

The Dreamer

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



March 2025

From Student to Carpenter: Trin's Journey with St. Joseph's Indian School

An alum shares his story as a child and adult at St. Joseph's.

At St. Joseph's Indian School, we take pride in our students' journeys, especially when they come full circle to contribute to the community that nurtured them. Today, we celebrate Trin's inspiring story, which begins with him as a student and meets us in the present day as an adult employee at St. Joseph's. His story is a testament to resilience, growth and the enduring spirit of our school.

A New Beginning

Trin arrived at St. Joseph's as a first grader, a young boy stepping into a world of new experiences and opportunities. Coming from a large family, Trin said his family struggled to make ends meet, making St. Joseph's the

optimal option for him and his siblings.

The transition was not easy. Trin had some behavioral issues as a child he had to overcome while dealing with homesickness.



"I remember crying when my mom left but my teacher hugged me and told me it would all be okay," said Trin. "I was just a little kid trying to get used to the environment around me. Reservation life and life at St. Joseph's was a total switch."

Cherished Memories

Life at St. Joseph's soon provided a sense of peace for Trin, allowing him to grow, learn and cultivate lasting memories. Amongst memories of the cultural trip, donor luncheons and times on campus, two favorite memories take center stage for Trin.

One was learning to snowboard at Terry Peak in the Black Hills during a home trip with his houseparents and housemates. It was his first time on a snowboard and he discovered a natural talent he never knew he had.

"It was amazing to be good at something I didn't know I was good at," Trin recalled with a smile.

The other cherished memory for Trin was dancing at powwows.

"Dancing powwow was fun," he said. "It's

(over, please)



very spiritual on the grass when you're flowing. It calms my mind and my heart. Calms my soul."

Trin is currently designing his own regalia, taking it day by day, and envisioning what it will look like. Doing so will allow him to relive childhood memories of dancing at a powwow, only this time as an adult.

Journey Comes Full Circle

With St. Joseph's help, Trin was the first person in his family to graduate high school. After graduating, he pursued higher education at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, SD, where he studied building trades.

Throughout his college years, St. Joseph's kept in touch with Trin, offering encouragement. This unwavering support played a crucial role in his journey.

The turning point came when Trin graduated with his degree. He received a call from St. Joseph's about a job opening. Without hesitation, he seized the opportunity to return to the place that helped shape him.

"I love my job. It's what I wanted to do and I got exactly what I wanted," he said proudly.

Another plus to working on campus is Trin can visit two of his younger siblings, who currently attend St. Joseph's as students. This family connection is invaluable.

Reflections and Advice

Reflecting on his journey, Trin fondly remembers his time as a student.

"I liked being a kid here. It was really fun," he said.

If he could go back and advise his eight-year-old self, Trin said he would tell himself to "keep going and everything will be alright."

Trin is confident that his younger self, the one who was unsure of what his future held,



would be proud of the person he has become.

A Message of Gratitude

Lastly, Trin said he wants to extend a thank you to donors of St. Joseph's. He remains in awe that people who are strangers would open their hearts to kids like him.

"They don't even know us, and they're very helpful," he said. "I want to thank them for all they do to make this place possible."

Expanding upon that statement, we send you, our DreamMaker, a sincere **philámayaye** — *thank you* — for your kindness. Because of your generosity, stories like Trin's happen. Thank you!

DID YOU KNOW?

"Walking the Red Road" is a deeply spiritual and meaningful way of life for the Lakota people. It represents living with purpose, integrity and a deep connection to all living things.

Not every detail about Trin's story made it into this story. However, Trin's story is documented in video format on our YouTube Channel! Visit stjo.org/Trin to watch Trin tell his full story. As you watch, we think you'll appreciate how Trin tries his best to follow the Red Road.



Dear friend

Hello! my name is Victoria and i am in 6th grade

Thank you for donating to St. Joe's

What i Like about St. Joe's is everything!

i Like to do art and read books for fun

i am learning every Subject in School

When i grow up i want to be An Artist

Sincerely Victoria 😊