

Guilford College • Lilly Grant Request Crow Reservation Service Trip Proposal

Description of Trip

Fifteen Bonner Scholars and two staff members will work on the Crow Reservation in Garryowen, Montana, May 10-20, 2004. This will be our third May service trip on the reservation. We will be working with two small non-profits who are in partnership. The Kelly Foundation in Arlington, Virginia, works with Native American communities to promote self-esteem, resourcefulness and initiative in youth through education, volunteerism and entrepreneurship. The Center Pole Foundation was started on the Crow Reservation by Crow people to address unmet community needs.

The Center Pole Foundation will be working with several service groups over the summer to continue work on their Entrepreneurship Education Center, construct an outdoor amphitheater for cultural performances, and assist in their food bank and clothing thrift store. We will be the first group in their summer schedule. We will work at a range of tasks to help them prepare for the projects that they hope to complete over the summer and get ready for the other groups.

Justification

We will work with local people on the reservation to accomplish projects that they themselves have decided are important to the people living on the Crow Reservation. However, the trip is part of a larger strategy to help us continue to work on the growing relationship between the Crow people and Guilford College. There are several reasons why this relationship is important to us. During the past three years, we have had five Crow students attend Guilford. Two of those students graduated last year, two dropped out, and one is a rising junior who will be accompanying our group this year. Even though Guilford has a struggling and inadequate Native American Program, our success rate (measured by graduation) is well above the national norm. Imagine the difference it could make to Native American students who struggle to adjust to life at Guilford to have a group of Guilford students who have at least some understanding and appreciation for their culture and community issues.

Our May trips the past two years have been very successful, both in educating Guilford students about life on the Crow reservation, as well as in strengthening the college's relationship with the Crow community. Last year, Guilford launched a pilot Crow Studies Semester in the fall of 2003. Six students (two QLSPers) lived with a Crow family on the reservation, took Crow Studies courses at the tribal community college, and completed an internship. Currently, Guilford College has zero Native American faculty or staff! As we work to become an anti-racist multi-cultural community, the Native American voice is sadly missed. Building a bridge between the Crow Reservation and Guilford College will help us better serve our Native American students, but it will also give Guilford students access to authentic Native American voice.

Our Crow Bonner, Heidi Macdonald, will work with us before the trip to orient us. We are also planning to have an orientation meeting coincide with a visit in March from

Peggy White, our host and the founder of the Center Pole Foundation, who is bringing a group of prospective Crow students to campus. A presentation about last year's trip and Indian taco dinner is planned at New Garden Friends Meeting on March 20th to educate participants about Crow culture and help raise money for this year's trip, as well as the Center Pole Foundation. This event will be open to the entire Guilford community, as well as members of New Garden Friends Meeting. During the trip we will spend some time each day learning about Crow culture through field trips, speakers and cultural experiences and reflecting on what we are learning.

Lilly Grant Criteria

Discernment: Native Americans respect the natural world as a sacred living, breathing entity that must be valued and honored in any decision or action. In our mainstream cultural decision making process, we focus primarily on the potential impact on the human community. Students have the chance to expand their ability to discern by being exposed to people who regularly practice listening to the earth and its non-human creatures as an expression of the divine.

Vocation: Working with native peoples and glimpsing their understanding of the nature of reality shakes up our assumptions about what is important. Looking at our lives through a different lens can provide a shift in thinking that will help us see in a new way what our gifts and callings might be. Peggy White, our host, is a healer and community leader who sets an inspiring example for our students, many of whom are interested in community outreach and social change work as future career paths.

Faith/Spirituality: The Crow are a deeply spiritual people. They believe in religious freedom and so a range of spiritual practices are followed including Catholic, Mormon, Protestant and the Native American Church. No matter with which religious practice the Crow identify, we experience on the reservation a deep spirituality practiced in daily life that is thrilling and enriching. Learning from our Crow friends again this year will give Guilford students a new way to imagine building a spiritual practice in their own lives.

Enhancement of Quaker tradition: Quakers have had a long tradition of concern for Native American peoples. Friends have consistently held that Native peoples should be treated fairly and honorably. However, a look at the historic record will show that Quakers, too, have contributed to the crimes committed against Native Americans. We will join a long tradition of trying to build a mutual relationship with Native American peoples based on respect. The material simplicity of traditional Native American lifestyles resonates deeply with Friends who have been moved by the call for Simplicity. Experiencing reservation life will help Guilford students think about our own materialistic, consumption-oriented society, and put us in touch with Friends' work on Native American issues. The growing relationship between Guilford and the Crow Reservation also includes the congregation of New Garden Friends, who have become very involved over the years in supporting the work of the Center Pole Foundation.

Community Building: We currently have 30 students and three staff members who have spent at least ten days on the Crow Reservation and six students who have lived there for a semester. This continues to improve our ability to be a welcoming community to Native American students. In addition, we have many lessons to learn about building community from our Crow hosts, who are able to think collectively in a way that we can only imagine. The trip also serves to really bond our first-year Bonners together, and expand their ideas about what community is. This is extremely important, as Bonner Scholars serve as leaders and participants in Guilford's community outreach efforts here in Greensboro. We find that students who feel truly connected to the Bonner program are more successful and effective in their service to the wider community.

Reflection: Indian time is real! The Crow approach time as if there is a lot of it and the most important thing in a day is not to rush around accomplishing things. Reflection is built into daily practice of the Crow people so it will be a natural part of our day as we slow down to a pace that will allow us to think deep thoughts and respond to our deeper selves. Reflection is also built into the expectation for trip participants. We will begin the reflection process in orientation. Bonners will be asked to consider all of their assumptions about life and culture on the Crow Reservation through a group activity and later journal writing. All students will keep individual journals and we will have a daily meeting for reflection throughout the trip. A group journal will also be kept this year to serve as a means of thoughtful communication among group members during the trip, and to remain as a record of our trip for future participants.

Breadth: This short trip in May is an important part of our efforts to build a bridge between the Crow Reservation and Guilford College. Each experience there will inform us about how to do this better. We want to build a relationship based on trust and respect that will allow us to welcome Native American students into our midst as well as learn from them with open hearts by taking the time to learn their history and culture. Building such a relationship is no small task. The U.S. government has never kept a single treaty among the many signed with Indian Nations. Can we begin to heal some of the grave wounds between us by working to develop a right and just relationship? Over time, as we learn more, and the bridge between us is strengthened, our growing relationship with the Crow community will touch the entire Guilford community.

Endurance: This service trip is a small piece of our larger effort to build a bridge that will give our students access to the Native American voice so strikingly absent from Guilford College, serve Native American students better, and help us learn to be the spiritual community for which we long.

Cost for each Bonner Scholar includes:

Plane fare:	\$400
Room and Board	250
Local transportation	75
Speakers, field trips, and cultural events	100

Total: \$825

We estimate the trip will cost approximately \$14,850. So far we have raised the following:

Bonner Foundation Service Trip Fund	\$3,250
Bonner Community Fund (controlled by Guilford Bonner Scholars)	1,500
Service Coordinating Council	1,500
Community Senate	3,000
Student fundraising efforts (so far)	<u>600</u>
Total raised	\$ 9,850
Still needed	5,000

Students are currently working in committees to organize fund raising events. We held a large bake sale in February, and are currently selling carwash tickets through the Autobell Charity program, which allows us to keep half of the ticket price. We hope that our dinner planned for March will help us raise additional funds. We are also planning to submit a funding proposal to Community Senate, and may hold a benefit bike ride. If students do not raise all of the money needed, they plan to borrow the funds from their parents and pay them back with wages from their summer jobs. Since Bonner Scholars are among the highest financial need students, it is our hope that we can raise the entire amount so that Bonner Scholars may use their summer income to raise the funds they need to return to Guilford in the fall. Fundraising projects so far have netted \$600, leaving us \$4,325 yet to raise. We are grateful for the assistance given to us last year by the Lilly Grant, and we would greatly appreciate assistance again. Our years of past experience has helped us to realize how important this growing relationship can be to Guilford and to the opportunity for education for our students, and we are eager to continue this work.

Thank you for considering this request!

Claire Dixon
Bonner Scholars Coordinator