

The Dreamer

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



June 2022

Donor Support Provides Students a Glimpse into the Past and Future

It's an event many graduating eighth graders mark as their favorite during their time at St. Joseph's Indian School: the Cultural Trip.

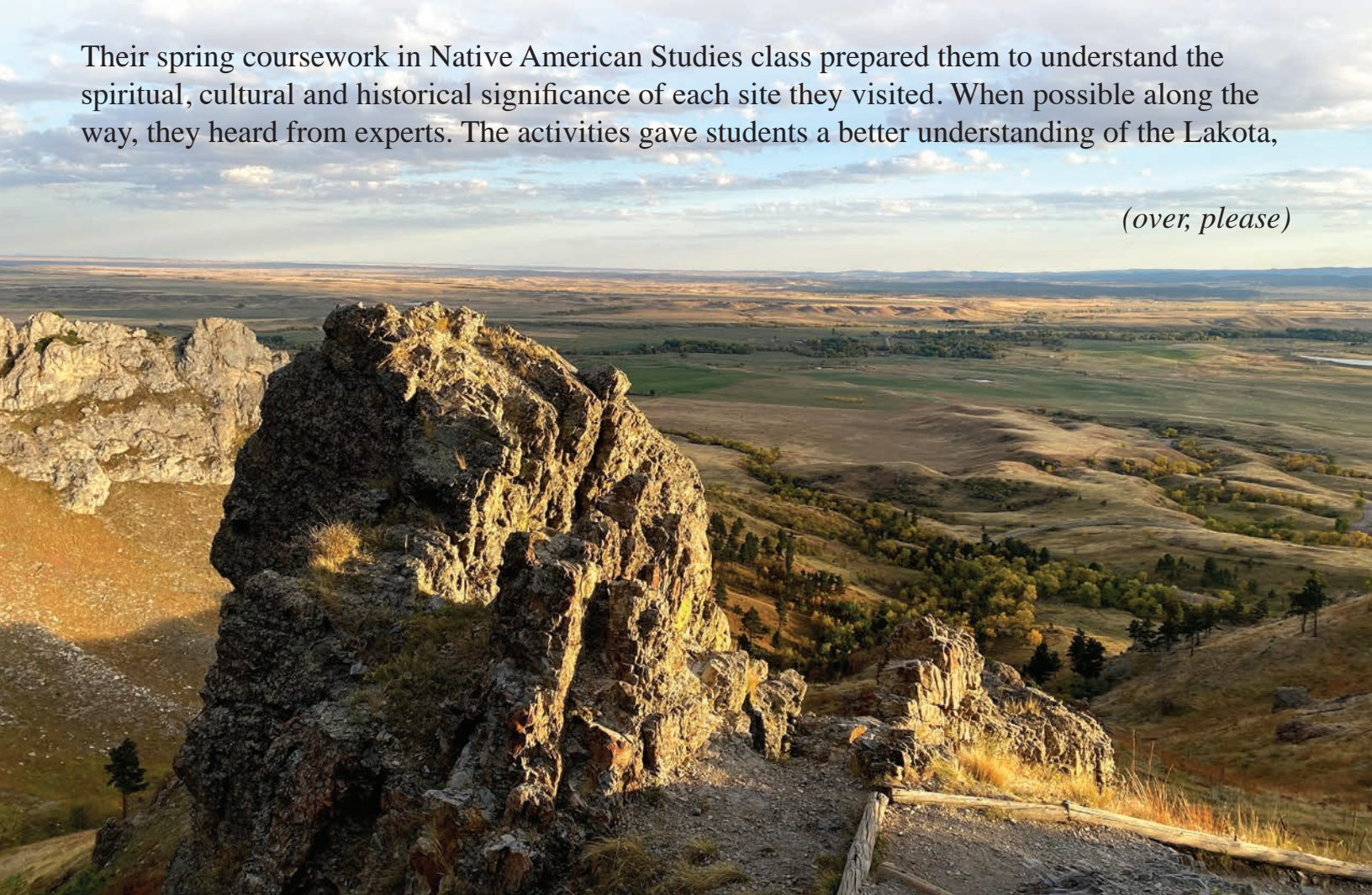
The Cultural Trip is meant to inspire students to continue learning more about their Native American culture. Hearing stories of the greats who came before them sparks a flame within to rise and become the next generation of great leaders.

Before the 2022 trip last month, seventh grade students of St. Joseph's Indian School huddled in prayer prior to embarking on the trip that has become a spiritual and cultural rite of passage for the school's students.

The students used the smoke from burning sage to smudge — purify — themselves before boarding the busses that took them to sacred Native American sites across several states. Over five days, they visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield at Greasy Grass, Mathó Thípila (Devil's Tower), Bear Butte, Pešlá (the heart of the Black Hills), Black Elk Peak, Wind Cave, the Crazy Horse Memorial and the Badlands.

Their spring coursework in Native American Studies class prepared them to understand the spiritual, cultural and historical significance of each site they visited. When possible along the way, they heard from experts. The activities gave students a better understanding of the Lakota,

(over, please)



Dakota and Nakota people. Though they are young, these experiences plant seeds for their future growth.

“It meant everything to find out more about my culture,” said Jordin. “I could feel my ancestors close to me as we walked and drove through the sacred places.”

When asked about her favorite part of the trip, Jordin said without hesitating, “Bear Butte. I have so many childhood memories from there. When we got to the top, we tied our prayer ties to a tree. As I walked away, I felt I left all my stress behind.”

Other students fondly recounted their Cultural Trip memories, too.

For instance, Akicita, a 2022 eighth grade graduate, said his favorite trip experience was during a hike of Black Elk Peak, traditionally a place his ancestors would go on a Vision Quest. An eagle flew over him and the rest of the group — something considered a good omen in the Lakota culture. The **wanǵblí** — *eagle* — is an important winged symbol for the Native American people and is considered the strongest and bravest of all birds.

Upon their return to campus, students gathered in a large conference room on campus to develop presentations about their experience. These presentations are the way they share their learning with younger students and step into their leadership roles.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — to supporters around the world who make opportunities like the Cultural Trip possible. If you would like students to make a prayer tie in honor of someone you love who has passed away to take with them on next year’s trip, you can do so by visiting stjo.org/prayertie.

DID YOU KNOW?

Before St. Joseph’s students and staff hit the road for the Cultural Trip, they took part in an **inípi** — *sweat lodge* — ceremony, which is the purification ceremony of the Lakota (Sioux). Throughout **inípi**, participants sit in a circle while heated rocks are placed on the center fireplace. Water is poured over them to create steam. Songs are sung and prayers are offered by the participants.



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

Hello my name is Tre and I am in 8th Grade.

Thank you for letting us be able to be in school, and supplies for school.

What I like about St. Joes is going outside and hanging out with my friends. I like to play football for fun. I am learning to pay attention and listen in school.

When I grow up, I want to be a houseparent at St. Joes.

Sincerely, TRE