Several chapters back, I taught science for years in South Dakota. So, when our new science teacher here asked for some help, I decided to step back into the classroom and co-teach with her. It’s been a great experience and has reinforced my beliefs about why a relational and place-based approach to education is so important.

The class is Ecology, a scientific way of understanding how everything is related. But how to get that across in a meaningful way? So we began with a conversation. I asked everybody to introduce themselves traditionally: “Let’s go around the table as I ask each of you to tell us all your name, tribe and where you consider yourself from. Next, tell me one thing you really enjoy.” After we’d gotten to know each other, I introduced the subject: “Ecology is essentially the study of relatedness so how is relatedness important?”

This led to a lively discussion. Someone mentioned the problem of invasive species disrupting ecosystems and we talked about what happens when something foreign enters from the outside. One young man, I’ll call him Dan, said, “It sounds like colonization.” He nailed it. Since the new species doesn’t have any natural predators (think small pox in blankets) it disrupts the system and sickens or kills many of the organisms in the system it invaded.

This led us to the concept of relatedness and what promotes interdependence or destroys it. I suggested that the idea of race, dividing us up into red, white, brown and yellow, is harmful to our sense of relatedness and that got students talking about how they’ve experienced harm to their relationships because of the way people think of race.

I reminded them that everything comes from the sun and that all people, no matter their race, eat for energy. All of our relationships are dependent. Plants absorb the sun to live and we eat the plants. If we eat meat, we’re eating animals that ate plants. These are energy relationships.

You’re reading this, because you’ve developed a relationship with the school. Whether you’ve donated your time or money, worked with our kids or staff, sent your child here or graduated yourself, you’re part of the energy relationship that supports Nawayee.

I thank you and hope you like science as much as I do.

Executive Director

An Indigenous Science Lesson

HELLO MY RELATIVES.

Visit to Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium

Board of Directors 2015–2016

Thank you to our board of Directors for their support and guidance during the last year.

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Our Mission:
Providing transformative education, grounded in indigenous life-ways and love of learning.

Our Vision:
Center School will exemplify excellence in indigenous education.

KNOWLEDGE | RESPECT | COURAGE | GENEROSITY

2015-2016 Annual Report
Na-way-ee, Center School, Inc.

Visit to Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium
Center School Achievements

Great things that happened during the 2015-16 school year:

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH
We have added a number of new positions to enhance the programming at our school. We have brought on an Ojibwe language speaker to teach our students about the history of language and deepen their knowledge about culture. We have also added a full-time Program Coordinator to work with our students in the SABE after school program and to help guide them with college preparation and internship opportunities. We have hired on a full-time chemical dependency counselor to work with the students that struggle with substance abuse. We have brought on a full-time Math teacher. We have also hired a full-time Grant Writer and Fund Development position.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Our award-winning garden program continues into its tenth year and now includes: planting and maintenance, food preparation, preserved storage, composting, cooking, a bee and butterfly garden, and rain gardens and is well integrated into our summer school program. We offered a variety of opportunities for physical education including martial arts, yoga, hiking, drumming, canoeing, bicycling, physical training, rock climbing and a basketball team to all of our students resulting in healthier lifestyles and improved health outcomes, measured four times yearly at our School/Community Health Fair. With a generous grant from the Notah Begay III Foundation we were able to purchase a salad bar for our lunch room in order to serve fresh vegetables and fruits, either purchased locally or grown in our garden.


Foundations
ANA – Administration for Native Americans
Bein Foundation
Beverly Foundation
Bawley Foundation
The James E. Thorpe Foundation
Kiwanis Club
Minneapolis Rotary Foundation
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Women’s Club
Nash Foundation
Notah Begay III (WAL Mart Fund)
Still Ain’t Satisfied
WCA
Youthprise

Individuals/ Businesses
Genta Alyaat
Anonymous
Rosava Areika
Margaret Cullen
Datus Eriich
Christiana Giordano
Flo Goldin
Timothy Klanderud
Mary Jo Maynes
Letta & Josh Page
Alice Rosignol
Deborah Schonholz
Owen and Muriel Turnlund
Six Degress Upton
Lucy Tobin
Lauren Weck
Angel Zimpel

Organization
Dakota Language and Culture

National Organizations
American Indian OIC
Flo Golod
Greta Alquist
Businesses
Anonymous
Beverly Foundation
Six Degrees Uptown

State Organizations
Minnesota Department of Health

Corporate
MMP

American Indian Community
Center School

Community Partners
Minneapolis American Indian Center

Regional
American Indian OIC

Federal
MPS and the American Indian Community

National
American Indian OIC

State
American Indian OIC

Local
American Indian OIC

Staff
Joe Rice, Executive Director
Mary Cullen, Lead Teacher
Vicki Heilweil, Office Manager
Vicki Hongheim, Business Manager
Jessica Nadaud, Development Director
Pat Welch, Therapeutics Arts Coordinator
Keng Kimnander, After School/Internship Program Coordinator
Robert Klanderud, Dakota Language and Culture
Mary Beth Johnson, Ojibwe Language Instructor
Carol Laub, Family Engagement Coordinator
Gary Ten Bear, Chemical Abuse Prevention Specialist
Andrea Adams, Language Arts Instructor
Maia Galager, Science Instructor
Korissa Howe, Social Studies Instructor
Meghan Hunkins, Math Instructor
Dan Zera, Security Manager

Collaborating Agency Supporters

Division of Indian Work
Louise Matson, director
Migizii Communications
Elaine Salinas, President
American Indian OIC
Joe Hobert, CEO
Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center
Patina Par, Director
Dream of Wild Health
Diane Wilson, Director
Minneapolis Public Schools
Department of Indian Education
Anna Ross, Director
Welna Ace Hardware
Mark Welna, Proprietor
Triangle Park Creative
Dan Neadley, Manager
Metropolitan Federation Of Alternative Schools
Gloria Kibbel, President
Minneapolis Minnesota American Indian Center
Mary Le Garde-Agnew, Director
Native American Community Clinic
Dr. Lydia Carr, CEO

Nawayee 2015 graduates
Nawayee 2016 graduates

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets:
Cash $185,289 $93,881
Accounts Receivable 1,341 1,341
Grants Receivable 4,000
Prepaid Expenses 9,572 7,919
Other Assets 1,237 12,569
Total Current Assets 201,438 115,710
Property and Equipment—Net 81,779 94,713
Total ASSETS $283,218 $210,423

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:
Accounts Payable $21,334 $19,413
Notes Payable 36,755 24,081
Funds Held for Others 38,647 30,074
Accrued Salaries and Vacation 24,954 18,228
Total Current Liabilities 121,690 92,966
Long-term Liabilities
Notes Payable 13,629 20,653
Total Liabilities 135,319 113,349
Net Assets:
Unrestricted 93,399 59,574
Temporarily Restricted 54,500 37,500
Total Net Assets 147,899 97,074

* For additional financial information see our entire audit at www.centerschool.org

2015 2014
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Temporarily Restricted 54,500 37,500
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Nawayee 2015 graduates
Nawayee 2016 graduates

Student Success

Nineteen students graduated in 2015 and 2016—making our graduation rate 66% (of graduation eligible seniors)
33% of students increased their overall GPAs. We maintained a core of group about 40 students who were regular attendees (75% or higher), with 5 being at or above 90%
Student enrollment has trended upwards,
growing from 42 students three years ago to 56 students at the end of 2016. 2016 has been a rebuilding year, with students back to the low forty five level of three years ago as we re-engage a new student cohort.

Our business partnership and internal internship program provided students with on-the-job training through supervised internships at local businesses and within the school ranging from local coffee shops, hardware stores and administrative work and cooking at the school. We prepared students for internships by assisting them with resume preparation, interview training and working on basic life skills and expectations within the school.

Programs & Events
Our Administration of Native Americans (ANA) funded after school arts therapy program called SABE was approved for three years of funding after a very successful ANA grant funded outdoor education program came to a funding close that had previously engaged over 500 students and 60 adults from 12 area schools.
Two of our students were able to represent the Minneapolis American Indian Community at the 2016 National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Session Youth Summit in Washington D.C. This was made possible by the generous support of local individuals and the Close Up program.
Center School continues to be a Best Practices Site for Minneapolis Public Schools as defined by the Memorandum of Agreement between MPS and the American Indian Community.

Capacity Building
Center School continues to function as a Best Practice Site with strong expertise in engaging disaffected students by implementing Indigenous educational practices.
We were honored to host Governor Mark Dayton for a day visit to our school to meet with our educators and students to learn about the work we do.
With the help of local Foundations we were able to make steps toward implementing a new program, Emerging Impact, with a future goal to add solar panels to our rooftop and added science component to our curriculum. Funds were raised to fully update our failing and extremely outdated roof with the goal to make it fully solar ready (construction slated to begin in Spring of 2017).
With the help of individual donors and the MN Dairy Council we were also able to raise funds for some of the much needed kitchen updates, including a new refrigerator and sink (to be implemented in 2017).

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