



Community Information

A GLIMPSE INTO CHEYENNE RIVER, SOUTH DAKOTA



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

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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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.

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.cheyenneriversiouxtribe.org/history>

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 1 | Native American's 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 | Christian denominations represented on the Reservation: Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, the Church of Latter-Day Saints, and Seven Day Adventist.
- 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.

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 Pine Ridge 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. Pine Ridge 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.

CHRISTIAN'S CLOSET

Christian's Closet is a ministry run by Chug and Karen Garreau. This ministry serves children in the foster care system on the reservation, in honor of their late granddaughter, Christian. They collect new items so that kids in foster care are able to come "shop" in Christian's Closet, selecting needed items like shoes, coats and clothes. Chug and Karen are from Cheyenne River and lead Calvary Chapel Fellowship in Dupree, SD. They are an amazing force for the Kingdom of God and we are so 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 Exercises used to promote healing and personal growth.

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.

LONG-TERM INVOLVMENT

Below are five 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 in Pine Ridge. Please consider creating a prayer team to pray at specific time each day for specific prayer items on the Reservation. This prayer will powerfully transform Pine Ridge, as hope and freedom will continue to bring light to this community.

FINANCIALLY SUPPORT A LOCAL MINISTRY

There are a wide varieties of ministries, churches, organizations, and schools on the reservation in need of financial support for various programs, events, etc. Please consider giving to one of the organizations we partner with as a way of supporting and furthering their ministry on a year round basis.

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 ear-marked for Pine Ridge to go toward various community programs and projects.