

IT'S ALL RELATIVE

Bringing Australians together



Project Summary

Angela Milthorpe grew up in Sydney, and has lived and worked in the NT for the past 8 years. During this time she has worked with Aboriginal people in the areas of training, aged care, substance misuse and Applied Anthropology, and in the process has been 'adopted' into two Aboriginal families, one from Ramingining, coastal Arnhem Land, and one from Docker River, desert central Australia.

To be 'adopted' is the only meaningful way an outsider can be incorporated into the Aboriginal social structure. This is because Aboriginal society is based upon an extended kinship network, with all people related in either a real or classificatory sense. Each relationship has behavioural rules attached; for example, women should never look at or talk directly to anyone who is their potential son-in-law. One in eight males within the Community are potential son-in-laws, for any woman.

This project entails taking 12 members from each 'adopted' NT Aboriginal family, on a one month journey to the east coast; in order to introduce them to her biological family, as well as giving them a taste of the best of her cultural background. Activities will include: sport and recreation such as yoga and fishing; a cruise on Sydney Harbour; aquarium visits; music; art; and camping by the ocean.

The trip will culminate in a Reconciliation Event in the Southern Highlands of NSW, where Angela's family now reside. The goal of this celebration will be to unite people through food, music, art and dance, giving them a sense of their shared humanity and identity as Australians. The event will incorporate some talented indigenous and non-indigenous Australian dancers, musicians and artists.



Mapu and Ngarritjan with their 'Aunty Angie'



Andrea hunts in the swamp near Ramingining

We will make an intimate documentary about this example of practical reconciliation (to be aired on ABC or SBS as well as potentially overseas). This film will be aimed at the average Australian, who has no understanding of Aboriginal culture, and sees no way to experience a first-hand connection.

Broad Goals

- Cross-cultural understanding at both individual and societal levels.
- To educate Australians about the strength and vibrancy of contemporary/traditional Aboriginal culture.
- To demonstrate the rich diversity of Aboriginal peoples: such as the fact that the two Aboriginal families speak different Indigenous languages.
- To inspire two Aboriginal Communities with new possibilities (eg. all trip participants are saving money to contribute towards trip expenses, gaining an understanding of financial planning).
- To generate forums for cultural presentation, education and celebration.



Albert, Elaine and baby Bronia
Docker River



The Products

1. The trip

Three families will come together to experience different concepts of 'family', the sharing of culture and language, and the great Australian institution of the 'road trip'; finally culminating in the opportunity to share in Christmas celebrations together.

2. The Reconciliation Event in NSW

This will be a low-key event in Robertson, NSW. The two Aboriginal families will have the opportunity to interact with Angela's biological family and friends. Cultural exchange will be encouraged through the sharing of food, music, dance, art and craft.

There will be professional musicians and dancers representing each group, as well as an exhibition space for the sharing of arts and crafts, photography and educational material.

3. The documentary

A positive contemporary story, exploring the differences between the cultures, as well as the common elements and shared humanity.



Angela with her mother and stepfather

Trip Facilitators

- Angela Milthorpe, 32, Grad Dip. (Business and Tourism), BA (Anthropology): conversational Pitjantjatjara and Yolngu Matha languages.
- Danielle Green, 32, BMed FRACGP. Part-time GP at Royal Darwin Hospital: also a partner in a video production business, Formation Studios.
- Will Tinapple, 34, B Sc, Grad Dip. SEc Ed, Cert TESL. Has extensive experience in teaching and working with Aboriginal groups, as well as teaching in mainstream high schools.
- Bhavini Patel, 35, Bsc (Hons) Pharmacy Class 2 (i) Msc. Clinical Pharmacy. Director of pharmacy at Darwin Hospital, July 2001 to date. Responsible for 21 staff members and a \$10 million budget.
- Paul Pritchard, 36, B Env Sc, currently studying Nursing through CDU. Has operated his own business since 2000, Australian Catering and Touring Services. Has worked as a Tour Guide for 12 yrs, conducting tours through central Australia, The Kimberleys and Kakadu NP.
- Paige Shreeve, 33, B Appl Sc (physiotherapy). Paige has worked as a physiotherapist and more recently, she has been co-ordinating the 'Healthy Skin' program at Menzies School of Health Research.
- Sophia Williams, 31, B Education. Sophia studied in the UK, and has spent the past 4 years teaching special ed. in Darwin. She is also a practicing artist.
- John Morse AM, 57, former Managing Director of the Australian Tourist Commission. Awarded a Centenary Medal in 2002 and an AM in 2003 for services to tourism and the development of indigenous tourism. John is the official mentor for the Its All Relative project.

Contact

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