



Media Release

For Immediate Release

June 1, 2009


An American Indian Non-profit Organization

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June 1, 2009

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SIGN THE PETITION AT:  www.whitebison.org

Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness 1/3 Complete

Eight of the twenty-four scheduled community visits of the 40-day, 6800 mile cross-country Journey to heal the effects of historical trauma among Native Americans are now complete.

Over 1000 participants in urban, rural and reservation communities have spent a day of listening, learning, grieving and smiling as the often forbidden topic of the legacy of boarding school era abuses is placed on the table in an open and healing way, perhaps for the first time in Indian history.

“We are starting to see *the truth about the lie* coming out,” said Don Coyhis, president of White Bison, Inc. during one of the site visits. “Once the truth starts to be spoken about community secrets and the things that happened in the boarding schools, then we start to see among the people an emotional response because somebody said out loud what has been previously *unsayable*.” Coyhis is also the inspiration behind the Wellbriety Movement for Native Americans, which is also behind the Journey.

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness takes advantage of the fact that the time is right for many Native Americans to recognize what happened to them as a people during the boarding school era, which spanned the decades from 1879 until about 1970. Many of the social ills experienced by American Indians and Alaska Natives today are just the tip of an iceberg of harm that originated in the boarding schools. Issues such as substance abuse, diabetes, parenting skills, mental health disorders, and limited job and education opportunities are a direct result of the unresolved intergenerational trauma of the boarding school era.

“This Movement that encourages *remembering and forgiving* is fundamentally sound from a counseling viewpoint,” said Tony Robichaud, a chemical dependency counselor at Riverside County Indian Health in southern California and an organizer of the Sherman Indian School visit.

The Journey also offers an online petition for [Apology for Abuses at US Indian Schools](#) that will be presented to the Obama Administration at the conclusion of the event on June 24, 2009 in Washington, DC. The petition currently has over 3800 signatures on the way to a goal of 10,000. Those who feel moved by this national effort are urged to sign the petition online at www.whitebison.org.

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness is now en route to Oklahoma for a series of three visits. [News reports and photographs of the previous site visits are available online at www.whitebison.org](#). The schedule for the rest of the Journey can also be found there. Check the website frequently during the remainder of the Journey to read reports and see photos of all events to come.

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