

'Indian fight needs community help'

Community involvement is the most serious missing ingredient in the Indian people's fight for a better education, according to Midland College's director of Indian studies.

"How many towns with a large Indian population have an Indian on their school board?" Keith Jewitt, a Cheyenne Sioux, asked about 50 people in the Nebraska Union Ballroom Tuesday.

"Mighty few," he answered? Jewitt, here during NU's Indian Culture Week activities, said Indian grade schools he is familiar with are taught by white people. "They come in the morning and leave at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. They

can teach on the reservation for 18 years and never know what's going on there."

He said the three areas in Nebraska with the highest concentration of Indians - Macy, Winnebago, and Niobrara - have no effective secondary educational support. As a result, he continued, the high school drop-out rate in those areas is 74 per cent.

Jewitt said Alliance has not graduated an Indian student in 30 years.

"Nebraska is a racist state," Jewitt said. "In Chadron they don't even let the Indian students form a club. In 1868, when that college was founded, the Ogalala Sioux had already been established for years."

But even in a racist state Jewitt said Indian people could accomplish a lot simply by coming together more over their problems.

He said at an Indian education conference just completed in Chadron only 3 Indian students were involved in the planning. "The planning agency didn't contact anybody from the Indian community at all," Jewitt said.

"No program can be successful unless it has the community involved in setting it up," Jewitt added.

But Jewitt said where Indians are getting more involved in their communities the changes are coming rapidly. "On the reservations in South

Dakota in the last few years we can see a dramatic change," he said. "Now Indians are starting to teach Indians in the Headstart program."

And Jewitt said Fremont's Midland College is helping out with a \$9,000 scholarship for Indian students. "It's the only college I know that is doing that with money from its own budget," he said.

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