

The Dreamer

Exclusive news for the St. Joseph's Indian School DreamMakers



November 2024

Braids of Strength: A Cord of Three is Not Easily Broken

November is Native American Heritage Month. Celebrate it by learning about the Lakota tradition of hair braiding.

Imagine in a not-so-distant past the following scene: a young Lakota (Sioux) girl sits unmoving as the woman behind her carefully weaves three sections of her hair into a beautiful, intricate braid. As the woman does this, she shares stories of history and tradition with the young girl. The girl breathes in the words and holds them in her heart. The stories provide her with a sense of togetherness with those around her and those from the past who first shared these stories.

Like a braid, her ancestors, her elders and herself create a cord of three — creating something stronger than any one of them alone.

Fast-forward to present day at St. Joseph's Indian School. While the scene may look



different, there are still so many similarities.

In grades 1-8, hair braiding lessons are taught in Native American Studies class. Students gather to practice various braiding styles on their friends and classmates, while also getting their own hair braided.

(over, please)



"And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

— Ecclesiastes 4:12

“In a world where cultural diversity can be overlooked and disregarded, the preservation of Lakota traditions, like hair braiding, is more important than ever. It serves as a reminder of the resilience and strength of the Lakota people,” said Joe, Mission Integration Director.

In the Lakota culture, hair is sacred. It makes up a person's cultural identity and can represent individuality, family, tribe and community. Each strand carries memories, joy and wisdom. However, hair can also hold a depth of meaning in times of grief. When a Lakota family loses a loved one, some surviving family members, both men and women, cut their hair as a visible sign of grief. This act symbolizes the pain of loss and the separation from the departed loved one.

All told, there are many layers to the importance of hair in the Lakota culture. This is why families and children have the final say in how students' hair is cared for at St. Joseph's. We're excited to see more and more students, girls and boys alike, honoring their heritage by growing their hair long.

As the strands of hair grow, so does a special braided connection. The first strand is the



child, the legacy of generations. The second strand is St. Joseph's, the nurturing place where dreams take flight. And the third strand? You! You, our generous DreamMaker, are woven into the fabric of the children's lives as the unseen hand providing resources, prayer and support.

United in a common purpose to educate and care for Native American children, this cord of three creates opportunities for a brighter future for each child. Together, this strong cord of three can withstand any challenge and “not quickly break.” When we join hands, this bond is unbreakable.

Wóphila tháŋka — *many thanks* — to you for helping provide education to Native American children and families for life — *mind, body, heart and spirit.*

DID YOU KNOW?

You can use Lakota words as you practice the art of hair braiding at home!

P̄héhíŋ — *hair*

Glastó — *to brush one's own hair*

Kastó — *to comb, smooth down*

Learn more about the Lakota culture by visiting stjo.org/culture today!



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

Hello! my name is Rayne and I am in 7th grade.

Thank you for being generous and donating to our school and thinking of us! What I like about St. Joe's is having a horse barn and visiting the horses and giving them snacks.

I like to go to the work-out room for fun. ♡

I am learning about proportions and ratios in math, flood plains in Science, The Renaissance in history/geography, gerunds and progressive tenses in ELA, and in one of my last classes of the day I learn about my culture and language.

When I grow up I want to be an EMT and help people in need.

Sincerely,
Rayne ♡