



St. Francis Mission
AMONG THE LAKOTA

MAKING AN IMPACT

Sapa Un Jesuit Academy

Dear Friends,

In September 2013, St. Francis Mission began a school based on the Jesuit Nativity model of schools. This model has a proven track record among high-risk populations of producing students who are able to graduate from colleges and universities and become leaders. While Sapa Un Academy has been a work of the Jesuits since it opened—as a ministry of the St. Francis Mission, our school has always had a relationship with the Midwest Province—it hasn't always been part of the Jesuit Schools Network.



Today, that has changed. Our school is now Sapa Un Jesuit Academy—one of 84 schools across the US known as the Jesuit School Network.

By joining this Network, we are strengthening our ability to provide a quality, faith-based education to our students and create leaders for the future. The strongest Jesuit schools are in active and regular relationship with other Jesuit schools, and our teachers will gain development opportunities and more through their connection to their peers in other Jesuit schools.

One thing that certainly will not change: Sapa Un Jesuit Academy will retain its mission and vision to offer a first-class education that will prepare Lakota youth for college. It will facilitate religious experiences for the entire family. And it will graduate the Lakota leaders of tomorrow who will be able to read, write and speak the Lakota language as well as English.

Rodney Bordeaux

President, St. Francis Mission



Message from the Superintendent

We are thankful these days that spring is turning to summer after a long season of bitter winter days. The grass has turned green and our students were able to get outside again for recess and other projects.

For example, the gardening club was able to use the greenhouse our students built three years ago, just before COVID hit. And students were able to continue their work on an outdoor classroom project begun last fall. We now have a bridge across the drainage slough in the large field to the south of the school building, and a large project table. We also built a corner bench next to the building as an outdoor instruction space.

The cookout was also special because it was a celebration of family gatherings that we were unable to host during the pandemic.

Other special events included Spring Fling, a student art show and finger food event that included a silent auction of student art, and participation in a fundraiser walk for juvenile diabetes, an activity close to our hearts as several of our students struggle with this disease.

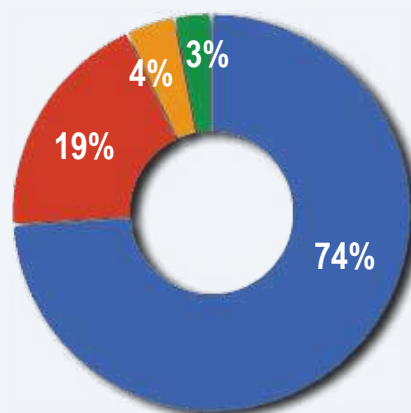
Last but certainly not least, we celebrated our fifth graduation ceremony on May 25th. We were joyful and thankful to watch our three graduates—one of whom started here in kindergarten—successfully complete their years at Sapa Un. All are well prepared for wherever their dreams may take them.



The education available at Sapa Un requires teachers who not only excel in preparing their students academically but who are committed to the spiritual, emotional and social development of their students in an environment where each individual, including staff, is cherished and challenged to embrace the best of who God calls them to be. Sapa Un attracts teachers of this quality, but we can retain them long term only by compensating them at a level that supports their families and their futures.

In addition to teacher salaries, the school must fund the purchase of books and materials, technology, and the general supplies necessary to support the academic rigor of our program. We also strive to staff and underwrite our integral cultural, spiritual, athletic, and community-building activities which are essential to the education of the whole person and a hallmark of Jesuit education.

**2022-23
Budget:
\$432,000***



- Quality teacher salaries: \$323,000
- Program supplies: \$78,500
- Student activities, including sports, cultural, community building, spiritual formation: \$17,500
- School administration: \$13,000

* does not include maintenance and administrative fees paid to the Mission



During our spring cookout, we dedicated that bench to one of our sixth graders who helped build it. Sadly, he died of asthma complications during a big storm right before Christmas. His loss was a significant challenge for our little family, and we continue to remember and honor the gift of his life.

Our parents say... Sapa Un fosters a sense of community and learning the importance of service to others. One thing in particular we have noticed is the idea of meeting each child where they are in their particular learning and development. In this increasingly harsh world that children are growing up in, a community of faith and love in a school that focuses on the entire child—their mind, heart and spirit—is an immeasurably important base to build young lives for the future.”

Connect With Us!

HOW CAN YOU HELP US IN OUR MISSION?

- ◆ Let us know what you think of our newsletter – or anything else!
- ◆ Pray for us.
- ◆ Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, and share posts with your family and friends.
- ◆ Donate now at www.sfmission.org/newsletter



Saint Francis Mission
PO Box 499
St. Francis, SD 57572

“For over 100 years, our Lakota sisters and brothers have invited us to walk the good road with them. Through this shared journey—though never perfect—we have grown in holiness, more humble, more generous, closer to God.”



V. Rev. Karl Kiser, SJ
Provincial
USA Midwest Province
of the Society of Jesus

Father Jim Lafontaine, SJ, is surrounded by Sapa Un fourth through eighth graders, including this year's graduates, after an afternoon of joyously celebrating the first warm days of spring.

Please open this newsletter to see a message from Fr. Jim.