

The Dreamer

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



March 2022

The Cold Can't Freeze Faith at St. Joseph's



Even when circumstances seemed bleak, there was hope thanks to the generosity of friends like you!

Spring may technically be on the way, but in South Dakota, weather patterns don't follow the calendar. Mother Nature writes her own rules in this part of the country.

For many years, journals were kept at St. Joseph's Indian School to report the notable events of the year, beginning in 1923 (four years before our founding in 1927) through 1964. These historical journals describe events such as grasshopper plagues, dust storms and drought, depending on the year.

However, a common thread written about every year during the winter and early spring: the cold.

Take a look at the following journal entries from the early days at St. Joseph's.

January 22, 1936

The furnace is the main item these days. As long as we can keep it going, we shall not suffer so much. The wind finds every crack

in the windows and doors and makes it very uncomfortable in the north end of the building.

February 12, 1936

Yesterday, the wind drifted snow and our road to town is blocked. The supply of coal is about gone ... The temperature is 15 below zero.

April 24, 1937

Cold weather comes back again today with fierce winds and sub-zero weather ... Rain freezes as soon as it hits the ground.

January 20, 1941

South Dakota is not a place to brave the winter without heat, especially if there are water pipes to freeze.

January 1949

The softly falling snow looked just like another beautiful snowfall ... Then with the air of a 60 mile per hour gale, beauty became violent. We awoke in the morning to find ourselves completely snowbound.



(over, please)

Such humble beginnings, wouldn't you say? Now, we may not be waiting for truckloads of coal to deliver warmth, or enduring drafts from unsealed windows and doors, but the cold is something we still battle. That is one thing remaining unchanged as **waníyetu** — *winter* — overstays its welcome each year.

How worried the authors of the journal entries must have felt. For instance:

January 1, 1937

We go into the new year without funds. All we have left is a houseful of children and faith.

It is through steadfast faith that St. Joseph's endured. Despite menial circumstances, our founder, brothers and sisters kept going. They stayed the course. They had a mission to fulfill and refused to lose the fight.

And now look at this school. It's been 95 years and St. Joseph's has secure buildings to block the children from the frigid wind gusts. Children can climb into their own cozy beds each night knowing they will wake up to a warm breakfast. We have machinery keeping us from becoming snowed-in. Children have warm coats to protect them when they go outside. The modern world is much kinder in those regards ...

And it's all because of generous friends like you.



Your **wačháŋtognaka** — *generosity* — makes it possible for the children to focus on other matters. For instance, their education. Your support provides each child with things as large as their classrooms and computers, to the things as small as the crayons and erasers in their pencil boxes. There is a library with books to read that take the children on imaginary adventures when the weather keeps them from going outside. They can view the world from the safety of the indoors until spring returns and the sun warms the ground they call home.

Although things look different from the early days, we never forget where we started. We are thankful for the people from our yesterdays who opened their hearts during difficult times. And today we are grateful for you continuing that legacy of kindness.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are St. Joseph's journal entries we left out that talk about how water gathered from the river for drinking would freeze by the time the gatherer returned inside! Brr! In Lakota, the phrase **Mní kiŋ čháġa iyéčhel sní** means *The water was as cold as ice.*

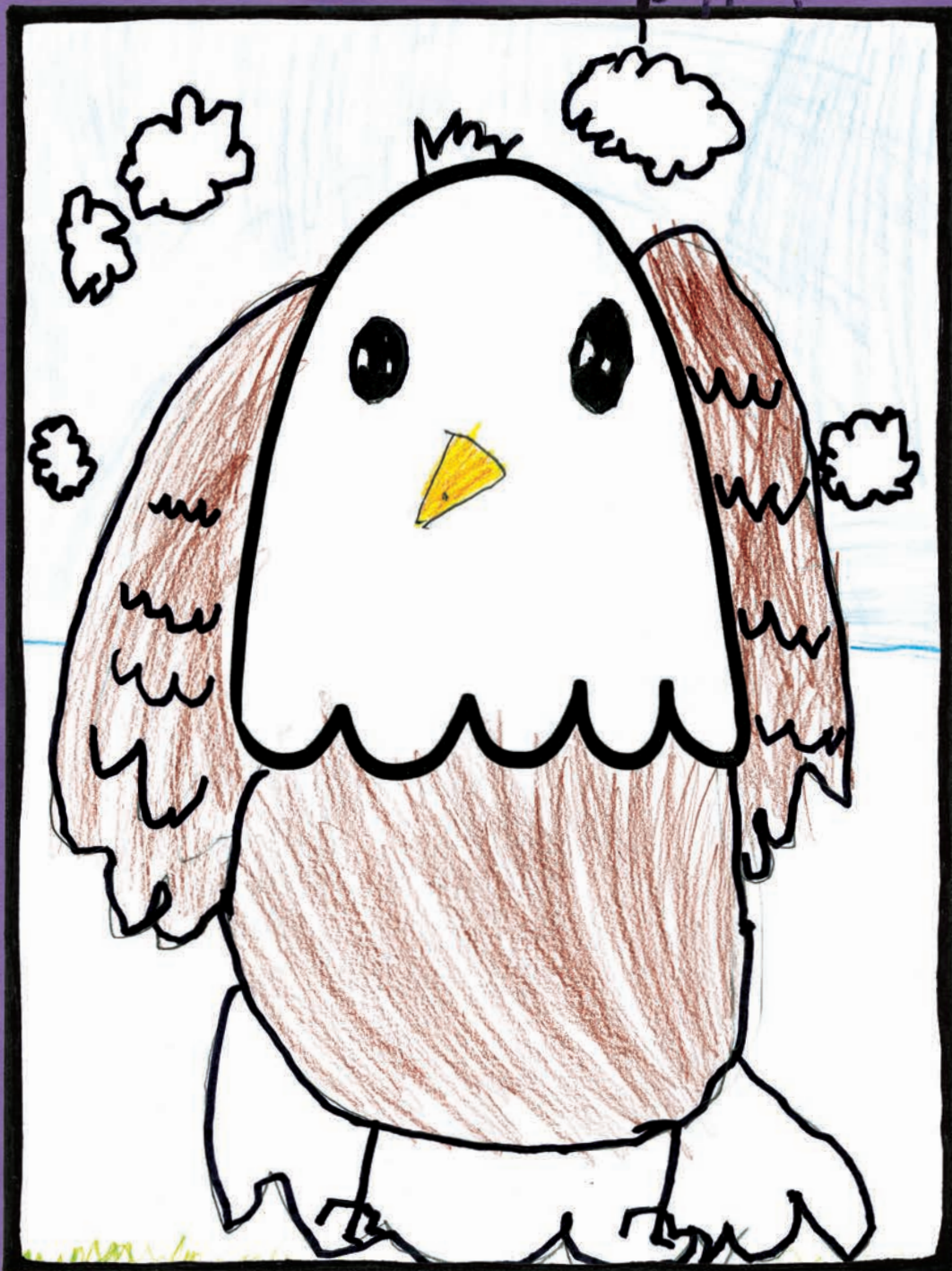
Learn more Lakota words and phrases on our Facebook page every Wednesday at stjo.org/facebook.



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.
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Dear friend

Hello! My name is Kai and I am in the 8th grade.

Thank you for everything we have that many other kids don't have and this school.

What I like about school is there is a lot to do around here we get to learn and have fun with friends. For fun I like to play basketball for fun. I am learning math in school.

When I grow up I wanna be a professional basketball player or football player.

Sincerely, Kai.