



St. Joseph's Indian School  
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

# Mitákuyepi



Mitákuyepi is a publication for employees of St. Joseph's Indian School and its outreaches like Darcy Belitz. A family service counselor, she is recognized for helping young women in the high school program make ribbon skirts.

This employee newsletter is named Mitákuyepi because it speaks the mission of St. Joseph's Indian School. Mitákuyepi is a Lakota word used to say, "my relatives." Also, it is the address to an audience that means, "I have something to say." This is the voice of our thiyóšpaye.

Its masthead has a backdrop of sacred sage to remind us that our work is Wakháŋ.

**PROBLEMS?**  
PLEASE LET US KNOW!  
CHANGE LABEL AND MAIL BACK TO US.

- \_\_\_ Misspelled name
- \_\_\_ Wrong address
- \_\_\_ Received more than one
- \_\_\_ Remove my name from the mailing list



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## Native Hope Announces MMIP Funding

At a Capitol press conference in Pierre, S.D., on February 16, Native Hope announced that it will fund the position created in the state Attorney General's Office on missing and murdered Indigenous person cases. The grant for \$85,000 per year will extend for three years.

"The decision to fund the grant was a logical next step in our commitment to the issue that has been a pillar of our work for seven years now," said Executive Director of Native Hope Jennifer Long. "When we learned in the news about difficulties in funding the office, we wanted to break down any barrier that existed. In the work we do with tribal communities, we want to have a positive impact. No more missing sisters. No more missing Indigenous people."

Native Hope is an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School. "Native Hope is doing the right thing for our students and families," noted St. Joseph's Indian School President Mike Tyrell. "Even one missing person is too many. Students at St. Joseph's have lost loved ones and family members through this human tragedy. Not only is this so important for improving outcomes for missing and murdered Indigenous persons, but also we hope this can become a nationwide model for other situations where jurisdictional gaps create problems."

Some 40% of sex trafficking victims in South Dakota are Native women and children, disproportionate to the 8.57% of Native residents. Domestic violence is another contributing factor to MMIP.

Among Native Hope's MMIP efforts are Red Sand Project and Never in Season events that target the multi-billion-dollar human trafficking industry; work with the Red Ribbon Skirt Society; a short film "Voices Unheard" to raise awareness; and a working relationship with Call to Freedom. In addition, Native Hope works with Counseling Services at St. Joseph's on educational events and resources on the issue.

The Office of Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) will coordinate with the U.S. Attorney's Office and Department of Justice and state and tribal law enforcement agencies to bridge gaps in coordination and training. Challenges arise because cases might involve multiple jurisdictions, and communication and coordination between various agencies become crucial.

Like the Sacred Heart Center in Eagle Butte, S.D.,

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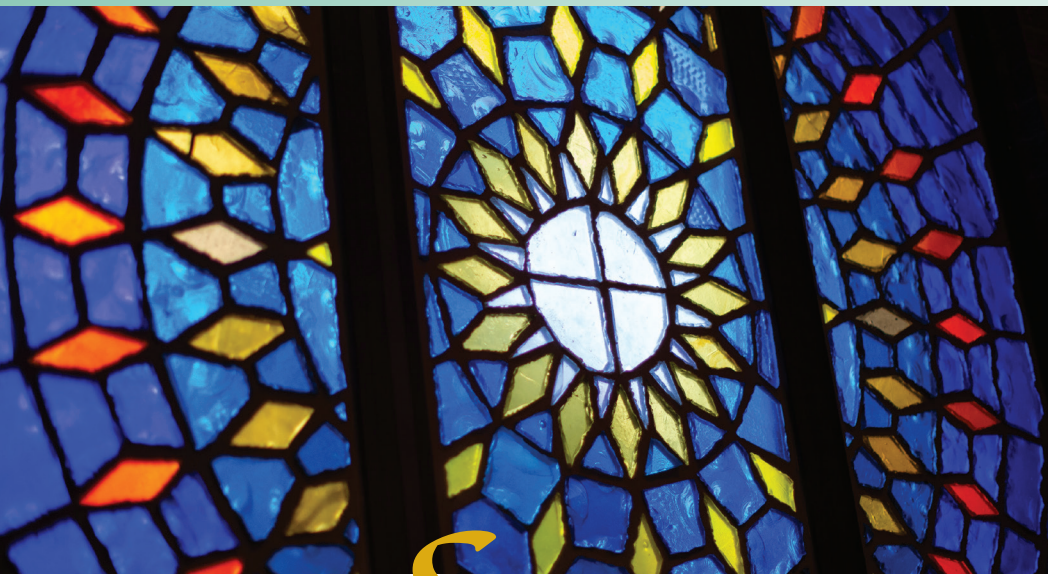
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## SACRED SIGHTINGS

Sacred Sightings is a pictorial celebration of God's presence and signs of hope at St. Joseph's Indian School.

WINTER 2021

# 4

## MESSAGE FROM MIKE

### Perseverance is a Mission Characteristic

There is no doubt one of the main pillars of our long history is a sense of perseverance. That sense of dedication impacts our resolve today and still affects how we approach issues.

From taking on new programs for the betterment of our students to the long-term support of individuals and families, our mission is rooted in determination. Many examples of the way we do things here at St. Joseph's Indian School illustrate our resolve in action.

Did you know we give scholarship money each year to alumni and families of alumni?

This demonstrates a long-term commitment to our thiyóšpaye and their families. At a recent meeting, a Parent Advisory Committee member mentioned how impressed he was at the continued assistance we provide to high school graduates. This past year, a record \$186,285 in scholarships were awarded.

A recent grant to help fund a liaison position between tribal, state and federal entities on MMIP cases is another example of helping where needed. St. Joseph's Indian School, through our outreach at Native Hope, bridged the gap between an existing issue and the resources required to

solve it. It seemed logical for us to assist in a situation dire to those with whom we partner – our students and families. Fitting to our characteristic perseverance, a three-year grant is now in place instead of a one-year, less-resolute effort.

These are two of the many examples of our organization taking a long-term view of our mission.



Mike Tyrell  
President  
St. Joseph's Indian School



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Mitákuyepi is PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY ST. JOSEPH'S INDIAN SCHOOL. ITS PURPOSE IS TO COMMUNICATE ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SCHOOL, TO SHARE IDEAS AND INFORMATION USEFUL IN PERFORMING THE MISSION, TO ASSIST IN FOSTERING A COMMON CULTURE AND TO REINFORCE THE MISSION AND CORE VALUES OF ST. JOSEPH'S INDIAN SCHOOL.

### QUESTIONS?

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www.sjiskids.org or  
www.stjo.org

## New Podcast Launches at the Heart of St. Joe's Campus



it is. We launched on January 31. Season 1 runs to May 9 and contains 13 episodes.

The Lakota word "Hóchoka" (emphasis on the first syllable) means the center of the camp circle. The name speaks to the actual location of the recording studio off the main chapel sacristy, the centrality of the mission of St. Joseph's Indian School to all that we do, and the role of the podcast to be at the center of the Native American educational conversation and gather others around that conversation.

The podcast is directed at internal and external audiences and will vary by topic. Audiences might include employees, potential employees, families and students, the general public, supporters, advocates, educators and donors.

Family Service Counselor Scott Woster and St. Joseph's Indian School Alumnus Hope McCloskey share hosting duties this season.

It is a great joy to bring Hope to the podcast table in that capacity. Other hosts may appear from time to time.

Podcasts are found at <https://sjiskids.org/our.stories/podcasts/> and on Podbean and Apple Podcasts. Guests and topics include: • Student Coordinator Jennie Schilling and Transition Specialist Krista Lepkowski in a three-part series that discusses the school's unique approaches to helping students find success and overcome obstacles

- Sícháŋgu Lakota author Joseph Marshall III in a six-part series on helping Native American youth know their cultural identity
- The school's Native American Studies Lead and Sícháŋgu Lakota LaRayne Woster on her journey to embracing her cultural identity
- Dr. Damian Costello, scholar of Catholic social thought and teaching, Black Elk and Native American Studies, on Black Elk, Catholicism and Lakota Spirituality

# Getting to Know Security

At first glance, the Security Department at St. Joseph's Indian School looks like a one-person show. "Looks," in this case, are deceiving. Just as law enforcement is nothing without the public, campus is the same kind of thing. "I don't see what all of you see. I am one person, and I rely on everyone else to be my eyes and ears on campus. You can help me identify problems, and then we can come up with a solution," said Joe Hutmacher, emphasizing that security is everyone's job.

Hutmacher also cites the role of the Strategic Protection Committee members who meet monthly to identify concerns and update each other on safety and security issues around campus.

Staff is likely aware of their role in security from A.L.I.C.E. training. "It's a good program," noted Hutmacher, "because it gives you options based on the situation. Simply hiding or locking down isn't always the best solution."

Security isn't Hutmacher's only role. He also supervises some of the custodians. "They remind me of the offensive linemen on a football team," he said. "They are never noticed until they aren't there. They don't always get the credit they deserve."

In addition, he enjoys teaching Driver's Education. When he heard the school was looking for a teacher in a shortage market, he said, "You know I can do that." He gets a particular kick out of this role. "They come in the first day and see this big, bald guy, and it's intimidating. The conversations at that point are all one-syllable long. Then, they get to know me, and we get up to full sentences."

Hutmacher gives the Driver's Education students the option to call him "Mr. Hutmacher," "Joe" or "Big Joe." As they climbed into the car for the first day of hands-on practice, one student said to him, "Hey, Big Joe, we were kind of wondering if you were gonna fit in the Driver's Ed car."

A favorite part of his job is when he is out-and-about on campus, and the elementary students approach. "They aren't afraid of me and always want to try on my size-20 rings and check out my sleeve tattoos," Joe said with a chuckle.

Well-known to locals for nearly 29 years in community law enforcement, he began his career in Chamberlain before going to Lyman County as Chief Deputy. In 2000, he returned to Chamberlain as a patrolman, later becoming Chief of Police. Hutmacher came to St. Joseph's Indian School in 2019.

Hutmacher appreciates St. Joe's because people don't hesitate to call him. Calls always begin with, "I apologize for calling you, but ..." He wants people to know that he is glad they call any hour of the day or night. He admits that he doesn't miss getting calls every night, but he does miss the excitement of law enforcement.

When he's not on campus, there is a good chance he is either riding or working on a motorcycle. "Every year, I rack up more miles than ever before. I have learned from riding that it is not about getting there. It's about the ride." He says it is a form of therapy for him.



### Catholic Schools Week

"Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service" was this year's national theme for Catholic Schools Week, and St. Joseph's Indian School students tapped into it with reflection, antics and purpose. Beginning January 30, the school joined others across the country to focus on Catholic education's value.

A classroom activity directed students to reflect on challenging scenarios they may face in their daily lives through the perspective, "What would Jesus do?" Eighth-grade students created mock Instagram profiles for the exercise, imagining what Jesus would post on his modern-day account. William Johnson suggested Jesus would give a shout out to the angels.

A broader campus activity involved an exercise reminiscent of Flat Stanley to simulate an imaginary visit from Pope Francis. Using the school's life-size cardboard stand-up Pope Francis, the antics highlighted various places the Pontiff could visit to experience the excellent programs and services at St. Joseph's and learn about the rich Lakota culture.



### Visiting Artist Ties Mosaic Project to Rec Renovation

When Michele David Mechling visited first- through fourth-grade Art classes the week of January 31, she engaged the smallest hands on campus to help create a large mosaic for the upcoming renovation of the Recreation Center.

As students honed in on their artwork, each emerging mosaic was as unique as its owner. There were star quilts, flowers, checkerboards and more – motifs as myriad as the choices of glass and tile.

As St. Joseph's embarks on the Rec Center renovation and expansion, the idea sprouted to design a piece for the updated space. Mechling's mosaic will mimic the existing Circle of Courage mural in the Rec Center to some degree, with its overall shape of the Medicine Wheel and corresponding red, yellow, black and white colors. However, Mechling's work includes vector shapes that highlight the four values of the Circle of Courage – Mastery, Independence, Belonging and Generosity – as they pertain to athletics.



### Creation.Story Opens at the Aktá Lakota Museum

On December 20, 2021, a remarkable, newly curated exhibit titled Creation.Story opened at the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center. Keith Braveheart, a contemporary native artist, worked with Assistant Curator David A. Meyer II, musician Talon Bazille and eight other Native American artists to create the show. The modern retelling of the Lakota and Dakota creation stories includes the work of Jhon Gok In Center, James Star Comes Out, Mikayla Patton, Randilynn Boucher, Dwayne Wilcox, Dyani White Hawk, Marlena Myles and Inkpa Mani.

Events for St. Joseph's Indian School students and other schools that might want to visit are planned. The exhibit will be open until May 15, 2022.



### Paying the Ribbon Skirt Project Forward

The ribbon skirt project, which began in November to build cultural identity in the young women of St. Joseph's Indian School, quickly became inspirational. The experience led senior Shyanne Jumping Eagle to ask Family Service Counselor Darcy Belitz if she could make a ribbon skirt for her infant nephew. The following day, Belitz and Jumping Eagle did just that.

After the first ribbon skirt-making event where the high school girls made their own, many wanted to make one to give away. So Belitz organized another event in late February (as this publication goes to press). "What is so unique about this project is that it illustrates the Circle of Courage," said Belitz. She explained that it encompasses Mastery because the girls learn a new skill, Belonging because they make the skirts in a social setting, Generosity because they will give the skirts away and Independence because they gain life skills and identity.



### Hey, Mocs, You Rock!

On November 17, students at St. Joseph's Indian School bundled against the late-fall wind and cold to participate in a Rock Your Mocs walk. Rock Your Mocs is a national annual event that creates a positive cultural experience, promotes unity and celebrates tribal individuality by wearing moccasins.

Students chose their moccasins from the school's powwow regalia and wore them throughout the week to honor their ancestors and Indigenous people worldwide. The walk was one of many Native American Heritage Month activities.

The walk looped around the school's campus and finished at the Wisdom Circle with a round dance, celebrating the school's thiyóšpaye (extended family). All staff was invited to participate.

### Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ, Recently Elected to Provincial Council



On Tuesday, January 4, the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in Hales Corners, Wisc., elected Fr. Greg Schill to the Provincial Council. Ordained in 2010, Fr. Greg joined St. Joseph's in July 2021. Accepting his new role, Fr. Greg vowed, "I will support Vien and the council for the

interests of the Province to the best of my ability."

Elections to the five-member council followed the election of Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, as the 16th Superior of the U.S. Province.

Deacon David Nagel, SCJ, ordained to the diaconate in 2003 and executive director of St. Joseph's from 1996 to 2004, also was elected to the council. He has previously served on the council and is currently provincial treasurer in Hales Corners.

The school's President, Mike Tyrell, said, "We are pleased that these two fine colleagues have been tapped for roles on the council. They have strong connections to us, are passionate about our mission and, in their new capacity, offer a depth of guidance and experience that will surely benefit St. Joseph's."

### Jennifer Long Named "One to Watch"



Editors of Chief Marketer, Event Marketer, and AdExchanger announced the 2021 Top Women in Marketing Awards on December 8. Jennifer Long, executive director of Native Hope, was chosen "One to Watch" from hundreds of nominations. The award identifies

women who exhibit outstanding promise as future leaders.

Since taking on the role of executive director in July 2019, Jen has piloted the organization to greater realize its mission to address the injustice done to Native Americans. Through storytelling and impactful programs that bring healing and inspire hope, the organization dismantles barriers. An enrolled member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Jen brings passion and meaning to the organization.

She has also proven herself a savvy content marketer who understands how to leverage modern media tools to extend the organization's reach. In addition, she has expanded Native Hope's reputation through strategic relationship building and partnerships. Congratulations, Jen.



### Aktá Lakota Museum's Wanda Bunker Achieves South Dakota State Honor

Few of Wanda Bunker's colleagues will be surprised to learn that she recently was awarded a Ruth Ziolkowski Outstanding Hospitality and Customer Service Award by the South Dakota Department of Tourism. The veteran houseparent and current Historical Center Coordinator at the museum is well-known for her trademark hospitality, including a warm, grounding smile and pleasant greeting.

But Bunker was surprised when, on January 20 at the Governor's Conference on Tourism in Pierre, S.D., hers was one of four names called for the award that recognizes persons whose work demonstrates an outstanding spirit of hospitality. Her first words on receiving the award were, "I am blown away."

### Alumnus Box Going to New Heights with Scholarship



Father-son inspiration was behind Aaron Box's decision to undertake a degree as a power lineman at Mitchell Tech. He follows in his father's footsteps in pursuing this career, and the birth of his son Oliver kick-started his plans.

Until then, he said, "I wasn't making the best decisions in my life, and I walked down a harder road than I should have. I knew it was now or never." Box, a 2012 graduate of St. Joseph's Indian School's High School Program, plans to graduate in May.

Box works at Avera Laboratory Network transporting pharmaceuticals and laboratory specimens, balancing school and work to provide a stable home for Oliver and Box's partner, Erica. "Our goal is almost reached, and with the scholarship, I believe we can achieve it," he says. He is already making plans for after graduation and hopes to find a job quickly. Mitchell Tech offers the only Power Line program in South Dakota and boasts a 96% job-placement rate.

St. Joseph's Indian School recently awarded \$95,285 in spring-semester scholarships to Native American students across the nation, bringing the total awards for the academic year to a record \$186,285. This spring, the school provided 78 scholarships: 15 to alumni, 9 to family members of St. Joseph's Indian School alumni and 54 to others enrolled in a federally recognized tribe and pursuing higher education.



Alumnus **Cameron Carpenter** returns to St. Joseph's Indian School as Production Support. He enjoys fishing, video games and pizza. The last movie he saw was "Spider Man: No Way Home."



**Payton Comp** is the new Receiving Associate in Home and Office. She watches football and Netflix, and hangs out with friends in her free time. The Dining Hall will have to keep her posted when tater tot casserole is on the menu because it's her favorite.



**Shelley Gerard, LPN**, is the new nurse at the Dehon Health Center, and she says she finds everything about the new role interesting. Married with three children, she keeps cream cheese on hand.



**Kiley Naro** joins staff as a software development manager. Specific about his favorite food he said, "homemade chocolate-chip cookies fresh out of the oven with a cold glass of milk." He likes a warm summer evening with family, grilling food and playing lawn games.



**Lenora Quick Bear** is the health center custodian. She and her family enjoy the outdoors, going to the park or playing baseball. She is excited about getting to know new people. The last movie she saw was "Encanto," so if you hear her talking to the floors and drawers, she just might be doing a little custodial magic.



**Alicia Schmitt** also joins the custodial team. Her favorite food is shrimp. Every summer, she and her family take a weekend out to "the hills" and enjoy the time together. Walking is a favorite free-time activity for her.



**Ara and Thomas Svitek** are float houseparents in the 4-6 Residential Community. Ara says, "We are very simple people, love God and love to sing worship songs every day." She describes her and Thomas as health-conscious. "Laughing together is our medicine," she adds. Thomas likes to read and build things. He is interested in learning about Native American culture.