



Pine Ridge Retreat Center



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March/April 2013 Newsletter

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April Showers Bring...Snow Plows.

The running conversation through most of April and even March around Pine Ridge was regarding how much moisture we need for the ground. While we welcome the moisture here, we also found ourselves under a lot of snow in April! One storm in mid-April brought 26 inches of snow, followed by six inches the next week and twelve inches the week after that. Despite all of this frozen moisture, life has begun to start blooming around the Pine Ridge Retreat Center.

March meant that we began to see some of the spring breakers from college heading our way. We hosted Carleton College from Northfield, Minnesota for their first trip to the Reservation! We hosted a group of nurses from Mercy College who got to experience the joy of digging out from the 26 inches of snow. We had another group of nurses come to us from Augsburg College. At the end of the month, we had a group from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cresco, Iowa and the "Sewing Ladies" of St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Holy Week and Easter brought lots of adventures, including an Easter egg hunt with the young people of the Sanctuary program. After decorating their own

baskets, the kids headed out to find brightly colored eggs. Everybody got a bit of chocolate and sugar before we sent them home to their families. ☺

Pastor Karen and Intern Meredith celebrated the services of Holy Week and Easter with several of our partner churches, including St. John Episcopal, Makasan Presbyterian, an ecumenical Good Friday walk with the 4-Denominational Prayer group and a joint-ELCA community Easter Vigil in Rapid City.

With the anticipation of the Taize event at Red Shirt Table in May, the Retreat Center has played its part in supporting the housing needs and participating in the planning meetings when possible. We hope to see some of you back here for this awesome event!

With the warmer weather come lots of summer visitors. We look forward to hosting those of you who are coming back soon. Until then, toksa ake! (See you again!)



Focus on: Carleton College

During Holy Week, we hosted a group of students from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. This was Carleton's first visit to Pine Ridge and we hope that they come back again! Here is a reflection from Rafadi Hakim, Class of 2013.

As an Indonesian student cooped up in a Minnesotan college town without a driver's license, I did not think that I would spend time in scenic, rural South Dakota. For me, living for three years with a group of mostly American city-dwellers has already been a cultural experience, but I never expected what was about to come. Unlike the initial awkwardness that I always encounter while introducing myself to new people, almost everyone I met in Pine Ridge are prolific storytellers of their own lives, the history of their people, and the dreams they have for their children and grandchildren. Between the modest amounts of repairing and construction work that I did, I learned the most about people's life histories.

On the very first day, after putting up a wooden sign for an Episcopal church, I heard the story of a young man who went home to the reservation after his father had to go to prison in Denver. In the evening, a woman who supports her niece solely through her craft told us how she fought alcoholism and now diabetes. On the next day, a former teacher explained to me how the long waiting list on the Housing Authority's wall means that homes are almost always overcrowded. On one of the most difficult visits I've ever made to a historical state, the story of Wounded Knee reminded me again that it is still difficult to go beyond the boundaries of faith, skin color, and ancestral rivalries.

Living on a Lakota reservation, however, is not only about lost hope.

Many of my fellow Carleton classmates remembered playing with the persistently energetic twenty-odd children who came to the Retreat Center every day. I was especially happy when I could make simple sandwiches with cheese and bologna, and give them to anybody who knocked on our door, perhaps followed shortly after by looking at the colorful beadwork and jewelry that someone else was showing to a group of my friends.

Pine Ridge, however, keeps even more beautiful stories underneath the cover of its endless prairies. There are those who try to speak the language and reclaim it as a heritage. There are those who provide food and shelter to children regardless of their family's faith and fortune. There are those who teach teenagers how to care for their bodies and to value their own young lives. Above all, the people I met were so compassionate to each other and even to us, although we came from such a privileged world of advanced degrees and study abroad programs.

My college told me that service-learning projects are as much about learning as trying to contribute. I acknowledge this philosophical lesson. But, at the very least, now I know that the next time someone knocks on my door, I will happily listen to their stories and share whatever I have.





Image taken from the LFCU website

Credit Union Grand Opening

This article was written by Rev. Larry Peterson, the former director of the Pine Ridge Retreat Center.

The dream of having a financial institution located on the Pine Ridge Reservation has become a reality! The Lakota Federal Credit Union opened its doors for business in November of 2012. On Friday, May 3, 2013, this huge financial step forward for the Lakota people will be celebrated with a Grand Opening Celebration beginning at 11:00 AM. The key leadership for this economic venture came from the Lakota People themselves; particularly Tawney Brunsch, Director of Lakota Fund and Board Chairperson for the new credit union. A number of people, churches, and organizations receiving this newsletter made financial contributions which helped greatly in the bringing of this dream to reality. Your financial support helped pay for much of the remodeling and furnishing of the credit union space located in the new Lakota Fund building in Kyle.

During the years that I was connected with the Pine Ridge Retreat Center people often times made the comment, "I wish there was something more that we could do that would help in the area of economic development". Often times the conversation included comments about

how nice it would be if there was a credit union located on the reservation where we could make deposits and be a member. Well that day has come!

I am now retired and living in Loveland, CO. but my financial needs are served in part by the Lakota Federal Credit Union. You as an individual or as a church, school, or other organization could do the same. Because the Lakota Federal Credit Union is a member of the NCUA (National Credit Unions of America) accounts are insured as in any credit union located any where in the USA. The Membership Requirement reads, "Lakota Federal Credit Union membership is open to individuals who live, work, worship, volunteer, or attend school on the Pine Ridge Reservation". If you have ever worshiped or volunteered on the reservation you can be a member. For more information check out the web site at <www.lakotafcu.org>, or give them a call at [\(605\) 455-1515](tel:6054551515).

Even better would be for you to be sure and stop by the Lakota Federal Credit Union during your next visit to the Pine Ridge Retreat Center. Seeing this beautiful new facility is exciting; opening an account is rewarding. Being a member of the Lakota Federal Credit Union helps you feel day in and day out that you are doing something important towards helping with the economic development of the Lakota people living and working on the Pine Ridge Reservation.



Wish List/List of Needs

We again thank all of the awesome donations of time, talents and money to the ministry that happens here at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center. It is truly moving to get telephone calls and emails asking "How can I support you?" and "I met so-and-so while I was there. Could you give me their contact information?" Our young people often ask if a former retreat group visitor will be back soon, even if the visit was months ago. THANK YOU!

The following list is of things we would like to add/replace:

- *Pool cues
- *A new pool table
- *A new bumper pool table
- *A new set of pool and bumper pool balls
- *12 twin mattresses
- *4-6 Leap Frog learning pads
- *12 Evangelical Lutheran Book of Worship (ELW) hymnals

Other Retreat Center/Community Needs:

- *Gift certificates for Shell or Sinclair
- *Monetary donations to support the staff and ministry here
- *Funds to produce Retreat Center t-shirts
- *Donations for community assistance (to help out with food and energy needs)
- *Play equipment for the young people

If you or your group would like to contribute to meeting any of our wish list/needed items, please contact Reverend Karen by email or phone. We thank you for all your prayers and support for our ministry here! May God continue to bless and keep you!

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!

