



## **Blankets of Peace Fact Sheet**

In 2010 we became aware of the dire conditions on Indian Reservations in southwestern South Dakota where winter temperatures frequently plummet to fifty degrees below zero and many homes have little or no heat. In response, we began creating Blankets of Peace in the sacred colors of the Oglalla Lakota: red, yellow, white and black. We deliver these to both the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations.

Pine Ridge is home to about 40,000 persons, 35% of whom are under the age of 18. The infant mortality rate is **300% higher** than the US national average. The general suicide rate is **200% higher** than the US national average; teen suicides are **400% higher**. The rate of diabetes is **800% higher** than the US national average; about half the population over 40 suffer from this deadly disease. **At least 60%** of the homes are infested with Black Mold which is life-threatening for infants and children; it can also cause hemorrhaging of the lungs and brain as well as cancer. The rate of cervical cancer is **500% higher** than the US national average. The rate of heart disease is **200% higher** than the US national average. The rate of tuberculosis is **800% higher** than the US national average. The death rate from alcohol-related problems is **300% higher** than the US national population and alcoholism affects **8 out of 10 families; one in every four** infants is born with fetal alcohol syndrome or its effects. The infant mortality rate is **300% higher** than the US national average.

The issue of alcoholism is also an economic one for a nearby Nebraska community. The Oglala Lakota Nation prohibited the sale and possession of alcohol on the reservation in the early 1970's. The town of Whiteclay, Nebraska is only 400 yards off the reservation. It has approximately 14 residents (yes, only 14 residents, period) and 4 liquor stores that sell over 4,100,000 cans of beer every year, producing a \$3,000,000 annual trade. Whiteclay has no schools, churches, civic organizations, parks, benches, public bathrooms, fire service, or law enforcement; it seemingly exists for the sole purpose of selling alcohol and making money. Lakota tribal officials have consistently lobbied the State of Nebraska to close the Whiteclay liquor stores or at least enforce state laws regulating liquor stores but their efforts have been consistently refused.

Median income on Pine Ridge Reservation is approximately \$2,600 to \$4,000 per year. Unemployment rates are 80-90%. 97% of the population lives below the Federal poverty level. An average home houses 17 – 30 people. Some homes have dirt floors; most lack central heating; 39% have no electricity; 60% have no land-line phones; cell phones issued to residents do not operate in windy or stormy weather, in rural areas, or off the Reservation. Weather is extreme: summer temperatures frequently reach well over 110 degrees and in winter they plummet to -50 degrees or worse.

Despite these overwhelming challenges the Oglala Lakota are a determined, intelligent, deeply spiritual, and proud People who are working very hard to reclaim their self-sufficiency, their culture, and their life.

For additional information visit [www.re-member.org](http://www.re-member.org).

**Blankets of Peace: Mitered Square Blanket Pattern**  
**(Finished size: 60" x 72")**

- Yarn:** Superwash worsted weight (colors: red, yellow, black, white)  
Approximately 72 grams per square
- Needles:** Size 8 needles. (You can go up or down a size depending on how tightly or loosely you knit.)
- Other supplies:** Crochet hook or needle to sew squares together  
Stitch markers

**Pattern:**

Cast On (CO) 2 stitches.  
Knit 1 row.  
Turn.

Knit 1 (k), Make 1 (slip a twisted loop onto the needle), place a marker on the needle (PM), Make 1 (slip a twisted loop onto the needle), Knit 1.  
[Or with abbreviations: k1, m1, pm, m1, k1]

Knit 1, Purl 1 (p) Slip marker (slm), Purl 1, Knit 1.  
[Or with abbreviations: k1, p1, slm, p1, k1.]

Repeat the next 2 rows until the side of the square measures 12 inches:

Knit to 1 stitch (st) before the marker, yarn over, knit 1, slip marker, knit 1, yarn over, knit to end.  
[Or with abbreviations: K to 1 st before the marker, yo, k1, slm, k1, yo, k to end]

Knit to 1 stitch before the marker, purl 1, slip marker, purl 1, knit to end.  
[Or with abbreviations: K to 1 st before the marker, p1, slm, p1, k to end]

When the square measures 12 inches, bind off loosely. Some knitters recommend using a needle one size larger as a means of ensuring that your binding off will not be too tight.

Save all your unused yarn to sew the blanket together.

When you have created 30 squares, lay them out to create a blanket pattern you like. Then use your left-over yarn to sew the blanket together.

**Say a prayer** for the family who will receive your Blanket of Peace.  
*Your compassion & love are as important as the work of your hands  
in "knitting together" the Beloved Community.*

**Send your completed blanket (along with your e-mail address so we can acknowledge receipt) to:**

**Knitting4Peace**

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