

Whiteclay Arts Makerspace Rotary Global Grant Project News #3

Whiteclay, Nebraska borders the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and has a population of about 12. It is less than two miles from the village of Pine Ridge, population about 3,308. There were four liquor stores in Whiteclay that sold about 4 million cans of beer yearly, mostly to residents of Pine Ridge who left their dry reservation to buy liquor. In 2017, the State of Nebraska Liquor Commission did not renew any of the liquor licenses in Whiteclay, which closed the liquor stores. A non-profit corporation, Whiteclay Makerspace, was formed in Nebraska in 2018 with the purpose of buying one of the liquor store properties and transforming it into a makerspace for Pine Ridge area artists and craftspersons.

Where are we today?



The Whiteclay Makerspace has proven to be an excellent project for Rotary. Our basic mission of peace building is enhanced by a suite of areas of focus which channel our efforts into broad categories of service. These include maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, disease prevention and treatment, peace and conflict prevention/resolution, economic and community development, water and sanitation, and our newest focus of supporting the environment. Our Whiteclay Makerspace global grant project falls within the economic and community development focus.

Rotary grants do not allow the construction or renovation of buildings, but we can equip them to serve beneficiaries. Whiteclay Makerspace, Inc. has offered a beautiful opportunity to partner in our efforts to serve our neighbors on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Whiteclay

Makerspace is handling the building and the management of the facility while Rotary is able to equip the makerspace with needed equipment and supplies. In our opinions, this is a perfect partnership.



Finding and working with partners to expand our ability to serve and make a positive impact is key to successful projects. Jon Ruybalid and Candi Red Cloud have proven to be great partners. We have enjoyed working with them and look forward to continuing the relationship as we finish the makerspace and look to potential future projects.

This project offers Rotarians the opportunity to learn about Ogala Lakota culture and life on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Most importantly, it offers the opportunity to meet the Pine Ridge artists and craftspeople. One of Rotary's superpowers is forging friendships across geographic and cultural boundaries. Face to face and hand

to hand is how Rotary and Rotarians build peace. Whiteclay Makerspace offers us that opportunity in our own backyard.



The news media has been helpful in featuring this makerspace.

Follow these links to read the stories:

SDPB <https://listen.sdpb.org/post/once-tarnished-town-changing-its-legacy-1>

RC Journal [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/rotary-club-businesses-helping-to-create-a-new-hub-for-lakota-artists-at-whiteclay/article_852ff0f7-de17-5b48-bb4d-69d8b4d69dc9.html?](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/rotary-club-businesses-helping-to-create-a-new-hub-for-lakota-artists-at-whiteclay/article_852ff0f7-de17-5b48-bb4d-69d8b4d69dc9.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)

[utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/rotary-club-businesses-helping-to-create-a-new-hub-for-lakota-artists-at-whiteclay/article_852ff0f7-de17-5b48-bb4d-69d8b4d69dc9.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)

Native News Online <https://nativenewsonline.net/arts-entertainment/remolding-whiteclay-a-once-bleak-bordertown-becomes-an-oasis-for-oglala-sioux-artists>

University of Nebraska/Lincoln <https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/students-innovation-studio-team-up-to-help-whiteclay-makerspace/>

Nebraska Living Times magazine (PDF)

Rotary clubs have featured the team as weekly speakers in Rapid City, Hot Springs, Brookings, and at District and Zone conferences. Please let us know if you would like us to speak at your meetings via Zoom!

What is next?

After almost 4 months from grant approval, we have made good progress, considering we are in the middle of a pandemic! Rotarians have made 5 workday trips to the property, bringing equipment and supplies. The sewing and quilting room is completely furnished. We have had Rotarians volunteering labor on repairing walls, painting, cleaning and assembling our donated equipment. The team is thrilled with the enthusiasm and generosity of the local business community as items are procured! We plan to go back to finish more rooms in late winter thru spring. The supply store is the first priority, so the beads and fabric can be offered to locals for sale. Then they can begin creating their art at the sewing machines, quilter, beading tables, and woodworking areas. The photography room is later, when we can access a home on the reservation to bring the donated equipment in and setup a studio. Work days for volunteers to setup and install equipment and prepare the space have occurred in September and October. Please plan to volunteer on future workdays, installing the Rotary equipment and supplies!

What can you do? Support this project as economic development for our Native American community!

Thank the volunteers! Thank the businesses who have been very generous with discounting equipment and supplies. Be a volunteer! See the list of needed items and check out your shop or garage to see if you have something to donate! Follow Whiteclay Makerspace on Facebook and the website www.whiteclayredo.com Check out the hand made items for sale at <https://whiteclay-makerspace.myshopify.com/collections/all>

Items needed:

laser cutter
Mac computer with Adobe Photoshop software
airbrush tools
art canvases, brushes, and canvas stretcher
wood for frames
wood chisel hand tools set
quilt hoops
leather tooling punches, stamps, awls, mallets
table saw
drill press
carpentry tape measures, angles, saws, misc. hand tools

Donations of cash or in-kind items are welcomed. A donation form is available for download on the rotary5610.org website. Please contact the committee members (listed below) if you have an item to donate.

Background Information:

We are making this economic development project possible with a Rotary Foundation Global Grant!

The project Rotarians are PDG Ina Winter (Hot Springs), PDG Linda Peterson and former Peace Corp Tom Katus (Rapid City Rushmore) worked for over a year to assess local artists, gather equipment costs, supplies list, and secure the training element. We added international Rotary partners with India, Australia, Greece and Mexico, and US Districts in Vermont and Texas, plus our DDF to make a \$57,575 global grant from The Rotary Foundation, approved August 2020.

What does the grant include?

Equip the Artists and Craftspeople to directly impact these beneficiaries by supplying needed tools and equipment to produce their art. Five centers situated inside the building will include: Quilting & Beading, Painting & Drawing, Photography, Woodworking, and a Conference room. A Gallery of art will be in the front and supply store areas.

Stand up a Supply Store to provide an initial stock of the type of supplies used by local artists. Paints, canvas, bolts of cloth, batting, and a large inventory of beads have been purchased with the grant. The artists, residents and general public may buy supplies, which sustains the project.

Provide Training to help artists succeed in developing their small businesses of art production with business practices, financial matters, online marketing, computer skills, and professional development. First Peoples Fund is providing two Native trainers to lead business classes. The classes will probably be held next summer, after a vaccine is available and people feel comfortable gathering. Currently, the community is very anxious about the virus and are staying home.

Whiteclay Makerspace will be the cooperating organization assisting District 5610 in delivering the project. First Peoples Fund is providing two Native trainers to lead business classes, included in the grant. This is the premier national Native American arts organization that has trained and provided funding to more than 2,000 Native artists over the past 20 years.

We should define just what is a makerspace:

To describe them simply, makerspaces are community centers with tools. Makerspaces combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education for the purposes of enabling community members to design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn't be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone. These spaces can take the form of loosely-organized individuals sharing space and tools, for-profit companies, non-profit corporations, organizations affiliated with or hosted within schools, universities or libraries, and more. All are united in the purpose of providing access to equipment, community, and education, and all are unique in exactly how they are arranged to fit the purposes of the community they serve.

We think of our Whiteclay Makerspace as a small, volunteer-run community (10-80 active members) that occasionally teaches classes, shares some amount of tools and space, and pays a relatively low membership fee to sustain the approximately 3,000 square foot space. The online marketing venue will also collect a percentage of sales to sustain both the artists and the operating expenses.

PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ina Winter, Hot Springs Rotary, D5610 DG 2019-20 kristine.ina.winter@gmail.com

Contribution: project and process knowledge

Linda Peterson, Rushmore Rotary, PDG, RPIC 2018-20 linda4rotary@me.com

Contribution: financial management and product knowledge

Tom Katus, Rushmore Rotary, Omniciye Committee tmkatus@gmail.com

Contribution: people and place knowledge