



St. Joseph's Indian School

We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

Chamberlain, SD 57326

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NEWS RELEASE

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Six Alumni Return to Share Post High School Advice at St. Joseph's Indian School

(Chamberlain, S.D.) – Generosity is a deeply held value of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people who once dominated the Great Plains and passed that value on for generations. Families and staff of St. Joseph's Indian School, where some 220 descendants of that rich tribal history attend, are diligent in teaching that value to the students enrolled there. And it filled the room at a gathering on a recent Friday evening when six alumni of the school took time off careers or away from studies to share their post high school experiences with current high school students.

Honesty, humor and sincerity describe the generous advice of the panel of six: Danielle Arpan, class of 2017, studying Nursing and American Indian Studies at South Dakota State University (SDSU), Brookings, S.D.; Cameron Carpenter, class of 2019, studying Video Game Design at Dakota State University, Madison, S.D.; Gabe Haukas, class of 2016, employed as a security officer and assistant girls' basketball coach at St. Francis High School, St. Francis, S.D.; Jacob Lacota, class of 2016, Corporal in the United States Marine Corps, currently stationed in North Carolina and preparing for a seven month deployment on a ship; Hope McCloskey, class of 2018, studying Media Studies at Augustana University, Sioux Falls, S.D.; and Kayla McCloskey, class of 2018, starting at Black Hills State University, Spearfish, S.D., in January.

In addition to some 25 high school students, the room was crowded with the alumni's former counselors, houseparents and other St. Joseph's Indian School staff eager to support and catch up on these young adult lives. The panel took questions from all present and frankly covered:

- A day in the life of a young adult
- Advice for current high school students
- The best part of college life
- The hardest part of transitioning to life beyond high school
- Alcohol and partying
- Post high school surprises

- The unique struggles faced by Native American young adults trying to establish themselves in life

A dinner of pizza, veggies and fruit plied the talkative, energetic group in a meeting that lasted more than one hour. There were many memorable exchanges, perhaps the most being Lacota's response to his former houseparent's question, "What was the hardest transition?" He quickly shot back, "Leaving you," to gales of laughter, but then went on to explain the difficult demands of boot camp.

Arpan's passion and respect for SDSU was palpable as she addressed the unique struggles of Native American students. She cited the work of President Barry H. Dunn in making university life accessible and navigable for Native Americans and told of a program that educates every professor about the special circumstances Native American students face. She encouraged students to be their own best advocates, to find ways to benefit from their new environment and that if a resource they need doesn't exist, then to implement a change.

To a person, the panel commended the preparation they received for post high school life from St. Joseph's Indian School Transitions Program, which consciously works with students in the upper high school grades to teach studying, budgeting, meal preparation, independent living and more. All but one, who admitted with a smile that his home is filled with piles of laundry, said that doing their chores at the school has helped them keep a clean residence and be responsible in their current life.

More Than 220 Native American students in first through twelfth grade find hope and brighter futures through our educational, counseling, and residential programs. St. Joseph's Indian School transforms lives—mind, body, heart and spirit—every day. Learn more about us at www.stjo.org.

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