

Hope for the First Nations Newsletter

This page: Photos of our new friend, Mike from VBS at White Earth.



A True Community

By Tammy Bumgarner, Board Member

This was my first year volunteering at Vacation Bible School with HFTFN. I had some idea what to expect—at least, I thought I knew what to expect. I've learned from others since then that each year is a wildly different experience.

Before I went on this trip, I was thinking about what strengths I have or what knowledge I could share with the kids and the community. Instead, I ended up learning quite a bit from the people I met at White Earth.

On the first day of VBS, I noticed a man sitting with the kids at the end of the day. I assumed he was a parent checking out what his kids were doing.

He was intently watching Joseph and Laralyn RiverWind tell stories. The man would laugh this big, boisterous laugh and slap his knee at all the funny parts. He really seemed to be enjoying himself.

"Good, he will be happy with what his children are doing here," I thought.

The next morning as we arrived at the church and started working, I noticed the man was there again.

Today he made a name tag for himself—his name was Mike. Mike didn't have kids in VBS. He

was back for another fun day for himself.

I liked Mike immediately. He enjoyed simple things, like a good story, and I found out through conversations with him that he liked the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and his favorite movie was "Happy Feet."

I also learned during our small group time that Mike couldn't read or write very well, if at all.

I watched in amazement through the week as every child who attended VBS treated Mike with dignity and respect. They welcomed him into their activities and helped him out when he needed it.

When Mike was struggling with writing his Bible verses, R.J., a kid who often had a chip on his shoulder, copied the verses down twice so Mike could have his own copy.

The kindness of these children really touched my heart.

I've seen similar situations outside the reservation, but they usually didn't go as well for a person like Mike. I've seen children tease and taunt these special people. Unfortunately, American culture teaches us to find the weakest link and then step on them on our way to the top.

Needs List

We're making our list and checking it twice. Items we need for our Christmas trip to White Earth include:

- Socks (all sizes)
- Hats
- Mittens
- Blankets
- New toys (\$15 limit)
- Money toward fruit and other treats
- Money toward a Christmas dinner
- Prayers for a successful trip

To donate, contact Executive Director Lynn Wilson (see p. 2).



These kids on the reservation know more about community than many adults could ever hope to know. I've seen how they respect, not only people like Mike, but their elders and veterans too. They hold these people up and honor them because they deserve it, and that is what a strong community does.

We all can learn a lot from their example.

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Mission Statement

Partnering with the people of the White Earth Reservation,

Hope for the First Nations is building unity through relationships with individuals in the community

And sharing the love of Christ in culturally relevant ways.

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Needs List 1
Items we need for our Christmas trip to White Earth.

Vacation Bible School. 2
Because how many kids like school?





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To:



Vacation Bible School Is Now Hope Day Camp

Why the change? For many of us who grew up in church, "Vacation Bible School" is a familiar term. For the children of the White Earth Reservation, it is a foreign language. It sounds like school dragging them away from summer vacation. So from now on, we're calling our program "Hope Day Camp." It sure sounds like more fun to us!

Executive Directions

By Lynn Wilson, Executive Director

Fall is in the air, and our thoughts at HFTFN are about Christmas

There's lots of planning going on. Last year we went to Pine Point a few days before Christmas, and it was one of the most awesome days of our lives: Seeing little faces shine with joy and love as they got their gifts. Seeing adults welcome us and accept our meager offerings and that we were there to say, "Merry Christmas, dear people of White Earth." Wow, it doesn't get much better than that!

Wait – maybe it does.

This year we have the wonderful opportunity to again join our friends at Pine Point for the community's Christmas celebration Dec. 15. Then, on Dec. 16, we are invited to the Indian Assembly Church to host the first HFTFN Christmas party for the children and their families of the community of White Earth.

We need socks – lots and lots of socks.

Last year, we took 1,200 pairs of socks to the reservation. We packed three pairs in a plastic baggie and added fruit, beef jerky, peanuts and just a little candy. We had enough to give one to every person who came to the celebration.

The gifts were a big hit.



So this year, we plan on doing the same; however, we need lots and lots more. We would also like to take hats, mittens and blankets.

We connected with many elders this summer. They were so excited they had not been forgotten. This Christmas would be a great time to bless them with the message of the season and some warm items.

Maybe we're asking for too much, but I think those kids at White Earth would love to have a new toy to open also.

So, dear friends, once again we are asking for help in getting these things. *Miigwech and Zhawendaagozi* (Thank you and be blessed).



This page: Photos from last year's Christmas Party at Pine Point.

