

# Children of the Prairie

Your seasonal newsletter from St. Joseph's Indian School

Summer 2023

*“Thank you for helping  
my school.”*

— Jaylena,  
St. Joseph's student

## From the Desk of Fr. Greg



Fr. Greg, Chaplain

As the weather continues to change, one thing that never changes is that I am keeping you all — our benefactors, staff and students — in my prayers.

Throughout the year at St. Joseph's Indian School we have events that honor animals. Animals play such

an integral role in multiple programs on campus. Although most focus on the buffalo, horse and dog, there are other animals deserving of some attention. For instance, the turtle, which you'll read about in this newsletter.

All of us must recognize that God creates each one of us equally, both humans and animals. Moreover, we are to respect the integrity of God's creations through acts of kindness. When we think of animals

or people, all of us are invited to faithfully follow the "Golden Rule" of treating others the way we would want to be treated. Treating others with kindness is thoughtful and considerate and, I must say, contagious. When we watch others treat one another with acts of kindness, there is always the potential for kindness to expand.

The beginning of Proverbs 12:10 reads, "*The righteous care for the needs of their animals ...*" and, with your help, we're proud to do just that.

**Philámayaye** — *thank you* — for opening your hearts to the children so they can do the same by growing to be kind in spirit and in action.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr. Greg

Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ  
Chaplain

## SPOTLIGHT: The Legend of "The Great Race"



Are you familiar with a Lakota legend known as "The Great Race"?

The legend begins with animals and humans once living in complete

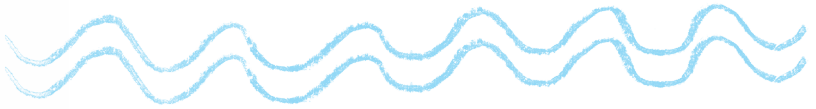
harmony and peace, but over time, the buffalo and man began to quarrel over who was the most powerful. To settle the matter, they decided to hold a race — The Great Race.

Upon hearing news of the pending race, other animals wanted a chance to prove themselves against man and buffalo, too, for they believed they were also powerful and could win.

All living things went to a place at the edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota called Buffalo Gap. There, they lined up for the race.

What happened next? Who won? Find out by visiting [stjo.org/GreatRace](http://stjo.org/GreatRace) or by scanning the QR code with your mobile device.





## Turtles: Traditional and Modern Connections to the Lakota

*Looks aren't always as they seem when it comes to turtles.*

Students at St. Joseph's Indian School love turtles, but it might be for reasons you don't expect ...

Before we dive into all that, consider the following scenarios:

*You meet someone for the first time and find out not only do you share the same name, but the same birthday.*

*You haven't seen an old friend in years, but decide to try a new restaurant and run into them.*

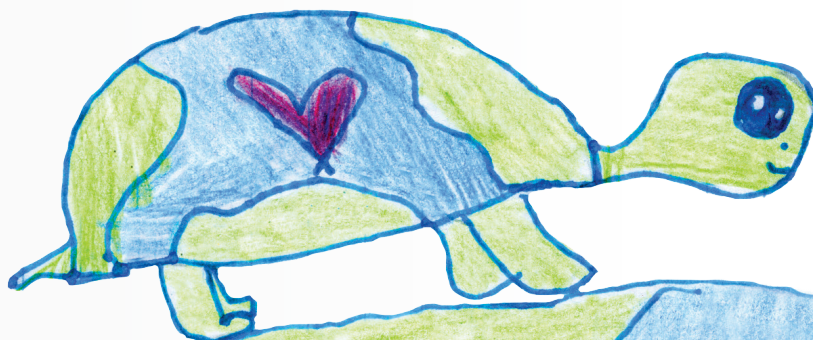
*Or maybe you move to a new town, join a club, meet your dad's old college roommate who has a daughter the same age as you, and all of a sudden you have a new friend ...*

Call it a coincidence, serendipity or even a happy accident but sometimes things line up in such a way that spark our interest — that make us wonder or think more deeply.

Now, let's turn your attention back to the **khéya** — *turtle*. Seemingly one of the most insignificant animals to roam the planet, turtles prove looks aren't always what they seem. In fact, the turtle is present and significant in a multitude of stories, legends and observations of the Lakota (Sioux) people.

One of these observations, for example, has to do with the scales on the turtle's shell and the number of months in a year. Based on certain star constellations in the night sky that appeared during different seasons, the Lakota identified 13 moons throughout the year. This led to them creating their yearly calendar, which contained 13

*(over, please)*



months — each having 28 days.

The Lakota also observed some creatures on Earth reflected the same or similar natural phenomena. Like the number of Lakota moons and days each moon is present, the turtle has 13 large scales on its back, and 28 small scales around the shell — mimicking the monthly moon pattern of 13 moons existing for 28 days.

Again, call it coincidence, serendipity or a happy accident, but it's because of this and other natural occurrences the turtle became an important symbol in traditional Lakota society.

So, you may be asking, what do turtles have to do with our students at St. Joseph's Indian School now, in modern times?

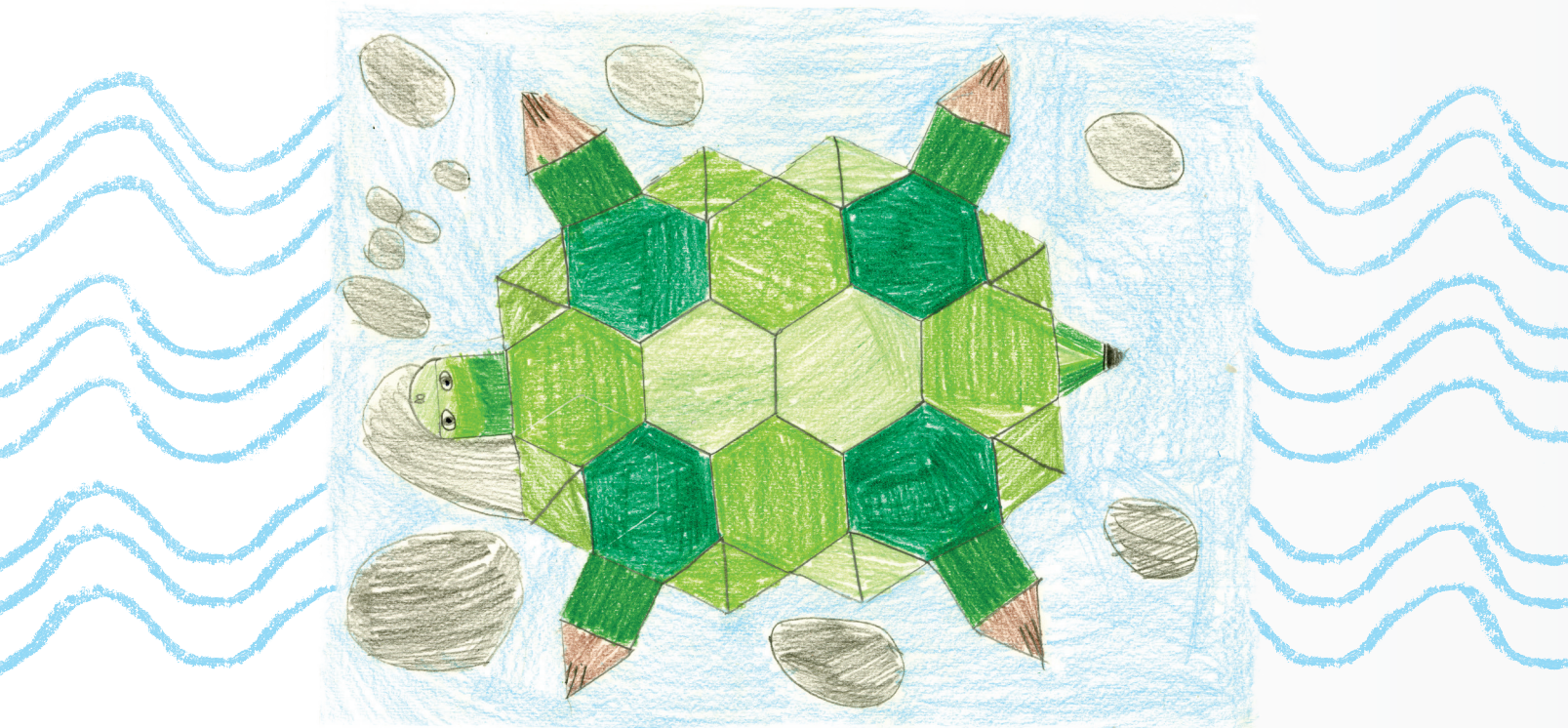
It's no secret the natural habitats turtles call home are often polluted with debris, trash and man-made items that harm and threaten the

livelihood of this reptilian relative. In an effort to help, students have organized a multitude of activities to benefit or honor turtles.

For instance, students sold reusable straws as a way for people to lessen the amount of items that become trash. All proceeds went back to helping save the turtles. On Earth Day, students took time picking up trash along the Missouri River near our campus in Chamberlain, SD, as a way to benefit the turtles, and other creatures. The list goes on.

“Animals play such an integral role on campus. Whether in the homes, at school or in counseling sessions, they are a part — big or small — in providing support to all of our students,” said Tia, a St. Joseph's houseparent.

**Wóphila thánka** — *many thanks* — for helping educate our students on how to respect others — humans and animals alike.



*Artwork created by St. Joseph's students.*



What is your favorite animal?



“Wolf, because they look cool and their eyes are beautiful.”

— Tristine



“My favorite animal is the lynx, because they jump high and run fast.”

— Darnell



“All animals, because their babies are all cute.”

— Jasleen

Do you have a question to ask the Lakota children? Email it to [saintjosephs@stjo.org](mailto:saintjosephs@stjo.org).

# BLESS OUR LAKOTA CHILDREN



A Will is the last statement of your ideals and values here on Earth. You want to be sure it reflects the love and concern you hold in your heart for family, friends and special charities. By naming St. Joseph’s in your Will, you are directing a gift to support our work that helps the Lakota children even after you are gone.

Would you consider the needs of the Lakota boys and girls at St. Joseph’s Indian School when you plan your estate?

Start planning today by requesting our FREE Estate Planning Course booklets.

Contact our Major Gifts Department at 1-800-584-9200 or visit us online at [stjo.org/will](http://stjo.org/will) to request information.

You are under no obligation. We offer this information only as a service to help you.



THANK YOU ☆ FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!