

FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN-HE SAPA

Spring 2026

NEWSLETTER

Friends in the Field

Two of our incredible youth recently met and exceeded their schools testing goals—a huge accomplishment! While their school celebrated them, their mentor wanted to make sure their hard work didn't go unnoticed.

So, they headed to Rapid City for a very special reward...their very first spa day. From picking out nail colors to soaking in the full experience, the joy on their faces said it all. One of the girls shared, through tears, that she had always dreamed of getting her nails done like the girls she watches online. Seeing that dream come true in real life was something none of us will forget.

The smiles, the laughter, the excitement! On the ride home, they couldn't stop comparing designs and dreaming about coming back again after their next big achievement.

Moments like these remind us that celebrating hard work builds confidence, joy, and belief in what's possible. These girls left not only proud of their accomplishments but feeling beautiful, seen, and celebrated.

We are so proud of these two and the dedication they are showing in school.



Pictured: Program youth participating in the Rush Facility tour



In the spotlight

Support comes from all places

As a Target Circle member, guests earn a vote for each Target trip they make.

Guests can then use those votes to direct where funds go in support of nonprofits in their community and across the nation. Once each voting period wraps up, Target awards grants to the nonprofits based on the percentage of votes they receive.



We're so excited to announce that we're featured in Target Circle™! Vote for us in the Target app to direct Target funds that support our work. Here's how:

Step 1: Choose 'My Target' in the Target app or 'Account' on Target.com

Step 2: Tap 'Cast votes'

Step 3: Find us & vote

Words of Woksape

Culture isn't what we do, it's the heart of who we are

The Lakota way of life guides us in achieving our mission at Friends of the Children – He Sapa. Using these values as a basis for decision-making can pave the way in which we live our lives providing balance and meaning. Enjoy our most recent installment of our Traditional Teachings online series from respected Elder Richard Two dogs "Interpreter of the Sacred". Find these teachings and more on our [official Youtube Channel!](#)

FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN-HE SAPA

Message from our Executive Director

“The only constant in life is change.” – Heraclitus, Greek philosopher



Dear Friends and Relatives,

As happens for us all, change does occur. Walt Swan has moved on from his position with Friends of the Children – He Sapa, and we wish him well.

Over the last few weeks, I have had the privilege to serve as the interim executive director of this amazing organization. The services we provide to our wakanyeja have continued and we are moving forward with a sense of gratitude for this work.

In the hustle and bustle of our newly charted course, I recently read this statement from one of our grant narratives: “(paraphrasing) we work to bring out what our children already have within themselves...” I was inspired by that idea, hidden within the many words describing our model, like a nugget of gold buried in the ground.

It’s what we do. We lead, model and draw out the essence of what is already within our beautiful little ones. Creator has gifted them to succeed. Their potential is there and we have the honor of helping them become what they are already destined for. It brought clarity and reinforced the importance of our mission.

Your support means so much. Thank you for walking alongside us. We value each one of you.

Lila Mehlhaff

Interim Executive Director

Friends of the Children- He Sapa

Upcoming events

Exciting things are happening with us in the future. Check out our upcoming events, we would love to see you there!

Drum Group Practice: We will be hosting drum group with our program youth and their families every Thursday from 3:30-4:30 pm at our new office location!

Summer Programming: FOTC Program staff are busy planning our summer activities and we can’t do it alone! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Tyresha Grey Horse for more information.

Behind the scenes

We have moved office locations! We are excited to announce that our new location is at 330 Knollwood Dr, Rapid City, SD 57701. If you are in the neighborhood stop on by and stay for a cup of coffee.

Did you know?

This newsletter we are highlighting our outcome area of Health and Wellbeing.

Native Americans have the highest prevalence of diabetes among all U.S. Racial/ethnic groups, with approximately 13.6% to 15.7% of adults diagnosed. Our mentors are committed to assisting our youth in a healthy and active lifestyle.

Be on the lookout for future Newsletters for a deep dive into each of these outcome areas!

Never miss a moment

We revamped our social media presence! Follow like and share each of our pages, a little support goes a long way in supporting this work

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsHeSapa/> Instagram: @friendshesapa X (Formerly known as Twitter): @FOTCHeSapa

Partner Highlight

We are honored to share that Friends of the Children–He Sapa has been selected as a 2026 Grantee of the Cook Native American Ministries Foundation.

This support helps us continue walking alongside our youth, creating meaningful opportunities, and building brighter futures rooted in connection, culture, and consistency.

We’re excited to be featured in their

Spring 2026 Newsletter in the “Empowering Native Communities” section—highlighting the impactful work

being done across Native communities and the power of partnership.

We invite you to learn more by subscribing to the Cook Native American Ministries Foundation newsletter and staying connected to the incredible work they support.

Thank you for believing in our youth and investing in the work of building a Nation!

