

The CATHOLIC TIMES

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK SPECIAL SECTION

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Catholic Schools Week

Bishop Earl Fernandes interacts with students from Columbus Immaculate Conception School. *Photo courtesy Immaculate Conception School*



Bishop Fernandes supports authentic Catholic education

Dear Friends in Christ,

As Catholic Schools Week approaches, I wanted to write to express my gratitude to the many school administrators, teachers, staff members, and young people who make our communities vibrant places where the love of Jesus Christ can be learned and can flourish in the lives and hearts of young people. I am particularly grateful to the many supporters of Catholic Schools – both benefactors and parents, who labor tirelessly to give children the opportunity to encounter Christ on a daily basis.

When my parents first came to the United States, my mother impressed upon us the importance of working hard, praying hard and studying hard. She had been a Catholic school teacher in India, but she realized the many opportunities that would be opened for us boys through Catholic education. My father was particularly interested in the Catholic identity of the schools, and he would never allow the mentality “private school with religion class” to enter into our minds. He wanted his boys to practice their faith. Good parenting and the solid foundation of a Catholic education allowed three doctors, a magistrate and a bishop to emerge from one family. What a difference a Catholic education can make!!!

As a result, I have always championed Catholic schools. Thus far, in my visits to parishes and schools, I have been delighted by the graciousness and hospitality of our communities. The children are filled with joy and enthusiasm. Quite often, they sing with gusto at the liturgies and demonstrate how beautiful the liturgy can be when celebrated well. In visiting the classrooms, I have seen Catholic imagery displayed everywhere, and the children themselves are inquisitive and creative. In the classroom, they are disciplined and respectful.

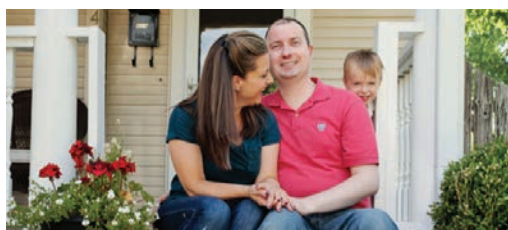
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Members of the Lancaster Fisher Catholic girls basketball team are raising funds with every 3-point basket this season to support the family of Brian McCauley, a former teacher who has brain cancer, Page 11

Celebrating our success during Catholic Schools Week

By Dr. Adam J. Dufault
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Across the country, the week beginning on Sunday, January 29, is recognized as Catholic Schools Week, an opportunity to celebrate and to thank all who make Catholic education possible. During the week, schools throughout the Diocese of Columbus will host events and activities to recognize families, show appreciation for administrators and teachers, celebrate clergy and religious, and perform service activities for the community. It is also a time for inviting new families to take a look at the difference that Catholic schools make in the lives of our students, as our schools share the Good News of Jesus Christ all day, every day.

Catholic Schools Week is also a chance to share exciting news about Our Catholic Schools. I am pleased to share with you that enrollment across the Diocese has seen significant growth in recent years. Our official enrollment count of 16,913 students in preschool through 12th grades is the highest number of students in Catholic schools in ten years. Families have found us, drawn by the opportunity to surround their children in schools of faith. Many schools now have waiting lists, and several are even

developing plans for expansion to better accommodate the increased demand for Catholic education.

Often, families considering Catholic schools are concerned about the affordability of tuition. Thanks to the success of our scholarship granting organization (SGO), the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund, plus local fundraising, endowments, the Catholic Foundation and state programs such as EdChoice, Catholic education is both obtainable and affordable for all who want it.

During the months of November and December, the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund received nearly \$2 million in contributions, all of which will be dedicated toward supporting students with need in our Catholic schools. By way of comparison, last year, the Diocese received financial aid requests totaling \$15 million. Through the generosity of the Catholic Foundation and our internal fundraising, we were able to meet just under \$1 million of that need. This year, thanks to the tremendous success of the SGO, we will be able to support many, many more families and expect to offer more than \$3 million in direct aid.

I anticipate the increased growth of the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund in the year ahead, to the point where it will radically transform the financial aid processes of our Diocese. The advocacy

of the Catholic Conference of Ohio, assisted by our Legislative Action Network of school parents, hopefully will increase the tax credit threshold of the SGO law and make even more funding available to support parents who choose Catholic education. I sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to this fund. Donations are accepted at any time of year. More information can be found on our website, www.EmmausRoadScholarship.org.

The Office of Catholic Schools continues to implement the strategic plan that was introduced one year ago. This plan, *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools*, lays out an exciting vision for the next three to five years. Framed around three primary goals – Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, and Sustainability – the plan outlines the actions steps that will develop our system of schools in each of these areas. Already this year, we have released the completely revised Religion Course of Study for schools, strengthened our work with Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute, developed a Task Force to examine ways to further promote vocations in our schools, created another Task Force to focus on the recruitment and retention of dynamic, faith-filled educators into our Diocese, and developed plans for our Evangelization Day, an inspirational one-day conference in conjunction with Franciscan University for all of the educators in our Diocese scheduled for August. A lot is happening in our schools – we are growing in size and in quality as we strive to do all that we can to ensure that all of our students are given every opportunity to know, to love, and to serve Jesus Christ.

None of the success of our Catholic schools would be possible without the dedicated people who make it a reality every day. During this celebration of Catholic Schools Week, I would like to



Adam Dufault,
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

sincerely thank the administrators who tirelessly lead our schools, the teachers and staff who educate and care for our children every day, and all of the families that have made the choice to send their children to schools where they can learn in the fullness of our Catholic faith. We are truly blessed here in the Diocese of Columbus by so many who are motivated by their love of the Lord and desire to create excellent Catholic schools.

I ask that you keep our schools, our administrators and teachers, and our students in your prayers. And, of course, please encourage anyone with an interest in learning more about our schools for their children to contact their local Catholic school or visit www.education.columbuscatholic.org.

You can also stay informed on Our Catholic Schools by following us on social media and by listening to our new podcast, *Becoming Saints: The Podcast for Our Catholic Schools*, which is released twice a month and discusses various aspects of life in Catholic schools. It is available on our website and also on Spotify.

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It is obvious that a lot of hard work has been put into forming the whole person – not just the minds and bodies of students, but the spiritual and religious sense within our young people. This past year, a new course of study for religion was promulgated and is being implemented in our Catholic Schools. Importantly, it incorporates Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body into the curriculum, emphasizing a true understanding of the human person, made in God's image and likeness, and the idea of making a gift of oneself.

As our Diocese prepares for the future and as we begin to implement the recommendations of Real Presence Real Future, we also need to remember to celebrate successes. Our Catholic Schools tell our success stories, especially in lifting many out of poverty and

providing quality, faith-filled educational opportunities for our youngsters. Some people will say that we Catholics don't do much for our young people, but those same people forget how present Christ is to our young people. In Catholic Schools, friendships and bonds that last a lifetime are formed. Catholic Schools remain one of our best vehicles for evangelizing members of our community, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

To all who make this possible, you have my heartfelt thanks! May God bless our Catholic School communities during Catholic Schools Week and throughout this new year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop Earl K. Fernandes



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\$1.9 million from taxpayers boosts Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

A new initiative that allows Ohio taxpayers to fund scholarships for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Columbus with their tax dollars raised more than \$1.9 million in scholarships last year, effectively changing the landscape for making Catholic education affordable and accessible.

Known as the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund, the initiative capitalizes on a law passed by the Ohio Legislature in late 2021 creating a tax credit – up to \$750 for an individual taxpayer or \$1,500 if married filing jointly – for donations made to qualified scholarship granting organizations (SGO).

Furthermore, taxpayers can designate all or a portion of their donation for use at a specific school(s) in the diocese or give to the unrestricted fund, which is distributed to families in need at any of the diocese's 52 schools.

An SGO is a tax-exempt religious or nonreligious nonprofit organization that registers with the state attorney general's office; mainly awards academic scholarships for students to attend primary and secondary schools; and prioritizes awarding those scholarships to students from low-income families. The Diocesan Education Corporation, doing business as Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund, was Ohio's first SGO certified by the attorney general on Dec. 7, 2021.

"Since the Ohio law creating SGOs was passed late in 2021, we could only do a last-minute push for donations that year," said Alison Metzger, associate director for government affairs at the Office of Catholic Schools. "We didn't really begin promoting Emmaus Road until the fourth quarter of 2022 and were delighted with the response from donors in the last two months of the year."

The \$1.9 million collected during that time period came from approximately 2,000 donors.

"Allowing taxpayers to direct their tax dollars to support scholarships for our Catholic schools makes a Catholic education more accessible and affordable for everyone," Metzger said. "It also means the financial assistance awarded by the diocese each year can help more families."

She said the diocese awarded about \$800,000 in such assistance for the current academic year.

SGOs aren't new to the United States, just new to Ohio. Seth Burkholder, associate director for data analysis and finance also at the Office of Catholic Schools, said about 20 states have SGO programs, including Indiana, Pennsylvania and Illinois.

Despite great success in 2022, he said, the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund has just scratched the surface of potential capacity adding, for comparison purposes, that the Archdiocese of Chicago distributes more than \$12 million in SGO funds each year.

"This new influx of funds will ease the burden on parishes that provide their

own assistance to many school families," Burkholder said, "potentially freeing money for other needs or ministries of the parish. Similarly, for many low-income families who attend Mass each Sunday and desire a Catholic education but can't afford to pay tuition, the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund may allow them to fulfill that desire."

For the purposes of Ohio SGO awards, low-income families are defined as those earning at or below 300% of the federal poverty level, which is \$83,250 for a family of four in 2022.

Metzger said the early success of the SGO program in Columbus and several of Ohio's other dioceses has encouraged Catholic school officials throughout the state to push for increased tax credits to \$2,500 per individual taxpayer for 2024. She is working with her own Legislative Advocacy Network, composed of parents from Diocese of Columbus Catholic schools, and the Catholic Conference of Ohio to promote that change.

"This sounds too good to be true, but you can turn your tax dollars into scholarships," Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School Principal Kathy O'Reilly told parents in a letter encouraging them to donate to the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund.

"We can help so many families with this amount of money. I am just asking that you investigate this program. Each family has its own tax situation and needs to check with its own tax adviser, but the majority of you can do this."

St. Brigid families responded enthusiastically, donating more than \$400,000 in 2022.

Chillicothe Bishop Flaget School raised more than \$51,000. "We're really excited about this," said principal Laura Corcoran. "It enabled us to access funds we normally wouldn't be able to access, and it gave people a voice in how their taxes were spent. It will help free up money we use for tuition assistance and perhaps allow it to be spent on capital expenses or program expansions."

Any student can apply for a grant from the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund or the previously existing diocesan tuition assistance fund through FACTS, a third-party company contracted by the diocese to manage the application process for financial aid.

FACTS uses an internally built program to determine award amounts based on students' tuition rates in comparison to their ability to pay. The application period opens Nov. 1 and closes March 15, with scholarship amounts for the coming school year determined in April and recipients notified by their respective schools in May. The SGO funds collected in 2022 will be distributed for the 2023-24 school year.

Donations to the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund are accepted all year and anyone, including those who do not have a child attending a diocesan school, can donate in a lump sum or on a monthly basis to receive the tax credit. Donations are accepted in any amount, but tax credits

are limited to the first \$750 for individuals or \$1,500 for couples married and filing jointly. The credit is claimed on line 9 of the Ohio IT 1040 income tax return.

Payments are accepted online at www.emmausroadscholarship.org or by check made payable to Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund and mailed to the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Columbus, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215. All donors are sent a tax receipt via U.S. Mail to acknowledge their gift.

The Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund is being overseen by an advisory board consisting of Burkholder; Metzger; Dr. Adam Dufault, diocesan school superintendent; Theresa Vivona, associate director for advancement in the schools' office; Jim Silcott, principal of Columbus Our Lady of Peace School; Becky O'Connor, business manager, Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare Church; and Father Theodore Sill, pastor, Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle Church.

Explaining how the scholarship fund got its name, Dufault said, "In Luke 24:13-35,

we hear about how Jesus, having recently resurrected, accompanied two of His disciples on the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, discussing what had transpired in the preceding days. The disciples

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Turn Your Tax Dollars into Scholarships for Our Catholic Schools...

...and help make an authentic Catholic education affordable and accessible for all!

Thanks to a law passed in late 2021, as an Ohio taxpayer, when you make a donation to the **Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund**, you receive a dollar-for-dollar credit* on your state income tax liability while creating much-needed scholarship dollars for **Our Catholic Schools** in the Diocese of Columbus.

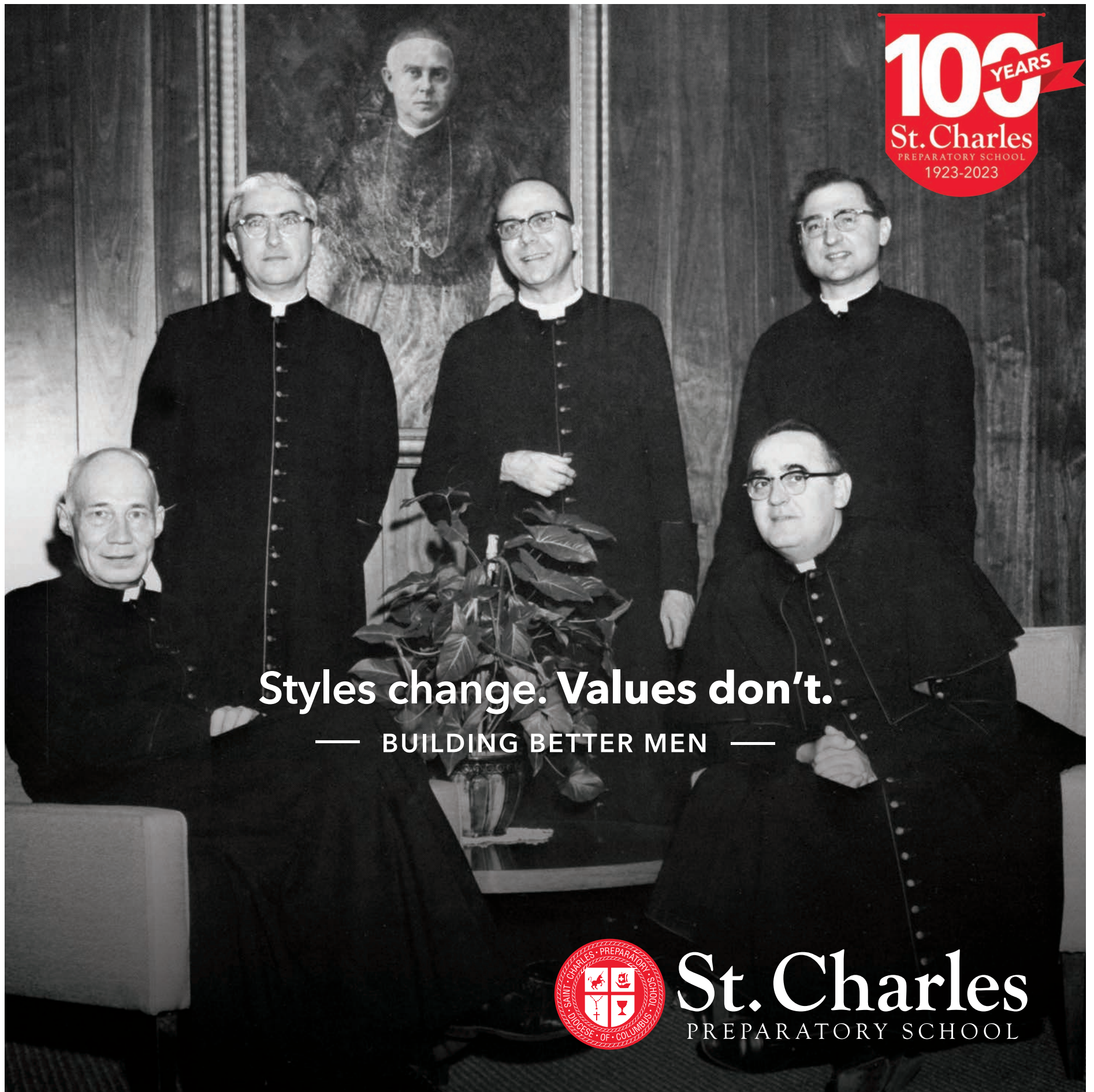
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*Ohio tax credit is limited up to \$750 per person, or \$1,500 if married filing jointly. Consult your tax advisor for guidance. The Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund is a certified scholarship granting organization in the state of Ohio.



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St. Charles
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Enrollment increase spurs optimism at Marion St. Mary

Catholic education is experiencing a rebirth in Marion that bodes well for the future of St. Mary School.

In the past two years, St. Mary has reversed decades of dwindling enrollment numbers, going from about 90 students to more than 120 in kindergarten through eighth grade.

And, by all accounts, the trend is likely to continue.

“The Gospel teaches us both that the greatest treasures are hidden, and that we are not to hide our light under a bushel,” said Father Thomas Buffer, the pastor at St. Mary Church, where the parish’s first school was established in 1875.

“More and more, our community is discovering the treasure that is St. Mary School, where the light of Christ illuminates the hearts and minds of our children.”

The increase in students at the K-8 school is welcome news in an area impacted in recent years by population shifts and the cyclical nature of manufacturing and the economy. Enrollment declines led to the closing in 2013 of Marion Catholic High School, leaving St. Mary as the only Catholic school in Marion County.

Located in one of the diocese’s northernmost counties, St. Mary attracts students from within and outside the city of 35,000 people located directly north of Columbus about 45 minutes from downtown.

With a large immigrant population working and settling in the area, 50% of the school’s student body either speaks mostly Spanish or lives in a family where it’s the primary language in the home.

“And so that has brought some requirements for us to change what we do here because we serve a lot of immigrant families and a lot of Spanish speakers,” said Jared Tedrick, the school’s principal.

“Most of our staff does not speak Spanish, but we have a bilingual staff member and an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher who is here full time. We have two bilingual priests, and we have a Hispanic outreach coordinator who is able to speak Spanish and English fluently. So, we have many resources for those families.

“And the students do a wonderful job helping each other. A lot of our bilingual students will translate for each other or for the teacher and their parents.”

The school’s growth coincides with the arrival of Tedrick as principal. Tedrick taught English and journalism at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School before moving to Marion at the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

This year’s kindergarten class with 22 students might be most reflective of the growth at the school. Half of those children are Spanish speakers.

“Having spoken to many parents in their homes, they say the same thing, that they are here to work for a better life for their children, and they’re excited for their children to live here, take on the culture, learn English and have a future



Kindergarten teacher Raeanna Garber practices sight words with her students at Marion St. Mary School.

CT photo by Ken Snow



Marion St. Mary School principal Jared Tedrick helps first-grader Creek Manley with a STEM project.

CT photos by Ken Snow

here,” Tedrick said.

“And that’s not just from Hispanic families. Along with the increase in enrollment, what we see in this community is a desire, a hunger for faith and morals to be incorporated in the educational environment of the school. That’s not something they can find in public schools.”

Some of the enrollment gains can be traced not only to the desire for a faith-based education but also to the procedures and policies that Catholic schools followed coming out of the pandemic in 2020 when they emphasized returning to the physical classroom.

“We have seen a population of students that has really struggled academically post pandemic because of that lost instructional time and lost social-emotional development being at home,” Tedrick said. “And so, in many ways, we’re still reckoning with that.”

“We also have an extra challenge, which is providing instruction to many students who speak Spanish as their primary or only language.

“We’re facing those challenges like any other school, but we believe that with the increased engagement that these students see, with their increased time in the school with great instruction, and



Stephanie Spears (second from right), director of the after-school program at Marion St. Mary, works with students (from left) Michelle Medina Flores, Donna Espino Alegree and Sidney Marie Russell.

with the different priorities that we have for discipline, respect, responsibility and solid moral, traditional teaching that our students are better equipped to make progress than they would be elsewhere.”

St. Mary has also made some staff and leadership changes that brought a new energy to the school.

“What we’ve tried to do is become more visible, to connect more with the community and to bring more programming and activities here for the students,” Tedrick said. “So, this is not just a place you stay until 2:15 when school is out.”

The after-school program, led by Stephanie Spears, provides homework assistance that’s beneficial particularly to children who are learning English, snacks, physical education, playtime with friends and various craft and technology projects.

In addition to providing a robust after-school program, the staff is reaching out to help families outside the school walls with home visits. Some families live as far as 40 minutes away and rely on buses to take their children to and from school.

“Many of our families deal with transportation concerns, and many are working all the time and not able to visit the school,” Tedrick explained. “So, whatever

we can do to bring the school to them is going to assist with that home-school connection. And so, we worked hard last year to get out into the communities.

“Many times the teacher will take a translator because many of these families are Hispanic, but not all, and so we go into the house and sometimes we’ve had dinner, we talk about the mission of the school, the faith life of the school, good homework habits for the students, goals for the future, what they want their children to be as they get older, and we try to build that relationship that pays dividends in the classroom and in the future.”

Kindergarten teacher Raeanna Garber is one of the teachers who makes those visits along with Irene Tron, the school’s ESL instructor.

“I usually take my things with me like report card information and how they’re doing at school,” Garber said. “We don’t have to meet at school. So that way the parents feel welcome in the school environment even though sometimes they can’t get to our school.

“It makes them feel important and part of our school because they can’t always come in for parent-teacher conferences because of work issues or transportation issues.

“It’s really nice just to go and meet with them for a half hour and talk about their kids, and the kids really enjoy it, too. They remember that kind of thing.

“It’s not that common in schools, but it makes the relationship grow, and so then in school they like respect you a little bit more, they remember that. A lot of my kids bring it up to me. ‘You came to my house the other day.’ So, it means a lot to them.”

The outreach efforts additionally include taking children to update their vaccines or to doctor visits, helping families secure furniture or heaters for their homes and connecting to the parish and organizations such as the local St. Vincent de Paul Center.

“I find that especially with the language divide in the parish, it’s sometimes difficult for parishioners and the organizations that are in the best position to help to ascertain what the needs are and then to fulfill those needs,” Tedrick said.

“And so, what we can do is because we have such good relationships with the children and the parents and we are in the homes frequently, we’re able to facilitate and reinvigorate the outreach arms of the parish.”

It’s beneficial that both priests at St. Mary Church, Father Buffer and Father Seth Keller, the parochial vicar, speak Spanish. Both are also actively engaged with the children, who attend Mass once a week on Fridays, and students in upper grades go to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament weekly. The parish offers a regular Sunday Mass in Spanish.

“We have a buddy system so that at

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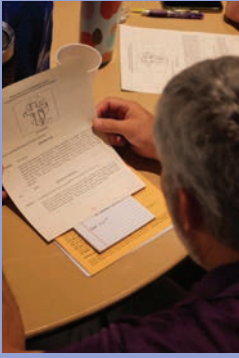
A snapshot of *Our Catholic Schools*

52 TOTAL SCHOOLS IN 15 COUNTIES	37 PRESCHOOLS
41 K-8 SCHOOLS	11 HIGH SCHOOLS

FACT: Our Catholic Schools continue to recruit and retain experienced and committed educators

- 14%** of our educators this year have been teaching for more than 25 years
- 46%** of our educators hold a Master's degree or higher
- 50%** of our educators have been in the classroom for 11 years or longer
- 82%** total staff in PreK-12 are Catholic

FACT: The Office of Catholic Schools is committed to building a Christ-centered community among educators and administrators through spiritual formation integrated with knowledge and practice



- OCS implemented Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute (CI) program at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year
- Since implementation of CI, 100% of educators and administrators participate in continual religious formation

FACT: Students in Diocese of Columbus Catholic schools continue to outperform their public and charter school counterparts in the State of Ohio and nationally in both reading and math proficiency

- 70%** of our students are experiencing typical growth or higher in reading from 2020-22
- 18** Grade 7-8 math proficiency has increased 18 percentage points from 2020-2022
- 80%** of our students in grades 5-8, and 70% of our students in grades 3-4 are experiencing typical or higher growth in math from 2020-22

FACT: Diocesan high school graduates are wholly prepared for post-secondary education!

- Diocesan high school students' performance on the ACT held steady throughout the COVID years, which is particularly poignant since ACT scores continue to decline nationwide with a sharp decrease since COVID
- Diocesan students outperform students on the ACT, both in the State of Ohio and nationally by a significant margin

FACT: Enrollment in Our Catholic Schools continues to increase!

2022-23 MARKS THE HIGHEST ENROLLMENT IN 10 YEARS

SINCE THE 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR (COVID), ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED 4%, EXCEEDING PRE-PANDEMIC NUMBERS

INCREASED 4%

TOTAL PK-12 ENROLLMENT BY ACADEMIC YEAR		
PRE-COVID 2018-19	COVID 2020-21	POST-COVID 2022-23
16,540	16,229	16,913

Jon Peterson
SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FACT: Our Catholic Schools are prepared to educate students with diverse learning abilities

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS WHO RECEIVE THE JPSN SCHOLARSHIP*		
PRE-COVID 2018-19	COVID 2020-21	POST-COVID 2022-23
429	519	592

*JPSN scholarships are for students who are eligible to attend K-12th grade and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) from their district

- 50%** of Our Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Columbus are registered as Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) providers
- 38%** Since 2018, the number of students in Our Catholic Schools benefiting from Jon Peterson Scholarships has increased by 38%
- 13** Special People in Catholic Education (SPiCE) programs exist at 13 of Our Catholic Schools to support a variety of student learning needs in their communities, including typical, developmental, and accelerated learners

FACT: In partnership with the Diocesan Recreation Association (DRA), Our Catholic Schools promote healthy living and physical welfare while building character and good sportsmanship.

- During the 2021-22 academic year, there were more than 6,200 athletes from 27 parishes participating in DRA sports
- Nine sports are offered for middle-elementary through 8th grade
- Three high school-level rec sports are offered in addition to the OHSAA-sanctioned sports at each of the 11 diocesan high schools
- Track, cross-country, and softball are the top-three, fastest-growing DRA offerings



Bishop Ready graduate returns as mentor to students

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

Columbus Bishop Ready High School graduate Taron Slone wasn't sure he wanted to return to his alma mater as a mentor the first time he had the opportunity, but when a second chance came, he realized God was calling him to a new position.

Slone, 28, who has been married for two years and has two daughters, said he had been mentoring young people in Akron's inner city for about three years when former Ready principal Celene Seamen asked him in 2019 if he would be interested in a similar role at his old high school.

"I enjoyed what I was doing in Akron," he said. "The kids I was working with needed someone to not give up on them, to push them. I was providing them with an example of the person I needed when I was their age. So, at first, I turned Celene's offer down.

"But it stayed on my mind for the next year. God was pushing me in that direction, and eventually I accepted the position, beginning with the 2020-21 school year. The timing turned out to be fortunate, for the COVID pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, and I was laid off from my position in Akron."

When Slone arrived at Ready in fall 2020, the school was coping with the effects of COVID by splitting the student body into two groups, with one group attending classes in school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and online Thursdays and Fridays, and the other group reversing that order. Masking and distance requirements also were in effect, and lunches were eaten in the cafeteria and the gym, with distancing rules being observed.

All students returned to the school in March 2021, but spacing at lunch continued until the following March. School principal Matt Brickner said the difference when all COVID-related restrictions ended was obvious.

"Everyone was excited to be back in the building. Noise returned to the cafeteria and the halls, and all of us, teachers and students, loved being back together," he said.

Though the limitations are gone, Slone said the effects of COVID linger. "Students are still struggling," he said. "You can't miss a year of regular education and not be affected by it."

Slone is part of the school's guidance department. "I work with students either directly one-on-one or in small-group gatherings, concentrating on one student at a time," he said.

"Most students I see are brought to my attention by specific teachers or by the guidance office as needing mentoring and are sophomores or freshmen, but



Taron Slone talks with Bishop Ready students Mya Riggins (left) and Lia Wahl.

I do see some juniors and seniors. My door is open to anyone, and some just walk in.

"I'm fortunate to have the gift of child-like energy, meaning I can still remember how things were for me when I was the same age as the students," he said. "I'm an adult who can relate to young people.

"I was an athlete in high school and college and ran the 200- and 100-meter dashes, and I continue to work out every morning. I'll race the kids and go to football and basketball practices and games to encourage them. Those are the kind of places where they'll often be more open than in an office setting."

Students appreciate his efforts away from the office. "He's helped me become more of a leader," sophomore Lia Wahl said. "He told me to keep calm during basketball games and use my intelligence to help others see the good qualities in me. He's always supporting me, talking to me and my dad after games, so I know he's concerned about me and wants me to succeed."

"Mr. Slone is good at getting kids involved in things both inside and outside school,"

sophomore Mya Riggins said.

"He had eight or 10 of us go to a diocesan schools event called the Martin Luther King Day of Engagement and make a 60-second presentation on the subject of mental health within the Black community. Doing that was a great boost to my



Bishop Ready students Terrianna Daniels (left) and Aaron Marshall meet with Taron Slone in the school's guidance center.

Photos courtesy Bishop Ready High School

confidence.

"I do the hurdles and the long jump in track, and he knows I'm a good athlete, but he also knows I'm smart. He encourages me whenever I see him and reminds me of that."

Rocco Fumi, vice principal for student affairs, said of Slone, "We brought him back to Ready to work with kids on a variety of levels because it's so important to have someone who can say, 'I was where you are once, at this school, so I know what you're going through, and here's how I handled it.'"

"Taron always cared about other students and got a lot out of his time here," said Brickner, who has been at Ready for 21 years, including the past two as principal. He was dean of students when Slone attended Ready from 2009 to 2013.

"He had good experiences and made sure other students also did. You could see how well he related to people and that he would do a great job helping others."

Slone said, "Students often talk to me about life after high school and their sense that they don't need many of the

courses they're required to take.

"I tell them, 'You have to take things seriously. You may not think you'll need something then be surprised later when you find out you should have paid attention to it. Take advantage of what you have in front of you now, including the things you don't like.'

"When students have problems, how they react to them makes such a difference. I often ask, 'How are you going to get through this moment? How will you respond to it?' Being able to step back, look at things and anticipate a response allows students to face a situation with much more assurance.

"I deal with kids in moments of high stress, often when they're feeling depressed or anxious," he said. "I struggled with those myself. Telling students, 'I see your struggle' and having them know someone else has gotten through it often has a big impact and enables me to teach them a lesson on how to get through things and take time for themselves."

Some of the students Slone worked with have continued seeking him out for advice after their graduation or have told him how what he taught them still makes an impact.

"Mentors are masters at receiving delayed gratification," he said. "I know I've been called to serve, and those moments when former students express appreciation years later make me feel I've found the right calling."

Slone also owns a couple of investment properties but said he is in no hurry to change careers.

"I love what I'm doing and want to stay active for as long as I can," he said. "At some point, I may combine youth work and real estate. I want to keep pushing forward, sharing and spreading God's love and helping young people be everything they were meant to be."



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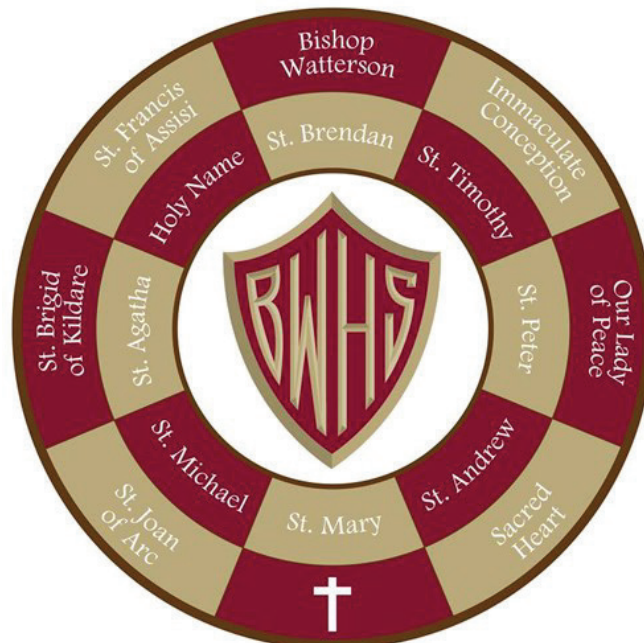
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Watterson students team with graduate for waste audit

Wearing aprons and gloves, a dozen student members of the Environmental Club at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School recently sorted trash into bins for a waste audit at the school.

Leading them through the audit was Dominique Hadad, a 2016 Watterson graduate whose company, Green Scope Consulting, helps local businesses reduce food waste and potentially bridge the food insecurity gap.

Hadad discovered a passion for environmental issues while a student at Bishop Watterson assisting teacher Will Reiss, who has since passed away.

“Mr. Reiss was very passionate about making the school more green, and that exposed me to how much I cared about making green transitions for organizations,” said Hadad, a 2020 Ohio State University graduate with a degree in industrial systems engineering.

Green Scope was launched after Hadad won the 2021 Ohio State President’s Prize, a grant of \$100,000 to fund a project.

Watterson senior Sophia Schroeder, whose older brother was a classmate of Hadad’s, was inspired to get involved with environmental issues after observing her brother’s work with such efforts at the school. Schroeder has spearheaded the revival of the Environmental Club, which was less active after Mr. Reiss retired and had all but disappeared during the pandemic.

“We want everyone to realize that trying to recycle and at least making an effort to live more sustainably is possible,” Schroeder said. “We want people to know they do make an impact, even if they think they don’t, and that it’s their choice whether the impact is good or bad.”

“For us it’s about the care for God’s creation,” senior Eliza Thomas said. “It’s very clear that as a student body there’s so much in the back of our minds that we could actually be actively participating in. How our club is helping is a really nice form of prayer, to me. It’s God’s



Members of the Environmental Club at Columbus Bishop Watterson High School with 2016 Watterson graduate Dominique Hadad (right).

Photos courtesy Bishop Watterson School

world, and we have a responsibility to care for it.”

Club moderator and theology teacher Ali Reis said the club has been taking an incremental approach with the student body, starting with ensuring that classrooms have recycling bins and then making recycling pickups routine. The waste audit was the next step in determining the focus of their education efforts. Green Scope will present audit results to the club in a couple of weeks.

For the audit, waste cans in the cafeteria were labeled for “recycling,” “composting” and “trash.”

“It was surprising to see what people thought was recyclable versus what actually is,” senior Ava Fultz said.

Club members had noticed during classroom recycling collections that students had tossed tissues into the recycling bins, mistakenly thinking they are recyclable. During the lunch waste audit, they found that many students consider only produce compostable, not crackers or tater tots, for example.

There was an air of teamwork and camaraderie as the students sorted their classmates’ lunch refuse.

“When I first met Dominique, she told me that environmental work was a ‘thankless job,’ and that’s very true,” Schroeder said. “Mr. Reiss is remembered so fondly because he did a thankless job with grace and dignity and inspired others to be as selfless.”

“When we ask people to join in our effort, we’re asking them to resemble Mr. Reiss in that way. We are asking them to do something that will at first inconvenience them and will challenge them to live not only thinking of those around them but also of those who will inherit the earth after them.”

Hadad credited Schroeder with motivating the club and assembling the audit crew.

“They’re learning so much, and when they get to college they’ll feel more confident to continue living with environmental consciousness and educating others,” said Hadad, who has managed student volunteers involved in composting at Ohio State.

“We see it at Ohio State. The students who come from local schools where they were involved in recycling efforts are more effective leaders in this area.



Bishop Watterson senior Sophia Schroeder led the effort to conduct a waste audit at the school.

“It feels full circle for me to remember how it felt to be in the classroom, wanting to impact change, and now to be back at Bishop Watterson seeing that students are motivated to do this work,” Hadad said.

“It will be helpful to put numbers to what is being discarded. We’ll be able to take those numbers and suggest strategies, things that are practical for Watterson to put in place. What really matters is that students learn they can take actions to make a difference.”

Considering possible next steps, junior Jason Thomas said he would like to see the school begin to compost.

“There’s a lot of waste, not only at school but all over, and it would be nice to know that something is being saved.”

Reis said the future is bright for the Environmental Club.

“We have some very motivated students who are willing to step up in the future,” she said, “and I have no doubt they are going keep this effort moving forward at Bishop Watterson.”

To inquire about a waste audit, contact Hadad at dominique.hadad@green-scopeconsulting.com.

MARION, continued from Page 5

Mass the fourth-graders come down and sit with our kindergartners, and that’s really nice because they can whisper to them and help them understand what’s going on,” Garber said.

“And our priests are really, really good with our kids. They see them quite often in school, which most schools just don’t have the opportunity to have that because the priests are busy. Just being able to speak to most of them and having interactions with them and talking to them about certain things in Spanish – a lot of the students appreciate that.”

Garber is in her second year of teaching at St. Mary after graduating from Sycamore

Mohawk High School, about 30 miles north of Marion, and Heidelberg University.

Successfully teaching and managing 22 kindergartners is a challenge that’s compounded by two languages being spoken in the classroom, “but we have a lot of resources (including an aide and parent volunteers) to help them, and for the most part the kids easily understand what I’m saying,” Garber said.

“I have a lot of students who are also bilingual, and so they help each other. It seems like the kids are really getting adjusted, and I make sure that we have high expectations for all of them.

“We’re all here for the same reason –

to learn and grow in our faith. To learn in this environment and have this Catholic education, that’s all that matters, and that’s what their parents want.”

Garber is also involved in another new extracurricular program at the school, which is bringing back sports with the addition of indoor soccer this month. She will be one of the coaches for five teams from the school that will play in a community league comprising churches in the area.

Many of the coaches will provide transportation for students who lack the means to get to and from practices and games.

“Almost half the school is playing,”

Tedrick said. “We have seen a tremendous amount of excitement from the students and from the families, and we’re excited to bring back programs that promote the growth of the whole child, not just the academic side of things, because that’s really what we’re trying to provide.

“There’s a lot of reasons for optimism here, especially for enrollment and growth of the school. The last couple of years have demonstrated that there is an increased appetite for Catholic education, especially in communities like Marion. We’re excited for the future.”



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Fisher Catholic team raising money for cancer patient

When Lancaster Fisher Catholic makes 3-point shots this season, the baskets not only benefit the girls basketball team on the scoreboard but also a special cause that's bigger than wins and losses.

Baskets for Brian was launched not long after Brian McCauley, a 2002 Fisher Catholic graduate, former theology teacher and band director at the school, was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer last April.

The fundraiser was set up by John Albert, a Lancaster Basilica of St. Mary parishioner, to provide for the current and future needs of the family through monetary donations for every 3-point basket throughout the 2022-23 season and through one-time donations.

"John Albert came to us right around the time Brian got sick last April and had some ideas about how to get St. Mary's School and/or Fisher Catholic involved," said Gina McCauley, Brian's wife and the mother of their young son, Benedict.

"He put forth the idea to do this fundraiser called Baskets for Brian. He really thought out the whole thing on his own and proposed it to us. Now, since it's become a reality, we're just trying to be receptive and recognize the way this amazing community has surrounded us in our own time of sorrow and surprise."

Since the 2022-23 season started in November, the Irish had made 105 3-pointers on their way to a 12-5 record entering the final week of January and also had received more than \$2,000 in one-time donations for a total of more than \$5,000.

Gina McCauley visited the girls after practice on Thursday, Jan. 12 to give the team an update.

"I really just came to them today with the hope that they might see that nothing in life will ever make sense outside

of a relationship with Christ," Gina said. "I know that might sound kind of heady to them, kind of untouchable, sort of just words, but my prayer for them is that it's this world view that might drive their lives; their relationships, academic and athletic careers."

"That's the message I really wish to impart on them, and from it is born the virtue of charity – to be able to love the people around us – to have eyes to see the people who are hurting or suffering. And what they're doing for us, here at the high school, is really an example of that."

Brian, who has a history of headaches, had gone in to have a routine CT scan last April and came away with a diagnosis much different than expected. Doctors determined that he had Stage IV glioblastoma brain cancer, a terminal disease.

He underwent surgery that month and subsequent treatments intended to improve his quality of life.

The McCauleys' deep Catholic faith, devotion to Mass, their prayers and the prayers of many others have sustained them through a difficult situation.

"It's been the only source of sustenance, and our faith will never fail us," Gina said.

Brian has served as the director of sacramental preparation and faith formation at the Basilica of St. Mary. He



Gina McCauley chats with members of the Fisher Catholic girls basketball team after practice on Thursday, Jan. 12 in the high school gym.
CT photo by Ken Snow



Gina, Brian and Benedict McCauley sit in front of their home in Lancaster.
Photo courtesy McCauley family

announced in August that he was taking a leave of absence from his work at the basilica after 13 years there.

On the Baskets for Brian fundraiser website, he's described as having a great love for the Church and that his ability to teach and defend the faith with excellence set him apart and makes him well known in the community.

"The wonderful story behind all this is that, in all of this suffering and pain that he's going through, the first thing that he did was he asked for just an onslaught of prayers and things that he could pray for during this time for the whole community," Albert said. "So that's really what triggered this."

"To me, this is how we can show that this cross is just bringing everyone together, but more importantly how we return to God in heaven through the salvation of the cross. So, we've got to have the cross for you to get there. That's really the message that we're trying to get through

the kids through this encounter."

Gina has spoken with the girls at practice several times during the season. Brian and Benedict visited the team for a photo shoot with the players and coaches in the fall.

"I think their story, and how they've dealt with being handed the cards of a devastating cancer diagnosis, and using it to do good for others, and using other people's intentions in offering their suffering up, is really amazing, and it's really inspiring for me to do that in my own life and for others as well," Fisher Catholic junior guard Ava Albert said.

"Just to encourage others to lift up what they're going through."

"It's a really nice way to include our school and our sports in our life as young adults into something that means more than just us, something that's bigger than us," Albert's teammate, senior

See CANCER, Page 16

At Lancaster Fisher Catholic, students are serious about service

One of the biggest commitments that Lancaster Fisher Catholic High School students make is to their Service Guilds. The Service Guilds aim to Encounter Christ by Helping Others (ECHO), and students determine the ECHO Encounters that they will tackle each semester.

These endeavors engage students beyond what many might expect. Guild Guides hope that the students go beyond the minimum level of engagement with those benefiting from their time, energy, commitment and love.

Scripture is rich with ways that the students can strengthen their relationship with God and others through service: "Love one another." "Care for one another." "Pray for one another." "Encourage one another." "Help one another." "Counsel one another." "Support one another."

The seven school Service Guilds are built upon the seven themes of Catholic social teaching:

- Guild No. 1: Life and Dignity of the

Human Person

- Guild No. 2: Call to Family, Community and Participation
- Guild No. 3: Rights and Responsibilities
- Guild No. 4: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

- Guild No. 5: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Guild No. 6: Solidarity
- Guild No. 7: Care for God's Creation

Each student is randomly assigned to a Service Guild. With their Guild Guide in monthly meetings, the students determine what they will accomplish as a guild and in smaller groups. Following are some of the school's Service Guild highlights August-December 2022:

- Created and placed wreaths on military veterans' graves at Lithopolis Cemetery.
- Held a Christmas party for residents at Reflections Retirement facility in Lancaster.
- Provided a variety of support services for Meals on Wheels.
- Presented cards of gratitude to Fair-

field Medical Center employees.

- Raised \$1,700 for Adopt-a-Family efforts through Jingle Jog 5K.
- Donated 47 pints of blood during a Red Cross blood drive.

- Donated 700-plus shoes to hurricane victims in the Dominican Republic during the Soles-4-Souls Shoe Drive.

- Adopted six families for Perry County's Christmas Fill the Sleigh to Pave the Way effort.

- Made blankets for families and babies in the newborn intensive care unit at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

- Made Christmas Eve meal deliveries for Charity Newsies.

- Collected \$1,500 in toys and donations for the Jobs and Family Services Christmas Adopt-a-Family program.

- Unloaded trucks for the Bottoms Up! diaper donation organization.

- Sang Christmas carols at Crestview nursing facility in Lancaster.

- Participated in the Lancaster Live

Nativity presentation.

- Prepared and served meals at Lancaster Social Services Faith Mission.

- Picked up and sorted items donated to Bremen Calvary United Methodist Church.

- Provided after-school tutoring Monday-Thursday at local Catholic elementary schools.

- Prepared meals for Kairos Prison Ministry at St. Mark's Ministry Retreat.

- Provided babysitting for the monthly Mommies Matter meeting.

- Cleaned up the Lancaster Bike Trail.

- Sent notes of kindness to school faculty and staff members.

- Participated in Sandwich Saturdays.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops says, "The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society."



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Serving the community core to Bishop Hartley's House System

The mission of Columbus Bishop Hartley High School is to transform lives through the teachings of Jesus Christ within the Catholic tradition.

At Bishop Hartley, the mission and beliefs are based upon six pillars that serve as their foundation: faith, preparation, community, service, spirit and leadership.

"As an alumnus returning to my alma mater as a teacher and now in a leadership position, I know firsthand that Bishop Hartley is a community built on our faith," said Andrew Jahahn, vice principal of operations.

"Our greatest strength as Hawks is drawn from our witness to Jesus Christ and the Gospel message. The relationships and bonds we build as Bishop Hartley Hawks lead us to be servant leaders in the world."

One of the core ways that Hartley furthers its mission and provides pastoral care to students, all while strengthening a sense of community and students' leadership skills, is through its House System. In its 13th year, the House System ensures that students are embraced in the "Hartley Family Spirit" while recognizing them for their gifts and talents.

Every Hartley student is assigned to a House, and through that House they participate in mentor groups, learn leadership skills, serve the community to help others and compete in areas of academics, athletics and school spirit.

The House System ensures that all students have a support system, healthy peer relationships, people to turn to with questions, positive adult role models and a place to be themselves.

Thirteen years ago, current principal Christopher Kowalski led a team in researching the House concept, which has its roots in English boarding schools. The team found that the system offered three times the number of leadership positions as the student council model that had been in use for many years.

The team visited Trinity High School in Louisville, Kentucky and Archbishop Moeller High School in Cincinnati to see the House System in action and talk with administrators, teachers and students about their systems. Bishop Hartley officially rolled out its own House System early in the 2010-2011 school year.

"I had an opportunity to see the House System in action during my time at Archbishop Moeller," Kowalski said, "and felt strongly that Bishop Hartley would benefit from a similar system, particularly with the mentoring students receive from peers and adults in their Houses and mentor groups."

"Since integrating this as part of our everyday life 13 years ago, I'm thrilled at what we've been able to offer our students when it comes to service and leadership opportunities and enhancing our community life."

The House System effectively brings together the uniqueness, Catholic identity and service-learning opportunities Hartley offers students. While a somewhat newer concept to Catholic education in Columbus, the House System is rooted in legacy, with the six Houses named after now-closed Catholic schools in and around Columbus.

Aquinas House is named after Aquinas College High School. Rosary House is named for Holy Rosary Roman Catholic High School and parish. Sacred Heart House is named for the Sacred Heart School and parish.

The Springs House is named for St. Mary of the Springs, an academy for young women in the late 1800s before it moved to Columbus and eventually became Ohio Dominican University. Our Lady of Victory House is named after the former school and current church. Wehrle House is named after Columbus Father Wehrle High School.

Each House has a patron saint, representative colors, mascot, Latin motto and staff leader.

While each of Hartley's six pillars is embedded into everyday identity and actions, the House System allows students to work together to live out the call to service as a school.

With yearly requirements as part of the leadership curriculum, Hartley students participate in organized service opportunities. Students also work with established community agencies and organizations whose goals address the heart of Catholic teaching on social justice. In the 2021-2022 school year alone, Hartley recorded 19,887 service hours.

In addition to building character and



Students in Bishop Hartley's House System display their school spirit and pride while living out the mission of their Catholic identity through faith and service.

Photos courtesy Bishop Hartley High School

community, this provides a foundation of Christian living as students graduate and go on to live productive lives.

"Upon my arrival at Bishop Hartley, I immediately noticed the faith, spirit and leadership that our students demonstrate through our House System," said Patricia Hanna, vice principal of academics and student services.

"Students and teachers alike worship together during Mass, fulfill Christ's mission to meet the needs of others through acts of service on our House Days and celebrate one another's accomplishments at schoolwide gatherings."

"Every student gets to let their light shine in our House System, and our school shines brightly because of it."

To learn more about the Bishop Hartley House System, visit bishop-hartley.org.

EMMAUS, cont. from Page 3

did not recognize Jesus until later in the breaking of the bread, but they realized how their hearts were burning as He opened the Scriptures to them while accompanying them on their journey.

"This is exactly what we want for our students – for their hearts to be opened to Jesus through Catholic education. Donors to the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund make this possible with their financial gifts, accompanying students on their faith journey following the example of Jesus."

Cristo Rey graduate advises fellow alumni

By Elizabeth Pardi

Diamond Wilson, a 2018 Cristo Rey Columbus High School (CRC) graduate, recently finished college and was hired by CRC as its alumni adviser.

CRC is part of a network of Catholic schools across the country that offer a college-preparatory education to students from financially challenged backgrounds. Since the school opened in 2013, 100 percent of its graduating students have gone on to college.

In an interview for CRC's podcast, Wilson said, "What brought me back was how much Cristo Rey has prepped me for college and what it's done for me."

She said that although the workload for CRC students is intense, it's worth it. "Once I got to college ... I realized how much I was prepped not just academically but also career wise." Because, as Wilson said, she has a heart for giving back to her community, she wanted to help CRC impact others as well.

As alumni adviser, Wilson communicates with CRC graduates – many of whom were her classmates – to see how they're doing in college or the workforce. She ensures they're secure with finances



Diamond Wilson, a 2018 Cristo Rey High School graduate, has returned to the school after graduating from college to serve as an alumni adviser who reaches out to graduates to check on their college and career progress.

Photo courtesy Cristo Rey High School

and housing and doing well socially and emotionally.

"(Many) of our students are the first generation (in their family) to go to college, some even the first to finish high school," Wilson said. "We were all in the same boat at one point in time, fearing we wouldn't get accepted into college, ... wouldn't be able to afford it and wouldn't be smart enough to handle the rigor."

"Now I have the honor of seeing how far they've come and how I can help

them achieve even more."

Ashley Grasinger, CRC's college counselor who works closely with Wilson and shares an office with her, said Wilson has excelled as alumni adviser.

"She is warm, outgoing and thoughtful," Grasinger said. "Her life experience, especially her experience as a CRC student, has been instrumental in helping students (here) understand the purpose behind the ... demands CRC puts on (them)."

Aside from the academic demands, all Cristo Rey students participate in a work-study program. This entails holding temporary, entry-level positions with various companies that partner with Cristo Rey.

"I enjoyed every single one of them," Wilson said of her work-study positions. "I appreciate the professional work-study program ... (because) I could figure out what I like and what I didn't like."

Wilson, who spent one of her work-study experiences in Mike DeWine's office while he was Ohio attorney general, eventually began college at St. John's University in Queens, New York as a legal studies major.

"I fell in love with my courses," she said. "They challenged me, made me think outside the box and pushed me far beyond my comfort zone." She changed her major to political science with a minor in legal studies when professors advised her to do so if she eventually wanted to attend law school.

Along with several other honors at St. John's, Wilson was elected executive secretary for the nonprofit Student Government Incorporated, working alongside university president Father Brian J. Shanley, OP.

See CRISTO REY, Page 18


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Newark schools plan events for Catholic Schools Week

The next few weeks will be a busy time for Newark-area Catholic schools.

Newark Catholic High School will present open houses in Licking, Knox and Franklin counties beginning Jan. 29 at Newark St. Francis de Sales School from noon to 1:30 p.m. and continuing at Reynoldsburg St. Pius School on Feb. 1 from 6:30 to 8 p.m., Feb. 5 at Newark Blessed Sacrament School from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Feb. 21 at Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul School from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

During the weekend before the start of Catholic Schools Week, Newark Catholic will present its annual drama production, Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella, on Jan. 27-28 in the school's auditorium.

On Jan. 30, the student council is leading a blood drive for the American Heart Association from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

On Feb. 2, there will be an annual Mass for Newark Catholic, St. Francis de Sales and Blessed Sacrament students celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes.

On Feb. 4, the senior class along with junior Kairos leaders lave for an annual four-day retreat.

Catholic Schools Week closes on Feb. 4 with a concert benefiting the SPICE program from to 9 p.m. in the auditorium.

Also during Catholic Schools Week, Newark Catholic student Maggie Richardson will be participating in an international junior luge event from Jan. 27 to Feb. 13 on the Olympic track at Pyeongchang, South Korea.



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St. Brigid forms service learning committees



Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare eighth-graders have had a chance to step into leadership and service roles this year through newly formed committees. In December, the service committee learned about the Ronald McDonald House of Central Ohio and led the school in a “Stuff the Stockings” project for the organization. Kindergarten through fourth grade had a hand in sewing and decorating the stockings with their older “buddies” in fifth through eighth grade. A total of 280 stockings were sewn. The eighth graders also organized a stocking stuffer drive and collected hundreds of toys, games, and personal care items that were donated by the school community. The committee then visited the Ronald McDonald House of Central Ohio to deliver their collection from the “Stuff the Stockings” project. The students toured the facility and learned about the hardships and challenges that families face.

Photos courtesy St. Brigid of Kildare School

Epiphany at St. Bernadette



Lancaster St. Bernadette School students gathered to celebrate Epiphany, the 12th day of Christmas, on Friday, Jan. 6, when the three wise men, or Magi, first saw the baby Jesus, bringing him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Father Tyron Tomson, pastor at St. Bernadette Church, and seminarian Nick Love (holding holy water) joined the students for the traditional blessing of each entrance way in the school, marking them with 20+C+M+B+23, the Latin blessing *Christus mansionem benedicat*, which means “Christ bless this house.”

Photos courtesy St. Bernadette School



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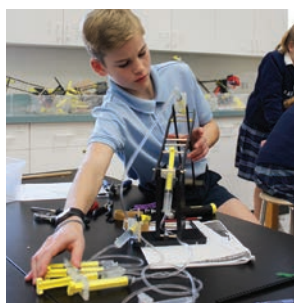
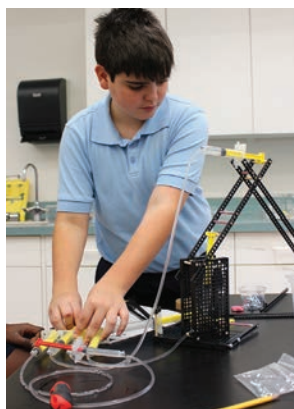
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Hydraulic engineering at St. Andrew School



Columbus St. Andrew School seventh-grade students have been studying hydraulic movement and putting their knowledge into practice in the lab. Using Legos and tubes, the students were tasked to create a robotic arm they could manipulate with syringes and water. After gaining mastery of their hydraulic arms, the students added grasping claws before the devices were then put to a final test. The students had to pick up building blocks from a container using their syringe-controlled arms. This is one of the labs featured in Teacher Geek, a new science and engineering program adopted by St. Andrew this year for seventh and eighth grade STEM learning. Pictured are Thomas Lillis (upper left photo), Luca Pietropaolo (bottom left photo) and a group that includes (from left, bottom right photo) Elaine Gbeckor-Kove, Anthony Crowley, instructor Patricia Lubanovic and Madeline Lane.

Photos courtesy St. Andrew School

Zanesville schools mark special week with activities

Students at Bishop Fenwick School (pre-K through eighth grade) and Bishop Rosecrans High School will participate in daily dress themes. Students in both buildings will wear Mass uniforms for their weekly Mass on Wednesday and in school spirit attire or sports jerseys on Friday. The themes vary the rest of the week.

Students at Fenwick will also be doing various daily activities and bringing in canned goods for the local food pantry. A movie day

is also planned.

At Rosecrans, the mentor groups will compete against one another with daily trivia contests focusing on the faith, the diocese, the Catholic Schools of Zanesville and diocesan high schools.

On Friday, students from Fenwick grades kindergarten through fifth will have their pictures taken with their favorite high school student or athlete.

CANCER, continued from Page 11

post player Emma McCrady, said.

Asked if the team thinks about raising money when players are putting up 3-point shots during a game, junior forward Ruby Hagy said, “I take it sometimes, and when I do I like to think about it, that it’s a good way that we’re raising money for the McCauley family.”

“And after games, when we’re talking about the 3-pointers and how much we’ve scored, it’s a good reflection on how much money we’ve earned for their family.”

Gina described her husband’s current health status as stable. He tires more easily after his diagnosis and a surgery.

“Brian is very grounded in his Catholic faith, and he is always looking for invitations from Christ to reveal Himself to him. He is certainly feeling the prayers of support from

the community.”

And through his suffering exists the possibility that many individuals will strengthen their faith.

“I hope that the exposure of our story to the people who see it, whether they come to a game as visitors or as supporters of the home team, will help them realize that life here on earth is brief and when you see somebody young diagnosed with this type of cancer, it might even serve as a reminder of the brevity of life,” Gina said.

“My real hope is that people might grow in their desire to connect with each other and love one another well and, above all, to let the love of Christ shine through in every facet of their lives.”

For more information or to donate, visit www.basketsforbrian.com and www.caring-bridge.org/visit/brianmccauley.

Films preserve history of Columbus St. Mary Church, School

By Ken Snow

Bob Stoll, 84, enrolled as a freshman at Columbus St. Mary, Mother of God High School during the 1952-53 academic year and graduated in the Class of '56. During Stoll's years there, the pastor, Msgr. Edmund A. Burkley, an amateur filmmaker, often showed home movies he'd made of various parish and school activities such as First Holy Communions, confirmations, festivals, parades down Third Street, sporting events and graduations.

Outside of celebrating Mass, it was a rare occasion to see Msgr. Burkley without his Bell & Howell 16mm movie camera. His films, which he made beginning in 1929 and continuing into the late '50s, were always popular.

During his school years, Stoll was intrigued with the films and thought, "Wow, this is wonderful! This is some great stuff!"

"I just fell in love with them and could see that, down the road, there might be some real value in being able to see them again."

In 1964, shortly after Stoll returned from a four-year stint with the Coast Guard, he became a member of the Foresters Club, a Catholic benevolent society located on Whittier Street on Columbus' south side. It was there that he met John "Mike" Sergio.

At the time, Sergio – who is now 91 and a graduate of St. Mary High School, Class of '48 – wanted to organize a class fundraiser for the school and had received permission to show some of Msgr. Burkley's old films at the event. Knowing how entertaining they were and how much they were loved by the alumni, Sergio thought the films would be a big draw.

However, the films needed cleaning and splicing before they could be shown. Sergio asked Stoll if he could help. At the time, Stoll was a plasterer at Ohio State University and knew some staff members in the Department of Photography and Cinema. Through this connection, Stoll had the films restored and in projector-ready condition for the fundraiser. The Foresters covered the restoration cost.

On and off, through the 1970s and '80s, Sergio and Stoll showed the films at other fundraising events. When home video became popular, they had the films put on VHS cassettes that were then offered for sale during St. Mary festivals to benefit the school.

At the time, the silent films were chronologically assembled with the original titles that Msgr. Burkley had created on school chalkboards. Most were of individual events, such as "St. Mary's Football, 1932," but otherwise weren't edited into a grander, combined story.

Then, early in 1989, parishioner Elizabeth Wolf (now deceased) learned that the diocesan Office of Communications was offering its video production ser-

vices to schools and parishes. She asked the office if a video about Msgr. Burkley's many years leading St. Mary Church and School might be made.

By this time, Sergio and Stoll had raised funds to have Msgr. Burkley's entire collection of 16mm films preserved on professional quality videotape, although still unedited. As a result of Wolf's efforts and with the availability of the unedited films in a modern format, a video about the school and Msgr. Burkley's beloved presence there was created.

The yearlong effort was spearheaded by Tony Dinovo Jr., a part-time employee of the Communications Office from 1988-92. (He later entered the Pontifical College Josephinum and was ordained a diocesan priest in 2002, eventually taking the reins as pastor of Worthington St. Michael Church.)

The result was a half-hour video, *Remembering St. Mary's School: The Legacy of Msgr. Edmund Burkley*. During the production, Dinovo cataloged the unedited videos, wrote and narrated the script and served as the program's editor. Its primary destination as a finished video was Public Access TV (Channel 21 on Warner Cable), which was, at the time, a Columbus city-funded cable TV channel offering free broadcasting of qualifying programming. It was, for the diocese, a cost-free way to get Catholic programming out to Catholics and the general public.

The video told the story of Msgr. Burkley's passion for three things. First was his devotion to the Catholic faith, and especially to the Blessed Mother, after whom Columbus St. Mary Church and School are named.

Second was his dedication to making Catholic education at the parish level, from kindergarten through 12th grade, the foundation of lifelong learning and service to the larger community. Last

was his delight in making home movies of special parish happenings.

One of the people who appeared in the 1989 video was Fran Ryan – now 89 years old and a graduate of St. Mary High School, Class of '52.

"In 1950, my father was transferred from Pittsburgh to a new position in Columbus," she said recently. "We settled in the German Village area, and I became enrolled in Columbus St. Mary's High School. This was at the beginning of my junior year.

"I'm a cradle Catholic and had gone to Catholic schools most of my life, so the transition was pretty smooth. In fact, I was amazed at how quickly and easily I was accepted into the new school by my fellow students and the teaching staff.

"It was, like, I was new, but the quality of the kids that were there and the families, they kind of adopted me. And I had so much fun and just loved being there.

"I remember Msgr. Burkley as if it were only yesterday. He was so devoted to the school and to the parish. And that movie camera! It seemed that he always had it with him. We all loved to watch the movies he made of us.

"I graduated from St. Mary's in 1952. So, I had two years there. But those two years were the most fulfilling of all my school days. They were just fabulous! I mean, I loved every minute of it. I loved the football team. I loved all the sports. I even played on the girls basketball team.

"But I think it was the work ethic and the core values that I learned in St. Mary's School that have stuck with me to this day. In fact, as you know, I got into public service following my college education at Ohio State. And I really believe it was my Catholic education that prepared me best for serving the needs, not only of the Columbus and Franklin County community, but of the nation as

well while I worked for the Carter administration.

"You know, things like caring for others, like advocating for seniors and the elderly, and like taking opportunities to use the talents God gives you and putting them into service. It's all about you making somebody's day a little bit better. Then you've created something that's lasting.

"One thing I've taken away from my experience at St. Mary's School is that our Catholic values, our faith, teaches us to be all-encompassing and that we have to embody the whole community."

During the 1990s, *Remembering St. Mary's School* became available on VHS and eventually on DVD, again to be offered for sale at reunions and other events to raise funds for the school. But there was still the issue of preserving Msgr. Burkley's original 16mm films as they were fragile, yet historically important, records.

Those films, stored in cardboard boxes in various closets and cubby holes at the school, seemed to mysteriously disappear and reappear over the years. But persistence paid off when Stoll, sometime in the late 2000s, called a retired Franciscan sister, Sister Margaret Ann Zimmerman, OSF, at her residence in the sisters' assisted-living facility in Joliet, Illinois.

Sister Margaret Ann had taught at St. Mary from 1962 to 1985 and was the only person Stoll could find who realized the historical importance of the films and might know their location.

Sister Margaret Ann – who passed away in 2022 at age 101 – told Stoll where to find them.

Fast-forward to 2022. During a major renovation and expansion of St. Mary School, once again Msgr. Burkley's original films seemed to disappear amid the dust and clutter of construction. Stoll wanted to know where they were, not only for himself but also for posterity.

St. Mary's deacon, Roger Minner, undertook a successful search. The box of films turned up in the attic of the rectory where many items were being stored during construction. Attics, however, aren't ideal for storing old movie film.

Now, through the efforts of St. Mary Church and the Catholic Record Society (CRS), the films will be preserved in CRS' archives. *Remembering St. Mary's School* will also be preserved there, and it is likely that St. Mary will eventually post a link on its website to the video so others can see it.

"As the repository of diocesan archival materials, CRS assures us that there will be real benefits for future generations of Catholics who are the stakeholders of St. Mary's School," Don Schlegel, CRS secretary, said.

"First, the purpose of preserving the records of our schools and churches is to give the community a perspective of



Msgr. Edmund A. Burkley, a longtime pastor at Columbus St. Mary, Mother of God Church in the German Village area and an amateur filmmaker, carried a movie camera almost everywhere he went outside of Mass and recorded parish and school activities from 1929 until the late 1950s.

Photo courtesy St. Mary, Mother of God Church



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CRISTO REY, *continued from Page 14*

Of her college experience, Wilson said, “I discovered life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent what you make of it. Because of college, I became the woman that Cristo Rey Columbus Diamond could have only dreamt of.”

The Cristo Rey Network encourages its students to dream big for themselves and their futures. “One of my favorite parts of the Cristo Rey Network credo discusses dreaming outrageously,” Grasinger said.

“Cristo Rey Columbus is changing the lives of our students by helping them to dream boldly and giving them the support they need to make those dreams come true.”

Wilson said that theology class in her senior year at CRC helped her discover her dream vocation.

“One of our assignments covered the Catholic Church helping those in need, specifically those with criminal


records,” Wilson said. “That lesson hit close to home, as almost every student knew someone who was formerly incarcerated and understood their struggle.

“From that lesson, I found my vocation. I want to create a nonprofit organization focused on formerly incarcerated individuals and troubled youth. Big dream, I know. But the way I put it, if your dreams don’t scare you, are they big enough?”






For now, Wilson helps students who are where she was not long ago, which she finds extremely fulfilling.

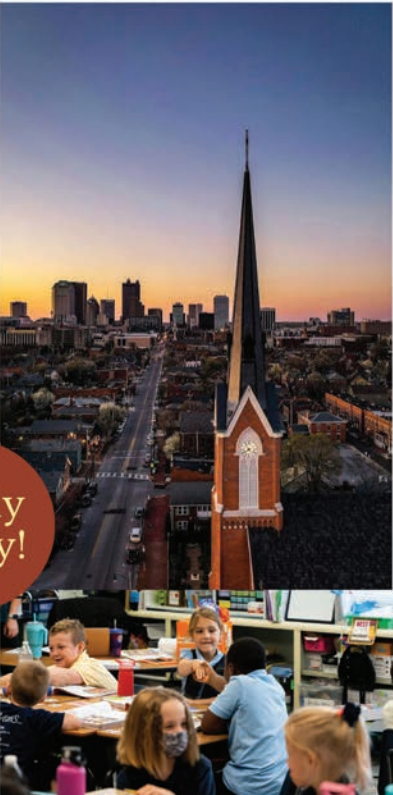
“I don’t think there are enough words ... to describe what it feels like to ... help our alumni (as) an alumni myself, but the best way I can put it is that it is seeing God’s work with your own eyes.

Elizabeth Pardi is a freelance writer.








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HISTORY, *continued from Page 17*

where we are. And we don’t know where we are unless we know where we’ve been. We can see if things have improved through time or if they’ve deteriorated and need more work. That sort of thing can give us some feeling for our history and the struggles that the people of the past went through.

“Regarding Msgr. Burkley and his films, I think the big value is that it brings the past to life for us. Those people don’t just remain a name on a page. You can see them and what they’re doing. It gives you a tie to them, a kind of connection through time, a ‘communion with the saints,’ so to speak.”

Msgr. John Cody, a retired priest of the diocese, although not referring to the video or the films, had this to say about St. Mary School: He said his sister, Kathleen Cody McClernon, who died in 2018, had been a teacher, and then the principal, at St. Mary School for 39 years. In 1965, she was hired as an eighth-grade teacher while Msgr. Burkley was pastor.

“Kathy loved St. Mary’s School,” Msgr. Cody said, “and, during her 39 years there, she distinguished herself as an excellent teacher to such a degree that the diocesan school office would often send teachers having trouble in classroom management to Kathy, who would work with them and help them gain confidence.

“Kathy was also a pioneer in making our Catholic schools inclusive. She was willing to accept as a student a young boy whose parents were told by his parish school principal that they were unable to accommodate his special needs. Kathy accepted him at St. Mary’s, and this, in turn, served as a model for other parish schools.”

Today, Columbus St. Mary School continues its tradition of providing academic excellence to the community as well as being a strong Catholic witness on the south side of the city. Msgr. Burkley’s legacy of devotion and honor to the parish namesake, Mary the Mother of God, lives on in every aspect of its mission.

Fr. Vince Nguyen, pastor of St. Mary, said that this is all about the kids and their families and having a place to grow -- that everything St. Mary is doing is focused on providing them with the best possible opportunities to grow in values and in faith, to help them grow as a family unit, and to help them learn how to serve and to give back.

Also, with a nod toward the future, he said that St. Mary itself, as an institution, will continue its mission moving forward, tirelessly striving to serve kids, adults and elders in their diversity, in their cultures and in their languages.

Ken Snow is a photojournalist for The Catholic Times.

DeSales holds MLK Day event



Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School hosted an MLK Day of Engagement on Sunday, Jan. 15, bringing together presenters and guests from DeSales and other Central Catholic League schools for conversations on public health, environmental concerns and human rights. One of the guest speakers (not pictured) was Jordan Reeves, a 2020 DeSales graduate and the executive director at Leaders of Today, a Columbus non-profit dedicated to helping high school and college students achieve their highest potential. Photo courtesy St. Francis DeSales High School



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St. Charles students in OSU program lead new initiatives at school

Since fall 2020, groups of Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School juniors have taken part in Ohio State University's Student Research Leadership Collaborative. Through the collaborative, they have shared stories, experiences and concerns with diverse populations of fellow high school students from across Ohio.

Participants receive guidance from the program's staff members to develop leadership and public presentation skills. Throughout the year, participants explore student needs and issues affecting their school experience and develop strategies to address them.

Two student ideas born from this process have since been implemented with significant student input: establishment of the St. Charles Student Advisory Board and creation of the Learning Formation Center.

These new programs are benefitting the student body.

The St. Charles Student Advisory Board was created before the 2022-2023 school year. The board helps the administration identify strengths and address weaknesses of the school's educational practices and culture.

It also provides a way for students to be heard and to feel supported. By soliciting student feedback about school policies and decision making, the board gives students a voice in their education and a way to shape the school's vision.

The board consists of student leaders, including Student Council officers, presidents of My Brother's Keeper and the National Honor Society and leaders in the Ambassadors Club and Campus Ministry Team. It meets every two weeks, either during the daily Enrichment Period or after school. Through open discussion, the board works to

create clear communication and a closer relationship between students and the administration and faculty.

Currently, the Student Advisory Board is working to improve and expand the school's My Brother's Keeper mentoring program. It also continues to develop ways to support the school's students of color. This includes initiating discussion forums as well as seeking the input and involvement of St. Charles alumni of color.

Rick Ey, an alumnus and the school's vice principal for student services who heads the advisory board, says one of its goals is to "listen to concerns about the experiences of minority students at St. Charles and to discuss and initiate ways to support them more fully."

"While an overarching purpose of the board is to allow for student involvement in the formation and strengthening of St. Charles culture, we moreover want students of color to feel a part of that process."

The seed for the creation of the Learning Formation Center in the Holy Angels Library, was planted by students during the OSU program's inaugural year. They identified a need at St. Charles for more strategic assistance for students who are struggling academically.

A team of seven educators and an intervention specialist work to identify and support these students. The team members check in personally with stu-



Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School's Advisory Board meets in the Guidance Office Suite's Conference Room.



A Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School Advisory Board meeting in January includes (clockwise from bottom) faculty members Rick Ey, Jason Nappier and Ree Wickerham, students Raphael Bott and Derek Lyons, faculty member Danielle Hoff and students Ryan Carretta, John Castellano and Thomas Matthews. Not pictured: faculty member Tom Lopresti and students Chase Walker and Malcolm D'Souza.

Photos courtesy St. Charles Preparatory School

dents during study halls, before and after school and during the day's Enrichment Period to make sure they are on-task and successful in and out of the classroom.

Today, a year and a half since the inception of the Learning Formation Center, the student-retention rate and the number of students who are academically eligible to participate in athletics have significantly improved.

Kristen Dickerson, guidance counselor at St. Charles, has coordinated the OSU program during the past two years. She said the program "has given our students the opportunity to identify issues in our school and to come up with creative ways to address and solve the problems."

Thanks to this leadership program, St. Charles students have not only been empowered to shape their high school experience but also become integral in creating meaningful changes that will benefit students now and into the future.



In 2020, students attended the Ohio State University's Student Research Leadership Collaborative via Zoom from the Guidance Office Suite's conference room. Students are (clockwise from bottom) Andrew Huffman and Trenton Wells, counselor Kristen Dickerson and students Kellen Karas and Anish Gupta.

Service learning at young age for Our Lady of Bethlehem students



Columbus Our Lady of Bethlehem School (OLB) believes it's never too early to learn the virtue of service to others. Even the smallest students find that they can make a big impact on the world. Together, the students, families and staff realize that by serving others they serve Christ. By opening their hearts to them, they open their hearts to Him. OLB annually partners with the Bottoms Up Diaper Drive to collect and distribute diapers, pull-ups and wipes to central Ohio families in need. On Nov. 11, OLB kindergarten students loaded the Bottoms Up van with 6,220 diapers, the most ever collected in the school's annual diaper drive. Since 2019, OLB has collected and donated 13,456 diapers to Bottoms Up. One of the kindergarten students said simply, "It felt good to help babies that didn't have any diapers." Past service projects performed by the OLB community include collecting and assembling items for 50 care and art kits for patients at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus; raising money for Father David Gwinner of Westerville St. Paul Church for the international mission "Unbound" through a Chick-fil-A day fundraiser; collecting and assembling 120 blessings bags for the Columbus Holy Family soup kitchen and food pantry and providing Easter baskets and monetary donations through Lenten Lunch fundraisers for the local Run the Race Club.

Photos courtesy Our Lady of Bethlehem

High school proposed

In 1986, Chillicothe Bishop Flaget High School closed its doors, a decision that left a lasting mark on many who were impacted by the closing. However, the dream of bringing back a high school and the possibility of being able to once again offer an authentic Catholic education to high school students of the area is within reach.

As part of the Real Presence, Real Future planning process, the Diocese of Columbus identified the need for a high school in Ross County to provide an educational opportunity for students in Pickaway, Ross, Vinton, Pike, and Jackson counties. This recommendation was celebrated by many who have been working for many years to bring a high school back to the area.

After meeting with Bishop Earl Fernandes at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, permission was granted to move forward with the planning process. This month, a meeting took place with architects to begin master planning process to make this dream a reality.

The current school building at 570 Parsons Ave. was constructed in 1962, but due to ongoing maintenance and good stewardship, the facility remains in excellent condition. An addition to the west side of the building would house six classrooms, which are considered adequate for the needs of the proposed high school.

Construction of an early childhood center on the property southwest of the current school, known locally as the Scothorn property, also is being considered. The center would house preschool through

See **HIGH SCHOOL**, Page 23



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James Kardinal Roesler invites by the thousands to help spread devotion to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Page 10



Relics come to diocese
Dean Faler, a member of Newark St. Francis de Sales Church, venerates a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis at Newark St. Mary. Page 7



PREPARING FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD AT CHRISTMAS

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2022 IN REVIEW



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'Stages of Mercy' memorializes the tragic and yet inspiring story of Brian Mula's death and his mother Rachel's forgiveness. Page 10

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Happy Thanksgiving!
Columbus St. Bernard's Church offers one of the diocese's longest running Thanksgiving dinners for those in need, and other parishes and organizations are extending the hand to help the less fortunate for the holiday. Page 4



Evangelization summit
The second annual diocesan Evangelization Leadership Summit on Saturday, Nov. 17 at Ohio Dominican University was attended by nearly 500 educators from 50 diocesan parishes and several states. Page 2



Advent activities
During Advent, a host of activities related to the season and Eucharistic Adoration are scheduled to take place in parishes around the diocese. Page 5



FAITH OF OUR FARMERS

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The CATHOLIC TIMES



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HIGH SCHOOL, continued from Page 21

pre-kindergarten programs as well as additional early childhood options.


Organizers say they are excited about the opportunity to try something new, so they are looking at different curriculum models for the high school. At this point, there is freedom to build a program that will fit the needs of the students in the area.

The hope is to continue to offer the STEM-focused curriculum used in Bishop Flaget's elementary and middle schools while providing a high school education tailored to the needs of students. With classes of 20-25 students, the high school hopes to be able to provide students with internships, mentorships, apprenticeship, college credit courses and career-focused educational opportunities.

The proposed high school would add one class at a time, starting with freshmen in fall 2024 and adding an additional class each year. The current plan does not include athletics, but students may continue to participate for their home districts and in their own communities.

Through the cooperation of communities, STEM partners and all of the area parishes, there is a strong belief that an authentic Catholic education can become a reality for families in south-central Ohio.


All of those involved in the project ask for prayers as they embark on this mission to reawaken the evangelizing mission of secondary Catholic education in the community.



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Why Choose Us?

- Welcoming Catholic Community
- Small Class Sizes
- Nurturing Environment

For more information:
 call: (740) 852-0161
 or email: rlogue1@cducation.org




Celebrating Our Catholic Schools

“For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form one body, so it is with Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12:12



Inspired Scholars

Passionate Creators

Innovative Leaders

Virtuous Disciples

