

Children of the Prairie

Your seasonal newsletter from St. Joseph's Indian School

Winter 2026

*“Thanks to you
my Christmas at
St. Joseph’s was
great! I hope you
have a great year!”*

*— Chris,
St. Joseph’s student*

From the Desk of Fr. Greg



Fr. Greg, Chaplain
St. Joseph's Indian School.

Winter has a way of making people want to hole up and be still. While stillness has its time and place, action is required to do God's will. We must move. We must act. Even when it's cold and we may be feeling winter fatigue, the Lakota (Sioux) children need

But, we don't do it alone. We have a **kǎolá** — *friend* — like you in our corner. This brings me so much peace. Sometimes, I think we forget that God's power is limitless and that, through faith, we can achieve more than we can imagine — especially when we work together.

As you'll see in the following Year in Review, 2025

was a busy year. It was a year of accomplishing so much. It was a year of doing more than we ever imagined we could.

“And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.”

— Galatians 6:9

Thankful doesn't begin to describe how I feel about you — how the children feel about you. As we head into 2026, let us join hands again, fueled by the power within us, and create a legacy of compassion, resilience and transformation.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr. Greg

Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ
Chaplain

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Mersayis



Meet Mersayis, a remarkable young woman whose resilience, compassion and determination earned her the prestigious Dr. Henry C. Mueller Scholarship — awarding her \$10,000 toward her dream of becoming a nurse.

Growing up in the foster care system, Mersayis faced many challenges. However, at St. Joseph's Indian School, she found a foundation of support where

her passion for helping others began to flourish. Her journey is marked by perseverance and cultural pride. She holds a special place in her heart for the elderly, whom she is dedicated to serving with dignity and care.

“It all started when I was younger. I was always a big sister growing up, so I already have the nurturing part down,” she said.

Mersayis is a shining example of how generosity and encouragement can change lives.

2025: A Year in Review

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

If 2025 were a Lakota star quilt, it would be sewn from moments of growth, tradition and togetherness — each month adding a vibrant patch to the year's fabric at St. Joseph's Indian School. Thanks to your support, students thrived in ways big and small, and the campus buzzed with energy, celebration and love.

January welcomed students back from winter break, while Phase II of the Rec Center renovation moved forward, improving workout areas and entrances.

February brought a landmark achievement as the school awarded \$247,800 in scholarships to Native American students — changing lives and opening doors to higher education.

March showcased student creativity during Youth Art Month at the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, where colorful artwork celebrated culture and imagination.

April was packed with joy as students took on staff in a friendly basketball game, while Phase III of the Rec Center project began — updating the shower areas near the gym and pool.

May connected students with their heritage during a powerful cultural trip, while the community proudly celebrated the graduation of 17 eighth graders and five seniors.

June came alive with Rising Eagle Day Camp, where children enjoyed Lakota teachings, crafts and games. Meanwhile, campus improvements continued with upgrades to the football field.

(over, please)



July saw the spirit of service on the move. Families across the reservation received food boxes, and the St. Joseph's Bookmobile delivered free books — nourishing both bodies and minds.

August welcomed a new school year and students back with cheers, smiling staff and a colorful parade — setting the tone for a year of learning and joy.

September was a highlight, as the 49th Annual Powwow brought together guests and families to celebrate the Lakota (Sioux) culture. The month also marked the grand opening of the newly renovated Rec Center.

October included Native American Day, where the campus was filled with stories, songs and tradition. Even the animals were blessed in a special ceremony honoring all living beings.

November focused on remembrance and connection. Students created heartfelt prayer ties, remembering loved ones with care and ceremony during Native American Heritage Month. We also hosted a Family Game Night, bringing students and staff together for laughter and friendly competition.

December arrived and students shopped for loved ones at the Christmas Store, sharing the joy of giving before heading home for winter break.

Reflecting on this incredible year, we're filled with gratitude for the community that helps make St. Joseph's more than a school — it's a place where Lakota heritage thrives. Here's to a bright and beautiful 2026!



BLESS OUR LAKOTA CHILDREN

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What is your favorite
Christmas gift?



“I loved all my gifts
and my favorite one
was my science kit.”

— Kayden



“My favorite one
was a drone.”

— Michael



“My favorite gift
was my
American Doll.”

— Charlie

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



Are you looking for a 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 a home-away-from-home.

Please contact Denise Hyland at 1-800-584-9200 or dhyland@stjo.org for more information! Or visit our website at stjo.org/plannedgiving for other ways to give.

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



THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

