

# CELEBRATIONS - EVENTS

## RUNNERS

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ground we were greeted by Rick Gray Grass (Oglala) and his family who are with a group of 60 Oglala teens and their chaperones who have already set up camp. Our group unload from the vans and make their way to the lake's edge within walking distance. The scenery is magnificent, everything is green and we are told Bear Butte sitting 2 miles to the north is a holy mountain with ties to the spiritual ways of the Lakota. Only later, at the end of the week, we to return to climb Bear Butte for special prayers and songs as we are led by holy people of the Oglala people.

On June 19, our 500 mile run begins from Bear Butte after a short ceremony with songs and prayers of the Oglala people held at the entrance to the Bear Butte Park on a paved road. We make a huge circle and the smell of burning sage floats through the circle as the sage is carried in a large empty can with bailing

wire for a handle.

With our Nation joining 3 other groups of runners aged 10 to 40+ years old, the YAN runners intermix with the other runners and some hop into our vans to take up the 10 mile segments that were given to us. The bonus is that our vans have air conditioning and some good snacks and thirst quenchers. One 10 year old Oglala has crawled to the very back of our van and has been asleep there for quite some time. Yes, cross-country runners get tired and worn.

Some of the runners such as Anthony Trujillo of Middle Verde (son of Herbert and Yolanda Trujillo of Middle Verde) ran 4 mile segments while another non-Indian runner about 40 years old, whose nickname is 'Rewind' also ran 4 mile segments.

With 4 groups running two-10 mile segments each day, we are able to run 80 miles a day with some of the Lakota runners even running further to make our run a little easier the next morning.

One of the vans fol-

lows our runners constantly to the right side of the highway. Most drivers are courteous and make safe passage to our left. Big trucks give an occasional blast with their horns to show support for the runners.

We run across a dirt county road for many miles bypassing Rapid City, South Dakota to our west. The rolling hills become steeper but only for a short time as the flat lands toward Pine Ridge becomes more level. After getting dropped off with a runner, waiting on the roadside's edge brings a certain stillness of the prairies—the soft blowing winds—the waves of wheatfields on the ranches dotting the country side.

The 4th night we camp in Pine Ridge not before we stop at Wounded Knee where we walk into the cemetery and pay our respects to 150 Oglalas who were killed there in the dead of winter December 29, 1890 by the U.S. Cavalry.

The Oglala share the same unfortunate circumstances as the Yavapai and Apache



Phillip Grass, Jr. (front) and Riley Ortega reboard their van after a long run on the highway.

from the round-up of 1875 here in Verde Valley. Except that the Oglalas are not as forgiving as the Yavapai-Apache to this day and still speak of the injustices of the Black Hills land takings publically and the undertones of racism in the border towns of South Dakota toward Indian people is evident.

This hot summer afternoon, we enter

the arched gates of the Wounded Knee cemetery in a solemn manner and line up along the fence while standing on the tiny concrete pathway no more than 14 inches wide inlaid on the ground. Here, one song is sung and a brief talk by our tour leader Rick Gray Grass about what happened on cold winter day on December 29, 1890 long at the top of this

tiny hill. The well-noted church that was seen in photographs from the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation with Dennis Banks and Russell Means and others, burned down since then according to local people.

After this, our convoy and runners stop outside of Pine Ridge, a few short miles from

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## FIREFIIGHTERS

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ers who travel about the country and Brian Marquez of YAN is Wildland Fire Manager and Wildland Fire Crew driver is Lonnie Chavez of Clarkdale who manage the fire team when called to put out fires. This means getting up all hours of the night coordinating all of the movement for the fire fighters through the Truxton Canyon Agency in northwest Arizona west of Peach Springs and Southern Paiute in Utah.

Temperatures on the frontlines exceed 1000 degrees in some cases and there are



Y-A Camp Crew Brooklyn Fire in Black Canyon city.

many risks involved with fighting fires which makes it necessary to continue training for the firefighters.

After these fires, the fire fighters from the Nation will go to other hot spots across the country sometimes

traveling by commercial aircraft.

Courtesy photos by Brian Marquez.



Rookie training school in June held in Truxton Canyon agency near Peach Springs.



Wildland Fire Crew helping out at the Day Care Center.

## YOUTH

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involved in the culture of the community.

Summer work experience participants Jazlynn Sandoval, Jonah Bates and Marina Lewis were 3 of the participants who went on this trip. A real adventure for sure as they recall getting rained on with a severe thunderstorm at Show Low lake the first night out which drove the traveling group into a motel in nearby Show Low that night. Ms. Sandoval and Mr. Bates were good sports about it though.

"My tent had a broken zipper and inside of the tent was flooded," she recalls as the crew moved into a motel that night out of concerns for the safety of the participants as the rain was relentless that evening according to the participants.

But all was not lost as the group continued on their schedule to meet with Apache spiritual leader Manuel "Speedy" Cooley in the commu-

nity of Whiteriver the next day. The group also visited the Apache culture center located on the grounds of Ft. Apache historic site where Ramon Riley, culture director for the museum, greeted them and took them on a tour of the Kinnishba Ruins located nearby. This site is a national historical site recognized as a national park and also considered a sacred site for the Apaches.

"We saw different things there. Mr. Riley talked about the sunrise dance, where our origins are from- that was pretty interesting," said Ms. Sandoval.

[During this interview for the Whiteriver trip, the students were working at the Nation's culture center on a Friday recovering from their tiring 4 day trip. The 3 participants are assigned to work with the cultural specialists for their summer work experience.]

The extra bonus was that Mr. Riley sang a few songs for the group entitled "It's a beautiful place to go" according to

Ms. Sandoval. While in the area that afternoon, the group was suppose to go swimming in Diamond Creek north of Whiteriver but their hopes were squelched by a rain storm that day. However, the blessings in disguise kept arriving as the group met up with Mr. Cooley again that evening for dinner consisting of acorn stew and tortillas cooked by Mrs. Cooley and their son. "We met with a 'Matt' who worked for the fire department (in Whiteriver and a friend of Mr. Cooley) who talked to us about motivation and how he tried many things and how he didn't give up," said young Bates about the meeting at Mr. Cooley's home.

And Ms. Sandoval followed up by stating that the special speaker ('Matt') emphasized to them "not to rely on other people".

Asked about their camping experiences during the course of their stay in the White Mountains during the week, Mr. Bates said he loves camping and that

he didn't want to move into the motel the night of the storm Monday night. Whereas, Ms. Sandoval stated that "It was my first time camping and it was kinda of rough. My tent got flooded and I didn't have a jacket (which got wet from the tent leak). I wanted to stay camping. It was more relaxing and pretty out there".

Ms. Sandoval said they did make an effort in making S'mores in their motel room on that Monday night but the microwave overcooked the marshmallows and the smoke saturated the room. The whole traveling experience did give the participants an opportunity for them get to know each other better and open lines of communication said Ms. Sandoval.

Wednesday consisted of a basically free day swimming at Show Lake as the storm had cleared out and a meeting on that day for the participants was cancelled in San Carlos. The day's activity was to involve studying herbal plants of the area



WIOA students Marina Lewis, Jazlynn Sandoval and Jonah Bates working on arts and crafts at the culture center. This is where they are employed for the summer as well.

Photo by YAN News

with a Seth Pilsk from the San Carlos Forestry Department.

Ms. Sandoval and Ms. Lewis will be incoming 9th graders at Camp Verde High School next month while Mr. Bates will be a 10th grader at the same school.

Adult chaperones on the trip included Gertie Smith, YAN culture director for the Yavapai people, Delmondo Cepress who is JOM tutor for the Nation, and Nina Sanchez, program coordinator for WIOA.

The WIOA program

summer work experience have participants placed in the various departments such as maintenance, social service, human resource department and other of the Nation's various departments learning about the requirements of the job and are paid hourly wages. The second session of WIOA ends on July 28.

Courtesy photographs by Nina Sanchez and Gertie Smith.