TIWAHE GLU KINI PI

"Bringing the Family Back to Life"
Equine Therapy Program

The TGKP EAMHT program has been
designed to benefit from the special,
emotional, and spiritual relationship as well as
the unique knowledge that the Sicangu Oyate
have with the Sunka Wakan Oyate (Horse
Nation.) We know that our children live with
multiple layers of trust, trauma, identity, and
social skills issues to overcome. With
culturally relevant support and healing
opportunities and by bringing our knowledge,
strengths and values together to address
these issues, new doors to healing are
opened. Working with the Sunkawakan
Oyate, TGKP has seen the success of this
process.

When a child is referred to TGKP and receives
an assessment, if interested in ET, TGKP
Clinical Supervisor will assign child to an
Equine Therapy Group that meets during
school hours. TGKP transports children to
ranch from school and returns after sessions.
Although children miss 90 minutes of class
time once a week for therapy, When they
return to school they are in a better frame of
mind to learn.

TGKP is also offering Sunkawakan Oyate
camps in summer for community children
interested in learning and riding horses.

For more information, please
contact us at 605-856-8163

"Sunkawakan (Dog like Animal that have a
powerful energy) it's a respectful term.
When working with the horses a person must
be in a respectful mode. Horses understand
the mood of the person that works around
them. Horses have a strong energy that has
the good and bad in them. Grandpa always
told me when I handle horses, be respectful
to them, be nice to them and to those who
work with you. If you mishandle them or
don't understand them, stand aside and
learn from others who do know how to
handle them. Aho!!"

-The late Francis Cutt,
Late SGU Lakota Studies Instructor
Within this Lakota culture that evolved around the horse, the children played an important role. The grown-ups cared for the needs of the camp, while children watched the herds, moving them to better grass and water as needed. They played with the mares and colts, assisting in the “gentling” of the horses that were going to be trained. The horse also helped in the training of the children. The children had to be responsible in caring for the wealth of the family, making sure the horses were not hurt or attacked by predators. The horse nation also brought healing spiritual power with them. Many “Medicine men/Interpreters” had horse spirits that assisted them. The Oyate had a strong spiritual connection with the horse.”

- Ben Artichoker

Horses, because of their size, power, and sensitivity to humans, are great for therapy. In their natural environment, horses are prey. Their survival requires that they are extremely sensitive to the environment. Over time, they have developed an ability to assess the intentions and emotional states of their herds, other animals, and predators. Horses also have strong social bonds and being a part of a herd is crucial to survival. The herd is based on a cooperative form of living and each horse in the herd has an important role just as in a Tiospaye. In therapy, each horse has a gift they bring for healing of particular issues.