

# The Dreamer

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



April 2024

## Breaking the Cycle of Substance Abuse, One Step at a Time

*It's not just a Sobriety Walk. It's so much more than that ... and your support makes it possible!*

There is one thing at St. Joseph's Indian School we never take for granted ... and that's you! Your generosity allows us to make a difference in the lives of Native American children and give them the tools they need to build a brighter future. While we do this in a number of ways, there is one event held each spring that takes the spotlight: The Annual Sobriety Walk.

The Annual Sobriety Walk is an event that has a profound impact on our students and the community we serve. The Sobriety Walk aims to instill the importance of living a drug and alcohol-free life into our students. It gets students out of the classroom to walk with their siblings, friends and others in solidarity.

For our students, this is such an important choice. According to recent data, Native Americans in South Dakota face significant alcohol-related issues. A study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reveals 43% of deaths among Native Americans in the state are alcohol-related. The report also highlights Native American communities in South Dakota experience disproportionately high rates of alcohol abuse, which contribute to various health problems and social issues.\* Further, 50% of students were exposed to drug and alcohol use prior to their enrollment at St. Joseph's.

These alarming statistics highlight why it's crucial to provide students with the guidance and support they need to make positive choices. By organizing events like the Sobriety Walk, we aim to break the cycle of substance abuse and create a brighter future for the children in our care.

Leading up to the walk, St. Joseph's Indian School hosts a Sobriety Walk T-Shirt design contest. Students submit their best designs. The design with the most votes wins.

During the Sobriety Walk, our students exhibit exceptional strength, determination and



(over, please)





resilience. Approximately 200 children and staff members walk side-by-side. Each step taken is a symbol of the progress we are making in our collective efforts to combat substance abuse. In spirit, you walk with us each spring from afar as a monthly giver — making this event a powerful reminder of the unity and support that exists within our community because of our DreamMakers.

However, our programs to combat substance abuse don't begin and end with an annual walk. At St. Joseph's, we have implemented various programs to break the cycle of substance abuse and help our children reach their full potential. Our comprehensive approach includes education about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, counseling services and activities to promote positive coping mechanisms and healthy lifestyle choices.

By providing students with a safe and nurturing environment, we empower them to overcome adversity and embrace a future free from the grip of addiction. We highlight the importance of cultural pride, spiritual growth and healthy relationships as essential tools in their journey.

It cannot be emphasized enough the impact your contributions have on our ability to provide these life-changing programs. Your dedication to our mission makes it possible to continue supporting and guiding our students on their journey towards a brighter future.

From the bottom of our hearts, we say **philámayaye** — *thank you* — for joining us in this vital mission. Together, we have the power to create a positive change and build a brighter tomorrow for the Native American children we serve.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Walking the Red Road is a phrase and ideal used by Native Americans to describe living with purpose on a path to positive change. In doing so, our students embody the Seven Lakota Values, which are: Generosity, Kinship, Fortitude, Wisdom, Prayer, Respect and Compassion.

Learn about what each of these values entail by visiting [stjo.org/values](http://stjo.org/values).

\*Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017). *Alcohol and public health: Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>



**St. Joseph's Indian School**  
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Hi my name is Demarius I am in the 7th grade, I like St. Joseph's because I like to see my friends. My favorite thing to do is play with my friends and play video games. One thing we are learning is volume of cylinders and surface area. My favorite subject is math and cultural because we learn new things.

I enjoy watching tv at home, and playing with friends. In the spring I go outside and play with my friends because it is nice and hot out. When I grow up I want to be a NFL player because I used to play football all the time. Thank you very much for donating to my school. Demarius



My dream is to be the best  
cop ever.

