

# Children of the Prairie

Your seasonal newsletter from St. Joseph's Indian School

Winter 2024

*"Thank you for everything you do  
for St. Joseph's Indian School."*

*— LaRee, St. Joseph's student*

## From the Desk of Fr. Greg



Fr. Greg, Chaplain

As the snowflakes gracefully fall outside my window at St. Joseph's Indian School, I wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support. Your commitment to our mission allows us to provide a nurturing environment that empowers Lakota (Sioux) children to dream of a brighter future.

Through your generosity, St. Joseph's Indian School empowers children and young adults to face the challenges of life with strength, resilience and a deep sense of cultural identity.

And sometimes those traits are needed more during certain seasons than others ... such as winter! Winter in rural America is no easy feat. However, St. Joseph's Indian School embraces the winter by

providing indoor recreation and leisure activities when the children aren't out enjoying the snow. Some students are taking time to learn to sew and bead, while others take to the basketball court to work on their three-point shots. All in all, we're not letting the snow and cold get us down!

We extend our gratitude for your continued support. Your compassion and generosity truly make a world of difference in the lives of our students. As we continue this winter season, we are reminded of the warmth and love that come from a **k'holá** — *friend* — like you.

May this season be filled with joy, love and blessings for you and your loved ones.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr. Greg

Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ  
Chaplain

## SPOTLIGHT: A Year of Recognition

2023 was a year of recognition for St. Joseph's Indian School and we are so humbled and honored by it! Last year, St. Joseph's was named a Top-Rated Charity by GreatNonprofits and awarded the Platinum Transparency Seal by Candid, which is the highest level an organization can attain.

“St. Joseph's instills pride in their students and it shows in their accomplishments and their success in life. God bless the children and bless the school for providing the kind of education and care that they need to grow into responsible adults.” — Donor review on GreatNonprofits



Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

Candid.

We're proud of our accomplishments, because they reinforce that not only are we educating Native American children for life — *mind, body, heart and spirit* — but we're doing it in a way that is ethical, transparent and compassionate.

To learn more about the awards and accreditation St. Joseph's has attained, visit [stjo.org/awards](https://stjo.org/awards).

# 2023: A Year in Review

*Some really wonderful events took place at St. Joseph's last year thanks to YOU!*

## JANUARY 2023

Students returned from winter break and took part in Christmas parties within their campus homes. It's the most joyful way to begin the new calendar each year with presents, food, fellowship and fun!

## FEBRUARY 2023

St. Joseph's Indian School awarded a record-breaking total of \$213,970 in college scholarships to Native American students pursuing higher education!

## MARCH 2023

Students celebrated College, Career and Military Month by exploring their options after high school graduation.

## APRIL 2023

Groundbreaking on the Rec Center renovation and expansion took place. The new addition will include a second gym to more seamlessly accommodate gymnastics, wrestling, archery and cheer. Volleyball and basketball will continue to take place in the current gym. The project will also include offices, restrooms, a multi-purpose room and exercise spaces for students and staff while meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

## MAY 2023

Seventh grade students went on the Annual Cultural Trip to sacred Native American sites. Fifteen eighth grade students and six senior students also graduated this month!

## JUNE 2023

Rising Eagle Day Camp was hosted on campus! Each day, kids were provided transportation to and from St. Joseph's for the opportunity at a fun-filled summer that included daily meals, recreational activities, lessons in Lakota culture, arts and crafts, swimming and more!



## JULY 2023

Outreach programs were in full swing. Food box deliveries to reservations gave families healthy foods of meat, cheese, eggs, bread, fruits, veggies and more. At the same time, St. Joseph's Bookmobile delivered 16,990 free books to reservation communities!



## AUGUST 2023

Students returned from summer break and were welcomed with a parade — officially beginning the 2023-24 school year!



## SEPTEMBER 2023

We hosted our 47th Annual Powwow to the public! It was a weekend of cultural activities, campus tours, powwow dance competitions and more!



## OCTOBER 2023

Students celebrated Native American Day by focusing on their traditions, heritage and stories. St. Joseph's also hosted an animal blessing for the four-legged on campus, which included dogs from our Houseparents and Pets In (HAPI) Homes program and the horses from our Equine Therapy program.



## NOVEMBER 2023

Students celebrated Native American Heritage Month through activities like proudly wearing moccasins for Rock Your Mocs day. Students also celebrated All Souls Day by making prayer ties for loved ones who have passed on.

## DECEMBER 2023

Students selected presents for their siblings, parents/guardians and grandparents from our campus Christmas Store before leaving for winter break to spend valuable time with their families.



Thanks to the generous support of our **thiyóšpaye** — *extended family* — we were able to continue meeting the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of students and families throughout the whole year!

As another year begins, St. Joseph's remains grateful for the ongoing support of our dedicated donors who make extraordinary things happen here every day.



# BLESS OUR LAKOTA CHILDREN

## How was your Christmas at St. Joseph's?



“We watched movies,  
ate really good food  
and opened presents!  
My favorite presents  
were my shoes  
and necklace.”

— Deveah



“My favorite gift was a  
lot of stickers! I hope  
you have a great  
New Year!”

— Persais



“This Christmas was a  
blast thanks to you!  
We enjoyed the  
presents, cards and  
the joy!”

— Jayda

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



Are you looking for an easy, cost-effective and convenient way to support St. Joseph's Indian School? You may want to consider sharing a gift through your IRA or Donor Advised Fund. You can help make a difference for approximately 200 Native American children who call St. Joseph's their home-away-from-home.

Please contact Denise Hyland at 1-800-584-9200 or [dhyland@stjo.org](mailto:dhyland@stjo.org) for more information! Or visit our website at [stjo.org/plannedgiving](http://stjo.org/plannedgiving) for easy ways to give.

Special giving options should always be researched and discussed with qualified individuals, so friends are encouraged to call St. Joseph's Major Gifts Department or contact their own legal representative.



THANK YOU  FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

