

The Dreamer

Exclusive news for the St. Joseph's Indian School DreamMakers



January 2022

Christmas Spirit Lives on into New Year

Thanks to you, Christmas is extra special for students at St. Joseph's and their families!

It is understood when December 26 comes around, there are some people who are ready to be done with all the caroling, red and green décor, tree ornaments and lights that the Christmas season brings with it ... but not us.

St. Joseph's Indian School students are home in their reservation communities on Christmas Day as part of winter break. So, Christmas hits pause on campus as we await their safe return in January ... and then the fun and celebrating truly begins!

It starts with Mass, followed by a special dinner until the event you know every child anticipates: gift opening! Thanks to your generosity, every child at St. Joseph's finds sweet treats in their stockings and shiny packages inscribed with their names. Soon enough, ripped paper flies this

way and that. Laughter and expressions of awe fill the room. It is a day of absolute joy. A day of giggles, smiles and playfulness.

For some Native American children living in poverty, this scene can be in stark contrast to what they experience at home on December 25. Christmas Day can unintentionally reinforce negative feelings they may have on other days and expand upon it. It can bring more stress to parents who cannot financially afford to give their children presents tied up with sparkling ribbons and bows. It can confuse children who may wonder if they did something wrong

(over, please)



when they see the space beneath the tree remaining bare.

But, thanks to your love and kindness, the joy the children experience on campus also takes place in their reservation homes during break. Before students traveled home, they first shopped at St. Joseph's Christmas Store. The store is comprised of donations from generous supporters — special people like you. Sometimes beautiful items are given to our school in overabundance, allowing us the opportunity to put them to immediate use for families in need. Students shopped the rows of donations with their loved ones in mind and selected gifts for their moms, dads, grandparents, siblings — anyone they wanted to bless during the celebration of Christ's birth.

After they made their gift selections, children received help from staff members to wrap the gifts in festive paper, ribbons, bows and gift tags so the recipients knew their present was chosen especially for them. Children are absolutely giddy on this day and each looks like a mini-Santa Claus as they tote their gifts out the door in bags slung over their backs.

This experience is a special one, because it is rooted in one of the four Lakota values: **wačháŋtognaka** — *generosity*. The Lakota word for generosity means to contribute to

the well-being of one's people and all life by sharing and giving freely. As an old Lakota saying goes, "What you give away, you keep; what you keep you lose." Providing students with the opportunity to exercise this value, when they may not otherwise have the chance, is magical. And, it spreads a lot of joy between the giver and receiver.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — for being a DreamMaker and a loyal **kǎholá** — *friend* — to the children at St. Joseph's Indian School. Your gift, while it helps provide a safe place for them to live and learn, provides the children with so much more. It provides them with love as they reach for their dreams.



DID YOU KNOW?

Native Americans have always been generous and thoughtful gift-givers. In an incredible example of gift giving, the sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman came to Earth and gave the Lakota people a Sacred Pipe and a small round stone. These gifts were then used to encompass the Seven Lakota Rites (or ceremonies) of the Lakota people.

Learn more about the Seven Lakota Rites at stjo.org/culture.



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.
PO Box 326
Chamberlain, SD 57326
1-800-762-2162 • www.stjo.org/Dreamer

Printed at Tipi Press Printing

Have a
Great Year



Dear Donor,

My name is Thalia, I'm in 7th grade. I'm truly grateful for all you do. I'm so glad you took the time out of your day to help provide the gifts.

TO: Donor

From: Thalia 