



Live. Learn. Learn to Lead Now.

Dear Youth Leaders and Their Parents:

September 21, 2017

In our endless quest to understand ourselves and how strategies for strengthening our own paths might also strengthen our communities, in less than a month, ALCS student volunteers will head to the banks of our beloved Gila River. The focus of the trip is on each individual's 'capacity to endure' (e.g. 'to-live-sustainably'), as determined by comfort zones and safety protocols. *An ability to weather extremes is one of the most important skill-sets for creating a resilient human community.* This skill-set, while adapted to a 'modern' setting, comes to us through an oral tradition well-grounded in direct experience, and echoed within indigenous cultures throughout the world. At this two-day workshop, students will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning from experienced life-coaches in the spheres of both non-religious spirituality & holistic physical health. The learning is for student **volunteers only and is not mandatory**, as it involves participation in (1) a guided sweat-lodge ceremony, (2) a group sharing circle, (3) the preparation & clean-up of communal meals, and (4) planting trees in a community garden (along with prep work). This trip will occur from 12:30 pm on Thursday, Oct 12 until 3:30 pm on Friday, Oct 13. Once again, please note that this trip is **for committed student volunteers only**, as it will involve discomfort, personal challenge and 'extra effort' from all participants. The trip will be led by experienced local volunteers who are engaged each step of the way with ALCS staff guidance & support.

Here are the essentials:

Who: Student volunteers on a first-come basis, per each grade, with priority given to seniors

What: A 1.5-day trip to the Gila River (Near mile-marker 7 on Turkey Creek road in Gila, NM)

When: Depart ALCS at 12:30 pm on **October 12 and return by 3:30 pm on October 13th**

Where we will be: On private land near the Gila National Forest, just off Turkey Creek Road in Gila, NM.

Why: To expand our consciousness of how our personal capacity to endure is reflected in (a) our local community's journey to create a more sustainable world, and (b) our school's capacity to grow & endure.

*Website for more information: <http://schooloflostborders.org/content/wilderness-rites-passage-healing-growth-and-initiation-john-davis-phd>

How Much: \$18 standard fare; up to \$22 to help us cover all costs; \$15 "bare-bones" fare

Travel, as you know, can be both enlightening & expensive. As always, ALCS faculty have endeavored to keep our trips as affordable as possible, sleeping outdoors & relying on the expertise & good-will of both parents & community members. 2017 marks the third year that ALCS has sponsored such a leadership enhancement trip for multiple grade-levels, & we are hoping that dedicated ALCS student-leaders will be able to attend this worthwhile journey that offers students a way to find their own internal strengths.

The cost of this trip to the school – not including teacher and substitute salaries – comes to \$22 per student. This amount includes a small recognition of our volunteers’ time; the cost of driving the bus; and three meals. As is our usual practice, we have a three-tiered fee structure for this trip. The “bare-bones” cost covers just the food we will purchase to feed your student. At \$5 per meal, that’s \$15. The standard cost also includes volunteer gifts; that brings the amount to \$18. And the full-fare option, for those families able & willing to help us continue to provide such rewarding experiences to Grant County’s teenagers, is \$22. If coming up with the money to pay for this trip is a hardship, know that eligible households may apply for a school subsidy of \$7.50, bringing the “bare-bones cost” to only \$7.50. This last option is available to families who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. The Aldo faculty will never let a student’s financial challenges get in the way of attending a school trip.

We are asking students to bring a sack lunch for Thursday Oct 12, bus snacks, and two quarts of water each.
We will return to ALCS around 3:30 PM on Friday, Oct 13.

The Leadership Enhancement Workshop (LEW) is intended to advance the school’s stated vision to create graduates who have the necessary skills for enhancing “their own lives and to advance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.” To achieve this intention, students at LEW will have the opportunity to gain skill-sets that are largely independent of being a passive, comfort-motivated consumer. As such, it is our goal that these young people gain confidence in their ability to take meaningful action in their own lives, and in the greater world, as engaged citizens who believe that change starts from within. Turn your attention to the final page of this document for information on (a) the day’s itinerary, and (B) the trip’s application process. Remember, your spot is not secured until you give your permission slip to Cathie Gomez.

Even though we will be lower in elevation than Silver City and in a warmer climate, the principle of layering prevails when you’re in the desert during the fall; a jacket or fleece is necessary, as are closed-toed shoes, light clothes, & a hat for warm days. So, too, are a warm sleeping bag and a shared tent necessary. And, while rain is a rare blessing here in the Southwestern U.S., it’s always possible—so students should bring rain gear.

A packing list is attached below. If you have any questions about the trip, don’t hesitate to contact me at 575-654-3622 or at prankin@aldocs.org.

With kind regards, Pete Rankin

Leadership Enhancement (Oct 12 & 13) Please complete, detach & return with payment:

Name of student: _____ Meal Preference: Meat / Vegetarian (circle one)

___ All medical information is up-to-date in our school records. If this is not true, then please let Jim McIntosh (ALCS school nurse) know as soon as possible.

___ Our address & phone number are up-to-date in our school records. If not, please update these with Cathie or Andrea.

___ We have signed this ‘LEW Registration Form’

Choose from the following options:

___ \$18 is attached, representing the cost of food for my student and a gift-fee for community volunteers.

___ \$22 is attached, representing the standard fee plus the cost of driving our bus.

___ \$15 is attached, representing the cost of food for my student

___ \$7.50 is attached, along with a subsidy application; my family qualifies for the free and reduced lunch

Parent signature: _____

ALCS Leadership Enhancement Trip - Packing List

Items with an asterisk () beside them are available on loan from the school. "Loaners" require that students offer \$50 collateral as a guarantee that items are returned in good condition. Please let Pete Rankin (prankin@aldocs.org) know if you need any of these items.*

- Duffel or "softside" travel bag (or backpack*)
- Tent* (This item will be necessary.)
- Cool-weather sleeping bag in a stuff-sack*; should be rated 20 degrees or lower
- Sleeping pad* (more important than you might think)
- Cap with a brim
- Rain poncho *or* raincoat and pants
- 2 sturdy water bottles or Camelback-style hydration system
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Sturdy hiking shoes
- Sandals for camp (very optional in winter)
- Mess kit (sturdy bowl, cup, spoon, fork)
- Trash bag
- Hand towel and washcloth
- Bandana
- A "sack lunch" for the first day of the trip, and bus snacks for the drive
- Toiletries: sunscreen, lip balm, soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant (optional)
- Journal, along with at least one pen & pencil
- 2 optional items for camp:
 - Lighter (for fire-starting)
 - Pocket knife with a 2-inch (or shorter) blade

- In general, you need **clothes for 2 days**: the clothes you wear to school on Thursday, & a change of clothes for Friday. The key word is **layering**.
 - 2 pair of socks; cotton is not recommended
 - Warm jacket—but probably not a "winter coat"; cotton is not recommended
 - Warm cap; cotton is not recommended
 - 1 long-sleeved shirt; cotton is not recommended
 - 2 short-sleeved shirts; cotton is not recommended
 - 1 pair of pants; long pants that convert into shorts are ideal; cotton is not recommended
 - Underwear, of course—including some sweatpants or long-johns for sleepwear
 - Also, a watch would be handy, so that we can stay close to a schedule; we are sharing meals & engaging in group activities that require some punctuality.

Note: All secret stashes of food should be placed in the Bear Bag.

Explanation of the Application Process

Trip Name: ALCS Leadership Enhancement Workshop (LEW)

Objectives: Students will...

1. *Learn* from their community elders.
2. *Embed* their individual identities in the riparian ecosystem.
3. *Deepen* their cultural, physical, psychological & spiritual roots in our local region.
4. *Understand* how to replace dysfunctional habits of mind or spirit (e.g. substance abuse) with rituals of growth & renewal (e.g. sweat lodge, service to community & meditation).

Plan:

Thursday Oct 12

12:30 Depart ALCS after lunch on Thurs Mar 9
1 to 3:00 Choose safe campsites & students set up camp
3 to 5:00 Help with wood for sweat lodge & prep communal meal
5:30 – 7:30 Sweat lodge guided by community elders
7:30 – 8:30 Meal shared together
8:30 – 9:30 Tea & sharing circle

Friday Oct 13

6:30 – 8:30 AM Quiet reflection time and break individual camps
8:30 – 10:30 Breakfast, wash dishes & closing circle
10:30 – 11:30 Break camp
11:30 – 2:30 Snack lunch & tree planting service project for the Gila Community Center
3:30 – 4:00 Arrive back at ALCS

Application Timeline & Process: A **maximum of 16 spots** are open for student attendance. Priority will be given to seniors, followed by juniors, then sophomores, and fresh-people.

- All applications from seniors are due by Friday Sept 29
- All applications from juniors are due by Monday Oct 2
- All applications from sophomores are due by Thursday Oct 5
- All applications from fresh-people are due by Monday Oct 9
 - If there are slots open after the fresh-people deadline, then these slots will be filled in the same order of priority.

Effects on Internships: Internship hours are possible.

What to Expect That Might Be New: Students will be camped within visual & auditory range of an ALCS adult facilitator. However, students will sleep in their tent by themselves. They will have the opportunity to participate in a sweat-lodge workshop guided by experienced adult mentors. This Oct 12 workshop will involve the opportunity for physical discomfort as a pathway toward personal growth. The tree-planting service project on Oct 13 might also involve a type of discomfort, called 'hard work.'