

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

SETON CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL: BUILT ON LOVE

Seton Catholic High School has become a source of pride for Richmond's Catholic community, especially in light of the recent graduation ceremony of its first class. But before any student earned a diploma, the long-awaited high school depended on the love and support of local Catholics.

In 1936, the community of Richmond closed the doors of its Catholic high school and focused on elementary education. Throughout the years, the Catholic education system continued to evolve. In 1976, St. Andrew and St. Mary schools consolidated to become St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Elementary School named after the first American-born female saint. In 1981, Holy Family joined the mix, completing the consolidation of Richmond's Catholic elementary schools.

"Parents loved what Seton was doing and many wanted their children to benefit from the system for four more years," Father Riebe, pastor of Richmond's three parishes, Holy Family, St. Andrew and St. Mary said. "The high academic level was recognized, the spirit of the school was strong and a true sense of community developed as a result of the Seton school system. The kids loved going to school!"

To foster the revival of the Catholic high school system, a steering committee, formed in 1996, oversaw a preliminary study required by the archdiocese. The study revealed that the Richmond community possessed enough interest, the right demographics and adequate financial support to start and maintain a small high school.

The community raised approximately \$2 million in pledges over a three-year period—clear evidence of the desire and need for the high school. This support, in addition to the Legacy of Hope capital campaign, allowed renovation to begin on a building dating from 1912.

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Father Riebe explained that the high school has become the pride of Richmond Catholic Community. Many individuals, like some members of the kitchen staff, volunteer their time as part of their stewardship to the school. In fact, a local businessman became certified as the school bus driver for special field trips.

In 2002, the doors of Seton Catholic High School opened, welcoming its "pioneer" students. On June 3, 2006, 11 of these students became the first graduates of the school, leaving 125 classmates that have since enrolled in the school.

"We want to produce leaders for the community and Church who are grounded in Gospel values," Father Riebe said. "We want to create an army of people who are willing to sacrifice, who think of others and who care for the poor. We are forming people with a heart for service."

An example of this can be seen in Joe Beard, a soon-to-be-senior at Seton High School who hopes to attend Purdue University and become a civil engineer. Although the Seton school system has prepared Beard for a lifetime of success, it has also provided him with an invaluable support system of friends since elementary school.

"You can't pass up a great education for anything," Beard said. "Seton has helped me build character and gain knowledge from my teachers—every aspect of this high school is great."

While Richmond Catholic Community has seen tremendous success with the school, it maintains a strong vision for the future. The three parishes hope to build a gymnasium at Seton Catholic High School that will produce a space large enough for tri-parish gatherings and provide students with a much-needed facility. Funds raised through the Legacy for Our Mission campaign will help continue the development of the high school.

"There will always be financial challenges," Father Riebe said. "But that's where God provides for us. He inspires people to help support us in that way."

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the local and changing needs of Archdiocesan Ministries such as Catholic education. By contributing to the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic education programs and distributed to schools in need such as Seton Catholic High School.