

Children of the Prairie

Your seasonal newsletter from St. Joseph's Indian School

Spring 2022

“Thank you for all you do,
you are very important to us
and St. Joseph’s.”

— Lakora,
St. Joseph’s student



From the Desk of Fr. Greg



Fr. Greg, Chaplain

*“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’
Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”*
— Isaiah 6:8

Although St. Joseph’s Indian School’s campus resides in Chamberlain, S.D., the mission to help Native American children and families extends far beyond into many other communities and reservations.

St. Joseph’s responds to the effects of poverty through direct action and outreach during every season of the year in a variety of ways. Whether it’s hosting a summer day camp for reservation children, or providing food boxes and clothing to people in need, St. Joseph’s does not sit idle when others are in need of help.

In this issue of *Children of the Prairie*, we wanted to highlight two of our outreach efforts: the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center and the Sacred Heart Chacon Family Safe Shelter. Both of the outreaches serve others in different ways. While the museum

honors the heritage and culture of the Lakota (Sioux) people and other Northern Plains tribes, the domestic violence shelter offers a safe place of refuge for victims and families in dangerous situations.

Two very different programs, two very different missions — both equally important. Each outreach, along with all the others, is possible because of the generosity of people like you. People like you who help us answer the call of God and gladly yell out, “*Here am I! Send me.*”

Thank you for supporting the programs, services and outreaches that are so important as part of this Godly work.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr. Greg

Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ
Chaplain

SPOTLIGHT: Two from St. Joseph’s Win National Honors



A sincere sense of self is the characteristic shared by two St. Joseph’s Indian School colleagues that made them standouts to win national awards announced at the Coalition on Residential Excellence (CORE) Banquet.

and Tayeden, a St. Joseph’s alum, was honored as the Catherine Hershey “Student of the Year.”

“I want to give our students pride and understanding of their cultural identity and lead them to participate in the preservation of their Lakota language,” said LaRayne.

Tayeden’s nomination called him “a wise and gentle soul.”

“What makes Tayeden special is that he is one of the kindest, most thoughtful and level-headed students with whom I have ever worked,” said his Family Service Counselor. “He is wise beyond his very young adulthood.”

St. Joseph’s Indian School salutes these two remarkable people who bring so much to the organization and to all whose lives they touch.



LaRayne, Native American Studies teacher, received the Catherine Hershey Award “Educator of the Year,”



The Aktá Lakota Museum: 30 Years of Sparking Wonder

When people visit the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center and take in the beautiful Lakota artwork, it is common to see eyes fill with wonder. For most, that wonder usually comes from the pure and obvious beauty of the exhibits.

But, when St. Joseph's Indian School students look through the glass cases or span the walls, they see something else. Something beyond the obvious beauty ...

**They see a part of their family history.
They see a part of themselves.**

These moments make the museum one of the most beloved places on campus.

This past year, the museum has been celebrating a special milestone: it's 30th anniversary!

As an outreach of St. Joseph's, the museum helps support our mission in several ways. It highlights the history of Northern Plains tribes. It also provides an educational component, so visitors and students can learn about this unique culture. Most importantly, the museum helps to build pride in our students and other Native American youth who walk through its doors.

For instance, during an exhibit entitled "The Gift," students observed the Seven

Lakota Rites through artwork, poetry and song.

"I liked learning about the female ceremonies because we are the birth givers," said seventh-grader MaKaia.

"I want to do a Vision Quest now," added sixth-grader Alayna.

It's those sparks of wonder — the planting of seeds to learn and do more — that make the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center such a wonderful place.

The museum is open year-round and admission is free. For more information, please call 1-800-798-3452 or visit aktalakota.org.



What are the Seven Lakota Rites?

Inípi — *Rite of Purification*

Hanbléčheyapi — *Crying for a Vision*

Wiwáŋyang Wačhípi — *Sundance*

Huŋkálowanpi — *Making of Relatives*

Iśnáthi Awíčhalowanpi — *A Girl's Coming of Age*

Wanáŋi Yuhápi — *Keeping of the Soul*

Thápa Waŋkáyeyapi — *Throwing of the Ball*

Learn more at stjo.org/culture.

The Difference You Help Make

Sacred Heart Chacon Family Safe Shelter Opens on Reservation

The Sacred Heart Chacon Family Safe Shelter is an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School. Their mission is to eradicate violence and oppressive practices through the empowerment of individuals, families and communities to support justice, social change and non-violence.

The one-year anniversary of the new shelter's grand opening is approaching and we are feeling nostalgic for the celebration held that day ...

The sun bathed the crowd gathered to dedicate the Sacred Heart Chacon Family Safe Shelter in Eagle Butte, S.D. A gentle, cooling breeze lifted prayer heavenward as Bishop Peter Muhich of the Diocese of Rapid City led the group of employees, representatives, community members and supporters from St. Joseph's Indian School. The Bad Bear Singers drummed Lakota prayer songs, punctuating the blessing of the new 10,523 square-foot shelter.

"We are blessed to be here," said Mike Tyrell, the president of St. Joseph's Indian School. "This building is a testament to the power of a vision that goes back to 2012, and the power of sustainability and commitment on the part of the Priests of the Sacred Heart."

Mike acknowledged the foresight of the shelter's board, support of the tribe, gifted architect Christine Bjerke and the construction team who persevered through the pandemic to complete the project.



"For those who use our services, our prayer today is a beacon of hope," Mike concluded.



The new facility expanded the shelter's capacity with eight bedrooms suitable for individuals or families, two segregated bedrooms for men or families with teenage boys, additional staff offices for increased confidentiality and meeting space for staff training and victim consultations with outside agencies.

Brother Frank Presto of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, who helped start the Sacred Heart Chacon Family Safe Shelter in 1982, cut the wide red ribbon across the shelter's opening, making way for those gathered to tour the new building.

It was a wonderful day that marked a new beginning for victims of domestic violence and their families.

Learn more about St. Joseph's outreach efforts by visiting stjo.org/outreach.

BLESS OUR LAKOTA CHILDREN



You know the phrase, “April showers bring May flowers.” But, if you ask a St. Joseph’s student to fill in the blank to “April showers bring May ...” you get some pretty interesting responses.



April showers
bring May ...

“July”

— Lennex



April showers
bring May ...

“Snow”

— Lisa



April showers
bring May ...

“Flowers”

— Braxton

Throughout our lifetime we become acquainted with so many special and wonderful people. Whether they are family, friends or loved ones they have been very important to us and have touched our lives. Memories of such people will always hold a special place in our heart. We want to remember them in a personal and ongoing way.

A memorial gift can be a beautiful means to honor someone for whom you cared for deeply. Through a lasting and meaningful way, a memorial benefits others in the name of the person you love and wish to remember.

We invite you to prayerfully recall the people you knew and loved so well during their life. And then consider honoring them with St. Joseph’s Indian School Founder’s Memorial. Those who partake in this gift have the satisfaction of knowing their kindness is used for the care and education of approximately 200 Lakota children.

FOUNDER’S MEMORIAL

- Engraved brass plate displayed in Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel
- \$500 memorial gift

If you would like to establish a Founder’s Memorial, simply complete the information on the enclosed form and return. Our Major Gifts Department can be reached at 1-800-584-9200 or online at stjo.org/memorial.

Do you have a question to ask the Lakota children? Email it to saintjosephs@stjo.org.



WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY
THANK YOU
FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!