

PINE RIDGE/LAKOTA YOUTHSTAY TEAM REPORT

Since 2012, members of Sanctuary have volunteered for a week each summer on the Pine Ridge reservation in SD and 2018 was no exception. A small group of 4 went out to Pine Ridge in July, 2018. In the summer of 2019, a group of nine Sanctuary members, LYS host families, and friends will be visiting the reservation. The group includes Ose's grandson Liam Schwab and two other teenagers. A senior trip planned for September 2020 and openings are available for any adult who would like to have this amazing opportunity. ReMember and Sanctuary have developed a strong connection through the ongoing commitment of Sanctuary volunteers each summer.

The second year of the Youthstay program in 2018 was a huge success, with 11 boys and girls from the reservation in Medford for a week of cultural exchange, building friendships and exploration/discovery of themselves and the world around them through engagement in shared activities of interest. The youth were hosted by families from Medford, Arlington and Malden. The program was a wonderful success thanks to involvement of so many supporters, volunteers, and donors. The highlight of the 2018 program was Tipi Day at Playstead Park. The Medford Community had the opportunity to learn more about Lakota culture. The program would not be where it is today without Christy's commitment to the youth and her strong belief that the mission of the program can change lives. .

The Youthstay program was honored by the UCC with the Haystack award for outstanding service. We wish to thank Rev. Wendy for nominating LYS for this prestigious award. Our 2019 program is planned and the youth will be arriving in July. Through these ministries, we are provided with opportunities to both express our faith and to learn from the Lakota people. We are grateful for the involvement of church members and community members

On the revenue side, the LYS team was very successful with fundraising efforts in 2018 primarily through an online silent auction and individual donations. The combination of grant monies and successful fundraising allowed the program to blossom in 2018 with a solid financial foundation in its third year with funds carried over to 2019. A number of fundraising events are planned in 2019 and early 2020.

The program has been an inspiration and source of hope for the Lakota youth and their families on Pine Ridge and an educational and bonding experience for the City of Medford, church communities and host families. We look forward to a promising future as we explore avenues for relationships and support. We are excited about the continuing visits of our church members and friends to the reservations to practice our faith and learn. We hope that the future for the Pine Ridge Ministry will be a bright and shining beacon of hope and love.