



[www.lvschool.org](http://www.lvschool.org)

# Lillian Vallely School

P.O. Box 790, Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Phone 208-785-1890; Fax 208-785-1884

February, 2017

Dear Friends,

The winter months have been full of excited children as they play in the inordinate amount of snow we have received this year. With the snow piling deeper each day, it became a worry that the students would become permanent snowmen as they were covered from head to toe in the snow at every recess. Our gymnasium became our place of refuge for the children to play when the snow became too deep to play on the playground.



Every day, I am amazed at the incredible children we have attending Lillian Vallely School. The work and determination that each student brings to the classroom is remarkable. The staff members are instilling the concept of, "work hard, play hard" and are seeing some wonderful results. Students' day-to-day productivity has gone up and the weekly testing is showing tremendous growth. Our teachers are incredibly talented. "Playing hard" can be science experiments during which the students create mind-blowing scientific chemical reactions...or building solar-powered ovens and making s'mores...or math lessons about fractions using bubble gum and chocolate bars. And there was that trip to the ice skating rink to experience the theory of gravity. Each minute of the day, whether "work" or "play", becomes a teaching moment.



Check out our [Facebook](#) page, [Lillian Vallely School Parent & Teacher](#) for weekly update of what the students are achieving.



Our fourth and fifth grade classes created an unusual event on Valentine's Day. They wanted to raise a little extra money for their upcoming four-day trip to Yellowstone National Park, to pay for snacks and crafts and special activities. They organized a fund-raiser: performing singing Valentines! They planned, advertised and performed approximately thirty-five singing grams throughout the community, raising enough money to surpass their goal. It was a joy watching their proud, sweet faces as they carried off each detail of a successful event. The skills they learned will help them throughout their lives. The experience of excellence remains one of the goals of our school.

The Lillian Vallely School has a legacy of love and a history of giving. Our founders, Rt. Rev. John and Jan Thornton have spent decades investing boundless time and energy to help the children that attend Lillian Vallely School. There are countless stories of their dedication to this beautiful school. With the passing of time, they have encouraged others to step in and create lasting connections. Having the direct tutelage of both of these remarkable individuals as I take over writing the quarterly newsletters will be a blessing for all of us. We have created a "Founders' Corner" that will enable all of us to hear directly from Bishop John and Jan Thornton. Each day I get to work with the staff, students, and LVS board members I am thankful for the hard work and dedication they provide.

Respectfully yours,

Kathy McDaniel  
Lillian Vallely School  
Business Manager

#### THE FOUNDERS' CORNER

Several months ago, I came across the obituary of Joseph Medicine Crow, "the last living war chief of the Crow Tribe in Montana." He was 102 years old, born on October 27, 1913, near Lodge Grass, Montana, the child of Leo Medicine Crow and Amy Yellowtail.

One historian said that, " (When) you meet Joe Medicine Crow, you're shaking hands with the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he knew hundreds of people who lived in the 1800s. In fact, he knew people who were present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. His step-grandfather, White Man Runs Him, was one of six scouts for General George Armstrong Custer.

After high school, Joseph went to Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, earning a B.A. Degree. In 1938, he earned a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Southern California. The title for his thesis was *The Effects of European Culture upon the Economic, Social and Religious Life of the Crow*. Having completed all the classwork for a Ph. D., Joseph made the decision to go to work of his "uncle" (Uncle Sam). He joined the army in 1942 and went to war.

Private Medicine Crow became a scout in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division and was deployed to France. Whenever he went into battle, he wore his war paint under his uniform and a sacred eagle feather under his helmet. Probably the most famous story about Private Medicine Crow is how he stole 50 horses from a battalion of German SS officers, singing a traditional Crow song as he rode off. The SS officers could just walk for the rest of the war.

While doing a little research on Joseph, I found the most astonishing story. Turning a corner in a French village, he literally collided with a German soldier. The German's soldier's rifle was knocked to the ground – so Joseph laid his on the ground and went into hand-to-hand combat. After three or four minutes of struggle, Joseph overpowered the German soldier and got him in a choke-hold. He had the strength to kill him – but he didn't. The German soldier, weak and defeated from the struggle, cried, "Momma." Joseph let him go, thereby fulfilling one of the four tasks necessary to become a war chief: touching the enemy without killing him. For his service, Joseph was awarded the Bronze Star and the French Legion of Honor Chevalier and numerous service medals.

There's so much more to say about this amazing man. If you want to know more – and I hope you do – read his memoir titled *Counting Coup: Becoming a Crow Chief on the Reservation and Beyond* or any of his six books, including one specifically for children. And you can see him interviewed on Ken Burns' PBS series *The War*.

All of this is to say that the purpose of the Lillian Vallely School is to nurture the curiosity – indeed, scholarship – and to nurture the growing confidence that comes from being truly valued – and to nurture the stirring greatness in each of the children.

+John S. Thornton