

Early Developments of the Whale Foundation
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Summer 1998 Volume 11 #3

Grand Canyon boatmen face unusual challenges in this life unlike most others. They are in a job that is desired by many and held by few. There is an incredible closeness to the boatman community that is coupled with competition for jobs. There is pride in the experience you bring to the job, but as the boatman population ages there is the worry that anything less than stoicism may result in the loss of one's job to one of the younger generation who is waiting in line. This is a job where benefit plans are incredibly rare and pension plans nonexistent. Many boatmen live a hand-to-mouth existence that peaks in the summer and scrapes by in those long, lean winter months. There is always the worry of "what do I do when I get too old to guide?"

The Whale Foundation hopes to address some of these unique problems faced by the river community. The goals of the foundation include the following:

- * Mental Health Services.
- * Provide information and anonymous services to anyone in the boating community.
- * Career Counseling Network.
- * Establish a network in the boating community to assist each other in any career endeavors.
- * Financial Planning Network.
- * Utilize the expertise of the boating community to assist in retirement planning and general investing for the future.
- * Ultimately? Perhaps strive for some form of group medical insurance and perhaps an Old Boatman's Home.

There are two ways that folks can help us achieve our goals:

1. Make a Financial Donation

Of course, the Whale Foundation needs money in order to realize its goals. The Whale Foundation is an offshoot of the non-profit organization Grand Canyon River Guides, and your tax-deductible financial donation can be sent to:

The Whale Foundation
c/o Grand Canyon River Guides
PO Box 1934
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

2. Donation of Services

We are looking for professionals, preferably in Northern Arizona and southern Utah and Colorado, who are willing to donate services in any of the following areas: Mental Health Services/Counseling, Drug and Alcohol Counseling/Rehabilitation, Financial Planning Services, Career Counseling Services. If you are interested in donating any time or knowledge, please write,

call, or e-mail the gcrg office, or TheGruse@aol.com.

If you need help, call (520)773-0773. If you want to talk to someone, call this number. You don't have to wait until you go over the edge. Mental crises take many forms, from gradual onset of depression to sudden end-of-the-world predicaments. Maybe you've gotten to the point where you're really worried about yourself or perhaps you merely have a dim suspicion that things just aren't right. Or maybe it's your friend you're worried about. Doesn't matter. That's what the Whale Phone is there for.

For right now, the Whale Phone is attached to Sandy Reiff's business phone. This is, however, only temporary. One of our immediate goals is to set up our own toll free line. The toll free number will, in theory, provide a few things:

1. Give out the phone number(s) for regional mental health professionals.
2. Give access for those who want to offer a service or information to the Whale Foundation. We want to bring in everyone who wants to be involved. The Whale Foundation will act as a clearing house for community services which may include; financial planning, a career assistance network, legal advice, medical insurance, and any other service our community wants or needs. Anything we can think of.

Over time we will develop a database for assisting each other within the Grand Canyon boating community. This is the strength of this program: being there for each other.

Until the next issue, safe boating, both on the river and off.