



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CHEYENNE RIVER YOUTH PROJECT® TO HOST “OKICIYAPI RUN” ON APRIL 19**

#### ***Effort Will be Show of Support for Lotta Schneidemesser, a Former Volunteer Running the North-Blackforest Half-Marathon in Germany***

EAGLE BUTTE, SD (March 30, 2009) — The Cheyenne River Youth Project® in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, is preparing to host a special four-mile run on Sunday, April 19 that will serve as a show of support for Lotta Schneidemesser, a former volunteer who is preparing to participate in the North-Blackforest Marathon in her native Germany on the same day. Schneidemesser will run the half-marathon distance, 13.1 miles, as a CRYP fundraiser.

Wiyaka Chasing Hawk, CRYP’s wellness coordinator, is organizing the run on the Cheyenne River reservation, which the youth project has christened “The Okiciyapi Run” (O-kee-chee-yapi).

“The Lakota name means helping each other, or supporting each other for the same cause,” Chasing Hawk explained. “The purpose of our run is to raise awareness and support for this former volunteer, who is continuing to garner support for our youth in another country. It’s also to inform our youth that this is a great way to give back to someone who gave so much to them during her three months here.”

Schneidemesser served as a long-term volunteer from April to July 2008.

According to Julie Garreau, CRYP’s executive director, an event like the Okiciyapi Run is healthy in every possible way for its youth participants.

“What’s critical to acknowledge here is that the kids are giving back,” she explained. “It’s what should be happening, and it’s what our children should be learning from our elders. It’s natural.

“I imagine that Lotta will run even harder and faster knowing that young people from the Lakota nation will be running with her, and not just in spirit,” she continued. “This is an example of education and reconciliation at its best. It’s inspiring. I’m touched when I see kids taking the lead — it’s what gives me hope for tomorrow and the future of Cheyenne River.”

The Okiciyapi Run will start at noon on Sunday, April 19, the same day as the half-marathon event in Egenhausen, Germany. The start line will be at the “four-mile” junction of Highway 212 and Highway 63; it will end at the Cokata Wiconi Teen Center on CRYP’s Eagle Butte campus.

And as Schneidemesser solicits sponsorships for her run in Europe, which will be donated in full to the youth project, CRYP will be doing the same on South Dakota’s north-central high prairie.

“We, the youth project’s staff and volunteers, will be raising funds here in Eagle Butte for Lotta’s cause,” Chasing Hawk said.

At press time, Chasing Hawk said he was preparing a series of jogging sessions for teens who wish to train for the run. In addition, the local youth diabetes program is allowing participants to use its treadmills to aid in the training effort.

When the day of the Okiciyapi Run arrives, a Cheyenne River elder will say a prayer to start the event. Singers from the Red Scaffold community will sing an encouragement song for the teens and staff who will be running. A police escort will accompany the runners along their route, and Cokata Wiconi will host a feed afterward.

“The teens and other participants do not have to run the entire four miles,” Chasing Hawk noted. “The distance they want to run will be at their own discretion.”

For more information about participating in the Okiciyapi Run on the Cheyenne River reservation, contact CRYP at (605) 964-8200 or send e-mail to Wiyaka Chasing Hawk at [wiyaka.cryp@gmail.com](mailto:wiyaka.cryp@gmail.com).

There are three ways to make a contribution to Schneidemesser’s half-marathon fundraiser and the Okiciyapi Run fundraiser. Pledges and payments can go directly to CRYP, which now accepts PayPal contributions on its Web site; simply visit [www.lakotayouth.org](http://www.lakotayouth.org), click “Help CRYP” and select “Monetary Donations.” Facebook users may prefer visiting CRYP’s “Causes” page and donating through that. Or, contributors may send checks via regular mail to the Cheyenne River Youth Project, East Lincoln St., P.O. Box 410, Eagle Butte, SD 57625.

To learn more about the Cheyenne River Youth Project and its programs, and for information about making donations and volunteering, call (605) 964-8200 or visit CRYP’s recently redesigned Web site at [www.lakotayouth.org](http://www.lakotayouth.org). And, to stay up to date on the latest CRYP news and events, visit the youth project’s new Facebook group page. All group members will receive regular updates through Facebook.

*The Cheyenne River Youth Project, founded in 1988, is a grassroots, not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing the youth of the Cheyenne River reservation with access to a vibrant and secure future through a wide variety of culturally sensitive and enduring programs, projects and facilities that ensure strong, self-sufficient families and communities.*