

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

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News Release
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U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior visits Circle of Life Academy

WHITE EARTH, MINN. – Although the Circle of Life Academy is currently closed to students for in-school learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the school opened its doors for Katharine MacGregor, U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior (DOI) on Thursday, Oct. 15.

The Circle of Life Academy (COLA) is a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) grant school and is currently operated by the White Earth Reservation Business Committee (RBC). The BIE is an agency of the DOI. The school offers a comprehensive K-12 culturally-based education program to Native American students residing on or near White Earth Reservation.

COLA Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter and staff, along with White Earth RBC council members and staff, welcomed MacGregor on behalf of the White Earth Nation. During a tour of the school, several topics were discussed to include distance learning, food and transportation issues, special education services, Covid-19 mitigation measures, importance of Ojibwe language and culture revitalization, and the need for broadband internet services for students and community members.

The tour ended with a demonstration of COLA's Smart Bus, part of a pilot project that outfits a school bus with wi-fi. The bus then visits communities where students, who are currently distance learning, can use the wi-fi. COLA officials consider this a short-term

solution due to the distance between the school and where students live on the reservation. Plus, the satellite connectivity is spotty due to the lack of cellular towers.

MacGregor appreciated the feedback and said she was impressed with the school and its scenic location on Mission Lake.

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Attachments:

Photo 1: Circle of Life Academy Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter, left, gives U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior Katharine MacGregor a tour of the school's library on Thursday, Oct. 15.

Photo 2: Circle of Life Academy Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter, right, demonstrates COLA's Smart Bus to U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior Katharine MacGregor on Thursday, Oct. 15. COLA was selected to participate in a pilot program that outfits a school bus with wi-fi.

Photos by Gary W. Padrta





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TO OPEN
ROTATE HANDLE
PUSH OUT WINDOW