



# KINDERGARTEN

## Students of the week...

February 2 - 6, 2026



Jessica Poitra & Carlie DeCoteau's classroom

**DASON LAFOUNTAIN**  
son of Alexia LaFountain & Jessica Walette

He is 5 years old. Dasan's favorite things are the color blue, zebras, playing outside, and eating Dino nuggets. Dasan says, "going to the park makes me happy."



Josie Poitra & Nick Parisien's classroom

**KOVIE DAVIS**  
Brandi Davis & Kevin "D-Lo" Davis

Kovie is 6 years old and wants to be a dancer when she grows up. Kovie's favorite things are; the color pink, animal is a bunny, food is donuts, and sport is basketball. Her favorite movie is The Grinch. Kovie's favorite holiday is Christmas and her favorite subject is reading. Kovie's goal this year is to learn more about math and to play on the playground. This year Kovie is excited about being in kindergarten.



Suzie DeCoteau & Loren Peltier's classroom

**MALACHI BRIEN**  
son of Seth & Alisha Brien

He is 6 years old and wants to be a Police Officer when he grows up. Malachi's favorite color is black and her favorite pet is a dog. He likes to eat Macaroni and Cheese. He favorite cartoon is The Blaze. Malachi's favorite thing to do at school is homework and at home he enjoys playing his games. Malache is a star student because he is kind and likes to help others.



Crystal Short & Christy Demery's classroom

**DEMI LAVALLIE**  
daughter of Destiny Martell & Terry LaVallie

My favorite food is spaghetti, holiday is Christmas, color is pink, animals are tigers, subject is coloring, sports is wrestling, movie is Gabby's Dollhouse, book is Picture Books, song is Beautiful Things. This year I am excited about being with my friends. This year my 2 goals are learning to read & learning more Math.



Leah Azure & Denise Kinney's classroom

**ISLA CHASE**  
daughter of Daniel & Maggie Chase

Isla is 5-years old and wants to be a Doctor when she grows up. Isla's favorite things are; the color pink, animal is Monkey, food is lettuce, book is Unicorn Book, and sport is Soccer. Her favorite movie is A for Adley and her favorite song is Let It Go.

Isla's favorite holiday is Christmas and her favorite subject is ABC's. Two goals for Isla this year are to learn how to read and do her numbers. This year Isla is excited about playing outside!!



## Department of the Interior Expands Training Pathway for Native Youth in Wildland Fire Careers

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior announced today a new partnership between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education to prepare Native students for careers in wildland firefighting, strengthening the workforce while creating clear school-to-career pathways for tribal youth.

Through the Native Youth Firefighter Training Program, high school and post-secondary students receive hands-on instruction, mentorship and technical training that prepares them for seasonal and permanent positions with tribal, federal and state fire programs.

"Wildland firefighters protect lives, communities and some of our most treasured landscapes," said Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum. "This program invests directly in Native youth, builds a skilled workforce for the future and supports the Trump administration's priority to strengthen public safety and create practical career opportunities through education and training."

The initiative supports the Trump administration's priorities by connecting classroom learning to real-world careers. Students from Pine Ridge School, Cheyenne Eagle Butte School, and St. Francis Indian School in South Dakota, as well as Two Eagle River School in Montana, Northwest High School in New Mexico, and Sequoyah High School in Oklahoma, are currently participating. Officials are exploring future student participation through a dual enrollment program at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in New Mexico.

"Education must lead to opportunity," said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Billy Kirkland. "By linking tribal schools with high-demand public service careers, this program honors tribal communities, supports self-determination and helps young people build futures of service, leadership and stability."

Bureau of Indian Education schools and colleges provide daily oversight and student support, while Bureau of Indian Affairs fire training staff lead virtual instruction and mentorship. The program uses the Wildland Fire Learning Portal and other web-based tools to deliver flexible, high-quality training.

The Native Youth Firefighter Training Program reflects the Interior Department's commitment to strengthening tribal communities, supporting workforce development and preparing the next generation of wildland fire professionals.

# Happy Valentines Day

February 14, 2026

## Dakota Attitude

**John & Susan (Stroh) Svoboda**  
Interview: Nov. 15, 2017  
County: Grand Forks  
City: Johnstown

Everybody will always have garbage



John and Susan Svoboda were married in 1962 and live in Johnstown, current population about 20. But their school is two miles west of Johnstown. The Midway Public School has an enrollment of approximately 170 students from K-12 and is a consolidated district of seven communities: Inkster, Honeyford, Gilby, Forest River, Mekinock, Ardoch, and Johnstown.

"Dad was in the livestock hauling business since 1930," John says. "I started doing that with him, and we took it over eventually. We got into the garbage business in 1971 and out of the hauling cattle business in 1975. The guy I sold it to probably had five pretty good years before everybody got their own pickups and trailers. After everybody had their own equipment, the cattle hauling business disappeared."

At first, the garbage business contracted with the towns of Gilby and Manvel to collect their trash and haul it to the landfill in Grand Forks. "We had converted a cattle truck into a garbage truck, and my cousin was up in the cattle rack with me throwing the plastic bags of garbage up to him. I drove along, would jump out, throw the plastic bags, and get back in and go. He was my packer up in the box," John laughs.

Svoboda Sanitation Service, established since 1971, has used slogans like "It's garbage to you, but it's our bread and butter!" and "Satisfaction guaranteed or double your garbage back." Susan says of the latter, "That's a good one; I still use that one a lot."

The average route is about 120 miles in a day. John says, "That's one load—about eight-and-a-half tons of garbage." There is even a portable microwave installed in the truck. For lunch on the go, Susan says, "I pre-fry hamburgers 'cause it gets rid of some of the grease, and then keep them on ice in a cooler along with ketchup and pickles. Then we microwave the hamburgers." She says they enjoy the work most days, and they aren't worried about job security. "Everybody will always have garbage!" Susan defines success in life as "hard work."

**Grace (Peterson) Chewakin**

Interview: July 22, 2015  
County: Mountrail  
City: Lunds Valley

You have to be compassionate



The former Grace Peterson became a registered nurse, married Don Chewakin [a veteran of Korea], and moved to a farm in Emmons County. She and Don raised four children, and Grace was the first RN at Strasburg Care Center.

"You're in [patients'] lives completely. You have to be compassionate to care for them; you have to do your best whether they appreciate it or not. We used to have people that didn't have clothing. They didn't have anything for themselves. In fact, that's why many of them were buried in one of Don's old shirts or somebody else's old suit jacket. I found out I was glad I lived 12 miles from work; I could gain

control by the time I got home.

"But I think I was fortunate in that people did appreciate the little things, anything that was done for them. They appreciated everything we did, and it was always hard to say goodbye. The staff were told, 'If you're not doing a task, go visit the patients. Stand by and talk to them.' Because they wanted that one-to-one communication.

"Most of the people I took care of have a good faith background, but those that probably didn't either didn't show an emotion or they brushed it off as not necessary. But I think most of them would like the pastor or the priest to come and see them, just comfort them."

Grace's attributes her ability to empathize with the ill and the dying to her parents' influence. "We were told to do what's right, whatever we did, and respect people. My parents were great on that. Maybe they need a good word once in a while, a kind word. We're not all perfect, you know, a whole bunch of us came with a chip on our shoulder sometimes.

"I think I'm luckier than most. Because I got to go to school, got an education, I live in a good country, people have been good to me. I think our country has absolutely got me the best of anything on earth. Yeah, I got no complaint."

**Dale & Norine (Wilkinson) Knudson**

Interview: Aug. 9, 2017  
County: Stutsman  
City: Pingree

What a beautiful world we live in



Norine tells one of her dad's stories from World War I: "It wasn't action, but the night before a battle. Clergy were goin' around to ask if they want to be baptized, and so they came to my dad, and they asked him if he wanted to be baptized, and he says, 'Well, okay.' 'Well, what faith do you want to be baptized in?' 'Well, what haven't they taken so far?' They hadn't taken Presbyterian, so he became a Presbyterian before a battle in France. I don't think he was ever at a Presbyterian church after that."

Norine Wilkinson and Dale Knudson were married in 1959. Norine relates what happened on their first date: "The first time we actually did anything I went up to him before the intermission of a dance right down here and asked him, because every time I'd be dancing past 'im, he seemed to be looking at me, and I went up to him and says, 'You want to take me home tonight?' He said yes. He was very bashful."

Dale was born in 1939. He grew up in Pingree and left Pingree High School early to join the service. After his military service, Dale returned to the farm. "I took pride in farming. I enjoyed growing things. I started work for the post office. I was a rural mail carrier." Carrying the mail had its hazards. "Some of 'em played tricks on me. They used to put pennies in the [mailbox] when they wanted to buy stamps, and they were always trickin' me with something. Well, this Clark girl filled a little jar with pennies and water. I couldn't see the water. I pulled [the jar] in and just dumped it on my lap, yeah. I thought it was very hilarious. And I was sure she was standin' in the house watchin' me."

Dale says, "I started gardening two years ago again. I never had a garden for 40 years. My objective is to make this world beautiful. That's why I grow things. I can look at these ol' ragged trees, and I think, 'What a beautiful world we live in.' To me the green grass, everything, is just beautiful. The crops. It's a beautiful world at Pingree."

(Editor's Note: The following profiles of North Dakota residents were collected by author James Puppe between 2004-2018, covering 617 subjects and 113,000 miles. He has given permission for his book to be serialized in North Dakota Newspapers at no charge. To find out how you can read the entire collection of Dakota Attitude profiles go to [dakotaattitude.com](http://dakotaattitude.com).)



## TURTLE MOUNTAIN HOUSING AUTHORITY, T.D.H.E.

A TRIBALLY DESIGNATED HOUSING ENTITY

P.O. Box 620 • 9818 BIA RD 7 — SUITE 7 • BELCOURT, NORTH DAKOTA 58316-0620  
TELEPHONE: 701-477-5673 ADMINISTRATION OFFICE FAX: 701-477-0193

### MOBILE HOME REPAIR OPPORTUNITY

The Turtle Mountain Housing Authority (TMHA) is in the process of APPLYING FOR FUNDING under the HUD PRICE — Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) Native Nations Manufactured Housing Rehabilitation DREAM Initiative Program to support manufactured home repairs, rehabilitation, and safe housing for Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians members.

TMHA is seeking eligible MANUFACTURED HOME (trailer homes) OWNERS and CONTRACTORS interested in participating in this program, which aims to remove barriers to safe, healthy, and sustainable housing on the Turtle Mountain Reservation.

Tribal community members are encouraged to APPLY for this potential opportunity. IF TMHA is FUNDED for the DREAM Initiative, applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications can be requested by email or picked up at the HAF office (directly behind the TMHA Main Office) in Belcourt. Applications must meet income eligibility requirements and reside in the Turtle Mountain Housing Authority service area of Rolette County, ND.

For more information or to request an application, contact: Michelle at the Turtle Mountain Housing Authority, Phone: (701) 477-5673 x 271 or email: [haf@tmhousing.net](mailto:haf@tmhousing.net)



## Public Utilities Commission

P.O. BOX 490 - BELCOURT, NORTH DAKOTA 58316 -  
OFFICE 477-6159 -FAX 477-8292

### PUBLIC NOTICE AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Turtle Mountain Public Utilities Commission (TMPUC) plans to submit Rural Utilities Water Grant applications to USDA Rural Development

The application being considered would request:

- \$4,000,000 for Belcourt Sewer and Water Improvements Phase 7 (Sewer)
- \$8,000,000 for TMBC Operational Improvements Phase 5 (Water and Sewer)
- \$4,000,000 for TMBC Operational Improvements Phase 6 (Water and Sewer)
- \$4,000,000 for the Three Mile Road to Dunseith Water Main Extension (Water)

A public hearing will be held on February 16, 2026 at 10:30 A.M. at the TMPUC Conference Room.

To obtain views and answer questions related to project economic and environmental impacts, or any other impacts to service areas.