

Cheyenne River Reservation Sioux YMCA

Our mission is to develop and strengthen the children and families in our Reservation communities so they can fulfill their greatest individual and collective potential, spiritually, mentally and physically.

YMCA After School Program

Our After-School program is aimed at school age youth, ages 5 - 16. The program runs Monday-Friday, 3:00-7:00 pm. We work with an average of twenty to forty-five youth each day. Participants are supervised by caring trained staff and have their choice of many activities: arts and crafts, board games, game room, computers, assistance with homework, books, videos and athletic equipment for games outside. We also provide youth with healthy snacks. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we make extra soup for the Soup and Social so the After School kids can enjoy an early dinner in addition to their snack.

Lakota Achievers

An group of male and female students, ages 5th-high school. The program focuses on supporting and positively impact youth's desire and ability to value a dream for their future, achieve in school, graduate from high school and qualify for additional education or employment. Youth gather for monthly meetings and quarterly leadership training conferences. During the year they take trips to a variety of places of employment, shadow people working in an area of interest and tour community colleges, tech schools and colleges/universities both on and off the Reservation.

Other Programs:

Photography
Game Room
Soup and Social
Fitness



A information taken from www.siouzymca.org

The History of the General Convention of Sioux YMCAs

In 1862, the Dakota People, tired of semi-starvation and poverty, took part in an ill-fated war meant to push white settlers out of their lands in Minnesota. At the end of the brief war, 160 Dakota warriors were captured and sentenced to hang. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln commuted the sentences of 120 of the younger men. However, 40 other warriors were hung from a single scaffold in Mankato, Minnesota, making it the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

These younger Indian men languished in a military prison. Volunteers from the Young Men's Christian Association visited them, bringing clothing, bedding, English language lessons and Christianity.

The Dakota men were so impressed with the compassion of these YMCA volunteers, that upon their release in 1879, some of them, including Chief Little Crow's son, Thomas Wakeman, started the *Koskada Okadiciye*, a Young Man's Association. In 1885 they were recognized by the national YMCA movement and changed their name to Sioux Young Men's Christian Association. Their goal then, as it still is today, was to teach and encourage the values of *Wawokiye*, *Woksape*, *Ohitika*, and *Wa o'hola* or Generosity, Wisdom, Bravery, and Respect.

Change and growth have continued. In 1970 the Sioux YMCAs voted to become a family association and in 1971 a summer residential camp, YMCA Camp Leslie Marrowbone was started. The YMCA was incorporated in 1972, became a member of the National Council of YMCAs in 1977 and assumed full responsibility for fundraising in 1983.

Today, the General Convention of Sioux YMCAs, with a Lakota Board of Directors and supported by a dedicated Board of Trustees, operates youth, recreational and camping programs that serve youth and families spread out among isolated villages on the 4,500 square mile Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation.



Thomas Wakeman, son of Chief Little Crow, organized the first Sioux Indian YMCA in 1879.



Dr. Charles A. Eastman, Ohiyesa, a member of the Santee Sioux, formerly with the Indian Health Service during the Wounded Knee Massacre, was selected by the national YMCA to head the Indian office in 1894. He was the first Sioux YMCA Executive Director.



The original log cabin Sioux YMCA.



Three generations of Chief Sitting Bull's family were members of the YMCA.

Some Lakota Culture:

Q. What is a pow wow? What was its original meaning and how does that differ today?

A. Originally, a pow wow, or wacipi in Lakota, was held in the spring to celebrate the new beginning of life. It was a time for people to get together, sing, dance, renew old friendships and make new ones. Pow wows had religious significance also; they were an opportunity for families to hold naming and honoring ceremonies. In the Sioux (Lakota, Nakota, Dakota) tradition, the celebration was also a prayer to Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit or Grandfather. Some trace the word pow wow to the Algonquin language.

Today, pow wows are still very much a part of the lives of many Native Americans. From June through September there are several pow wows -somewhere- every weekend. Many families pack up and follow the pow wow trail, camping out and enjoying the traditional celebration activities.

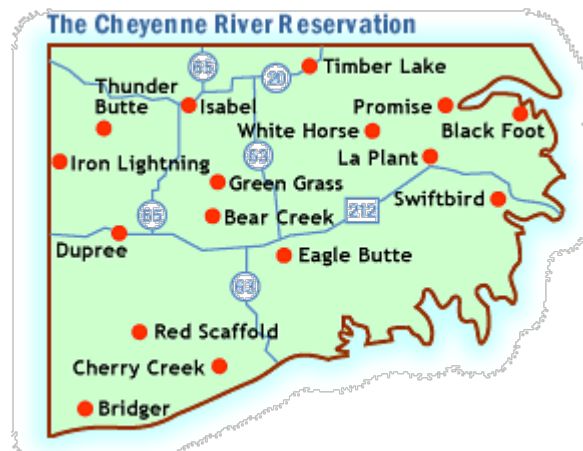
Q. What is the Grand Entry?

A. The Grand Entry, borrowed from rodeos and Wild West shows, is the parade of dancers which opens each session of dancing and also the time for all dance contestants to score points and show off their style and regalia. All the dancers competing in a pow wow are required to take part in the Grand Entry.

First the Eagle staff is carried into the circle by a male traditional dancer, followed by the American, state, and tribal flags carried by an honor guard of veterans. Then the royalty, title holders from other contests, enter. They are followed by the men: traditional dancers first, then grass dancers and finally fancy dancers. Women come next: traditional dancers, fancy shawl dancers and jingle dress dancers. They're followed by junior boys, junior girls, little boys, and little girls, all in the same order as the adults.

The dancers dance sun wise (clockwise) around the arbor, showing the audience, the singers and the other dancers that they are dressed and ready to dance, showing off their outfits (the term "costume" is considered derogatory) and their steps.

When Grand Entry song ends there is a flag song and an invocation blessing of the gathering. After that, the eagle staff (always positioned above the American flag to signify the first nation) is tied to the pole in the center of the arbor. Then the dancing can begin!



Learn More Before You Go:

The Sioux YMCA recommends these cultural resources...

Books:

Ten Little Indians by Sherman Alexie

Lakota Woman by Richard Erdoes with Mary Crow Dog

The Antelope Wife by Louise Erdrich

On The Rez by Ian Frazier

Movies:

Skins starring Eric Schweig, Graham Greene. Directed by Chris Eyre.

Smoke Signals starring Adam Beach, Evan Adams, Irene Bedard, Gary Farmer. Directed by Chris Eyre.

Dance Me Outside starring [Ryan Rajendra Black](#), Adam Beach. Directed by [Bruce McDonald](#).

Powwow Highway starring A. Martinez, Gary Farmer. Directed by Jonathan Wacks