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SYNERGISTIC EMERGENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

# Global Conversations

January/February 2006

## *Conversations with the Field - Montana Native American Reservation*

Below is an email dialogue with Abe Levine, Audrey James' son:

**Dear Mom,**

It's been a long project week here at the Reservation. We came here on a Shining Mountain Waldorf 10<sup>th</sup> grade trip to volunteer and help by building structures for these impoverished people. But I've got to tell you I wasn't really prepared for the reality of this situation. Actually, we haven't done much building at all. We've just kind of lived with and participated with the Native American teens. At their heart they're some really cool people. But the sadness is so intense. Alcoholism and drug use and domestic and sexual abuse is everywhere. Their faces show it.

I saw something the other day that made me feel sick to my stomach. Me and my friends Nate and Shan have been shadowing at the high school all week. Can you believe there is a military man here walking the halls, taking full control of the school? You see, they are here offering military training to anyone who signs up, promising them that once they complete this they have guaranteed future work in one of the armed forces. Now here's the really upsetting thing. Most of the recruits are teenage girls, 16-18. One girl that I had been watching all week was clearly in the early stages of being pregnant. She was in our JROTC class with her head on the desk, weak, and tired. A captain came in and said, "Get up and do drills outside." She told him she didn't feel well, and he kept yelling at her. I tell you, Mom, I was so close to jumping up and getting in his face, telling him, "Back off!" She was my age for Pete's sake, and probably pregnant. But finally she pulled herself up slowly and he followed her out the door as she walked with her head hanging down into what I knew was an empty future.

I wish I had never come. It feels like this is a whole other country being here. But you know what? I am here and the teens I've met I really like. These Native Americans are tall like me. They have a kind of depth in their eyes. They like my hat and my headband, and my hair pulled back in a ponytail. It's hard to feel such *affinity* **and** *a sickening pain*

at the same time. So I guess I can say overall it was worth coming but kind of hard to swallow the whole experience.

Can PNE help or work with the situation here? Why are we helping out around the world when there's such a need here in our own country?

I know we can create some project, Mom ... we always do.

***Love, your son, Abe***

***Dear Abe:***

Hi Sweetie!

Thanks for being in the conversation for making a difference where you are with what you are doing. One of the worst things is to see injustice or unnecessary suffering and feel helpless in the face of it. Instead of being angry and stuffing those feelings down, you've chosen to tell me about it and make a request.

Yes, I do think we can help. There are organizations that create micro-lending opportunities that give impoverished people a chance to start their own small businesses. And Abe, when people are productive and feel good about themselves, they don't do desperate things like go into the military, or sell and take drugs.

You know, honey, I know it's tough to emotionally digest such an experience. But if you do it and lean into the discomfort and the ugliness while communicating the horror you can find yourself taking powerful and effective steps towards altering the condition there in Montana and helping your new friends. Maybe we can organize with Anna's mom a project that begins to offer possibility and opportunity. Would you like to work with me on this project?

Abe, I'm so proud of you, your heart is so big. I know you love people ...

***I love you, Mom***

**PNE has selected the Montana Reservation as a partnership project to empower the health and productivity of its residents. If you would like to participate in this project, please send an email to [Abe@paradigmnouveau.com](mailto:Abe@paradigmnouveau.com).**