

# The Dreamer

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



February 2022

## St. Joseph's Alumni Making an Impact Near and Far

*Where do the Lakota (Sioux) students go after they graduate from St. Joseph's Indian School? What are they doing now? The answers: Everywhere and Everything!*

St. Joseph's alumni have made careers in every field you could ever imagine, some of which include healthcare, education, counseling, advocacy, military and/or dedicated parents.

Our alumni truly make a difference thanks to the HOPE you have provided with your love and generosity. Keep reading to learn more about some of our alumni who went off to do extraordinary things!



### **D'Kera Grassrope (2001-2012)**

After completing the high school program at St. Joseph's, D'Kera enlisted in the U.S. Army as a 74D Chemical Operations Specialist.

Following training,

she returned to Sanford Medical Center in Chamberlain, S.D., for her first job in healthcare as a Certified Nursing Assistant, a job she cherished. From her initial passion for geriatrics, D'Kera has grown to enjoy all specialties in her current work as a Licensed Practical Nurse. In the Army Reserve, her role has changed to Combat Medic focusing on battlefield medicine, such as trauma and other tactical skills.

Of nursing, D'Kera said, "It is an ongoing journey of learning honor, humility and a chance to make even the smallest difference in the lives of your patients. That is my 'why'."



### **Dr. Billie Kingfisher, Jr. (1976-1982)**

After high school, Billie joined the military. He proudly served in the prestigious 82nd Airborne Division and with the 3rd Infantry Regiment in the United States Army.

After more than six years in the military, Billie went to college, continuing his education at the University of South Dakota, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Native American History. In 2016, he completed his PhD at Oklahoma State University.

Today, Billie is an independent scholar researching Native issues, including the influence of basketball in Native communities and the history of tribes in South Dakota.

*(over, please)*



**Jeanette Germaine DeCoteau (1947-54)**

After earning her GED, Jeanette attended Highline Community College in Seattle and obtained her degree to become a Registered

Nurse. In 1969, she graduated from the University of Washington Medex Program, receiving her PA-C as a Physician Assistant in Seattle.

In the course of her career, Jeanette has served others and accomplished many things. She worked with Casey Family Programs; the Native American representative for Native students in the Federal Way School District in Washington State; helped start the Tahoma Indian Center in Tacoma, Wash.; was named Washington State Physician Assistant of the Year at the University of Washington in 2000; and is a member of the National Indian Women’s Health Steering Committee; among many other roles.



**Sr. Madeleine LeCompte, OSBS (1929-1937)**

Sr. Madeleine attended St. Joseph’s Indian School along with her siblings, graduating eighth grade in 1938. In May 1941, she entered the Oblate Sisters

of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Sylvester’s Convent in Marty, S.D.

“St. Joseph’s provided for all our needs. The sisters encouraged each of us to use the talents we were given. I was good at music, and I remember helping the sisters teach songs to the entire group of students. I’m very grateful for those years,” said Sr. Madeline in a 2006 interview.

She served in Marty, Rapid City and on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota. She also served four terms on St. Joseph’s Board of Directors, from May 1997 to January 2009. Sr. Madeline passed away in December 2012.

Chief Seattle once said, “When you know who you are; when your mission is clear and you burn with the inner fire of unbreakable will; no cold can touch your heart; no deluge can dampen your purpose. You know that you are alive.”

As more and more students graduate from St. Joseph’s, we pray they take with them clear missions and an inner fire that carries them forward, no matter the obstacle.

**Philámayaye** — *thank you* — for your support that helps St. Joseph’s Indian School students flourish.

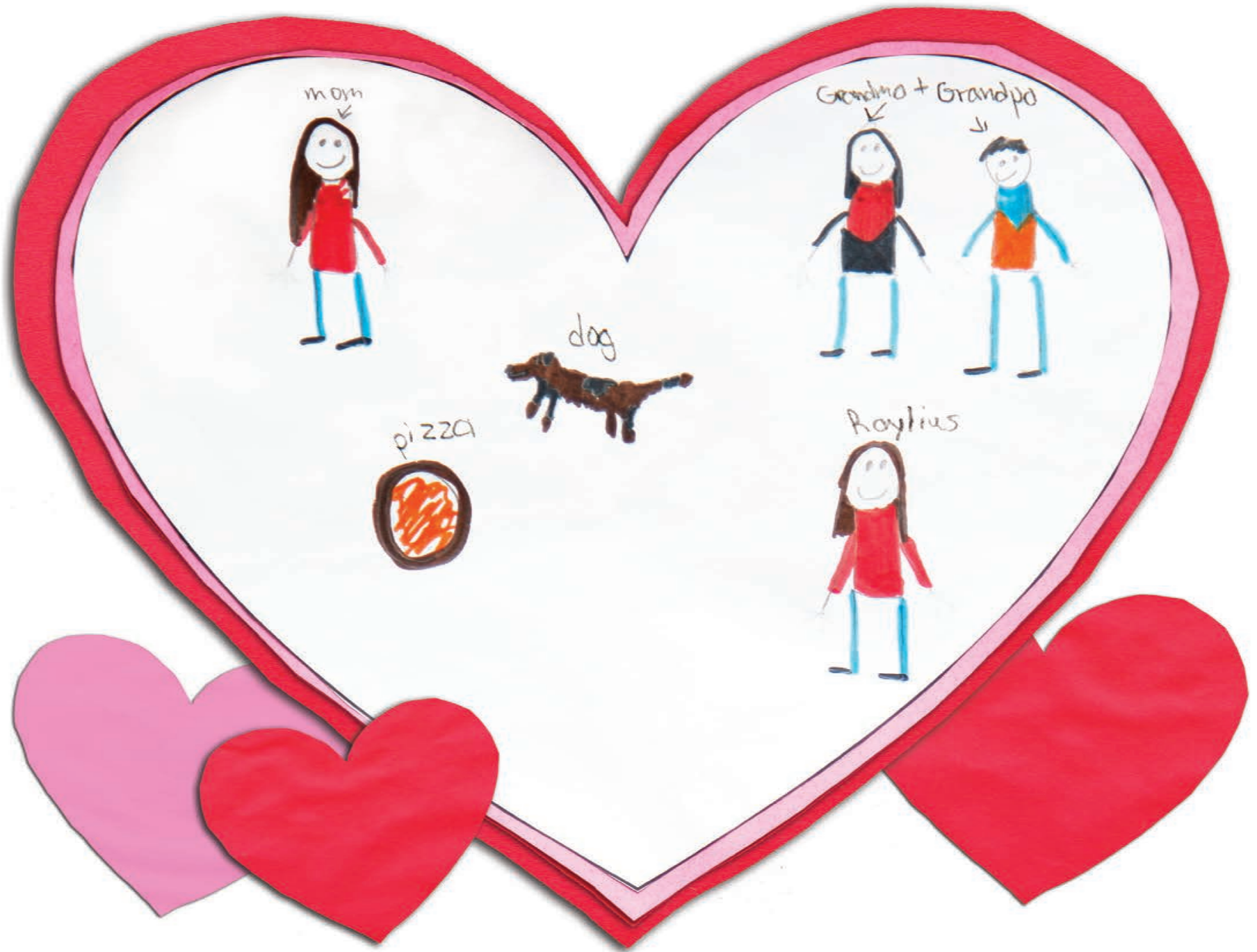


**DID YOU KNOW?**

As students reach graduation and “alumni status” we are reminded of the Lakota phrase **Awówaši ečhámun**, which means *I am working towards a goal.*

To learn more Lakota phrases, follow us on Facebook at [stjo.org/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/stjo.org) for a new word or phrase every Wednesday.





mom



dog



pizza



Grandma + Grandpa



Royluis



Dear Donor,

Hi, my name is Roman and I am in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I like St Joseph's because they take good care of me.

My favorite thing to do at St. Joseph's is to have free time.

One thing we are learning in school is counting coins.

Thank you.

Your friend,  
Roman