Building Relationships
one Family at a time

Pine Ridge Reservation

The Pine Ridge Reservation spans over 2.8 million beautiful acres and is the second-largest Native American Indian Reservation, yet contains one of the poorest counties in the United States. Conditions exist here that should not exist in the middle of the wealthiest country on earth. Our volunteers are shocked to see the harsh, third-world living conditions on the Reservation. The population has the second-lowest life expectancy in the Western Hemisphere coupled with staggering high rates of diabetes, alcoholism, and suicide.

On the Rez, extended families and friends often share one home. Such overcrowding leads to a shortage of beds and mattresses, leaving children to share beds and sleep on the floor. Many homes lack running water, functional bathrooms, or kitchens.

Re-Member exists because of contributions from people who care - contributions of money, contributions of gift cards to purchase building materials, contributions of tools (see our wish list on the website), and contributions of time and energy!

How You Can Get Connected
Visit Our Website: Learn more about us at www.re-member.org and sign up for our e-mail communications! We also have a Facebook page and a blog to keep you up to date on Re-Member current events!

Visit The Rez: Re-Member’s work is never finished, and the best way to understand what we do is to experience it for yourself! Visit our website to book your trip. Please sign up as early as possible, as the weeks fill up fast!

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About Re-Member

Founded in 1998, Re-Member is an independent, registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

Re-Member means to “put back that which is broken; to re-member.” Conditions on Pine Ridge represent a part of our world that is broken, a part that we seek to put back together.

We believe that in addition to assisting the people of Pine Ridge with material goods, the strongest way to promote positive exchange in one of the poorest areas of the United States is to build relationships. Through relationship building, our volunteers become advocates to stand in solidarity with the Oglala Lakota people.

Guided by the aspirations of the Oglala Lakota communities we serve, Re-Member seeks to improve the quality of Reservation life through relationships, shared resources, and volunteer services.

Re-Member mission statement

From March through October each year, Re-Member welcomes more than 1,200 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to the Pine Ridge Reservation for week-long working vacations, with a strong emphasis on cultural immersion.

Working with our staff, volunteers complete various projects across the Reservation, while learning about the culture and history of the Lakota people.

What we do

Cultural Immersion: When not on a worksite, our volunteers are immersed in Lakota culture through two days of tours and daily discussion, music, and Lakota speakers that teach history and spirituality. Volunteers also have opportunities to interact with the Lakota at various other times throughout the week—including attending a Pow Wow (if possible).

Work Projects: Having adequate shelter is a necessity of life. Unfortunately, this is not the reality for many on the Reservation. Our volunteers and staff work together on various construction projects for three days per week. To meet the varied and essential needs of the Oglala Lakota people, our work projects encompass:

- Building and delivering bunk beds for children—many children have never slept on a bed with a mattress of their own. Each step of the process—from constructing the wood frame to placing the pillow—is more than just part of “building a bed.” Our volunteers are helping to rebuild a relationship and providing hope for future generations.

- Installing outhouses—some regions of Pine Ridge are lacking the basic infrastructure to provide fresh water and sewer for homes. We construct and install outhouses to provide a more functional living environment.

- Building wheelchair ramps for elders—there are many Lakota in wheelchairs due to diabetes and other health issues. We build and install wheelchair ramps so they can enter and exit their home safely.

- Helping with community gardens—there is only one grocery store on the Reservation. Fresh fruits and vegetables are scarce and unaffordable. We help facilitate various community gardens across the Reservation to help provide fresh fruits and vegetables to our Lakota neighbors.

--- 2014 By The Numbers: ---

- 337 Families Served
- 170 Bunk Beds
- 41 Decks/Steps
- 38 Skirting Jobs
- 310 Firewood Deliveries
- 37 Outhouses
- 27 Wheelchair Ramps

Securing and delivering firewood during the winter months. When our volunteer season ends, our staff gather, cut, split, and deliver firewood to those in need of heating fuel during the harsh winter months.

Repairing homes, including decks, steps, and trailer skirting. Trailer skirting is a cost-effective way to help weatherproof the underside of trailer homes that are so common on the Reservation. Temperatures here can range from a record low of -31°F to a record high of 111°F.