ABOUT THUNDER VALLEY

Thunder Valley is located in the northern part of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Oglala Lakota Nation between Sharps Corner and Rockyford. We are just a few miles off of being physically located in the geographic center of the Oglala Lakota Nation. The heart of this winding valley was formed over thousands of years as Porcupine Creek carved its way through the grass-covered hills at the edge of the badlands of South Dakota. It was long ago in this region the Lakota people, originated, having spread out and flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries. The origins of the name Thunder Valley have long been forgotten, and until recently, only the elders and old ranchers still used the name Thunder Valley. Now the name is synonymous with an amazing renaissance of traditional values and cultural pride.

In 1998 the rebirth of the ancient rite of traditional Lakota Sun Dance was reintroduced in the Thunder Valley community. This celebration of sacrifice, life and rebirth lay the foundation for change offering culture, tradition and a renewed sense of responsibility toward family and community. As this circle of change grows larger with each passing season, more and more individuals and families have become involved creating the energy and passion needed to set a powerful path forward.

The organization of Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation was created in 2007 using this same energy of resiliency and community values. Nurtured from conversations voiced by youth to elders who realized we honor the best of our past by utilizing new tools, new ideas and new strategies as we create the opportunities of the future, Thunder Valley CDC came into being.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a Oglala-led, Native American 501(c)3 non-profit public charitable organization based out of the Thunder Valley community of the Porcupine District on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

OUR MISSION

Empowering Lakota Youth and families to improve the health, culture and environment of our communities, through the healing and strengthening of cultural identity.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

- PEOPLE
- HOUSING
- JOBS
- HEALTH

THUNDER VALLEY PROGRESS REPORT • 2014
SPECIAL THANKS

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of Foundations - Donors - Agencies and Individuals. “Movements for positive change aren’t about institutions, organizations, governments, or jurisdictions. They are about people… people coming together for the benefit of each other and the willingness to sacrifice in order to lift each other up. As human beings we can accomplish anything we put our minds to.” We say Wopila, thank you to all those who support us now, in the past and those yet to join us in meeting the goals of our community on the Oglala Lakota Nation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jennifer S. Irving
Morris Brewer
Chance Weston
Brett Shelton
Robert Ecoffey

DESIGN PARTNERS

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation can not do it alone. From the beginning, every step forward was achieved by the efforts of many. Community volunteers, community leaders, folks from every level of support have had hands on of our shared success thus far.

We acknowledge our partners, our relationships with many talented individuals and organizations, many powerful and passionate spirits who are changing the story. Owning the story and directing what the future chapters may hold for our future generations on our own terms.

Thank you for your continued support.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hau Mitkuyapi,

Greetings relatives. 2014 was an exciting and inspirational year here at Thunder Valley CDC. In the spring we revisited our strategic plan and made sure that we listened to our stake holders, that resulted in us creating programming and fundraising strategies that were at the crossroads of community development and youth empowerment.

We recognized that we needed to return to our roots of working with youth but also involving youth in the catalytic community development project taking place at Thunder Valley CDC. We opened our minds to believe what is possible and had the courage to take on new ideas.

This year we began to move toward implementation of a variety of different projects and programs. The Lakota Childcare Immersion Program located in Oglala on the western edge of the reservation experienced growth and progress. They secured funding for the childcare center for the next three years. This will ensure that at least 20 youth are immersed in the Lakota Language every day. The funding was also secured to launch our Workforce Development Through Sustainable Construction Program, in January 2015. This will engage 10 young adults to build their skills, confidence and employability.

We went back to the drawing board and completely redesigned our entire master plan of the Thunder Valley Regenerative Community Development Project north of Sharps Corner. This was a result of active community engagement and steadfastly listening to the feedback of our community members who felt that the design needed to better reflect our Lakota culture.

We are especially grateful this year to our community and to our design team (BNIM, Pyatt Studio and KLJ) for helping us to craft a vision for the Regenerative Community Development. Our community continues to inspire and inform us as we plan for the future.

Thank you,

Nick Tilsen,
Executive Director
Mitakuye Oyasin (We are all related)
COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN

WHAT THIS MEANS TO US:

True community-based design becomes possible when everyone involved shares a clear vision for the future, rooted in the values of the community. A firm foundation of community input and engagement allows the invaluable skill and knowledge of our incredible team of architects and engineers to develop design plans that support the needs, values, culture, and future of the local community members who will make the regenerative community their home.

MEET THE DESIGN TEAM

Christina Hoxie, BNIM
Rob Pyatt, Pyatt Studio Architecture
Janna Ferguson, Pyatt Studio Architecture
Dana Foreman, KLJ Engineering

DESIGN CHARRETTE

In July we had more than 40 people attend our Community Design Charrette, an event that gave community members and potential homeowners the opportunity to provide feedback on our design plans at this early and critical stage of development. People talked about the desire for a Homeowners Association and the importance of energy efficient homes as a way of making ownership more affordable. This meeting was a particularly great opportunity for Pyatt Studio Architects to work side by side with the community to directly incorporate their needs and desires into the design of healthy, sustainable housing.

ONE PLANET ACTION PLAN

Our organization strongly believes in the importance of building a resilient, regenerative community on the reservation that is good for the environment, good for people, and good for the economy. We recognize the value in monitoring our progress and evaluating our impact.

In October we hosted our One Planet action plan meeting to establish a sustainability roadmap that sets goals and performance indicators for each of the ten One Planet living principles. These principles include: Health & Happiness, Equity & Local Economy, Culture & Community, Land Use & Wildlife, Sustainable Water, Local & Sustainable Food, Sustainable Materials, Sustainable Transport, Zero Waste, and Zero Carbon.

We have high goals for each of these principles and creating an action plan will help us achieve these goals with leadership from our community members.
In 2014 the program has evolved from a daycare serving a handful of local kids to a multifaceted program on the forefront of the Lakota language revitalization movement, empowering a new generation of heritage language speakers. In addition to the children we teach in our total “language nest” style daycare facility, our books, videos, e-readers, apps and online teaching materials allow us to reach an unlimited number of eager Lakota learners. By utilizing a variety of platforms such as Bitsboard, Memrise, Mindflash, GoAnimate, and SceneSpeak, we allow users to engage with Lakota in ways like never before. By creating more ways to read, hear, and speak the Lakota language, we will increase the number of speakers.

A robust staff and steadily growing enrollment, have allowed us to improve the amount of classroom time across all age cohorts, every day becoming more and more a heritage language nest and preschool that goes far beyond the expectations of a typical daycare.

The staff are divided among the each age cohort during a morning and afternoon class session, in which we lead the children in various engaging activities. These include singing songs, making arts and crafts, playing games, doing kinesthetic activities, and – for the older kids – more advanced learning such as letter recognition, counting and basic scientific experimentation. Through these activities, our children are meeting, and often times exceeding, the language comprehension milestones we have set in place.

2014 was an incredible year for moving forward on the Master Plan for our Regenerative Community Development. After presenting our first draft of the Master Plan to local community members, their feedback helped us realize that we needed to dream bigger and create a more uniquely Lakota community that incorporates our heritage in every aspect of its design.

Our commitment to the honoring the voice of local community members sent us back to the drawing board. We made some major changes to the design of our community, most significantly shifting from a linear organization of structures to a more circular concept, organizing our single family homes in the same way our ancestors organized their tipi clusters. We also reorganized our shared community spaces, centralizing them around the space that will be our powwow grounds, farmer’s market and artist market.

By staying true to the visions our people have for a community that they want to live in, our second Master Plan shows a community that is greatly informed by who we are as Oglala Lakota people. Developing this Master Plan with our devoted Design Team would not have been possible if not for the voices of our local community members, and for that we thank them.
This year has been a year of planning for growth. We are so grateful to our Federal and Philanthropic partners for supporting our work and believing in the future of our organization. This year we were supported by:

Hopa Mountain
Lannan Foundation
Minnesota Housing Partnership
Northwest Area Foundation
Rotary Club of New Britain-Berlin
Sacred Fire Foundation
Seventh Generation Fund
Surdna Foundation
Threshold Foundation
The Seventh Power Fund
Tara O’Keefe
Kevin Hancock

Administration for Native Americans
Buckminster Fuller Institute
Bush Foundation
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
First Nations Development Institute
Gathering Thunder Foundation
Hill Snowdon Foundation

**2014 SUPPORTERS**

**FINANCIALS - 2013**

**REVENUE - 2014**

- Contributions ........................................ $940,307
- Grants .................................................. $173,683
- Rental Income ...................................... $5,400
- Program Income .................................. $19,352
- Sponsorships ....................................... $6,130
- Other Income ....................................... $6,970
- **TOTAL RENUE** ........................................... $1,151,841

**EXPENSES - 2014**

- Program Expense ................................... $119,355
- Salaries, Benefits, Taxes ......................... $406,595
- Professional Fees ................................ $52,790
- Fiscal Sponsorship Expenses ................. $13,352
- Office Expenses .................................. $7,938
- Staff Travel and Training ...................... $71,891
- Marketing and Outreach ....................... $43,160
- Utilities ............................................. $17,056
- Depreciation ....................................... $12,765
- Repairs and Maintenance ..................... $1,518
- Insurance .......................................... $8,508
- Telephone ......................................... $7,881
- Meetings/Conferences ......................... $5,486
- Postage ............................................. $517
- Interest Expense ................................ $601
- Subgrantees ....................................... $202,500
- Fundraising Expense ......................... $1,250
- **TOTAL EXPENSES** ................................. $975,987

*All audited financials are available to the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribal members, and the general public. These can be downloaded at www.thundervalley.org
Your Gift to Thunder Valley will help us create a better world for Lakota Youth & Families. Native Communities like ours need support from people like you. Together we can work towards creating a healthier way of life for all. Please consider making a recurring donation of $500 dollars or more. We are in this systemic work for the long term. Please join us in this struggle.