

New Programs Reach Out to Standing Rock Youth

The Sitting Bull College Extension program's work with youth has greatly expanded in the past year.

Phillip Bird Horse started working as the Extension Youth Horsemanship educator in fall 2011. Phillip supports youth horsemanship leaders in each District on Standing Rock with their local activities and lessons. Children and youth new to horses (*šúŋkawakǰáŋ*) are oriented to approach them gently and with a good heart. Lessons include riding skills, care and feeding, trimming hooves, and training horses. Youth learn to consult and work together to care for the horses, and to earn money to pay for hay and grain. The youth also plan and participate in group rides such as the annual Chiefs Ride in late May, and the Future Generations (*Ómakǰa Thokátakiya*) Ride to Wounded Knee in December. Several adults in each District are already working with Phillip on local youth horsemanship activities. Phillip has previous experience working with IHS on the use of horses as an aid in counseling youth.

Verlinda Iron Cloud began part-time work for Sitting Bull College in summer 2012. Her role is to recruit and support adults in local communities who are willing to teach life skills to their neighborhood children and youth. Verlinda will also help plan the Sitting Bull Youth Culture Camp. She has learned many traditional skills, like making *pápa* (dried meat), from her parents, Vernon and Theo Iron Cloud.

This summer Verlinda planned and hosted the Bear Soldier Youth Culture Fair for youth and adults to learn how to make *waphéša* (headroaches), hand drums, and quillwork. The goal is that the participants of this workshop will teach the skills they learned this summer to others in the future. The Bear Soldier District and the Boys & Girls Club of the Grand River Area co-sponsored this program with Sitting Bull College. Verlinda is also helping four other Districts plan cultural learning events for their local youth at this time. Her goal is find and offer training to adults on Standing Rock and in Mobridge who will continue through the year to help young people learn skills that will help them through life and to feel good about themselves and their culture.

Both Phillip and Verlinda have offices at the McLaughlin Bear Soldier Campus, 823-4318, and serve the entire Standing Rock community. Anyone who would like help getting started teaching skills to their local youth is welcome to contact Verlinda or Phillip. This program is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Sitting Bull College programs are available to participants without regard to race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, citizenship status, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic or status that is protected by federal, state or local law.

Photo caption: Bear Soldier District youth learning quillwork at the Bear Soldier Youth Culture Fair. Tom Bullhead, the teacher for the class, is on the right.

(Verlinda may have a photo release / permission signed already)



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