



# Wellbriety!

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## *Hoop Journey IV Visits the DC Area Saturday, April 12, 2003*



The Yarn Exercise shows the old traditional ways where men form a protective circle around the women and children.



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## White Bison Speaks

# Hoop Journey IV Visits the DC Area Saturday, April 12 2003

**T**he Lincoln Park Community Center in Rockville, Maryland, a neighborhood close to Washington, was the location for our next stop on this Journey. Over 150 people joined us to celebrate Wellbriety on a sunny day in the land of cherry blossoms. Every visit on a Hoop Journey is different because every community we stop at is different. The DC Indian community is one peopled by Natives who work in the many government agencies that serve Indian interests across the country. There were people from some of the local tribes also present at the Wellbriety Day gathering.

Don Coyhis shared the Gifts of the Sacred Hoop and highlights of the Journeys of the Wellbriety Movement. There was a video presentation of "Healing Native Women and Children"--the 2002 Journey West of the Mississippi. That's the way our Journey visits always start. The Gifts of the Hoop seem to manifest and wind like a spiritual thread thru the tapestry of an agenda or gathering. As the day progressed, it became clear that the gift that would touch us and help us to heal today was UNITY. We came together from all nations, genders, ages, and job descriptions to share a common desire. To focus on the Healing of our Men and Children.

*"In the old Ways, and in the new Ways that are now coming again, Native men form a protective circle around the community. They can do this once they are connected in their own positive warrior's circle of men."*

The DC Hoop Journey visit offered a half-day of ceremony, good eating, and panel discussions, followed by another half day of powwow, more ceremony and more feasting. The government agencies, people and tribes represented include:

- Duane Birdbear (Hidatsa/Mandan) BIA Division of Tribal Government
- Chet Eagleman, (Assiniboine), BIA Division of Human services
- Walter Lamar (Blackfeet/Wichita), BIA Office of Law Enforcement
- Dalton Henry (Choctaw) BIA Office of Indian Education Programs
- Amos Goodfox (Pawnee/Osage), DoEd Office of Indian Education
- Roger Iron Cloud (Oglala Sioux), Indian Headstart Program, ACF
- Kenneth Ryan (Assiniboine), ANA
- Daniel Echohawk (Pawnee/Otoe), IHS Div. of Health Professionals Support
- Frank Canizales (Miwak), IHS Behavioral Health Program
- Jim Cussen, Director, National Indian Urban Program
- Anselem Davis, (Navajo) National Science Foundation

Hoop Journey IV is about healing our men and children. But the way to healing Native men and children is to have the men connect as a men's circle. Then they can welcome the community into their own sacred strength and wellness. The yarn circle at the close of the powwow brought this home to everybody present in such a moving way.

The men formed a circle around the Sacred Hoop. The women and children then circled up on the outside of the men's circle. One man was given a ball of yellow yarn. Holding one end of the yarn, he threw the ball to another man. Then that man held onto the yarn and threw the ball to still another member of the circle. Round and around the ball of yarn flew until every man was connected in the spiderweb of yellow. They could all feel their connectedness in this

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men's circle. If one man pulled on his piece of yarn, another could feel it. If still another backed up a few steps, everybody could feel it through the pull in the yarn. So the men felt their interconnectedness as men in the circle.

When each man knew his place in the circle of men, Don Coyhis then gave the instruction for the men to all raise the spider web up high. He asked the women and children to enter the web and take their places. When the men lowered the yarn the picture was complete. In the old Ways, and in the new Ways that are now coming again, Native men form a protective circle around the community. They can do this once they are connected in their own positive warrior's circle of men. What a visual, tactile, and feeling way to learn about Healing Men and Children

Our appreciation is extended to the coordinators, the community members, and the many representa-

tives of government agencies and departments whose presence and participation demonstrated their united desire for Wellbriety. From the welcoming introduction by Jerry Gidner, Chief of Staff to Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, to the honored speakers and panelists, and to the volunteers who served us the wonderful feast, it was all noticed and appreciated not only by White Bison, but by all of those who were fortunate to join together for this day of celebration and healing.

White Bison is especially grateful for the help of Daphne Berwalk, Alberta Joseph and Dr. Velma Mason of the BIA as coordinators of the Hoop Journey visit to Washington, DC. Without their commitment the visit would not have been possible. ✚

*Vette Middleton  
Richard Simonelli*



*Hoop Carriers Rico Newman, M.Savoy, Jamil Newman, and Linda Proctor prepare to enter the Lincoln Park Community Center in Rockville, MD to begin Wellbriety Day on the Washington, DC visit of Hoop Journey IV*

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*Clarence and J. Standsblack*

*Clarence Standsblack said,  
"I talk to my child—sing to her—play the flute for her while she is  
in the womb. My thoughts go on and on about what I want to say to her. My wishes are end-  
less and simple: 'Don't forget who you are when the circle and the Drums call'."*

*Healing Native Men and Children—Healing the People.*



*Wellbriety Pow-Wow Grand Entry*

*Dancing at the powwow during the Washington, DC Wellbriety Day in Rockville, MD*

*(Left to Right) Head Dancer - Jay Hill White Bison Founder Don Coyhis MC - Mel Whitebird*