

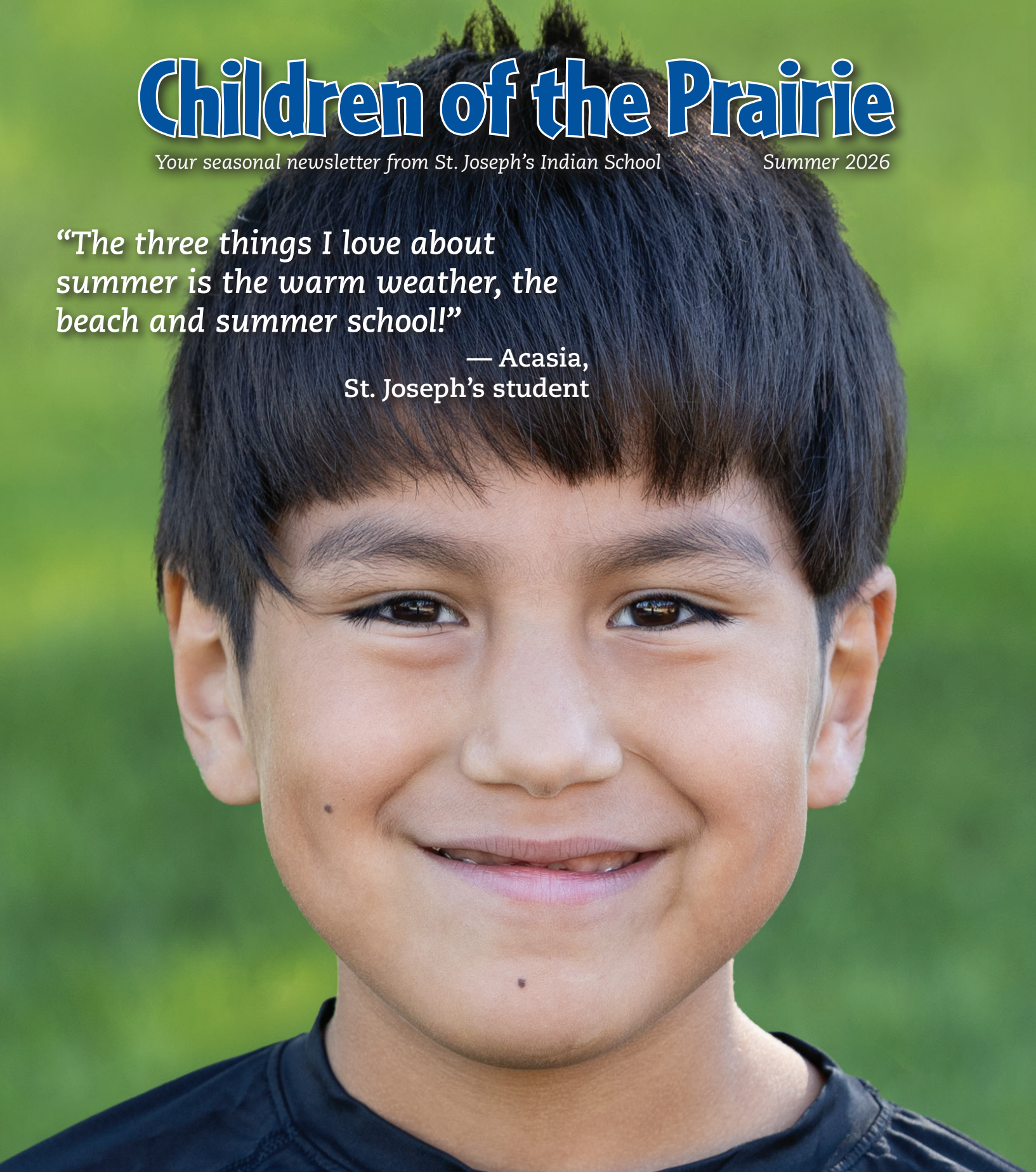
Children of the Prairie

Your seasonal newsletter from St. Joseph's Indian School

Summer 2026

“The three things I love about summer is the warm weather, the beach and summer school!”

— Acasia,
St. Joseph's student



From the Desk of Fr. Greg



Fr. Greg, Chaplain

Our campus is filled with purpose as we prepare to celebrate our 100th school year. This milestone invites us to pause with gratitude, reflect on our history and look ahead with hope as we continue our mission of serving Lakota (Sioux) children.

Looking back over the past century, it is clear that the journey has not always been easy. There have been moments marked by hardship, sacrifice and perseverance. Yet through every challenge, one truth has remained: this work has been worth it, worth pursuing and worth never giving up on.

I'm excited for you to read this newsletter and learn more about the beginnings of St. Joseph's Indian School, including the struggles that shaped who we are today. Our history is a testament to faith in action and to the countless people who believed this mission mattered, even when the path forward was difficult.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you." — Matthew 7:7

Through many years of asking, praying and trusting in God's provision, we have been able to faithfully endure challenges and continue forward, arriving at where we stand today with gratitude, humility and hope for the future.

None of this would be possible without you. Your prayers, generosity and steadfast support make you an essential part of our *thiyóšpaye* — extended family. *Philámayaye* — thank you — for walking alongside us, for believing in this mission and for helping ensure that Lakota children continue to have opportunities to learn, grow and thrive.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr. Greg

Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ
Chaplain

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Taivin



As a St. Joseph's Indian School student, Taivin built strong friendships and learned the importance of independence and responsibility. Before graduating in 2023, he earned a Build Dakota Scholarship and went on to study Building Trades Technology at Lake Area Technical College, graduating in 2025. Today, he works for a design and construction company, gaining hands-on experience and building a career he's proud of.

But his greatest role is one he recently stepped into:

fatherhood. It's reshaped how he defines success.

"Success for me now is simple," Taivin shared. "It's about being the best dad I can be and making sure my family is taken care of. If my son has what he needs and grows up knowing he's loved and supported, then I'm successful."

Taivin stays connected to St. Joseph's, grateful for the mentors and community that continue to support him.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — for giving Taivin a firm foundation to grow up in, so he can build a strong future for his family.

100 Years at St. Joseph's Indian School: Built on Faith. Sustained by Generosity.

After 100 years of serving Lakota (Sioux) children, the journey hasn't always been easy, but it has been work worth pursuing and never giving up on.

One hundred years ago, a quiet but determined mission took root along the Missouri River, one that would endure fire, loss and uncertainty through faith and **wačhántognaka** — *generosity*. In 1923, Fr. Henry Hogeback, SCJ arrived in the United States from Germany. His ministry soon led him to the Lower Brule Reservation in South



Dakota, where he recognized a deep need for education, care and opportunity for Lakota (Sioux) children.

In the spring of 1927, Fr. Hogeback received permission to purchase the Columbus College campus in Chamberlain, SD for \$40,000. That fall, St. Joseph's Indian School opened its doors to 53 Lakota boys and girls. From the beginning, the mission was clear: to provide children with a safe place to learn, grow and be loved.

The early years were marked by hardship. Resources were scarce, buildings were fragile and each school year depended on perseverance and faith. Because St. Joseph's was not a federal school, much of Fr. Hogeback's time was spent raising funds just to keep the school open. Donations of clothing, shoes, medicine and supplies were lifelines, used carefully and gratefully, just as they are today.

The Sisters who served at St. Joseph's recorded the realities of those early years in their diaries. In January 1930, a fire destroyed the laundry building during the dead of winter. With frozen water lines and no money for improvements, the Sisters and students improvised, thawing pipes with

(over, please)



blowtorches and turning the priest's dining room into a temporary laundry. "Our empty treasury forbids even such necessary improvements," one Sister wrote. Yet they stayed.

Then came another devastating fire of June 17, 1931. Sparks from a chimney, carried by fierce winds, ignited the roof of the main building. In just hours, four years of labor were reduced to ashes. The children's dormitory burned first, followed by classrooms, the kitchen, laundry, boiler house, garage and even the school's only car. Exhausted and heartbroken, Fr. Hogeback asked, "How can I get my school back?"

There was one consolation: no lives were lost. The children, Sisters, Fr. Hogeback and other staff were safe. And in a moment that defines the spirit of St. Joseph's, the Sisters scrubbed and whitewashed a chicken coop to serve as their temporary home, stating, "In an emergency, Father,

anything will do. If our Divine Lord was born in a stable, a chicken coop should be good enough for us." They endured, not because it was easy, but because the children mattered.

The growth of St. Joseph's Indian School did not happen by chance. New schools, homes, health services and programs were not built overnight, but with time and belief. Receiving little to no government funding, this mission has always depended on the hearts of caring people who chose to stand with Lakota children year after year.

As we celebrate 100 years, we honor those who never gave up — and you, our faithful supporter. Because of you, St. Joseph's continues to provide safety, stability, education, healing and hope to nearly 200 Lakota children today. **Philámayaye** — *thank you* — we would not be who we are without you.



DID YOU KNOW?

St. Joseph's Indian School will soon celebrate its 50th Annual **Wáčhípi** — *Powwow* — a vibrant tradition honoring Lakota culture, community and heritage. Festivities begin Thursday, September 17, with the main powwow celebration taking place Saturday, September 19. It's a wonderful time to tour our campus and see our programs and buildings firsthand.

You can still plan your visit and sign up today by visiting stjo.org/powwow.

BLESS OUR LAKOTA CHILDREN

What do you like to do in the summer?



“I like to do
cartwheels!”

— Jace



“I like to play
with my friends
and watch the stars
at night!”

— Weston



“I like making
friends at
St. Joseph’s
summer camp!”

— MariJo

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



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 to help 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 to request more information.

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

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

