

# ST. AUGUSTINE INDIAN MISSION the Trumpet Call

FALL 2009

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF EDUCATION, TRADITION AND FAITH

## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



This is a very special school year for us here at St. Augustine Indian Mission, **as we begin another school year, we also celebrate our 100th Anniversary.** You probably know by now that we have a very unique history. **We are the only Indian Mission in the state of Nebraska, and we are one of the few schools left in the United States that can boast about the fact that we were founded by a saint – St. Katharine Drexel.**

In preparation for this 100th year celebration, **I have been reading and reflecting a great deal on our history and the history of the dealings with Native Americans in our country. Much of this history contains broken treaties, empty promises, and ill treatment.** The history of St. Augustine Indian Mission contains our share of mistakes and painful memories.

However, that is not the full picture. Last February, before we began the celebration of our Centennial, we first gathered the community together to pray for healing and reconciliation for the painful parts of our history. **During that prayer service an alumnus of the Mission got up and expressed himself. What he said left me in tears.** He appreciated the gesture of asking for healing and reconciliation, but **he wanted to make it very clear that he had wonderful memories of being a child in the safe, loving, and caring environment of St. Augustine's.** He thanked the Sisters and the priests who served the Mission over the years.

As we have started celebrating our 100th Anniversary, many other people in the community have expressed their

thanks for the presence of the Mission and the education we have provided for the children of the Omaha and Winnebago people. **They desire us to continue to provide a safe, loving, and caring environment.**

In order to do that, we need your help! In the midst of a struggling economy, we depend on generous donors such as yourself to make sacrifices so that we can continue to respond to the many needs that face these children today. **Would you consider making a donation in honor of our 100 years of service here?** Over the years, there have been some people who have even left us in their Will, which greatly adds to our stability. Would you consider doing the same?

Our financial situation is very tight right now. At times I feel sad because I wish we had more funds with which to celebrate this important milestone, **but when I see the smiling faces of our children and I am filled with gratitude because we are still providing the most important thing: a brighter future for these children.**

As we celebrate our 100 years of history among the Omaha and Winnebago people, **I extend their words of gratitude to you for the generosity and care you have shown these beautiful children of God!** With your continued support, we can plan on making a positive contribution to their lives for the foreseeable future.

*God's Blessings, Fr. Dave Korth*



# 100th Anniversary Powwow

Powwow photos by Don Doll, SJ



*Anthony, a kindergarten student, shows his love for the Men's Fancy Dance.*

The Mission kicked off the school year with a powwow to celebrate its 100th Anniversary on Sept. 12 & 13. The joyful event was held at Veterans Memorial Park, also known as the "powwow grounds" here in Winnebago. Celebrating with a powwow was another way for the Mission to encourage its students to embrace the beauty of their Native Culture.

"The Centennial Singers" provided the drum beat and singing to which current students, parents, and alumni danced in full regalia. The honor of Head Woman Dancer and Head Man Dancer was given to two former students of St. Augustine's who are current students at Winnebago Public High School: Winona LaPointe and Craig Cleveland.

A number of very special guests came to celebrate our 100th Anniversary: Fr. Wayne PAYSSE, the Executive Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions from Washington, DC; several members of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters from around the world who happened to be in Nebraska for an international meeting, including Sisters who have served the Mission in the past; former members of the Board of Advisors; Fr. Don Doll, SJ (who captured the event on camera), and priests of the Archdiocese of Omaha, including all of the former Directors of the Mission who are still alive (Frs. Richard Whiteing, Tom Bauwens, and Steve Boes).

During the two-day celebration, three meals were served thanks to the hard work of the Kateri Circle, and the



*Sarah Snake, and her granddaughter, Anna, take a break from the dancing.*



*Community members come through the line to show their gratitude for the 100 years of St. Augustine Indian Mission. (l to r) Winona LaPointe (Head Women's Dancer), Frs. Dave Korth (Director of St. Augustine Indian Mission), Mike Eckley (pastor of the reservation parishes), Wayne PAYSSE (Exec. Director of Bureau of Catholic. Indian Missions), Pat McLaughlin (former Assoc. Director of the Mission), Craig Cleveland (Head Men's Dancer), and the Sisters.*

generous donations of Andy Daniels- sweet corn, Tom Ewin- smoked pork, Hy-Vee, and Burger King.

The event was fittingly brought to a close with an outdoor Mass at the powwow grounds. Fr. Dave celebrated the Mass, Fr. Mike preached, and concelebrated by the priests mentioned above, as well as Frs. Tom Fangman, John Pietremale, Mel Wiese, and Quentin Kathol, OSB. "It was a beautiful celebration and we were honored by so many people who came to celebrate with us!" Fr. Dave said, and then added with a smile on his face, "But it was a lot of work. I'm glad something like this only comes around every 100 years or so."

## Students Research Past Trumpet Call Articles for History

September 1945 marked the inaugural printing of St. Augustine's The Trumpet Call. It was published to create awareness in Catholic laity of the work at the mission and the needs of the Winnebago and Omaha people.

Through the years, the news letter has unfolded the story of St. Augustine's to many people in the United States and abroad who had no previous knowledge of the plains tribes and the missionary efforts in Northeast Nebraska. Detailed articles about day to day operations, the education of the children, the needs of the mission and life as a missionary were found in every issue.

During this centennial year at St. Augustine's the seventh and eighth grade students will explore stories of past students documented in The Trumpet Call.

The two students chosen to review stories for this article are Shaynie and Xerxes. The first story appeared in a 1945 issue which related a story of the illness of a shy, young girl, Margaret, with tuberculosis who requested baptism while she was in the hospital. A second story that year was of three Omaha boys who ran away from school to be with their families, how they were found and safely returned to live with their families.

Students were asked to share their impressions of these stories. The students wanted an explanation of some words used in 1945 and of the disease of tuberculosis. They expressed sadness about little Margaret's illness. One student, Shaynie remarked how cool it was that the girl loved Jesus so much that she wanted to be baptized. Xerxes shared that he had hoped a miracle might happen to help the girl get well.

The runaway boys prompted more discussion. The students were certain they don't like to get into trouble but recognized that living separate from their families would be quite difficult for them. Xerxes says he feels very safe at St Augustine's and is happy he does not have to contend with negative influences at school. The runaway boys were spoken to by their grandfather in their traditional tongue. Shaynie is proud to be learning the Omaha language from her grandmother.

The stories of the past may need some explanation for today's students and many differences exist but the similarities demonstrate that the work at the mission is far from complete. The vision and task of providing quality Catholic education to the children of the Winnebago and Omaha reservations will continue long into the future.

St. Augustine's Mission is part of the history of the Winnebago and Omaha people. The past issues of The Trumpet Call are located in the school library. The history and stories are interesting and well written. We invite you to come and spend some time exploring our past with us!

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## Evidence of Our Viability

The financial markets we have recently experienced have caused many private schools to take a critical look at their sustainability. Schools that rely heavily on financial support from the community beyond their immediate parishes have been especially hard hit. After a period of inquiry, it is the summation of the leadership of St. Augustine Indian Mission that we are a viable institution deserving of support from the community at large. We see the following as some of that evidence:

- **Tribal and Native American support in general** - The Winnebago Tribe offered their words of appreciation and desire for the education at St. Augustine to continue. They have also passed a motion in their Tribal Council to recognize the Mission as a "tribal sponsored" organization which is necessary for some grant applications. The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, a Board made up entirely by Native Americans, honored St. Augustine with the prestigious "Chief Standing Bear Award", recognizing the positive contributions the Mission is making for Native Americans.
- **Parental and community support** – the enrollment has steadily increased over the last 15 years. This year we are seeing our largest enrollment to date – 121 students.
- **Archdiocesan support** – the Archdiocese of Omaha continues to show its support of St. Augustine Indian Mission by assigning two priests to help with the Mission and do Native American ministry.
- **Religious women support** – in an era when religious orders of women are decreasing in numbers and orders are drawing back

from the ministries they have historically supported, St. Augustine Indian Mission is blessed to receive a strong presence and commitment from the Missionary Benedictine Sisters. They too are currently assessing where they will have to cut back in their missionary work, but they assure us St. Augustine Indian Mission is not part of that discussion and pledge their presence into the foreseeable future.

- **Benefactor support** – Another important factor to indicate viability is look at the amount and type of support St. Augustine Indian Mission is receiving from its benefactors. The Mission has seen an increase in revenue of 70% in the last five years (excluding investments). The number of benefactors who give at least \$5,000 has seen a 74% increase in the last four years, and the number of benefactors who give at least \$10,000 has seen a 63% increase in the last four years.
- **Other support** – Along with the Chief Standing Bear Award, the Mission has received other honors and awards. We will be receiving the prestigious "Presidential Medallion" from Creighton University at the December 2009 Commencement Exercises. The calendar of portraits of St. Augustine Indian Mission students has received several regional awards in the past few years, and this year was chosen as the top non-profit calendar in the country.

As you prayerfully consider your year-end giving, I hope that you will commit time and thought to a gift to St. Augustine Indian Mission. As the above successes show, we are making a significant difference in the lives of the children we teach every day. Our annual budget is \$1.2 million. Of that budget, 90% comes from private financial contributions. Will you join us in our effort to educate these students spirit, mind and body?

# ST. AUGUSTINE INDIAN MISSION

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## Welcome Adam Nissen

St. Augustine's welcomes Adam Nissen. He was hired to fill the position of secretary for the school where you will find him on most days. He is however wearing multiple hats in his duties. He has also been able to bring formal art classes to the students at St. Augustine's each Friday and can fill in as a substitute teacher in the classroom when needed.

He likes being at St. Augustine's because it is a small school and it is easy to get to know people and the school. He says he has always had an interest in the Native American culture and this position lets him learn about the culture and Native art.

Adam was born in Norfolk, NE and later moved to South Sioux City, NE where he continues to reside. He graduated from Wayne State University in 2008 with a Bachelor's degree in Art. His student practicums and teaching were completed in South Sioux City and Homer, NE. He completed his teaching certificate with three additional semesters of education classes at Wayne State.

He is excited to be here and to have the opportunity to teach art to the students. He explained that he is currently focusing on art basics with the students. For the younger grades this means learning about color and color schemes. The older students will be introduced to elements of design such as depth and the images that color projects.

He is an artist and painting is his favorite expression using either watercolor or mixed media. His pursuits recently have been confined to watercolor. He also likes to do pottery. In addition to his duties here, he will also be teaching art at Little Priest Tribal College in Winnebago this fall.

## Art Supplies Wish List

- 18x12 white drawing paper (1000+ sheets)
- Art brushes for tempura and acrylic paints
- Earthen ware potting clay
- Drawing Boards *Size approx. 30x24*
- Masonite with a smooth finished side and handholds.  
*These boards can be purchased or made*

## ST. AUGUSTINE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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\* *Tribal member representative*

## How to contact us at the Saint Augustine Indian Mission:

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St. Augustine Indian Mission

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