

The Dreamer

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



May 2024

Cultivating a Love for Nature and Teamwork at St. Joseph's

A breath of fresh air awakens the campus of St. Joseph's Indian School, signaling the arrival of a beautiful transformation: spring. Spring is not just a season of blossoming flowers and abundant sunshine — it is also a time of exploration and outdoor learning for our students.

After being cooped up all winter long, outdoor class time is welcomed by students and staff alike. The following outdoor experiences foster a deep appreciation for nature, instill a sense of environmental stewardship and develop valuable teamwork skills.

Planting Seeds of Growth

The Lakota (Sioux) believe in the importance of connecting to **Ṭḥuŋkášila** — *Creator* — and to having a close relationship with **Waḳḥáŋ Ṭḥáŋka** — *Great Spirit*. They believe Mother Earth is sacred, and they

honor and respect her greatly.

In our school, this virtue is explored with a hands-on learning activity.



Children recently grabbed tiny shovels and packets of seeds as they embarked on a journey of nurturing life through planting. Through this gardening experience, our young students learned to value and care for the environment — and learned a lot of patience along the way! They watched the miracle of growth as they tended to their plants, eagerly awaiting the moment they can witness the fruits of their labor.

Exploring Sacred Sites

Our seventh graders will soon experience a cultural trip taking them on a journey

(over, please)



of discovery to sacred sites of cultural significance. Beyond the classroom, amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Black Elk Peak, Wind Cave, Bear Butte and others, the students will deepen their understanding and appreciation for their ancestral heritage. Likewise, they'll also develop a profound love for the natural world surrounding these sacred sites.

In year's past, students have reported this trip to be life-changing. Upon returning from the trip last year, a St. Joseph's student named Jordin said, "It meant everything to find out more about my culture. I could feel my ancestors close to me as we walked and drove through the sacred places."

Earth Day Cleanup

St. Joseph's Indian School students spent the afternoon giving **Uŋći Makhá** — *Grandmother Earth* — a good cleaning in celebration of Earth Day. They collected garbage in the communities of Chamberlain and Oacoma, S.D.



"I was excited to go from the beginning," said Kayley, a St. Joseph's student. "When I was done, I felt honored to help clean up Grandmother Earth."

Cultivating Valuable Teamwork Skills

The magic of outdoor learning at St. Joseph's

extends far beyond individual growth — it forges unbreakable bonds and strengthens teamwork skills. Whether it's tending to their gardens, cleaning up or exploring sacred sites together, our students learn the power of collaboration and cooperation. They learn by working towards a shared goal, they can overcome challenges and achieve a brighter future ... together.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — for being a part of this incredible journey. Your generosity allows St. Joseph's Indian School to provide transformative experiences for our students, even in the great outdoors.

DID YOU KNOW?

The phrase **Mitákuye Oyás'iy** in Lakota means *We Are All Related*. Therefore, the Lakota do not only honor the earth because it is important for humans. They also do it for animals — their relatives. St. Joseph's has a FREE coloring book activity that showcases five animals sacred to the Lakota.

It's available to you to print from home now! Visit stjo.org/free to download it with our many other free activities!



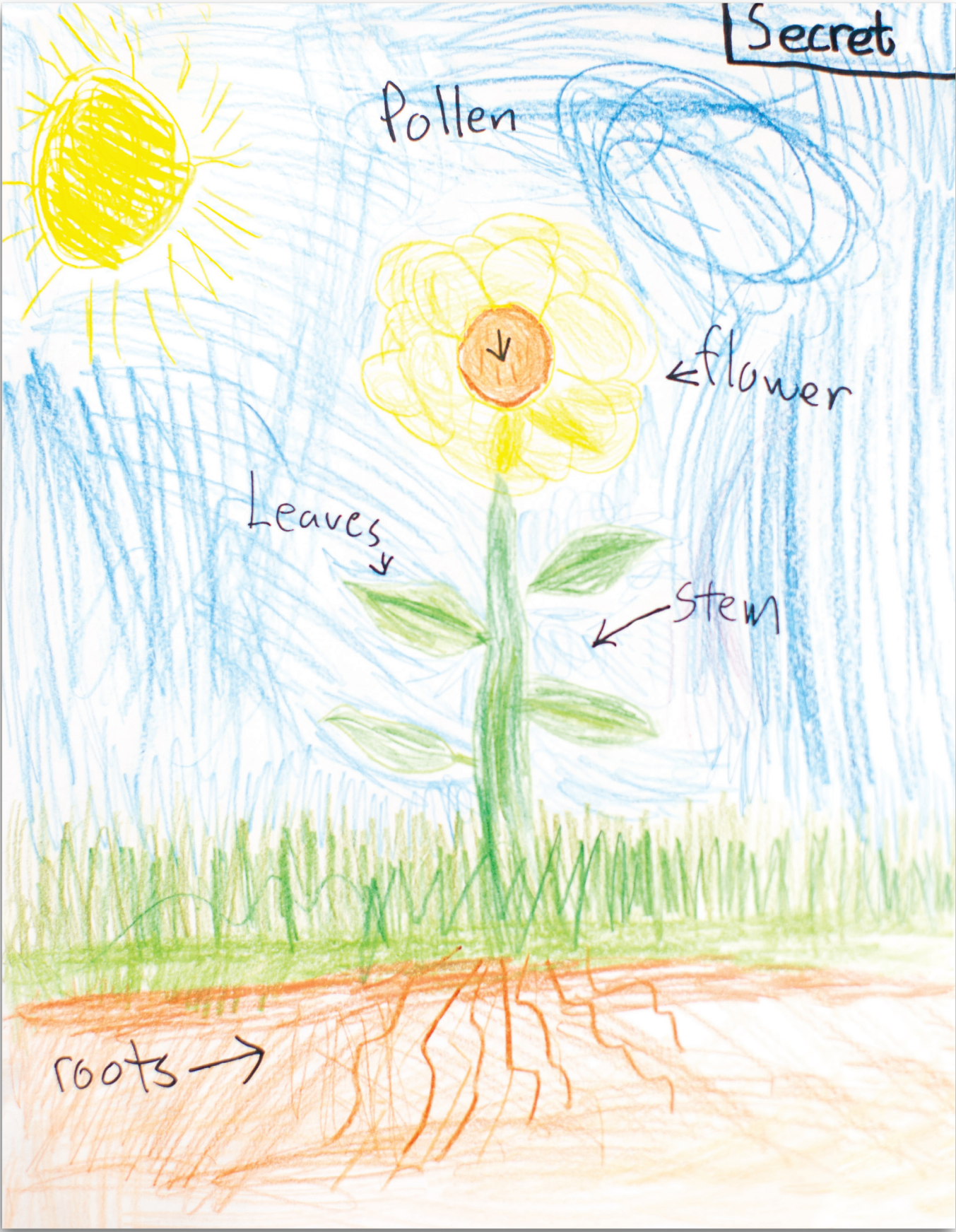
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We serve and teach, we receive and learn.
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