



The Road Scholar Press Kit

ROAD SCHOLAR®

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Hello, I'm Kelsey

PR DIRECTOR

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

If you're working on an article about:

travel for older adults ♦ solo travel ♦ women-only travel ♦ travel to Cuba ♦ skip-gen or intergenerational travel ♦ virtual learning / virtual travel

... or anything else related to Road Scholar, please reach out!

Road Scholar's Public Relations Director Kelsey Knoedler Perri has worked in travel, tourism, hospitality sales, marketing and communications throughout her career and has been with Road Scholar since 2016. Kelsey caught the travel bug when she studied abroad in Ireland during college. She holds a BA and an MFA in creative writing. She is an expert in travel, communications, social media for older adults, solo travelers and grandparents and has appeared on various [talk shows](#) and [podcasts](#).

Find Press Releases, Photos, Mentions and More at roadscholar.org/press

DOWNLOAD ASSETS: [Photos](#) [Logos](#)

HAPPY TO PROVIDE

{ MINED DATA
EXPERT QUOTES
INTERVIEW SUBJECTS
STORY IDEAS
INDUSTRY TRENDS

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Road Scholar at a Glance



**The not-for-profit
world leader in
educational travel
for older adults**

135k

PARTICIPANTS PER YEAR
Road Scholar serves older adults
from across North America

72

AVERAGE AGE
Road Scholar serves participants
in their 50s and older

1975

ROAD SCHOLAR
was founded over 50 years
ago as Elderhostel

28%

SOLO TRAVELERS
85% of whom are women,
60% of whom are married

4,775

LEARNING ADVENTURES in...

100+

COUNTRIES **7**
around the world and online

Not-for-profit Road Scholar is the world leader in educational travel for older adults, serving more than 135,000 lifelong learners annually in over 100 countries, throughout the United States and **at home**. Founded as “Elderhostel” in 1975, Road Scholar celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2025. Their programs combine travel and education to provide experiential learning opportunities featuring an extraordinary range of topics, formats and locations. For more information, visit roadscholar.org/about.

The Road Scholar Experience – A University of the World

“The ‘art’ is learning,
the ‘medium’ is travel.”

- KELSEY KNOEDLER PERRI
PR DIRECTOR

What Is “Educational Travel”?

Road Scholar offers group travel

experiences across the U.S. and around the world, ranging from four days to four months. Think of us as a “university of the world.” There are no borders, no homework and no grades. It’s learning for the love of learning in “classrooms” around the globe.

What’s included?

Once someone enrolls in a Road Scholar program, nearly everything is included:

- An expert Group Leader who will take care of all the logistics
- Lodging & most meals
- All taxes and tips (including for your Group Leader)
- On-program transportation
- Field trips and classroom lectures
- Authentic local interactions & behind-the-scenes access you wouldn’t get on your own
- 24/7 emergency assistance as part of our [Road Scholar Assurance Plan](#)
- The camaraderie of a group of curious and open-minded peers

How big are groups?

The majority of Road Scholar’s programs are “small group” programs, with a maximum capacity of 24, but we also offer smaller “microgroup” programs, mid-sized programs and a select few “large group” programs centered around a special festival or event, like the Rose Parade®.

Expert Instructors...

Like Dr. Jeremy Yudkin, esteemed author, Ph.D. in historical musicology, professor at Boston, Harvard and Oxford Universities and co-director of the Center for Beethoven Research.

Authentic Local Interactions...

Like making tortillas from scratch and learning the cultural deer dance in the traditional adobe home of a local Maya Indigenous family in Mexico.

Behind-the-Scenes Access...

Like an overnight stay on the [USS Missouri](#) in Pearl Harbor to get the same experience of the sailors living aboard the historic vessel during WWII.

A vertical collage of 15 hexagonal images arranged in a staggered grid, showcasing various travel experiences. The images include: a woman with a camera, the Polar Star ship, people on a boat, a group of four women cheering, a city at night, a woman with a camera, two women posing, a restaurant interior, a group of people on a boat, a waterfall, the Lincoln Memorial, a colorful building, and an elephant.

We offer an astounding breadth of educational programming – 4,775 programs in over 100 countries, seven continents and across the U.S., plus “Road Scholar At Home” programs for online learners. In-person programs range from four days to four months and start at \$899. Our programs represent a range of activity levels to accommodate curious explorers of any ability.

Winter in Southern Europe

Road Scholar At Home

Popular Destinations

Greece - 2026 Campus of the Year!

Cuba

With the first departures in 2025, these programs have been developed as a response to the continuous increase in solo travel.

Road Scholar's most impactful programs bring participants face to face with American heroes to learn about the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement.

Chartered voyages exclusively for Road Scholar participants create a unique campus community experience.

A range of programs for beginner to advanced pickleballers who will join top pickleball instructors to hone their skills.

“Skip-gen” programs for grandparents and grandkids and “multi-generational” programming for three generations create stronger bonds and lifelong memories.

Adventures Afloat range from shorter voyages on riverboats and barges to multi-country voyages that span the globe.

Participants stay in
apartments, taking language

What Makes Road Scholar Unique?



Mission

Road Scholar's mission is to inspire adults to learn, discover and travel. Our learning adventures engage expert instructors, provide extraordinary access and stimulate discourse and friendship among people for whom learning is the journey of a lifetime.

“Regardless of the topic, you will learn something with every Road Scholar program, and your curiosity will be piqued to learn and discover more! A zest for learning is a zest for life.”

– Paula W., Alameda, Calif.,
Online Lecture enthusiast



Not for Profit

Road Scholar is not a commercial tour operator. We're a not-for-profit organization, and we have been since our founding in 1975. That not-for-profit status means we can put learning first in our decision making. It allows us to keep costs low and offer valuable programs that aren't driven by revenue. And it makes it possible to provide scholarships that help offset costs so that financial constraints don't pose a barrier to participation.



Value

Since we are not for profit, Road Scholar programs come at an unmatched value. On average,

travelers save 20% per night compared with commercial tour companies. That's because every Road Scholar learning adventure includes most meals and all lodging, tips and taxes, behind-the-scenes experiences, expert lectures, group expeditions, listening devices and 24/7 emergency assistance, too.



Financial Assistance

Road Scholar offers financial aid in the form of scholarships and grants, including our Caregiver Grant for full-time family caregivers and PEAR Scholarship for retired educators. These financial aid programs enhance our mission of providing educational opportunities to a wider range of diverse older adults.

roadscholar.org/scholarships



Sustainability

Our commitment to caring for the environment and local communities is rooted in our core values for sustainable travel, developed in collaboration with Sustainable Travel International, which advocates for accountability for our organization's impact and offers the most positive contributions to the places we visit. Our five core values are: Respect and Preserve Local Cultures, Conserve Natural Environments, Minimize Waste and Pollution, Protect Wildlife and Make a Difference in Local Communities.

roadscholar.org/sustainability



Our Commitment to Diversity

Road Scholar values diversity as a dynamic and integral part of a thriving educational community. We strive to develop dynamic program content and offerings that represent the rich diversity of our society and to foster a welcoming, inclusive and equitable work and learning environment for people of all backgrounds and identities.



World-Class Staff

Road Scholar uses a scoring system called “eNPS” (Employee Net Promoter Score) to measure employee satisfaction. Our staff consistently score Road Scholar a 70 for eNPS. The industry average is 14. Road Scholar staffers note work-life balance, benefits, mission-focus and company culture as reasons they love working for the organization. Our staff's passion for the mission and the organization comes through in the ways they serve our participants.

“I get to work in a not-for-profit environment with a wonderful mission, be involved with my passion of travel and have great work-life balance. I don't feel stuck or stagnant or disconnected. I appreciate work being such a positive part of my life.”

– Excerpt from anonymous staff survey

50 Years of Learning, Friendship & Adventure

Road Scholar was founded in 1975 as Elderhostel by University of New Hampshire colleagues and longtime friends Marty Knowlton and David Bianco. In summer 1975, hundreds of older adults communed on college campuses around New Hampshire, sleeping in the dorms, attending lectures from the university professors, eating in the dining halls.

Over the past 50 years, the organization has evolved into the world leader in educational travel and experiential learning for older adults. Today, participants stay in hotels or at retreat centers, and most of the educational content is delivered in the field — where participants can experience the landscapes and historical sites they're learning about in person.

Delve Deeper Into Road Scholar's 50-Year History



Interview Our Industry Experts



James Moses
President & CEO

Road Scholar's President and CEO James Moses has been at the helm since 2002. Under his direction, Road Scholar has become a leading educational adventure organization, offering thousands of programs worldwide.

Moses began his career at Road Scholar in 1979 as the organization's first registrar. He has held several leadership positions, including Chief Operating Officer, Senior Vice President of Programs and Vice President of International Programs. Moses holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Psychology from Boston College.

“Road Scholars have the power of their life experiences to help the world overcome its differences, one new friendship at a time. Engaging with people gives each of us an opportunity to better understand our differences, to accept other points of view, to accommodate and compromise, to cultivate cultural exchanges that celebrate our differences and reinforce the concept that there is so much more that connects us than divides us.”



Maeve Hartney
Chief Program Officer

Chief Program Officer Maeve Hartney has guided Road Scholar in her current role since 2022. She joined the organization in 1998, serving in several positions along the way including Manager of Program

Assessment and Evaluation, Senior Manager and Director of Program Services and Associate Vice President of Special Programs. Maeve was previously at Ernst & Young and Saga Holidays. She holds a degree in business administration from Limerick Institute of Technology.

“My daily goal is to ensure we inspire adults to learn, travel and build friendships. Continuing to learn in adulthood is important for the mind, body and spirit, as is the need to stay connected socially to your peers. Road Scholar's learning adventures do both.”



Operations Director
Adventures Afloat
Zoe Fox-Mailer



Associate VP
Participant Experience
Lucy McClelland



AVP, Office of Financial
Aid & Community
Outreach
Ann Simanis



Group Leader
Domestic, International and
Grandparent/Family
Robin Rocque

...And dozens more experts on destination-specific travel, education and aging.

Road Scholar Participants

135,000 adults each year, referred to as “participants” or “Road Scholars”

Serving adults ages **50-100+**

From all **50** states and Canada

68% are women. See our [Programs for women](#)

25% are [retired educators](#), representing more than any other field

Camaraderie

Road Scholars are no ordinary travelers. They are lifelong learners over the age of 50 from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. They are students of the world and the guests you hope to sit next to at a dinner party. They lead interesting lives because they're interested in everything. Road Scholar attracts adults who are open-minded and intellectually curious — and these shared characteristics often create a quick and lasting bond among participants.

Interview Our Participants

Want to interview one of the fascinating Road Scholars mentioned or quoted in this press kit? Email newsmedia@roadscholar.org.



Rosalyn Wiener, 77, from Frisco, Texas, Road Scholar Class of '12, connected with Susan Levy from Atlanta on a Road Scholar message board in 2011. They decided to room together on a trip to Albuquerque. They hit it off, went on to share five Road Scholar programs together and visited each other in their home cities. Sadly, Susan passed away from cancer in April 2024, but Rosalyn is so grateful for the Road Scholar memories they shared. She has now been on 38 Road Scholar programs and heads to the Rockies with her grandchild in 2026.



Ahmed & Fumie Hussen, both 75, from Decatur, Ga., knew they wanted to do something special to celebrate their 50th anniversary. In 2024, in Paris — the City of Love, the pair enjoyed dinner by boat on the Seine and visits to iconic monuments and museums with Road Scholar experts. The most romantic moments they shared were an anniversary dinner at a cozy restaurant in Place des Vosges and a walk along the Champs-Élysées, arranged with help from their Group Leader. “It was hard not to feel romantic and carefree as we strolled along this famous avenue,” says Ahmed.



Carol Phillips, 81, from Pleasanton, Calif., has been on 53 Road Scholar programs on all seven continents from Iceland to Indonesia, the Arctic Circle to South Africa, Easter Island and beyond with two more booked for 2026. Carol worked as a high school registrar before she retired. Her husband wasn't interested in travel, so she began traveling after he passed away in 2000. For a number of years, she traveled with a group of three other women whom she had met on Road Scholar programs. Now she typically travels solo or with her grandchildren.



Margaret Barber, 82, from Seattle, Wash., lost her husband in 2022 and went on her first Road Scholar program to Iceland about a year later. “In our group of 23, six were recently widowed. We understood each other's experiences,” she said. “It was such a restorative journey. I started to live again.” Margaret has now been on nine Road Scholar programs and is headed to Australia and Greece (Road Scholar's Campus of the Year!) in 2026.



Sandy Curtis, 81, from Oak Park, Mich., got the travel bug from her father, who took their family on trips across the country despite the challenges for a Black family traveling in the 1950s. He died when Sandy was a teenager, but she has carried on his legacy through travel to her children and grandchildren. “As an adult, every spare quarter I got, I used to go somewhere, and I did it for my children, too.” Sandy has been on 18 Road Scholar programs, both solo and with her five grandchildren. “I wouldn't even consider another company,” she says.

“ I met my second husband on a Road Scholar program to the Caucasus, and we've had at least 50 learning adventures together ever since. ” — **Joan Graviss, 82, Clayton, Mo.** ROAD SCHOLAR CLASS OF '11

Solo Travel

Up to 28% of Road Scholars travel solo each year, and that number has been on the rise — driven by married women traveling without their husbands, as reported by Road Scholar in a [2023 Solo Travel Report](#).

Road Scholar has always been conscious of creating a welcoming environment for solo travelers. Solos report overwhelmingly that they feel very welcome by fellow participants, often making lifelong friends who they travel with for years after.

Road Scholar offers a collection of programs with [no single supplement](#) as well as a unique roommate matching option for solo travelers, and in 2025 began offering [programs exclusively for solo travelers](#).

Reach out to interview one of our solo travelers!



Private Groups

Road Scholar offers private programs for groups like Lifelong Learning Institutes, hiking clubs, book groups, church groups, alumni groups and multi-generational families. Since 2015, a group of retired teachers from Texas has traveled together from Sedona and Sonoma to Italy, Iceland and beyond.



How Does Road Scholar Serve Older Adults?

What is an “Older Adult?”

Road Scholar serves adults from 50 to 100+, with the average age of 72. This is the demographic we’ve served since our founding as Elderhostel in 1975.

Redefining Aging for Over 50 Years

Our participants defy aging stereotypes every day as they “Age Adventurously,” like 91-year-old Annette Samuels who will travel with us to Galápagos, Botswana, and Iceland in 2026! Or Sid Gelb, a 96-year-old retired science teacher who went to Spain last year on his 15th Road Scholar program.

Fighting the Loneliness Epidemic

“In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory declaring loneliness a national public health issue. At Road Scholar, we have understood the value — the critical necessity — of supportive, joyful, social connections. It is written into our mission. For over 50 years, Road Scholar has provided opportunities to connect America’s elders through our learning community, providing enriching, meaningful, stimulating social connections to hundreds of thousands of older adults.”

— Road Scholar President & CEO James Moses

Age Well

In 2025, we introduced a free online lecture series called Age Well, offering insight into the physical, emotional and social aspects of aging. Learn more at roadscholar.org/agewell



Aging Experts

- Looking for travel tips for older adults?
- Want to hear how our programs help fight loneliness and social isolation?
- Interested in hearing our thoughts on aging or ageism?
- Want to hear about our expertise on marketing and communications for older adults, including social media?
- Looking for an older adult defying ageism to interview?

Reach out!

Our experts and participants are happy to share their knowledge and ideas for an article, podcast or TV segment. Email newsmedia@roadscholar.org.



Activity Levels

Road Scholar offers programs across a range of **activity levels** to accommodate older adults of every physical ability, including “Road Scholar At Home” online programs for those who cannot physically travel. They include detailed activity notes so participants can select a program that is the appropriate activity level for them.

Listening Devices

Road Scholar provides listening devices on over 80% of our programs, which accommodate those with hearing challenges and allow the group to walk more inconspicuously through a city center.

Road Scholar Assurance Plan

Travel health insurance is important for any traveler, but perhaps particularly so for older adults. That’s why Road Scholar includes the **Road Scholar Assurance Plan** in the price of every in-person program, which includes things like emergency medical evacuation and 24/7 emergency assistance.

