

Lakota Oyate
Wakanyeya
Owicakiyapi
(LOWO)

*Transformation
Report*

AUGUST 2012



decades of collaboration

Lakota Oyate Wakanyēja
Owicakiyapi (LOWO)
and Casey Family
Programs: *Three Decades
of Collaboration on
Behalf of Indian
Children on the Pine
Ridge Reservation*

For more than three decades,
Casey Family Programs has
engaged tribal and urban
Indian programs, governments,
communities, families, and
children in support of its vision for
the development of quality and
culturally responsive services to
Indian children.

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Approximately 30 years ago, Casey Family Programs established a division in Rapid City, South Dakota, to provide direct foster care services in the region. From the beginning, the Rapid City Division made a commitment to follow the guidelines of the Indian Child Welfare Act in its work with Indian children and families. Priority was given to hiring American Indian staff to recruit American Indian foster families for children served by the Division. In early 1984, Casey began discussions with the tribal council and human services on the need for foster care services in Pine Ridge. At the time, Pine Ridge did not have a social service agency located on the reservation. In 1984, Casey's Board of Trustees approved a plan to establish satellite offices on or near the Pine Ridge Reservation. In 1986, the Martin Office was opened to serve Pine Ridge. During this same year, Casey's Board of Trustees received a proposal from Children's Village in Pine Ridge to remodel their facility. This request was approved in 1985 and the remodeling was completed. In 1998, Casey began construction of a satellite office in Pine Ridge. Construction was completed in 1999. During this time, in acknowledgement of Tribal Sovereignty, the Casey Board of Trustees approved plans to make the Pine Ridge Office a Casey Division with its own leadership, staff and budget.

Beginning in 2002 and throughout 2003, changes were happening throughout Casey which culminated in the closure of the Casey Division Office in Rapid City. At this time, discussions began to transform the Pine Ridge Division from being Casey led and funded to a tribally-chartered Indian child welfare program in its own right—Lakota Oyate Wakaneja Owicakiyapi (LOWO). In 2002, the Pine Ridge Community introduced an initiative known as the "Integrated Child Welfare Project." The mission of this community-driven, multi-agency child welfare initiative was to integrate the child and family services on the reservation into one system. The vision to integrate child welfare, juvenile justice, state social services, housing, employment, tribal government, and individual leaders on the reservation was founded on the following beliefs:

- Children belong with their families and with their tribe;
- The four Lakota values of courage, generosity, wisdom and bravery;
- All children should be safe;
- All families should be provided the comprehensive supports they need to become self-sufficient and inter-dependent;
- All children and families should be taught traditional and spiritual Lakota ways;
- Preserving and strengthening families;
- The Tiyoaspaye way of keeping children safe and families strongly interdependent upon each other;
- Every family should have a nice home;
- The Oglala Sioux tribe has the responsibility to protect and support Lakota children and families—legally, spiritually and culturally.

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The anticipated results of this vision were to develop a seamless system that supports:

- Oglala Lakota children living with their biological families with basic needs being met including food, housing, and health care;
- Healthy families who understand the Lakota culture and live the Lakota culture
- Assurances that Indian children who must be placed in care are placed with relatives whenever possible or with other Indian families when family or extended family are not available;
- Access to employment opportunities and transportation;
- Every Lakota community having recreational activities available to children and families and a public park in each community.

The Oglala Sioux Tribal Council officially chartered Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi (LOWO) on April 23, 2003, to provide comprehensive child and family services on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

In summary, throughout the period from 2003 to the present, Casey worked with the LOWO to accomplish the following:

- The development of culturally responsive practice standards to guide workers in the delivery of services to Indian children and their families.
- The development of culturally relevant practice model for Family Group Decision Making.
- Training and education in Lakota-based child welfare practices for tribal and state child welfare staff, foster parents, spiritual and other tribal members, birth and extended family members.
- The transfer of the Casey caseload in Pine Ridge to LOWO.
- The provision of and training on a web-based case management system that would capture both case management work and outcomes for children served by LOWO known as Harmony.
- The transfer of all program infrastructure and maintenance to the tribe.
- The complete transfer of the LOWO building in Pine Ridge to the tribe to be completed in 2012-2013.

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Historical Overview | Casey's Investment in Indian Child Welfare Services on Pine Ridge

1979 -1984	1986 -1999	2003 - 2011	2012
1979 – Rapid City Office Opens 1983 – first foster care placement in Pine Ridge 1984 – Casey develops relationship with the Oglala Sioux in Pine Ridge	1986 – Martin Office opens serving Pine Ridge 1993 – Pine Ridge Office opens 1998 – Casey begins construction of building in Pine Ridge 1999 – Construction completed	Transformation • LOWO Chartered • Practice Standards • Culturally responsive practices • Infrastructure development • Web-based case management and reporting system introduced-- Harmony • Transfer of Building begins	• Transfer of Building to Tribe Completed

A Legacy of Investment in Indian Child Welfare: Casey Family Programs Collaborative Work with the Pine Ridge Oglala Sioux

Services to Children

Between 1994 and 2011, more than 200 youth were served in Pine Ridge both directly by Casey Family Programs and after 2003 via contract with LOWO. These youth received a variety of services including foster care, permanency services, family case management, transition case management, continuing education and job training, community learning and support, and transition (133 young women and 75 young men). A total of 25 families were served in Family Case Management.

The average age at intake into Casey foster care services was 13 years. Services to these youth continued on average until these youth turned 18. Since 2006, no youth have aged out of care. The majority of youth served were placed with family, extended family, or Indian families on the reservation. The majority remained with, or are connected to, their families.

Since 1996, five Pine Ridge youth have received some level of college or continuing education support from Casey Family Programs. Two of these youth are still in college at this time and three are not and their cases have been closed; however, Casey does accept applications for continuing education and job training after a youth's case has been closed.

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In addition, a variety of different services were provided to Pine Ridge children by Casey Family Programs. For example:

Child and Family Services

Services provided to children placed on the Pine Ridge Reservation included services to prevent placement. If this was not feasible, then foster care and respite services were provided.

Medical Services

Although medical services were provided in the main through Indian Health Services (IHS), other medical services not covered by IHS or the tribe were provided by Casey. This included orthodontia, vision, and substance abuse disorder treatment.

Case Management Services

Case planning that involved culturally appropriate approaches and services designed to fit the needs of the family. This planning involved the family, through family group decision making and crisis intervention staffing. Input by the youth occurred where appropriate.

Psychological Services

The psychological well-being of the children benefitted in being placed near familiar places (school, play areas, tribal land), family and friends. When needed they received mental health assessments, counseling, psychotherapy, intensive care placements, chemical dependency evaluations and treatment as needed.

Educational Services

Youth received educational assistance through tutoring, educational enrichment activities, Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessments, funds for high school graduation costs, college preparation services, college tuition, and funds to defray costs while in school.

Indian Child Welfare Staff and Foster Family Development

Since the beginning of its relationship with the Oglala Sioux Nation on Pine Ridge, Casey has consistently invested in staff educational development and training to ensure children received high-quality, culturally-responsive services. Foster families also received an array of services designed to help them nurture children and prepare them for the adult world. Early on, the Rapid City Division made active efforts to recruit American Indian staff to work with native youth and to recruit American Indian families. A tribal member was hired as the family developer to recruit, license, train and provide on-going support to American Indian families. Several staff members were supported to attain their Bachelors and Masters degrees in Social Work. Over time, staff members

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were also exposed to an array of training opportunities to help them continue to refine their skills and knowledge. Training opportunities included:

- Supervision
- Casey's Continuing Education Job Training Program
- Racial and cultural identity formation
- Trauma and Attachment
- Substance Abuse Assessment and Intervention
- Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth
- Self-Injury Prevention
- Family Group Conferencing
- Behavioral Management Techniques
- Safety
- Employment for Youth
- Harmony Case Management System

Infrastructure Development

From 2004 through 2011, Casey worked collaboratively with LOWO to support the development of its infrastructure. The following chart shows LOWO infrastructure development over this time period.

These infrastructure developments will enable LOWO to continue to serve the remaining Casey youth through the Casey contract and to continue to serve children on the Pine Ridge Reservation who are in foster care or at risk of entering foster care.

Board Development	Resource & Business Requirements	Capacity Building for Financing	Accounting & Financial Systems	Tribal Court Infrastructure Development	Practice Standards and Services
• LOWO Board selected and seated • Board orientation • Board decision making process adopted • Board training • LOWO Policies and Procedures finalized	• Harmony System • HR System and procedures developed • Risk Management Plan • Business Process Mapping • Quality Assurance Plan • Technical Requirements Plan • Resource & Business Requirements for Harmony	• Title IV-B & IV-E Plan • 638 Plan • Risk Management Plan • Community/Po-litical Sanction • Quality Assurance Plan • Resource & Business Requirements Plan for financing	• Open LOWO Account • Implement Finance Management System • Risk Management plan • Community/Po-litical Sanction • Quality Assurance Plan • Resource & Business Requirements Plan for finance system	• Code revisions • Development of Tribal foster care, adoption, kinship and guardianship standards • Risk Management plan • Community/Po-litical Sanction • Quality Assurance Plan • TA Plan • Court development plan	• Development of culturally responsive ICW practice standards • Supervisor training • Staff training • Development of Lakota-based Family Group Decision Making practice model

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Financial Investment

Children — Between 1988 and 2011, Casey invested approximately \$19 million in child welfare services to children on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Services included foster care payments, respite care and clothing allowances.

Infrastructure — In 1998, after negotiating an agreement with the Tribal Council, Casey began construction of a child welfare office building on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Construction was completed in 1999 at a total cost of approximately \$1,400,000-- \$1,300,000 for the building and \$70,000 for the land. The current assessed valuation of the building is now assessed at \$1,590,000.

Total Financial Investment in Oglala Lakota Children on Pine Ridge

Between 1988 and 2011, Casey's contribution to child welfare services for children and families in Pine Ridge was approximately \$20 million. The vast majority of these expenses, nearly \$19 million, were for staff and services for children and families on the reservation.

A Hope for the Future

It has been an honor for Casey to partner with Pine Ridge Sioux Nation to serve children and families and create Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi. Casey learned valuable lessons about building relationships and trust, developing culturally-relevant and responsive practices and infrastructure development for American Indian child welfare organizations.

In 2012, Casey transferred the ownership of the building to the tribal government. Casey's Indian Child Welfare Programs will end the transformation relationship with the tribe at the completion of 2012's projects. This will not conclude Casey's work with tribes in South Dakota. Tribes that request assistance in accessing and planning for direct Title IV-E funding, improving Indian Child Welfare Act compliance within the state child welfare system and the courts, and practice improvement will be part of this new and ongoing partnership with Casey's Indian Child Welfare Programs and tribes in South Dakota.



