

Cheyenne River Reservation Project

Green Fund 2010

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Project Overview

Each year, the Office of Student Development and Activities (OSDA) at The New School organizes an annual trip to the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. In 2010, 15 students from all divisions participated in a weeklong Habitat for Humanity build where the focus was on house restoration and rehabilitation, specifically concerned with increasing energy efficiency.

Original houses built in Eagle Butte were made using Georgia designs and are very drafty and not suited for the harsh South Dakota summers and winters. This year's project was to insulate the attics of an entire neighborhood using sustainable insulation to increase heat/cold retention and lower energy bills and emissions.

The project received \$5,000.00 from the Green Fund to help cover the cost of insulation in the homes and money to pay for making a video to document the trip to use as an educational tool for future students.

Results

The project resulted in the insulation of over 25 homes in Eagle Butte, which will save substantially more in energy costs for the homeowners over the long run than the cost invested in the insulation.

Students learned about the energy issues facing pre-fabricated and volunteer-made homes, and learned how to repair their future homes to be more energy efficient. Another lesson included understanding that the quality of volunteer work has a significant impact on the quality of life for the family living in the home later.

Afterwards, the Cheyenne River Reservation organized a week of cultural events for students, including an experience in a sweat lodge, dinner conversation with the tribe, a tour of the reservation's buffalo wildlife preserve and a visit to a local museum.