

## TRIBAL ELDER PERFORMS CEDARING CEREMONY AT WALTHILL SCHOOL

August 25, 2003

For Immediate Release

WALTHILL, NE --- The children, staff, and teachers of Walthill Public Schools listened attentively as Valentine Parker, Vice Chair of the Omaha Tribe, addressed them prior to performing a cedar blessing ceremony last Thursday.

Parker, who has performed the cedar blessing of the school for several years now, spoke words of care, advice, and thankfulness.

“You are all my children,” he said. “That’s why I’m here this morning.”

Stressing the importance of education, he said that although teachers may appear to make nuisances of themselves, they have “the expertise, the knowledge ... that is much needed these days in order to survive in this world, to have a better life. So you listen to them and learn all you can.”

He further stated he hoped that Walthill Public School remain open for a long time, thanking superintendent Larry Frost, the teachers and support staff for their hard work and dedication.

After his address, Parker proceeded to bless the attending with cedar smoke.

Walthill has been undergoing a continuous school improvement process for the last few years. In the school district’s effort to address the cultural needs of the student community, which is over 90% Omaha Indian, it has made ceremonies such as annual cedar blessings and paying homage to the Omaha flag staff part of its program.

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