



Y7FIRES INITIATIVE

2024

Y SEVEN COUNCIL FIRES INITIATIVE

Leadership Development Experience

**Work alongside our community on the
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation.
See the Y mission in action.**

**siouxymca.org/initiative
sky@siouxymca.org**





Y7FIRES INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE - Leadership Development Experience

- ☀️ Are you passionate about making a positive impact on young lives?
- 🌍 Do you have a desire to explore new cultures and perspectives?
- 🤝 Are you ready to be part of a program that brings communities together?

Look no further! The Y Fires Initiative is calling upon dedicated individuals like you to embark on an incredible journey. Our mission is clear: to develop YMCA professionals and serve young people on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

🌐 **Global Perspective:** This Initiative is an opportunity to broaden your horizons and experience the world from a new angle.

👥 **Inclusive Community:** We welcome individuals from all backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life. Diversity is our strength.

🌱 **Personal Growth:** This program isn't just about giving back; it's also about personal development and self-discovery.

☀️ **Life-Changing Experience:** Join us for a transformative adventure that will leave you with memories, skills, and a sense of purpose that will last a lifetime.



BUILDING A LASTING IMPACT

This 8 month experience will develop leaders to be equipped with the best practices for trauma care, Native Appropriation restoration, and mitigating poverty mindset.

Initiative participants arrive in groups of 3 or 4, completing programming that overlaps with the next team by a couple of days. Overall, service to these communities spans 12 weeks of the summer for youth ages 3 and older. Thanks to this program, more than 5,000 youth have connected to positive adult role models since the Initiative began.

Participants develop a strong understanding of and commitment to the YMCA mission, bring skills and leadership development competencies back to their home branch, and make a huge impact on the lives that are touched. In addition to the benefits to the Initiative participants, the Y Seven Fires also benefits immensely. With a vast service area of 4,400 miles and 18 communities stretched across those miles, coupled with a limited amount of resources with which to deliver our programs, we rely on our partnerships for support.

Together, we can overcome the stark disparities that face one of the poorest areas in the entire United States.



Y7FIRES INITIATIVE

The Initiative Experience

Month 1 Welcome - Virtual

- Meet your team of 3 or 4

Month 2 Regional Training

- Day 1: Cultural Lens
- Day 2: On-boarding

Month 3 Virtual Training - History and Culture

- Land Acknowledgement
 - Why they are important and what to do next
- Cultural Appropriation
 - The history of appropriation being masked as appreciation
- American Indian Movement (AIM)
- Seven Generations

Month 4 Virtual Training

- Trauma and how it lives with you

Month 5 Virtual Training - Capstone Projects

- What is it and how do you do it?

Month 6 In-person Experience/Virtual

- Virtual - Indigenous People's Day
 - What this means for your local community?
 - How to celebrate?
 - Why it shouldn't be Columbus Day?

Month 7 In-person experience/Virtual

- Virtual - how to take this back to your community
- Discussion on Inappropriation
- Resources and how to use them

Month 8 Regional Debriefs

- Dimensions of Diversity
- Once the capstone project is complete the participant will receive YUSAs Global Leader Certification

Continued action

- Learning and brainstorming ways to advocate for communities that have been affected by marginalization



The Initiative Experience - on the ground

What to expect when on the reservation

Day 1 - Arrive (Tuesday)

- Transportation from Rapid City Airport to Dupree, SD
- Interactive experience at Lakota Village at Y's Equity Center
- Walking tour of Dupree

Day 2

- Tour Cherry Creek and Eagle Butte
- Complete the Blanket Exercise

Day 3

- Deliver Y Mobile Program to Twig Sites in Cherry Creek and Bear Creek
- *Learn how to scrap a hide the traditional Lakota way
- Visit with 100 Horse Woman Society - learn about Lakota Ceremonies

Day 4

- Transitional housing service work - why is housing a crisis on the reservation
- Tour Y Camp Marrowbone

Day 5

- Deliver Y Mobile Program to Twig Sites in Cherry Creek and Bear Creek
- Boarding School Crisis and how it influences today's world

Day 6

- Deliver Y Mobile Program to Twig Sites in Cherry Creek and Bear Creek
- *Lakota bead work - Lakota Artists

Day 7 - Depart - (Monday)

*denotes tentative trainings that might be replaced if presenter's schedule does not line up. Another Lakota training will be presented.



Y7FIRES INITIATIVE

Package Pricing

Both packages include

- Transportation to and from the airport
- Meals while on the reservation
- Program supplies on site
- Copy of the book Inappropriation

Standard - 1 week boots on the ground
\$1,200+travel

Premium - 2 week boots on the ground
\$1,800 +travel

Waves

You will have to select one of the following waves to join on this adventure

- Wave 1 - January - August
 - One week in South Dakota between February and June
- Wave 2 - March - October
 - One week in South Dakota between April and August
- Wave 3 - May - December
 - One week in South Dakota between June and October

*dates are tentative



What We Offer vs What You Gain

International Cultural Immersion: Immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Native American culture on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Engage in authentic experiences and gain a profound understanding of the community you'll serve.

Skill Development: Acquire valuable skills and mindsets that will not only enhance your personal growth but also empower you to make a lasting impact on programmatic and philanthropic opportunities within Native American communities.

Community Engagement: Build connections, foster relationships, and be a part of a dynamic team that believes in the power of community. Together, we will create positive change.

Make a Difference: Your participation in the Y Fires Initiative will contribute to the well-being of young people and strengthen the bonds between cultures. Your impact will be felt far beyond your journey's end.

LAKOTA CULTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

A Brief Overview



Patience and Flexibility

Although we run on a schedule at the Y, many of our days are very fluid and stray from any set plan or timeline. We invite you to be present in the moment as a volunteer. Embrace the constant motion and excitement of new adventures every day.

Open Mind

Culture shock is a normal reaction to immersing yourself in another culture, especially if this culture is very different from your own. Be open to new ideas and new experiences. Appreciate them as “different,” not necessarily “wrong”. Give yourself time to adjust; forming relationships, learning about the culture and community and asking questions can help you to adjust.

Listening

This is a new culture, always listen and observe. Culture exists everywhere. Staff are present to answer questions and help with this transfer!

Gifts

If you're offered food, coffee, soda, etc. accept it no matter what. It is considered rude to refuse. Gift giving is an important part of Lakota culture.

Stereotypes

Watch out for preconceived notions and stereotypes. There have been countless examples in the media that wrongfully and harmfully depicted Indigenous communities, particularly communities on the North American Plains. Be mindful of these harmful depictions and any unconscious bias that you might have.





Y7FIRES INITIATIVE

Resources

[Life Lakota - click here](#)

Life Lakota captures the state of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota today. The Lakota culture is fading and their voices must be heard. Local leaders are taking action to educate the youth while organizations like the Sioux YMCA *(DBA YMCA Seven Council Fires) are helping kids stay above the influence of many of the extreme adversities that the reservation presents them. Lakota people are humble, proud and full of faith, we are honored to help tell their story. Produced by Vativ Media: Vativmedia.com

[YMCA Canada - click here](#)

Statement of Reconciliation - The YMCA Federation in Canada's Statement of Reconciliation was unanimously approved by all YMCAs in Canada and strengthens our dedication to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and communities in Canada. It is reflective of the YMCA Federation's commitment to fostering a sense of belonging for all and its values of inclusiveness, accountability, and collaboration.

[YMCA of the Virginia Peninsulas - click here](#)

Honoring the land and its people: YMCA's commitment to Native American and Indigenous Recognition.

[Aaron Huey: America's native prisoners of war - click here](#)

16 minute TedTalk - an overview of Oceti Šakowij history with Pine Ridge community members

[This Land Podcast - click here](#)

The award-winning documentary podcast This Land is back for season 2. Host Rebecca Nagle reports on how the far right is using Native children to attack American Indian tribes and advance a conservative agenda.

[Inappropriation: The Contested Legacy of Y-Indian Guides - click here](#)

Paul Hillmer and Ryan Bean

In 1926, Harold Keltner, a YMCA Boys Work secretary from St. Louis, and Joe Friday, a member of the Canadian Ojibwe First Peoples, channeled white middle-class fascination with Native Americans into what became the Y-Indian Guides youth program, engaging over a half million participants across the nation at the height of its 77-year history. Intended to soften the stereotypical stern father, the program traced a complicated thread of American history, touching upon themes of family, race, class, and privilege.

*it can be found and ordered from any bookstore, this is just the most convenient option



INITIATIVE

Phone

605.365.5232

Email Address

sky@siouxymca.org

Office Address

224 6TH St Dupee, SD 57623