



# AKTÁ LAKOTA

## Museum & Cultural Center

- an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School -



**NATIONALLY RENOWNED CENTER OF AMERICAN INDIAN ART**

## EXPERIENCE LAKOTA CULTURE

### Discovering the Art and Culture of the Lakota People at the Aktá Lakota Museum

Learn about the rich cultural heritage of the Lakota people who were the first to inhabit this area. A visit to the Aktá Lakota Museum will provide you with an introduction to traditional and contemporary Native American culture and artistry. Our museum collection is composed of numerous items of rare historic value and exceptional contemporary pieces made by notable Lakota individuals, artists, and artisans.

Lakota artwork has evolved over the years, incorporating a diversity of materials including glass beadwork, porcupine quillwork, hide painting, feather working, wood, pipestone carving, and metalworking. These mediums, along with some of the traditional forms such as decorated garments, ceremonial regalia, personal adornment, and containers like bags and parfleches, were all developed by the Lakotas during their nomadic hunting days of the early 1800s.

The museum's collection of contemporary Native American arts and crafts comprises work by the late Oscar Howe, Herman Red Elk, and Robert Penn, as well as nationally renowned artists like Arthur Amiotte, Dyani White Hawk, Henry Payer, and many more. The distinctive tribal styles and surface embellishments in beadwork and quillwork were developed during the early reservation days of the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century.

The Aktá Lakota Museum features rotating exhibits in addition to our permanent exhibits, which tell the stories of the Lakota people.





# WINTER TRADITIONS IN LAKOTA CULTURE

## Waníyetu — The Cold and Dark Moons (Winter)

In Lakota culture, Winter marked the start of a calm period where a solitary campsite was utilized for the entire season. As women crafted and repaired clothing, men went on expeditions to safeguard and fortify the camp. Despite the work, Winter was also seen as a time for enjoyment. Children gathered around the fire to hear their grandparents' stories, while elders shared the tribe's history. Additionally, there was plenty of time for games, dancing, and socializing.

- **Wanícokan Wi** — Moon When the Deer Sheds Their Horns
- **Wiótehika Wi** — The Hard Moon
- **Cannápopa Wi** — Moon When Trees Crack From The Cold
- **Istáwicayazan Wi** — Moon of Sore Eyes (Snow Blindness)

## Waníyetu:

### The Cold and Dark Moons (Winter)

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The Lakota year is divided into 13 moons. Each moon is 28 days long, and every day represents something sacred:

Two days for the Great Spirit

Two days for the Mother Earth

Four days for the Four Winds

One day for the Spotted Eagle

One day for the Sun

One day for the Moon

One day for the Morning Star

Four days for the Four Ages

Seven days for the Seven Rites of the Sacred Pipe

One day for the Buffalo

One day for the Fire

One day for the Water

One day for the Rock

One day for the Two-legged People

American Indians treasured nature and earth, as evidence by their calendars that reflect their deep connection to the natural world. Based on the moon cycles, the American Indian year was divided into 13 moons with [each moon being 28 days long](#).

# THE ART OF STORYTELLING THROUGH HAND-BEADED CRAFTS

For American Indian people, hand-beaded crafts have been a form of artistic expression and storytelling for centuries. As a result of the introduction of glass beads by European colonizers, this rich and colorful tradition has been able to continue to thrive. Today, many talented artists invest their time and share their experiences through this medium.

At the Aktá Lakota Museum, we take pride in supporting these artisans by showcasing their pieces in our [gift store](#) and museum. We welcome anyone who wants to learn more about this beautiful art form to visit us and see these stunning works of art for themselves.



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## MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

### MUSEUM EARNS SOUTH DAKOTA'S 2023 GREAT PLACES AWARD

The Aktá Lakota Museum has been named one of South Dakota's Great Places for 2023, a prestigious award it has received since 2002 when it was formerly known as the Great Star Award. This recognition, given annually by the state's Department of Tourism, recognizes businesses and organizations that provide exceptional service. The program identifies and honors establishments that offer hospitality training to their staff, acknowledge and reward employees for providing excellent service, and use innovative methods to express gratitude to their customers.

Museum Director, Dixie Thompson, expressed her appreciation for the museum's frontline staff by acknowledging that their positive attitudes and teamwork are crucial for making the museum a great place.



### JOSEPH'S INDIAN SCHOOL HISTORICAL CENTER AND MUSEUM COORDINATOR, EARNS RECOGNITION FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Wanda Bunker, has once again been recognized for her exceptional customer service by the South Dakota Department of Tourism. As a South Dakota Great Face award recipient, Wanda went above and beyond to maintain a high level of customer service for the Museum and the state of South Dakota. The Governor presented her with a letter of recognition and a "Great Face" certificate to commend her outstanding efforts.

To receive this award, an employee must demonstrate exemplary performance in hospitality and customer service beyond the expectations of their job description. This includes receiving three or more positive comments from customers, a testimonial from their manager, and successfully completing the Department of Tourism's Hospitality Training program. Wanda has won this award for five consecutive years, which is a testament to her exceptional dedication to customer service.



### THE BEST GIFT SHOP AROUND!

Our museum's gift shop is proud to showcase the talents of local and regional American Indian artists. Our collection features a variety of unique, original pieces, from handmade jewelry to colorful pottery and more. We offer an assortment of items to choose from, such as star quilts, American Indian history books, cards, artistically designed t-shirts, and more. Come visit us and [explore our store](#) – it's a shopping destination you won't want to miss!



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## ON EXHIBIT NOW

### "WÓYAKE: LANGUAGE IN LAKOTA ART": A Celebration of Culture, Identity, and Language Exhibit Open November 13, 2023 – April 30, 2024

Exhibit curated by David A. Meyer II, Assistant Curator

Step into a visually [stunning exhibition](#) that delves into the many dimensions of language in the context of Lakota art. Each artwork in this exhibit offers a unique perspective on how language is used and interpreted.

At the heart of this exhibit are the winter count pictographs, which are a traditional form of historical record-keeping. These pictographs depict stories and events without the use of spoken or written words, serving as a silent narrative. In contrast, other art pieces in the exhibit incorporate written words and explicitly reference speech, showcasing the versatility of the Lakota language.

One of the most significant aspects of "Wóyake: Language in Lakota Art" is its use of both English and Lakota text. This dual-language approach highlights the resilience of the Lakota culture and its language, especially in light of historical challenges.

Beyond the art, this exhibition represents a deep reclamation of language and identity. It emphasizes the importance of preserving and embracing the Lakota language, contributing to the ongoing revitalization of Lakota culture. "Wóyake: Language in Lakota Art" stands as a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of a people determined to ensure their language and heritage are celebrated for generations to come.





## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### MONTILEAUX PAINTS PICTURES ON THE WALLS OF YOUNG MINDS

This fall, acclaimed Oglala Lakota ledger artist [Donald F. Montileaux](#) paid a visit to St. Joseph's Indian School where he sparked students' imaginations with his masterful storytelling and vivid artistic style.

Montileaux, accompanied by his wife, Paulette, spent the afternoon with third, fourth, and seventh graders in the school library, recounting the story of "Tašun̄ka, A Lakota Horse Legend" and mentoring students in illustration.

Donald Montileaux teaches a room of third- and fourth-graders at St. Joseph's Indian School.



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Students were attentive as Montileaux shared the story of his childhood learning to draw Mickey Mouse at the kitchen table. He told them about his internships with artists [Oscar Howe](#) and [Herman Red Elk](#), and his work as an illustrator. He spoke about adding Lakota storytelling to his successful career joining the ranks of traditional tribal storytellers who used their wisdom and gifted voices to paint pictures of wonderful, magical animals and colorful birds on the walls of young people's minds.

Seventh-grader Brooklyn's horse was decorated with constellations, the sun and the moon. Her takeaway from Montileaux's visit was, "Be creative! It's okay to go outside the lines. I felt like a kindergartener again," (which was a good thing).

William shows his horse during an activity with Donald F. Montileaux. Students agreed that they enjoyed the experience and felt motivated by it. Earlier in the day, Montileaux taped two episodes for the spring season of the school's [Hóčhoka podcast](#).

William shows his horse during an activity with Donald F. Montileaux.





## CAMPUS TOURS

Experience the rich Lakota culture by visiting the Aktá Lakota Museum and St. Joseph's Indian School! Our winter hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday. We are closed on weekends and national holidays. Admission is free of charge and donations are greatly appreciated.



Explore our exhibits at your own pace or request a guided tour of the campus by speaking with the receptionist. For more information, please call us at 800.798.3452 or email us at [aktalakota@stjo.org](mailto:aktalakota@stjo.org).

[>> Need more information! <<](#)

Plan your visit today and discover the timeless lessons that our museum has to offer. For more information about Lakota traditions and activities, visit us at <https://aktalakota.stjo.org/>

## GENERAL MUSEUM INFORMATION

### Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center

St. Joseph's Indian School

1301 North Main Street

Chamberlain, SD 57325

Phone: 1-605-234-3452

Toll Free: 1-800-798-3452

E-Mail: [aktalakota@stjo.org](mailto:aktalakota@stjo.org)

Online: [www.aktalakota.org](http://www.aktalakota.org)

### Memberships and Affiliations

ABA – American Bus Association

NTA – National Tour Association

ASDM – Association of South Dakota Museums

SDSHS – South Dakota State Historical Society

AAM – American Association of Museums

IACA – Indian Arts & Crafts Association

MPMA – Mountain Plains Museum Association

AASLH – American Assoc. for State &  
Local History

### Summer Hours

May – October

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Monday - Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Sunday

### Winter Hours

November – April

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Monday - Friday

Closed weekends and National Holidays

- Interactive Displays
- Medicine Wheel Garden
- After Hours Tours by Appointment
- Bus/RV Parking
- Handicap-Accessible
- Guided Tours Available Upon Request

**FREE ADMISSION**

Donations Welcome



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