

MOUNT
RUSHMORE
SOCIETY

2022 Highlights



People Behind the Purpose

Meet the Team Behind the Numbers



We are thrilled to spotlight our (r) Finance Director Jackie Spreizer, CPA, and (l) Accounting Assistant Cody Wolberg!

Jackie joined our team in summer of 2021 at our Rapid City office and manages the funds that all of you entrust with the Society. She had most recently worked for South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and has more than 25 years experience working in the accounting field. While numbers are her vibe, she definitely has a creative side, serving as accompanist for her local church and crafting in her spare time. Her great uncle was one of 400 people who helped carve Mount Rushmore, so she is continuing the family legacy!

Cody and his family recently moved from Oregon back to the Black Hills. He recently earned an Associate of Applied Science in Accounting from Western Dakota Technical Institute and has stepped right into being an asset to our accounting team.



From T-Shirts to Treasures— You Made It Meaningful

A big THANK YOU to Matea Hunsaker, who has served as the Mount Rushmore Memories Airport Store Manager for seven years! She is now leaving the Society but will always be a part of our team. Good luck, Matea!

People Behind the Purpose

Meet Our New Retail Manager

Kaitlinn Verchio has been named the retail manager for our Mount Rushmore Memories Airport Store at Rapid City Regional Airport. She has been with the Society team since 2018, most recently serving as supervisor for the airport store. She is excited to expand in this new role and continue the growth and popularity this location has in being the first stop visitors have in coming to the Black Hills



Kaitlinn also uses her retail experience in her passion for cooking. Born and raised in the Heart of the Black Hills, she graduated from Hill City High School and went to culinary school in Boulder, CO, at Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts, in which she graduated with a degree in pastry arts. She currently owns and operates Dazed on Sugar, making tasty sweets (which you can find at Mount Rushmore Memories Airport Store or on Main Street, Rapid City!)

Next time you're flying out of Rapid City (or flying in!), take time to pop into the Mount Rushmore Memories store and say "hi" to Kaitlinn.



Just one of Kaitlinn's creations at Dazed on Sugar and may be purchased at either one of our Mount Rushmore Memories stores.

People Behind the Purpose



A New Chapter in Visitor Engagement and Education

Earl Perez-Foust joined the Mount Rushmore National Memorial team this summer as the new Program Manager of Interpretation and Education. He oversees the interpretive and educational programs, visitor information desks and the rangers who provide the daily visitor services which help audiences discover the various meanings and significance of Mount Rushmore.

His role also includes serving as liaison between the Mount Rushmore Society and the Mount Rushmore Bookstores located at the park. He and his team are instrumental in the review, selection and development of publications and products we sell in our stores, as well as how resources the Society provides support the park.

Earl began his park service career in 2016 at Wind Cave National Park. In fact, three out of the five parks he has worked for are in the Black Hills: Wind Cave National Park, Badlands National Park and now Mount Rushmore National Memorial! He most recently served as Program Manager for Visitor Services at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas.

What most inspires him about Mount Rushmore are the visitors. "Every day, I talk with folks coming to the site for deeply personal reasons," explains Perez-Foust. "As an icon park, many people visiting the site already have strong connections to it. I think it is a testament to the special significance of the site and the Black Hills, in general."

At Mount Rushmore, Earl has the opportunity to work with people from many different backgrounds and perspectives, and this helps him identify ways to properly steward this site for the future. We are honored to partner with him in this mission of preserving and enhancing Mount Rushmore for all who visit!

Stories from the Mountain



In honor of National Park Week, we began a series of articles introducing you to some of the faces behind the four most famous faces at Mount Rushmore.

First up was U.S. Park Ranger Chris Chapman at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. He has been with the National Park Service for three years and at Mount Rushmore for six months. His main focus is protecting the integrity of the Memorial and supporting public safety. The position involves security and police work as well as interacting with the public every day. In his job, he may need to assist someone who is lost or having a medical emergency. He, and other law enforcement rangers, also attempt to educate our visitors on the Memorial and its regulations.

"My favorite part of the job is knowing that what we do can have a positive impact on society," says Chapman. "Mount Rushmore inspires me to become a better version of myself to serve the public more effectively."

Stories from the Mountain



Marvin Achtenberg has been working for the National Park Service since 1996. He worked as a seasonal employee from 1996 to 2010 at Mount Rushmore and became a permanent employee in 2010.

His job consists of helping to staff information desks, presenting interpretive programs, training and coaching seasonal employees, maintaining the park website and coordinating the publishing of park brochures and newspapers. He also works with the seasonal staff to create and schedule education programs for area schools and schedule field trip visits.

Marvin's favorite parts of the job are meeting people from all over the world and watching their varied reactions to Mount Rushmore, as well as training of new staff and seeing how they perform the job and the creative programs they develop.

"I like to give ranger talks that encourage audience engagement and that really get them thinking on a deeper level," explains Achtenberg. "I like to present talks about the presidents on Mount Rushmore as real human beings, flaws and all . . . they weren't very different from any of us. I hope visitors will see that any one of us might be capable of having just as large an impact on our country and the world as the four memorialized here."

Stories from the Mountain



The Mount Rushmore Society provides the funding for seasonal interpretive rangers at Mount Rushmore, like Matt Sweigart of Reading, Pennsylvania, through your donations and purchases at our Mount Rushmore Bookstores.

Interpretive rangers work with the permanent staff and summer interns to answer questions at the ranger desks and give educational programs to visitors during the summer season. They are on the front lines, ensuring that visitors are informed on a daily basis.

Formerly a teacher, Matt decided to make a change and join the National Park Service this year. Mount Rushmore National Memorial is his first assignment, and he has been serving as a seasonal interpretive ranger at the park since May. For the last ten years, he has visited the Black Hills off and on and is excited to work and live in an area he loves.

He has enjoyed his position for many reasons. "I enjoy working with the visitors and seeing people's emotions as they cross this bucket item off their list," explains Matt. "I also have had fun working with the kids who participate in the Junior Ranger Program."

Matt is inspired by the themes of perseverance and patriotism that are woven in the creation and enhancement of the Mount Rushmore story. At the Mount Rushmore Society, we appreciate rangers like Matt and hope you say "hi" the next time you visit the park!

Programs with Purpose



Your Donations Brought Mount Rushmore to Life This Summer

Thanks to your generous support, the Mount Rushmore Society was proud to fund a full season of engaging and educational programming at Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

Your donations made it possible to pay the salaries of seasonal rangers who greeted visitors, led talks and walks, and helped bring the stories of the memorial to life. You also helped support the Kay Jorgensen Interpretive Internship Program, which added capacity to the park's interpretive staff and enriched the visitor experience all summer long.

Throughout the season, thousands of visitors experienced:

- Ranger-led Talks and Walks
- Sculptor's Studio Presentations
- The nightly Evening Lighting Ceremony (which began May 27)
- The Mount Rushmore Self-Guided Tour
- Cultural presentations at the Lakota, Nakota & Dakota Village
- Youth-focused activities at the Youth Exploration Area
-

Thanks to you, the park also hosted a variety of special performances, including hoop dancing by Star Chief Eagle every Monday morning, as well as storytelling by Darrell Red Cloud and Sequoia Crosswhite.

Whether you visited the park in person or supported from afar, your generosity helped make this summer memorable for hundreds of thousands of visitors. Thank you for helping us preserve not only a place, but an experience!

Programs with Purpose



Jack & Jade Take on the Mountain

We caught up with two of the Kay Jorgensen Interpretive Interns at Mount Rushmore. With your support, the Mount Rushmore Society funds six interns at the park each summer. Jack is from Indiana, and Jade is from Pennsylvania. They are loving their time at Mount Rushmore and South Dakota!



Celebrating Citizenship at Mount Rushmore

On June 29, the Mount Rushmore Society was proud to once again sponsor the annual Naturalization Ceremony at Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

In a moving and patriotic event held in the park's historic Amphitheater, 119 new citizens from 43 different countries took the Oath of Allegiance and officially became citizens of the United States. Set against the backdrop of the Shrine of Democracy, the ceremony served as a powerful reminder of the values of freedom, opportunity, and unity that Mount Rushmore represents.

We are honored to support this meaningful tradition each year and to welcome our newest fellow citizens in such a symbolic and inspiring setting.

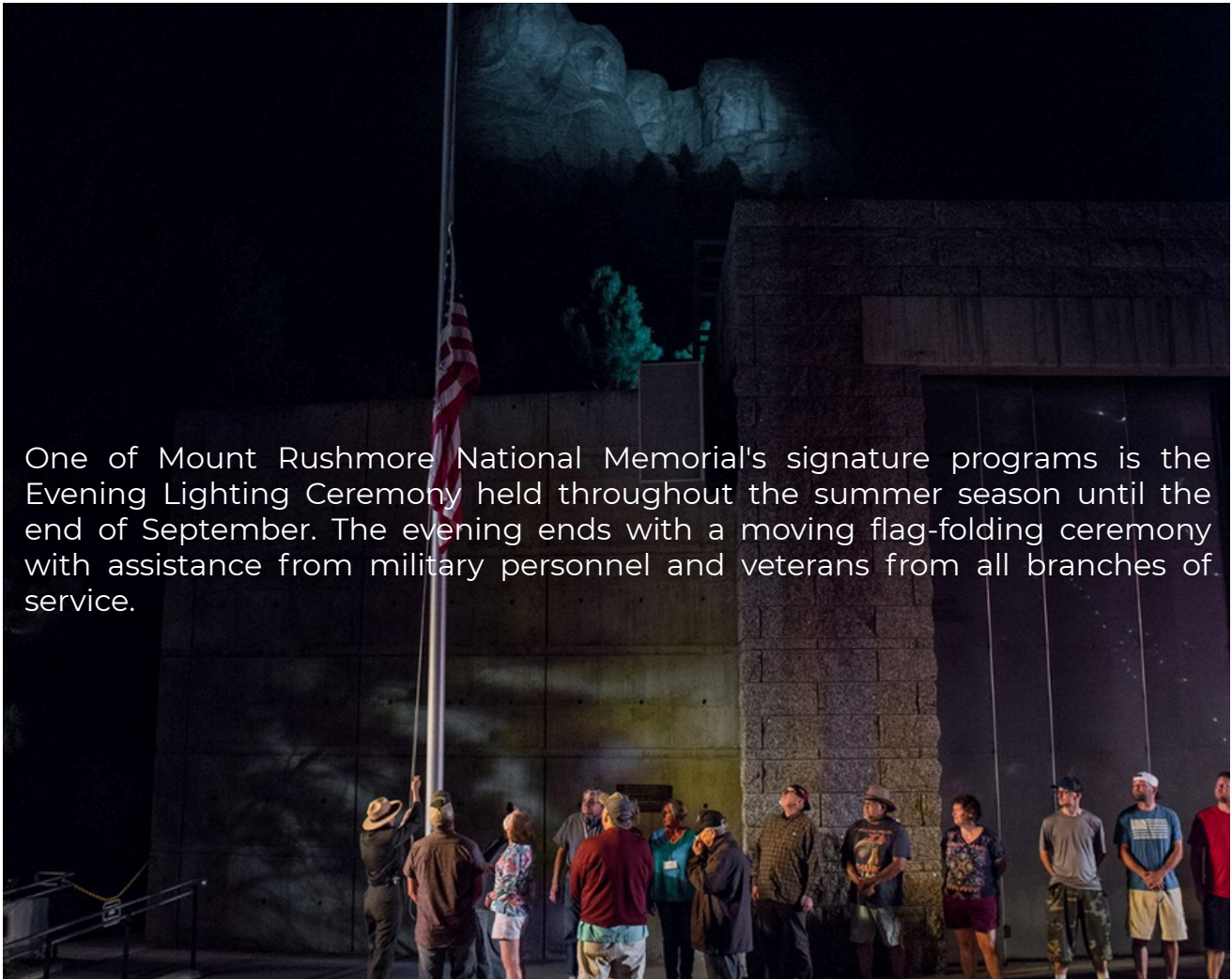
Programs with Purpose

A Presidential Conversation to Remember



In July 2022, four presidential re-enactors—familiar faces to many Mount Rushmore visitors—gathered for a rare, unscripted conversation about the leaders they portray. Their candid reflections offered a unique glimpse into the personalities, histories, and legacies of the four presidents carved into the mountain.

Thanks to your support, the Mount Rushmore Society is proud to help fund programs like this—bringing history to life and deepening the visitor experience at the Memorial.



One of Mount Rushmore National Memorial's signature programs is the Evening Lighting Ceremony held throughout the summer season until the end of September. The evening ends with a moving flag-folding ceremony with assistance from military personnel and veterans from all branches of service.

Programs with Purpose



City of Presidents & Visitor Info Hub at 830 Main

In summer 2022, the Mount Rushmore Society partnered with Visit Rapid City to serve as a hub for visitor information—and to help more guests experience the beloved City of Presidents walking tour.

From our downtown office at 830 Main Street, visitors picked up maps of the presidential statues, learned about the scavenger hunt, and claimed small prizes for completing it. The partnership not only welcomed guests to Rapid City but connected them to the broader story of the Black Hills.

In addition to City of Presidents materials, our office offered brochures and information about parks, attractions, restaurants, and other local experiences—helping thousands of visitors make the most of their time in the region.

Programs with Purpose

Find Your Park Festival



We had a wonderful time at the 2022 Find Your Park Festival, in which 18 vendors gathered to share information about their park or outdoor-related organization. Attendees shared in some family fun and heard from cultural demonstrator Sequoia Crosswhite, Black Hills Raptor Center and rangers from Mount Rushmore, Wind Cave, Badlands and Jewel Cave.

Programs with Purpose

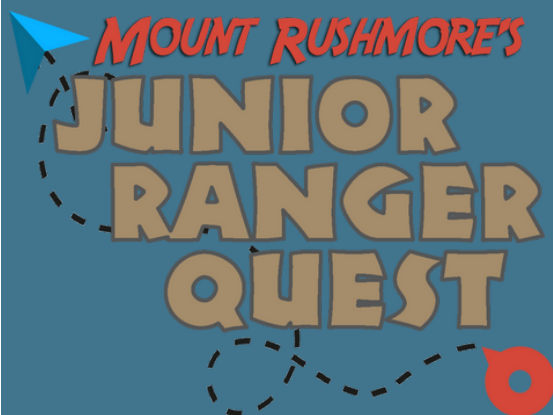


Enhancing Visitor Experiences with the Self-Guided Tour

Since 2007, the Mount Rushmore Society has proudly operated the Mount Rushmore Self-Guided Tour: Living Memorial, a multimedia experience that helps bring the story of the Memorial to life for visitors from around the world.

Thanks to your support, this immersive tour continues to be a vital educational tool—featuring narration, interviews, historic audio, and video content. It is available in English, Spanish, French, German, and Lakota, helping thousands of guests engage more deeply with the park's history and meaning.

Proceeds from tour rentals in 2022 helped fund key educational programming at the park, including the Junior Ranger program, seasonal rangers, and interpretive internships. Every tour rented supported these mission-driven efforts—and we're grateful to all who made it possible.



Also included in the self-guided tour is the Junior Ranger Quest game, an adventure that allows kids to participate in up to 16 challenges at different tour stops around the park. Once you complete 12 of 16 challenges, show your device to a ranger at the Information Center desk, and you will receive a Junior Ranger badge, just like the written Junior Ranger program. Although it's best played at the park, the game is available as a free download on the App Store and Google Play or by searching for "Junior Ranger Quest."

Philanthropy in Action

Honoring Generosity on the Grand View Terrace

On September 16, 2022, the Mount Rushmore Society and the National Park Service proudly unveiled 16 new donor names engraved on the Grand View Terrace Donor Wall at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. This year's newly engraved gifts represent more than \$135,000 in support for programs and preservation at the Memorial.

Set against the iconic backdrop of the Shrine of Democracy, the ceremony celebrated a powerful tradition: recognizing private philanthropy as both a cornerstone of our national parks and a reflection of the ideals Mount Rushmore represents—freedom, democracy, and patriotism.

Each year, names are engraved on the Donor Wall to recognize contributions of \$5,000 or more to the Mount Rushmore Society, following a donation review process. This lasting tribute is unveiled just once annually—and we are deeply grateful to each donor who chose to leave their mark on this national treasure. This is your Mount Rushmore. This is your legacy.



Donors honored during the 2022 ceremony included: Stephanie & Marc Pariza, Representatives from the U.S. Military Veterans Motorcycle Club, Rollie & Peg Noem, Elf Swan, Dan & Susan Welsh, Ed Corwin & Toni Logar, Aaron Galloway, Carol Johnson, and Brian Hagg.

Philanthropy in Action



The Mount Rushmore Society (Society) held its inaugural Spirit of America Gala on October 1 in the Carvers Café at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Approximately 165 attendees gathered to enjoy a beautiful evening at the park and an elegant dinner prepared by Xanterra Parks & Resorts and LIV Hospitality, as well as be inspired to reach for the stars!

The Spirit of America Gala, like Mount Rushmore National Memorial, celebrates the best of what this country has to offer with stories of inspiration, innovation and leadership. This year, the spotlight was on space exploration with featured speakers NASA Astronaut Doug Hurley and SpaceX Astronaut Dr. Sian Proctor. In addition, NASA Astronaut Nicole Stott planned to attend but was waylaid by Hurricane Ian.

As part of the evening festivities, both Hurley and Stott were each recognized with the first annual Spirit of America Award, which celebrates the tenacity, innovation and leadership of those who persevere to make America stronger and better. Dr. Proctor accepted the award on Stott's behalf.

"We are so excited that our inaugural event was a success!" explains Society CEO Diana Nielsen. "Mount Rushmore inspires each of us to never say 'I can't,' and we hope to bring inspirational stories to the Black Hills each year that remind us of what we are capable of as a country and an individual."

We thank our sponsors (listed below), Master of Ceremonies Aaron Galloway, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology volunteers, Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard, entertainer Margie Gruba and Purpose Entertainment (and crew) for making this event possible!

Philanthropy in Action



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Jim Weinel

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John & Kay Rozell

Bronze Sponsors

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	Visit Rapid City

Top left: Gala attendees listen while astronauts Douglas Hurley and Dr. Sian Proctor answer questions posed by Valley View Elementary School; Top right: Dr. Sian Proctor, CEO Diana Nielsen, Douglas Hurley and Christina Korp of Purpose Entertainment gather together before the program begins; Middle left: Our honored guests pose with park rangers Lynn McFarland, Marie Owens, Earl Perez-Foust and Superintendent Michelle Wheatley; Bottom left: South Dakota School of Mines & Technology volunteers take a time out before the program begins.

Retail with a Mission



Mission-Driven Retail That Supports the Memorial

In 2022, the Mount Rushmore Society continued to operate three retail locations that connect visitors and locals alike to the story of Mount Rushmore—while supporting the park through every purchase.

At Mount Rushmore Memories on Main in downtown Rapid City, guests found South Dakota-made gifts, books, apparel, and holiday items inspired by the Memorial and the four presidents on the mountain. From locals shopping for the holidays to tourists discovering a keepsake, the store offered something for everyone—with proceeds supporting educational and interpretive programs at the park.

We also continued to operate the Mount Rushmore Bookstores at the Memorial itself, as well as Mount Rushmore Memories at the Rapid City Regional Airport, extending our reach to travelers at every stage of their Black Hills journey.