

Lakota Funds and CITI 11 Youth Pilot Project



Kyle, South Dakota- Freshmen students attending Pine Ridge High School had the opportunity to participate in a pilot project sponsored through OWEESTA “helps build strong Native institutions and programs through professional services designed to build local capacity and provide tools for Native community development” this project is in collaboration with Lakota Funds in Kyle, South Dakota and Four Bands of Eagle Butte, South Dakota. Douglas Patton Jr, Red Cloud alumni will be working with three freshmen classes on Tuesday’s and Thursday’s for a period of eight weeks.

According to Jaci Ree, Manager, Financial Education & Asset Building with First Nations Oweesta Corporation “CITI 11 Oweesta will help 2-3 Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs) in the Citi's footprint develop and deliver a Native youth financial education program, targeted to low-income individuals. The goal of the program is two-fold: 1. Assist Native CDFIs with integrating youth financial education into their programming menu. 2. Increase the financial education skills of Native youth. Citi funds will be used to create Native youth focused financial education materials, and will support the development and delivery of a training program including follow-up technical assistance. We anticipate that up to 75 low-income Native youth will be directly served through this program; however, many more will benefit as the Native CDFIs will continue to offer the program long after the grant is completed.”

“It was great to see our students learn about basic finance language so they can make better daily as well as long term money decisions. This year had more depth within the material and so many relevant examples that students could easily identify with. Having a financial expert, who is Lakota, really helped the students make closer associations. I think Career and Tech. and Prep class would be better suited for students at a sophomore level. This financial Literacy segment would be more appropriate for students who have a little more mature life outlook. This curriculum is a definite keeper! My student teacher Jessica Fisher was also impressed and most definitely thought it was valuable for classroom instruction”, according to Beth Kizer, the freshmen Economics teacher at Pine Ridge High School.

Freshmen students that participated in the pilot project stated they would recommend this class to upcoming freshmen. Katie, Jacob and Kylee mentioned they were not aware of identity theft , they also encourage other youth to be cautious when they apply for a credit card, and to use money wisely, they also plan on using the techniques they learned in their daily spending habits and not spend irresponsibly, students agreed that they will share what they learned about finances with their family and friends. Each student plans to monitor and manage their budget, these sessions made a huge difference as to what they knew prior to and after the completion of this pilot project.

Lakota Funds serves tribal members with a business located on (or to be located on) the Pine Ridge Reservation. Loan types include: Micro-Loans (under \$5000); Business Loans up to \$200,000, a Business Line Of Credit, and the Credit Builder Loan up to \$2500. Lakota Funds also provides one-on-one technical assistance as well as business classes including Financial Literacy and Business Planning. If you have questions or want to register for a class call 605.455.2500 or email tbrunsch@lakotafunds.org