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My name is Joe RedCloud and my Great-Great-Great Grandfather, Chief RedCloud, fought for the lives of his people, their culture, their beliefs and to secure their homelands to provide a haven for peace and the prosperity of his people and for the following generations. Through numerous armed conflicts and even more negotiated meetings with the politicians in Washington DC, his actions and his determination won the hearts and souls of all Americans from then to our present today.

Presently, those battles continue but, now, they are fought for something far less tangible but equally important; information. The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where I reside, Internet service is a luxury that many of our people cannot afford. In fact, for a lot of the people here, Internet service is not even available. The remoteness of our geographic location does not attract business. Most Native American Reservations are situated far from cities and business interests. And, while most Native American Reservations exist in remote areas, away from mainstream America, we realize our troubles are now being compounded by information solitude which, quite candidly, threatens our continued existence.

Over the past few decades, Native Americans have struggled to bridge this information gap. My Tribe, the Oglala Lakota (aka Oglala Sioux) used wireless technology and managed to begin to remedy the telecommunication gap. Toward the end of the 20th century and continuing through the early 21st century, wireless telecommunications spread rapidly across the entire United States and the world. Observing that most telecommunications companies had “discovered” a new market, the largest wireless carriers tried to pry open this lucrative new customer base. The Great Plains Tribes, not wanting to permit private business to invade our homelands much like the United States Army once tried, focused on new efforts to bring communications to their people while still recognizing and observing the rights granted by numerous Treaties signed by the federal government with Great Plains Tribes that ended the Great Plains Wars at the end of the 19th century.

The federal government has recently begun providing Tribes with the necessary funding to help with access to Internet service. Our survival, as a people and a culture, will depend upon how we use this information and how we create a new path forward for our people. The Native American YesWeCan Foundation has stepped forward to help Native Americans by building an innovative Internet Library and Technology Center on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Here, Tribal residents can obtain free access to the Internet and, most importantly, digital literacy training on how to use the Internet to gain access to information including but not limited to tele-medicine and distance learning.

The Foundation is now taking its efforts a step further by establishing an Information Learning Center where Tribal residents can remotely connect by video to on-line sources of information. This promises to change our lives by removing our geographic isolation and information solitude. I humbly ask you for

your assistance in bringing the promises of the Foundation to fruition by making a donation to the Foundation to further its mission. This is not a passive donation. It is an opportunity to transform the lives of Tribal residents and a commitment on our part to provide you with updates and testimonials on how your donation has impacted lives. You can make a donation through our website at www.nativeyeswecan.com.

Following in the steps of my Great-Great-Great Grandfather, Chief RedCloud, I have learned in discussion and negotiation opportunities that most American citizens have very little information about or experience with Native American Reservations. Where, how and why they located where they are, how do Tribal, local, State and Federal laws interact and why we don't have the same services and amenities that every other American citizen enjoys. You would be surprised to learn that most school children, and a lot of adults, seem surprised that we no longer live in tipi's, we no longer travel long distances on horseback or that we as a people are actually still alive.

Armed conflict between the US Army and Native American Tribes began almost as soon as the very beginning on contact between the United States and Tribes. At first, the Army won many of the early battles. However, RedCloud's War (1866-1868) made the American Government realize that continued armed conflict was unsustainable. Negotiated peace agreements, or Treaties, were preferred. This period of peace was replaced with new federal laws and policies designed to eliminate Tribes once and for all. Since the United States Constitution clearly defines Treaties as the supreme law of the land (Article VI US Constitution), the open warfare of the 19th and 20th centuries was replaced with Acts of Law written, discussed and voted into place by the United States Congress. One of the most recent Acts is better known as The Termination Era. It was started in 1953 but was ended in 1968.

Pine Ridge village, the Headquarters of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, is located on the lower Southwest portion of the Reservation which, itself, is located on the lower Southwest portion of South Dakota. The Reservation itself is larger than the entire state of Rhode Island and is close to the size of the state of Delaware or Connecticut.

Imagine if you lived in Rhode Island or Delaware or Connecticut and there was only 1 small hospital and 1 large clinic to serve the entire state. Imagine there was no movie theatre in the entire state. Imagine if there was no mall in the whole state. Imagine there was no McDonald's, no Wal-Mart or no bank in the entire state. From Pine Ridge village, the closest McDonald's or Walmart is over 100 miles round trip. The closest city, Rapid City, is a 180 mile round trip. Imagine making that drive when the winter weather temperature is 5 degrees above zero or when the summer weather temperature is close to 100 degrees.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, one of the largest in the country, is the nation's worst off by many measures. Its life expectancy is the lowest, its county of Oglala Lakota has the lowest per capita income and its unemployment rate circa 2005 was 89%. Its school dropout rate is higher than 70%.

This is life on this Native American Indian Reservation and it is something we are trying desperately to improve. The Native American YesWeCan Foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of residents of Tribal lands by leveraging funding to exponentially help others by providing the necessary resources, *e.g.*, digital literacy, education and self-development to allow individuals to achieve their dreams with a helping hand by the Foundation which will lead to self-determination and self-sufficiency. We strongly believe in transparency and promise to document and post on our website,

www.nativeeyeswecan.com, and social media accounts information about our funding and how funds are used to further the Foundation's Mission. We will provide monthly updates on our work and accomplishments and we will individually respond to your questions, comments and suggestions by social media or email at director@nativeeyeswecan.com.

I offer this final note in conclusion. My ancestors, Chief RedCloud, Chief Jack RedCloud, Chief James RedCloud and Chief Edgar RedCloud, all put aside ideas of privilege and, instead, worked hard to benefit their people and their allies. They began the trail I have been following for several decades. Each of them knew that it was vital to surround themselves with good allies so that, together, they could achieve more than they could alone. In a like manner, the way ahead is difficult. There are many obstacles. There is always the need to negotiate in order to move forward to the goal. Perhaps you might find our goal worthy of your support. I hope you do. If we can work together, if we can combine our strengths, we can overcome any obstacle before us. Please, join me on this path forward. We can chose to stand for and with marginalized peoples by taking tangible ongoing strides forward. Together, we become stronger than we would be alone. I look forward to your reply.

Most Respectfully,

Joe RedCloud

Director, Native American YesWeCan Foundation