



Oregon

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To Whom It May Concern:

As the Administrator of Religious Services for the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC), I strongly support Red Lodge Transition Services and their work with Native Americans in Oregon Prisons. I worked with several Red Lodge Transition Services volunteers creating a Native American Handbook, and I recognize that this committed non-profit organization is an essential component to the re-entry and prevention of recidivism effort, being made today by people of many faiths and races.

Almost all Native American programming is done through the Religious Services Department. Red Lodge volunteers come into the prisons through Religious Services to work primarily with the Native population, yet their services are open to everyone. Volunteers come in to help incarcerated people express and practice their chosen faith, tradition and spirituality. I am honored to write a letter of support on behalf of Red Lodge Transition Services dedication to authentic Native American programming within Oregon prisons.

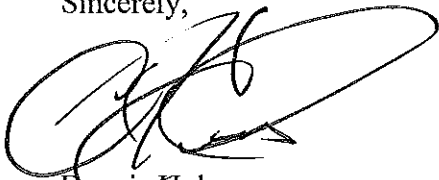
These annual prison events have touched the hearts and spirits of hundreds of incarcerated men and women, their families, and community members, here in Oregon. I am extremely thankful for Red Lodge's commitment to this underserved population and for the assistance provided to the chaplains, who have the responsibility of coordinating the event. Red Lodge Transition Services provides programming support to several men's prisons, but their priority is to work at Coffee Creek Correctional Institution (CCCF), a women's prison in Wilsonville, OR.

For example: Healing the Sacred Hoop project at CCCF is a cultural identity class for high risk women inmates who continue to cycle through the segregation and behavioral health units. Chaplain Brault facilitates the programming in the medium unit at CCCF. She can testify to the hope and inspiration given to many Native women attending special programming under the Religious Services umbrella. Native American religion and culture is woven deep into the traditions of Native people. Red Lodge helps support many of the chaplains by assisting with planning and coordinating annual Native American events. Several of the prisons annual events are supported with traditional Native foods and recruitment of community member participation through Red Lodge Transition Services.

As another example: Last fall ODOC took on the task of creating the Native American Handbook, an educational booklet for staff, administration, inmates and volunteers. This booklet will serve as a guide to Native American cultural traditions, will identify the unique cultural programming needed inside our Oregon prisons and will reinforce the accountability model as preparation for re-entry. Red Lodge Transition Services volunteers attended each formative meeting, collaborating in this joint effort with a focused dedication to their mission and passion for meaningful programming. Red Lodge Transition Services' volunteers provided insight that was instrumental in creating the Native American Handbook, thereby helping Oregon's incarcerated Native Americans.

Red Lodge Transitions Services provides culturally distinct programming within Oregon's prison walls and client services for a successful transition. I believe these efforts reduce recidivism among Native Americans and serve to promote Native American cultural awareness. This organization is part of the solution, and I am pleased to designate my support for Red Lodge Transition Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Holmes', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Dennis Holmes
Administrator, Religious Services
Oregon Department of Corrections