



Dear Participant

Cultural Immersion Experience: Across the Bridge is a unique exchange that will bring participants face to face with the cultural and racial division between the Tri-Cities area and Muskegon, just across the bridge. The following is designed to provide you with some basic information to help you prepare for your unique adventure.

PAYMENT EXPECTATIONS

We calculate the total and per-person cost of the trip. We also seek sponsorship to keep the costs as low as possible. If individuals are willing to contribute toward the per-person cost, we are grateful for those resources. We will not, however, choose people who apply to go on the trip using financial need or plenty.

Participation in Across the Bridge is voluntary, and no payment will be made to participants whether they are working during their normal work hours or not. Before committing to the trip, you are responsible for talking to your employer about taking any necessary time off and requesting any pay you think you might qualify for.

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

Suggested readings include *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates and *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving. To better prepare to engage with another culture, you may also want to read *Cultural Intelligence* by David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson. We also suggest *Integral Spirituality* by Ken Wilber, specifically his work with Integral Life Practice.

EXPECTATIONS

Participants are expected to participate in the full Across the Bridge experience. There will be a pre-meeting on September 6 at 12 noon. Each participant will spend either September 13 to 15 or September 27 to 30 with their cohort. The entire group will meet again for a debrief on October 4.

We will visit several places and meet with community leaders in both communities. The point of the trip is to identify and address stereotypes associated with both communities and to reflect inwardly on what we are experiencing and what actions WE will take as a result. We will share reflection time every morning and night during the experience.

Participants need to expect a full schedule and be able to comply with group ground rules regarding a respectful conversation with individuals who may not share their beliefs, customs, or agendas.

PACKING TIPS

Clothing: Once we leave in the morning, we will not return to our accommodations until evening. Plan to dress according to the weather and bring layers as appropriate. Jackets and other items can be left on the bus. Please dress comfortably and bring comfortable walking shoes. Don't forget to bring along an umbrella or waterproof rain jacket in case of rain.

Toilet Articles and Medicine: Bring your travel toiletries, including sunscreen, lip balm, contact lens solution, cosmetics, and feminine hygiene products. Remember to bring your prescriptions with you. Don't forget any over-the-counter products you may want, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen. Bring a pair of sunglasses, and if you wear glasses, bring an extra pair.

MONEY

You may want to have some cash or a credit card with you. You will have to pay for your own alcoholic drinks, and there will be some opportunities for light shopping if you are interested.

TRANSPORTATION

We will be traveling in a 15-passenger van.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will stay in VRBOs, private homes, and/or group campgrounds. They will not be luxury accommodations, but they will be safe and comfortable. We will have ten people staying together in these home-like or camping environments. Each person will have their own bed but will be sharing a room. Rooms may include bunk beds. All bedding and towels will be provided. Bathrooms will also be shared.

DINING

All meals are included in this experience. Breakfast will be continental at our accommodation site before leaving for the day. You are asked to bring your favorite breakfast cereal to share with the group. Some meals will include a predetermined menu, and others may have a limited menu for you to choose from. You will pay for your own alcoholic beverages. You may bring drinks and snacks to the home/camp for your own consumption or to share with the others.

SWAG BAG

We will provide a drawstring backpack, journal, pen, and refillable water bottle.

INTERNET AND TELEPHONES

We encourage you to go offline as much as possible during your cultural immersion experience. The more engaged with your fellow travelers that you can be, the deeper the experience you will have.

*We sincerely hope that this information has been helpful to you
preparing for your journey Across the Bridge.
Have a wonderful trip!*