



AKTÁ LAKOTA

Museum & Cultural Center

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



NATIONALLY RENOWNED CENTER OF AMERICAN INDIAN ART

EXPERIENCE THE AKTÁ LAKOTA MUSEUM

Step into the story of the Lakota people—the first inhabitants of this region—at the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center. Located on the scenic campus of St. Joseph's Indian School overlooking the Missouri River, the museum offers an unforgettable cultural experience for visitors of all ages.

Explore a remarkable collection of historic artifacts and contemporary Native American artwork that bring Lakota history, traditions, and creativity to life. From intricate beadwork and porcupine quillwork to hand-crafted regalia, pipestone carvings, and hide paintings, each piece reflects the skill, innovation, and cultural knowledge passed down through generations.

The museum also showcases powerful contemporary works by celebrated Lakota artists such as Oscar Howe, Arthur Amiotte,

Robert Penn, Dyani White Hawk, Keith Braveheart, Henry Payer, and more—demonstrating how tradition continues to evolve in exciting and meaningful ways.

With both indoor and outdoor exhibits, including the Medicine Wheel Garden, visitors are invited to learn, reflect, and connect with Lakota culture in a welcoming and inspiring environment.

Admission is free—making it an easy and meaningful stop during your travels through South Dakota. [Learn More!](#)



LAKOTA MOON CALENDAR - *WÍYAWAPI WÓWAPI HANWÍ*

The Lakota (Sioux) closely observed the natural changes that came with each new moon, naming each one to reflect the events and rhythms of that time. These names were not fixed, as the timing of moons could shift slightly from year to year—resulting in variations you may see today.


Rather than following the modern 12-month calendar, the Lakota organized the year by seasons. Spring, summer, and fall each included three moons, while winter held four—reflecting the cycles of nature rather than rigid dates.

Wetú — (Spring) *The Moons of Renewal and Growth*

With the arrival of spring, life began anew. Tribal camps moved to higher ground in anticipation of melting snow. Men repaired tools and resumed hunting, while women gathered early berries and roots and mended tipis after the long winter months. Children, no longer confined by the cold, embraced the outdoors with renewed energy.

Spring moons include:

- **Magáksicaagli Wí** — *Moon When Ducks Come Back*
- **Wihákata Cépapi Wí** — *Moon of Making Fat*
- **Wójupi Wí** — *Moon When the Leaves are Green*



Wetú:

The Moons of Renewal and Growth (Spring)

Magáksicaagli Wí Moon When Ducks Come Back
Wihákata Cépapi Wí Moon of Making Fat
Wójupi Wí When the Leaves are Green

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



Iron Cloud 89

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BRINGING TRADITION TO LIFE

The Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center, tradition is not only preserved—it is lived. Recently, staff members Linnea and Casey came together to bring that spirit to life through the painting of a new museum tipi, blending artistic skill with deep cultural meaning.

Working carefully by hand, the two artists applied each element of the design with intention, transforming the canvas into a powerful visual story rooted in Lakota tradition. What began as a blank surface soon became a meaningful representation of the Lakota worldview.



The upper portion of the tipi is painted with a traditional black band, symbolizing the sky. Within this band are unpainted **hocoka**—sacred circles representing stars or constellations. These elements hold spiritual significance, reflecting the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds. As light passes through the unpainted circles, the interior of the tipi is illuminated, creating a soft, stained-glass effect.



Encircling the tipi beneath the sky band is a second ring that follows the Lakota lunar calendar. Here, the moon moves through its 28 phases, marking the passage of time in harmony with nature and reinforcing the importance of seasonal cycles in Lakota life.



At the base of the tipi, the design shifts to the earth. Painted in the school's colors of blue and yellow, this section grounds the piece in both place and identity. Traditional curved mounds—often symbolic of sacred places for prayer—have been thoughtfully reimagined as the stepped form of the Black Hills. Known as the birthplace of the Lakota nation, the Black Hills remain a spiritual home for many, including the students of St. Joseph's Indian School.

Together, these elements create more than a design—they tell a story of connection: to the sky, to the earth and to generations of Lakota tradition. Through the work of Linnea and Casey, the tipi stands as a vibrant reminder that culture is not static, but continuously renewed through care, creativity and respect.



Visitors to the Aktá Lakota Museum will have the opportunity to experience this beautiful work firsthand—an enduring symbol of tradition brought to life in our new outdoor exhibit.

OPENING JULY 1 - MODERNITY MEETS TRADITION: REAL TRADISH

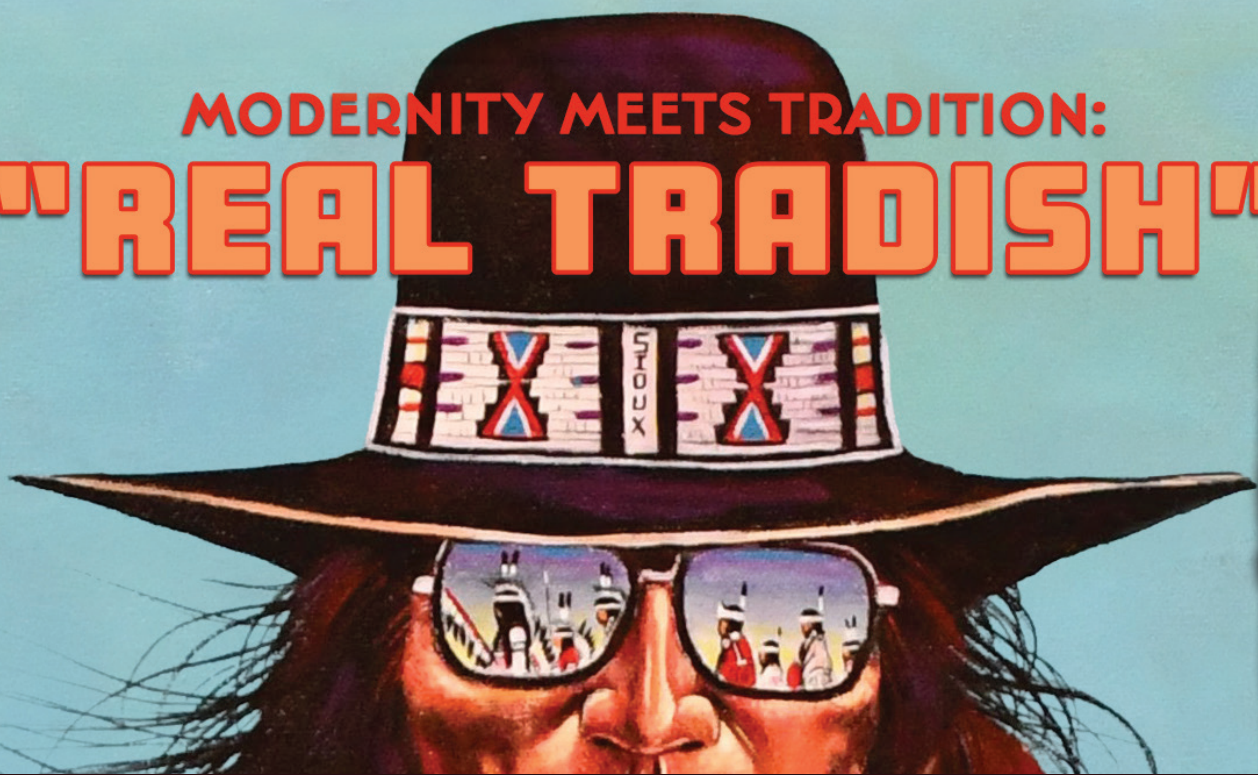
[Modernity Meets Tradition: Real Tradish](#) explores the dynamic intersection of contemporary life and traditional Lakota ways. Drawn from the permanent collection of the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center, this exhibition highlights works that bridge past and present through the use of traditional techniques and symbolism expressed in modern materials, themes, and imagery.

Each piece reflects the enduring strength and adaptability of Lakota culture—demonstrating that tradition is not static, but a living practice that continues to evolve and thrive in the 21st century.

Featured artists include Keith Braveheart, Micheal Two Bulls, Michael Willcuts, Daniel Long Soldier, Donald D. Ruleaux, Dwayne Wilcox, Henry Payer, Nelda Shrupp, Arthur Amiotte, Linda Fallis, and Stephanie Sorbel.

Curated by Casey Walsh, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

**MODERNITY MEETS TRADITION:
"REAL TRADISH"**



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

FIELD TRIPS WELCOME

The Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center offers enriching educational experiences for learners of all ages and abilities. Through interactive, hands-on exhibits and engaging programs, students are invited to explore and connect with the history, culture and traditions of the Lakota people.



In a welcoming, fun and inspiring environment, visitors can experience both indoor and outdoor exhibits that highlight art, literature and history. Each visit becomes an immersive journey—bringing the American Indian way of life, past and present, into meaningful focus.

More than a museum, the Aktá Lakota Museum serves as a living classroom and a valuable resource for students, educators and families alike. Best of all, admission is free.

To schedule your group visit, call **800.798.3452** or email aktalakota@stjo.org.

Plan your field trip today and discover all the museum has to offer!

BECOME A JUNIOR RANGER

The National Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger Program is a free, family-friendly activity available at the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center. As one of 30 locations across 13 states along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the museum is proud to participate in this engaging educational program.

Part of the National Park Service's popular Junior Ranger initiative, the Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger Activity Journal invites young visitors to explore history through hands-on learning and discovery. Journals are available at the museum at no cost, making it an easy and meaningful way for children to connect with the stories of the trail.

Stop by during your visit to pick up a journal and start your Junior Ranger journey. To learn more, visit [Where to Become a Junior Ranger](#).



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KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE: STORY TIME WITH UNČI AND LALÁ

Every Tuesday, something special unfolds at the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center, an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School. A space often known for quiet reflection comes alive with the voices of students, educators and community members gathering for a cherished tradition — story time.

But this is more than a simple reading session. It is a space where American Indian authors' voices are honored, where culture is preserved one page at a time, and where the next generation discovers the power of storytelling.

Each book is thoughtfully selected to reflect American Indian culture and traditions, reinforcing values deeply rooted in Lakota (Sioux) life. As students listen, they gain more than a story — they connect with teachings passed down through generations while engaging with contemporary Native voices.

Through richly illustrated picture books and meaningful narratives, each session creates a bridge between past and present, helping young listeners see themselves reflected in the stories they hear.

The experience doesn't end when the book closes. Each session includes a hands-on craft or activity, giving children the opportunity to creatively connect with the story's themes. These activities help reinforce lessons while encouraging curiosity, creativity and cultural understanding.

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

Families have embraced the program wholeheartedly, with many returning week after week. To celebrate participation, children earn a sticker for each session attended, and those who complete the full summer program receive a special gift — a meaningful token of their cultural journey.

As the children gather each week, they become part of something larger — a continuation of storytelling traditions, shared through the voices of American Indian authors who carry their heritage forward.

“Through stories, cultural tradition is strengthened, and the wisdom of ancestors is kept alive in a meaningful way,” Thompson adds.

Story Time is held every Tuesday in June and July from 10:30–11:30 a.m. at the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center. All are welcome to attend and experience the power of storytelling.



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SHARE THE CULTURE — NATIVE INSPIRED GIFTS

For American Indian people, hand-beaded work has long been a powerful form of artistic expression and storytelling. For generations, designs have carried meaning—reflecting identity, history and cultural values.

With the introduction of glass beads through European trade, this tradition evolved, allowing artists to expand their creativity while continuing to honor time-honored techniques. Today, beadwork remains a vibrant and living art form, with skilled artists sharing their stories through color, pattern and design.

At the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center, we are proud to support these artisans by featuring their work in both our exhibits and [museum gift shop](#). Each piece represents not only exceptional craftsmanship, but also the enduring spirit of Lakota culture.

We invite you to visit and experience the beauty and significance of this remarkable art form firsthand. Shop Now!



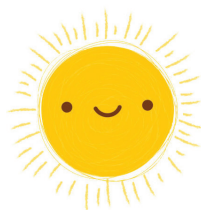
CAMPUS TOURS

STOP BY AND SEE US!

Experience the rich culture and traditions of the Lakota people with a visit to the Aktá Lakota Museum and Cultural Center and the campus of St. Joseph's Indian School. Whether you're traveling through the area or planning a special outing, we invite you to stop by and explore all that our campus has to offer.

Admission is free, making it easy for individuals, families and groups to enjoy a meaningful cultural experience. Visitors are welcome to explore the museum's exhibits at their own pace or enhance their visit by requesting a guided campus tour. To arrange a tour, simply speak with the receptionist upon arrival.

For more information or to plan your visit, call **800.798.3452** or email aktalakota@stjo.org. You can also learn more about Lakota traditions and upcoming activities by visiting aktalakota.stjo.org.



Summer Hours start May 1st

Monday – Saturday, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Sunday – 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

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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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