



St. Joseph's Indian School

We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

Chamberlain, SD 57326

(605) 234-3300 • www.stjo.org

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Danielle Kucera, St. Joseph's Indian School
605-234-3380

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Empowering others through Scholarship

St. Joseph's Indian School recently awarded more than \$160,000 in scholarships to Native American students across the nation for the 2019-2020 school year. The scholarship program provided financial assistance to 114 students, 31 of whom are St. Joseph's Indian School alumni.

Alumnus Liliana Castellon is one such recipient. Now in her third year pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics with a concentration in Astrophysics at the University of Denver, Castellon said, "I would like to thank St. Joseph's Indian School for supporting my dreams. The school helped me immensely throughout high school and still chooses to help fund my endeavors. I am forever grateful." Her journey has challenged her academically and emotionally, but she continues to find hope in pursuing a degree to benefit herself and her home community.

During her first year of college, Castellon discovered that only seven Native Americans have ever received a PhD in Physics, none from her tribe. "Hearing this left me in disbelief, but also it further fueled me to succeed," she said, adding that her goal is not only to achieve this for herself, but also for her people. Castellon's plan is to give back by assisting underrepresented populations to develop an understanding and appreciation of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts. "I am trying to change history and make it better for all. There are people in Indian Country doing beautiful things, and I want all peoples to know that," said Castellon.

The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart Board created the scholarship fund to benefit Native American students pursuing higher education. With the generosity of donors, St. Joseph's Indian School has been able to award scholarship dollars to Native American students since 1985. Alumni Coordinator, Andy Lepkowski assists with the program and says that it has helped students from every background succeed with their hopes and dreams. "Not only do I see these students graduate with a degree, but also I see those students raise families and be good role models for furthering education for their children and family members."

Scholarships are based on financial need and academic performance. All applications are due each fall and spring and are awarded based on proof of tribal enrollment, number of applicants and available funds. Consideration is also given to returning scholars continuing the education journey. "Students have become nurses, doctors, teachers, lawyers, welders, social workers, counselors and more," said Lepkowski.

More Than 200 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.

