



SNAPSHOT: Healing Spirit

- the need:** Native children are over-represented in Minnesota's foster care system. While American Indians make up 1.2 percent of Minnesota's population, they account for 12 percent of the children in the state's foster care system. They are "aging out" of foster care with little idea of who they are and even less knowledge of the sacred culture from which they come.
- purpose:** Healing Spirit operates a Minneapolis foster home for American Indian youth living in long-term foster care.
- who lives there:** Up to four boys, ages 13-17, live in the home at any one time. Many of the youth have a history of neglect, running away, poor school attendance, poor health care, and run-ins with police.
- services offered:** While living in the Healing Spirit house, the boys focus on school, their culture and independent living skills. The program excels at connecting youth to their Native culture and community — a significant missing piece in their lives — and through that experience, these young men begin to believe in themselves and others. They have formed their own traditional singing and drumming group and receive invitations from across the nation to share their gifts.
- where:** The four-bedroom home sits in a quiet Minneapolis neighborhood.
- staff:** The youth live with adult caregivers as well as have overnight and weekend staff. They also benefit from a Division of Indian Work staff member assigned exclusively as their caseworker and advocate.
- year founded:** 2003
- future:** In 2010, the Division of Indian Work hopes to open a Healing Spirit home for American Indian girls living in long-term foster care.
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