

The Honorable Wilma P. Mankiller
Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation
PO Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465

October 5, 1993

Dear Chief Mankiller,

As a doctoral candidate in Rehabilitation at the University of Arkansas, I speak for myself and my department when I thank you for your kind attention to this letter. As a human being who has lived over fifty years — the last ten with a spinal cord injury — I ask that you consider an idea close to my heart.

It is with enthusiasm and respect for you, your office, and the Cherokee Nation that I invite your participation in a project that encourages mentoring alliances between adults and school-aged children with significant disabilities. I believe this project is a true "win-win" situation that promotes:

- *Individual growth and freedom for Cherokee elders and young people*
- *Self-determinism for participant individuals and the Cherokee Nation*
- *Increased cultural balance within the Cherokee Nation*
- *Increased positive cultural identity for the Cherokee Nation*
- *Increased Cherokee leadership in proactive educational approaches*
- *Increased Cherokee participation in credible outcomes research activities*

To achieve the above I propose to put in place a mentoring program for the Cherokee Nation that helps significant elders with disabilities reach out to Cherokee youth with disabilities, see themselves as positive role models, and increase their personal power and self-esteem. To accomplish this goal, a method has been designed to assist participants to:

- *Identify their positive personal attributes*
- *Use their personal attributes to help others*
- *Contact students with significant disabilities*
- *Participate in a mentoring alliance with those students*

The above are key issues in building self-reliance. Research clearly indicates that significant disability often results in diminished levels of self-efficacy, self-worth, and prosocial behaviors. Since active participation in prosocial behavior often has the effect of increasing self-efficacy and self-worth, this model strongly promotes an active prosocial mentoring alliance and, thereby, should increase levels of prosocial behaviors, self-efficacy, and self-worth.

John
an
St. Louis
District
I am
very
interested
in
this
proposal.
Who should
follow
up?
[Signature]