YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE
SITE HANDBOOK
#NAVAJONATION
This Handbook was written to provide you with useful information regarding your participation in an Amizade sponsored program. It answers many of the frequently asked questions by previous participants. Read this entire handbook carefully and contact our office if you have any questions. Please note that best resource for you during your pre-departure planning is our website, which can be found at amizade.org.

> Amizade’s Mission & Vision
Amizade empowers individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning. We seek to create an equitable world where all people can connect freely and forge lasting friendships.

> Amizade’s Commitment
At the heart of Amizade is the sincere belief that intercultural understanding and the development of global citizens is essential to our increasingly connected global world. We are committed to providing you with an intercultural experience that allows you to make concrete contributions to a community resulting in a deeper understanding of your role in the global community.
1. Approach to service

> Ethic of Service
Amizade strives to promote an “ethic of service” on all our programs. This means that we envision the entire experience as one of service to our fellow human beings. There will be scheduled time for completing service projects on each program, but we also encourage you to carry your ethic of service with you throughout the program. You can do this by volunteering to help with food preparation, cleaning, or various other daily tasks.

As guests in the host community, Amizade volunteers are encouraged to act respectfully in all community interactions. The global service experience provides a unique opportunity to learn from the traditions, beliefs, and customs of a new community. Since most Amizade volunteers come from outside of the community, they are often seen as “ambassadors” representing their countries and communities and are able to use this opportunity to share positively about their culture. At the same time, volunteers have the unique opportunity of experiencing another culture while taking the time to absorb and respect new world views.

> Volunteer opportunities
One of Amizade’s core values is providing community-driven service, meaning that the community defines their biggest needs and we contribute in that way. The Navajo feel that volunteers who spend time learning about their life and culture and use this knowledge and their experience to educate their home communities have served the Navajo community in the greatest way. Participants will also have a number of direct service opportunities relating to community needs and cultural learning. Amizade has strong relationships with organizations that work on youth and education, cultural learning, tribal government and leadership, and social support organizations including food banks and grassroots organizations providing donated home goods and clothing to families in need. Community partners include; Greyhills High School, Angel House, Tuba City Chapter House, and a number of local community members and residents who may be in need of support.

This service is regularly tied to community members who cook for visiting groups, provide demonstrations, and teach about traditional Navajo practices. Projects have included sheep shearing and repairing animal corrals, building and repairing fences and roofs, and building traditional Navajo Hogans and Sweat Lodges. These service projects not only provide much needed assistance to community members but also act as opportunities for participants to learn about Navajo culture and ways of life.

2. The On-Site Experience

> The Amizade experience
The time that you spend in the Navajo Nation is sure to be one filled with many new experiences: new outlooks, new cultures, and new situations. In order to get the most out of your Amizade experience, we recommend doing some basic research and reading into the history of the Navajo Nation as well as familiarizing yourself with some of the issues over the last several years. This will allow you to begin your experience with an informed set of questions in mind. Your experience is about getting in deep enough and starting to dream enough to realize that your time can’t possibly be enough to see and understand all of the Navajo Nation, but it can be enough to get an idea of it, connect with new friends, meet and struggle with some significant challenges, make connections, create difference, and begin to understand an entirely different kind of place.
All of this will take place in the context of a relatively unpredictable environment. Unpredictable does not mean that it is unsafe. All programs work through our partner individuals and community organizations. Unpredictable simply describes the “climate” of Amizade programs in the Navajo Nation, often characterized by something called a “lack of redundancy.” This refers to an absence of continuously present and reliable systems and products. With water supply and electricity, that means it may go out sporadically. With transportation, it means roads may be closed. In stores or restaurants, it may mean the things they sell are not what they advertise outside, but rather whatever they have in stock (or can quickly get from a neighbor). All of this relates to an absolutely essential ongoing Amizade motto, “Okay, Good.”

“OK, GOOD.”

“Okay, good” refers to moments when we show up for an activity at the right time, yet quickly learn that the road was closed so the presenter won’t arrive for another hour. “Okay, good,” we have an opportunity to hang out in the Navajo Nation. “Okay, good” refers to moments when we long for some familiar comfort foods, but we have another helping of the same, exotic local foods. “Okay, good,” we have a great deal more exotic local food than most of those around us. “Okay, good” refers to times when we’re crammed into transportation (cars, vans, trains) in a way that we did not previously believe was possible. “Okay, good,” we have transportation and are moving to our desired destination more easily than most people in the area. “Okay, good” is about remembering – even when we feel that we are struggling – that we are fortunate for the opportunities to travel and serve; that we are still in amazing places with incredible people; and that life will go on even though (unlike in our local environment) the day-to-day life is just not all that predictable. Of course, “Okay, good” is also useful when the last leg of the return flight home doesn’t connect at the right time!

> **Amizade Staff**

Amizade programs are staffed by a variety of motivated, trained people. We encourage you to get to know the staff members that will be coordinating your volunteer program. Any concerns or questions during the in-country experience should be directed to the appropriate Amizade staff.

> **Site Director**

The site director is the primary program contact responsible for coordinating volunteers. The site director is responsible for coordination of logistics such as greeting volunteers, arranging housing and meals, setting up cultural experiences with local community members, and often leading reflection discussions. Coordination also involves setting up the service project, partnering with local masons and builders, procuring building supplies, and any other related planning. The site director will work closely with volunteer placements when they first arrive to help arrange everything.

> **On-Site Orientation**

Upon arrival in Tuba City, Amizade will hold a program orientation for all volunteers. Many issues such as health, safety, and security will be addressed as well as site logistics, standard procedures, and other important information that will benefit each volunteer to know.
**> Group Living**

Amizade programs generally have a strong core element built around group living. For many people, living, volunteering, studying, completing projects, and spending leisure time in a group may be new. Therefore we ask all Amizade volunteers to approach group interaction with flexibility, openness, and constructive communication. We strive to respect each other’s space and needs while also supporting each other to achieve personal goals on the program.

**> Flexibility**

Flexibility on behalf of the participants is the most important element on an Amizade program. Itineraries may change at the last minute in order to meet current community needs or participate in unexpected opportunities for recreational, educational, or cultural exploration. Many aspects of traveling are unpredictable and time-consuming, so be prepared to enjoy the unexpected surprises and embrace the opportunities they provide!

**> Housing**

All volunteers participating on the program will be housed at Greyhills Academy, one of the local public high schools in Tuba City. Like the majority of schools on the reservation, Greyhills was once entirely boarding students, but, in recent years has shifted to from primarily boarding students to primarily day students, leaving the majority of the dormitory is empty. Greyhills has now converted the empty area into lodging for visiting guests and Amizade volunteers. The rooms at Greyhills are basic, more similar to a basic hotel than a dormitory, with shared bathrooms on each hallway (one for men and one for woman). There is also common space on each floor for the group to meet and reflect and have discussions.

**> Meals**

Amizade staff will provide a light breakfast each morning. Some meals may also be taken in the school cafeteria with students. For recreational outings, Amizade will provide volunteers with food to pack a lunch. Dinners will vary and will include homemade traditional meals as well as local restaurants.

**> Note to Vegetarians and Other Dietary Needs**

While vegetarians are becoming more familiar in the Navajo Nation, it is still new to much of the community. Vegetarian options will be made available but you should be prepared for limited variety. You will want to talk to the Amizade staff to find out what can be arranged in terms of cooked meals and to have them purchase vegetarian options for lunches.

**> Climate and Weather**

"The Navajo Nation has beautiful weather year round. Unlike Phoenix, Northern Arizona enjoys much cooler temperatures. During the summer months you will experience daytime temperatures of 80 degrees and nighttime lows in the 50’s. During the winter months you will experience daytime highs in the 40’s and nighttime lows in the teens. We would suggest bringing a light sweater or jacket with you at all times. The average annual rainfall received is approximately 11-12 inches a year. The Rainy season takes place for the Navajo Nation during August, September, and October.”

Source: ExploreNavajo.com

**> Cultural and recreational activities**

The Navajo Nation is overflowing with opportunities for cultural education and recreation. Some possibilities include presentations from local community members on topics such as Navajo language and kinship systems, traditional hunting, Navajo basketry and moccasins, Kinalda ceremonies and traditional dress, sheep shearing, Navajo weaving, and visits to traditional family home sites. Canyon hiking and visits to various scenic spots in Arizona, such as the Grand Canyon, Navajo Monument and Monument Valley are also possible.
3. Local Considerations

For more information on the region and our partners, please visit:

- Official Website of the Navajo Nation: [http://www.navajo-nsn.gov](http://www.navajo-nsn.gov)

4. Preparing for your program

Transportation to Site
We recommend volunteers flying in and out of the Phoenix airport. However, it is possible to fly into Flagstaff. All volunteers are required to arrive on or before the scheduled program start date and depart on or after the scheduled finish date. If volunteers arrive early or stay late, the individual volunteer must make his/her own arrangements for food, lodging, and airport transfer.

Transportation on Site
Volunteers are responsible for arranging their own transportation from the airport to Tuba City and for the duration of the program. Amizade can arrange for group transportation for an additional fee.

Travel Documents
US citizens will need standard proof of identification (such as driver’s license or passport) if traveling to the site via airplane.

Please check with your airline for acceptable forms of identification.

If you are a non-US citizen, you must check with the consulate in your country regarding travel documents including passport and visa requirements.

If you need to obtain a visa to the United States, you can visit the US consular site for further information at: [http://www.travel.state.gov/](http://www.travel.state.gov/)
5. Health and Safety

* General Notes
  - Traveling often affects one’s health, so it is imperative that all volunteers are in good physical condition.
  - Typical travel ailments include stomach upsets and diarrhea, bug bites, jet lag, minor cuts, scrapes, bruises, and sunburn. Please feel free to bring travel-sized portions of over the counter medicines such as headache medicine, stomach medicines, sun block, bug spray, band-aids, etc.
  - An on-site Amizade staff member will have a first aid kit.

* Prescription Medicines
  If you have prescription medicines, bring them in the original prescription bottles with your name on them and bring an ample supply for the duration of your program.

* The Best Medicine is “Preventative Medicine”
  Throughout the program, please rest and drink plenty of water. While on the program, let the Amizade staff know if you have any concerns about your health and contact them immediately if you experience a health emergency.

* Amizade Medical and Insurance Form
  All volunteers are required to complete and submit the Amizade Medical Form prior to participation. It is imperative that you complete this form as comprehensively as possible so Amizade staff can best address medical situations on site.

  It is the responsibility of every Amizade participant to make sure that he/she is covered by his/her medical insurance when participating, domestically or internationally, on any of the Amizade Programs. Please check with your medical insurance policies to determine your coverage before you leave for any program.

* Safety
  While participants are on site for the service project, it is essential that participants adhere to all safety requirements and guidelines as determined by the service project supervisor and their staff.
> 6. Money Matters

Currency

The US dollar is the currency used in the Navajo Nation. Tuba City has a bank and there is an ATM available in front of the Quality Inn hotel. Some gas stations, stores, and other businesses will accept ATM/Credit cards, however, when shopping at the market, it is best to have cash.

Spending money

Please bring some spending money to use for costs beyond those covered by the Amizade fee. There may be opportunities to buy souvenirs at the local trading post or at the weekly flea market.
> What to Wear?
First and foremost, participants should plan and pack according to the weather, climate and temperature. As previously stated, the Navajo Nation experiences beautiful weather year-round. However, do not let the arid climate fool you; the Navajo Nation can experience cold temperatures at night. Furthermore, the Navajo Nation does experience winter-like conditions during the winter months, sometimes even seeing snowfall. Keep the time of year and the season in mind as you are packing clothing for your time in the Navajo Nation. The daytime average daily temperature is in the 80s to 90s during the warmer months with evening temperatures dipping into the low 50s. If you are in the Navajo Nation during the winter months, the average daily temperature can hover in the mid-50s with nighttime temperatures reaching as low as the mid-teens. Keep in mind that, depending on your service project while on-site, you may consider bringing clothing that you don’t mind getting a little dirty. It is also important to remember that you are acting as “diplomats.” While living in the Navajo Nation, you represent not only your country of origin, but also your university or organization, Amizade and even yourself. It is highly recommended that, along with packing for the climate of the region, you pack clothing that is tasteful, respectful and conservative.

>> PLEASE PACK LIGHTLY!
You should bring a maximum of two bags. Ideally, this includes one medium-sized suitcase/duffel bag and a smaller daypack for daily activities. You should be able to carry your luggage comfortably by yourself. Please use your best judgment regarding valuables. Amizade does not recommend that volunteers bring expensive jewelry, electronics, laptops, etc. Amizade is not reliable for lost or stolen articles.

> Recommended packing list
- Documents: photo id, airline tickets, personal health insurance information, and ATM/credit cards
- Water bottle
- Amizade Journal or Notebook and pens
- Travel alarm clock
- Watch
- Camera
- Daybag or backpack
- Towel and Wash cloth
- Toiletries – just the basics such as toothbrush, toothpaste, travel-sized shampoo, and soap
- Prescriptions in original bottles (remember to bring enough for the entire program!)
- Clothing
  - Casual/Outdoor Clothing you don’t mind getting dirty
  - Socks and underwear
  - Pajamas
  - One long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt, or jacket
- Shower shoes or flip-flops, bath towels
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Rain coat (optional)
- Cool weather items for nighttime
- Sun protection: bandanas, hat, sunglasses and sun block
> 8. While you are away / Returning home

> Culture Shock
Culture shock is a term used to describe the emotional stress that may occur when a person travels to a new culture. When experiencing culture shock, people sometimes feel unsure about what is appropriate in the new culture, confused about how to manage daily tasks (such as banking or telephoning), frustrated with managing language and cultural barriers and generally vulnerable. This experience is normal and affects people at different times throughout a cultural immersion program. Remember to rest, eat and take care of your physical and emotional needs in order to function at your best!

> Drug Use
Amizade in no way encourages the use of or purchase of drugs while visiting any of our sites. As an organization, our primary concern is that of the safety of our volunteers. For this reason, we adhere to a drug-free policy for all of our programs. We ask that all volunteers please respect this as a rule of Amizade. Failure to comply with this rule is grounds for removal from the program.

> Reverse Culture Shock
Many participants find that they encounter difficulties when transitioning home. Volunteers will be happy to return home and visit with family and friends, but after the initial reunions take place, they often find that they experience problems when trying to communicate the experience that they had abroad. Many people feel alienated, knowing that they have grown while many of those around them remain the same. It may help to connect with others who have had similar travel experiences, as they understand the need to talk about the experience in greater detail. If you would like to be connected with past participants from an Amizade program, please let an Amizade staff member know, and we will facilitate that for you.

> Contacting Home
Cell phones generally work in Tuba City but they cannot be relied on when you leave the city limits and during the drive from Phoenix. Internet is available at the local coffee shop.

> AMIZADE CONTACT INFORMATION
If someone from home needs to contact a volunteer with an emergency message, they can phone the Amizade US office to relay a message.

- Amizade US Office Phone: 412-586-4986. This phone line is staffed 9 am – 4 pm EST from Monday - Friday.
- Have the person leave: - Their name - Your name - Their phone number - The message to be relayed
- Amizade Emergency Phone #: 412-444-5166. This phone line is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during volunteer programs.