

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK SUPPLEMENT

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

The Good News of Catholic education spreads through deep faith, strong academics and compassionate service

By Harry Plummer

When the florist would drop off two dozen roses in a glass vase at the school office, no one had to look at the card to know where to deliver them. Every teacher—myself included—knew that they were for the first-grade teacher, Sister Margo.



The lesson she planned began when the delivery came to her classroom door. She would get very excited about the roses and so would the children. She would put them on her desk, and let the students come up row by row to touch, smell and comment on their beauty. She would talk about where roses grow, share some poems about roses, and ask the kids to draw and write about them.

She also used them for a science lesson, teaching the children to observe and note the differences between plant and animal life, and even doing a simple experiment with food coloring to demonstrate the rose's vascular system.

Later, while the students worked at their desks, Sister Margo would make some noise that was sure to attract their attention and, never looking up, would take the roses out of the vase, walk over to the sink, dump out the water, return the roses to the empty vase and resume her desk work.

Invariably, the shock that would run through the classroom at this action would quickly precipitate into a hand going up or a call-out asking, "Sister Margo, why'd you do that?"

She would then ask what was wrong with what she did, and always received the same reply, "But if you take the water out, the roses will die!"

She would then get up, refill the vase and say, "You're right. Now we're ready to talk about baptism."

Later in the week, Sister Margo would complete the lesson by marching her students down to the parish's weekly lunchtime soup kitchen, where the roses ended up as centerpieces or gifts handed out by the children to brighten the day of the homeless guests.

Do you think anyone in Sister Margo's class ever forgot that lesson? I know I haven't because it offers such a vivid snapshot of how Catholic school teachers light fires in the hearts and minds of students.

Her pedagogical method illustrates both the importance that Catholic school educators place on demonstrating interdisciplinary links between subjects, and bringing religious awareness into all human learning.

It also contains each of the elements of Catholic school education that we are celebrating this year—faith, academics and service. Let's take a brief look at each of these as they are lived out in our Catholic schools.

- **Faith**—Catholic schools celebrate our Catholic faith in word and sacrament, in service and in the ongoing development of a community spirit animated by the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord. As one of the privileged environments for the new evangelization, they have a missionary thrust and are often catalysts for bringing families into a renewed, life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ and his Church.

- **Academics**—In category after category, the performance of our Catholic schools on academic assessments is remarkable, often significantly exceeding the performance of other Indiana school systems.

Our Catholic high school graduation rate is 99.2 percent. The percentage of our Indiana Core 40 graduates is 98.5 percent. And our Catholic schools have the highest number of National Blue Ribbon School Awards of any diocese in the country. Many other academic accolades could be mentioned so if you are interested in them or other information about our Catholic schools, contact the archdiocese Office of Catholic Education at 317-236-1430 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1430.

- **Service**—In a U.S. bishops' pastoral reflection from 2002 titled "A Place at the Table," our bishops remind us that too often the call of the Gospel and the social implications of the Eucharist are ignored or neglected in our daily lives.

Our Catholic schools respond to this call by working with families to reach out to the poor and needy in a great variety of ways, completing 164,251 service hours during the 2010-11 school year. Wow!

So let's celebrate these three inseparable pillars of Catholic school education—faith, academics and service. Like certain chemicals, when blended together they ignite a fire.

And that's just what happens in the hearts and minds of the youth placed in the care of our Catholic schools, one spark at a time.

(Harry Plummer is executive director of the archdiocese's Secretariat for Catholic Education and Faith Formation.) †



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Little Flower students look to Jesus to become servant leaders

By Sean Gallagher

When the faculty and staff at Little Flower School in Indianapolis wanted to form their eighth-graders to be servant leaders, the choice for a role model for them was obvious.

Jesus Christ. But in using the example of Jesus to help the students become good leaders, Little Flower principal Kevin Gawrys didn't just look to Scripture and the Church's teachings.

He also took advantage of the writings of Ken Blanchard, a secular author known for promoting effective methods of business leadership.

In his book, *Lead Like Jesus*, Blanchard argues that servant leadership is the most effective way to lead others in a common task, and that the best example of this form of leadership is found in Jesus Christ.

The past three eighth-grade classes at Little Flower School have taken a Catholic version of *Lead Like Jesus* developed by Owen Phelps and learned how to become better leaders in their school and to lay the foundation for being good leaders as teenagers and adults.

Gawrys meets with the eighth-graders once a month for an afternoon to study the leadership qualities of Jesus, and how they can use them in their everyday lives.

"I think most Catholic school [administrators and teachers] tell their eighth-graders, 'Hey, you're the leaders of the school. You've got to be the leaders,'" said Gawrys. "But we don't always give them the tools to be the good ones. And this has really helped them understand that they are called to look out for everybody."

"Leadership is every time you have an interaction with another person."

The leadership that Little Flower's eighth-grade students show isn't just in school-wide events such as Masses or athletic activities.

It happens in ordinary events in the classroom and the cafeteria.

"They're more willing to include everybody in the classroom," said Theresa Slaton, Little Flower's eighth-grade teacher. "I've seen a lot of inclusion and not leaving people out. At lunch, nobody ever sits by themselves. I've actually seen people get up on their own and move to a seat so someone didn't have to sit alone at lunch."

Wesley Moss, an eighth-grade student, appreciates the way that *Lead Like Jesus* has changed his and his classmates' perspective on various aspects of their lives.

"I've noticed that we have become better leaders at home and at school, and even with people in day-to-day life outside of school," Wesley said.



Kindergarten students at Little Flower School in Indianapolis pose on Jan. 4 with pajamas that they donated to charity. All grades at the Indianapolis East Deanery school are finding service organizations to partner with to help the students learn to be servant leaders.

"I'm more willing to watch my twin sisters or help them with homework."

Little Flower's faculty and staff have also started encouraging students at all grade levels to become servant leaders.

This occurred last September at the start of the academic year when Little Flower had a "service-a-thon" instead of a walk-a-thon to raise funds for the school. Students elicited pledges for the amount of hours they would give in service.

"It sends a whole new message," Gawrys said. "I'm not going to go walk. I'm going to go do things for other people. That's what we're about here."

And, starting this year, it's what the whole school is about. Each grade at Little Flower is working to pair up with a service organization in the broader community.

The second-graders have reached out to the residents of St. Paul Hermitage, a retirement home and nursing home facility in Beech Grove.

Eighth-grade students have spent time volunteering at the Pratt-Quigley Food Pantry of the Indianapolis Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Wesley said that going to the pantry to meet and help people in need was more powerful than simply donating food items in order to be able to have the privilege of not wearing his school uniform.

"They're really thankful that you're there and willing to help them," Wesley said. "When you do this, you feel more rewarded than getting out of uniform once."

Sheila Gilbert, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus



Jacob Mages and Madison Jones, eighth graders in the 2010-11 academic year at Little Flower School in Indianapolis, volunteer at the Indianapolis Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Pratt-Quigley Food Pantry. For the past two years, Little Flower's eighth graders have spent time in service at the pantry.

(Little Flower) Parish and president of the national council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, sees great potential in the students giving of themselves in service to the community.

"What I hope it will do is create passionate hearts in them so that, when they see suffering, they're going to be moved to try to do something about it," Gilbert said. "They're not going to be cold or indifferent."

Gawrys shares Gilbert's hopes.

"Our job is to change the world," Gawrys said. "That seems like a huge thing, but I think these opportunities of service show them how to do it. They come back here realizing that they did it that day. They changed the world. They dealt with people and changed their world that day."

(For more information about Little Flower School in Indianapolis, log on to www.littleflowerparish.org/school.) †

Award-winning Spanish teacher shows students a different world

By John Shaughnessy

When Paula Owen takes her students to a Mexican restaurant, it's not just an occasion to savor burritos and enchiladas. It's also a teaching moment to help the children practice Spanish, work on math skills and learn about a different culture.



Spanish teacher Paula Owens leads a language exercise for Kennedy Gordon, left, Nathan Flora and Elyse Cullin, second-grade students at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg.

"Before we take our seventh-graders to a Mexican restaurant, we practice on how to order in Spanish," says Owen, who is in her 11th year of teaching the foreign language at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg. "The wait staff will only speak Spanish to the kids, and the students have to express their needs in Spanish—say if they want a straw or more water."

"It's also an easy way to bring in a little bit of math. We figure the tax and what the tip will be. Plus, there are some students that haven't been to a Mexican restaurant. We'll take about what a quesadilla, an enchilada and a burrito are. So they're anxious to try something and share something they normally wouldn't have."

It's all part of a bigger dish that Owen wants to serve her students.

"I'm trying to get them to open their eyes and their minds to seeing different things and doing different things," she says. "There's so much I want to teach them about the language and the grammar, but I'm also interested in trying to teach them the culture and tying it in with the other parts of the curriculum."

That approach has helped Owen earn recognition as the elementary school-level Teacher of the Year by the Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association.

Wanting her students to be open to the world means Owen is always open to different ways of teaching them.

Twice a year, St. Malachy School has children's Masses in "Spanglish"—half the celebration in Spanish and half the celebration in English.

When the Latino community celebrates the Day of the Dead—Nov. 1 (All Saints Day) and Nov. 2 (All Souls Day)—in the United States, Owen leads the school's kindergarten students to the nearby St. Malachy Cemetery.

"We walked down to the cemetery to honor the lives of the in-laws of one of our kindergarten teachers," she recalls. "We carried unlit candles and left flowers on the gravesite. Some weeks after we did that, a kindergarten student's mom had a parent die. The kindergarten student tried to help his mom overcome her sadness by telling her what he learned from our Day of the Dead celebration."

Trips to a nearby Mexican grocery have a different impact on kindergarten students and their families.

"Some of our parents go on the field trips and see the market, some for the first time," she says. "The people at the market always give us fresh pastries at the end of our visit. The families always want to go back and get more."

"It's letting them see another way of life. We live in a global society, and the technology brings us even closer together. So to see the bigger picture beyond our house and beyond our church is helpful and healthy." †



The joy of Catholic education connects generations

Editor's note: For our Catholic Schools Week Supplement, *The Criterion* invited readers to share their thoughts and favorite moments that capture the joy of the Catholic school experience, whether it's in the classroom, in church, in service or on the playground. Here are some of the responses we received. Others can be found throughout the supplement.

Student learns life lessons in classroom of sports

By Dillon Bennett

I am so fortunate to be blessed with the privilege of attending a Catholic school. Many opportunities have been presented to me, one being Catholic Youth Organization sports, which I have participated in since third grade.

I have gained more through my experiences playing football than I ever would have imagined when I first walked out on the field over five years ago—experiences that have taught me qualities such as sportsmanship, piety, loyalty, diligence and teamwork.

When my team was winning a game by a reasonable margin, I witnessed my coach taking a more conservative approach in play calling, trying not to run up the score. Never once did a game end without shaking the hands of the opposing players. We prayed before and

after games, praising God for the talents he had given us. We routinely knelt and held hands in respect for an injured player and prayed for his return to good health.

I built loyal, long-lasting relationships with my coaches. My teammates and I bonded so well through both winning and losing. After our first loss, we noted the things we did well and embraced the things we needed to work on during practice. Hard work between the lines translated to diligence in my studies.

The Catholic Youth Organization has made a positive, lasting impact on me. I will cherish my memories of playing football, and I will hopefully pass the virtues I learned to embrace to future generations.

(Dillon Bennett is an eighth-grade student at St. Luke the Evangelist School in Indianapolis.) †



The pure joy of boys getting to play football in the mud radiates from the faces of the fifth- and sixth-grade players on the football team of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

Parent finds a sense of community for her children

By Sara Graf

When searching for a school for my children, my number one goal was to find a community that would support our children's emotional, religious and educational growth. St. Paul School in New Alsace has exceeded my

Matthew Graf, left, and his brother, Nathan, pose for a picture at St. Paul School in New Alsace with Father Scott Nobbe, who is both the parish priest and the principal of the school. School secretary Millie Kraus watches in the background.



expectations.

It is the small things that add up to make St. Paul School so unique. The class sizes are small so the children are known on a personal basis by all—the priests, principal, secretary, teachers and cafeteria workers. Additionally, children of all grades interact well together.

I am also pleased that religion is able to “come alive” for our children. They come home from school excited to tell me about reading the petitions in church, taking up gifts and the Bible stories they learned about in class. I

have also personally grown in my faith through talking to my children about what they have learned in school.

Thank you to everyone who has supported St. Paul School. The support for generations has now enabled our children to grow up in a very loving and supportive community within their school.

(Sara Graf is the mother of Matthew, a second-grade student, and Nathan, a kindergarten student, at St. Paul School in New Alsace.) †

Graduates celebrate their Catholic school's timeless influence

By Dennis Brake

Playing kickball, marching in the May Crowning procession and saving entire villages of babies with mission collections are just a few of the many reasons to attend a Catholic grade school. But the best reason is that, contrary to what Thomas Wolfe said, you really can go home again. Even after five decades (that's an entire rosary), you can hold a class reunion and, with the exception of a few expanding waistlines and some graying hair, very little has changed.

Last year, I had the privilege of helping to organize St. Joan of Arc's Class of 1961 50-year reunion. That year, 109 little saints (with a small “s”) graduated, one of the largest classes ever

at St. Joan of Arc. Somehow, we all fit into just two rooms.

One of the highlights during the reunion weekend was a tour of the school. As we walked through the halls and stepped into the classrooms, the most common question heard was, “How did we ever fit 55 kids into this tiny room?”

The bigger mystery was, “How did one nun ever control 55 of us kids?” The answer was “Providence,” as in the Sisters of Providence. They truly were a rare breed, and we were most fortunate to be the beneficiaries of their devotion. †

Members of the 1961 graduating class of St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis share a group photo with Father Guy Roberts, pastor of the parish, during their 50th reunion at the school in June of 2011.



Staff member gives thanks for an invaluable gift of faith

By Katie Buck

There are two things that come to mind when I reflect on the joys of working at a Catholic school.

One is the first all-school Mass I attended with the student body. Even though I was excited about my new job

at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg, I was also feeling anxious because it required some sacrifices from me and my family. That first Mass gave me such a sense of peace and gratitude.

The second memory that comes to mind is from this past Advent. I was shelving books and listening to a class of first-graders work

on their computer lesson. Mrs. Wagoner had asked the class to brainstorm Christmas words. Our students' answers made me laugh and also touched my heart: “Jesus! Santa! Bethlehem! Presents! Angels!”

Listening to the class compile this list, with words about Jesus and the Nativity coming as naturally as words about

Christmas trees and presents, made me so proud to work at St. Malachy School. The truth of our Catholic faith is shared and reinforced each day, and that is an invaluable gift.

(Katie Buck works in the library at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg.) †

**‘I have also personally grown in my faith through talking to my children about what they have learned in school.’
— Sara Graf —**

Cardinal Ritter students focus on care for God's creation

By Mary Ann Garber

"Reuse. Recycle. Rejoice."

The sign in Mary Pat O'Connor's ecology classroom at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis reminds students of the importance of caring for God's creation.

Cardinal Ritter students are doing their part to protect the environment and lower their carbon footprints with a number of ecology-related projects at the Indianapolis West Deanery campus.

Teenagers enrolled in O'Connor's ecology class are working hard to help achieve National Green Ribbon Schools status for Cardinal Ritter by educating all the students about ways to be kinder to Planet Earth.

Ecology students also are enthusiastic about raising funds for water purification projects in Haiti, collecting electronics and other kinds of recyclables, monitoring water quality in nearby Crooked Creek, reducing litter on city streets, starting a salad bar in the school cafeteria to promote healthier diets, and encouraging more ecofriendly lifestyles among their peers.

Senior Tad Starsiak became interested in protecting the environment when he was a student at St. Christopher School in Indianapolis and began volunteering as a Zoo Teen at the Indianapolis Zoo.

"That was a lot of fun," Tad said. "We did [educational] shows with the animals and talked about the environment."

At Cardinal Ritter, he appreciates how the students are focused on recycling, and the faculty and administrators are open to implementing the students' ideas about ways to improve the school environment.

Next year, he will major in philosophy at Marian University, play football for the Knights and make time for nature walks in Marian's outdoor EcoLab.

"We're supposed to care for God's creation," Tad said. "That's one of the Catholic social teachings."

Senior Anna Beyer attended St. Michael School in Indianapolis, where she developed an interest in science.

She enjoys ecology class assignments, which are "all about becoming healthier and more environmentally friendly" as well as trying to make a positive difference in the world.

A class field trip to the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Vigo County was "really cool," Anna said, because the students watched a demonstration on water and wetlands.

Nature field trips to nearby Crooked Creek are fun too, she said, and include monitoring water quality, picking up trash and searching for different kinds of insect larvae that indicate whether the stream is clean or polluted.

"That's a real hands-on experience," Anna explained, "to teach kids about how we can make a difference in the world."

At home, she takes shorter showers, turns off lights when she leaves a room, and appreciates energy-efficient lighting and appliances.

At Cardinal Ritter, Anna carools to swim team practices with four other students as one way to lower her carbon footprint on the environment.

As a science teacher, O'Connor enjoys helping the students learn ways to connect biology, faith and respect for the environment.

Cardinal Ritter has promoted paper recycling for years, she said, and the school began recycling aluminum, glass, plastic and cardboard last year.

During this school year, O'Connor said, the faculty, staff and students increased the amount of recycled paper weight by 30 percent more than last year.

Ecology class assignments include field trips, school and community service projects, and studying environmental regulations to make the students aware of legal protections for natural resources.

"We talk about 'Where does this [object] end up if we aren't recycling it?'" she said. "We clean up the area near

Submitted photos



Above, Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School science teacher Mary Pat O'Connor, center, helps seniors Charlie Elliott, from left, Claire Osecki and Vanessa Lynn collect water samples from Crooked Creek in Indianapolis during an ecology class field trip in January 2011. The students graduated on June 3.

Right, Cardinal Ritter High School seniors Emily Carty, left, and Ashley Melgar gather samples of insect larvae from wet rocks taken out of Crooked Creek in Indianapolis during an ecology class field trip last spring. The trip of larvae helps to indicate whether the stream is clean or polluted.



the [Major Taylor] Velodrome every time that we go to Crooked Creek, which is about five minutes from the school. You would not believe what kinds of things we have found there—shower doors, grills, tires, all kinds of litter and trash."

The good news, O'Connor said, is that "the water really is of good quality" in the creek, which runs through Marian's campus then past the Velodrome and Lake Sullivan into the White River.

Field trips offer "fantastic teaching moments for the kids," she said. "One year, we participated in the city's cigarette litter clean-up campaign. We picked up cigarette butts along 30th Street and by the creek.

"The students learned that toxins from the cigarettes wash into the water supply," O'Connor said. "They talked to business owners about putting containers outside their stores to collect cigarette litter. They realized that they could affect a change by trying to correct the source of the problem, and they could tell they were making a difference."

O'Connor begins the ecology curriculum each fall by asking the students to choose an environmental project to focus

on all year, which empowers them to work harder to improve their community.

"Last year, we studied water quality and that evolved into discussions on water as a right of life," she said. "We started looking at places in the world where people did not have enough water or they had flooding and didn't have clean water."

That research led the students to sponsor a fundraiser on March 22—which is World Water Day—to help pay for a \$3,500 water purification system provided by Fountains of Hope and St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg for St. Marguerite Parish in Port Margot, Haiti.

The fundraiser also built school unity as teachers, staff, students and parents donated a quarter for each vote to select faculty and student "Brain Game" teams for a school competition.

The match was broadcast on the school's television channel, and the student team won by one question. The same students also won WTHR Channel 13's "Brain Game" competition.

But the real winners were the Haitian people who benefited from clean water thanks to the \$900 donation raised by the Cardinal Ritter family.

"It was a combination of science and our Catholic social teachings, which made it a perfect project," O'Connor said. "We are continuing that fundraiser again this March to send more funds to Haiti for water purification."

Last semester, students wrote essays on how climate change affects the water cycle worldwide and our responsibilities as Christians to take care of the environment.

Cardinal Ritter's most recent ecology project on Jan. 18 resulted in donations of nearly two truckloads of electronics and other recyclables.

This semester, students are studying more ways to conserve natural resources, create more green spaces and protect the environment.

Those educational efforts will give them a head start on celebrating Earth Day on April 23.

(For more information about Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School's recycling program, contact Mary Pat O'Connor at mocannon@cardinalritter.org. For more information about the Green Ribbon Schools program, log on to www.greenribbonschools.org.) †

Heavenly direction

Belief in angels spurs educator to guide children

By John Shaughnessy

It could be just a terrific coincidence—but try to sell that explanation to Sherlynn Pillow, who believes that angels protect and watch over people.

In June of 2010, Pillow was depressed because her nearly 30-year career in education seemed to be coming to an end due to budget cuts and the closing of the school where she had worked for the past 12 years, Craig Middle School in Indianapolis.

During her last days at the school, Pillow received an unexpected phone call from Connie Zittnan, executive director of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies in the archdiocese. Pillow had previously applied for an education position with the archdiocese, but wasn't contacted. So the call from Zittnan about a job opening for a principal caught her off-guard.

"Connie told me that I probably never heard of the school, that it was a little school on the west side of Indianapolis called Holy Angels," Pillow recalls. "I busted out laughing. Connie asked me why I was laughing. I said, 'I was baptized at Holy Angels. I grew up a block from the school. It's the area I know. It's my home.'"

After a few days of interviews, Pillow had the job. "I tell people that it was God calling me home," says a smiling Pillow as she sits in her office where her door, shelves and window sills are decorated with items from her extensive collection of angels. "When I got the phone call from Connie, it was another moment when the angels were watching over me."

In her second year as principal, Pillow tries to be an angel for the 132 children at the school that serves students from kindergarten through the sixth-grade. She views the fact that she is black and from the neighborhood as an advantage in connecting with Holy Angels students, who overwhelmingly come from black families.

"The one thing that the kids at Holy Angels may have not had in the past is someone who looks like them who is a role model," says Pillow, the mother of two teenagers. "They know I came from this area. They look at me and say, 'She was able to go to college. She was able to do things.' I think the parents are a little more comfortable with me, too."

"I want to build relationships—with high expectations. I expect a lot from the students, the parents, the teachers and myself. I think any one of these kids can meet those expectations. I want them to understand that their charge as young people is to make their community better."

As a parent, Cardis Morton appreciates that approach to education for his son, Matthew, a third-grade student at Holy Angels School.

"She's a hands-on principal who cares, who listens and who gets involved," Morton says. "They don't accept bullying. And if you have a concern, she always has time to sit and talk with you and solve it. She's a blessing. I wish everybody had an opportunity to go to a Catholic school, especially this one."

Pillow views Holy Angels as a school based on the foundations of Catholic identity, academics and cultural identity—a theme that appears frequently throughout the school building.

Tributes to George Washington Carver, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., President Barack Obama and other black heroes hang in the hallways.

A prominent display honors black role models from religious life. St. Martin de Porres is hailed for using his medical skills to help the poor. Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange is praised as the founder of the Oblate Sisters of



Sherlynn Pillow, right, shares a smile with Kalissa Larsuel, a first-grade student at Holy Angels School in Indianapolis, where Pillow is the principal and a firm believer in the guidance of angels.



Above, Sherlynn Pillow has filled her principal's office at Holy Angels School in Indianapolis with figures from her extensive collection of angels.

Left, the halls of Holy Angels School in Indianapolis are marked with tributes to black leaders who have lived their faith, including Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Thea Bowman.

Providence, the first United States-based religious order of black women. St. Charles Lwanga of Uganda is saluted as a martyr who died for his Catholic faith.

"I decided to try to get the kids to understand that Catholicism is not a white religion," she says. "I've focused on people who are saints or missionaries who look like them, who are part of the Catholic Church. The Catholic identity is important to me. I like being able to voice what I believe as far as God, as far as what Jesus Christ has done in my life, to talk about men and women who have achieved great things because of their faith."

She also connects with the children through their interests.

She does Tae Bo exercises with the school's youngest children. After school, she joins students as they dance to a Michael Jackson video game. She tries to attend their Catholic Youth Organization games. And she is always challenging the older students about taking responsibility for their actions while still being there for them—even sometimes buying shoes for a child in need.

If others see the touch of an angel in what she does, Pillow downplays that comparison, saying, "I just do what needs to be done." Still, she believes she is guided by angels.

"I get up in the morning and I'm happy about coming here," she says. "I go home exhausted, but I'm still happy. I truly believe someone is watching over me and guiding me." †

Spirit of family inspires students to help teacher's baby

By John Shaughnessy



A teacher at St. Louis School in Batesville, Kyle Jolly receives a check to help with the health expenses for his first child, Landon. Students at St. Louis School raised the money, which included a donation from one girl who emptied her piggy bank. The check was presented to Jolly by St. Louis students, from left, Calvin Shenk, Jack Tonges, Sarah Meer, Abby Roell and Molly Weigel.

There are moments when teachers learn just how special their students are.

For Kyle Jolly, that understanding came in the midst of a difficult time for him and his wife, Kimberly, shortly after the birth of their first child, Landon.

When their son was born on July 22, 2011, it was soon determined that he would require surgery on his right hand, where some of his fingers had grown fused together.

Even more of concern was that he had a very severe club foot on his right leg, and he was born without one of the main bones of his right leg. So doctors have determined that it will be best to amputate Landon's right leg at the knee and fit him with a prosthetic limb—a process that will begin this spring.

So at times, it's been overwhelming for Kimberly and Kyle, who teaches physical education and third-grade math at St. Louis School in Batesville. There have been concerns about paying for the surgeries that Landon needs—concerns that family and friends have tried to help with, including the "family" of St. Louis School.

"A couple of teachers came to me at the beginning of the school year and asked if the kids could bring in some of

their loose change to help Landon," Kyle, 29, recalls.

"I'm thinking in the back of my mind, 'This is nice. They'll collect a couple hundred dollars, and this will be a way for the kids to feel a part of it.'"

Yet, Kyle's view changed later when St. Louis School principal Chad Moeller told him that the students had raised more money than anyone had expected.

"He also said they wanted to make a presentation the next week with the whole school coming together," Kyle says. "I'm still shocked by what they did. They gave me more than \$1,500."

"One of the teachers told me later that one girl came in with a bag of money that was filled with bills and coins. The teacher said, 'That's a lot of money. Do your parents know you brought this in?' The girl said, 'Yes. I emptied my piggy bank and told my mom what it was for. And my mom said it was the best decision I could make.'"

Months have passed since Kyle first heard that story, but he still gets emotional when he tells it.

"When I heard that someone had emptied their piggy bank for my little boy, I was overwhelmed," he says. "What everyone felt and did for me and my little boy showed the kind of families, the kind of kids and the kind of community we have at our school. It's really amazing." †

'We're called to serve'

Lesson in empathy connects students to homeless people

By John Shaughnessy

Abby Wuensch realized how much she had changed when she saw a man on the street holding a sign that read, "Homeless. Need food."

In similar situations in the past, the 16-year-old sophomore at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis would have looked past the man, believing that he had chosen to live on the streets, thinking that he was someone to avoid.

Yet this time, she and a friend approached the situation differently.

"We got him a piece of pizza," recalls Abby, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. "I think he was in a state of shock when we did that, but I think he was thankful, too. I've had my eyes opened. I've learned that I shouldn't be awkward around homeless people. I should give them a smile."

Abby's change in attitude came from an immersion program about homelessness that each of the 170 sophomores at Bishop Chatard High School has experienced this school year—a program started by Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeadon, one of the school's sophomore religion teachers.

Her idea to start the program developed last spring when the bishops in the United States decided that sophomore

religion classes at Catholic high schools should focus on the Paschal Mystery, the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ.

"If the students don't have an understanding of suffering, the Paschal Mystery wouldn't make



Sr. Kathleen Yeadon, O.S.B.

sense to them," Sister Kathleen says. "So I thought the best way for them to experience suffering was to go into the inner city and encounter people who suffer. The whole purpose was to try to give them an understanding of what it is like to be homeless."

A humbling moment

The program exposed the students to real-life situations they had never experienced.

They stood and slogged through a pouring rainstorm at the American Legion Mall in downtown Indianapolis—a place where homeless people can be found during the day.

They met a homeless person named Stanley, who shared his life story filled with mistakes, told them to stay in school then led them in prayer, asking God to keep the students safe and let them realize their blessings.

They walked through a shelter with homeless people, ate lunch with them and listened to their stories. They visited a room inside a shelter where everything the homeless people had in their lives fit into a plastic container.

"It's a humbling room," recalls Nick Rulong, an 18-year-old senior at Bishop Chatard High School who helped Sister Kathleen coordinate some of the trips to the areas where homeless people lived. "It makes you think about everything you



Sophomore students at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis bow their heads as they are led in prayer by a homeless person in downtown Indianapolis. The reverent scene was part of an immersion program to help students learn about the suffering that homeless people experience each day.

have in your life, and how unfortunate some people are. Since then, if I see a homeless person, I'll give them something. Seeing that room keeps me grounded. It makes me think about how small my problems are."

The experience also added substance to what Nick and the other students have been taught about service at the archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis North Deanery.

"We're called to serve," Nick says. "We're supposed to serve God first, others second and then ourselves."

'Christ comes in many disguises'

It's a message that Sister Kathleen was able to bring to life with the help of about 25 social service agencies that work to help homeless men, women and children—including the archdiocese's Holy Family Shelter, Cathedral Soup Kitchen, St. Vincent de Paul Society and several parishes.

"Each time they came, the students really worked hard helping to make casseroles, making fruit salads or making meals we would freeze for later," says Margie Pike, director of the Cathedral Soup Kitchen. "I think it was a great experience because it was really hands-on."

"Many students have preconceived ideas about the poor. Most of them are surprised at how nice and polite they are. The students also see the struggles of the people. We always talk here about St. Benedict and how he always said to welcome all as Christ. We tell them that Christ comes in many disguises."

That lesson has even changed the attitude of Bishop Chatard teachers who have helped Sister Kathleen with the program.

"It was very real for me," says Abby Funk, who teaches English and theater at the school. "Every time I would see someone on the side of the road, there was a frustration—'Yeah, they're homeless. Why don't they get a job?' Then we went to



Helping to prepare a meal for homeless people, sophomore students at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis cut vegetables at the Cathedral Soup Kitchen in Indianapolis.

the Central Library, and it was busier than any library I've ever been in. I talked to the librarian. She said the homeless people don't have the resources we have at home—the computers to do resumés, the clothes for interviews."

Funk then shared the main benefit of the immersion program for her. "It made me see the human dignity in everybody. It's made me smile at people. I recently saw a homeless man. I said, 'Hello. How are you?' His face just lit up, and he said, 'I'm fine. You have a blessed day.' He didn't ask for anything."

'Against incredible odds'

That connection, the understanding of human suffering and the appreciation of human dignity were the goals that Sister Kathleen sought for the sophomore students.

"One of the big things we worked on was not judging people," she says.

"Overall, I'd say it was an incredible experience for them. They got to do something outside of their normal world. And they encountered people they would never meet. Even when we stood out in the rain, we didn't stop. It added to the experience of how we were connected to the people who are homeless."

One more connection stands out to Sister Kathleen, making her smile as she shares it.

"I was hoping for them to see how people don't give up, how people can go against incredible odds and overcome them. We saw how good came out of suffering. They encountered a man who had been homeless and a street person for years. Now, he has a lawn care business, he's getting married and he helps the homeless."

"I think they definitely saw the connection between people's passion, the love of God and how God is calling them." †

The joy of Catholic schools: 'You never sit alone at lunch'

By John Shaughnessy

As a fourth-grade teacher at St. Roch School in Indianapolis, Dick Gallamore asked his students, "What do you like about going to a Catholic school?"

Here are some of their answers:

- "I like going to a Catholic school

because we get to learn about God and the saints."—Lillian Egan

- "I like going to a Catholic school because instead of friends, we are family."—Isabella Battiston

- "I like going to a Catholic school because you never sit alone at lunch."—Riley Prewitt

- "I like going to a Catholic school because

we collect food for the poor. We do many things for others. I enjoy doing that!!!"—Beau Laeuffer

- "I like going to a Catholic school because we all fit in."—Malachy Davis

- "I like going to a Catholic school because I get help when I need it."—Aaron Letko

- "I like going to a Catholic school because

we have prayer partners."—Katey Reed

- "I like going to a Catholic school because they have nice teachers."—Miles Marshall

- "I like Catholic schools because we have a priest like Father [James] Wilmoth. He is my favorite priest!"—Lance Brand †

HOW CAN I POSSIBLY AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS

What are Tax Credit Scholarships?

The Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship Program provides scholarship support to families who want to enroll their children in the private school of their choice. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive a minimum of a \$500 Tax Credit Scholarship.

Who qualifies for a Tax Credit Scholarship?

- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart on next page), AND
- A student who is entering Kindergarten or 1st grade, AND/OR
- A student who is coming to a private school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school.

Why should I apply now?

If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 13 years. Kindergarten and 1st grade students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for a Tax Credit Scholarship?

1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
2. To apply for funding, visit choicetrust.org/apply.

INDIANA SCHOOL VOUCHERS

What is an Indiana School Voucher?

A Voucher is a state-funded scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at a private school. Qualifying students in grades 1-8 can receive a maximum of \$4,500 per school year. High school students can receive up to 90% of the local per-student state funding amount.

Who qualifies for a Voucher?

- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart on next page), AND
- A student in grades 2-12 who is coming to a private school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A current private school student in grades 1-12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship in a prior year.

Why should I apply now?

If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 13 years. Kindergarten and 1st grade students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for a Voucher?

1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
2. To apply for funding, visit doe.in.gov/schoolchoice.



archindy.org/schools

WHAT AM I ELIGIBLE FOR?

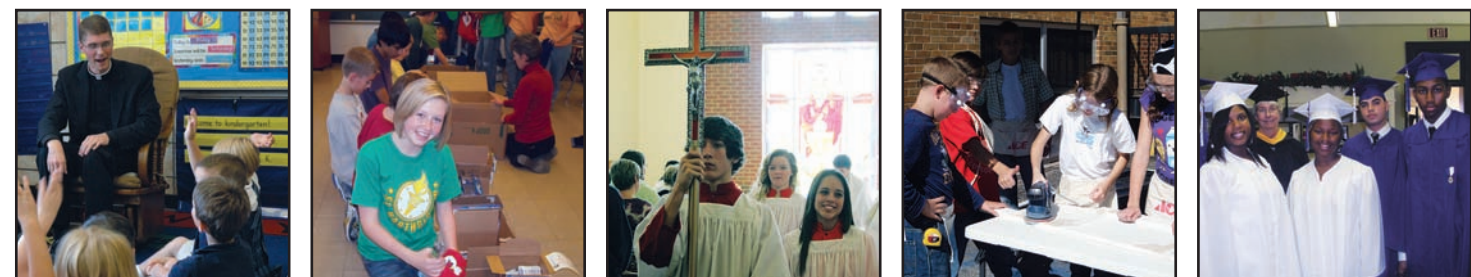
See the charts on page 10B to see if you qualify for Tax Credit Scholarships and Vouchers





ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS Catholic Schools

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
THE GOOD NEWS
archindy.org/schools



DEANERY SCHOOLS

Batesville Deanery

Aurora
St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception School (K-8)
211 Fourth St.
Aurora, IN 47001
812-926-1558

Batesville
St. Louis School (K-8)
17 St. Louis Place
Batesville, IN 47006
812-934-3310

Greensburg
St. Mary School (P-6)
210 S. East St.
Greensburg, IN 47240
812-663-2804

Lawrenceburg
St. Lawrence School (K-8)
524 Walnut St.
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
812-537-3690

New Alsace
St. Paul School (P-6)
9788 N. Dearborn Road
Guilford, IN 47022
812-623-2631

Shelbyville
St. Joseph School (P-5)
127 E. Broadway
Shelbyville, IN 46176
317-398-4202

Sunman
St. Nicholas School (P-8)
6459 E. St. Nicholas Drive
Sunman, IN 47041
812-623-2348

Bloomington Deanery

Bedford
St. Vincent de Paul School (P-8)
923 18th St.
Bedford, IN 47421
812-279-2540

Bloomington
St. Charles Borromeo School (P-8)
2224 E. Third St.
Bloomington, IN 47401
812-336-5853

Connersville Deanery
Brookville
St. Michael School (K-8)
P. O. Box J, 275 High St.
Brookville, IN 47012
765-647-4961

Connersville
St. Gabriel School (P-6)
224 W. Ninth St.
Connersville, IN 47331
765-825-7951

Richmond
Seton Catholic High School (7-12)
233 S. 5th St.
Richmond, IN 47374
765-965-6956

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (P-6)
801 W. Main St.
Richmond, IN 47374
765-962-4877

Rushville
St. Mary School (P-6)
226 E. Fifth St.
Rushville, IN 46173
765-932-3639

New Albany Deanery

Clarksville
Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School (7-12)
707 Providence Way
Clarksville, IN 47129
812-945-2538

St. Anthony of Padua School (P-8)
320 N. Sherwood Ave.
Clarksville, IN 47129
812-282-2144

Corydon
St. Joseph School (P-6)
512 N. Mulberry St.
Corydon, IN 47112
812-738-4549

Floyds Knobs
St. Mary-of-the-Knobs School (P-6)
3033 Martin Road
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119
812-923-1630

Jeffersonville
Sacred Heart School (P-8)
1842 E. Eighth St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
812-283-3123

New Albany
Holy Family School (P-8)
217 W. Daisy Lane
New Albany, IN 47150
812-944-6090

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School (P-8)
1752 Scheller Lane
New Albany, IN 47150
812-944-7676

Seymour Deanery

Columbus
St. Bartholomew School (P-8)
1306 27th St.
Columbus, IN 47201
812-372-6830

Franklin
St. Rose of Lima School (P-8)
114 Lancelot Drive
Franklin, IN 46131
317-738-3451

Madison
Father Michael Shave Memorial Jr./Sr. High School (7-12)
201 W. State St.
Madison, IN 47250
812-273-2150

Pope John XXIII School (P-6)
221 W. State St.
Madison, IN 47250
812-273-3957

North Vernon
St. Mary School (K-8)
209 Washington St.
North Vernon, IN 47265
812-346-3445

Terre Haute Deanery

Terre Haute
St. Patrick School (P-8)
449 S. 19th St.
Terre Haute, IN 47803
812-232-2157

Seymour
St. Ambrose School (P-8)
301 S. Chestnut St.
Seymour, IN 47274
812-522-3522

Private High School Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception (9-12)
1 Twister Circle
P.O. Box 200
Oldenburg, IN 47036
812-934-4440

Tell City Deanery
(No schools in this deanery)

GREATER INDIANAPOLIS DEANERY SCHOOLS

Indianapolis North Deanery

• **Bishop Chatard High School (9-12)**
5885 N. Crittenden Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-251-1451

1. **Christ the King School (K-8)**
5858 N. Crittenden Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-257-9366

2. **Immaculate Heart of Mary School (K-8)**
317 E. 57th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-255-5468

3. **St. Joan of Arc School (P-8)**
500 E. 42nd St.
Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-283-1518

4. **St. Lawrence School (P-8)**
6950 E. 46th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46226
317-543-4923

5. **St. Luke School (K-8)**
7650 N. Illinois St.
Indianapolis, IN 46260
317-255-3912

6. **St. Matthew School (K-8)**
4100 E. 56th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-251-3997

Indianapolis East Deanery

7. **St. Pius X School (K-8)**
7200 Sarto Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46240
317-466-3361

8. **St. Thomas Aquinas School (K-8)**
4600 N. Illinois St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-255-6244

9. **St. Simon the Apostle School (P-8)**
8155 Oaklandon Road
Indianapolis, IN 46236
317-826-6000

• **Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School (9-12)**
5000 Nowland Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-356-6377

10. **Holy Cross Central School (P-8) ***
125 N. Oriental St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-638-9068

11. **Holy Spirit School (P-8)**
7241 E. 10th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46219
317-352-1243

12. **Holy Name School (P-8)**
21 N. 17th Ave.
Beech Grove, IN 46107
317-784-9078

Indianapolis West Deanery

13. **St. Michael School (P-8)**
515 Jefferson Blvd.
Greenfield, IN 46140
317-462-6380

14. **St. Philip Neri School (P-8) ***
545 N. Eastern Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-636-0134

15. **St. Therese of the Infant Jesus/Little Flower School (P-8)**
1401 N. Bosart Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-353-2282

• **Roncalli High School (9-12)**
3300 Prague Road
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-787-8277

16. **Central Catholic School (K-8) ***
1155 E. Cameron St.
Indianapolis, IN 46203
317-783-7759

17. **Holy Name School (P-8)**
21 N. 17th Ave.
Beech Grove, IN 46107
317-784-9078

Indianapolis South Deanery

18. **Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ School (P-8)**
3310 S. Meadow Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46239
317-357-3316

19. **Our Lady of the Greenwood School (P-8)**
399 S. Meridian St.
Greenwood, IN 46143
317-881-1300

20. **SS. Francis and Clare School (P-8)**
5901 Olive Branch Road
Greenwood, IN 46143
317-215-2826

21. **St. Barnabas School (K-8)**
8300 Rahke Road
Indianapolis, IN 46217
317-881-7422

22. **St. Jude School (K-8)**
5375 McFarland Road
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-784-6828

23. **St. Mark the Evangelist School (K-8)**
541 E. Edgewood Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-786-4013

24. **St. Roch School (P-8)**
3603 S. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-784-9144

Indianapolis West Deanery

• **Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School (7-12)**
3360 W. 30th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46222
317-924-4333

25. **Holy Angels School (P-6) ***
2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-926-5211

26. **St. Christopher School (P-6)**
5335 W. 16th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46224
317-241-6314

27. **St. Malachy School (K-8)**
330 N. Green St.
Brownsburg, IN 46112
317-852-2242

28. **St. Michael the Archangel School (K-8)**
3352 W. 30th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46222
317-926-0516

29. **St. Monica School (K-8)**
6131 N. Michigan Road
Indianapolis, IN 46228
317-255-7153

30. **St. Susanna School (P-8)**
1212 E. Main St.
Plainfield, IN 46168
317-839-3713

Private Schools

31. **Lumen Christi Catholic School (K-12)**
580 E. Stevens St.
Indianapolis, IN 46203
317-632-3174

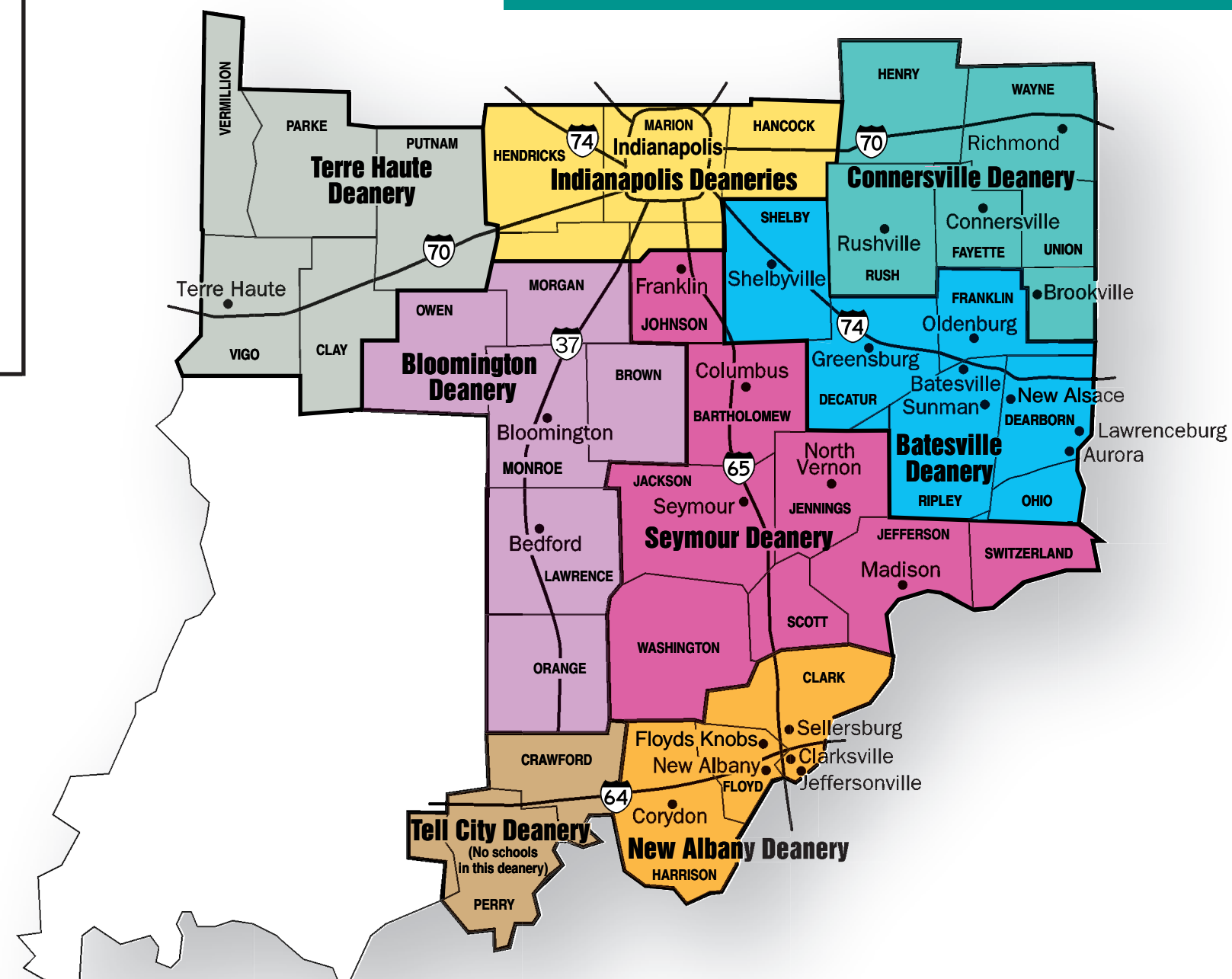
• **Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School (9-12)**
2801 W. 86th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46268
317-524-7128

• **Cathedral High School (9-12)**
5225 E. 56th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46226
317-542-1481

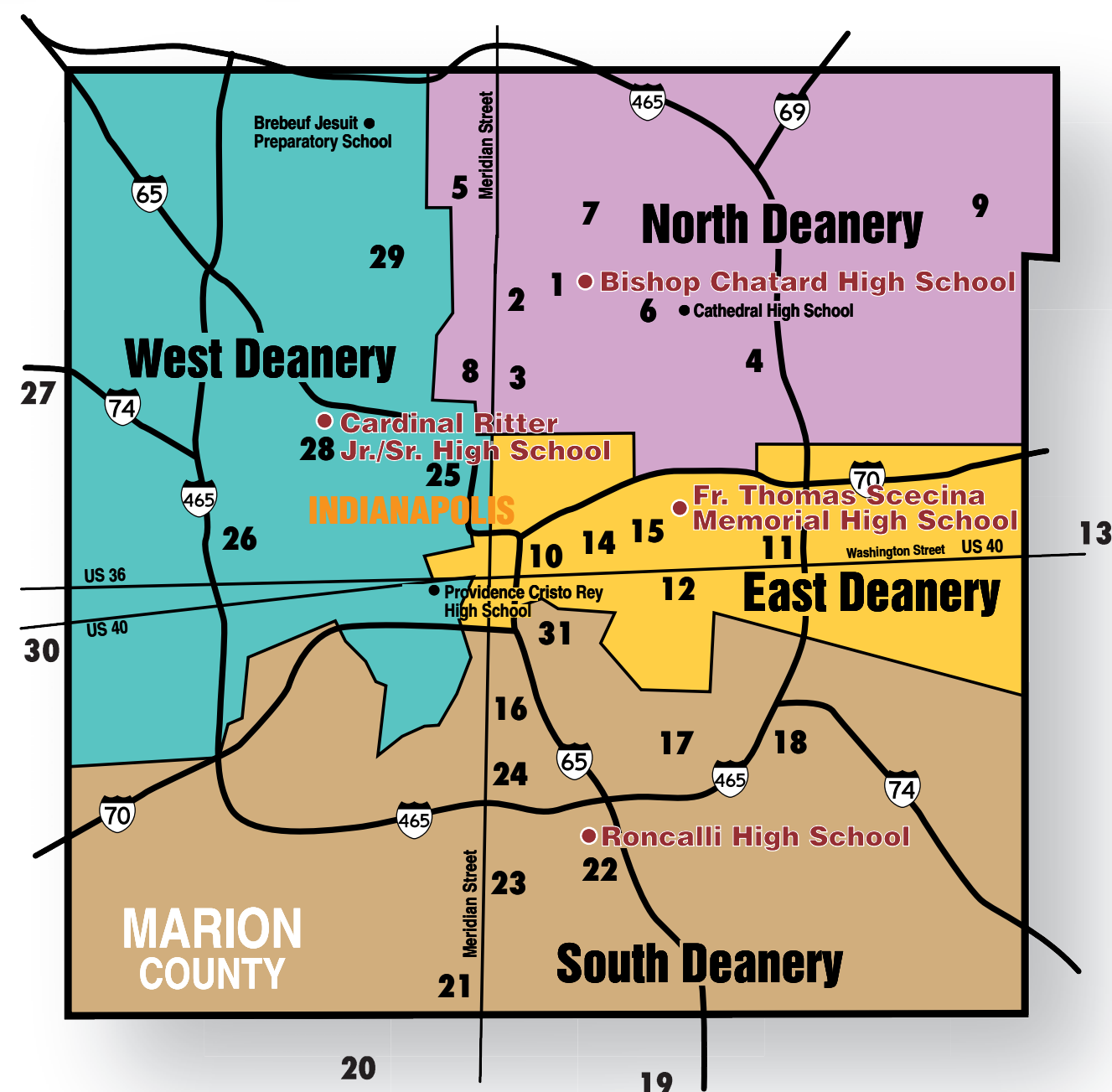
• **Providence Cristo Rey High School (9-12)**
75 N. Belleview Place
Indianapolis, IN 46222
317-860-1000

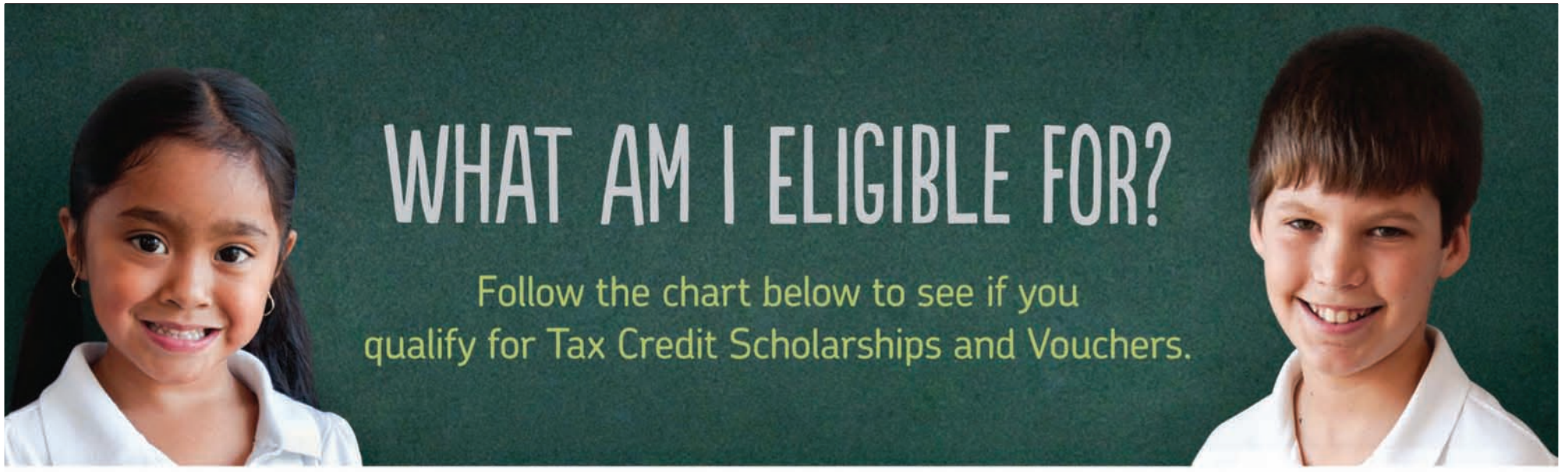
* **Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (Consortium)**

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS



GREATER INDIANAPOLIS





I'm enrolling my child in Kindergarten or 1st grade at a Catholic school.

I'm moving my child in grades 2 - 12 to a Catholic school.

I meet these eligibility requirements:

- Indiana resident
- My family is between 150% and 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

I meet these eligibility requirements:

- Indiana resident
- My child attended public school the previous year (two semesters) OR received a Tax Credit Scholarship, or Voucher, the previous school year.

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP

AND one of the following:

My family is between 150% and 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

My family is at 150%, or below, the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

SCHOOL VOUCHER

Income Eligibility Levels			
Household Size	90% Voucher 100% FR Lunch	50% Voucher 150% FR Lunch	Tax Credit Scholarship 200% FR Lunch
2	\$27,214	\$40,821	\$54,428
3	\$34,281	\$51,421	\$68,562
4	\$41,348	\$62,022	\$82,696
5	\$48,415	\$72,622	\$96,830
6	\$55,482	\$83,223	\$110,964

Contact your local Catholic school or for more information about schools, contact:



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Office of Catholic Education
(317) 236-1430
(800) 382-9836
www.archindy.org/oce/



Prince of Peace schools graduates return to form new leaders

By Sean Gallagher

MADISON—Philip Kahn and Jill Mires were classmates for 12 years at Pope John XXIII School and Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison.

Although they spent much of their childhood and teenage years together, they never imagined when they graduated from Shawe in 1987 that, 21 years later, they would work together to ensure the future of the schools that are a ministry of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison.

Mires is in her fourth year as Pope John's principal after previously teaching there for 17 years. And Kahn is in his third year as president of the two schools.

"It's been fun," Mires says with a laugh about working with her classmate. "We talk about how things have changed so much. Things that we got away with. And now things that we don't want our kids to be thinking of doing."

"But we both just want these schools to be so successful. That's the goal, to make them successful and sustainable for our children and grandchildren."

Kahn and Mires are leaders at Pope John XXIII and Shawe. And they work together with Father Christopher Craig, Prince of Peace's pastor, in making the schools as good as they can be and in promoting them in the wider community.

Father Craig also graduated from Pope John XXIII and Shawe, earning his high school diploma in 1983.

Just as the three graduates returned to Madison and the schools that they love, many of the teachers who taught them are still on the staff at Pope John XXIII and Shawe.

Father Craig said it's that tight-knit community that draws people to the schools and keeps them there.

"It's the sense of community and the family spirit," he said. "I think it's the Church, that feeling of being a part of the body of Christ. We've had so many common experiences together—joyful experiences and also struggles of people that have lost family members."

Kahn knows from experience how the schools' communities can be a support in times of trial.

The youngest of four siblings, his father died when he was a young child.

"The support and the family atmosphere that I got from teachers and friends and families ... really helped my family through a tough time," Kahn said. "I think that helped create that bond at an

Photo by Sean Gallagher



Jill Mires, left, principal of Pope John XXIII School in Madison, speaks with sixth-grade students Summer Martin, Leigh Ann Gaminde and Erin Cooper on Jan. 11 about a presentation board created for the CLASS ("Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students") program.

early age that I have with the schools."

That bond led him to walk away from a career at Eli Lilly & Company to return to his hometown and work with people like Mires and Father Craig to form the next generation of leaders to come out of Pope John XXIII and Shawe.

A young adult who is working with them in this mission is Chelsea Sims, 24, the first-grade teacher at Pope John XXIII.

She attended Pope John XXIII and graduated from Shawe in 2006. Her first-grade teacher at Pope John XXIII was Mires.

"I knew right then that she was going to make a great educator," Mires says with pride.

Now Sims is enjoying doing the same thing that her first-grade teacher did—recognizing the gifts in her students and encouraging them to excel.

"I have several little girls in here that I could see being teachers one day," Sims said. "It's very rewarding to find that spark

in them, and to light it and make it go forward, especially when they're interested in it and they know that you're interested in making it happen."

Not all of the students who go through Pope John XXIII and Shawe become leaders in education. Some, like

Jefferson County Sheriff John Wallace, become leaders in the broader community.

Wallace attended Pope John XXIII and graduated from Shawe in 1980. After serving for nearly 25 years on Madison's police department, including four as its chief of police, he was elected sheriff in 2010.

"Those ... school years are your most

formative years," he said. "I wouldn't be sitting here today if I wasn't fortunate enough to have had the parents that I had and then had my Catholic education. It's a major factor in who I am."

At Pope John XXIII, Mires sees seeds of leadership being planted in her students,

both in their academic studies and in learning an array of life skills, such as creativity, generosity and manners through a program called CLASS—an acronym for "Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students."

Fifth- and sixth-grade students at Pope John XXIII hone leadership skills in the program by teaching their peers and students in lower grades these skills on a monthly basis as ambassadors.

Erin Cooper, a sixth-grader at Pope John XXIII, is an ambassador in the program for the school's first-grade class.

"I'm so much more comfortable talking in front of people," Erin said. "I know how to act ... and how to be a role model. I'm a lot more confident than I was a few years ago."

That goal guides Mires and all the faculty and staff at Pope John XXIII and Shawe.

"My hope is that when everybody leaves Pope John [and Shawe], they have a good foundation to make good decisions, to be a lifelong learner and to be a good citizen, along with being strong academically," Mires said. "If they can do those things when they leave our doors, I think we've made our mark." †

"It's very rewarding to find that spark in them, and to light it and make it go forward, especially when they're interested in it and they know that you're interested in making it happen."

—Chelsea Sims

The joy of Catholic schools: Simple tools offer lasting lessons about relationships

By Emerson Wolff

At St. Luke the Evangelist School, students are privileged to have the opportunity to participate in many special events. The eighth-graders' trip to Camp Rancho Framasa in Brown County offers a unique opportunity to bond and connect with classmates in an outside setting away from school. The activity that I cherished the most was the campfire.

When we first arrived, we laughed and sang camp songs led by Mrs. (Tara) DeWitt and Mrs. (Tara) Strohl, but soon the chatter became quiet when the topic of the evening grew serious.

Emerson Wolff

Mrs. DeWitt passed out tubes of toothpaste and paper plates to several people. The partners were instructed to squirt out all of the toothpaste onto the plate. All the partners were able to squeeze their toothpaste onto the plate without a problem.

Then Mrs. DeWitt told us to put all the toothpaste we had squirted out on the plate back into the tube. This task seemed nearly impossible, and none of the groups were successful in their attempts. The significance of the toothpaste, Mrs. DeWitt told us, was that it represented our words. It is easy to quickly say hurtful and unkind words, but much harder to clean or mend the damage that these words can cause.

We can never take back the hurtful words we have said to our peers just like we couldn't put the toothpaste back into the tube.

Later, Mrs. (Pam) Scheck shared with us her personal experiences about bullying. She gave the analogy that

when someone hurts you, it is like they are shooting an arrow through your heart. She then proceeded to hand all of us paper arrows and told our class to write down all the hurtful words we have spoken or others have said to us.

After several minutes of reflection, everyone threw their arrows into the fire and watched them burn. Suddenly, all the emotions of the night ran together and slowly many students began to cry. We walked around hugging each other while tears streamed down our cheeks. No one asked us to cry and hug one another, yet we did. We made an emotional connection without saying a word.

At the closing ceremony, we described each other not just as classmates, but as a family. We all made a pact to make this last year our best ever.

(Emerson Wolff is an eighth-grade student at St. Luke the Evangelist School in Indianapolis.) †

The joy of Catholic schools: 'We can make an immense difference together,' student says

By Katie Pankow

At our First Monday Celebration, the whole student body gathers in the gym to embrace our faith and to celebrate what students did the previous month to help those in need. First Monday is started with the usual prayers, pledge and birthday announcements. One of the greatest parts, though, is when we recognize all the people

Katie Pankow

who did wonderful things for our community.

Some examples are when students have guests donate money for those in need instead of getting birthday presents or when a family goes to another country to help build houses for hurricane victims. This helps us realize that we can help the world individually, and that we can make an immense difference together.

To end First Monday, the middle school choir sings uplifting songs. The voices of the

choir echo through the gym and remind us that singing is one of the highest forms of prayer.

First Monday is one of the countless reasons why I am thankful that my parents sent me to St. Luke the Evangelist School.

(Katie Pankow is an eighth-grade student at St. Luke the Evangelist School in Indianapolis.) †

Small school systems provide new approach to Catholic education

By Mary Ann Garber

Three small “school systems” in the archdiocese are enhancing the ways that the Church provides its ministry of Catholic education to students of all ages during this challenging economic time.

In 2009, St. Gabriel the Archangel School and St. Michael the Archangel School in Indianapolis were consolidated by the archdiocese to form the West Deanery Unified Catholic Schools Inc. with nearby Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School.

The merger of the elementary schools on the St. Michael Parish campus next to the deanery junior and senior high school enables the archdiocese to better serve the students from those adjacent parishes by sharing administrative and academic resources as well as governance by one board of directors.

This parish partnership helped to resolve some longstanding financial and enrollment concerns affecting both elementary schools.

Two other small school systems already in place in the archdiocese are achieving similar successes for parishes and families in east-central and southern Indiana.

Seton Catholic Schools in Richmond and Prince of Peace Schools in Madison also share a governance structure and a variety of resources with their elementary schools and high schools.

G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of Catholic education for the archdiocese, said the St. Gabriel and St. Michael consolidation resulted from a 2009 study of the Indianapolis West Deanery schools approved by Archbishop [now emeritus] Daniel M. Buechlein as the best use of educational resources and facilities for the two parishes, which are only three miles apart.

“It’s a success story, but it wasn’t easy,” Peters said. “There were some struggles getting there. ... Elementary enrollment is up by 27 students this year.”

Sarah Watson, principal of the consolidated elementary school, brings a unique perspective to her ministry.

She graduated from St. Michael School, returned to her parish years later as a youth minister then was appointed principal of St. Gabriel School, where she served for seven years and assisted with the transition duties for the merger.

“Both schools were performing well academically, but both suffered from declining enrollment,” Watson said. “This year, our [combined] enrollment is 280 students in pre-kindergarten through the eighth grade. Our school serves both parish communities as well as a number of other church communities. ... We are a very diverse school religiously and ethnically.”

Last July, with the assistance of Catholic School Management Inc., the board of directors of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School was reconfigured to include the elementary school.

“Because of the partnership with Cardinal Ritter High School, we are able to expand what we can offer to our students on a daily basis,” Watson said. “The academic possibilities that have opened up between the two schools really benefit the students and families.”

“We have seventh-graders and eighth-graders who take advanced language arts and mathematics classes at the junior high level at Cardinal Ritter,” she said. “Most of our eighth-graders will graduate at the end of the year with dual credits in language arts, composition, digital communication and honors algebra.”

The elementary school and Cardinal Ritter also share faculty members, she said, who teach classes at both schools.

“We provide an exemplary education for our students,” Watson said. “But this was not an easy process for the two parishes because it required sacrifices. We are grateful for their support. We also are grateful to the board and committee volunteers that worked through this partnership process for two years. We would not be here today without their help. We have come together, we are unified and we are blessed to have each other.”

Greg Perkins, Cardinal Ritter’s president

Photo by Mary Ann Garber



Sarah Watson, principal of the consolidated St. Michael and St. Gabriel elementary schools in Indianapolis, helps kindergartner Mia Rodriguez with an assignment in teacher Lisa Zetzl’s class on Jan. 12 at the Indianapolis West Deanery school.

and administrative officer of the West Deanery Unified Catholic Schools Inc., oversees the principals of both schools—Jo Hoy and Watson—who work together with Perkins as a team on administrative matters.

“I think the most important aspect of this is that it is a different approach to managing our Catholic schools,” Perkins said. “It is a different governance model. ... It helps relieve the parishes of some administrative burdens because running a school is not easy. ... It is a very practical, resourceful and efficient approach that allows for more central organization to focus on the needs.”

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School students represent West Deanery parishioners from Indianapolis, Avon, Plainfield and Brownsburg.

In Richmond, Seton Catholic High School principal Rick Ruhl said collaborating on planning, curriculum and student life issues as a small school system has many benefits for the students at the high school and two elementary school campuses.

“We now have a single board of directors for governance of the entire Seton Catholic Schools system,” he said. “The exciting thing that we are finding in our unification as a preschool through grade 12 system is that we are approaching these issues in a much more systematic fashion.”

“We consider ourselves to be a family, and we take advantage of opportunities to gather together more often than we have in the past,” Ruhl said. “It has strengthened the bonds between the elementary school and the high school.”

Three years ago, Seton Catholic Schools—Seton Catholic Jr./Sr. High School and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary School—began a four-year strategic planning process with assistance from Catholic School Management Inc. and the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education to reconfigure the board, develop long-range goals and identify areas for possible growth as a school system.

A key to this reorganization and planning is a greatly expanded board committee structure that addresses the various planning areas.

“The support of the ministry of Catholic education by the good folks in the Richmond Catholic Community has been phenomenal,” Ruhl said. “What I’m most proud of is our exciting integration of new technology.”

“Nine of our high school classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards,” he said. “These devices allow our teachers to have much more flexibility in their methodology and approaches to classroom teaching. Students in grades seven through

Photo by Mary Ann Garber



Jansen Clark, a fifth-grade student at the consolidated elementary school, listens to a class discussion on Jan. 12.

Photo by Sean Gallagher



Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School senior Chloe Storm, from left, senior Taylor Davis and junior Joe Nchia of Madison share basic information about the French language during a presentation to Pope John XXIII School students in Shawe teacher Aline Schafer’s classroom.

12 have Netbook computers that they carry with them throughout the day, use in every classroom then take home as well.”

In Madison, Philip Kahn, president of Prince of Peace Schools Inc., as well as an alumnus, said it is easy to operate as one school system and collaborate on educational programming because Pope John XXIII Elementary School and Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School are only 100 feet apart. The schools have operated with a single parish school commission for many years.

“Every month, we have an all-school Mass for the kindergarten through the 12th grade students,” Kahn said. “The community is also welcome to attend the all-school Masses, which is nice.”

High school students serve as mentors for elementary school students, he said, and occasionally help teach elementary classes.

“We promote a family environment,” Kahn said. “We tout Prince of Peace Schools as a small community within a small community. Madison has about 13,000 residents, and people take care of each other here.”

Sharing resources helps keep the cost of Catholic education affordable, he said. “We are always looking at how we can benefit from sharing resources, whether it is copy machines or assigning teachers to different roles at both schools. We work hard to provide a family atmosphere, safe environment and great Catholic education.” †

First education summit marks new era for Catholic schools

By John Shaughnessy

It was a defining moment for Catholic education in Indiana—a moment when the issues of the Indiana school voucher program, the future of Catholic schools in the state and the importance of Catholic identity in schools were addressed in a historic education summit.

For the first time, educational leaders from the state's five dioceses met at an education summit to discuss the different ways they can collaborate to make Catholic education even stronger statewide.

When the two-day summit at Marian University in Indianapolis ended, education leaders from the five dioceses—Evansville, Gary, Indianapolis, Lafayette and Fort Wayne-South Bend—had established the groundwork for a new marketing campaign and several other initiatives that could “allow even more students to experience the great, quality Catholic education.”

“We all have the same mission in the state of Indiana,” said Kathy Mears, an assistant superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, who wrote the executive summary of the Catholic Education Summit 2011 that was held on Nov. 29-30. “We haven’t been maximizing, through collaboration and cooperation, all the gifts we’ve been given. With this approach, the possibilities are endless.”

A main factor that led to the summit was the Indiana school voucher program that became law on July 1, 2011—a program that offers state-funded, financial assistance to families of certain income levels to help them select a school of their choice for their children. (For information about the program and how to apply, see pages 7B and 10B in this supplement.)

While the voucher program connects the school systems of the five dioceses even

more and offers opportunities for increased enrollment, it also creates the challenge that the Catholic identity of these schools is not lost as they “become more involved in the educational reform movement in Indiana,” Mears noted.

“We want to make sure our faith is integrated into the standards of what we teach,” Mears said. “If we’re going to teach about the civil rights movement, in addition to talking about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we’ll talk about Cardinal [Joseph E.] Ritter and how he integrated Catholic schools in Indianapolis 15 years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. In Biology, we’ll talk about the sanctity of life.”

Another challenge is to continue to develop teachers and administrators who can teach the faith and lead students to academic excellence—while also finding ways to better compensate those Catholic educators.

“The gap between a Catholic school teacher’s pay and a public school teacher’s pay continues to widen,” Mears said. “I don’t think the average parent knows the difference in compensation. We’re looking at different compensation models.”

Holding the first summit at Marian University also showcased the benefits and possibilities of connecting Catholic elementary schools and high schools to nearby Catholic colleges.

“The state of Indiana talks about P-12 education [preschool to 12th grade],” Mears said. “We think it needs to be P-16. There’s expertise at the college level that we can use. I believe other Catholic universities will come on board for the next summit.”

The summit has already led the school systems of the five dioceses to embrace the same marketing theme that will be used by Catholic schools in Indiana—“Catholic Schools: The Good News.”

“We hope it comes to mean Catholic education in Indiana,” Mears said. “The Good News means the Gospel, which is our evangelization. The Good News also means Catholic schools are good for kids.”



Marian University president Daniel Elsener makes a point during an education summit that involved educational leaders from Indiana’s five dioceses. The summit was held on Nov. 29-30 at the Indianapolis college.

Plans to continue the education summit among the five dioceses are also good news for the future of Catholic education in Indiana, according to Mears.

“I think the summits will help make our Catholic schools strong and viable,” she

said. “Together, we’re going to consider a lot more ideas than we did before. The result will be that we Catholics will come together in communion and community to develop our students into faith-filled adults. That’s the real goal.” †

2011-12 facts about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Catholic schools:	69
Elementary schools:	58 (26 in Marion County)
High schools:	11 (seven in Marion County)
(includes four private high schools)	
Preschool programs:	44 (Pre-K programs for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds)
Extended care programs:	58 (Pre-K-8, before and after-school care or both)

Professional staff: 1,703 (full-time and part-time)

Enrollment 2011-12 (Unofficial Oct. 1, 2011, enrollment):

Total preschool-12:	22,558
Preschool:	1,939
Elementary (K-8):	14,932
High school (9-12):	5,687

Religious composition:	Elementary	High school
Catholic:	85 %	92 %
Non-Catholic:	15 %	8 %

High school graduation rate (Class of 2011): 99 % (in four years or less)
Percent of graduates entering college (2011): 97 %

NOTE: All figures above this line include private Catholic high schools.

Average tuition rates, first child (est. 2011):	Catholic	Non-Catholic
Elementary schools:	\$3,809	\$5,053
Interparochial high schools:	\$6,965	\$8,813

NOTE: Elementary tuitions are set at the parish level and vary greatly. Schools receive parish subsidies except for private Catholic high schools, which are not included in these figures.

Estimated Operating Costs of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese (est. 2011):


Elementary schools cost-per-pupil:	\$4,900
Interparochial high schools cost-per-pupil:	\$8,184

Total operating cost of archdiocesan schools (est. 2011): \$110 million

(Estimated using 2011 enrollment excluding capital costs and private high school costs)

Annual savings to Indiana taxpayers (estimate): \$200 million

(Estimated at aggregate Indiana public school 2010 K-12 composite estimated expenditure per pupil of \$10,120 x 2011 Catholic school enrollment, excluding private schools)




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Sacred connections

Students' outreach creates special bond with senior citizens

By John Shaughnessy

FRANKLIN—Ryan Long and Sarah Barnard shared the same feeling of being nervous and overwhelmed as they entered the Franklin United Methodist Community for senior citizens with the other students.

The two eighth-grade students from St. Rose of Lima School in Franklin hadn't had the opportunity in their young lives to interact with senior citizens who have Alzheimer's disease. So school counselor Nikki Kirch thought the experience could help the fifth- through eighth-graders make a difference to the senior residents. She also hoped the experience would make an impact on the students.

At 13, Sarah wasn't sure what to expect when she and a few friends sat at a table with a group of grandmothers.

"It was difficult at some points," Sarah said in recalling the visit in November of 2011. "I don't have grandparents who have Alzheimer's. One of them couldn't remember the names of her grandchildren. That made me sad."

Her mood started to change when she began a conversation with a talkative woman who is 106.

"The two of us just talked and talked, and we ended up laughing together," Sarah said with a smile. "By the end, I enjoyed just being able to talk to them and know we were making them feel better."

For Ryan, the ice breaker moment in the two-hour visit came when he was part of an interactive game with the residents. The students and the senior citizens bounced balloons around the activity room, keeping the balloons in the air by hitting them with large, foam sticks.

"At first, it was an overwhelming experience, but when we began the game, I saw the smiles on their faces," said Ryan, 13. "It was like they were getting their inner-kid out. It was a lot of fun. By the end, the experience seemed rewarding for all of us."

While community service for students has always been a significant focus at St. Rose of Lima School, the visit with the senior citizens who have Alzheimer's disease was also designed to lead the students to a deeper understanding of their faith.

"We spent all of October talking about the value and sacredness of life," said Estelle Britner, eighth-grade teacher at St. Rose School. "We talked a lot about babies, but most of them don't have the experience of seeing older people being sick. This let us talk about the sacredness of life at both ends of life."

The visits also offered the students the opportunity to look beyond the images they had of the senior citizens, and personally connect with them.

"It was an eye-opener for the kids to see that these aren't people they should be afraid of," Britner said. "One of the ladies told the kids that her grandson is playing volleyball in college so our volleyball players were excited about that. And one of the women said her grandson was playing football in college so our football players were excited about that. The whole experience was great for so many of the kids."

That result was also true for the senior citizens, according to Jack Cronin, activities director at Franklin United Methodist Community.

"The residents talked about the visit for days," Cronin said. "The students



Above, during a visit to the Franklin United Methodist Community, St. Rose of Lima students Nate Fries, left, and Ethan Sullivan bring smiles to senior citizens as they use large, foam sticks to bounce balloons around the activity room.

Left, for St. Rose of Lima student Sarah Barnard, a visit to the Franklin United Methodist Community offers an opportunity to talk and laugh with senior citizens.

exercised with them, and they were singing songs and playing games with balloons and a parachute. About a week after the final visit, we got about 25 to

30 cards from the students. We passed them out, and the residents really cherished those cards. We're looking forward to doing it again." †

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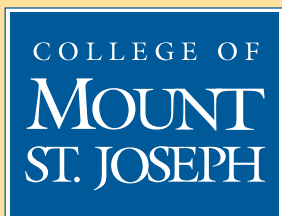
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Providence graduate embraces faith in home, life and business

By Christa Hoyland

Special to *The Criterion*

It took 15 years, but the faith that was nurtured in Katie Butt Beckort's heart while she was a student at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville finally blossomed.

Raised in the Presbyterian faith, Beckort came to Providence in seventh grade because her mother, a public school teacher, wanted her to have the education that Providence provided. But she learned so much more.

"The teachers made a good impression on me, especially my religion teachers," said Beckort, a 1995 Providence graduate. "My religion classes and learning the history of the faith built an appreciation for traditional religion in me."

Still, she had stopped attending church in recent years. And when her mother encouraged her to return to Sunday services, Beckort instead chose to attend Mass. In the spring of 2011, she was received into the full communion of the Church at St. Michael Church in Bradford.

"What I was taught at Providence just stuck with me," she explained. "I've always been intrigued by it. As I grew older, I had a lot more respect and understanding of the Catholic faith, and I wanted to be part of it."

Now a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, she plans to have her three sons—Blaine, 5, Duke, 4, and newborn, Henry—baptized in the Catholic faith.

"I have a strong passion for Catholic education, and I want my children to experience it," she said.

Beckort said it's amazing that she ever became a Providence student. Her childhood home in Corydon was about 30 miles from the school. Besides, no one else in her family is Catholic, and her father, Thomas Butt, was reluctant to send her to Catholic schools because he feared alienating his independent-pharmacy customers.

Despite those obstacles, a good education for Beckort was the primary concern of her mother. At Providence, she

worked hard to meet the high expectations of her teachers and learned the need for community service. As she developed her strong work ethic and commitment to serve others, the then shy seventh-grade student began to grow in confidence.

"Not only did the educational experience change my life, but it was the atmosphere and the respect level that students were expected to maintain that made a lasting impression on me," she said.

Today, she is a successful businesswoman who owns two Corydon-based businesses—the Real Estate Co. of Southern Indiana, which she co-owns, and Butt Drugs, the independent pharmacy founded by her late grandfather, William Butt, in 1952. She also is the bookkeeper for her husband Brian's auction business. And she gives back to Providence as a member of its marketing committee.

Beckort said she never intended to take over the family business after earning a business degree at Indiana University. Yet, after helping at the store during a break between jobs, she has never left.

Her business and marketing acumen has helped the independent pharmacy compete with popular chain stores by offering such services as free curbside pick-up and delivery. She also modernized the store by installing a pharmacy automation system that fills, labels and caps each prescription bottle—technology not often found in small, independent stores.

Still, Beckort keeps the personal touch and knows many customers by name. Just as she learned at Providence, she treats each customer like they are the most important person in the store.

"At the end of the day," she said, "you see what you do for a lot of people."

(Christa Hoyland is director of communications and alumni relations for Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville.) †



Katie Butt Beckort continues to use the principles she learned at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville to lead her life, her family and Butt Drugs, the independent pharmacy in Corydon that was founded by her late grandfather.

Archdiocesan students succeed at high levels on assessment tests

Third- through eighth-grade students at Catholic elementary schools in the archdiocese took the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress in the spring of 2011.

The Indiana Department of Education has a goal that 90 percent of all Indiana students will pass ISTEP+ by 2012. More than 90 percent of archdiocesan Catholic school students passed both the English/language arts (93 percent

passing) and mathematics (92 percent passing) portions of the test for 2011 as compared to 73 percent of students at all Indiana schools taking the test.

On a related measure, 93 percent of archdiocesan schools compared to 51 percent of all Indiana public schools earned the top 2 percent Public Law 221 performance categories on ISTEP+ scores and annual improvement, while 1 percent of archdiocesan schools and

20 percent of all public schools placed in the bottom two categories. Archdiocesan schools have steadily increased students' performance since 2007.

The archdiocese was recently honored by the College Board as an "AP District of the Year" for the increased number of high school students taking advanced placement (AP) classes and for the high marks that students are earning (3 or higher on the AP exams). †



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Principal overcomes challenges to lead high school students

By John Shaughnessy

In every child's life, seeds of doubt and seeds of inspiration get planted.

Sooner or later, one of those seeds takes root, making all the difference in how a life blooms.

Just look at the life of John Hegarty, principal of Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis. His story could serve as a guide for any student who has ever wondered and worried about overcoming the challenges to a dream.

When Hegarty was a teenager, the seeds of doubt were spread for him when college advisers in both the United States and Ireland recommended that he shouldn't pursue a career in education because he had a speech impediment that caused him to stutter noticeably.

In contrast, there were the seeds of inspiration from two of his teachers and Blessed John Paul II.

Hegarty knew the power of a teacher from the time he entered a two-room schoolhouse in Ireland as a child, and saw how one teacher challenged all his students—a group that ranged from fifth-graders to eighth-graders—and made each one of them believe they were the most important student in his class.

The young Hegarty also knew the unflinching support of a high school English teacher in Ireland who told him to never back away from following his dream of becoming a teacher.

Then there was the inspiration of Pope John Paul II, who came to Ireland in 1979—the first time a pope had ever visited that country. Nineteen then, Hegarty and three of his friends squeezed into a tiny Fiat 850 and drove through the night to participate in a Mass that the pope was celebrating in Galway for the young people of Ireland. The four friends found themselves among about 500,000 people stretched across the Irish countryside.

"It strengthened my faith," recalls Hegarty, who was born in the United States before his family returned to his mother's hometown in Ireland when he was a child. "It made me want to serve in some capacity. He had that joy about him, that smile, that inner peace."

Still, even with those inspirational influences, the seeds of doubt stemming from Hegarty's speech impediment kept him from following his dream. Nine years passed before he returned to the United States in 1988, coming to Indianapolis where a brother lived. It would take another two years—and a visit from two men—for him to see that he truly had a

future in working with young people.

"It was 1990, and two guys came down to the bar where I was working as a bartender, and asked me if I would coach the boys' soccer team at Scecina," recalls Hegarty, who played Gaelic football and semi-pro soccer in England in the 1980s. "As I began coaching, the desire to teach came back."

In the 1990s, Hegarty married his wife, Patricia, welcomed two sons into the world, continued to work and pursued his degree in education at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. He earned his degree in 1999, the same year he started teaching at Scecina. A short while later, the severity of his speech impediment faded significantly.

"It started to go away the first year I was teaching," he says. "I noticed that the kids didn't care. I felt if the kids didn't care, then I shouldn't worry about anyone else. In the 20 years I've been at Scecina, I've never heard a child mock me because of my speech impediment. That's amazing. I came to the realization that it's part of who I am, that's how God made me, and if you have a problem with that, talk to God. It's not totally gone, but that approach has helped it to go away."

It also helped Hegarty to realize he had found a home at Scecina. In 2005, he became the vice principal. In 2010, he became the vice president of student life. He started as principal this school year.

"My strengths are academics, teacher development and a student-centered approach to education," he says. "At Scecina, we have a huge cross-section of society. Every child comes in with a different set of strengths and weaknesses. And we're small enough [343 students] that we're in a position to know what those strengths and weaknesses are, and direct our attention to them."

One of the strengths of the school—its foundation of faith—led to one of the most memorable moments that Hegarty has experienced at Scecina. It came on the morning of the terrorist attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I had an Honors English class that morning," he recalls. "We started praying the rosary in the classroom. That was so powerful a moment when those students got down on their knees and prayed. It helped us get through it. It's a blessing to teach in a Catholic school."

Fans of Hegarty believe it's a blessing that he's an educator at a Catholic school.

"The Catholic faith is at the core of his identity," says



As the principal of Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis, John Hegarty always makes students the priority. Here, he interacts with Scecina students.

Joseph Therber, president of Scecina High School. "John recognizes the unique gifts and strengths in every student. He's a hard worker with a great sense of humor. John values our traditions, values and mission. He has been a significant factor in Scecina Memorial's growth and success for many years."

Hegarty had such an influence on Francisco Gomez that the 1998 Scecina graduate became a teacher after he played soccer for Hegarty and served as an assistant coach with him.

"He's the type of person who puts kids first," Gomez says. "When he coached me, everyone on the team played hard for him because he cared about us, and we cared about him. He's just a wonderful human being."

For Hegarty, it all comes down to a motto that guides his life, a motto that dominates a wall in his office: "May you live every day of your life with faith, hope, love."

It's an Irish blessing from an educator who overcame the challenges to live his dream.

"I feel very strongly that I'm a role model for kids," he says. "I have an impediment, but it's not a rock, it's not a wall. I want to tell people that whatever they have, you can get around it. It may slow you down, but it can't stop you. We have some kids here who have speech impediments. I tell them they can do whatever they want—especially teach." †



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