



The Center Pole

Promoting Knowledge, Justice and Sovereignty in Native Communities

20 YEARS STRONG

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20 Years Serving Our Community and Celebrating Our Culture

Dear Friends,

We are still here! Thank you friends of Center Pole for all your support over the past 20 years.

So many supporters have come forward and rescued us when we were met by challenges over the years and we are eternally grateful.

We have grown from an empty field in 1999 to a force of positive change in this reservation community and in all of Indian country in 2019. Children we nurtured and helped navigate through unfortunate or disadvantaged situations in our early years are now returning to us to help us continue to build a strong and resilient community.

Center Pole is a dynamic testimonial of what a diverse group of people can do together by combining tenacity, team work, and vision with both a practical and indigenous approach to change.

Because of you.... Our story continues.

Aho,

Peggy White Wellknown Buffalo

Founder

Susan Kelly

Founder

Focus on Food Access and Sovereignty



Until the mid-20th Century, Crows were master growers, hunters and gatherers and produced their own food. They shared their bounty in the community and had the competitive edge over local non-Indian farmers.

In the 1920s, a series of government laws tied Native food producers hands and the plague of 1960s government entitlement programs set in.

Center Pole's food program started with a simple mission twenty years ago: Peggy Wellknown Buffalo wanted to feed hungry children on her reservation located in rural southeastern Montana

She knew that without enough food, there was little to no chance of peace, empowerment, success, sovereignty or healthy ways in the community. As a reservation resident all her life, she knew the pain of hunger, what she calls "the worst pain." If one is hungry, one cannot think of anything else but short term survival.

Today, Center Pole is working to rekindle the native entrepreneurial spirit in the area of food production and in creating a reservation food economy.

Center Pole is training a workforce of Native interns in food sovereignty (growing, composting, gathering, hunting), traditional foods, agritourism and non-profit management. Many were previously homeless and unemployed. Many are parents with children to support. Some are recovering addicts. Some are college students.

This transition to food independence is not immediate and solving the hunger issue here takes multiple approaches, since 25% of children on Indian reservations are currently hungry every day.

In addition to its food sovereignty approach, Center Pole has developed a reservation-based system to transport and distribute "recovery foods"- otherwise wasted, about-to-expire food that food outlets in Billings are required to remove from their shelves. Forty per cent of food produced in the United States ends up in the dump. That is 133 billion pounds a year. Center Pole systematically redistributes these foods to hungry families on reservations.

Currently, Center Pole transports and distributes about 120,000 pounds of recovery foods per month, over a million pounds per year. Food is distributed from the Center Pole's reservation-based warehouse in Garryowen, MT every weekday and is also transported into the communities of Crow Agency and Lodge Grass on the Crow Indian Reservation as well as Busby and Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. During the distribution activity, a meal or snack is also served for the elders and others in need in these communities.

What can you do? Your donation will go to sustaining this critical access to food in communities where children and their families are hungry and there is no other option!



Youth, Art and Culture

Artistic expression is at the heart and soul of Native communities and Center Pole has always provided an outlet for assisting artists to connect to customers. In addition, we have begun new project to support a growing number of local indigenous artists by providing tools, resources, connections and space. In exchange for this resource and opportunity, artists will teach youth their craft.

So far, Native artists represent the following artistic mediums: photography, ledger and tipi painting, sculpture, ceramics, carving and painting.

What can you do? We are seeking donations to complete the physical classroom studio space.



Youth learn how to set up tipis for culture camps



Healthy Café - Role Expands

The Wellknown Buffalo Café underwent an expansion and extensive, expensive electrical re-wiring. Originally planned to serve as a typical café and coffee house, featuring traditional foods, the building has taken on a new role to meet the immediate and critical needs of the community.

Daily meals are now prepared in the kitchen for serving or delivering meals to elders. The cooks are interns being trained to prepare delicious healthy meals using produce from the food bank.

Travelers and community guests continue to enjoy specialty coffee drinks, ice cream and the opportunity to purchase authentic Native art and traditional medicinals.



Crow Voices Radio– 91.1 FM

Independent, Bilingual Music, Interviews, News
www.crowvoices.org

Our Mission:

To build knowledge, justice, opportunity and prosperity in reservation communities, while preserving and protecting indigenous ways.



What We have Been Up to.... Growing the Future

Redesigning Our Infrastructure to Better Support Our Mission

Now in our 20th year, Center Pole is excited to announce a redesign of our community service, social enterprise and education facilities.

Located in the valley below the site of the Battle of the Little Big Horn on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana, this is a joint project of the Center Pole, Portland State University's Center for Public Interest Design, and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN).

The project will foster principles that reflect just energy transition and indigenous decolonization education, including food sovereignty, regenerative farming, conservation and ecological stewardship, intergenerational healing and indigenous-appropriate community and youth development.

The new Indigenous Discovery Center will feature an observation deck overlooking the Little Big Horn Battlefield for ceremony, performance and stargazing, a large meeting space, a kitchen for traditional food practices and a greenhouse for growing traditional plants, medicines and food.

The new Grounds design will feature permaculture and conservation grassland areas, regenerative gardens

with cistern, a tipi camp, horse facilities and an artist makers space. The main buildings, resale shop, radio station, food bank, café and sacred areas will remain the same.

The completed Center and Grounds will house the food sovereignty program and healthy foods hub that educates, trains and feeds the community, traditional Crow cultural healing events, heritage activities and education, an artists cooperative, as well as various agritourism and social enterprise activities whose income supplements our operations.

Center Pole will become the headquarters for a think tank of brilliant indigenous minds, to explore ways to build healthy, just communities, providing inspiration, practical guidance and hope for our world.

These brilliant minds will include respected, knowledgeable elders and renowned specialists.



These cultural leaders and educators will share their perspectives on the principles of the project during radio interviews which will be live streamed on our Crow Voices radio station. Their interviews will attract new listeners which will broaden our already international reach.

If you would like to be a part of this innovative project and help an impoverished community help itself, you can donate by sending a check or donate via paypal on our website:

www.thecenterpole.org

Volunteers are also needed as skilled labor work on this Indigenous Discovery Center.

*Contact Susie at
406.638.2821*

*Or email her at
wellknownbuffalo@hotmail.com*

Activities and Achievements

Center Pole supports indigenous student achievement through its mentoring program.

- ⇒ Ramon White, Auston Hehman, Ty Backbone, and Maren Holds The Enemy are Center Pole interns who enrolled at Little Big Horn College this semester. Adrian Fox, also a previous Center Pole intern, began his study at Montana State University in Billings to become a paramedic. Taj Bird Hat enrolled at Montana State University in Bozeman.
- ⇒ Ramiro Chavez attended Legacy Global Youth Village in Virginia. He also received the Awake Media Fellowship, a national award, and worked with a mentor in Videography in New York City. He plans to attend Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico.
- ⇒ Jada Archilta attended Shrine Mont's Music and Drama camp for a second year. She is also a talented runner and horse woman.
- ⇒ Daivyon and Jamison White attended the Legacy Global Youth Village in Virginia. Daivyon was part of the Department of State Agriculture Leadership Program and plans to travel to Turkey for an agricultural exchange next summer. These exceptional brothers are also on their high school's Honor Role. Daivyon was the top runner at his high school and placed 27th in State Competition.

We continue to learn and to share

- ⇒ Peggy Wellknown Buffalo, Susan Kelly and Mila Big Hair received Certificates in Cultural Heritage Tourism from George Washington University's International School of Tourism.
- ⇒ Peggy Wellknown Buffalo received a Masters Certificate in Historical Trauma Healing from Freedom Lodge in South Dakota.
- ⇒ Prinz Three Irons and Mila Big Hair spoke at the Indigenous Environmental Network's Just Transitions Gathering in Kansas.
- ⇒ Peggy Wellknown Buffalo and Susan Kelly spoke at the Billings Food Summit, a conference on Food Sovereignty.
- ⇒ Center Pole hosted the 100 Per Cent Network, a collaboration of Environmental Justice organizations, for an indigenous cultural immersion meeting.
- ⇒ Peggy Wellknown Buffalo received the Fire Keepers Award from Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous People.
- ⇒ We sponsored an honoring for Clayvin Herrera (Crow) for his victory in the US Supreme Court case Wyoming vs. Herrera. Clayvin stood alone for indigenous hunting rights and treaty rights and won. We thank him for his sacrifice and courage.

The "Reality Dance"

Three steps forward and two steps back...

With every success we celebrate, there are harsh realities of reservation life that force us to develop our resiliency skills. For example, a fire burned down the only grocery store in our community-increasing the demand for our food distribution services, a fire on our own campus caused the temporary closing of our clothing re-sale thrift store, and due to a lightning strike, we had to replace the entire electrical wiring system of our healthy food café which was delayed and extremely expensive in both materials and the "premium" charged by skilled electricians to come to the reservation. We continue our work...

In Memorium



Ann V. Kelly, a founder of Center Pole with Daniel M. Kelly;

Andrew Biache, our first and long-term contributor;

Audrey Rosselot, who stood with us from the beginning;

Trudy Pearson, beloved Board member;

William Eggers, a dear friend and supporter;

Nathan Pretty Weasel, our longest and most loyal community intern.

The Difference You Make

Aho and Kun Na Di Wa A Chile
(Thank You and May You Have Many
Good Days Added To Your Life)

Since its founding in 1999, what have generous Donors and Volunteers helped Center Pole to do?

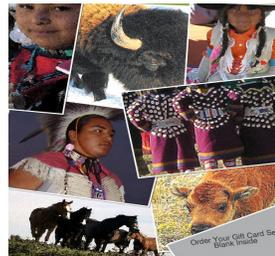
- Create a community learning center with resources on indigenous ways of thinking, being and living
- Develop a culturally based youth development project, serving 500 youth a month, with progressive educational activities
- Send more than 550 Native students to off-reservation educational programs, colleges and universities
- Support food sovereignty and access to improve food security and safety, health, self-sufficiency and the reservation economy. In November, Center Pole served 8,563 community members with its food redistribution.
- Operate culturally oriented social enterprises that provide work force learning and hands-on experience for youth and young adults
- Support the organization and education of a traditional leadership base, including a bilingual Native community radio station, and conducted social justice projects that give a voice to the reservation community.
- In 2019 - The donation of a 14-passenger van from Hilton and a used food truck from Foundation for Community Vitality helps us to better serve those in need!

How Can You Help Sustain and Grow Our Important Programs?



Order our micro-roasted coffee and enjoy a great cup of our "Crow Roasted" coffee. Informative Clan labels!

\$10/bag + \$3.50 s/h
\$70 full set of 8 bags + \$12 s/h



Order a set of "Giving Cards" with beautiful images depicting life on the Crow Reservation.

\$15/set of 8 + \$3.50 s/h

Order a hand painted ledger style painting on wood by the artist Wallowing Buffalo. Each piece is unique. Start a collection! \$80 each plus s/h



Contributions may be made by credit card on our website www.thecenterpole.org or

Checks may be written to "Center Pole" and mailed to:
PO Box 71 Garryowen, MT 59031

Email us or order online!



Learn more at: www.thecenterpole.org

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