



# Community Information

A GLIMPSE INTO THE COMMUNITY



## WELCOME

You have made the exciting decision to spend a week serving with the people on Cheyenne River this summer. In response, we want to do all we can to prepare you for the beautiful community in which you will be immersed. That is why we have created this Community Information packet; to communicate information about the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation that will be significant as you serve within this community.

Understand that this packet reveals just a small glimpse of the complex culture that truly defines the people of this community. Allow this information to create awareness: an awareness that in the midst of these seemingly hopeless statistics, there are individuals and organizations that are relentless, as they continue to reveal the potential that lies within this country.

We are on this journey with you and commit to consistent investment in growing our knowledge and involvement in this community. We are grateful for your partnership with us, as well as the people of Cheyenne River this summer. God will work in huge ways through you as we come alongside this community. It is my goal to support you in any way I can as questions come up concerning South Dakota and the experience you will have this summer.

### Blessings

*Mollie Hooter*

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

**By the Numbers** | Specific statistics regarding the community.

**Background to the Numbers** | An explanation as to why some of these statistics exist.

**Beyond the Numbers** | A page dedicated to the potential of the community. These are words from community members themselves as to what is already taking place to defy these statistics.

**Things You Should Know** | Details to know before heading out this summer.

**Community Partnerships** | Individuals and organizations that we partner with in the community extending our impact far beyond one week.

**Long-term Involvement** | Ways for you to be involved in the community before you arrive and after you go home.

**Resources** | Additional information to dig deeper in your learning of this community.

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## ABOUT CHEYENNE RIVER

The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation is made up of 1,450,644 acres, just outside of Pierre, SD. The estimated population living on the reservation is about 9,000 but there are approximately 16,000 members enrolled in the tribe. You and your students will be staying in Eagle Butte, SD which is home to their Tribal Headquarters. The Reservation is considered a Sovereign Nation, independent from the U.S. government. Cheyenne River Indian Reservation is governed by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council, which is made up of 15 Tribal Council Representatives, a Tribal Chairman, a Tribal Vice-Chairman, a Tribal Secretary, an Assistant Tribal Secretary, a Tribal Treasurer, an Assistant Tribal Treasurer, and an Administrative Officer.

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## HISTORY

For generations, non-native people have been sharing Lakota history from their perspective. However, it is super powerful to hear Lakota history from them directly. The link below will take you to the official Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's website, where you can read more about their story: <https://www.cheyenneriversioux.com/history>

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 1 | Lakota people give a light handshake and don't often make eye contact. Many times this lack of eye contact can be viewed as disrespectful or disengaging, when in actuality, it is a sign of respect.
- 2 | In the Lakota Culture, giving gifts is a sign of great affection and respect. Locals may give you jewelry, food, blankets, and handmade objects. Receive any gift with gratitude and as a sign of respect. Turning down gifts (including food or something to drink) is not viewed in a positive light.
- 3 | Please don't wear bandanas on the Cheyenne River Reservation.
- 4 | Though it may be tempting to take before and after pictures of your work projects keep in mind that this can be very insensitive. Please only take pictures of each other or various action shots of the construction projects.
- 5 | There are four cardinal virtues among the Lakota: Honesty, Courage, Humility, and Generosity. Knowing these and acting on them can really show a common ground between youth and the Lakota people.
- 6 | There are several Christian Denominations represented on the Reservation such as, Baptist, Catholic, Calvary Chapel, United Church of Christ, Episcopal.
- 7 | The most common types of homes are trailers and government-supported housing. These are the types of homes you will be repairing this summer.
- 8 | Eagle Butte is a town on the Cheyenne River Reservation. It is the central economic, political, and educational hub and is unusual in that it has many businesses such as the Eagle Stop Gas Station and other restaurants. When extending out into smaller surrounding communities, isolation becomes much more prevalent. Transportation, job opportunities, and community gathering spaces become scarce.

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## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Although the construction work that we are doing is extremely significant, remember that the relationships we build in the community is equally, if not more important. Take time to get to know the community member that you will be working alongside. The hardest part may be beginning a conversation with somebody that you aren't familiar with. Some helpful starters are:

- 1 | First and foremost, your conversation will reflect how you view the person you are talking to. On a mission trip, it is easy to think of the person you are talking to as a project, but instead, it is important to view that person as a friend. They also, just like you, have good and bad days, family, best friends, hobbies, favorite movies and songs, and more! These are great things to ask your new friend about.
- 2 | Be sure to refrain from asking a pretty standard question in our culture: "What do you do for a living?" Many people in Cheyenne River are without a job and this question creates an initial separation between you and the community member.
- 3 | Ask if he/she has any advice for you. I like to comment on how we have so much to learn from those who have lived through more years. This will show a person that we value what they have to say.
- 4 | Approach relational ministry with two ears and one mouth. What I've found is that everyone wants to be heard. Lakota culture is a culture grounded in oral tradition. The Lakota people love to share stories of their history, family, what they have accomplished, and so much more.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We have close working relationships with various organizations that serve the Cheyenne River Community on a full time basis. We heavily rely on these organizations as a collaborative force to extend our impact beyond a weeklong project. Below describes each organization's involvement in the community on a year-round basis.

### **CHUG & KAREN / CALVARY CHAPEL / CHRISTIANS CLOSET**

Chug and Karen Garreau are some of our closest friends and partners on Cheyenne River. They pastor Calvary Chapel Church and generously host community events. Together, they run a ministry called Christians Closet, which serves children in the community by providing brand-new clothes, baby items, and shoes. This ministry is dedicated in honor of their late granddaughter, Christian. They are an incredible force for the Kingdom of God, and we are deeply grateful for their friendship.

### **BLACK HORSE RANCH**

Also referred to in Lakota as Šungsapa Othi, Black Horse Ranch is run by Father Kurt Huber and Mother Ellen Huber. Black Horse Ranch hosts several programs and camps that introduce participants to the Lakota Horse culture through equine therapy techniques used to promote healing and personal growth. Together Next Step helps run 4 weeks of Horse and Pony Camp in the summer with an average of 70 kids per day!

### **THE MUSTARD SEED**

The Mustard Seed shelters people that are living in a state of homeless in tiny houses, with a Main House where people may do laundry, cook, eat and socialize. They also provide emergency food to low income households, delivering to those without transportation.

### **CRST PROPERTY AND SUPPLY**

CRST Property & Supply is a program that is funded and run by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. They provide general maintenance and labor for Tribal members, property and programs.

### **CHEYENNE RIVER YOUTH PROJECT**

Established in 1988 in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, the nonprofit Cheyenne River Youth Project is an essential community development organization on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. We are from Cheyenne River for Cheyenne River — an authentic grassroots initiative designed to meet the specific needs of our community through innovative youth programming, vital family services, and educational public events and activities.

## LONG-TERM INVOLVMENT

Below are a few practical ways that you and your group can be involved on a year round basis in the community, extending your service much beyond your one-week trip. Please contact your Area Director if you are interested in becoming involved in any way.

### **CREATE A PRAYER TEAM**

No doubt you saw and experienced a multitude of things that can use the power of prayer during your time this summer. Please consider creating a prayer team to pray at specific time each day for specific prayer items within this community. The power of prayer is more than we can ever imagine.

### **SUPPORT PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS**

Next Step partners with various organizations that serve this city on a year round basis. See how you can also help support these organizations and their efforts by visiting their website.

### **BECOME A PEN PAL**

We find that many of our residents enjoy letters. Stay connected with the resident you work alongside. Each week, have a different student from your group write a letter and send it to the family or individual you worked with. Maybe they will write back, but at the very least you will bring a smile to their face, as they know they are still remembered and loved.

### **ASSIST A SPONSOR FAMILY**

It's a goal of ours to have a family from our host church sponsor each resident that we work with during the summer. After a project is completed, the sponsor family will consistently follow up with the resident and maintain an ongoing relationship. Putting together a care package, sending games or other donations, can be given to the sponsor family to share with the resident as they go to visit the individual or family.

### **MAKE A ONE-TIME GIFT TO THE NEXT STEP FOUNDATION**

The Next Step Foundation (NSF) is a 501c3 organization that exists to support our communities on a year-round basis. You may make a donation to NSF specifically earmarked for the community to go towards various community programs and projects.

### **COME BACK AND VISIT**

We encourage you to build and grow the relationships that you establish during your time this summer. Residents experience great joy in seeing groups come back to visit.