March
After three years of intensive study and preparation, a group of parishioners from Red Cloud’s churches completed the Lay Ministry Formation Program and were commissioned by the Bishop of Rapid City. As lay ministers, they play a crucial role in their parishes, serving as pastoral assistants, Eucharistic ministers, religious educators and youth ministry directors, and leaders in caring for the elderly and sick.

April
Red Cloud officially broke ground on a number of new housing units on campus, as part of a new initiative to recruit and retain the best faculty and staff. These new units will help address the severe shortage of quality, affordable housing on the reservation—and allow more Red Cloud graduates to return to the reservation after college and build their careers here on campus.

May
The class of 2018 received their diplomas and celebrated their graduation as families, friends, and school staff applauded all of their extraordinary accomplishments. Together they earned nearly $1 million in college scholarships, and 95 percent are going on to post-secondary education. In the fall, Red Cloud’s newest group of graduates will be attending outstanding colleges and universities across the country—from New York University, to the University of Minnesota, to the University of New Mexico.

June
Over 250 Native artists, art advocates, and visitors from across the region and around the country gathered on campus to mark a very special moment in Red Cloud’s history: the opening of the 50th annual Red Cloud Indian Art Show at The Heritage Center. The show is the largest and longest-running Native art exhibition of its kind—and one of only a few held in an indigenous community. Over the past five decades, it has created opportunities for countless Native artists from across North America to share their talent and vision.
Each spring, as our seniors prepare to graduate and take the next step in their education, it is always astounding to hear them speak about their dreams for the future. Some are interested in becoming health care professionals, to provide quality care to those who need it. Others want to start their own businesses, to spur economic development where it is so desperately needed on the reservation. And others want to become educators and teach the Lakota language, to ensure it lives on for future generations.

Their specific plans and dreams may differ, but there is no doubt: Red Cloud students are living examples of the Lakota virtue of wačháčtognaka, or living generously and with compassion. As one of our newest graduates, a member of the class of 2018, said recently, “no matter what profession I end up in, I want to help people and give back to this community...because it has done so much for me.”

During the 2017-18 school year, our students, faculty, and staff demonstrated their deep compassion, and their commitment to living with wačháčtognaka, in so many ways. As part of a community service project, two young women organized a full-fledged, reservation-wide basketball tournament to raise funds to support a classmate who had been diagnosed with a serious illness. After three years of study and preparation, six parishioners from Red Cloud’s churches were commissioned by the Bishop of Rapid City as lay ministers, so that they can expand their work ministering to those in need across the reservation. And The Heritage Center team launched a new initiative to create economic opportunity for Lakota artists—and to deepen the world’s understanding of Lakota history and culture.

Witnessing this kind of commitment to community convinces me that together we are doing God’s work. Indeed, I believe what we are doing at Red Cloud—by nurturing our staff and students and creating the kind of environment and programs that allow them to thrive intellectually, spiritually, and artistically—is not only making a difference today. The hope that we are creating will continue to bring about positive change on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and in communities all over, for many generations to come.

Fr. George Winzenburg, S.J., President

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25 Percent
More than 45 graduates have returned to Red Cloud to serve as teachers, administrators, coaches, and counselors; alumni now make up close to 25% of our staff.

Nearly 1 Million
Together, the 46 graduates of Red Cloud’s Class of 2018 earned nearly $1 million in college scholarships.

95 Percent
95% of the Class of 2018 will be going on to postsecondary education, and one student will proudly serve in the Armed Forces.

Over 250
Native artists, art advocates, and visitors from across the country gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Red Cloud Indian Art Show in June.

25
Colleges and Universities
Our newest graduates will be attending colleges across the country—from New York University, to the University of Minnesota, to the University of New Mexico.

July
For the fourth summer running, Red Cloud students, graduates, teachers, and community members came together for the annual Lakol’iya Wihihíta, or Lakota Language Camp. The camp provides students with an important opportunity to be immersed in their heritage language outside the classroom walls—and to help revitalize their culture and community. As one camper said, “Our language strengthens us. It’s our identity.”

August
After more than a year of preparation and planning, members of Red Cloud’s pastoral team helped to bring over 800 Native Catholics to Rapid City for the annual Tekakwitha Conference. Held in honor of Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint, the conference allowed participants—who came from every corner of the continent—to explore new ways to amplify the voices of indigenous peoples in the Catholic Church.

September
Graduate Maka Akan Najin Clifford ’05 became the first alum to be named Red Cloud’s Director of Curriculum and Assessment, focusing on new ways to strengthen classroom instruction and academic outcomes. After attending college in San Francisco, teaching abroad in Japan, and earning his master’s degree at Columbia University in New York City, Maka fulfilled his dream of returning to Pine Ridge to advocate for the next generation of Lakota leaders.

October
To create needed opportunity for Lakota artists—many of whom support their families by selling their work—The Heritage Center launched a new initiative designed to spur cultural tourism on the Pine Ridge Reservation. By bringing more visitors to campus, The Heritage Center is leading Red Cloud’s efforts to expand the marketplace for Lakota artists and to deepen understanding about Lakota culture, history, and art.