



## Winnebago to Receive New Parks

The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student leaders from Winnebago Public School are touring the Winnebago Reservation and surrounding communities on a Blue Ribbon Fact Finding Trip to gather information about placement of new community parks in Winnebago. "Through our Indian Country Meth Initiative Grant and Learn and Serve funding we received, youth in the community are leading an effort to place family and community parks in Winnebago. This is an awesome activity for the students to learn about community needs, resources, and environmental considerations for park placement" said Keely Clark, Project Coordinator for HoChunk Community Development Corporation (HCCDC). Clark continued saying "students will be attending tribal council meetings, village board meetings and attending a guided tour of the parks with a representative from the play equipment company. "A goal of the students has been to provide a destination for families in the community to gather and have a fun time where all age groups needs are met by the equipment." Learn and Serve is a grant designed to teach civic responsibility and utilize real world activities that students can relate to classroom studies. In this instance, students will be working with an adult helper, Keely Clark, to research and provide information back to their classmates on the parks with the ultimate decision being made through a democratic voting process among the students. Teachers in the classrooms are heavily involved in the process, using classroom lessons to support the activity. If the weather holds at least two of the parks will be in place by December 31, 2009 with a larger community park opening in June 2010.

Another group of students from 5th grade to seniors in high school are collaborating with each other on a skate park for the community. Students met with Clark and Principal Tiffany Heese to discuss what was needed and where the park could be placed. "I would like to see an Art Wall in the proposed skate park so the children's need to express themselves artistically would be channeled into something positive for an appreciative audience" said Clark. The previous skate equipment had to be removed for insurance reasons and eventually fell into disrepair and is unusable. "The youth need to work with the village to use the old tennis courts for a skate park. There are several issues including lighting, fencing, and maintenance of the area that need to be worked out before the site would be approved. Chief Michael White of the local law enforcement and his officers have agreed to take charge of the keys and would both open and close the park pursuant to the posted skating hours. "The officers look forward to working with the community to provide a safe environment for the children to skate. We appreciate any opportunity to interact with the youth in a positive environment" said Chief White.

A long time need for the community has been play equipment for the children in the Youth Shelter. "With no place to burn off energy and have a good time, the children come inside frustrated and still wanting to run, jump and do other physical activities that are not conducive to our indoor group areas" said Terry Snowball, Director of the Shelter. "Another issue for the staff at the shelter is the children who could be a flight risk. We are unable to take these residents off the grounds. Our hope is that one of the playgrounds be located in our "front yard" and would include a basketball hoop, some digging equipment and perhaps a jungle gym." The Youth Shelter provides a safe and secure environment for children ages birth to 17 that have been removed from their home for various safety reasons. "We look forward to working with HCCDC and the Youth leaders to devise a playground to meet our resident's needs" Director Snowball continued.

Other areas that the students are touring will include BIA and the 12 plex housing area, Thunderway Pond area, Big Bear Hollow, Ho-Chunk Village, the apple orchard, and Sheridan Drive.

HCCDC is committed to working within the community and Winnebago organizations to provide positive support for residents.