



## Focusing on the essence of fatherhood

On a recent Tuesday night, a group of about 25 mothers, children and fathers gathered in the Dakotah Lodge to share a pre-Thanksgiving meal of turkey and all the trimmings.

At the end of the meal, the fathers gathered in front of the lodge fireplace to discuss how things had been going, to plan future meetings and the next sweat lodge ceremony. Then the dads returned to their families to share in the night's activities.



Bob Klanderud

For program assistant Bob Klanderud, this was the perfect microcosm for what the Fathers Program means to these men and to DIW. "There is a rhythm and flow to everything and you have to work with the rhythm that life offers," Klanderud said. "We have a collective consciousness when we come together."

The Fathers Program helps American Indian fathers become better parents and providers for their children. The group meets once a week, with the dads focusing on learning life, relationship and parenting skills.

Klanderud, whose hours have been cut because grants for the program have been reduced, spends most of his shortened work days talking with dads who need and want support. "Most of the Native fathers in the program have no fathers in their life," he explained. "They don't have the social skills to approach employers. They don't have conflict resolution skills. We are working to bring some of these skills into the realm of their reality."

While growing up, Klanderud didn't identify with being Indian. But he returned to his roots, living through adversity and facing many challenges to become a spiritual leader, healer and elder. Along the way, Klanderud found he had an affinity for working in the city, to offer the traditional ways in an urban setting.

"These are prideful people. It would be easy for them to become institutionalized because they don't make enough to be self-sufficient," he said. "Yet we want them to realize that it is very healing to accept I am who I am. From there, they can resonate in harmony with the earth their ancestors came from."

### Sweat lodges feed the spirit, nurture the soul

Following the controversial deaths at a sweat lodge in Sedona, Arizona in October, Bob Klanderud took to the airwaves to defend the Native American sweat lodge tradition.

In a report on KARE 11 News on Sunday, Nov. 1, Klanderud, program assistant for the Fathers Program at DIW, explained details of the ceremonies he facilitates in two sacred domes behind St. Luke Presbyterian Church in Minnetonka.

"We feed (the rocks) the water of life: that first medicine the Creator gave us. It creates an environment that the spirits come in," Klanderud, who is part Lakota, explained. "We don't hurt anybody. We have compassion. That's what we go in there is to learn how to be human beings."

The complete report can be viewed at [KARE11.com](http://KARE11.com) by searching for story number 827571.

For more information about the Fathers Program contact :

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# Meeting the Needs

## A stronger healing touch

Making the most of increased federal funding, the Division of Indian Work's Strengthening Family Circles (SFC) is expanding to meet growing needs in two important areas.

The faith-based program, called Wiidookodaadig, is expanding its reach of providing crime victims with spiritual support to aid them in their healing process. Two traditional spiritual mentors, one male, one female, are on staff and offer counseling, one-on-one guidance and monthly sweat lodge ceremonies. In addition, because they are often difficult for the community to find in an urban setting, SFC offers monthly healing and ceremony services with traditional healers.

In an effort to ensure that American Indian patients have fair access to traditional services in hospitals, SFC is working on building new collaborations with hospital chaplains throughout the Twin Cities. And to improve how professional sectors serve the Native community, the faith-based program is offering trainings for educators, law enforcement, medical professionals and service providers.

While continuing to meet with girls in local public schools, SFC is adding staff and improving the Phoenix Project street outreach. Through relationships, education and traditional services, the Phoenix Project empowers American Indian girls 17 years old and under to escape the trap of sexual exploitation and trafficking. For more information on these programs, contact Strengthening Family Circles director Suzanne Tibbetts Young at 612-722-8722, x350 or stibbetts@gmcc.org.

## New name reflects cultural relevance

DIW's Reduce Tobacco Abuse Project has a new name. The program, which teaches American Indian young people about the traditional Native uses for tobacco to keep them from smoking, is now Mashkiki Ogichidaag. Stressing the correct use of tobacco, the new name is Ojibwe for Medicine Warriors. For more information, contact Health Services director George Spears at 612-722-8722, x376 or gspears@gmcc.org.

## Helping DIW meet the needs

DIW was one of six organizations nationwide focusing on American Indians to receive grants from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. The grant of \$100,000 will be used for Healing Spirit, Youth Leadership Development Program, Horizons Unlimited, and Strengthening Family Circles.

## Revitalizing a Native tongue

The dream of a program in Native language instruction for American Indian youth will become a reality early next year. With a three-year grant from the federal Administration for Native Americans, a part of the Department of Health and Human Services, the DIW's First Language Project will offer structured after-school Ojibwe language instruction to youth 7-17 years old. For more information, contact Louise Matson at 612-722-8722, x370 or lmatson@gmcc.org.



## Dedicated to sharpening skills and having fun

From homework to demonstrating mathematic creativity with projects such as snow snakes to gathering for activities such as ice skating, it has been a busy fall for youth involved with the American Indian Math Project. After a break for the holidays, the youth will get back to work and fun on January 5.

# Looking for the answers to what do you want and why are you here?

Pie is such a ubiquitous visual during the holiday season. Pecan, apple, pumpkin, slice by slice, the list goes on and on. But what if that same pie was your life, carefully divided into ten important slices.



Youth worker Korina Barry and Healthy Transitions participant Antonio Bellanger cook dinner for a recent Thursday night gathering.

For the young adults participating in Healthy Transitions, the pie and those slices represent an independent living plan. The ten parts include questions about career planning, home life, housing and money management, social relationships, communication and work/study skills. The goal of the program is to assure that system-involved American Indian youth are prepared for independent living.

“The questions help them to focus and think more realistically about their own reality,” Kristian Theisz, youth worker for the program, said. “The self-assessment provides a guide to how to get from where they are now to where they want to be.”

One of DIW’s newer programs, Healthy Transitions currently serves 10 youth, 6 boys and 4 girls from 16-21 years old. “We start from the premise of where would you like to see yourself in a year,” Korina Barry, youth worker, explained. “Through the assessment and support, we create a path to that goal through attendance at Wednesday and Thursday classes.”

The Wednesday program is required and includes development of more of the tangible — learning goals and living skills. Thursday, the focus shifts in a cultural direction, with activities such as cooking, making medicine pouches and listening to guest speakers. Many of these activities are in partnership with participants in other DIW programs, including Healing Spirit and Recovery Maintenance Services.

“Intertwining culture with everyday living is an important aspect of the program,” Theisz said. “After they complete the 22-week program, it will be imperative for us to be there to support them in maintaining goals and successfully move forward with their next steps.”

Theisz and Barry explained that the program is designed to be organic, to change as life changes and to give each participant a sense of ownership. Each youth has a folder with a copy of their assessment and regular homework. In addition, they sign a leverage contract which instills responsibility while offering financial assistance with living expenses.

“They need support in their lives and we serve as that extra support,” Theisz said. “My goal is to see each youth successfully complete these life skills and use them on their own path to success,” Barry added.

For more information on Healthy Transitions, contact Healing Spirit director Kirk Crow Shoe at 612-722-8722, x319 or [kcrowshoe@gmcc.org](mailto:kcrowshoe@gmcc.org).

**“They need support in their lives and we serve as that extra support.”**

**Kristian Theisz  
Healthy Transitions**

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**VISION ON THE WIND**



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**YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

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**Giving thanks and staying warm**

DIW has been a busy place this fall. On Oct. 30, a line snaked from the Dakota Lodge, down 11th Avenue and along Lake Street for the annual coat voucher distribution. Six hundred vouchers good for up to \$50, were given to American Indian children who attend Minneapolis public schools and qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.

On Nov. 23 and 24, DIW staff manned tables in the lobby and garage to help hand out 500 Thanksgiving baskets. The boxes, which served more than 2,000 people, included a 10-12 pound turkey, a family pack of chicken, pie, bread, stuffing and canned vegetables. In addition, the package included a hygiene kit, with shampoo, toothpaste, soap and other items.

In another effort to ease holiday stress in the community, on Dec. 15 and 16, about 1,000 youth selected toys in the Toys for Tots event at DIW. The holiday season will conclude with a Christmas basket giveaway on Dec. 21 and 22.

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