



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 Holly Meyerink. As Human Resources Associate, she is the detail-oriented mind behind social posts and passionate about being the organization's benefits guru.

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 Wakhán.

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SPRING 2023

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From left: Collin Two Strike, Tairin Fallis, Basil Eagle Star, Mariah Quigley, Larsten Lynd, Joselle Boyd

Six Graduate St. Joseph's High School Program

St. Joseph's Indian School announces the graduation of six seniors from its high school program, which partners with Chamberlain High School. Graduation is Saturday, May 13, at 2 p.m., at the Chamberlain Armory.

"These focused students of diverse talents and experience have great career plans," noted St. Joseph's President Mike Tyrell. "A piece of our heart goes with them into the future, we acknowledge the way their efforts have made all of us better people and we are grateful to have them in our extended family."

Joselle Boyd plans to attend Mitchell Technical Culinary Academy to become a chef. She was active in the Native American Club and HOSA-Future Health Professionals. She enjoyed football and basketball games. Her advice to future Cubs: "Take all the opportunities given to you."

Basil Eagle Star plans to attend college for a welding degree. Twice this past year, he was the guest host for St. Joseph's Indian School's podcast, Hóchoka. At Chamberlain High School, he enjoyed Senior Literature, and said he will miss his friends. Eagle Star notes, "Our choices don't make our living. Our actions do."

Tairin Fallis plans to attend Lake Area Technical School and hopes to become a construction business owner. He enjoyed Algebra in high school because it was challenging but fun, and he was active in the Native American Club. His advice to younger students: "Put school first."

Larsten Lind plans to attend Western Iowa Tech Community College to become a veterinary assistant. She was in the Native American Club at Chamberlain High School. To younger students she says, "Get involved and step out of your comfort zone."

Mariah Quigley attended St. Joseph's since the first grade. She will be entering the Information Systems Technology Program at Mitchell Technical College. She was in the Native American Club at Chamberlain High School. Drawing from her experience, she advises, "Learn to embrace challenges rather than avoid them."

Collin Two Strike plans to attend Lake Area Technical College in Automotive Technology. Athletic, he was involved in basketball and track at Chamberlain High School. He says, "Get out of your comfort zone - it'll help you in the long run."



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SPRING 2023

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MESSAGE FROM MIKE

Awe Experienced in Participation in the Mission

I am in awe as I write this column on a sunny May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. For some days, the awareness of the blessings of the mission oozes out of every aspect of our campus.

The year's ending allows us to reflect on our mission's power. Highlights of our Alumni graduating from college, our Chamberlain High School grads finishing strong, and our Eighth graders who will graduate at the end of the month - one can only marvel at these accomplishments. On the surface,

these graduations include one individual and their family. But, these came about with the assistance of staff, whose support is invaluable. Add on our generous benefactors; it is a miracle in the making.

The past school year included a winter that would not quit, challenges with enrollment and staffing shortages. But we weathered the storm. Our enrollment will stabilize, and staffing is picking up. More importantly, there has been student achievement, student safety and much happiness.

As I prayed for St. Joseph's and the challenges before us, I was reminded that other administrators over the years prayed about the challenges before them. I was bolstered in my prayer to realize our mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, will continue. I also felt thanksgiving for all who support our mission as we act as the hands, feet, and heart of the Lord. With the awe realized, I smiled, knowing I am a part of the miracle that is St. Joseph's Indian School.



Mike Tyrell
President
St. Joseph's Indian School

QUESTIONS?

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For additional information about St. Joseph's Indian School, its outreaches and the Priests of the Sacred Heart visit:

www.sjiskids.org or
www.stjo.org

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.



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Despite the Weather, Sobriety Celebration Observed



Andrew Lepkowski speaks to students about his work and displays his vest.

Nearly every spring for the past 27 years, students and staff at St. Joseph's Indian School walk for sobriety in April, starting on campus and splitting into the four directions sacred to Native Americans. To "walk the Red Path" in Native American spirituality means living in healthy spiritual, physical, mental and emotional balance.

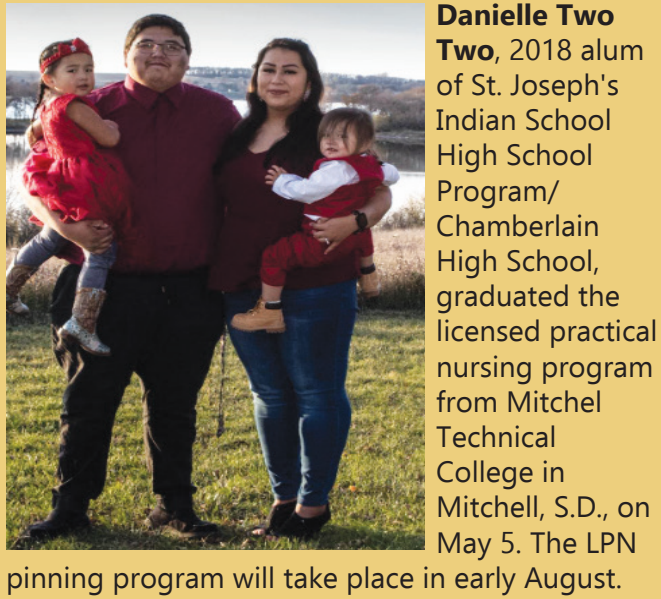
Last spring, Mother Nature put the kibosh on the walk, and this spring, she made an encore performance. But the snow and wind didn't put an end to the event. The annual observance began at 4 p.m. with a talk by Andrew Lepkowski, acting supervisory special agent with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Fort Thompson, S.D.

"All of you are loved and have people who care for you and don't want you on drugs. It

would be best if you didn't start at all. Once you start, it's hard to stop," Lepkowski urged. His talk covered the causes and effects of drug use and detailed the severe problems caused by alcohol, vaping and methamphetamine. Students listened intently and then peppered him with questions about his bulletproof vest and his job.

Students wore T-shirts designed by eighth-grade student Secret Red Bear that said, "A person's past doesn't define their future." Despite the canceled walk, they gathered for dinner as a student body in the Dining Hall following the speech.

The April observance is one of several yearly events created by St. Joseph's Indian School's Substance Abuse Prevention Committee to show students how to enjoy life without drugs.



Danielle Two, 2018 alum of St. Joseph's Indian School High School Program/Chamberlain High School, graduated the licensed practical nursing program from Mitchel Technical College in Mitchell, S.D., on May 5. The LPN pinning program will take place in early August.

She is shown here with her husband, Richard Two (2008-2018 alum) and their children Athena and Junior. Richard recently became the Chief of Police for Kimball, S.D. It is believed that Richard is the first Native American to ever wear the badge of Chief of Police in Kimball.



Trinity Sazue, 2018 alum of St. Joseph's Indian School High School Program/Chamberlain High School, graduates May 12 with an associate degree in Building Trades Technology from Lake Area Technical

College in Watertown, S.D. Trinity was in the National Honor Society during high school and was a well-like varsity basketball player. Trinity stays in touch with CHS friends. He is the brother of students Aiden Sazue and Shayla Flute.



Jeremy Herron, a St. Joseph's Indian School High School Program/Chamberlain High School class of 2016 alum, graduated May 6 from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., with a bachelor's degree in Sports Administration. After graduation, Herron hopes to begin his career in the Durango,

Colo., area.

All three of the graduates were recipients of the St. Joseph's Indian School Čhaŋkú Lúta scholarship. Čhaŋkú Lúta is Lakota for the "Red Road," a commitment to live life in the best way possible with respect for oneself, others, all of creation and the Creator. For Christians, it is the road that Christ walked in giving his life for others.

Fifteen Graduate Grade School Program

On Friday, May 26, 15 students will finish their grade school years at St. Joseph's Indian School. One of the most joyful celebrations of the year, the graduation is always a celebration of thiošpaye (extended family) among relatives, staff and students of the school.

This year, South Dakota State Representative Red Dawn Foster addresses students. The class had met her on a school trip to the capitol and requested her as their speaker. She plans to address students about finding their passion and turning it into a love of learning. Foster told students during a preparatory phone call that she understands the value of seeing successful people "who look like you." An example of resilience, she told students she had to run for office many times in order to get where she is.

The school will honor Whitney Jones, Sičháŋgu Lakota, as the school's 2023 Distinguished Alumnus. Jones lives and works in Mission, S.D., and attended St. Joseph's from 1976-1984. He is a school counselor at St. Francis, a rancher and a truck driver. This alum, who doesn't sit still, has a mission to help in as many ways as he can and uses his sobriety and positive life experiences to make life better for those around him. "Do something positive that people will remember you for," he advises.

Graduates include: Mario Bernie, Jalonna Eagle, Taylen Honomichl, Makaia Hurley, Memphis Joseph, Kaedyn Kennedy, Amelia LaPointe, Jack Little Elk, Paul Luedke, Demarius Medicine Crow, Oyate Monje, Emilia Provancial, Secret Red Bear, Gabriel Daijon Rouse, Consuelo Summers.



(Back row, left to right): Oyate Monje, Taylen Honomichl, Memphis Joseph, Secret Red Bear, Consuelo Summers, Jalonna Eagle, Gabriel Daijon Rouse. (Front row, left to right): Emilia Provancial, Makaia Hurley, Kaedyn Kennedy, Paul Luedke, Demarius Medicine Crow, Jack Little Elk, Mario Bernie.



Celebrating Milestones

Employees from across the organization are celebrating service milestones. Thank them for their commitment to the mission!

Five Years

Daniel Andera, Production Support I
Darcy Belitz, Family Service Counselor
Ellen Cleland, Production Support I
Karen Delamater, Donations Processor
Regina Duba, Mail Processing Lead
Michelle Eggers, Data and Program Analyst
Lance Forester, Press Operator
Virginia Fox, Mission Advocate
Shannon Grant, Thrift Store Associate
Travis Hallock, 7-12 Residential Director
Lynn Hanson, Mission Advocate
Bonnie Hosek, Thrift Store Associate
Polly Killian, Reading Specialist
Dusty Lechette, Grocery Store Manager
Jared Mallon, Houseparent
Keylin Mallon, Houseparent
Angela Medrano, Residential Coordinator,
Janet Morgan, Food Service Assistant
Nicholas Parent, Groundskeeper
Brittney Perez, Houseparent
Hannah Ruhlman, Communications Specialist
Lance Spears, Cafeteria Manager
Philip Wendling, Houseparent

Ten Years

Raquel Hickey, Health Center Assistant
Tammy Kenyon, Major Gifts Officer
Lyndsey Kleinsasser, Senior Supervisor MAC
Melissa McDonald, Teacher
Matthew Mohnen, Teacher
Alicia Rausch, Communications Specialist
Andrea Schoenhard, Teacher
Heather Surat, Joint Cost Specialist, Cultural Liaison
Joseph Tyrell, Mission Integration Director
Kory Willard, Quality Analyst MAC
Clare Willrodt, Director of Communications

Fifteen Years

Tina Kirkpatrick, Major Gifts Specialist
Ronald Luurs, Web Editor Lead
Steven McLaughlin, Sr., Outreach Layperson
Claire Nehring, Librarian
Terry Sawhill, Mail Processing Lead
Roger Steckelberg, Carpenter
Daniel Stevens, High School Academic Advisor
Colleen Swanson, Thrift Store Associate
Aaron Wisenbaugh, Houseparent
Melissa Wisenbaugh, Houseparent

Fifteen Years



Craig Barcal, Teacher



Becky Larsen, Finance Manager



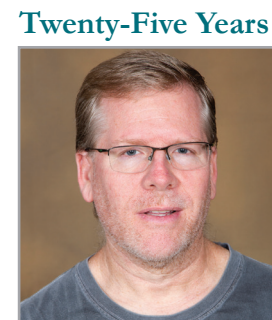
Sarah Brown-Moran, Teacher



Bryan Rinehart, Rec Center Coordinator



LaRayne Woster, Native American Studies Lead



David Anderson, Houseparent



Jean Anderson, Houseparent



Melissa Hall, HR Generalist



Carla Hubbard, Secretary, Exec. Dir. Development



Cindy Knippling, Residential Admin.



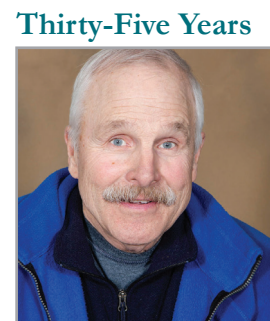
Kandi Lewis, Special Ed.



Sharmel Olson, Principal



Kory Christianson, Exec. Dir. of Development



Miles Clark, Residential Assoc.



Maija Davlouros, HS Services Support



Julie Lepkowski, Admissions Coord.



Nancy Toepfer, Purchasing Agent



Mary Beth Freidel, Production Mgr.



Andy Lepkowski, Alumni Liaison



Balinda Schmiedt, Senior SQL Programmer, Marketing Analyst



Dixie Thompson, Museum Director



Melonie and John Coyle join St. Joe's as houseparents. They both prefer classical music or vintage rock. She likes Italian, Mexican and Chinese food. He prefers seafood, especially shrimp. When he was younger, John was a bit of an Ansel Adams, enjoying backpacking, nature and landscape photography. The two describe working for



St. Joe's as "A dream come true." For Melonie it fits the bill as something to do in their retirement together. He says it is a chance to put to good use all of the skills he has developed over the years.



Linnea Wright is the new Museum Store Manager at the Aktá Lakota Museum. Her taste in music: Anything so long as it doesn't have swearing. She especially enjoys breakfast and pizza. When she was younger, she had a Yorkshire Terrier named Poco. To her, success is being happy and enjoying life.

