

Increased need stretches resources, forces cutbacks at Horizons Unlimited

On many weekdays, there is a steady flow of men, women and children who arrive at the Division of Indian Work lobby empty handed. But they don't leave that way. They step outside with a bag or two of groceries, knowing they have the makings for a few more meals.

The staff and volunteers at Horizons Unlimited have seen the number of families coming to the food shelf surge in 2010. That increase in usage has stretched the resources of Horizons Unlimited to unsustainable levels. DIW has spent \$60,000 for food in the first six months of 2010, double the \$30,000 budgeted. In July, 37,000 pounds of food were distributed through Horizons Unlimited. Six months ago, 28,000 pounds were distributed.

"Cuts in state programs have forced many families to spend their limited income on medicine, rent and other essentials," Maren Hardy, the food shelf manager, said. "This has brought more people to us."

Hardy added that Horizons Unlimited started to see an increase in usage late last year, shortly after the food pantry at nearby Little Earth closed.

The number of people using Horizons Unlimited has risen from 9,236 in the first six months of 2009 to 14,085 in the same period this year. Because of that 52 percent increase, some difficult decisions had to be made.

In July, families were limited to one visit per month rather than two and the shopper's choice option of allowing clients to select food was discontinued. With the pressure on resources mounting, the decision was made in August to close the food shelf on Thursdays. Recently, the decision was made to close the food shelf the second week of each month through the end of the year. And the popular Christmas food basket distribution has been canceled for 2010 and the Thanksgiving food basket giveaway may have to be scaled back.

"In a perfect world, I would not have a job here," Hardy said. "We're just trying to get food to where it's needed the most."



You can help

Cutting back hours and services at Horizons Unlimited were painful decisions. With the holiday season quickly approaching, you can support the food shelf by making a donation to DIW at diw-mn.org.

Catching Up

Healing Spirit

General Mills produces a video each year as part of their United Way campaign highlighting work being done in the Twin Cities to change lives. This year, *Healing Spirit House* is featured. On Aug. 31, a camera crew followed two General Mills executives as they met with Kirk Crow Shoe, director of the program, Tony Frank and two brothers who reside at the home. The stop included a tour of the house and discussions about the impact of the program and what it means to the young men who live at the house...Several young adults in the *Healthy Transitions* program attended traditional camps. They gained a sense of confidence and community that will help them with job searches, college applications and in their everyday lives.

Health Services

Mashkiki Ogichidaag welcomed a new coordinator, Matt LaFave, to the program. He hit the ground running, helping to organize a Smoke Free 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament at Little Earth on June 19. In addition, the Medicine Warriors focused on developing a work plan for achieving their stop smoking goals and three of the members attended training on how to develop and edit public service announcements...Gearing up for fall, *Live It!* coordinator Adrienne Morris was hard at work updating the culturally-specific sexuality education curriculum.

Youth Leadership Development Program

The YLDP staff kept 30 American Indian youth busy for 10 weeks, coordinating 2 sessions of culturally-based activities, including learning Ojibwe language and participating in field trips to the Science Museum, the Minnesota Zoo and canoeing at Hyland Lake. In August, YLDP co-sponsored the Dakota and Ojibwe Community Language Camp, a three-day event designed for early childhood programs serving American Indian children and their families. Staff members taught language and helped with the Friday feast/powwow.

Niminoosemin helped with the Third Annual Heartbeat of Recovery community event featuring Don Coyhis, with Wellbriety White Bison, as the keynote speaker and testimonials from people in recovery throughout the day...On Nov. 6th, the *Healing Spirit* drum group will be co-host drum at the Gathering for Our Children and Returning Adoptee Powwow. The event, at the American Indian Center in Minneapolis, brings kids and adults separated from their family back to the community.

In October, *Mashkiki Ogichidaag* is co-sponsoring a Youth Tobacco Prevention and Wellness Symposium. This event will bring youth together from across the state to discuss their experience with community leadership development around creating smoke-free and commercial tobacco free policies...Adrienne Morris is continuing to facilitate *Live It!* trainings and recruit new sites. In October, she will be traveling to the National Indian Education Association Conference in San Diego and will be hosting training for the Federated Indians of Granto Rancheria, CA.

The various school-based programs, including the *American Indian Math Project* and the *First Language Project* will be shifting into high gear. In addition, program director Louise Matson, along with DIW executive director Noya Woodrich and First Language coordinator David Butler will be attending the Administration for Native Americans grantee meeting in January.

Family focus, solid inspiration help innovative Spears direct Health Services



George Spears watches this summer's three-on-three basketball tournament, sponsored by Mashkiki Ogichidaag.

For many people a rock is something to climb over, something to edge a garden with or to sit upon while taking in the vastness of a lake or river.

For George Spears, the rock is a more personal, motivating symbol, one that he brings along to meetings and community discussions.

"It offers a powerful perspective for me," Spears, director of Health Services, explained. "It represents a foundation and stability. In the sense of ceremony, the rock purifies and will be here a lot longer than me."

Spears came to DIW in June 2007 as the coordinator of the Reduce Tobacco Abuse Program. He had previously worked for the Minneapolis Public Schools' Indian Education Program for three years after graduating from Augsburg with a degree in political science in 2004.

Although initially hesitant about pursuing the Health Services leadership position, Spears was encouraged to apply by Louise Matson, Youth Leadership Development Program director.

"It was an interest of mine, one that I saw as a good fit," Spears said. "I have always been concerned with the health and well-being of American Indian people, and all people, for that matter."

In many ways, his father, who died in 2006, influenced his strong desire to work in the American Indian community. As a social worker for Hennepin County, his father placed several young adults in DIW's Healing Spirit program. "I have a lot of connections because of the impact my father had," Spears said. "He always gave people respect. He was somebody who never talked bad of other people and you don't see that enough in our community."

With three brothers and three sisters, family is a very important part of Spears' life. "I grew up in a big household. So when I say I have a lot of brothers, I literally do," he said. "My mom is an Episcopal minister and a very powerful woman. I ask her for advice on many things."

In addition, Spears is the father of three, a son and two daughters. "They are my motivators, my team, my crew," he said. "They keep me real."

The importance of family also influences his leadership of Health Services. Impatient at times, he doesn't see the change happening in the community that is necessary. "I have lived in this community the majority of my life," he said. "The problems are the same."

And while he is very supportive of his staff and the benefits many derive from those programs, he sees more potential. Spears wants to concentrate on the needs of families rather than individuals. He believes that while immersing the entire family in programming is more time intensive, it will produce more results.

"If 20 families really experienced change, just imagine what impact that would have on the community," he asks. "We need to strive for long-range results and not be satisfied with the short gain."

And just as the rock is a powerful symbol in his life, running is also very important. It is an activity that he shared with his father and he admits it brought out both of their competitive spirits. But it has an even deeper meaning in his life. "Running balances me," he explained. "There's that release of energy, then the sense of calm."

The same combination he brings to his job at DIW.

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OUR FAMILY OF PROGRAMS

HEALING SPIRIT

~ KIRK CROW SHOE, DIRECTOR

HEALTH SERVICES

~ GEORGE SPEARS, DIRECTOR

STRENGTHENING FAMILY CIRCLES

~ SUZANNE TIBBETTS YOUNG, DIRECTOR

YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

~ LOUISE MATSON, DIRECTOR

Mark your calendar

Powderhorn Empty Bowls: Choose a handmade bowl (some made by DIW's Youth Leadership Development Program participants). Enjoy a meal of homemade soup and bread and you get to keep the bowl. Your free-will donation supports Horizons Unlimited. Fri. Nov. 5, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at the Powderhorn Park Building. For more information, visit www.pebmn.org.



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