



AKTÁ LAKOTA

Museum & Cultural Center

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



NATIONALLY RENOWNED CENTER OF AMERICAN INDIAN ART

DISCOVER THE AKTÁ LAKOTA MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER

While many travelers come to South Dakota to experience the beauty of the Black Hills and the Badlands, those who take time to explore the state's cultural landscape discover something just as profound: the enduring legacy of Native American communities who have shaped this land for generations.

A visit to the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, located on the campus of St. Joseph's Indian School, offers more than just a learning experience—it invites guests to see South Dakota through a deeper, more meaningful lens.

An outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School, the museum offers an in-depth look at the cultures of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples—both past and present. Unlike many

museums, the Aktá Lakota Museum begins its story before European contact, highlighting the traditions, spirituality, and way of life of Native people of the Northern Plains.

"An Immersive Cultural Experience."

As visitors move through the galleries, they encounter powerful exhibits that explore the impact of traders, missionaries, and government policies, including broken treaties and forced assimilation. The journey concludes with the exhibit Continuity and Change, which celebrates the resilience of Native people and their ongoing efforts to live and thrive in today's world.

EXPERIENCE THE MEDICINE WHEEL GARDEN



While visiting the Aktá Lakota Museum, be sure to take time to explore the Medicine Wheel Garden—a peaceful and symbolic space that reflects the spiritual traditions and natural wisdom of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples.

This sacred circle garden features native plants and a tranquil water feature, honoring water as a source of healing and life. The garden's design is rooted in Indigenous teachings, representing harmony, balance, and the interconnectedness of all living things.

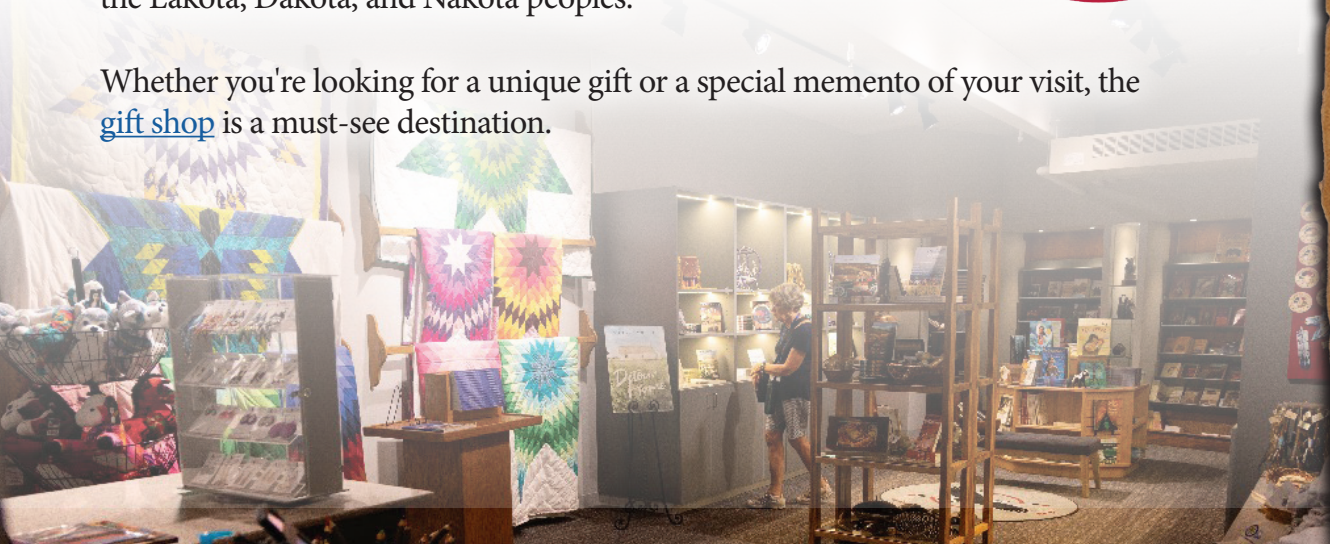
Whether you're seeking a moment of quiet reflection or a deeper understanding of Lakota values and connection to the natural world, the [Medicine Wheel Garden](#) offers a meaningful extension of your museum visit.

DON'T MISS THE GIFT SHOP!

No visit to the Aktá Lakota Museum is complete without a stop at the museum gift shop, where you'll find a thoughtfully curated selection of items crafted by local Native artisans.

From handmade [jewelry](#) and [star quilts](#) to ornaments, [artwork](#), [books](#), and cultural keepsakes, the shop offers something meaningful for everyone. Each purchase supports Native artists and helps preserve the traditions and talents of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples.

Whether you're looking for a unique gift or a special memento of your visit, the [gift shop](#) is a must-see destination.



LAKOTA MOON CALENDAR - *WÍYAWAPI WÓWAPI HANWÍ*

Blokétu — The Warm Moons (Summer)

Summer—**Blokétu**—was a season of movement, abundance, and purpose for the Lakota people. As the buffalo migrated across the Plains, the camp followed, requiring frequent relocation. Women led the work of packing, transporting, and setting up the family's belongings. They prepared food, gathered essential resources, and assembled the tipis that formed the heart of each new camp.

Girls learned quillwork and contributed by collecting firewood and hauling water, gradually taking on responsibilities that would serve their families and community. Boys sharpened their hunting skills by tracking and capturing small game. Men focused on crafting weapons, hunting larger game, and protecting the camp from threats.

Summer was also a time of joy and spirituality. It marked the season for important **ceremonies, social gatherings, and celebrations**, reinforcing kinship ties and cultural traditions.

The Lakota recognized the passing of time through the moons of the season:

- **Wípazuka Wašté Wi** — *Moon of the Juneberries*
- **Čhanpásapa** — *Moon When the Chokecherries Are Ripe*
- **Wasúton Wi** — *Moon of the Harvest*

Each moon signaled a change in the land and the rhythm of daily life—offering sustenance, guidance, and opportunities for learning that shaped generations.



AMERICAN INDIAN DAY WACÍPI — SEPTEMBER 18 - 20

Celebrate Our 49th Annual Powwow: Gathering of the Wakányeja (Children)

You're invited to join us in celebrating the 49th Annual Powwow: Gathering of the Wakányeja—a meaningful weekend dedicated to honoring the rich and vibrant heritage of Native American people, especially the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota tribes of the Great Plains.

This cherished tradition brings together students, families, staff, alumni, and guests to celebrate culture, community, and kinship.

Powwow Weekend Schedule

Thursday - Festivities begin with registration at the Rec Center, followed by tours of our newly expanded Rec Center. Stay around for our Powwow Kick-Off Program to learn more about our programs and enjoy light Hors d'oeuvres.

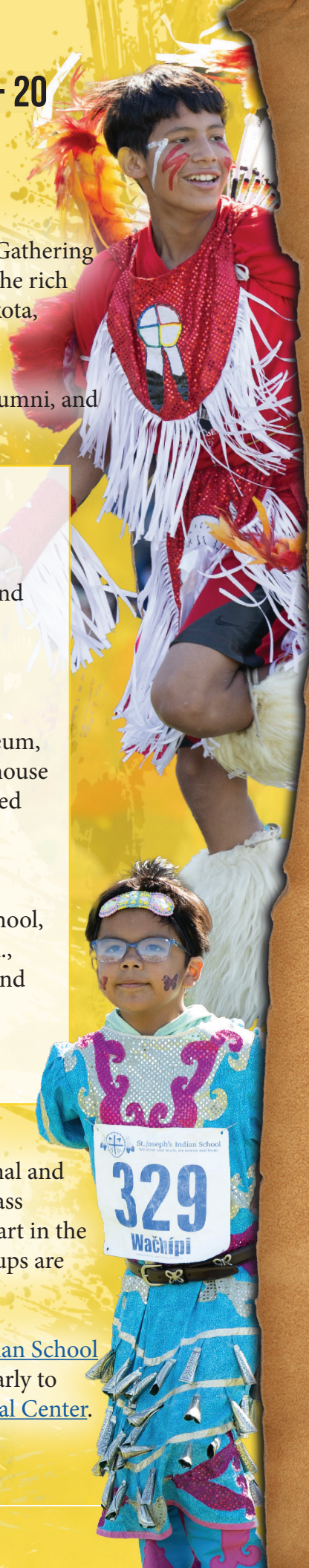
Friday - Guests are invited to a day of cultural enrichment, including activities at the Rec Center and the Aktá Lakota Museum, guided tours of the school and health care center, and an open house at the Equine Therapy Complex. The day concludes with a relaxed evening reception and **Tiyóšpaye** (extended family) dinner at Arrowwood Cedar Shore Resort.

Saturday - Continue exploring the campus with tours of our school, Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel, and student homes. At 11:45 a.m., a blessing of the powwow grounds will be held, followed by Grand Entry at noon, where dancers and drum groups officially open the celebration. The weekend concludes with evening Mass, the awarding of prizes, and a shared community meal.

Dance & Drum Competitions – Dancers compete in three age groups: Tiny Tots, Juniors, and Teens. Categories include Traditional and Fancy Dance for both boys and girls; Jingle Dress for girls; and Grass Dance for boys. Drum groups from across the Dakotas also take part in the celebration and competition. All registered dancers and drum groups are eligible for cash prizes.

All powwow activities take place on the campus of [St. Joseph's Indian School](#) in Chamberlain, South Dakota. Visitors are encouraged to come early to explore the campus and tour the [Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center](#).

For a complete schedule of events, please visit our [website](#) or call 800-798-3452.



NOW ON EXHIBIT: VOICES OF THE PLAINS

Explore the richness of Native expression in [Voices of the Plains](#), a new exhibition at the Aktá Lakota Museum. Featuring artwork from our permanent collection, this powerful showcase brings together diverse artists connected to the Plains, highlighting Indigenous creativity across generations, styles, and media. The exhibit reflects the museum's growing collection and continued commitment to uplifting Native voices.

Curated by David A. Meyer II



HONORING MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS RELATIVES

St. Joseph's Indian School Observes May 5 with Prayer, Education, and Remembrance

On May 5, the St. Joseph's Indian School community came together in a spirit of unity, reverence, and learning to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR)—a national crisis that continues to affect Native communities across the country. This day of remembrance, observed annually, seeks to raise awareness, inspire action, and hold space for those still seeking answers.



The day began with a sacred prayer service in Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel, where students and staff created prayer ties and reflected on the realities of MMIR through a short educational presentation. Together, they processed to Wisdom Circle for a continued ceremony grounded in cultural strength and resilience.

The Chalk Hills Singers led healing songs and a round dance, followed by a remembrance walk to American Creek Park. Donning red shirts featuring a student-designed logo, the campus community honored those lost, those missing, and the families still waiting.

“We hold this event as a **thiyóšpaye**—*extended family*,” said Amanda, Family Service Counselor. “It gives space to grieve and heal while building community and awareness.”

MMIR: The Reality

- [4 in 5 Indigenous women experience violence](#)
- [Murder is the 3rd leading cause of death for Indigenous women](#)
- [Most cases in South Dakota are from Rapid City, Pine Ridge, and Sisseton Wahpeton](#)

What You Can Do?

Awareness is ongoing. Learn more, support local efforts, wear red on May 5, and hold space for families still seeking answers. Together, we remember and act—for justice, healing, and hope.

STORY TIME AT THE AKTÁ LAKOTA MUSEUM

Each Tuesday morning, the quiet galleries of the Aktá Lakota Museum come to life with the sound of laughter, curiosity, and storytelling. Students gather not only to listen, but to take part in a living tradition—a continuation of oral history, adapted for today's generation through the voices of Native authors.

An outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School, the museum's Story Time with Uŋčǐ & Lalá is more than just a reading session. It's a celebration of Lakota culture, identity, and resilience—shared one story, one lesson, and one child at a time.

A Space for Learning and Connection

The books featured each week are carefully selected to reflect themes rooted in Native American life, from perseverance and cultural pride to the importance of family and tradition. Through these stories, students connect with Indigenous authors who understand their heritage firsthand—many of whom are from the Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota nations.

“Storytelling plays a vital role in preserving Lakota culture and traditions,” says Dixie, Museum Director. “Traditionally, it served as a living bridge between generations, passing down language, values, history, and spiritual teachings.”

Colorful illustrations and rich narratives spark the imagination, while hands-on activities and crafts after each reading help children engage more deeply with the stories. These interactive elements reinforce lessons and offer fun, creative ways for students to connect with the themes of each book.

Encouraging Participation and Pride

To celebrate commitment and encourage continued attendance, the museum has introduced a participation certificate program. Children receive a sticker at every session they attend, and those who complete the entire summer series are awarded a special gift—a keepsake marking their journey through cultural discovery.

Story Time with Uŋčǐ & Lalá takes place every Tuesday from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center. All are welcome to attend and experience the joy of storytelling, tradition, and community. To learn more, visit <https://aktalakota.stjo.org/>



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PLAN YOUR VISIT

GROUP TOURS WELCOME

Looking for a meaningful and educational outing for your students or youth group? The Aktá Lakota Museum offers an engaging and enriching experience for children of all ages and abilities.

Through interactive, hands-on exhibits and programs, the museum brings learning to life—connecting visitors with the rich cultural heritage of the Lakota people in a fun and accessible way.

Exhibits both inside and outside the museum explore themes in art, literature, culture, and history, offering a well-rounded educational experience that encourages curiosity and respect for Native traditions. Each visit provides children and adults alike with a living lesson in American Indian life—past and present.

Whether you're planning a class trip or a family visit, the Aktá Lakota Museum is a welcoming space where learning and cultural appreciation go hand in hand.

Admission is always free! To [plan your visit](#) or schedule a field trip, contact us today or visit aktalakota.org.



TOUR ST. JOSEPH'S INDIAN SCHOOL CAMPUS

Visitors and group tours are always welcome at St. Joseph's Indian School! Whether you're exploring the campus for the first time or returning with a group, we offer a warm invitation to learn more about our mission, students, and community.

Guided Campus Tours Available

Explore our campus with a personalized guided tour—available by request. To schedule your visit or ask about transportation assistance, please contact us in advance.

- **Call:** 800-798-3452
- **Email:** aktalakota@stjo.org

You may also stop by the receptionist's desk at the museum for more information or to request a same-day tour, based on availability. We look forward to welcoming you!

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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

Online: <http://www.aktalakota.stjo.org/>

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

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

- **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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