

CIRCLING THE SEASONS



*American Indian
holistic school wellness program
of
MIND
BODY
SPIRIT*

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2006*

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Overview and Objectives

WHO:	American Indian Schools/Families
WHAT:	Intergenerational literacy wellness program
WHEN:	Ongoing: Three year cyclical program following the seasons
WHERE:	American Indian reservations & urban communities
WHY:	To promote a healthy Mind/Body/Spirit
HOW:	Basic literacy wellness kits providing incentives to enhance the cultural, community, school, family connections using Mother Earth as their core element.

Objectives

- Develop culturally appropriate literacy wellness program
- Develop holistic approach: Mind, Body, Spirit
- Instill the importance of self-respect and values
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- Create enthusiasm for learning
- Incorporate theories of multiple intelligences and learning modalities
- Provide interesting resource alternatives for learning
- Provide variety of learning activities
- Encourage innovation and creativity
- Set realistic and age-appropriate goals/activities
- Incorporate Mother Earth in all aspects of learning



Cultural Values

Circling the Seasons is unique in that it is written by two American Indian women authors, who understand the need for a culturally acceptable holistic wellness program of Mind, Body, and Spirit tailored for American Indian children. This program was developed to reflect the culture and values of their heritage as well as a way to *give thanks* for the teachings of their Elders. The authors believe that wellness focuses on the whole person. These cultural values weave an integral thread throughout the literacy, nutritional, physical fitness and family activities, that promote wellness and a feeling of self-worth. This program encourages students to choose a positive lifestyle balancing their health and well being in accordance with the following **cultural values**:

RESPONSIBILITY

... Being able to make good decisions and being trustworthy

RESPECT

... Being willing to show consideration and appreciation

COURAGE

... Being brave and willing to stand up for what is right

HONESTY

... Being truthful, fair and sincere

Circling the Seasons revolves around the four seasons of each calendar year embracing the above cultural values. Since changing seasons play an important role in the lives of American Indian people, the curriculum embraces themes centered on traditional seasonal activities and foods. It highlights books written by American Indian authors, which teach children the importance of these cultural activities and how they relate to a healthy lifestyle.

This unique cultural wellness program sets high expectations while giving American Indian children the opportunity to identify with community role models who can influence and support healthy behavioral change.



Three-Year Cyclical Program

Circling the Seasons is an intergenerational literacy wellness program. This three year cyclical program promotes wellness of Mind, Body, and Spirit. The *recurring* themes, values, quotes and seasonal colors are significantly related to the seasons of Mother Earth.

Year One is designed to create an understanding of the importance of integrating wellness of the Mind, Body and Spirit. Literacy is woven through inter-curricular activities that include the teaching of cultural values, with reading, writing, speaking, listening, physical activity, nutrition and other health related activities both in and out of school. Families and community are invited to participate in intergenerational seasonal activities.

Year Two and Year Three are designed to reinforce learning based on concepts introduced in the previous year. The program is designed to be repeated in three year cycles and strongly encourages teachers and students to be creative and innovative in their teaching and learning, while seeking additional ways to enhance learning opportunities that will result in an improved quality of life for students.

The simple organizational program format using the ABC's and 1,2,3's is designed to promote interactive learning activities that expose students to a variety of learning models to increase student comprehension. Incentives that are designed into the activities promote a feeling of self-worth and are meant to build self-pride and self-respect. (The authors discourage the use of unhealthy and material incentives that teach children to always expect a *material* reward for good behavior. Instead, students are encouraged to give thanks for the many talents and gifts given to them and to learn ways to share those with others).

Circling the Seasons recognizes the need to meet individual learning styles and utilizes the theories of multiple intelligences and learning modalities.



Seasonal Themes, Values, Quotes, and Colors

<i>Fall:</i>	Theme:	<i>"A Time for Harvesting"</i>
	Value:	Responsibility
	Quote:	Chief Seattle
	Cultural Identity:	Family
	Seasonal Color:	Yellow/Orange
<i>Winter:</i>	Theme:	<i>"A Time for Sharing Life's Stories"</i>
	Value:	Respect
	Quote:	Chief Luther Standing Bear
	Cultural Identity:	Family
	Seasonal Color:	White/Blue/Purple
<i>Spring:</i>	Theme:	<i>"A Time for New Life"</i>
	Value:	Courage
	Quote:	Lone Man, Teton Sioux
	Cultural Identity:	Family
	Seasonal Color:	Green
<i>Summer:</i>	Theme:	<i>"A Time for Growth and Development"</i>
	Value:	Honesty
	Quote:	Chief Joseph
	Cultural Identity:	Family
	Seasonal Color:	Red



Walk Activities

Each year, of this three-year program, a new "Walk" is introduced with the purpose of bringing students, school, family and community together to promote wellness. Each year's walk activity strives to encourage increased family and community participation in unique school literacy wellness activities.

Year 1:

The **School Walk** initiates a physical activity that sets the foundation for the understanding that wellness is a shared responsibility among individuals, family, school and community. The walk is held once a week during each eight-week season and has a culturally identified theme name that provides many opportunities for sharing and learning. Students can have fun challenging themselves and others while learning to understand the value of this lifelong healthy activity.

Year 2:

The **Literacy Walk** initiates a reading activity that provides an opportunity for students and their families to "walk" with their minds by reading independently outside of school hours. The challenge is to increase the number of minutes read each day within each eight-week season. The goal is to develop a love and enjoyment of reading so that reading will become a lifelong learning experience.

Year 3:

The **Spirit Walk** initiates communication activities that involve interviewing, writing and sharing of family and community history. The goal is for students to develop a better understanding of the important role their past, present and future families/ancestors play in creating their cultural history.



Program Format

Circling the Seasons is a literacy-wellness program consisting of four seasonal wellness kits revolving around wellness of Mind, Body and Spirit. Each kit will include the ABC's and 1, 2, 3's of wellness in a simple, manageable format for teachers and students.

Mind:

- A: Picture Book
- B: Novel
- C: Poetry/Storytelling

Body:

- A: Nutrition
- B: Physical Activity
- C: Health Screening/Immunizations

Spirit:

- A: Giving Thanks Every Day
- B: Respecting Self and Mother Earth
- C: Sharing Cultural Stories

The A, B, C's under the Mind, Body, and Spirit stay the same each year and each season. The 1, 2, 3's are the three activities connected to each of the A, B, C areas outlined under Mind, Body, Spirit. New activities are designed for each year and each different season. (See next page for example of Year One: Fall season.)



A, B, C's and 1, 2, 3's of Year One: Fall Season

The ABC's of the MIND:

- A:** Picture Book: *Giving Thanks* by Chief Jake Swamp
1. Reading
 2. Writing
 3. Speaking/listening
- B:** Novel: *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich
1. Reading
 2. Writing
 3. Speaking/listening
- C:** Native American Poems by Native American Poets
1. Reading
 2. Writing
 3. Speaking/listening

The ABC's of the BODY:

- A:** Nutrition
1. Nutritious foods (yellow/orange vegetables & fruits)
 2. Making nutritious snacks
 3. Fun food snack recipe
- B:** Physical Activity
1. Reminders for keeping physically active
 2. Games and school walking program
 3. Physical fitness activity goal
- C:** Health Screenings/Immunizations
1. Annual well child and dental check-up
 2. Immunization schedule
 3. Individual wellness goal

The ABC's of the SPIRIT:

- A.** Giving Thanks Everyday
1. Finding ways to give thanks each day
 2. Reading the "Giving Thanks" book
 3. Writing a book of thanks: "*Thank You, Mother Earth*"
- B.** Respecting Self and Mother Earth
1. Encouraging outdoor activities
 2. Eating nutritious foods
 3. Developing strong, healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit
- C.** Sharing Cultural Stories
1. Sharing wild rice gathering stories
 2. Sharing stories about family culture
 3. Relating "Giving Thanks" Book to self, family, community and culture



Teacher and Student Kits

Teacher Kit:

- Teacher Manual (1 per year)
- Seasonal Picture Book (1 per season)
- Novel (1 per year)
- Value Posters (1 per season)
- Classroom Composition Journal for Students
- Classroom Giving Thanks Folder for Students
- Weekly Family Newsletters (Developed & to be sent home weekly)

Student Home Kit:

- Seasonal Book Bag (1 per season)
- Game and Recipe Card File Case (1 per year)
- Seasonal Picture Book (1 per season)
- Spiral Note Book (1 per season)
- Box of Crayons (1 per season)
- Pen and Pencil (1 per season)

Student Classroom Kit:

- Composition Journal (1 per season)
- Giving Thanks Folder (1 per season)



MIND: Weekly Reminder. . .

Help your child begin writing their "Giving Thanks" book.



Game of the Week

"Hula Hoop Festival Game"

Year 2006, the [hula hoop](#), one of the biggest fads in history, turned 40 years old. Join in the spinning celebration with a whirl of color-- and a hoop decorated with festive streamers.

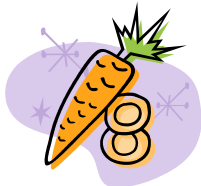
Just cut brightly colored fabric ribbon into 2-foot lengths (you'll need about 20). Tightly tie the ribbons to the hula hoop, spacing them about 5 inches apart. Now you can spin the hoop around your hips and make the streamers fly. Enjoy!

BODY: Weekly Reminder. . .

Schedule a time for physical activity.



Food of the Week:



Carrot

Fun Food Snack

"Dishin' - Fishin' Snack"

1/2 cup low-fat cream cheese or cheese spread

Fish-shaped crackers

4 carrot sticks

Water to Drink

Scoop the cream cheese into a bowl. (You can tint the cream cheese with blue food coloring to make it look like a pond.) Place the goldfish in a separate bowl, or surround the "pond" with them. Let the kids dip the carrot sticks into the cheese, then into the bowl of crackers to "catch" a fish. Enjoy!

SPIRIT: Weekly Reminder. . .

Be RESPONSIBLE: Make good decisions and be trustworthy.



Teacher Training Course Summary

Course: "Challenge to Change": Innovative Teaching Techniques that Stimulate and Improve Comprehension for American Indian Students

A five day literacy workshop that will show teachers how to incorporate "Circling the Seasons" program into their curriculum. It will challenge elementary teachers to incorporate positive teaching techniques that celebrate individual student's strengths.

Teachers will be trained to implement the theories of multi-intelligences and modalities of learning through a seasonal, cultural curriculum in which literacy is continually woven through inter-curricular activities.

The program includes the teaching of cultural values, with reading, writing, speaking, listening, physical activity, nutrition, and health activities which help schools and teachers meet required state standards.

Participants will have a greater awareness and increased understanding of the need for utilizing multiple resources, which create the synergy needed for a successful school.



Bios and Backgrounds of Authors/Instructors

Background on the innovators of *Circling the Seasons*:

Yvonne Aarden and Mary Snobl are sisters and enrolled members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe White Earth Nation. They were born and raised in the village of Nay-tah-waush in northern Minnesota. Having developed *Circling the Seasons* to reflect the culture and values of their American Indian heritage and to give thanks for the teachings of their Elders, they are interested in working with communities willing to build on these values.

Yvonne Aarden:

Yvonne Aarden: yteach@verizon.net

Master of Science - Reading and Learning Disabilities

Bachelor of Arts - Elementary Education

National Educational Consultant

Forty-five years of teaching experiences in Pre-K through University levels. For the past fifteen years has worked as a consultant around the world developing literacy programs for schools and communities.

Mary Snobl:

Mary Snobl: marysnobl@LLwb.coop

Master of Science - Education Administration

Bachelor of Arts - Health and Psychology

Associate of Applied Science - Registered Nursing Degree

Health Program Consultant

Thirty years of experience in community health and wellness programs, and for the past eleven years worked with American Indian Elders across Minnesota developing the Wisdom Steps Preventive Health Program.