



March 2014

MISSION GRANT STORY

JESUS OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WINNEBAGO TRIBE, NEBRASKA \$58,553

The village of Winnebago, with 774 residents, sits in the hills of Thurston County, Nebraska, 90 miles north of Omaha. The community, located within the Winnebago Reservation of the Ho-Chunk, is rich in American Indian tradition. This proud tribe understands the importance of education in the lives of their youth, but struggles to motivate and support them.

The challenges that face the Winnebago children every day are higher than statewide percentages in areas of unemployment, households headed by a single parent, poverty, and students needing special education.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Pastor Ricky Jacob began his ministry in the community in 1993. He continues to provide a strong Lutheran message to the people of this area with many opportunities for spiritual learning and growth. He also leads a weekly spiritual talking circle, as well as a Divine service, at the Ho-Chunk Youth Facility and has started basketball camps where LCMS volunteers are able to witness while teaching the fundamentals of the sport.

In 1997 the doors of Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Preschool opened inviting three and four year olds to come and learn about their Lord and Savior in an educational environment. In August 2004, the Winnebago Tribal Council invited the LCMS to expand its Christian outreach within the community because they believe the Tribe's youth needed assistance to meet the demands of the future. Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Schools was started in August 2009. The vision for this ministry is to establish a Christ-centered Native-led

ministry that offers Word and Sacrament ministry and is supported by the community.

The Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Schools (JOSLS) have had minimal financial support. Presently there are two teachers, one for the preschoolers and one for grades K through three. With only two instructors for 28 children, teaching time is not utilized to its fullest. This grant would allow JOSLS to hire two part-time instructional assistants who will provide support for both the Preschool and K-3 teachers. These assistants would offer group tutoring for students struggling with concepts; help students who need assistance outside the classroom; allow teachers to take short breaks during the day; guide students through art and music lessons; and welcome guests and visitors. In addition, the part-time assistants would help with JOSLS outreach to include website maintenance, e-newsletters for district churches, LCMS schools and interested individuals, and personal visits to community and LCMS meetings to provide presentations on the faith-based learning students are receiving at the schools.

The School Board and staff will do what it can to recruit and hire local American Indians for these roles. This will allow for cultural concepts to be interwoven into daily learning, provide faculty with a deeper understanding of the culture they are serving, and show the community that the JOSLS are committed to both Christ and the Winnebago tribe.