



2 Rivers Circle

No. 1 March 2026

Mendota Dakota Friendship Group

Hau and **Han** to all our friends and relatives.

Stronger together by Rita Chamberlain

With all the things and changes we have been through this past year, let us remember we have the strength, respect and love of each other that has carried us through to the other side. We have been made stronger. In these times of uncertainty and fear, may the Great Spirit continue to show us the path to hold each other up including our neighbors and those in great need. Peace be with us all.



December potluck at Rita's house.

WHO ARE WE?

2 Rivers Circle is a name chosen by a group formed after the breakup of the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community. We were a faithful remnant that wanted to stay together and find a purpose. 2 Rivers Circle is a reference to the sacred Bdote of the Dakota creation story, and the ancient symbol of the circle—the medicine wheel, sacred hoop, Sun Dance circle.

The heart and soul of our community for many years is our tribal chair, Sharon Lennartson. She will continue to be a guiding light as we move forward in this new way. Our goal is to nurture the history and culture of the Dakota community, while serving in the generous spirit embodied for centuries before us.

Please join us and invite others you think might be interested in coming.

Memorial at Powderhorn Park, February 7



Arvol Looking Horse led prayers at the memorial service for Renee Good and Alex Pretti at Powderhorn Park on February 7. Several hundred people were in attendance, and the sacred part of the gathering was officiated by Looking Horse.

Cold Water Encampment



Mni Owe Sni Bdote Camp. Some of our members have been to the Mni Owe Sni Bdote camp near the Whipple building and Coldwater Springs. Four mysterious white tipis and lodges appeared there on February 9. At first it wasn't apparent what their purpose was. We've learned that the camp is a stand by the Native Community to return these lands to its Dakota and Lakota relatives who say "this place is alive, sacred, and we want to come home" (Marlene Myles, Spirit Lake Dakota). We have since learned the four tipis were intended to invite the four Dakota tribes to a council, and they decided not to come because they have already been working with county, state, and federal entities on the issue.

The camp is part of Land Back and will remain until Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan and Governor Walz meet with them and provide ceremonial space (Land Back) for Dakota women to have their ceremonies and place to pass on their teachings and traditions. At issue is non-Natives having space for a dog park and funding for a "River Learning Center" while ignoring the needs and will of the original people of Bdote. The organizers want Bdote to be restored as living Dakota land with protected space for ceremony.

"Land Back means ceremony back. Land Back means Dakota governance at Bdote. Land Back means Dakota women have space again at the center of the world. If there is land for a dog park and millions for a river center, there must be land and resources for Dakota ceremony." (Marlene Myles). Everyone is welcome to come and support the camp as good relatives. Rita brought them soup, Isaac has been there as a

volunteer. Maybe as more structure and clear leadership emerges, we can figure out how **2 Rivers Circle** can contribute to this effort.

Community News

Birthdays: Carol, Jan. 4; Pat D, Jan. 18; Isaac Fish, Feb. 6; Joseph Bester, March 4; Janet, March 9; Rebirth of Spring, March 20; Sarah Sivright, April 8, Riley Tiokasin, April 15.

In Passing (have passed over): Dawn Fahrlander (Mille Lacs), January 14, 2026.

Newsworthy Mentions: Congratulations to Duane Leith on his 9th year of sobriety day, February 28.

Hooray for Samantha Walker for finishing her Law classes. Graduation in May, 2026.

Looking forward to Riley Tiokasin's high school graduation ceremony on May 28, at Red Lake.

Ceremonies:

Inipi: February 28 at the Dupuis House, 1357 Sibley Memorial HWY

Full Moon Walk: March 3 at Fort Snelling Park. ICE Out Full Moon Walk at Sacred Coldwater Springs. Tuesday, March 3, 2026. Gather at the National Park entrance, 7pm. Park on the Hwy 55 access road

Honoring Our Ancestors: March 7, 3:00 p.m. at Fort Snelling State Park, 101 Snelling Lake Rd. Park entrance off of HW 5 at Post Road. Please bring tobacco and sage. Dress for outside weather. Potluck afterward, place yet to be determined.

Drumming and Potluck: March 14. Community Room of the Sanctuary at West St. Paul, 1746 Oakdale Ave., West St. Paul, MN 55118. In February we had a great gathering of 20 people. Thank you for all the great food for the potluck!

Inipi: March 21 at the Dupuis House, 1357 Sibley Memorial HWY.

Next 2 Rivers Meeting: March 8, 2 p.m. at Rita Chamberlain's, 3328 Roll LN, Eagan.

1. Proposal to have people responsible: a treasurer, revolving door meeting leaders, a secretary, newsletter staff.....
2. Starting an emergency food shelf at Rita's house.
3. Volunteering for other organizations and churches who are doing service and feeding people work. Example: First Nations' Kitchen which already has a kitchen which prepares meals and has a food shelf.
4. Activities and Events we can do to build community:
~Attend Shakopee or Prairie Island powwows as a group.



~Check out Blue Hummingbird Art collective

~Do art together at Tammy Ortega's shop in Minneapolis on Saturdays.

~Attend a Sun Dance

5. Continue our education in Dakota philosophy, history, arts and crafts.

Needed Prayers: Sister Pat will be having knee surgery in March. Continued prayers for Sharon's healing and for Samantha's health. Prayers for healing for Duane's back.



Newsletter created by Rita Chamberlain, Pat Darling and Sarah Sivright.

The Road Ahead: will be what we make of it.

