

Pine Ridge Retreat Center

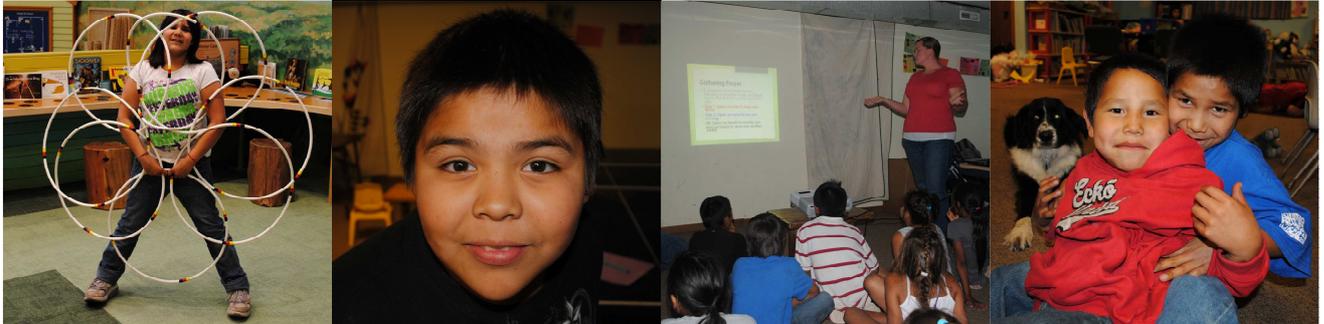


krn.rpp@gmail.com

pineridge.center@gmail.com

November/December 2012 Newsletter

(605) 867-5262



As the Days Get Colder...

Retreat season has slowed down a bit for us here at the PRRC during November and December, but life here hasn't slowed down at all! November and December has brought holiday celebrations, birthday parties, opportunities to travel and lots of fun to be had by all!

During November, we were happy to host the folks from the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine and the Mercy School of Nursing. Surrounded by these healing hands, our conversations about medicine and ministry were invaluable. In December, our only visitors were Charles and Helen Stormo, who have committed to supporting the people of Pine Ridge with donations of clothing, quilts and more.

Even without a lot of visitors, the center was bustling with the excitement for Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations! It was a wonderful two months here at the PRRC as we celebrated the birth of Christ with our friends at St. John's Episcopal Church, Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, Makasan Presbyterian Church and the residents of Cohen Home. We look forward to what the spring holds for the community here!

Birthdays for EVERYONE!

Over the last few years, the staff at the PRRC have been invited to help celebrate the birthdays of the young people who are living at the dorms in Pine Ridge for schooling.

On November 13th, we celebrated the August, September and October birthdays, with lots of cake and icecream! The young people seemed to have a blast, especially when the younger group had a karaoke session and a dance-off between the boys and the girls.

There's nothing like watching elementary-aged kids dancing to the hit dance song Gangnam Style!



Focus on: Excelsior Covenant Church

Once again, we were blessed to host the ECC at the PRRC. This faith community has had a relationship with the Reservation for many years, so we asked Steve Carley to share with us his thoughts about the history of ECC coming to Pine Ridge.



Excelsior Covenant Church (ECC) in Excelsior, Minnesota began visiting the Pine Ridge Reservation with a weeklong mission trip in 1998. Each summer since then our intergenerational teams of 20-25 have returned to continue the activities of home repair, deck & wheel chair ramp construction, tutoring in summer school classrooms, elder home visitation, neighborhood children's programs, and serving meals at White Clay. In addition to the summer trips, we have also become involved at two other times of the year – a fall retreat for Clergy and church leaders and a spring retreat for women.

We first became acquainted with the Pine Ridge Retreat Center in 2003. One of our team members, Pastor Carleton Peterson, desired to connect with local clergy, and the very first door he knocked on was opened by Pastor Larry Peterson. They soon discovered that both had grown up in the same small Minnesota farming town, and had known one another as children. Now adults and both in ministry, their friendship quickly grew

and together they offered the first annual weekend Clergy Retreat in October 2004. The purpose of this retreat is threefold: to express appreciation for the important church work being done on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, deepen relationships with God and each other, and encourage ongoing fellowship in learning and service. This ecumenical gathering is a free gift from the ECC community to local clergy and church leaders. It provides a forum for dialogue, prayer, Bible study and fellowship around a banquet table. After Carleton lost his battle with cancer in 2007, ECC determined it would continue the good work he had begun. Since then the retreat has taken place each year, and all but one of these has been held at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center. Our gracious hosts there are Pastor Karen Rupp and the helpful interns working alongside her. Their knowledge of native culture and established relationships with local church leaders provide a valuable resource for effective ministry.

In November 2012 the 9th Clergy Retreat was held. The two-day format included a time of informal fellowship, directed prayer, and dessert on Friday evening. Saturday morning began with a continental breakfast followed by a time for quiet meditation and sharing. We then pursued a study of James' brief five-chapter epistle and our theme:

“Persevering under trial ... standing up to the test”. Our study of James' practical admonitions offered a useful platform for discussion of obstacles facing both individuals and the church. There were shared stories of trial, faith, and blessing all of which affirmed the promise that “... greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” (1.Jn.4.4)

The ten-hour drive home provided ample time to reflect on the weekend. We

are constantly amazed that a group of outsiders could be so welcomed on the reservation and so readily accepted as a part of Christ's multicultural church. Our call to serve in this way is taken with great humility. Each of us from ECC who attend these retreats feels deeply honored and richly blessed to know devoted followers of Christ who bring honor and glory to His name at Pine Ridge. As we spend time together for the sake of the kingdom we strengthen our bond of unity in Jesus name.

Visiting Pine Ridge:

A Medical Student's Perspective

PRRC hosted a group of medical students in October and we're thankful for this reflection from Ben Jensen

I recently had the pleasure to visit Pine Ridge with eleven of my classmates. We are all part of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine class of 2014. Our visit was part of a cultural week to broaden our horizons and help us develop an understanding of different cultures, particularly the Native American culture.

We arrived on a Tuesday evening, late in October. Though most of us were born and raised in South Dakota, none of us had ever been to Pine Ridge. Our knowledge was essentially limited to what we hear in the hospital and the stories we've heard in the local and national media. Heading west from Sioux Falls, we were not sure what to expect.

When we first got to town, everyone was undeniably anxious as to what our experience would be like. By the time we met Pastor Karen at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center most of our anxiety had abated with her kind and gracious welcome. For any concerns that remained, those were fully abated with

locally prepared burritos and apple turnovers.

Our itinerary for the next few days involved several visits to local sites and talks with local elders and community leaders. All of these experiences were valuable in their own way, but I will share two particularly interesting and moving experiences.

On our first night, we were joined by a local teacher and musician, Will. He played his guitar and sang for us with his daughter and grandson. Their music revealed many of the struggles people face growing up on the reservation while integrating Lakota cultural themes. His music was great, but for me it was his discussion afterwards that was particularly interesting. He spoke of the need for change, perhaps by instilling traditional Lakota traditions in the youth. His methods are grassroots, working with students at the local high school. I think I can speak for our entire group in wishing him success and the strength to continue with his hard work.

One of the sites we visited was Wounded Knee. No doubt many of you have visited this site and have taken your own message from your experience there. We had a short presentation to tell us about the history of the site, but most of our time was spent quietly reflecting on our own. For me, I was struck by the history of the site and how that continues to impact the link between Lakota people and white people. I wonder if more people in South Dakota knew the history of the Lakota people, could that improve today's so often strained relationship.

While it is impossible to ignore some of the issues present on Pine Ridge, I can confidently say many of us left with hope for the future. With the work of people like Will, Pastor Karen, Meredith and so many others like them, there is an

opportunity for Pine Ridge to grow as an economy and as a community.

Brookings or Bust!

During the weekend of November 30th to December 2nd, Meredith, the intern, accompanied seven of the Pine Ridge young people to visit the South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota.

Upon invitation by Pastor Bob Chell, the campus pastor at SDSU, the PRRC brings a few teens to visit the university each year. Pastor Bob, along with his campus peer ministers, were awesome hosts!

The weekend was filled with swimming at the hotel, sharing in a meal with members of the Native Studies Department, playing at the childrens' museum, swimming in the hotel, rock-climbing, swimming at the hotel, attending the SDSU mens' basketball game, swimming at the hotel and worshipping with the campus ministry group. The young people *really* enjoyed swimming at the hotel, but were excited about the entire weekend. As we were driving out of town, several of them asked if they could stay in Brookings forever.

The silence of seven napping teenagers about twenty minutes outside of Brookings showed that the trip had been well-worth the busy days!



“Christmas, children, is not a date. It is a state of mind.” –Mary Ellen Chase

Just as the quote suggests, Christmas at Pine Ridge was not limited to one day, but months full of planning from people all over the United States. The children and families were overjoyed at the gifts given from sponsors, donors and supporters of the PRRC. We estimate that approximately 200 children received gifts out of the center and 65 families received gift cards to the local grocery store and restaurants, thanks to the generosity of all of YOU!

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank each and every one of you for supporting the ministry of this center. The work of God’s people has been awesome to witness in this holiday season, but it’s the spirit of your hearts throughout the year that makes it all possible.

THANK YOU!



Christmas program at Wolf Creek Elementary



Writing Christmas cards for people we love!

Holiday festivities!



250 treat bags with candy, peanuts and fruit



Lots and lots and lots of gifts for children!

Wish List/List of Needs

Thank you for all that you and your groups do to contribute to our ministry and grow relationships in the community. Be in touch if you'd like more information on supporting the ministry here!

The Mission of the Pine Ridge Retreat Center is to strengthen the congregational ministry of our ecumenical partners and to offer cross-cultural retreats for the purpose of building respect of, and understanding for, all of God's people.

Pine Ridge Retreat Center is a joint ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is God who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms the covenant, which the Lord your God swore to your ancestors, as it is today." Deuteronomy 8:17-18

In recognition of what God has provided for you, would you consider making a donation to the Pine Ridge Retreat Center? Attach this slip to your check or money order to "Pine Ridge Retreat Center" and send it to PO Box 862, Pine Ridge, SD 57770.

Name: _____ Donation amount: _____

Address: _____

In honor/memory of (circle one): _____

We thank you for your support of the ministry that happens every day at the center. As a ministry based solely on donations, we appreciate your gift to assist us to work with the community. Blessings on you!