

St. Joseph's Indian School



A Window to Our Core



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St. Joseph's Indian School

We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

PO Box 326

Chamberlain, SD 57326

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Foreword



We are humbled by the generosity of so many people who sacrifice to support our mission at St. Joseph's Indian School. Clothing, school supplies and countless other donations from caring friends around the world help provide needed programs to Lakota (Sioux) children and their families in South Dakota. May our business summary demonstrate our gratitude to our committed supporters and staff!

A Need in South Dakota

In 1923, German members from the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart traveled to the United States. Once there, the priests made their way to South Dakota where they found a dry, desolate, harsh land. They also discovered the beautiful Lakota people ... unfortunately living in poverty, isolation and general anguish.

From this scene, St. Joseph's Indian School was born in 1927 in an effort to create a better world for the Lakota people ... a world where opportunities to flourish were many. Over 87 years later, the effort continues, and the mission expands.

A Presence Overseas

To connect with our founder's roots while furthering our mission, we established programs in Germany (2002) and France (2007). From cultural programs and school exchanges to public education and fundraising, our international programs have a direct impact on the Lakota children and families in South Dakota.

Faces behind the numbers

The Lakota people, especially the children, are at the heart of St. Joseph's. We allow friends around the globe to partner with Native American

children and families by providing for life's needs – *mind, body, heart and spirit*. Our holistic approach embodies the values of faith, integrity, stewardship, respect, collaboration and excellence on which St. Joseph's was founded.

In this summary, you will find information regarding our programs and financials. While this information tells a story, it tells only a very small part of the story. Behind the numbers and narrative are the lives you touch through your kindness and generosity.

St. Joseph's Indian School is funded by private donations ... in all reality, programs for Native American children and families in need would not exist without you as part of our **tiyospaye** — *extended family!*



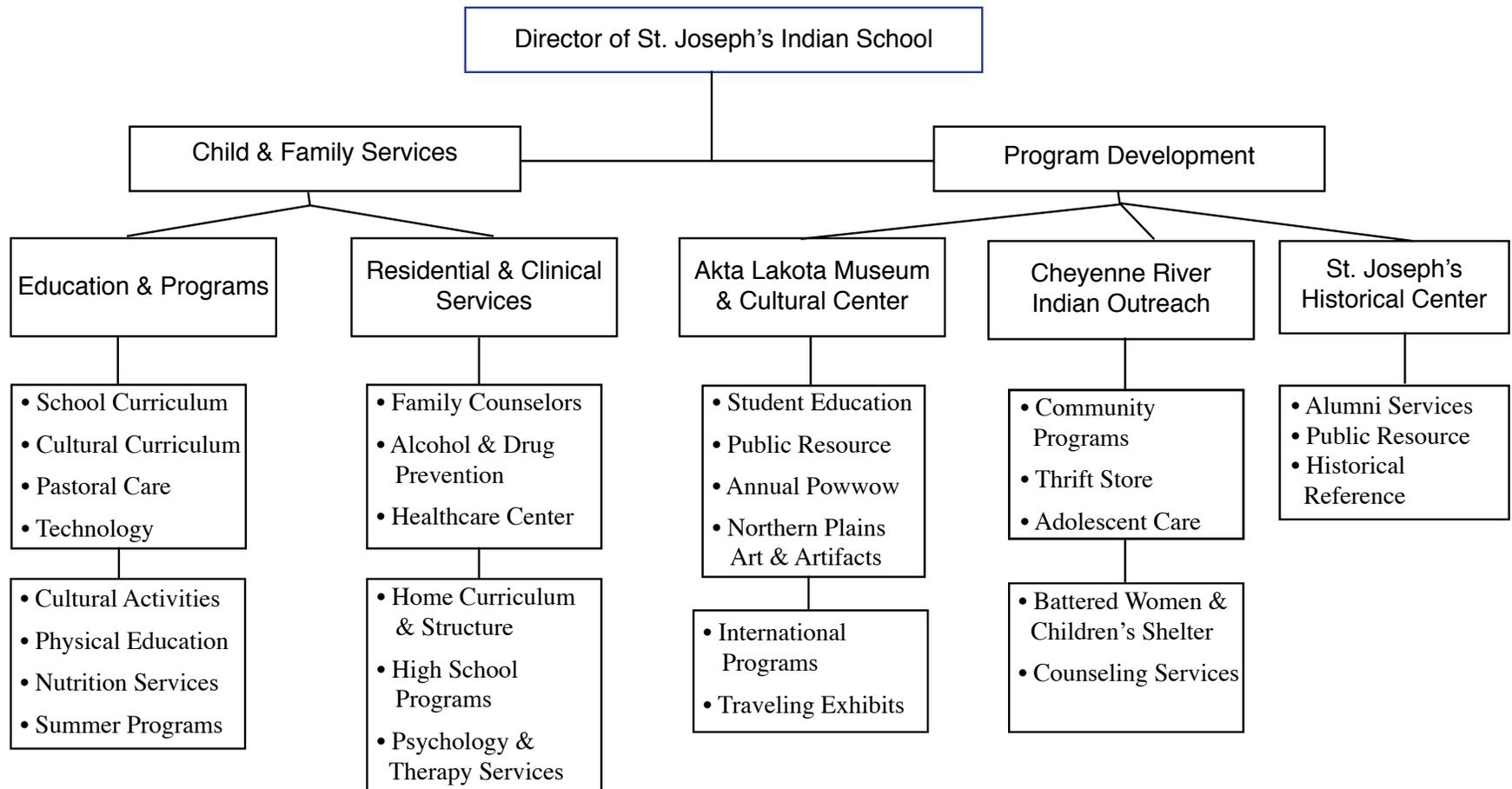
God bless,

Fr. Anthony

Fr. Anthony Kluckman, SCJ
Chaplain

Program Structure

St. Joseph's Indian School follows a simple purpose: to give Lakota (Sioux) children and their families a safe haven full of hope in times of need ...free of charge. The complexities and heartbreak filling so many Native American lives require a holistic, personalized care plan. Because of this need, St. Joseph's comprehensive staff structure serves as the organization's backbone.



Programs: Educational

Now that I have a stable home, I can finally concentrate on my homework.

~ Alex, St. Joseph's Student



Lakota (Sioux) families reach out to St. Joseph's Indian School for their children. Parents, grandparents, guardians and caregivers know St. Joseph's provides more than just a safe home. From cultural integration in daily living to specialized counseling services, we provide Native American boys and girls programs as unique as they are.

Children attending St. Joseph's benefit from individualized care plans that follow nationally approved and accredited techniques. Friends who support St. Joseph's help provide for every aspect of each child's physical, emotional, spiritual and educational needs.

School Years

Over 200 boys and girls call St. Joseph's their home-away-from-home. Children in elementary grades one through eight attend classes at St. Joseph's Elementary School on campus. Young people in grades nine through 12 attend the local public school ([Chamberlain High School](#)).

According to a 2012 report from the Bureau of Indian Education, only 46% of Native American students in South Dakota received a high school diploma. In contrast, eighth grade students who graduated from St. Joseph's Indian School in 2010 show a graduation rate of 77%. This alarming number solidifies the importance of education starting in elementary years. Children at St. Joseph's are encouraged to be

passionate about their education through special awards, recognition and fun activities.

Integrating the children's proud Great Plains heritage into their classroom experience also plays an important role in their healing and growth. Native American Studies is a required course for all students; in this course, children find themselves immersed in culture by learning their native language, traditional stories and more.

Additionally, Native American beliefs and philosophies are incorporated into core curriculum classes like math, science and language arts through careful lesson planning.

Programs: Educational



*“St. Joe’s gave me a lot of great opportunities. I was able to see more of this great country and experience different lifestyles.
~ Shay, St. Joseph’s High School Graduate”*

Exchange Program and Cultural Trips

Classroom education stands as a cornerstone of St. Joseph’s Indian School’s programs for Lakota (Sioux) children. However, helping young people experience the world beyond their classroom walls is a large part of helping them overcome obstacles and reach for their dreams.

Due to poverty many Native American youth have often not traveled far from their small reservation communities. Going beyond South Dakota’s borders is a big deal for our boys and girls ... traveling over oceans and to new continents is a life-changing opportunity! Friends who support St. Joseph’s provide all these opportunities and more.

Exchange Programs

We have partnered with [Gymnasium Leoninum](#) in Handrup, Germany as our sister school. This unique opportunity to travel abroad and learn from another culture expands the horizons of all young people involved; however, it is an especially amazing experience for St. Joseph’s students.

The teenagers chosen for this yearly exchange program are wide-eyed with excitement. From flying for the first time to seeing sites once only read about in books, St. Joseph’s students truly become citizens of the world through this trip.

The same can be said for German students who are welcomed to South Dakota. The experience to visit rural America changes their perspective and broadens their horizons. German exchange students share their

culture and lifestyle with Native American children here in the United States; however, they also take home part of the Lakota (Sioux) heritage and life to their friends and family.

Cultural Trips

Traveling abroad isn’t an experience for every child in our care. For some, life has been extremely sheltered, sometimes with painful experiences. Having positive experiences in a broader world is nonetheless important for these young people.

From home trips to larger South Dakota cities for museum, athletic and dining experiences to classroom field trips within the region for cultural and personal growth, we ensure all students learn there is a larger world awaiting them.

Programs: Educational

Higher Education Experiences and Scholarships

High school dropout rates exceeding 50% for Native American children in South Dakota seem to stack the odds against Lakota (Sioux) students. St. Joseph's Indian School helps break through those numbers by reinforcing the importance of higher education and lifelong learning.

Elementary students enjoy career fairs on our campus so they can learn about a variety of career opportunities. Students also hear about the type of education required for each career. These fairs plant seeds in the students' minds and spark excitement for their future.

Older students shadow business people in our local town and have many opportunities to visit universities and technical schools around the region. These business and campus experiences continue to serve as positive reinforcement for setting goals and putting in the hard work it takes to overcome obstacles.

St. Joseph's Indian School also provides young Native Americans – both St. Joseph's students and otherwise – with scholarships for higher education.

Over \$65,000 is awarded each semester; these scholarship funds are available thanks only to the generosity of friends around the globe. Because of this financial support, students have gone on to earn degrees that allow them to become leaders in their communities as teachers, doctors, nurses and more!

High School Preparatory Courses

Transitioning from elementary to high school can be a challenge for any child. For St. Joseph's students, they are leaving the comfort and familiarity of our campus school system to embark on a journey in the public school. In order to ensure a smooth transition we make special preparations during the summer before their freshman year of high school.

Through our high school prep program, St. Joseph's staff introduces students to public school teachers. This program allows students the opportunity to experience new classrooms, teachers and expectations before the first day of school arrives. We have found this program integral in helping Native American students successfully complete high school.

*I have spent six and a half years at St. Joseph's and it has taught me to dream. I dream of a future of giving back. I plan to attend college and study something in math and science, maybe I'll be a physicians's assistant. I hope to travel and serve after college by joining the Peace Corps.
~ Angela, St. Joseph's
High School Graduate*



Programs: Educational

*I am thankful for religion class,
getting to be on the basketball team
and for the care I get at St. Joseph's
Indian School.*

~ Jillian, St. Joseph's Student

Religion

St. Joseph's Indian School was founded by German members of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. This Catholic order was established by Frenchman Leo John Dehon, SCJ. Because of these deep roots in religion, spirituality is an important part of our programs.

Children at St. Joseph's come from a variety of religious backgrounds, and we respect them all. Students are encouraged to attend worship services and ceremonies of their family's own choosing and faith. We recognize youth, especially adolescence, as a time of spiritual searching and growth.

Religious education classes – which all children enjoy as regular curriculum – help students understand the importance of spirituality and prayer regardless of denomination.



Programs: Residential

*Had it not been for St. Joseph's Indian School,
I'd still be homeless, being shuffled between
family members.
~ Grace, St. Joseph's Student*



Elementary

St. Joseph's Indian School provides a nationally accredited home-away-from-home for Native American children in grades one through 12. Native American families bring youngsters to St. Joseph's knowing their children will be safe, loved and cared for in every way.

For some children, St. Joseph's campus is home only on the weekdays for a few months; their families simply need a helping hand during a short-term difficulty.

However, for others, St. Joseph's is home seven days a week for years. These precious youngsters and their families have nowhere to turn but

St. Joseph's, and thanks to gifts from friends around the globe, St. Joseph's is always here.

There are no dorms at St. Joseph's. Children live in one of our 20 campus homes with two specially-trained houseparents. They live and play together as any family would. The boys and girls learn life skills from personal health and home finances to communication and teamwork.

Beyond these life skills, youngsters learn how to embrace their culture and spirituality in everyday living. Family prayers, Lakota traditions and more are routine parts of daily life.

Programs: Residential

High School

Less than 50% of South Dakota's Native American students graduate from high school.

Many factors are behind this number. Alcohol, drugs, poverty ... there are so many challenges in life for young Native Americans, especially those living on South Dakota's reservations.

To begin addressing this problem, St. Joseph's tested a high school initiative in 1976. Today, a collaborative partnership exists between St. Joseph's Indian School and Chamberlain Public Schools.

Young adults complete an application and interview process to ensure they are open to accepting the opportunities and guidance they will be given through our program. Once accepted, the young adults live on St. Joseph's campus in residential homes – not dorms. Each home is run by two specially-trained houseparents. Much like St. Joseph's younger children, our high school

students are expected to be participants in family living.

There are responsibilities from preparing a meal to completing homework independently. Students have the freedom they need to grow, learn and thrive; however, they also abide by rules and expectations intended to protect them.

Unlike elementary age children, high school students do not attend school on campus. Instead, St. Joseph's high school students attend the local public high school. We work together to ensure each of our high school students has the same opportunity to thrive through a public school education.

High school homes are extremely busy with students working part-time jobs after school, participating in extra-curricular activities and preparing for higher education.



I was truly blessed to have St. Joseph's as my second home because there are so many people there who want me to succeed; it is something that I know will be very difficult to find anywhere else.

~ JR, St. Joseph's High School Graduate

Programs: Cultural

Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center

There was a time in American History when eradication of Native American people and their culture plagued our nation. The facts of history cannot be changed; however, the future of Northern Plains people, especially children, can be shaped through the restoration of their heritage.

Because St. Joseph's and our donors believe cultural awareness and appreciation lie at the center of healing and growth, the Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center was opened on St. Joseph's campus in 1991. The cultural center's name literally translated is "to honor the people." As a living museum, the cultural center's purpose is to honor the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people in South Dakota.

An Educational Awakening

Children at St. Joseph's often come to campus with little understanding of who they are as a people. Part of their educational experience comes from our cultural center. While in our care, youngsters attend classes in our cultural center, listen to speakers and find themselves immersed in a world few have ever known.

Additionally, the cultural center is open to the general public. As a living museum developed specifically with Northern Plains heritage and culture in mind, guests will find:

- contemporary issues receive as much attention as past battles;
- today's art is exhibited alongside yesterday's artifacts and
- the education of young Indian students is as important as state-of-the art research and conservation.

The Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center shares its collection through traveling exhibits. All efforts and programs are funded through private donations and promotion of Northern Plains art.

In May 2013, we proudly dedicated the opening of our historical and alumni center, **Tokéya unki nàjĩppi** — *We stood here in the beginning*. The center uses displays, audio visuals and artifacts to preserve the memories of St. Joseph's Indian School and shares accomplishments of the students, religious staff and our benefactors.



Excellent in every way, a very thought provoking experience!
~ Don B., cultural center visitor

Programs: Cultural

I dance both traditional and grass. I decided to learn after I heard the stories of where these dances came from in our history. When I dance, I feel like I can conquer the world!

~ Seth, St. Joseph's Student

Annual Powwow & Weekend Celebration

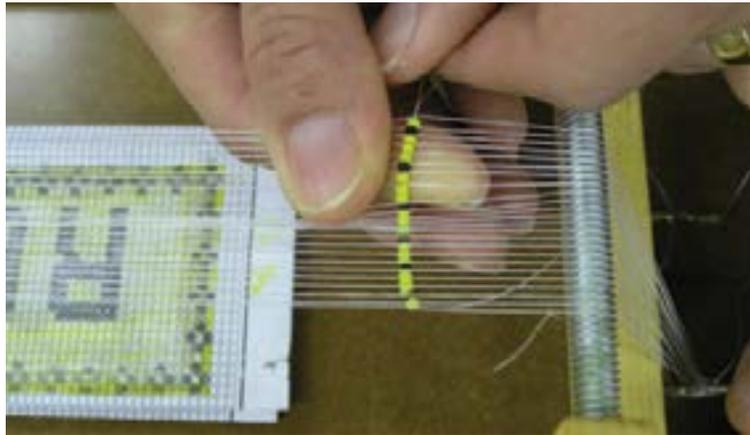
Native American culture is celebrated every day at St. Joseph's Indian School. However, each September, we host a large, public celebration open to all. This special day allows our children, their families, community members and donors to gather on our South Dakota campus and celebrate Native American people, culture and traditions through a powwow.

Hundreds of individuals have helped turn our [Annual Powwow](#) activities into an event people across campus, the state and the nation anticipate each fall.

Guests at the event have the opportunity to enjoy workshops on cultural activities like making a dreamcatcher and touring the campus. The most magical part of the weekend, though, is the children's powwow! Tiny tots to young adults dance to the beat of a traditional drum, and all who watch this event are transported to another time and place.



Programs: Cultural



Native American Studies

St. Joseph's Indian School offers core curriculum like language arts, math and science. As a private school, however, specialty classes are an equally important part of education. Native American Studies is considered an essential class for our students.

Children in grades one through eight attend a regular Native American Studies class where they learn their native language, cultural traditions and proud heritage. High school students enjoy lessons in Native American traditions and culture through home activities.

Boys and girls are led in their Native American Studies by enrolled tribal members rooted in culture and dedicated to helping children find healing through education.

Additionally, all children at St. Joseph's Indian School have an opportunity to participate in cultural activities through our dance and drum groups.

My favorite class is Native American Studies because we learn about our culture, how to bead and how to dance. When I dance, I feel like no one can stop me!

~ Rebecca, St. Joseph's Student



Programs: Recreational

Many of St. Joseph's programs focus on culture and education. However, because we are dedicated to providing for the children's every need, making time for fun and recreation finds equal importance!

Physical activities, like running, plays as much a role in personal well-being as intellectual activities like reading. We know healthy children are happy children, and offering a wide variety of recreational activities helps ensure each child in our care has the opportunity to grow and heal in every aspect.

Athletics

Elementary children enjoy after-school sports ranging from T-ball and archery to wrestling and basketball.

Whether the highest scoring player or the most accurate stat keeper, our organized athletic endeavors afford every child at St. Joseph's the opportunity to be part of a team.

Fine Arts

Not every child finds the perfect fit on a court. Many students take advantage of opportunities in the arts.

Taking part in art classes, music lessons and other fine arts activities helps children find the encouragement, stability and experience they need to set goals for the future.

Other benefits of our after-school recreational programs include:

- increased sense of family and belonging;
- life lessons in teamwork and sportsmanship;
- increased emphasis on physical well-being for a population plagued by health issues;
- additional opportunities for our students to interact with children in public school settings across the state.



There's so much more to recreation than basketball, and St. Joseph's works hard to provide children with a variety of activities!

~ Laura, St. Joseph's Houseparent

Programs: Outreach



Unlike traditional schools, St. Joseph's Indian School does not sit idle in the summer months. Students do not have regular classes; however, a growing number of children remain on campus to live in our summer homes and take part in our summer activities. Summer can be a trying time for Lakota (Sioux) children, especially on South Dakota's reservations.

Day Camp

At St. Joseph's Rising Eagle Day Camp, Lakota children from the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Indian Reservations take part in cultural arts and crafts, learn traditional Lakota dance, eat nutritious meals and thrive in a setting where kids can just be kids! Every day, camp counselors drive 30 miles, one way, to pick up Native American children who yearn to have fun, learn and form new friendships ... all in a safe environment and at no charge.

Reach Out Bookmobile

Each summer, St. Joseph's Reach Out Bookmobile travels nearly 2,000 miles across South Dakota reservation communities to distribute free reading materials to children and families in need. This program puts nearly 6,300 new books into the hands of needy youth and families each year. Our dedicated staff also uses the time in each community to visit with former students, meet prospective families and hand out student applications. Libraries are a rarity in reservation communities, so the Reach Out Bookmobile often serves as a lifeline to the outside world.

Programs: Counseling

Counseling

Native American families in South Dakota face many challenges associated with extreme socio-economic conditions. Poverty levels are high. Substance abuse, gang activity and violence run rampant. However, hope remains thanks to the many friends who support St. Joseph's Indian School.

When children come to us from families broken by addiction, our care team includes professionally licensed and trained counselors. Our clinical services team helps youngsters – and their families – deal with everything from homesickness to drug addiction and everything in between.

Counseling programs at St. Joseph's include a mentor program for the youth on our campus. And, to help facilitate greater healing, families are included in their child's care plan through regular meetings both in-person and over the phone.

Alcoholism and drug abuse have touched every child entrusted to us in some way. These precious children have lost loved ones to suicide; they have seen gang violence.

Through it all, St. Joseph's team of counselors and support staff have provided the resources – and love – necessary to help them heal and move forward.

St. Joe's has helped me realize that I can do anything I put my mind to.

~Beth, St. Joseph's Student



Programs: Healthcare

Back on the reservation, our house was condemned. We lived without running water and heat. I'm so grateful for the care we have here.

~ Sarah, St. Joseph's Student

Healthcare

At St. Joseph's, we recognize the importance of proper healthcare, including medical, dental, eye and hearing. Thanks to friends supporting our work with Native American children and families, we are able to offer crucial services on campus through our Friemann Healthcare Center.

A professional medical team ensures each of our children's health needs are covered. Whether it's a visit to our campus clinic or a trip across town for specialized services, the Lakota (Sioux) children in our care receive the treatment and attention they need for their physical and emotional well-being.

Additionally, all childcare workers at St. Joseph's are trained to deal with minor health problems and have studied basic First Aid and CPR. Our healthcare, education, residential and counseling teams work closely together to ensure they are always available to help the children and their families when needs arise.



Programs: Sacred Heart Center

The last time my boyfriend beat me I knew he would kill me if there was a next time. Having a safe place to go helped save my life.

~ Anna, Violence Victim

Sacred Heart Center & Cheyenne River Indian Outreach

Women's Shelter

In traditional Lakota (Sioux) culture, women are viewed as sacred beings ... keepers of life, heart of the family.

Today, the sacred circle of traditional Lakota values has been broken in many reservation communities. Native American women are among the most abused – physically and sexually – demographic in the United States.

Unfortunately, services to help battered women and their children in reservation communities are rare. This is why the Sacred Heart Center in Eagle Butte, South Dakota is so important. Our center provides battered women and children on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation hope, safety and support in times of great need. Whether it's a temporary home while they leave a dangerous situation or a ride to court, Lakota (Sioux) women receive moral support and



guidance through these challenging situations.

Adolescent Care Center

With dysfunction running rampant, young adults often find themselves with little to no parental guidance. These young people fall victim to gangs, violence and substance abuse. Sadly, many of these young men and women end up in the juvenile court system.

For these youth, the adolescent care center provides the opportunity to learn from the negative in their life, turn those situations around and apply them in a positive way. Children are referred to the center's program where professionally trained staff help them learn how to live healthy, productive lives.

Care teams work with the children and their families to help promote healing and future success.

Outreach Services

The Sacred Heart Center is a rare source of hope for the entire Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. Our team does not take this responsibility lightly, and we make every effort to have a positive impact on the community at large. From workshops on domestic violence to participation in local school health fairs, the Sacred Heart Center's outreach programs stand as a beacon of hope for the thousands of Native American people living on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

The Bear Necessities Thrift Store:

The Bear Necessities Thrift Store provides clothing and household items for those in need in the area and surrounding communities at a nominal cost. Items include adult and children clothing/shoes, household goods, bedding, books and other miscellaneous items.

Programs: Support



St. Joseph's is giving my children so much more than I can right now. The academics, responsibility, respect and culture ... it's all such a blessing.

~ Jody, Parent of St. Joseph's Students

Patience, love, dedication and a supportive community of friends make the programs for Lakota (Sioux) children and families possible at St. Joseph's Indian School. Core programs such as those related to education and residential living are critical; however, many support programs are also necessary to provide the level of care and commitment Native American families need and deserve.

Thrift Store

In addition to monetary gifts, friends support St. Joseph's children and families with gifts of clothing, toiletries and much more. Each of the items so generously shared is first offered to our students and their families through our home, school and outreach programs.

When we are blessed to receive a surplus of items or gifts not immediately needed by our children, families or outreach programs, we offer the items to the general public through our downtown thrift store.

Our store allows individuals from the area to purchase much-needed items at a discount while giving them the opportunity to support the boys and girls at St. Joseph's. All thrift store sales help to fund programs for the children in our care.

Additionally, the thrift store serves as a wonderful opportunity for our high school students to learn life skills. Interested students help staff at our thrift store as part-time employees. This benefits students by offering them flexible scheduling and real-life experience while also helping them earn income. Through this work experience, we help

young adults learn the importance of good work ethics and the rewards of financial responsibility.

Parent Advisory Council

Parents and guardians seek St. Joseph's Indian School for their children for many reasons. Some families need a helping hand for a short time when tragedy strikes. Other families have fallen on such hard times they see St. Joseph's as their only hope to break the cycle of poverty.

Because families are such an integral part of a child's healing and growth at St. Joseph's, we rely on members of our Parent Advisory Council to offer us insight and feedback on programs, services and challenges. Their perspective is priceless as we work to ensure wholistic care and individual attention.

The 11 members of our council advise us in crucial areas like high school education, alumni programs and grief counseling. Thanks to this group of parents and guardians, families have an important voice at St. Joseph's Indian School.

Financials

I am grateful that donors support our school and I will pray for them.

~ Rich, St. Joseph's Student

Funding a multi-faceted organization like St. Joseph's Indian School cannot be done alone. The teams in place on our campus and outreach locations are just as important as the friends around the globe who financially and prayerfully support our work.

St. Joseph's has been entrusted to care for hundreds of innocent, deserving Native American children. We have also been entrusted to care for the hard-earned funds so many people have shared. We do not take these important responsibilities lightly.

Through careful planning, strategic thinking and heartfelt consideration, we take extra care to be excellent stewards of the money donated to support our work with Native American children and their families. Independent auditors help ensure nothing is missed and our increasingly transparent culture encourages questions.

Visit stjo.org/report for our audited report.



Academic Results

Simply showing up for class is a huge positive step for many of the Lakota (Sioux) children at St. Joseph's Indian School. However, we believe children give you what you expect, and we expect each of the youngsters in our care to not only show up for school but also to participate and give their best.

Though boys and girls at St. Joseph's often face tremendous learning difficulties – from effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome to consequences of absentee adults not stressing the importance of school attendance – our staff has been specially trained to help these youngsters achieve their greatest individual potential.

We see a world where every child at St. Joseph's graduates from high school ... a world where Native American children have learned their worth and realized their potential.

To help our students on their path to educational growth, boys and girls

participate in two different types of standardized testing.

- Dakota Step — required by the State of South Dakota.
- MAPS — voluntary process intended to measure student year-to-year growth.

These tests have helped identify areas of opportunity for middle school students in reading and math. Because of the results, we have been able to adjust our programs and welcome a reading consultant and math aide into the curriculum.

Additionally, standardized testing has indicated areas of true growth. A survey recently conducted showed more than 80% of our eighth grade graduates earned their high school diploma or GED. Compared to graduation rates of 51% in reservation and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in 2010, it is clear the children attending St. Joseph's Indian School have an advantage for success.



My friends back on the reservation only go to school when they want; I know I am learning so much more here.

~ Jennifer St. Joseph's Student



Accreditation & Awards

Accreditation

Since 1995, St. Joseph's Indian School has received accreditation from the [Council on Accreditation \(COA\)](#). Founded in 1977, COA maintains a rigorous assessment process in order to identify providers with high performance standards and strong commitment to delivering the highest quality services possible to children in need.

Achieving national accreditation is not easy. Through the process, all aspects of St. Joseph's are reviewed extensively then measured against national standards. By earning COA accreditation, St. Joseph's services and programs can be considered:

- accessible
- appropriate
- culturally responsive
- evidence-based and
- outcome oriented

Additionally, COA's stamp of approval confirms St. Joseph's services and programs are provided by a skilled and supported workforce.

We take accreditation very seriously. We even welcome the process! The review affirmed what we are doing well and challenged us to look at ways we can improve. This fresh view is appreciated!

*~ Mike Tyrell, President
St. Joseph's Indian School*



St. Joseph's Indian School has met the requirements set forth by the State of South Dakota and has been recognized by the Department of Education as an accredited school district in South Dakota

Accreditation & Awards

The work we've been able to do is really going to make a difference for these kids. They are going to live longer, healthier lives.

~ Mike, Food Services Coordinator

Awards

As if the uphill battle caused by poverty, abuse and violence wasn't enough, Lakota (Sioux) children also face the harsh reality of increased mortality from severe health issues like cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

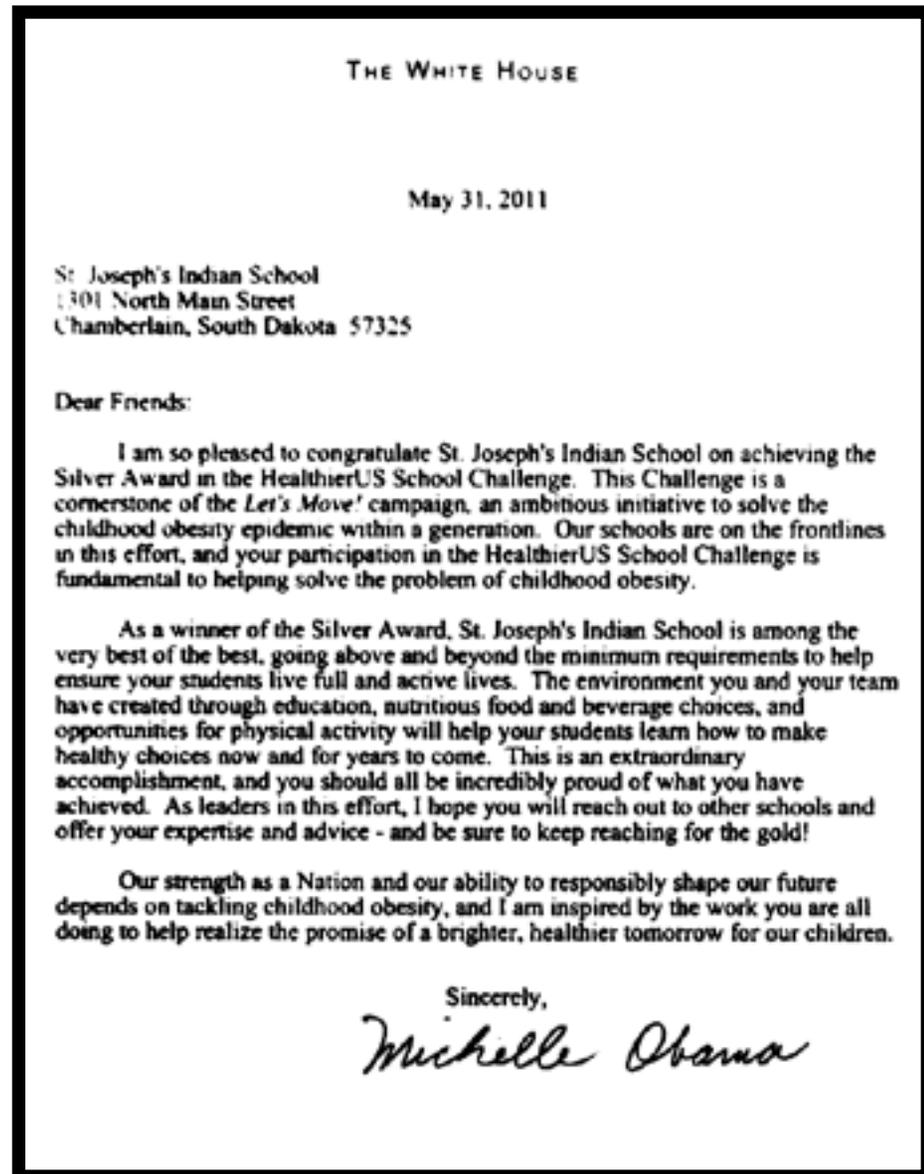
Thankfully, St. Joseph's Indian School helps level the playing field for Native American children by providing wholesome, nutritious meals both at school and in their campus homes.

In 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama recognized our efforts for healthy living by awarding St. Joseph's Indian School the Silver Award in the HealthierUS Schools program! This program reinforces all-around wellness, including physical activity and nutritional education.

Because studies show Native Americans in the United States are nearly twice as likely as other ethnic groups to be obese and to die from diabetes or cancer, St. Joseph's healthcare team knew something had to be done.

Changes were made to school and campus home menus to reflect more vegetables and whole grains. Children were encouraged to partake in games and lessons promoting physical activity, and everyone enjoyed opportunities to learn more about healthy cooking and living during special workshops.

Letter of recognition from Michelle Obama





Future Plans

*“Vision without action is merely a dream. St. Joseph’s is about action!”
~ Emily, St. Joseph’s Support Staff*

Looking back, we know caring friends have helped Lakota (Sioux) children and their families accomplish so much. Looking ahead, however, we know there is more to be done.

St. Joseph’s Indian School holds the children and their families in high regard. Families come to us in search of hope and help. Asking for help is not easy, especially for the proud Native American families in South Dakota. We recognize the challenges these families face.

As we look toward the future, we realize an even stronger partnership with families and community members will be critical to providing Lakota (Sioux) children all the support they need to become healthy members of society who are able to fulfill God’s plan for them.

At St. Joseph’s, we will walk beside every child in our care as they work to

graduate from high school and, ultimately, fulfill God’s plan for their life.

To achieve all the families and children have envisioned for their future, we are committed to:

- partnering with Native American children and families to educate for life – *mind, body, heart and spirit*;
- walking beside every student, ensuring each child graduates from high school equipped to fulfill God’s dreams for them and their communities;
- upholding the values of compassion, encouragement and results in the spirit of SCJ founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon.