

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK SUPPLEMENT

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS



Peer program strives to spare students from bullying, page 12B.



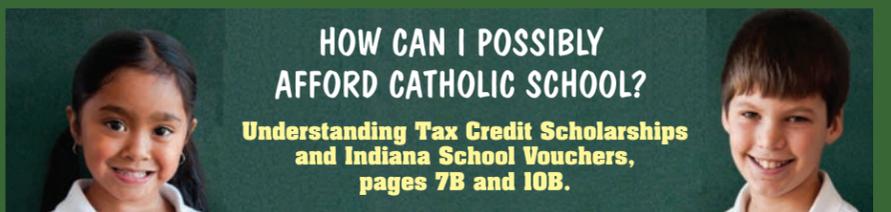
Family values guide students' special effort to help children in shelters, page 11B.



New assessment survey of religious education is being used in parishes and schools, page 14B.



Teacher draws on her faith as she volunteers to help children, page 4B.



## HOW CAN I POSSIBLY AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers, pages 7B and 10B.



## Catholic school students have opportunity to lead, see differently and bring others to Christ

*(Editor's note: A week after he was installed as the new archbishop, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin celebrated Mass on Dec. 10, 2012, with the seniors of all the Catholic high schools in the archdiocese. During the liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, Archbishop Tobin shared a homily that asked the seniors to discover "the hidden possibilities" in their lives. His message is shared here as a fitting, faith-filled way to begin our coverage for the annual Catholic Schools Week Supplement.)*

By Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin

Advent is a season that invites us to see the hidden possibilities: There is more to life than meets the eye.

These days, the word of God invites people who thought they had been abandoned to look again and recognize that God is coming to save them. John the Baptist points to the Savior when he does come. And the Word takes flesh because a young woman in Nazareth says "yes."

Faith isn't simply knowing a lot of facts and figures about God, like we were playing a sort of religious "Jeopardy." Faith is a different way of looking at things, seeing more than meets the eye.

Today, the word of God offers three suggestions about the faith of leaders. What a nice gift to you, the seniors of our high schools.

*Don't be afraid to be different.*

The Gospel story of the paralyzed man (Lk 5:17-26) begins by setting the scene. There was a crowd, but Luke takes pains to let us know who is there: "One day as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law

were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was with him for healing" (Lk 5:17).

Jesus attracted the attention of those who do not believe in him at all, many of whom were the religious leaders of his day. These are the same people who will eventually decide his death. So it is impressive to see the style of Jesus. He is calm and confident, not watering down his message because a good number of his listeners are hostile.

To live as a Catholic Christian today is to experience some opposition. There are voices, even very important people in our country, who dismiss what we believe and the choices we make. Some of our peers can make us feel like we are weird, out of step, uncool. The example of Jesus shows us the possibility of being true to ourselves, of sticking to our values, of making a free choice to believe and behave as a daughter or son of God.

*You can bring others to Christ.*

The friends of the paralyzed man used their ingenuity to bring the man to Jesus. Real friends do that. You can do that in your schools. Whether you like it or not, there are people watching you—juniors, sophomores, freshmen—as well as your classmates. You can influence your teachers and family. Your words and, more importantly, the testimony of your lives, can bring people to the Lord, people who are paralyzed by fear, disappointment, anger or even despair.

*Keep an open mind.*

Jesus tells the man that his sins are forgiven. The Pharisees and scribes immediately protest by making

an incredibly logical statement: No one can forgive sins but God alone! They might have continued that thought: No one can forgive except God, but Jesus claims he can forgive sins, therefore. . . . Maybe some of them tried to get their heads around that thought but quickly shook it off. No way!

An open—and honest—mind will lead you to grow in your faith. When I was in high school, I hated math. But like it or not, I continued to apply what I had already learned and then learned some more. My first paycheck, applying for loans in college, and different jobs all required me to continue to learn and apply mathematics.

It would really be tragic, I think, if you closed your books and your minds to growing in your faith. If you want to be truly happy, then the eyesight of your heart, the gift of faith, must constantly mature and deepen as the circumstances of life change.

Conclusion: There is more to being a senior than meets the eye.

Could the Lord be asking you to take another look at the coming months? Is he inviting you not to fear being different? To bring others to Jesus? To keep an open mind?

We can recall the example of Mary, one of the great guides of these days of Advent. She did not fear being different as long as she believed she was living the way God wanted her to live. She did not always understand God's plan, but "treasured things in her heart", trusting that God would eventually show her the way. She brought Good News to her cousin, Elizabeth, and, through her trusting faith, brought to all of us the Savior of the world. †

# Living the faith

## President 'found' her mission at school where 'no one gets lost'

By John Shaughnessy

Shared in confidence, the parent's words touched Franciscan Sister Therese Gillman.

"Sister, I don't know if you know or not but I am not Catholic," the parent told Sister Therese about his decision to send his children to Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg. "I am doing what my parents did for me. I am surrounding my son and my daughter with good peers."

The parent's words also strike at the heart of why Sister Therese considers Catholic education so important for young people, especially during their high school years.

"Here at the Academy, students are surrounded with strong faith values that hopefully will provide them with the foundation they need to make good moral decisions in their future lives," says Sister Therese, president of the private Catholic high school.

"It is my belief that Catholic secondary education is core to helping our young people be immersed in an environment that allows them to explore their faith and what it means to put that faith into action and live it each day."

It's an approach that Sister Therese embraced as a student at Oldenburg Academy, an approach that the 1969 graduate of the school who grew up as a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville has tried to live as a religious sister and Catholic educator.

"It was here that I learned how to do a lot with a little and still transform lives," says Sister Therese, who will step down at the end of the school year. "It was here that I also learned to use your talents to make a difference."

After her high school graduation, she followed "a deeper call" to become a Franciscan sister. She taught for 13 years in a Catholic school of predominantly African-American students in Kansas City, Mo., worked as a business consultant across the country and the world, and then returned to Oldenburg Academy as its president in 2001.

One of the most important lessons she learned along the way came during those 13 years at St. Joseph School in Kansas City.

"I was very blessed to be under the mentorship of Franciscan Sister Myra Peine," she recalls. "She helped instill in me the value of expecting the best from students and you will get it. Sister Myra always set the bar high no matter what obstacles students and families had to overcome. This value of 'push, excel, succeed' was further lived out at the Academy."

During her 12 years as president of Oldenburg Academy, Sister Therese helped the longtime all-girls school become co-ed. She also implemented a program where every student has a computer. And her business background led to a strategic planning process while her concern for helping people in need led to a student service and volunteer program.

Another innovative program that has been established during her tenure is called "Marathon Monday."

"The Academy instilled the program a couple of years ago to help students feel more welcome and connected to their peers," notes Kayla Wessling, the school's marketing communications coordinator. "Groups consist of about eight students from various grades and one faculty or staff mentor.



Above, Franciscan Sister Therese Gillman enjoys a fun moment of playing cards with the students who are part of her "Marathon Monday" group, part of a program that connects students and staff members to come together to relax and talk about school, community and world issues.

Left, Franciscan Sister Therese Gillman listens to a colleague during a staff meeting at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg. The school's president, Sister Therese plans to step down at the end of the school year.

"They meet every last Monday of the month for about 25 minutes to discuss school, community and world issues as well as collaborate on what they would like to see Oldenburg Academy do to become more successful. Some of that time with the Marathon Monday groups is also spent just having fun and relaxing."

All the initiatives reflect a collaborative approach to education that works best, according to Sister Therese.

"It's so much bigger than me," she says. "It's very humbling to see how many people are so invested in this school to make sure it's here for future generations. That's so inspiring to see how our faculty, principal, staff and parents come together. Our parents work very hard and make lots of sacrifices to send their kids here."

Similar to the parents, she focuses on the 210 students at the school.

"A hallmark for Oldenburg Academy is that no one gets lost," she says. "We want to create an environment where the students could succeed in a faith-based environment."

It's the foundation she received as a student. It's also the foundation that led her to return to lead the school as its first president.

"It was an opportunity to be closer to home, to be closer to the community, and also to give back to a place that had impacted my life," she says. "I've been able to see these kids grow up to become young men and women, to know that there is a community of faith holding us up. That's been most rewarding to me." †

## Christ sets the standard—and the message—for Catholic schools

By Harry Plummer

This year's Catholic Schools Week theme, "Catholic Schools Raise the Standards," and the fact that we just celebrated Christmas last month have combined to remind me of the day in mid-July when we moved into our new home.



Harry Plummer

The moving van had just left, and we were in the thick of carrying boxes to their designated locations.

In the midst of this rather chaotic activity—I have eight children—I noticed that several large boxes slated for the garage were missing.

Being pressed to attend to other matters, I quickly forgot about them. Hours later, one of my little ones, after many attempts to get me to go with him to see something special, finally seized my hand and pulled me to his new room.

Once there, he slowly opened the door and I looked

inside. From floor to ceiling, it was completely decorated for Christmas.

"Merry Christmas, Dad!" he said with a smile brighter than all the lights in the room. And even though it was July, in a very real way it seemed like Christmas.

I will never forget that precious moment, especially when I think about the great blessing of our Catholic schools, where Christ is born anew each day.

He is born anew in the hearts, minds and souls of our students in so many ways—through daily prayer, through the celebration of the love of God in word and sacrament, through the exercise of their God-given intellects and through acts of service to the community.

You see, Christ is our standard, urging us to raise all our standards—including academic ones.

And in that regard, our Catholic schools have been doing extremely well as evidenced by the results of Indiana's new A-F School Accountability Report Card assessment data.

Take passing rates, for example. Our schools significantly outperformed the combined scores of the public, charter and accredited private schools on ISTEP+ and End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs) as well as the percentage of schools earning "A" grades on this new

statewide report card.

Of course, the outstanding performance of our schools on standardized assessments don't tell the whole story of our success, but they do clearly demonstrate that our Catholic schools are effective agents in the game of raising Indiana's educational standards.

In fact, I think it is safe to say we're writing the playbook. But our playbook doesn't only concentrate on academic success.

It focuses on the formation of the whole student—spirit, mind and body—in such a way that it leaves a powerful impression on the youth who experience it.

This is an indispensable feature of our schools, enabling students to develop the tools, temperaments and tenacity to lead successful lives as contributing members of society and, with Christ as their standard, to bring into this world of change a living and active faith.

Like Christmas, we may celebrate Catholic Schools Week only once a year, but our schools seek to live its message each and every day.

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

# A winning combination

A special season in sports is shaped by a teacher's hope, a coach's influence and a team's effort



By John Shaughnessy

It's the story of a teacher's secret hope. It's also the story of a former student's desire to keep a promise. And both Peggy O'Connor-Campbell and Demetrius Folsom share the great joy of knowing that her hope and his promise led to a magical season for a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) football team of fifth- and sixth-grade boys. The seeds of the story were planted more than 25 years ago when Folsom was a junior high student at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis, learning language arts from O'Connor-Campbell. He never forgot the influence she had on him as a teacher—an impact that was strengthened by his experience of playing CYO football at the school. He carried that influence with him when he became a student-athlete at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, graduated from college, and served the United States as a soldier in the Indiana National Guard and later in the U.S. Army.

And when he came home from California in 2002 to visit family and friends, he stopped by St. Andrew School to see O'Connor-Campbell. During that visit, he also learned that the school no longer had a football team. That's when he told her that if the school ever started a football program again to give him a call. He promised he would coach. Flash forward to 2011. By then, O'Connor-Campbell had become vice principal at Central Catholic School in Indianapolis and the coordinator of CYO activities for the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies—a consortium of center-city schools that include Central Catholic, Holy Angels, Holy Cross and St. Philip Neri—and the parishes of St. Andrew the Apostle and St. Anthony. A football program for the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies had just been started a year before, and O'Connor-Campbell needed another coach. She found one in Folsom, who had returned to live in Indianapolis with his wife and daughter.

This past season, Folsom was the head coach of the fifth- and sixth-grade team. He also served as the coordinator of the football program for the academies.

"He has made such a huge difference," O'Connor-Campbell says. "His approach toward everything with the kids is, 'How can I help make these kids more successful in life?' Through his experience at St. Andrew and Chatard, he saw the impact that coaches had on him, and he wants to do the same thing for them."

She shares that assessment of her former student with such pride that it shows the depth of the hope that has guided her in her 34 years of dedication to Catholic schools. She has strived to make a difference in the lives of her students. And to see Folsom doing the same for children moves her.

"He's concerned about their character, their future and what kind of people they're going to be," she says. "He does it through the venue of football."

Folsom said he couldn't say no to his former teacher or the boys. "With all my experiences, I just felt I could make a difference in these kids' lives," the 40-year-old coach says. "We have a variety of kids—white, black, Hispanic. A lot of them are from single-parent families, but not all of them. And some of them come from disadvantaged situations. I can relate to them. Without me, I figure some of these kids would go [the wrong way]. I can help to keep them on the right road."

He did that as a coach, leading his team—which included seven boys who hadn't played football previously—to a record of six wins and two losses.

He also did it as a person, especially after the team lost a close game in the semi-finals of the city tournament. The hurt and the disappointment of the loss showed on the players' faces. They were also clearly on display as Folsom wiped away his own tears. Then he told the boys how proud he was of them, how far they had come during the season, and how special they are to him.

"We always end on a positive note," Folsom says. "We always talk about being student-athletes. We talk about them being prepared and self-motivated. I feel very fulfilled that I'm contributing to the future of young leaders. I just want to give back."

Those words give life to the secret hope of his former teacher.

"It's really very heartwarming to see it come full circle," O'Connor-Campbell says. "To see what you tried to instill in him, and that Demetrius wanted to come back to his roots and volunteer with these kids—it puts a smile in my heart." †

Photos by John Shaughnessy



Demetrius Folsom and Peggy O'Connor-Campbell flash smiles in recalling the success that the fifth- and sixth-grade football team of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies in Indianapolis had during the 2012 season of the Catholic Youth Organization. O'Connor-Campbell taught Folsom in grade school and asked him to coach the team.



After a season-ending loss, coach Demetrius Folsom talks with his players on the fifth- and sixth-grade football team of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies in Indianapolis, reminding them of the great progress and the special memories they made during the season.



The players on the fifth- and sixth-grade football team of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies show their disappointment after their 2012 season ended with a loss.

# 'God is there'

## Teacher draws on her faith as she volunteers to help grieving children

By John Shaughnessy

The moment—and the child—needed someone who would understand, not overreact.

Stephanie Theis watched as the 10-year-old boy ran down the hall, wildly letting out all his energy and emotion.

When the boy reached where Theis stood, he stopped, looked at her and said, "I'm really not like this at home."

Theis nodded and smiled at him, processing everything she knew about the boy. His father had died, his mother was frequently busy at work, and he often had to take care of his siblings as the oldest of four children.

"He was kind of thanking me for letting him get all that emotion out without stopping him," Theis recalls. "Sometimes, they just need a safe place to get all that emotion out."

That safe place for the 10-year-old boy is Brooke's Place, a non-profit organization in Indianapolis that provides support and services to grieving children and their families.

It's also the place where Theis—a science teacher and coach at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis—has volunteered nearly every Thursday evening for four hours during the past nine years. Her commitment and her concern for children led her to be chosen for Brooke's Place's Purple Heart Award for outstanding volunteerism in 2012.

"Stephanie goes above and beyond what is required of a volunteer," says Emily Ayres, supervisor of volunteer services and support group coordinator for Brooke's Place. "Her willingness to be with the kids and allow them to grieve in the way they need to is a big part of what she does. She cares so much about the kids and our organization."

Theis appreciates the impact that the organization makes on children and teenagers as they try to deal with the loss of someone they love.

"It's something I believe in," says Theis, who has been a teacher for 13 years. "I believe it's necessary to make a safe place for them. A lot of times, kids just want to remember and share their memories—'This is what my dad used to do for me.' It's sad in some ways, but it's also about hope. My belief is that God is there in those memories."

Her care for the children at Brooke's Place has also had a major impact on the way that she teaches and coaches



Bishop Chatard High School teacher Stephanie Theis shares a fun moment with senior Maggie McNelis and other students during a biology class. Besides teaching and coaching at the Indianapolis North Deanery interparochial school, Theis also volunteers at Brooke's Place, an organization that provides support and services to grieving children and their families.

students at Bishop Chatard.

"It has changed me," says Theis, who has a master's degree in school counseling from Butler University in Indianapolis. "You go into counseling thinking you're going to solve problems or fix things. Even teachers have that mindset. It took me a while to just be present to them."

"It has made me realize that every person has their own story. That helps me when I'm teaching and coaching. I'm more aware that all the kids have their own experience. God made us who we are. I've learned to try to help people be who they are, and accept them for who they are."

The combination of teaching, coaching and volunteering makes for a busy schedule for Theis, especially on Thursdays.

She's at school by 7:15 in the morning, ready for a full day of teaching classes that include Advanced Placement Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, and Honors Biology

for freshmen. She's also the moderator of the school's Brain Game team. After school, she coaches cross country and track until about 5 p.m. Then she heads to Brooke's Place for four hours.

Sometimes, she works with children ages 10 to 12. Other times, she's helping teenagers.

"They can come as long as they want," says Theis, who is 36. "We realize that everyone's grief is different. I like seeing the connections the kids have with each other, and seeing them share those thoughts they haven't shared before."

Her faith guides her in her work with the children and the teens.

"My personal faith is a big part of why I do this," she says. "I believe that God is with us in our grief journey. He gives us gifts within ourselves to grieve. He gives us our memories. I believe that God is with us through all our experiences." †

## Schools seek to grow closer to Christ during Year of Faith



Amelia Harrigan, left, Meredith Attai, Hailey Kocher and Gavin Farris, all second-grade students at St. Roch School in Indianapolis, pose on Jan. 15 in front of a bulletin board at their school dedicated to the Year of Faith. Each student wrote a way to evangelize on the bulletin board candles. Answers included, "I will give food to the poor," and "I will proclaim the word to others."



Father Sean Danda, administrator of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and Holy Guardian Angels Parish in Cedar Grove, lead the students of St. Michael School in consecrating the Connersville Deanery school on Dec. 12, 2012, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The consecration service was one of many ways that the school is observing the Year of Faith.

By Sean Gallagher

The Year of Faith began on Oct. 11, 2012, the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and will end on Nov. 24, 2013, the feast of Christ the King.

Pope Benedict XVI called for this special year to help Catholics around the world renew their faith in Christ so as to become more effective in their proclamation of the Gospel in their daily lives.

Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana are observing the Year of Faith to help everyone in their school communities grow in the faith—students, teachers and administrators alike.

Joe Hansen, principal of St. Roch School in Indianapolis, sees the Year of Faith as an integral part of the new evangelization, another priority of Pope Benedict.

"During our back-to-school discussions, we [teachers and administrators] talked about the importance of the Year of Faith and the new evangelization," he said. "We all agreed that St. Roch Catholic School does a great job with [teaching] doctrine, but we challenged ourselves to remind kids that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is of paramount importance."

"We also discussed the importance of ministering to non-practicing adults, and the nominal believers whenever the opportunity presented itself."

Teachers at St. Roch have also created colorful bulletin board displays to let their students know about the Year of Faith, and to encourage them to grow in their relationship with Christ.

"Words are one thing," Hansen said. "But there is so much science that shows that when you make things more visual, it helps kids. Those visual reminders in beautiful bulletin board displays remind our kids about the importance of the Year of Faith."

The students, teachers and administrators at St. Michael School in Brookville placed their focus on Christ during the Year of Faith by consecrating the Connersville Deanery school to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

All students attended the Dec. 12, 2012, consecration service led by Father Sean Danda, administrator of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and Holy Guardian Angels Parish in Cedar Grove. The service included prayers, a

blessing of the school and a formal hanging of pictures of the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart in the school.

"When you think about what kind of things that God likes, he likes action," said Cindy Johnson, principal of St. Michael School. "[The consecration was] an active way to get the kids involved in committing themselves and our school to him and to his mother, Mary. He likes us to do stuff and not just talk."

At the same time of the consecration, students at St. Michael were working on an essay contest in which they were invited to explain why they love being Catholic.

Ben Kahles, an eighth-grade student at St. Michael, entered an essay.

"I thought it would make me grow stronger in my faith," said Ben, a member of Holy Guardian Angels Parish. "I'm glad that I have guidelines from my faith, like the Bible, and have a place to go to worship."

Johnson was amazed to read the various essays entered in the contest.

"It was awesome," she said. "It's edifying when you realize that we're raising good, young Catholics, kids who care about their faith and want to please Jesus. They want that relationship [with him]. That's why we're here."

Ben has attended St. Michael School since the first grade. He plans on attending Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg for high school.

"[Attending a Catholic school] has helped me learn more about my faith and grow stronger in it," Ben said.

One of the reasons that Ben and his fellow students can grow in their faith is because their teachers also work to learn more about the faith.

During the Year of Faith, Johnson, her teachers and Father Danda are studying together the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*.

"When the teachers grow in holiness, it's good for students," Johnson said. "When you're working at a Catholic school, if you don't keep yourself connected to God, it's very hard to do. It takes a lot of commitment and time. And when you're working for Jesus, it's easy. But if you forget that, it's hard."

"So, this is one of the ways that our teachers and Father [Danda] and I, too, are keeping ourselves connected."

(To learn more about the Year of Faith in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to [www.archindy.org/yearoffaith](http://www.archindy.org/yearoffaith).) †



Submitted photos



## Acts of love

### Program helps students learn lessons in compassion and stewardship at an early age

By Patricia Happel Cornwell  
Special to *The Criterion*

CLARKSVILLE—Even kindergartners are learning the meaning of “stewardship” at St. Anthony of Padua School in Clarksville.

While most adults associate the term with the Sunday collection basket, these students are learning to share their own gifts and appreciate those of others.

The school is in the second year of a program called “Step by Step Stewardship.” It was created by a Louisville woman, Susan Reuter, 10 years ago in her own parish of St. Patrick. Copyrighted by Reuter in 2002, the program is now used in some form in many Catholic schools.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish has just less than 800 households, and its school has a preschool through eighth-grade enrollment of 300 students.

Jim Kenney, director of stewardship and development at St. Anthony Parish, explained that each grade level follows a specific theme throughout the school year, focusing on that subject in their studies and participating in a monthly Stewardship Friday.

At a recent Stewardship Friday, fourth-graders received first-hand experience of their focus topic—disabilities.

Volunteers staffed eight “disability stations” where the children experienced what it would be like to do daily activities without the use of various parts of their bodies. The stations represented hand impairment, back injury or paralysis, loss of ability to walk, loss of limbs, visual impairment, blindness, speech impairment, and hearing impairment or deafness.

At the hand impairment station, Christy Masters, mother of one of the fourth-grade students, Rylie, helped students put socks on their hands, one of which had a hole that allowed the use of only two fingers. The children then tried to do such tasks as open a medicine vial or peanut butter jar, use a can opener, tie shoelaces, button a shirt or write their names.

Fourth-grade student Samantha Thompson said the hand impairment station was “the hardest one of all, because you can only use

two fingers and you can’t open anything at all. You would have to ask someone to help you.”

She said that if she saw a person with a disability, “I might want to help them, like open their water bottle or a door. They are different, but no one’s better than anyone else.”

At the back injury station, a student’s upper body was tied to a chair while he or she attempted to put on a sock and do other motions without moving from the waist, as though injured or paralyzed.

Monica Nokes, another fourth-grade student, thought the back injury station was the hardest. “I could use the sock aid with my hands and I could move my head,” she said, “but that’s all. If you were paralyzed, it would be hard to do everyday things that we usually do.”

Asked what the focus on disabilities has taught her, Monica said, “If someone looks different, you shouldn’t make fun of them, because basically they’re the same as us. They probably still like the same things as us.”

This year’s theme for St. Anthony kindergartners is that food is a gift from God, that some people do not have enough to eat, and that we should help the hungry. Their parents read a related book, *Dewey’s Magical Sleigh* by Brahm Wenger and Alan Green, and the children made Christmas care bags for needy children at an agency in Jeffersonville. Each bag contained a can of soup, juice and snacks.

In the first grade, children learned the difference between gifts that cost money and gifts that are “acts of love.” Their parents read and discussed Pearl Buck’s book *Christmas Day in the Morning*.

In November, the first-graders spent time with less fortunate children at a neighboring Head Start program, where they gave out books, played games and sang songs. In December, they made holiday cards for the same children and sent them books and photos of their visit.

Second-graders heard a talk by Ken Lolla, men’s soccer coach at the University of Louisville, on “Finding Your Gifts.” Lolla has written a children’s book by that title about inclusiveness and appreciation of the differences of others. Before Christmas, these students of teachers Jennifer Kelly and Janet Marlin participated in a “Bags of Blessing” canned food drive.

“The stewardship program has provided our second-grade students an opportunity to take an active role as members of our community in reaching out to those in need,” Marlin said. “Through the well-planned monthly activities and the Christian witness of the adult volunteers, the children are learning some of the most important lessons of life. The program has truly helped my students to know what Church is all about.”

Kelly agreed. “The second-graders have gained perspective about hunger and sharing their blessings with others,” she said. “They demonstrated such pride as they read daily announcements over the intercom and as the number of donated food items grew.”

This year, third-grade students and their parents studied the changes that come with aging, including wrinkles, gray hair and dentures. During a role-playing exercise, the children acted as doctors while parent volunteers were elderly patients with such problems as cataracts and varicose veins.

Third-grade teacher Nancy McGarvey also praised the program. “Through their many letters, craft projects, and especially their visit to an assisted living facility, these students have become aware of the signs of aging,” she said. “I believe this program has made a significant, positive change in the way these children view the elderly.”

So far, “Step by Step Stewardship” is in place in St. Anthony’s kindergarten through fourth grade, and Kenney is introducing it to an additional grade each year. At present, he organizes 15 to 25 volunteers for the program every month.

On a recent Stewardship Friday, students in grades five through eight, although not yet part of the Step by Step program, heard a talk by Lolla, who explained that people who are different also have talents and gifts to share.

“Everyone benefits from the gifts of everyone else,” the coach told them. “God wants your light, your gift to shine.”

(Patricia Happel Cornwell is a freelance writer and member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.) †

*‘If someone looks different, you shouldn’t make fun of them, because basically they’re the same as us. They probably still like the same things as us.’*

—Monica Nokes,  
fourth-grade student at  
St. Anthony School in  
Clarksville

#### TOP RIGHT PHOTO

Ken Lolla, head men’s soccer coach at the University of Louisville, speaks to fifth-through eighth-grade students at St. Anthony of Padua School in Clarksville about “Finding Your Gifts,” also the title of his children’s book. Earlier, he spoke to second-graders. His talks were part of the school’s “Step by Step Stewardship” program.

#### TOP LEFT PHOTO

Gavin Gentry, a St. Anthony of Padua School fourth-grader, tries to carry his backpack while on crutches, as volunteers Cindy Collins, left, and Judy Kenney and classmates Joseph Schansberg and MacKenzie Gill watch. After the exercise, students discussed what daily life would be like if they lost a limb.

#### MIDDLE LEFT PHOTO

At the hand impairment station, Josh Walter, left, watches as Monica Nokes attempts to open a peanut butter jar and Samantha Thompson tries to use a can opener with socks on their hands. The St. Anthony of Padua fourth graders’ stewardship focus this year is on disabilities.

#### BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO

St. Anthony of Padua parishioner Terry Spray explains to fourth-grader Marquis Killebrew how to use a “sock aid” to put on and take off a sock without bending from the waist, as a paralyzed person would have to do.

# Double blessing

## Voucher program, donors help more students attend Catholic schools

By John Shaughnessy

A double blessing has helped more students attend Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

The combination of the Indiana school voucher program and generous donors in the archdiocese have helped to make it possible for 3,201 students from families in need to attend an archdiocesan Catholic school during the 2012-13 academic year.

"The Tax Credit Scholarships and the Indiana school vouchers have had a huge impact on our schools, probably more than any other single thing I can remember in my 27 years here, certainly economically and in terms of diversity," said G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of the archdiocese's Office of Catholic education.

The voucher program has had a major impact on Catholic schools that serve low income families, Peters noted. It has also benefited middle-class families who have multiple children.

"This has allowed a large number of families, many of them Catholic, to be able to choose Catholic education for their children for the first time," Peters said. "It has also allowed a number of our Hispanic families to choose Catholic education, inviting those families into our schools."

Esmeralda Gomez and her daughter, Aylee, have benefited from the double blessing. Aylee is a second-grade student at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis.

"I'm a single mother," says Gomez, a member of the parish. "I never knew I was going to have the opportunity to be involved in it. When they told me I qualified, it was great, great news for us. It's a great school. We just love the principal and the teachers. They treat the children with love."

The number of students who have benefited from the state voucher program this year has tripled from the 2011-12 school year. During that first year of vouchers in Indiana, 1,058 students attended Catholic schools through the program.

Besides offering children from families in need the opportunity to attend a Catholic school, the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust program offers potential donors the opportunity to fulfill those dreams.

State-funded vouchers cover the tuition and fees at accredited private schools in Indiana up to a maximum of \$4,500 a year in grades 1 to 8—and even more during high school.

"The goal of the archdiocese is to have Catholic schools identify each and every



Esmeralda Gomez and her daughter, Aylee, feel fortunate that the Indiana school voucher program and the generosity of donors in the archdiocese have made it possible for the girl to attend St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis.

eligible potential kindergarten or first-grade student and offer the opportunity for a CHOICE Tax Credit Scholarship so that the student may be eligible for an Indiana state school voucher," Peters said.

"Eligibility can only be established during the first year of enrollment in the Catholic school, and could qualify a student for a state voucher of \$4,500 or more annually for the next 12 years—a potential \$54,000 to \$64,000."

Indiana Tax Credit Scholarships were introduced as part of an overall Indiana education reform package, Peters said.

"This allows a donor to fund scholarships for students to attend a Catholic school of the family's choice," Peters said. "Most of these scholarships are given to entry-level students—kindergarten and first grade. Under the law, this allows them to become eligible for an Indiana school voucher after two semesters on a scholarship."

Contributing to the tax credit scholarships also provides a great tax reward for donors, Peters says. Donors can

get credit for up to 50 percent of the donation, up to the amount of their state tax liability, plus a federal tax deduction.

"The Tax Credit Scholarships have been extremely popular with donors who have given nearly \$1 million in our archdiocese alone," Peters noted.

Two major efforts by the archdiocese have contributed to the \$950,000 in donations to the archdiocese's approved Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO).

The main effort was the 17th annual Celebrating Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards event on Oct. 30. More than 600 people attended the event at the Crowne Plaza Grand Hall at Union Station in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese also held 11 regional breakfast meetings with potential individual and business donors for the scholarship program.

"We are extremely gratified with the unprecedented response to our Celebrating Catholic School Values event," Peters said. "Of the \$950,000 in donations, at least

\$350,000 was raised as a result of the breakfast events. The rest was raised by schools and the event committee."



G. Joseph Peters

Major donors will also be invited to a dinner later this year with Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin.

"We will also make efforts in the spring to allow more families to obtain a Catholic education for

their children," Peters said.

(For more information about the state voucher program, Peters recommended communicating with the principal of the nearest Catholic school or checking the website, [www.choicetrust.org](http://www.choicetrust.org). For more information about the Tax Credit Scholarships program, contact [indoce@archindy.org](mailto:indoce@archindy.org).) †



For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

## Values show the value of a Catholic education

There were no Catholic schools in the farm town where I grew up. So at our mission parish, the priest would travel to another town to bring religious sisters to teach catechism on Saturday mornings.

Although I later attended a Catholic university, I wasn't convinced about the importance of Catholic schools. Why?

Perhaps they seemed a bit elitist, and maybe not diverse enough. I wanted my children to associate with people from a variety of religious backgrounds, as I had done. So when it was time to send my oldest child to kindergarten in our Alaskan home, I visited the local public school to observe the teacher.

It was one of those pivotal experiences that changed everything. My luck was that the school had only

one kindergarten teacher. She was nearing retirement and clearly wearing out. It was obvious that her attention was consumed by rambunctious little boys, not the quiet girls, like my firstborn. Plus, the room was windowless, not good news in an already dark Alaskan winter.

At a party, I met a public school teacher who told me the best kindergarten teacher in town taught at our Catholic school. Go there, she said, and I could always transfer out for first grade. So I paid a visit, and along with a wonderful teacher came a classroom surrounded on two sides with windows that framed the rising sun on frosty mornings.

I was sold, but my husband and daughter were off visiting relatives. How

would I explain my sudden decision to send our daughter to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School instead of the neighborhood school?

When my 5-year-old rushed to me upon her return, the first thing she wanted to show me was something Grandma's neighbor had given her—a beautiful medal of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Sometimes you just have to pay attention.

Fourteen years later, the last of our three children graduated from that little Catholic school, and I emerged a total advocate of Catholic education. I know there are still people whose motivations include a snobbish sense of elitism, as if "private" education carries a certain cache.

I also think it's sad when people choose Catholic schools because they are fleeing from poor public schools. We should all support excellent public education, a bedrock of our civil society.

So why choose Catholic schools? I loved that my children were present before a crucifix each moment of the day, and that God could be mentioned and called on in each classroom. I loved that the liturgical seasons were observed, that during Advent the children would

gather each morning to sing and light Advent candles, that feast days were observed and explained, that my children learned the depth of their Catholic faith.

I loved that their friends came from families that shared our common values and a shared sacramental life. I loved that, while not always perfect or complete, the school complemented its deep commitment to charity with a determination to look at the broader questions of social justice from a Catholic perspective.

I loved that in a society growing increasingly more secular, my children were bathed in the sacred, and that when a school family was suffering, we not only showered them with support and food, but with prayer. I loved the growing diversity of the school, and the way kindness and respect toward others became a daily habit. I loved the immersion in faith.

National Catholic Schools Week runs from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2 this year. We owe Catholic education for educating generations of leaders, and we should support their continuing vitality.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

# 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](http://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](http://doe.in.gov/schoolchoice).



[archindy.org/schools](http://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



## 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)  
1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way  
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

### Sellersburg

St. Mary's Catholic Academy (P-8)  
420 E. Eighth St.  
New Albany, IN 47150  
812-944-0888

**Sellersburg**  
St. Paul School (P-6)  
105 St. Paul St.  
Sellersburg, IN 47172  
812-246-3266

**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

### Seymour

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

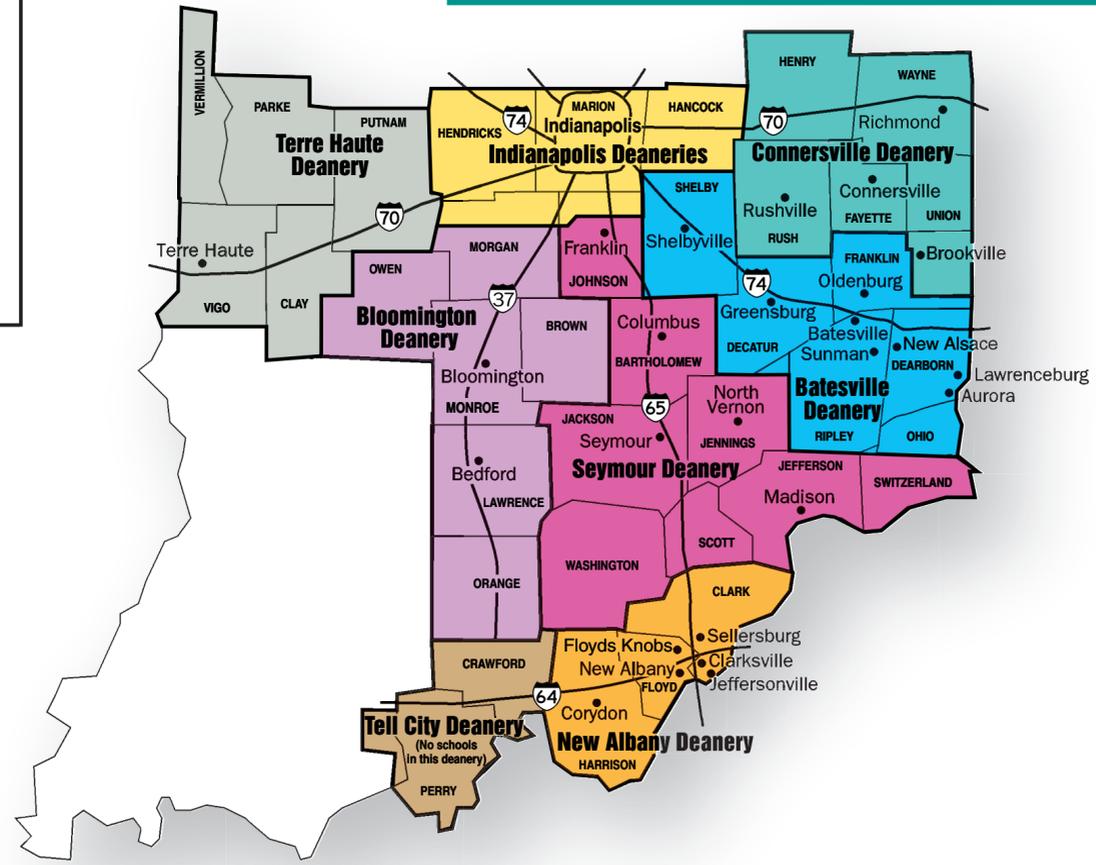
**Terre Haute Deanery**  
**Terre Haute**  
St. Patrick School (P-8)  
449 S. 19th St.  
Terre Haute, IN 47803  
812-232-2157

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

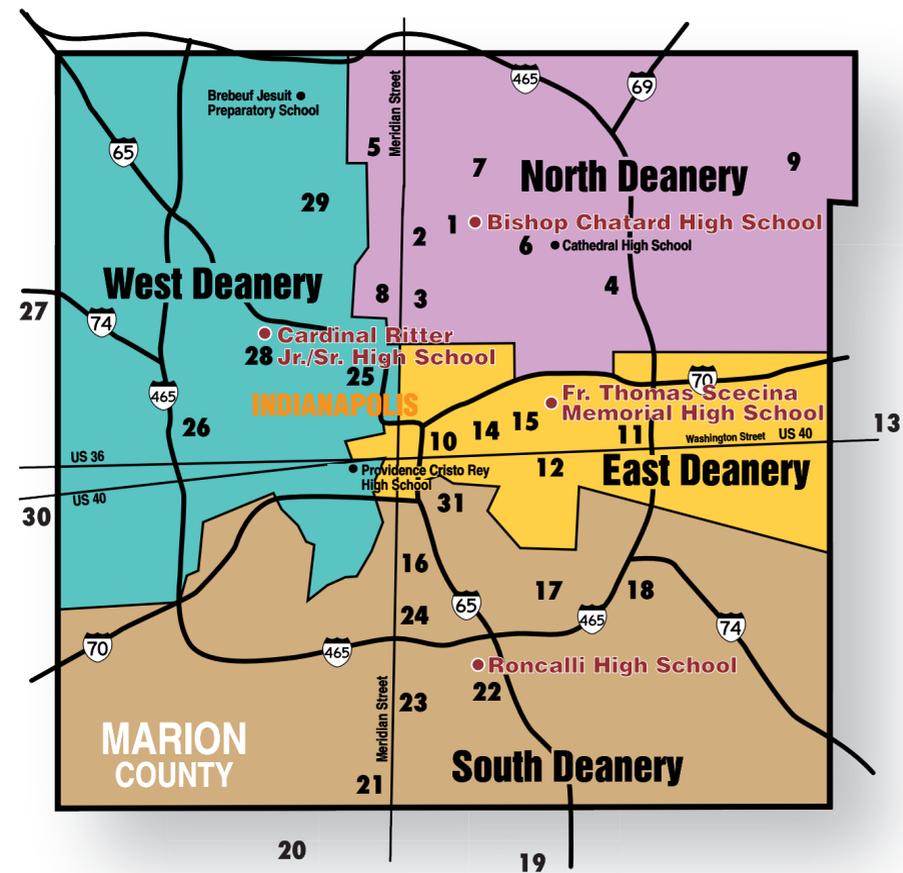
**Tell City Deanery**  
(No schools in this deanery)

**Perry**

## ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS



## GREATER INDIANAPOLIS



## 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

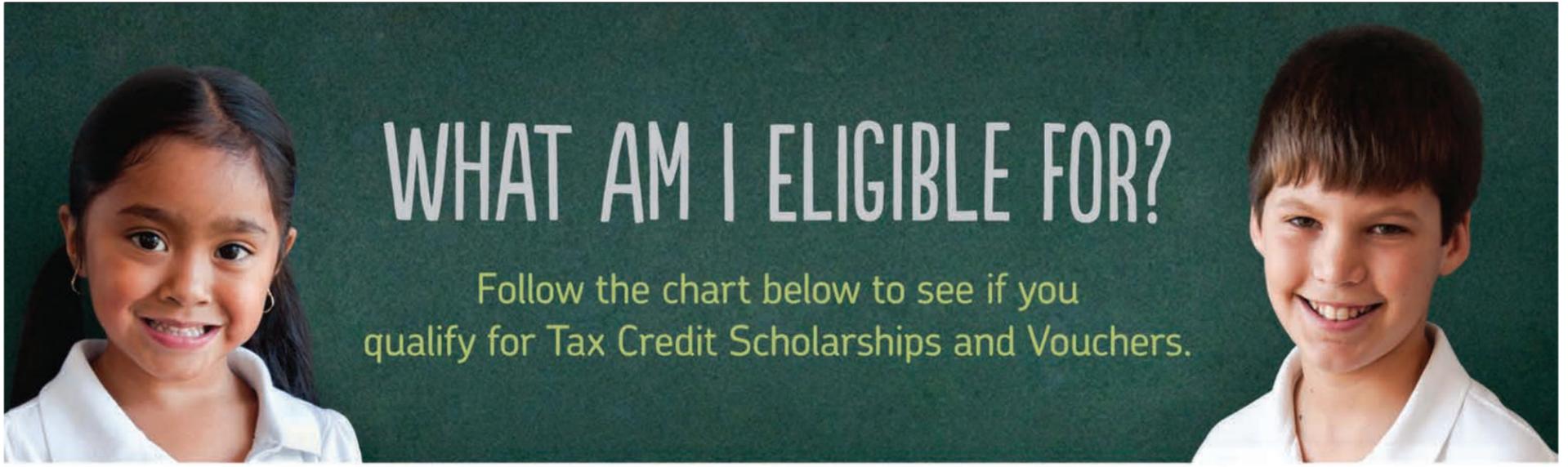
31. **Lumen Christi Catholic School (K-12)**  
580 E. Stevens St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46203  
317-632-3174

• **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)



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.

AND one of the following:

**TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP**

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**

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

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

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
**THE GOOD NEWS**  
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**OF INDIANAPOLIS**  
*The Church in Central and Southern Indiana*

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

# A legacy of love

## Family values guide students' special effort to help children in shelters



By John Shaughnessy

As a parent, Chris Straley looks for opportunities to stress the importance of family—the one we are born into, and also the ones that connect us in larger ways.

Part of Straley's approach is tied to an incredible discovery concerning his grandmother.

"She had a variety store, and she always looked out for the poor," recalls Straley, a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. "Even though it was a store she made money from, when she died we found a shoebox full of IOUs that she never anticipated collecting. People would pick out shoes and clothes for their kids, and sometimes they wouldn't have money to pay for them. She just told them to write an IOU, and she took care of it from there."

That concern for people in need became part of a special project this academic year at St. Matthew School in Indianapolis, a project led by the seventh-grade students, including Straley's son, Sam. The students directed a book drive for the school's library that netted nearly 2,300 books, with many of the surplus books being wrapped and given as Christmas and birthday presents to children who live at family shelters.

"I think we underestimate our

children's ability to do things without us," Straley says. "Just by giving them a little direction, they can do so much."

Straley jump-started the drive during a conversation with Sam on the way home from school one day last fall.

The father told the son about a meeting he had as a member of St. Matthew's school commission. During the meeting, Straley had

listened to a plan to raise about \$5,000 to buy new books for the library. Knowing that his family had "close to 50 books sitting on a shelf at home," Straley figured his family wasn't alone in that regard. So he proposed the idea for a "Books in Need" program led by students, opening up the possibility of using funds for other school needs.

He then proposed the idea to Sam.

"I always try to get him to open his eyes to things that aren't directly in front of him," Straley says. "I asked him if he wanted to be part of it. I knew if I could get him interested, a lot of boys would follow."

"We were in the car when he threw

the idea at me," Sam, 13, says. "We thought if we got a lot of friends together, we could start a group. I like to start things. I told my friends, they told their friends, and we got this together."

The students sent e-mails to the school families asking for books. They also included a notice in the school newsletter. And with the permission of

principal David Smock, they organized an incentive where a student didn't have to wear a school uniform one day if he or she donated five books.

"Nobody asked me about getting service hours for this," Straley says. "They just see it as a good idea, and they wanted to do

something about it. Natural leaders stepped up. 'Let's do this.' 'What about this?' They fired up their own ideas, which is always pretty cool."

Maddie Moores is one of the seventh-grade students who led the effort.

"To me, it's really fun because you're doing this with your friends, and you're helping other children who need help," Maddie says. "It's a

good feeling."

As the books were collected, the students spent several afternoons after school dividing the books into appropriate age and gender categories. They then wrapped two or three books together in Christmas and birthday wrapping paper, as gifts for children in family shelters.

"I wasn't really expecting so many books," Sam says. "We were overwhelmed with wrapping, but it was worth it."

The students' efforts impressed their principal.

"They've run with it," Smock says. "Reading is so important to everything. If we can get our younger students to read early on and get them excited, that's what we want to do. We want to engage them so they'll go back to the library and get more books."

"And the best part of the drive is the students getting to deliver the books to help other people, too. We have a mission in the Catholic Church to reach out to others."

It's a mission for teachers, students and parents, Sam says. It's a lesson about extended family he has learned from his father.

"He's always about donating, thinking about other people, and helping people in need," Sam says. "That's what I like about him. It's pretty cool." †

*"I think we underestimate our children's ability to do things without us. Just by giving them a little direction, they can do so much."*

—Chris Straley

Top photo, St. Matthew School students David Denise and Maddie Tarowsky, center, team up to wrap books as gifts for children in homeless shelters. The effort stemmed from the Indianapolis school's seventh-grade class to collect books for the school's library and to share them with children in need.

Below, Payten Morris, right, smiles as she watches her classmate Sara Englert finish wrapping a book at St. Matthew School in Indianapolis. The seventh-grade class delivered some of the books to children in homeless shelters during the Christmas season. Other books will be shared as birthday gifts for children in shelters.

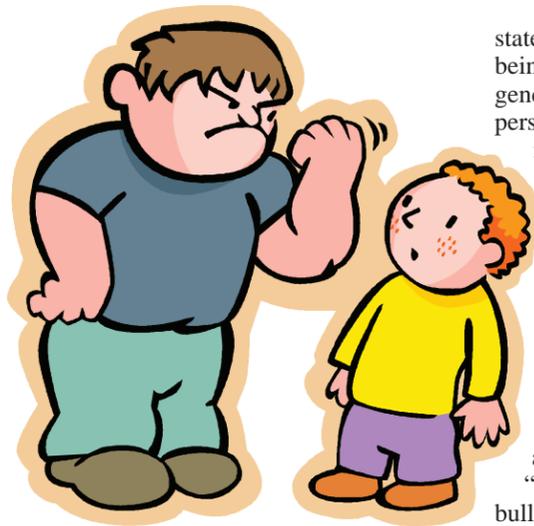


Above, as father and son, Chris Straley and Sam Straley worked together as the seventh-grade class at St. Matthew School in Indianapolis collected nearly 2,300 books that were used for the school library and as gifts for children in homeless shelters.

Left, books, stacked high in a classroom at St. Matthew School in Indianapolis, are ready to be wrapped as presents for children in homeless shelters.

Photos by John Shaughnessy

# Peer program strives to spare students from bullying



By Mary Ann Garber

**Bully.** Just reading that word or hearing it spoken is enough to prompt an emotional reaction—especially for people who have been the victim of psychological harassment or physical mistreatment as a child or adult.

It brings to mind the ugliness and unpleasantness of being dominated by someone who wants to cause trouble and scare or humiliate his or her peers.

*Bully*, a controversial and heartbreaking 2012 documentary film distributed nationally, has helped educate students and adults about the harmful effects of abusive behavior on others.

Sadly, many school campuses—even Catholic elementary schools and high schools—can be an environment for bullying.

Responding to that concern, Cathedral High School, a private Catholic school in Indianapolis, instituted an anti-bullying program called Project Irish in 2006.

The peer ministry organization's name, which is also the name of the school's athletic teams, stands for "Instilling Respect in Stopping Harrassment."

Presentations educate students about the definition of bullying as well as its root causes and serious consequences, campus minister Charlene Witka explained, so they are empowered to support and protect other teenagers experiencing harassment at school or during social events.

"It's pretty typical for any school or any business, in fact," Witka said, "so we formed a teen group with the help of an outside counselor who had some expertise in [ways to cope with] bullying."

Members of the group are "dedicated to speaking out against bullying and creating a safe environment where all students can thrive and learn," she said.

Cathedral students also wrote a school pledge to promote respect for every teenager.

"We believe that everybody should enjoy our school equally," the pledge

states, "and feel safe and secure while being accepted, regardless of race, gender, popularity, athletic abilities, personal interests, economic status, intelligence, religion and nationality.

This is why we—the students of Cathedral High School—agree to join together to end bullying in our school."

Twenty students representing each class completed a training course to act as conflict mediators on the school campus. Their goal is to involve every student in creating respectful relationships among classmates.

"We talk about the impact of bullying," Witka said, "what it is, the different types and what it does to a person. Cyberbullying is a big problem now" for many American teenagers that are targeted by other teens via social media sites on the Internet.

Project Irish teaches students that no one should be allowed to exert power over other people with the intention of humiliating or demeaning them.

"It isn't a normal part of development," Witka said. "We also talk about the role of bystanders, and how you are just as involved [in bullying] even if you're just standing there letting somebody do that to another person."

Students are often reluctant to talk with their parents about problems at school, Witka said, so Cathedral officials instituted faculty advocates for both the victim and the bully, who receive confidential counseling.

"Both individuals need attention," she said.

School officials are pleased that Project Irish has resolved many student conflicts.

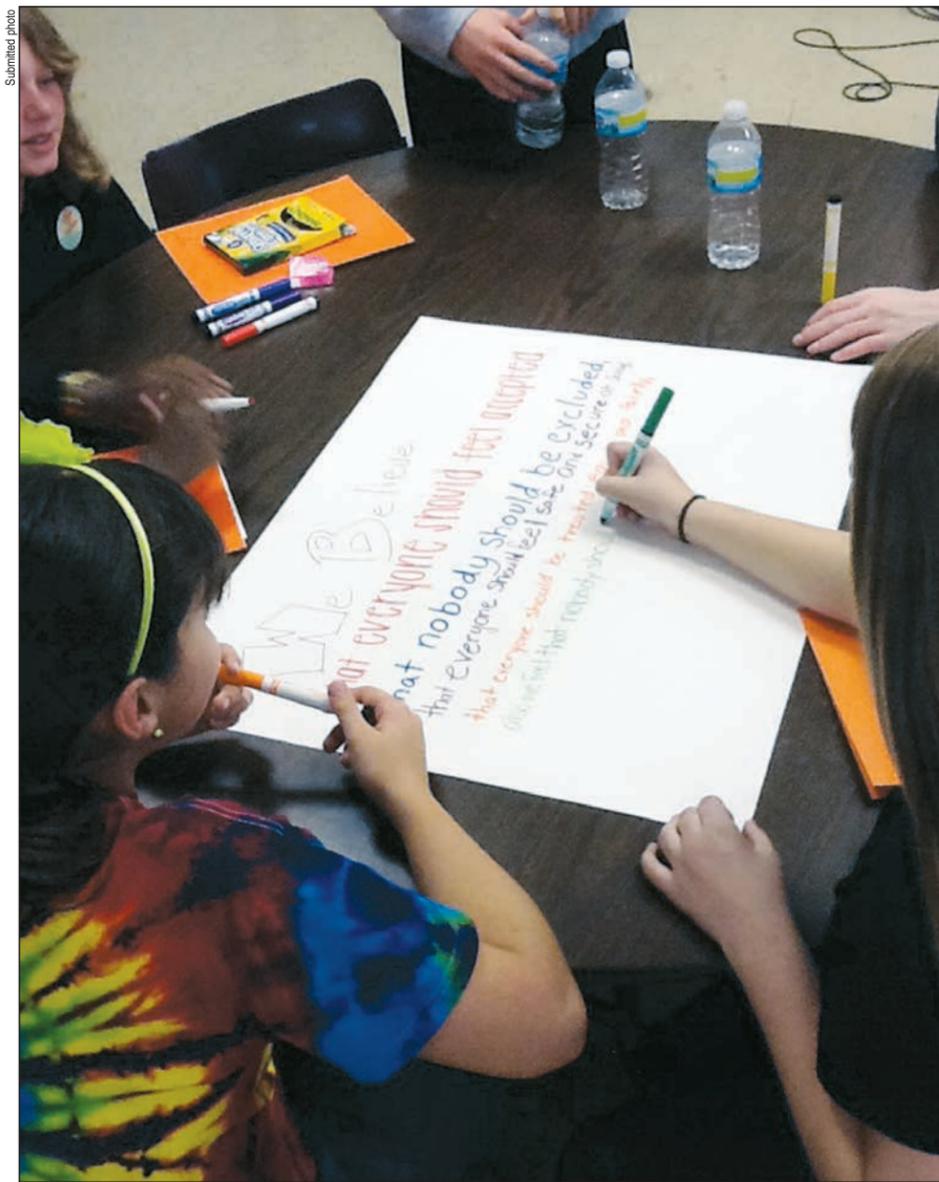
"A freshman who is active in Project Irish was bullied terribly at her grade school," Witka said. "She has told her story three times, and she's just amazed at how well she feels about herself now and how she did not feel that she would ever have the courage to do this. It's just wonderful to see the growth in her."

Early education and intervention helps younger students cope with bullying, Witka said, so Project Irish members presented a retreat for seventh- and eighth-grade students last fall.

"They were asked to create an anti-bullying pledge for their school," Witka said, "and a plan for what they could do at their school to end bullying."

Project Irish co-chairs this year are Cathedral seniors Holly Baker, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, and Matt Huber, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

They joined the peer ministry organization because of challenging middle school experiences with students



Grade school students compose an anti-bullying pledge during a program at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

who wanted to make life difficult—and even miserable—for other youths.

"Middle school was brutal," Matt said. "One boy that I know has a disability and can't see very well. He also has a speech impediment and can't hear very well, and people picked on him a lot for that. I hated it. I was in his science class, and I got to know him pretty well and he became a good friend."

It was hard to see his friend suffer so much pain from harassment, Matt said, so he is glad to have the training to intervene in bullying situations to help his peers in non-conflict ways.

"Freshmen come in and obviously they're scared because they come from different schools, and they have to meet new people and get used to high school," Matt said. "I think they form cliques pretty quickly and have a tight group of friends. But as the years go on, by senior year everybody is friends. ... You build that family [relationship] as you go."

Project Irish focuses on both the victim's feelings and the bully's feelings.

"I think some people do lash out because of frustrations," Matt said. "Every bully has an issue. They try to gain power. I think some people bottle up their emotions. Nobody can really know what is going on in that student's life outside of school."

Project Irish members organized an educational program for each grade before the start of school last fall to help the students understand the harm that results from cyberbullying.

"We try to stop the problems because no one should suffer because of bullying," Matt said. "We tell the students that Project Irish members will sit down and listen to them, and try to help them out. Everything is always confidential."

Showing respect for others is emphasized every day, Holly said. "Respect is a huge thing here in the classroom, with your teachers, with your classmates, with everyone." †

## Archdiocese's Catholic schools make top grades in state ratings

By John Shaughnessy

Catholic schools in the archdiocese have excelled again in the latest ratings by the Indiana Department of Education.



Gina Fleming

Under the state's accountability system that rates schools with grades of A to F, 52 of the archdiocese's 68 accredited schools received an A grade.

With 77 percent of its schools receiving an A, the archdiocese far surpassed the overall percentage of schools throughout Indiana that earned the highest grade—41 percent.

Ninety-three percent of the archdiocesan schools received either an A or a B in the state ratings.

"The report provides yet another confirmation of the effectiveness of our schools in bringing out the best in students academically," said Harry Plummer, executive

director of Catholic education and faith formation for the archdiocese.

"Performance on standardized assessments doesn't tell the whole story of our success, of course, but they do rather clearly demonstrate that our Catholic schools are effective agents in the game of raising Indiana's educational standards. In fact, I think it's safe to say we're writing the playbook."

While the grading system still relies on student performance on ISTEP+ testing results, the state Department of Education has placed a greater emphasis on the academic growth of individual students from one year to the next, according to Gina Fleming, an assistant superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

"Indiana's A to F accountability model incorporates student academic growth and graduation rates in addition to college and career readiness," Fleming noted.

Seven percent of the archdiocesan schools received a C or D grade. No archdiocesan school received an F grade. That 7 percent figure for the archdiocese compares to 39 percent of the schools in the state that received a C, D or F grade.

The archdiocese's Office of Catholic Education

continues to increase its efforts to provide a quality education that meets and exceeds state standards, Fleming said.

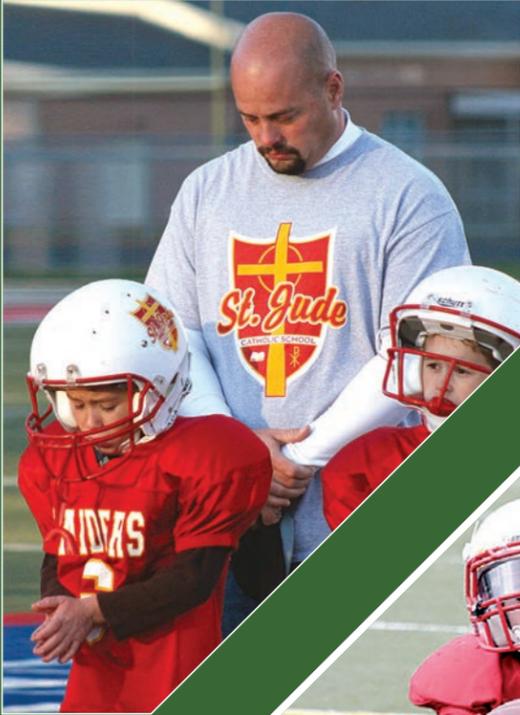
"Our focus on rigor is evident through coursework and programming offered at both the archdiocesan and school level," she said. "These efforts are intended to prepare students with valuable skills—such as collaboration, problem solving and creativity—that are necessary to lead and serve the world."

The emphasis on faith and values still remains at the heart of that education for students, she added.

"The archdiocese continues to lead the way not only in academic growth and success, but in our fervent desire to develop the 'whole child' as individuals who come to know, love and serve God," Fleming noted.

"While there is no grade for the service and Christian leadership our students and staff members display, we maintain great confidence that all of our schools attain an A in this category."

(For more information about Indiana's grading system for schools, go to <http://doe.in.gov/improvement/accountability/f-accountability>.) †



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The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

# New assessment survey of religious education is being used in parishes, schools

By Sean Gallagher

In January, students in Catholic schools and religious education programs across central and southern Indiana began experiencing a change in the way that their knowledge and practice of the faith is assessed. In years past, students in the third, sixth, eighth and 11th grades took a yearly exam developed by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis called Faith 2000.

That assessment tool has now been replaced by one developed approximately 30 years ago by the National Catholic Education Association called the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE), which has been updated at various times up to the present.

Students in the sixth, eighth and 11th grades will take ACRE.

"[Faith 2000] served us well," said Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis. "But because we're not in the business of standardized assessment, the annual process of administering Faith 2000

had become a little cumbersome. So from a stewardship perspective, if we could find something similar it was time to look for a different alternative."

ACRE is made up of three sections. One tests students on their knowledge of the faith. Another shows to what extent they practice the faith and what their attitudes are toward it. And the final section on perceptions will help parents, administrators and teachers see if there are problems, such as alcohol abuse, in a school or parish catechetical program that need to be addressed.

"The knowledge information is really important," Ogorek said. "I also think that some of the attitudes, practices and perceptions information can give some real insight into what kids are dealing with."

"To me, that information can be helpful not only for classroom teachers, but also from a campus ministry standpoint as activities like class retreats are planned."

Individual student results of the knowledge section of ACRE will be shared with administrators and teachers. For the sections on practices, attitudes and perceptions, a report on grade levels in each

school or program is offered.

Results will also be sent to the student or parents by April, Ogorek said. Administrators and teachers will receive results at the same time.

"That gives them time to work sooner rather than later as they set goals, especially for the next year," he said. "And it will allow that individual student report to get home to mom and dad sooner rather than later."

The use of ACRE for planning shows that the test isn't simply intended to determine a student's knowledge and practice of the faith.

"Assessments like Faith 2000 and ACRE also give a principal or director of religious education insight into how the overall program is doing," Ogorek said. "If the sacraments scores, for example, show a pattern of struggle, then it could be that the faculty needs to brush up their knowledge of the sacraments."

Ogorek also said that there is an advantage to ACRE because it is used by several dioceses across the country.

"It can be helpful to know where our efforts stand in relation to how other dioceses are doing in



Preston Saddler, an 8th grader at St. Bartholomew School in Columbus, dips a finger into a holy water font at St. Bartholomew Church on Dec. 5, 2012, while on his way to a school Mass. In January, schools and religious education programs across the archdiocese started to use the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education to help learn about the knowledge and practice of students' faith.

these areas," he said.

One of the dioceses in which ACRE is used is the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Deacon Vic Satter is the religion teacher for the seventh and eighth grades at St. Louise de Marillac School in Pittsburgh. He has seen firsthand how ACRE can help him pass on the faith more effectively to his students.

"The ACRE test is a great tool to evaluate the approach we are taking in catechesis," Deacon Satter said. "It helps us to determine from year to year what areas of faith formation need more emphasis and those which need less."

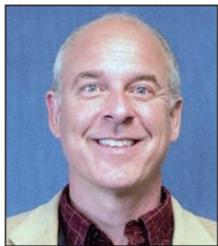
"As a school, the students of St. Louise have done rather well on this test. Therefore, it is an affirmation to all catechists in the school as to the quality job we are doing in introducing sacred

Scripture and presenting the teachings, history and sacramental life of the Church."

Ogorek said that the purpose of using an assessment tool like ACRE is ultimately to help religion teachers and catechists answer a question at the heart of their ministry: "Am I getting through to the kids?"

"That's why we do assessment of all different types," Ogorek said. "So, my hope is that ACRE will both show our teachers and catechists that, by God's grace, they are helping to shine the light of faith in the lives of young people."

"The flip side of that is that there's always room for improvement. Our hope would be that ACRE would identify specific areas where some improvement might be a focus for a catechetical leader out there in a school or parish program." †

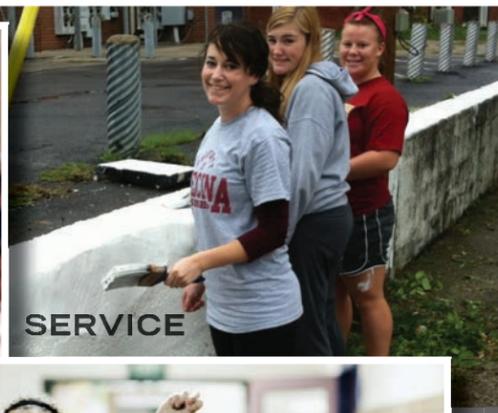


*"To me, that information can be helpful not only for classroom teachers, but also from a campus ministry standpoint as activities like class retreats are planned."*

—Ken Ogorek,  
archdiocesan director of catechesis



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# 'It all goes back to our roots'

## Great divide becomes special bond for classmates who still meet after 71 years

By John Shaughnessy

It's a fun story about the differences that sometimes divide boys and girls in the same grade in a Catholic school.

Marked by laughter and memories, it's also a timeless story about the bonds that sometimes connect those same boys and girls in an amazing way.

And "amazing" seems a good word to describe a group of male and female classmates, who still meet regularly nearly 71 years after they graduated from grade school together.

"It's kind of a special bond we have," says Ann Sadtler, one of the graduates of the Class of 1942 of St. Mary's Catholic Academy in New Albany. "We really look forward to being with one another. We have a ball."

Yet that closeness wasn't always on display. For the first five years of grade school, the boys were taught in one building while the girls received instruction in another.

But the true divide started after the boys and girls were combined into one building in the sixth grade—a move that eventually led to a classic showdown between the boys and the girls over the all-important issue of playground rights.

On one side, there were the girls who had been content to spend the first five years of their Catholic education in a parish building that had two key features from the girls' view: It was



Above, photo captures boys and girls from the Class of 1942 at St. Mary's Catholic Academy in New Albany. Surviving members of that class still get together for monthly luncheons 71 years after they graduated from grade school.

Left, 11 members of the Class of 1942 of St. Mary's Catholic Academy in New Albany pose with Dominican Father Emmanuel Bertrand, a member of the class, after a Mass at St. Mary Church during the summer of 2012 as the class celebrated its 70-year reunion.

modern, and there weren't any boys in it.

On the other side, there were the boys who had been thrilled to spend the first five years of their Catholic education in another parish building that had two key features from the boys' perspective: It had a great playground, and there weren't any girls in it.

In the midst of this utopia, the decision was made that it would be better for the boys and girls at the parish to actually attend school together in the same building.

It wasn't a popular decision as far as the boys and girls were concerned. Still, they managed to keep a peaceful co-existence—with the exception of the one boy who boycotted the class photo as a matter of principle—until one day when the girls wanted to play kickball on the boys' paved playground instead of the cinder alley that passed for the girls' playground.

The boys balked. The principal said the boys had to share. The boys protested and staged a sit-down strike on the playground—a strategic counterattack that drew the attention of the pastor of the parish. He declared that the boys could continue their sit-down strike by sitting in the bleachers for a month and watching the girls play kickball on the paved playground.

"Women's Lib had its first movement," says a laughing Trudy Peak as she recalls one of the defining stories of her class.

Yet the *most* defining story of that class is that its graduates still get together every month for lunch 71 years later.

"Everyone enjoys each other's company," says Peak, who is credited by her classmates for keeping the group together. "For a while after we left school, we all went into different lives. But after you get older and do things in your life, you think about the people you grew up with and the memories you had together."

There were 47 members of their graduating class. Twenty-four classmates are alive. The classmates included a doctor, a priest, an engineer, a chemist, teachers, business owners, homemakers and two religious sisters. The reunions began when the religious sisters, who were

missionaries, returned home to visit with family and friends.

"I ran into one of the boys one time and he said, 'Do you ever see anyone from school?'" Peak recalls. "I told him the girls get together. He said, 'Why don't you include the boys?'" So we did. The first year we got together, we were adults with families, and still the boys lined up on one wall and the girls lined up on the other."

Reunions followed every five years until 2002 when someone suggested that the group was approaching "the short end of life" so meetings should be held monthly. Now, the group meets at Sam's Food and Spirits in New Albany. About 20 people show up every time, including spouses and grown children who drive their parents to the lunches.

"You don't see many kids who were in school together in the late '30s and early '40s who have stuck together like this," says Ed Roth, a member of the class. "Maybe it has something to do with us not coming together until the sixth grade. It's a special day when I get to have lunch with them, and they all make me feel loved. It's really fantastic."

Classmates send flowers and cards of comfort when someone is ill. They sit together as a class at funeral Masses. A monthly newsletter is sent, sharing information from their lives and the lives of their children and grandchildren.

"It all goes back to our roots and our friendship in Catholic school," Peak says. "We learned our morals there. We knew who God was, and we learned to respect each other. Our friendship has been strong. It means a lot to us. We're always there for each other." †

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# Digging deep

## Students' service project in Nicaragua creates desire to live life at full force

By Christa Hoyland  
Special to The Criterion

CLARKSVILLE—It was hard to tell who enjoyed the moment more.

From one perspective, there were the 15 students and five adults from Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville—a group that worked with other volunteers last summer to dig a trench to lay more than 1,000 feet of pipe to bring fresh running water to outlying villages in Nicaragua.

From another perspective, there were the residents of one of those villages, residents who rolled around in water after the workers turned the pipeline on full-blast.

Being present at that moment was inspiring for the volunteers from Providence High School, including Alan Mathews, the Spanish teacher who organized the service mission trip that took place last July. Since then, he has felt called to do more hands-on service in local ministries and to encourage his students to also become more involved in those efforts.

“Giving money is something everyone wants to do, but there’s something about reaching out,” Mathews said. “Too often, we have good intentions, but intentions are not the same as help. Only through our actions do people get help.”

The group from Providence traveled to Nicaragua to assist the non-profit organization Amigos for Christ in its clean water project and

other ministries. The group spent time in an orphanage for mentally challenged children, taught children how to swim, and dug a trench to lay the pipe.

The pipe was part of a long-term project by Amigos for Christ in which rotating groups of volunteers lay a pipeline to transport water from an aquifer to villages that have no plumbing.

Mathews said it was humbling to see villagers living in shacks made of gathered wood and plastic, and their drinking water full of insects. He met third-generation families in which not a single member had ever experienced fresh, clean, running water in their village. When Amigos for Christ workers turned on the water, the villagers cried.

Elliott Happel, who graduated from Providence in May of 2012 before taking part in the trip, said he was overwhelmed when he saw the villagers' gratitude.

“It is hard to imagine how some people can live in such devastating poverty, but seeing it firsthand has an effect on you that is indescribable,” Happel said. “The work that Amigos for Christ does immediately and permanently changes the lives of all the people who live in these communities, [and] it also immediately and permanently changes the lives of the people who were able to help give them this new life.”

For Providence junior Matt Martin, the opportunity to serve and see the positive attitudes



Volunteers from Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville take a break from digging a trench to bring clean running water to outlying villages in Nicaragua in the summer of 2012. From left, senior Lloyd Lashley, junior Abby Spitznagel, junior Megan Gilland, 2012 graduate Elliott Happel, Spanish teacher Alan Mathews, junior Trey Embry and junior Austin Happel.

of people who live in such desperate circumstances was affirming.

“Every single one of us that went on this mission trip has been changed,” he said. “Our hearts have been engulfed from the love that these families share not only with

their children but with us, showing the thanks they all so eagerly wish to give.

“This isn’t a ‘been there and done that’ experience, but rather a wake-up call to live your life to the fullest, no matter what hardships you must endure, and

still be thankful to the man above for giving you a new day.”

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

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