



For Immediate Release

Blandin Foundation plans first-ever American Indian Alumni Gathering

GRAND RAPIDS, Minn. (March 30, 2009) – The Blandin Foundation is planning a first-ever gathering of American Indian alumni of its leadership programs.

The American Indian Alumni Gathering will be held May 5-7, 2009, and will celebrate and honor the more than 200 American Indian alumni of the foundation's Blandin Reservation Community Leadership Program and Blandin Community Leadership Program. In addition, it will mobilize these trained leaders to engage and empower youth in building healthy community.

Dr. Thomas Peacock, member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, and author and co-author of books on Native education, Ojibwe history and race relations, will deliver a keynote address. Michael Bucher, an award-winning Cherokee singer-songwriter who performed at the 2009 Presidential American Indian Inaugural Ball, will provide entertainment on May 5.

“We are eager for our alumni to attend this historic event,” said Valerie Shangreaux, director of leadership at Blandin Foundation. “It will be a time for the alumni to reflect on their leadership experience, and to return to their communities with tools to engage Indian youth – our next generation of leaders – in building healthy community.”

Invitations have been sent to addresses the foundation has on file. American Indian alumni who have not received an invitation or who have questions can contact Angela Jenkins at 218/327-8732 or 877/882-2257.

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Blandin Foundation, Minnesota's largest rural-based private foundation, is located in Grand Rapids, Minn. Its mission is to strengthen rural Minnesota communities, especially the Grand Rapids area, through grants, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives.

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