Early Head Start students on the Crow Creek Reservation. Our priority target population is “transitional” families, those who move from area reservations to Rapid City within the past year. These families are looking for greater opportunities, but instead discover difficulty in finding employment, housing and services. Priorities are children who are homeless, in foster care, handicapped or whose caregiver is incarcerated.

**HOW DOES RAI SERVE?** Through educational programs that address the needs of the whole family: early childhood development programs Head Start and Early Head Start, serving poverty-level children pre-natal through age 5 and their families, Ateyapi (Lakota for “fatherhood”), a positive role-modeling mentorship program in Rapid City’s elementary, middle and high schools, and a Lakota language program including a Lakota immersion classroom. Services are delivered in a culturally sensitive way.

**HOW IS RAI FUNDED?** Primarily by federal grants through the Department of Health and Human Services Programs, grants from State and local organizations, and donations from private individuals. Less than 1% of RAI’s operational funding comes locally from United Way of the Black Hills, and is the only Native American-led organization that is a United Way member.

**WHAT IMPACT DOES RAI HAVE ON OUR COMMUNITY?** RAI Head Start programs help increasing number of poverty-level children ages 0-5 get healthy starts and begin their school careers with the same skills and abilities as all children; gives poverty-level parents and caregivers the life skills they need to be good parents, become educated, employed, and provide stable homes for their families; RAI’s Ateyapi programs help children in elementary, middle and high school stay in school and graduate (over 92% of high school seniors in the Ateyapi program graduated in the last three years), give them confidence and the tools necessary to live healthy, successful lives; RAI provides mentoring assistance to the Rapid City Area Schools (pre-Covid approximately \$350,000 per year); RAI employs approximately 100 people with stable jobs and benefits, and provides a significant positive impact on our economy (currently \$22 million using a multiplier of 4.5).

**WHAT IS RAI’S CURRENT CHALLENGE?** After a successful three year capital campaign, RAI opened its new \$7.2 million building in 2019. It replaced modular and trailer buildings that were a decade past their useful lives, and provides our children with a beautiful and inspiring environment in which to learn, grow and thrive. We now have just under \$125,000 left to pay on our mortgage, which we’d like to retire this year. We also have discovered that our windy location takes a toll on our busses, so we need to enclose our bus barn at a cost of \$100,000. And—perhaps best of all—we already need to expand! We are at capacity and the need keeps growing, so we plan to expand our building by 4 new classrooms (the building was designed with expansion in mind)!

**We plan to launch a new \$1,841,000 Capital Campaign soon!**



# OVERVIEW

Rural America Initiatives (RAI), the largest, non-profit, continuously operating Native American organization in Rapid City, is a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit organization. Founded in 1986 to partner with Native American families to strengthen the development of healthy, sober, self-sufficient lifestyles, it has been the most effective service provider for the most at-risk Rapid City families for over thirty years. RAI addresses the needs of chronic, pervasive poverty of the most vulnerable Native American families who have restricted access to services in Rapid City. We do this through programs for children from pre-natal through high school, reaching over 1100 children and their families. Over ninety percent of our full time staff is Native American.

Our programs include Early Head Start and Head Start programs, the Ateyapi (Lakota for “fatherhood”) positive role-modeling mentorship program in elementary, middle and high schools in Rapid City and a Lakota language program including a Lakota language immersion classroom. RAI also operates Early Head Start and Head Start programs on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

**All of our activities** are alcohol and chemical dependence-free (all activities/all staff) and strive to support the Seven Lakota Values:

**Respect (Wauonihan)**

**Generosity (Wacante Ognake)**

**Wisdom (Woksape)**

**Humility (Wahwala)**

**Compassion (Waunshila)**

**Service: "helps the last one" (Wawoihakikte)**

**Honesty (Wowicake)**





**One target population** for RAI is “transitional” families, those who move from area reservations to Rapid City looking for greater opportunities for their families. Many of these transitional families do not find the opportunities they hoped to find. Many are one paycheck, one health crisis or one bit of bad luck from disaster. If this happens, these families are at risk to end up in shelters, living several families to a motel room, on the sofas of friends or relatives, or on the street. They can fall between the cracks of traditional services, and may be the most at-risk for alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, teen pregnancy and lifestyle-based preventable diseases such as childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes.





## PROGRAMS:

Head Start/Early Head Start

Ateyapi:

Elementary

Middle School

High School

Lakota Language



# HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Prenatal to Five Head Start program serves pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families.

Head Start/Early Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. RAI's prenatal to age 5 Head Start program provides educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to children enrolled in a federally recognized tribe and their families. Services are designed to be responsive to each child and family's ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage.



According to the Center for American Progress, children without early childhood education are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of school,
- 40% more likely to become teen parents,
- 50% more likely to require special education classes,
- 60% more likely to not attend college, and
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.

Early childhood intervention is a strong tool to address serious problems at their root, and Head Start has been proven to be an effective vehicle for these efforts. Without RAI's Head Start programs, survival would be more difficult for transitional families.



**RAI's Head Start program** has consistently scored among the highest in the nation. Our Head Start teachers and teacher mentors are required to have an Associate's Degree or higher. Our teacher assistants are required to have a Child Development Associates (CDA) credential in pre-school, and Our Early Head Start teachers and teacher mentors are required to have a CDA in an infant/toddler setting.

Each center has a variety of services and options available to families: part-day or full day and school year or full year. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are provided. Transportation is available for those who need it. Cultural and language curricula for the Lakota/Dakota language are used, and developmental screenings are provided.

**RAI engages parents** in their child's learning and helps them progress toward her or his educational, literacy and employment goals. Parents are welcomed into our program and our Parent Policy Council representatives are involved in shared decision making with RAI's administration and Board of Directors.

Pre-the Covid-19 public health pandemic, Parent Meetings were held at least once a month throughout the school year and a variety of topics were discussed. We also held an annual Art Expo, science fairs, elders and veterans honorings, powwows and more, often in conjunction with RAI's Ateyapi programs. Feeding large numbers of families and community members is always a component of our programs and events. We continue with these practices when it is safe to do so, and look forward to a post-pandemic time when we may resume all activities without restrictions.

Parents make every effort to support our curriculum within the home. **Parents are the backbone of every Head Start program; their involvement is appreciated and strong in our -programs.**

**We estimate that we save our families at least \$1200 per month  
in child care and transportation costs,  
or \$14,400 per child each year.**

Moreover, our program addresses the needs of the whole family. There is great disparity in the unemployment rate in Rapid City between Native people at 50% and non-Natives at 4.6%. Having a job changes lives and changes communities. It is our priority to cultivate teachers from among people whose children have been in our Head Start program, and we provide job-skills training in early childhood development. Over half of our teachers and aides in our Head Start programs began as clients.





## **ATEYAPI (Lakota for “fatherhood”)**

### **Youth mentoring program serving elementary, middle and high school students**

**Update:** Our Ateyapi mentoring programs in Rapid City’s elementary, middle and high schools have been funded by federal grants since 1994. That funding cycle ended in 2020-21, and we had to find alternative funding to continue these critical and highly successful programs going forward. We will be eligible for another round of federal funds for these programs within two years. We are committed to making these programs available to serve our children and their families.

**We are pleased to report that we have succeeded in finding funding  
to keep some of our programs operational!**

#### **Youth Engaged in Sports (YES):**

- Delivered in North Middle School only
- One mentor
- Extended for one year
- Funded by carry-over federal funds and a grant from the Gwendolyn Stearns Foundation

#### **New Ateyapi program Tokata Eyucgan Po – Thinking About the Future**

- Teem pregnancy prevention program, focused on abstinence education, tutoring and mentoring
- Delivered in all three Rapid City high schools.
- Reaching 270 students over three years.
- 3 mentors and a coordinator
- Federally funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

#### **Language Program:**

- Delivered in Head Start Classrooms to students ages 3-5
- Evening zoom classes for Head Start parents and caregivers
- All Head Start teachers receive training
- Delivered by Coordinator and two mentors
- Funding extended for one year through NoVo Foundation

## Background:

The Ateyapi Youth Mentoring Program was developed and implemented by RAI in 1994, serving over 1000 students in the Rapid City Area School District annually.

RAI employed close to 20 mentors in this program; young men and women who themselves strive to practice sober, healthy lifestyles respectful of their cultural tradition. Ateyapi is based on positive role modeling because we believe that children learn more from actions than words. Individuals chosen to be mentors are trustworthy, empathetic, supportive and patient. They encourage and motivate youth to envision successful, productive futures, and give them the tools to get there. Since 2014 over 90% of seniors in our Ateyapi programs have graduated from high school.



2020 Ateyapi Wicozani CPR training



2021 Ateyapi programs' end of the year school picnic



## PROGRAMS THAT WERE OPERATIONAL AS WE ENDED 2019 AND ENTERED COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS





## **ATEYAPI IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS: Serving North, East and West Middle Schools and Central High School in Rapid City, SD**

The program goal is to give our children the skills and support to make healthy choices for successful and productive lives. We strive to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy, gang participation and high school drop-out rates through sober, supportive role modeling and by teaching Lakota values that promote a positive self-image.

The focus for these students is smart decision making, imagining the lives they want to lead, and envisioning their legacy for the future.

Teen pregnancy, poverty and dropping out of school are multi-generational problems. According to the South Dakota Department of Health Office of Health Statistics the teen birth rate for American Indian teens was five times that of white teens and three times greater than the general population. The teen birth rates for all of Pennington County (Rapid City) were much higher than the state rates; the American Indian rate was still five times greater than the white rate and three times greater than the rate for all races.

**In class** Ateyapi mentors provide support to the students and teachers of the schools served by our program. We monitor grades, attendance and behavior to meet the individual needs of the students.

**During the critical "high risk" hours**, after school and during the summer, the middle/high school Ateyapi program offers activities that channel students' minds and energy into healthy activities including cultural teachings, physical activities, character-building experiences, educational projects, tutoring and more.

**The summer program** is filled with fun and empowering activities. Students experience our sacred Black Hills (He Sapa) with field trips to Bear Butte, Devil's Tower, Wind Cave, Pe Sla, Little Big Horn Battlefield, Wounded Knee and Ft. Robinson to familiarize them with and encourage them to develop a relationship with our ancestral homelands. Transportation and food are provided.



## **Middle and High School Ateyapi:**

### **North, West and East Middle Schools, Central High School**

This was a suicide prevention program, using Lakota Circles of Hope and cultural activities in its curriculum. Rural America Initiative's Ateyapi Wicozani Middle School Program used the Lakota Circles of Hope (LCH) Middle School Program (Hocoka Ohomni Wacinyekiyapi) which is an innovative Lakota culturally centered prevention curriculum designed for the sixth through the eighth grades as one of the major components of its program. The LCH program teaches how to make healthy decisions based on the traditional Lakota values of respect, generosity, fortitude and wisdom. The primary target population for the LCH program is the Rapid City School District middle schools that have a substantial Native American enrollment. Through the curriculum, summer sessions, and other activities, students and their families attain knowledge and resources for making safe choices and resisting peer pressure, tobacco, alcohol, non-prescribed drugs, and interpersonal violence. From its inception, the Lakota Circles of Hope curriculum has been developed as a collaborative project of Lakota elders, educational professionals (Lakota counselors, administrators, and teachers) and experienced Catholic Social Services Lakota Circles of Hope staff. The various collaborators and program designers bring to the program their knowledge and experience in Lakota culture, in curriculum development, in education, and in program evaluation.

The Ateyapi Wicozani Program supplemented the LCH program with additional after-school activities, which included: cultural practices, history, and traditions; recreational activities; presentations by Lakota elders, professional health providers, and youth development specialists. The boys and girls were separated, and met two times a week for the LCH lessons (1 hour per day) and one of the supplemental activities (2 hours per day). These activities not only supplemented the LCH program but enriched the students with additional information and practices about their Lakota cultural and coping skills to deal with antisocial and risky behaviors. Mentors were available during the day to help the students with academic and attendance challenges.

The focus was to strengthen families through incorporating Lakota values in all our programs and supporting families to live Lakota values. This is based on the premise that connecting to tribal identities and cultural values heals. This project supported healing from trauma by helping youth utilize Lakota cultural values, traditions, and practices to build resiliency, the ability to deal with life despite hardships and through adversity. The reality in the Rapid City community is that a majority of American Indian youth and families experience severe trauma, including historical, intergenerational, and current trauma. This trauma stands in the way of positive community and individual social and self-sufficiency development and leads to negative consequences including suicide. In addition to the culturally-based Lakota Circles of Hope curriculum, staff received initial training to help them provide trauma-informed care, become Trainers in the Adverse Childhood Experience model, (ACE), and learn suicide prevention/intervention strategies.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ATEYAPI: YES (Youth Engagement in Sports), a health improvement program**

The Ateyapi Youth Engagement in Sports or YES middle school mentoring program uses the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as its theoretical framework. This is a theoretical perspective in which learning by observing others is the focus of study. Basic assumptions applied to coaching are: 1. Coaches need to help learners believe in their personal abilities in order to learn and develop a new behavior; 2. They can reinforce learning by a positive response to a youth's performing a behavior and, 3. They can provide environmental conditions conducive for improved self-efficacy by providing appropriate support and materials.

Ateyapi YES coaches serve as positive role models, not only to demonstrate consistent sports skills, and good nutritional practices, but to apply Lakota cultural values in daily life. Each coach was stationed in one of the RCAS's Middle schools (East, North and West). They facilitated after-school activities three hours in length, four nights per school week. These sessions included a healthy snack, transportation to sports or exercise at Rapid Skills Sports Complex where students get sixty minutes of moderate or vigorous exercise, or thirty minutes in nutrition education including talking circles, and transportation home.

Fridays, school holidays and summer sessions were opportunities for special events, such as hiking at one of the Sacred Lakota Sites. Youth self-logged their physical and nutritional activities on weekends and reported to their coach. Ateyapi Intercross Program, the version of lacrosse played by Ateyapi YES participants, is a mixed-gender non-contact sport that uses an all-plastic stick and a softer ball. This allows the sport to be played indoors as well as outdoors and requires no protective gear. Intercross is an excellent way to introduce youth to lacrosse.

Ateyapi running club focused on preparatory activities (group games and exercises to build runner's skills, strength, balance and agility), and group runs. Youth logged their miles (each participant received an activity tracker}. The Ateyapi YES Hiking Club offered healthy outdoor exercise and promoted appreciation for Lakota culture at the same time. Youth participated in strength, balance, and cardiovascular exercise routines (offered indoors and outdoors) to prepare youth for outdoor experiences. The Rapid City Bike path, Black Hills North Area Campground and some city park areas are locations in close proximity where youth practiced skills helpful in hiking.

Indian dancing: Dances have always been significant in the lives of American Indians. Today, Indian dancing is considered a sport when it involves competitions at powwows around the nation. Most common kinds of Lakota dances include men's traditional, fancy, and grass dancing. Women's dances are called traditional, shawl and jingle dress.

Cross training in general athletic skills: The term cross training refers to a training routine that involves several different forms of exercise. At a minimum this would involve endurance or aerobic, strength, flexibility, and balance training. Specialized training to prepare youth for intramural sports was offered for football, cross country track, soccer, basketball and volleyball. Coaching staff provided a list of free YouTube exercise routines (screened for appropriateness) for youth with computers at home to use.

Nutrition Education: Staff served healthy vegetables and fruit snacks at each after-school session, role modeling how many different ways healthy food can be used. The nutrition curriculum was taught by our partner South Dakota State University nutritionist assistant. The students were also encouraged to drink less soda and more water.



## Wicozani continued

Objectives included:

Students learned about the Lakota value of respect and how it relates to their personal self-worth. *[Respect is the base upon which all the Lakota values are built].*

Students were able to identify and express personal feelings to others, to understand the importance of active listening, and to assess facts and untruths. *[The Lakota value of generosity was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students discussed the criteria for safe and healthy relationships and how to set clear boundaries. *[The Lakota value of fortitude was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students explored how to refuse or say no to unhealthy relationships, substance use, sexual advances, peer pressure, and provocation. *[The Lakota value of fortitude was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students learned about various risky behaviors (substance use, early onset of sexual behaviors, and self-destructive behaviors) and their long term physical and emotional consequences. *[The Lakota value of wisdom was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students practiced the Lakota value of wisdom by applying a step-by-step process for making good decisions, problem solving and setting personal goals. *[The Lakota value of wisdom was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students practiced the Lakota values of bravery and respect by learning assertiveness skills, conflict resolution skills, and anger management. *[The Lakota value of bravery was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students developed a safety plan which includes contacts and places; understand internal and external threats to their personal safety, and a mechanism for dealing with them within the school, community and home. *[The Lakota value of wisdom was the emphasis for this objective].*

Students reflected and summarized knowledge, skills, attitudes, attributes, and beliefs gained from LCOH (Lakota Circles of Hope) in the context of the Lakota traditional values and culture.

Students obtained an understanding of the importance of integrity and honor as Lakota values that contribute to an individual's identity, reputation, and reliance. *[The Lakota values of integrity and honor were the emphasis of this goal].*

Students became able to explain what all the rest of the Lakota values mean to them and practical ways they can apply all twelve values in their everyday life. *(The Lakota values of humility, compassion, truth, perseverance, love and sacrifice were the emphasis of this goal),*

## Wicozani continued

In the 2018-19 implementation of the Lakota Circles of Hope program in the Rapid City middle schools, the Ateyapi Wicozani Program reached out to 105 students in the spring of 2019 (Level 1) and 78 students in the summer of 2019 (Level 2). Level 1 LCH program was delivered in the spring of 2019 (January to May) to 40 sixth graders, 27 seventh graders and 6 eighth graders. Level 2 LCH program was delivered in the summer of 2019 (June and July) to 4 sixth graders, 19 seventh graders and 9 eighth graders.

In the 2019-20 implementation of the Lakota Circles of Hope program in the Rapid City middle schools, the Ateyapi Wicozani Program reached out to 50 students in the fall of 2019 (Level 1) and 46 students in the spring of 2020 (Level 2). Level 1 LCH program was delivered in the fall of 2019 (October to December) to 19 sixth graders, 21 seventh graders and 10 eighth graders. Level 2 LCH program was delivered in the spring of 2020 (February to May) to 17 sixth graders, 13 seventh graders and 16 eighth graders. Level 3 LCH program was delivered in the summer of 2020 (June to August) to 10 sixth graders, 23 seventh graders and 22 eighth graders.

Regulations and restrictions were imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic in the second year of the program delivery (2020). The mentors did not have easy access to the students and were restricted in the second year of implementation to digital and social media contact. After-school program delivery was a challenge. Home visits and small group meetings were held whenever possible. When the mentors had one-to-one contact with the students the program was delivered with great success and there were no negative consequences. Cultural and supplemental activities that could be delivered in 2019-20 were limited due to the restrictions. Funding for the program ended January 31, 2020.



Wicozani monthly family social November 2019

**High School Ateyapi:**  
**Zanniya Unkigluhapi (Lakota for “becoming healthy”)**  
**Making Proud Choices—Central High School**

The goals of this two-year program (2018-20) was to increase the knowledge about sexual risks, including pregnancy and STD's, encourage healthy decision-making around sexual behavior, and promote self-efficacy based on evidence-based curriculum and Lakota traditions and values. Also included were school-day mentoring and referrals to health services to support healthy lifestyles. The curriculum was integrated into high school programs. After school activities included a healthy snack, and a variety of physical activities.

Community socials were held for adults, designed to increase their knowledge of resources and prevention strategies related to risky sexual behavior, and to improve communication with youth in their own families.

Community partners such as the Community Action Group and the Youth Leadership Group assisted to expand and sustain a community coalition to promote adolescent sexual risk avoidance and reduction through increased awareness and resources.

Making Proud Choices had four major components: 1) Exploring goals, dreams and adolescent sexuality, 2) Knowledge, covering information about the etiology, transmission and prevention of HIV, other STDs and teenage pregnancy, 3) Beliefs and attitudes, and 4) Skills and self-efficacy, covering negotiation refusal skills and condom use.

The role of sexual responsibility and accountability was stressed, and the curriculum taught participants to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual behavior, to respect themselves and others, and the importance of developing a positive image.

Curriculum included: Getting to Know You and Steps to Making Your Dreams Come True, The Consequences of Sex: HIV Infection, Attitudes About Sex, HIV and Condom Use, Strategies for Preventing HIV Infection: Stop, Think and Act, The Consequences of Sex: STDs, The Consequences of Sex: Pregnancy, Developing Condom Use and Negotiation Skills and Enhancing Refusal and Negotiation Skills.

The curriculum was supplemented by Lakota cultural activities that teach youth about applying Lakota values in contemporary life. The Lakota way of life supports basic positive human qualities that promote healthy youth development. Lakota storytelling for years has been used to transmit the wisdom of the elders to the young, encouraging healthy relationships, responsibility, self-regulation, transitioning to adult roles, courageous decision-making and other education. In this tradition, Richard Moves Camp, Lakota elder, provided presentations to youth and families, and leadership to staff to guide these kinds of activities.



## **ATEYAPI LAKOTA LANGUAGE**

### **LAKOTA ADOLESCENTS KEEPING OUR TRADITIONS ALIVE**

The Lakota language is in danger of disappearing. Only 7% of contemporary Lakota people are native speakers, and each year over 1% of those speakers leave us. Believing that the loss of Lakota language and culture impacts levels of self-esteem, identity and therefore achievement for low-income American Indian children and their families, RAI offered a three-year Lakota language program.

Lakota language classes were offered to the community every Monday and Wednesday, 4:30-6:00 pm at the Crazy Horse location. A meal and all class materials were provided. In addition, presenters were brought in to demonstrate and teach traditional skills such as beading, moccasin making, and sewing ribbon skirts.

A Lakota immersion class was also held at the Crazy Horse location. Students from ages 5 to 80 met daily from 8 am—2 pm.



### **Lakota Language Ateyapi Elementary: Serving Knollwood, General Beadle, Horace Mann, Robbinsdale and South Park Elementary Schools in Rapid City**

The Ateyapi Elementary Lakota Language Program was funded by two sources: ANA (Administration for Native Americans) and a grant from the NOVO Foundation. Both grants started on July 1, 2018, ANA funding ended on June 30, 2021. NOVO funding runs through September 2021. The ANA grant allowed for three Lakota tutors stationed at General Beadle, Robbinsdale Elementary, Horace Mann Elementary School. The NOVO grant provided two more tutors for Knollwood Elementary and South Park Elementary. A reduced program has been extended for one year with funding from the NoVo Foundation.

Each tutor recruited 14 students and placed remaining applicants on a waiting list. The tutors stayed in the schools from 10:00 AM until the end of the school day at 2:50 PM. The tutors used classrooms in the schools from 3:00-4:00 to teach Lakota Language. From 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM the tutors helped students with any homework they may need help with, go to a park to play, take them on a hike, or learn cultural activities such as beading, drumming, singing and hand games. Every Wednesday they visited one of the 7 sacred sites in the Black Hills. Once a week the students went on an incentive trip to eat in a nice restaurant or go to a movie or Flags N Wheels. The tutors kept track of attendance and grades for each student. If they missed assignments or school the tutors contacted parents to see if there is anything the tutors could do to help their child, either with tutoring or a ride to school.

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

**We did it! A New Facility Becomes a Reality!**



In 2017 we publicly launched a capital campaign to build a new school for our children. The need had been dire for a while. We had been holding classes in dilapidated module and trailer buildings that were a decade past their useful lives, on land we didn't own. We embarked on a 7.2 million dollar adventure, the largest capital campaign ever attempted by a Native American organization in Rapid City.

With the help of our Campaign Co-chairs and a Steering Committee made up of local civic leaders, and because of the generosity of the City of Rapid City, the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, the Paulson Charitable Trust, Jim Scull, Hani Shafai, Casey Peterson, First Interstate Bank, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Black Hills Federal Credit Union, Black Hills Community Bank, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Black Hills Surgical Hospital, South Dakota Community Foundation, Black Hills Area Community Foundation, Black Hills Energy and so many more, the campaign was a success.

The beautiful 28,000 square foot building, designed by Williams and Associates Architects and built by Scull Construction, opened in January 2019.

# AND NOW WE NEED TO EXPAND!

RAI's Head Start and Early Head Start programs have long been recognized as some of the finest in the country. Due to the exemplary performance of our staff and its leadership, the National Head Start office has allowed us to expand our reach and serve more children. That is great news, since we always have a waiting list and there are many more families who need our services than we are able to accommodate. To meet this need and serve more children, we must add four classrooms to our building. Luckily, we anticipated this and the building was designed to be easily expanded. Electrical and plumbing are configured, and the building's end walls are construction with this eventuality in mind. We have raised all but \$125,000 of our original \$7.2 million project. We hope to retire our mortgage and be debt free soon. This goal will be included as part of our campaign, as will the much needed bus barn enclosure.



Drawing courtesy of Williams and Associates



# FINANCIALS

## RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES

Rapid City, South Dakota

### FINANCIAL REPORT

For the Year Ended December 31, 2020



**Rural America Initiatives**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**December 31, 2020**

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<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,144,558.94
Accounts Receivable, Net of Allowance of \$140,963	16,846.00
Grants Receivable	79,075.02
Current Portion of Pledges Receivable	53,315.00
Note Receivable	295,000.00
Prepaid Expenses	<u>109,603.17</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>1,698,398.13</u>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT</b>	
Equipment	154,637.75
Leasehold Improvements	137,099.28
Vehicles	991,021.47
Buildings	8,439,185.67
Land	<u>495,751.31</u>
	10,217,695.48
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(2,145,249.06)</u>
Net Property and Equipment	<u>8,072,446.42</u>
<b>Other Assets</b>	
Rental Deposits	7,889.00
Pledges Receivable	9,315.00
Capital Credits Receivable	<u>51,148.21</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>68,352.21</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>\$ 9,839,196.76</u></u>

**Rural America Initiatives**  
**Statement of Financial Position (Continued)**  
**December 31, 2020**

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<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
Accrued Payroll	\$ 88,426.77
Accounts Payable	55,799.70
Payroll Taxes Payable	5,435.25
Retirement Payable	8,108.98
Accrued Interest	188.13
Deferred Revenue	23,041.55
Current Portion of Notes Payable	<u>18,605.00</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>199,605.38</u>
<b>LONG-TERM LIABILITIES</b>	
Notes Payable	439,772.98
Less: Current Portion	<u>(18,605.00)</u>
Total Long-term Liabilities	<u>421,167.98</u>
Total Liabilities	620,773.36
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
Without Donor Restrictions	8,614,484.34
With Donor Restrictions	<u>603,939.06</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$ 9,839,196.76</u></b>



**Rural America Initiatives  
Statement of Activities  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2020**

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Grant	\$ -	\$ 5,742,819.98	\$ 5,742,819.98
Interest Revenue	6,993.13	-	6,993.13
In-kind	-	205,203.77	205,203.77
Contributions	302,734.69	136,660.58	439,395.27
Reimbursements	54,226.83	6,746.78	60,973.61
Child Care	1,767.06	-	1,767.06
CANS Food Reimbursement	-	50,742.53	50,742.53
Total Revenues	365,721.71	6,142,173.64	6,507,895.35
<b>NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS</b>			
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	5,538,234.58	(5,538,234.58)	-
Total Revenues and Reclassifications	5,903,956.29	603,939.06	6,507,895.35
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Management and General:			
Rural America Initiatives	45,093.56	-	45,093.56
Rural America Initiatives - Indirect '19	172,455.63	-	172,455.63
Rural America Initiatives - Indirect '20	369,900.52	-	369,900.52
Fundraising	83,125.79	-	83,125.79
Program Expenses:			
Rapid City Head Start Year 13	711,309.66	-	711,309.66
Rapid City Head Start Year 14	647,048.75	-	647,048.75
Rapid City Early Head Start Year 13	242,846.10	-	242,846.10
Rapid City Early Head Start Year 14	354,220.87	-	354,220.87
Crow Creek Head Start Year 13	412,861.92	-	412,861.92
Crow Creek Head Start Year 14	388,190.56	-	388,190.56
Crow Early Creek Head Start Year 13	308,375.50	-	308,375.50
Crow Early Creek Head Start Year 14	181,725.06	-	181,725.06
Early Head Start Expansion Year 3	368,955.39	-	368,955.39
Early Head Start Expansion Year 4	389,911.14	-	389,911.14
Rapid City Head Start Construction Year 4	202,321.77	-	202,321.77
Ateyapi Teen Pregnancy Prevention Tier 1 Year 10	406,845.97	-	406,845.97
ANA Language Year 5	152,653.51	-	152,653.51
ANA Language Year 6	151,841.57	-	151,841.57
Wicozani Year 4	10,040.03	-	10,040.03
Wicozani Year 5	249,597.96	-	249,597.96
Wicozani Year 6	171,383.74	-	171,383.74
NoVo Year 2	161,831.40	-	161,831.40
NoVo Year 3	27,313.79	-	27,313.79
Vucurevich Year 1	51,951.76	-	51,951.76
Ateyapi Youth Engaged in Sports Year 1	265,557.17	-	265,557.17
Ateyapi Youth Engaged in Sports Year 2	71,519.30	-	71,519.30
Total Expenses	6,598,878.42	-	6,598,878.42
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS</b>	(694,922.13)	603,939.06	(90,983.07)
<b>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	9,309,406.47	-	9,309,406.47
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	\$ 8,614,484.34	\$ 603,939.00	\$ 9,218,423.40

See independent auditor's report and notes to the financial statements.

**Rural America Initiatives**  
**Statement of Functional Expenses**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2020**

	Program Services	Supporting Services		Total
		Management and General	Fundraising	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Staff Travel	\$ 2,183.98	\$ 388.88	\$ -	\$ 2,572.86
Advertising/Employment Ads	4,663.37	15.00	-	4,678.37
Vehicle Repairs	41,521.85	-	-	41,521.85
Vehicle Operation	34,481.45	-	-	34,481.45
Copies P.S.	1,734.75	(7,605.50)	-	(5,870.75)
Consultants P.S.	133,235.74	3,800.00	35,556.21	172,591.95
Consultants Admin	4,400.00	800.00	-	5,200.00
Salaries	2,758,640.67	235,443.75	-	2,994,084.42
Supplies - P.S.	310,918.02	-	-	310,918.02
Supplies - Admin	70,866.62	39,084.59	4,208.99	114,160.20
Donations Expended	37,208.57	12,239.30	750.00	50,197.87
Payroll Taxes	237,417.57	19,090.13	-	256,507.70
Food	11,889.92	-	-	11,889.92
Food - Children	161,590.11	2,330.47	634.97	164,555.55
Staff Training - P.S.	45,793.52	171.33	-	45,964.85
Staff Training - Admin	19,765.26	10,309.97	1,645.00	31,720.23
Employee Retirement	103,586.11	17,739.97	-	121,326.08
Bank Charges	3.50	2,911.18	5.00	2,919.68
Penalties	-	5,206.14	-	5,206.14
Depreciation	260,367.15	-	-	260,367.15
Classroom Supplies	250,924.97	-	-	250,924.97
Volunteer/Client Activities	328,324.45	7,579.17	-	335,903.62
Out-of-state Travel	3,086.77	-	-	3,086.77
Evaluation	98,185.43	-	-	98,185.43
Telephone	139,541.91	10,680.71	-	150,222.62
Postage Admin	-	4,661.45	-	4,661.45
Interest Expense	19,868.83	-	-	19,868.83
Office Rent	73,371.61	-	-	73,371.61
Insurance - Vehicle	19,598.99	-	-	19,598.99
Insurance - Health	47,304.20	3,796.59	-	51,100.79
Cultural Materials	18,224.41	1,250.00	-	19,474.41
Curriculum Materials	34.93	-	-	34.93
Maintenance	207,827.18	22,319.92	38,435.53	268,582.63
Cleaning Supplies	9,172.27	641.22	-	9,813.49
Insurance - Work Comp	-	34,564.00	-	34,564.00
Site Improvement	453.69	-	-	453.69
Copies Admin	-	8,234.08	-	8,234.08

See independent auditor's report and notes to the financial statements.



**Rural America Initiatives**  
**Statement of Functional Expenses (Continued)**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2020**

	Program Services	Supporting Services		Total
		Management and General	Fundraising	
Parent Activities	13,786.66	-	-	13,786.66
Utilities	104,496.92	6,244.70	-	110,741.62
Classroom Supplies - COVID 19	72,221.39	85.50	-	72,306.89
Supplies PS - COVID 19	81,683.73	1,984.49	-	83,668.22
Maintenance - COVID 19	3,110.00	-	-	3,110.00
Pers Protective Supp - COVID 19	7,274.65	531.93	-	7,806.58
Net Payroll Taxes	3,890.85	129.41	-	4,020.26
Bad Debt	23,800.88	-	-	23,800.88
Disability Services	44.00	-	-	44.00
Disability Supplies	9,768.89	-	-	9,768.89
Kitchen Supplies	40,937.24	-	-	40,937.24
Postage P.S.	495.00	-	-	495.00
Disability Contractual	1,691.75	-	-	1,691.75
CDA Operating	4,659.00	-	-	4,659.00
Insurance Admin	103,404.51	33,748.76	-	137,153.27
Equipment Admin	849.65	-	-	849.65
Fundraising Activities	-	-	1,890.09	1,890.09
Accounting Fees	-	109,072.57	-	109,072.57
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 5,928,302.92</b>	<b>\$ 587,449.71</b>	<b>\$ 83,125.79</b>	<b>\$ 6,598,878.42</b>



October 2019, Wicozani staff setting up inipi (sweat lodge) on RAI building grounds



# PARTNERS

2019 Ateyapi  
Veterans' Powwow



Liz Hamburg/Black Hills Area Community  
Foundation, Bruce Long Fox/RAI and donor



Ribbon cutting, RAI's new building, 2020

## SELECTED MAJOR FUNDERS AND CONTRIBUTORS:

- US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Administration for Native Americans (under HHS)
- Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (under HHS)
- Office of Head Start (under Office of the Administration for Children and Families/HHS)
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- United Way of the Black Hills
- Jim Leach and Ann Trucano
- First Interstate Bank
- Black Hills Community Bank
- Casey Peterson & Associates
- Fred A. Lockwood
- Black Hills Surgical Hospital
- Dave Emery
- Black Hills Federal Credit Union
- Marie Quinn
- John T. Vucurevich Foundation
- Gwendolyn Stearns Foundation
- City of Rapid City
- Scull Construction
- Hani Shafi/Dream Design International
- Paulson Charitable Trust
- The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
- Rapid City Rotary
- Seventh Generation Fund
- Black Hills Energy
- Dave Lamb
- Michael and Lori McGuire
- Dietel & Partners
- Pete Cappa
- Gary and Elizabeth Mayer
- Ed and Peg Seljeskog
- Jim Jasper
- Hovey Family Foundation
- Brent Phillips





## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- Rapid City Area Schools
- Working Against Violence, Inc. (WAVI)
- Indian Health Service
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Behavior Management Systems
- Cornerstone Rescue Mission
- South Dakota Department of Social Services/Child Protection Services
- Native Women's Health Center
- Salvation Army
- Western South Dakota Action Agency
- Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
- South Dakota WIC Program
- Career Learning Center
- Birth to Three Connections – Part C
- Badlands Head Start: Prenatal to Five
- Rapid City Public Library
- United Sioux Tribes
- Pennington County Housing
- Lakota Homes
- Mommy's Closet
- Feeding South Dakota (Food Bank)
- Early Childhood Connections
- Rapid City Journal
- Hopa Mountain Foundation
- South Dakota State University
- Donna Chimera, Wolf Star
- Native Sun News
- Rapid City Regional Hospital (Monument Health)
- Linn Brothers Productions
- KEVN/KOTA Television
- Jeff Bridges, actor/philanthropist
- Hopa Mountain Foundation
- Joe and Wendy Lowe







## RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES

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