As we begin another calendar year and a new decade, it causes us to think about our many blessings and gifts, and even the challenges which lie before us. At the start of a new year, I always reflect on where I have been and what still needs my attention. I call this my personal portfolio, just as one also has a stock portfolio. I am called to take stock of my life. What are my dividends? How have I profited from my investments?

This year’s theme for Catholic Schools Week is “Catholic Schools: Dividends for Life.” When I first saw this theme, my mind went to the stock portfolio. Then the light bulb went off in my mind and I realized all the dividends that Catholic schools have paid over many years. It’s a totally different type of profit, one I am still blessed by each day.

There are four major qualities of Catholic education: faith, knowledge, discipline and morals. They are qualities I have valued since entering the first grade at St. Patrick School and graduating many years later from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Terre Haute. These gifts or dividends become a part of who we are and what we do—a personal portfolio.

Let me reflect on each of those qualities as they pertain to my life.

Faith is my personal relationship with God, and certainly with others, too. My religion classes, as did all my other subjects and service opportunities, allowed me to express my faith and belief in God, my classmates and later my colleagues. Knowledge means acquiring information and then transferring its importance. For me, knowledge also means the academic excellence which exists in our schools—not only in test scores, but also in teaching the whole student in body, mind and spirit. Ninety-eight percent of our students graduate from high school, and an amazing 97 percent continue to higher education. What a dividend for our business world. It doesn’t get much better than that.

We all know the importance of discipline. For me, it says that I needed to pay attention to my school lessons and be able to apply those skills for a happy and fruitful life. Discipline helped me achieve my dreams and goals—another great payoff!

Morals are a MUST. Finding a way to be happy and balanced is not easy. Knowing right from wrong is one thing, and doing it is another. Morals lead to integrity, be it in business, education or whatever field one chooses.

At the end of 2009, most publications listed the top 10 stories of the year and even the decade. In every case, these lists caused us to pause and reflect on the hallmarks mentioned. We have our own stories to remember and consider. What we do reflects who we are and helps us to write our story for the future. I ask you to think about the dividends of Catholic schools and commit yourself to the continued support of Catholic school education.

And so it is that Catholic schools produce dividends for life. The whole world benefits when we share these dividends with others. I am grateful to have had that experience. God bless.

(Annette “Mickey” Lentz is the chancellor of the archdiocese and the executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Education and Faith Formation.)
A special connection
Faith guides students’ efforts to make a difference

By John Shaughnessy

The images range from fun to heartwarming.

They also offer connections that spread far beyond the confines of Indianapolis. Quarterback Peyton Manning to the horror of earthquake-devastated Haiti.

In all the images, there is this constant—the way that Catholic school students across the archdiocese strive to make a difference in their communities and the world.

Here is a look at five special efforts that show that service is a way of life and an expression of faith for Catholic school students.

‘Hula Hoops for Haiti’
The students at Sacred Heart School in Jeffersonville had already made a commitment to Haiti before the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated that country and killed about 200,000 people.

At school, this theme year is "Sacred Heart School: Makes a World of Difference," and we have concentrated our efforts on ways that we can help our sister parish, St. Raphael, in Haiti," said Becky Spitznagel, the school’s principal. "A missionary team from Sacred Heart traveled to Haiti as our Vocations Club, to pray the rosary and pray for our students who have been living and praying there for more than 130 years."

"It’s a way to connect them with the Catholic history of Indiana and give them an experience of a faith-filled community of monks who have been living and praying in Haiti for nearly 1,000 years."

"The agencies were all thankful," Mayer said. "One of the biggest comments I got from them was their surprise [about] the quality of students we brought them. They weren’t sure how many students would respond. It’s cool the way they did respond. It was inspirational to see."

A special connection
The project bears the name of Peyton Manning. Just like a pass from Manning to his teammate, the connection has been a good one between the Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis and Bishop Chatard High School in Madison.

"The hospital has a program where they send us hospital bracelets with the names of the patients there and then we pray for them every day," said Jill Mires, the principal at Bishop Chatard. "We have about 50 students from preschool to sixth grade.

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"The hospital has a program where they send us hospital bracelets with the names of the patients there and then we pray for them every day," said Jill Mires, the principal at Bishop Chatard. "We have about 50 students from preschool to sixth grade.

"The program has been a perfect way for Mires to introduce the young students to the importance of being there for others in need. “The school children have really connected with it,” she said. “It’s been neat for both spiritually and from a service-oriented standpoint. It’s special to hear the children telling their parents about the child and their illness, and that they’re praying for them to heal.”

The students and teachers at Bishop Chatard High School pose outside a vacant home in Indianapolis that they helped to renovate during a week-long community service day on Oct. 28.

As part of a school-wide community service day on Oct. 28 for Bishop Chatard High School students, teachers and staff members in Indianapolis, freshman Patrick Gordon helps a guest go through a Christmas stocking made and filled with gifts for American soldiers in Afghanistan.

"I’m taking a group of students down there for what they call ‘The Wood Chop,’” Father Jenkins said. "Those counties down there are among the poorest in the state, and many of the people down there heat their homes with wood. Cutting and gathering wood is a way of providing heat for the poor in that area. It’s a way for our students to get to see a different picture of the poor.”

"The students were so proud. ‘The Wood Chop’ is a way of providing heat for the poor. Cutting and gathering wood is a way of providing heat for the poor in that area. It’s a way for our students to get to see a different picture of the poor."

"One of our students has an uncle serving in Afghanistan," said Kathy Schubel, the school’s principal. "So the students decided to send them stockings for Christmas. The students sewed the stockings themselves. They brought in their own materials and sewed the stockings themselves. They brought in their own materials and sewed the stockings themselves."

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So on Oct. 28, students, teachers, staff members and parents from Bishop Chatard took assignments that led them to help at nursing homes, child care centers, food banks for the poor, and other sites.

"I just hearing the students talk about their experiences was real neat,” Mayer noted. "Some kids had to build a brick wall, others had to move dirt, but no one complained. They knew they were helping them. It gave them a better perspective of the need that is out there."

"We decide we would hold a ‘Hula Hoops for Haiti’ event," Spitznagel said. "The students will take part in hula hoop activities in the gym and collect donations for Haiti. At the end of the hula hoop activities, Father Tom has agreed to be a human ring toss. For every five dollars they collect, he will get a chance to toss a hula hoop over Father Tom. The top three students to get the hula hoops around him will get to go out to eat lunch with Father Tom.”

"While the event is fun, the focus is serious following the earthquake." "The recent tragic events in Haiti have altered our focus," Spitznagel said. "We plan to raise the additional money during Catholic Schools Week—a time when the school traditionally has a fun event to help a serious cause.

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"I promise we are going to move into the homes and play baseball with them." "I promise we are going to move into the homes and play baseball with them."
New approach to student leadership creates deeper faith, tighter bonds

By Sean Gallagher

CLARKSVILLE—A main goal of any high school is to prepare its students to become mature, well-rounded adults who can be strong leaders in their communities. Catholic high schools also seek to form their students to be faith-filled leaders.

At the start of this academic year, Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville launched a major overhaul of its student leadership structure to better achieve that goal. Instead of having a student council and class officers like most high schools do, Providence now has what is called the “house system.” There are eight “houses” that include groups from all four of its classes in the senior high school.

The junior high school at Providence has one house. Each house is named for one of the values that are hallmarks of Providence. They also have a color and a patron saint.

There are 12 elected leaders in each house, and 80 in the senior high school as a whole, which contrasts with 20 under the previous model. This large group of leaders has been charged, with the rest of the members of their house, to organize at least four school-wide activities each year. “The house system is developing our students into stronger and better leaders,” said Providence senior Matt Duncan. “I have a feeling that it’s going, in the long run, to develop our leadership skills and really help us one day, when we’re out in the workforce, to be able to take charge and to make decisions.”

Matt is a member of the House of Integrity, whose color is metallic silver and has St. Jerome as its patron saint. The house system also creates a stronger bond among students. Upper class students interact more with freshmen and sophomores and so become real role models for them.

“It’s really been nice,” said Providence senior Travis Cunningham. “I’ve gotten to know a lot of underclassmen that I wouldn’t have gotten to know otherwise. I’m finding a new way to bond with people.”

Travis is a member of the House of Truth, whose color is green and has St. Gertrude for its patron saint. The house system even includes faculty and staff leadership positions.

“At least in my house, the teachers are on subcommittees, but aren’t leading [them],” said Providence senior Jacob Kraft. “They’re in there throwing out ideas and giving us their knowledge of what Providence may have used to be like. They’ve been able to interact with us on our own level, I guess, instead of just as a teacher.”

Jacob is a member of the House of Justice, whose color is red and whose patron saint is St. Amonrose.

A main reason for implementing the house system was to renew the spirit that filled Providence in previous years, according to Leslie Mills, the director of leadership and service at Providence.

Many of Providence’s teachers and administrators are graduates of the New Albany Diocesan school. Mills is a member of the Class of 1993. “Something had been lost since I had left,” Mills said. “I think things got stale. I think that we had the same students every year. It was such a small crop to pick from because a lot of people didn’t feel like they could jump into those leadership positions.”

Mills now sees a renewed spirit in the school because of the house system.

By Sean Gallagher

Catherine Aubrey, left, and Hadley Anderson, juniors at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, carry boxes of toys on Dec. 11, 2009, that were donated to the Marine Foundation Toys for Tots for the school’s lobby. The toy drive at Providence was organized by the school’s House of Justice and House of Faith. Students from all four grade levels in the senior high school are arranged in eight houses in a new student leadership model launched last fall at Providence.

A house united

Catholic identity, according to Providence senior Kameron Johnson. “Even at a Catholic school, it’s not really cool to show your faith a lot of times,” said Kameron. “I think I just seeing upperclassmen being very genuine with their faith in an environment could really affect freshmen and sophomores. It might make them more willing to keep the cycle going when they’re upperclassmen and show their faith to people.”

Kameron is a member of the House of Faith, which has teal for its color and St. Gregory the Great as its patron saint. The house system also presents new ways for students and teachers to get to know each other. “When a new faculty or staff member is assigned to a house, one serves as the house director, although the students in the house still end up making house decisions.”

“Even at my house, in the past, they’re in there throwing out ideas and giving us their knowledge of what Providence may have used to be like. They’ve been able to interact with us on our own level, I guess, instead of just as a teacher.”

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New faculty and staff leadership is emerging,” Ernstberger said. “It has re-energized some faculty and staff, but has also been a call for others to become a more vital part of the school community. Relationships with students are strengthening, and a new sense of commitment to and ownership of Christian leadership is being felt by [the] faculty and staff, too.”

The house system even includes Providence graduates. Each graduating class dating back to 1955, has been assigned to one of the eight houses in the school. Providence president Joan Hurley believes the house system will foster strong, ongoing relationships with graduates.

“Our hope is that these alumni will catch up with the students now in the houses, perhaps attend one or two of their meetings and support the projects each house conducts,” Hurley said. “It is attractive that by bringing the alumni to our existing student body, and allowing interaction through our Web site and other means, the house system grows and brings alumni closer to the school and its present student body.”

Even after just a few months, senior Jacob Kraft can see how the house system is making a difference to the school.

“I think the house system can catapult Providence to be so much better,” Jacob said. “It’s already good. But I think the house system has so much offer. It will create a bigger sense of community.”

(To learn more about the house system at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, log on to www.providencechs.net/node/506.)
Tough question, good answers

Teacher asks, ‘If Jesus came to Earth, what would he find?’

By John Slaughnnessy

Lynn Henning’s question about Jesus and how we live our faith would challenge anyone.

So just imagine what it must have been like for the third-grade students in Henning’s religion class when she asked them to write an answer to this question: “If Jesus came down to Earth today and walked into our room, what would he find that is good and bad in our world?”

The answers that Henning received from her third-grade class at St. Monica School in Indianapolis impressed her.

Here is a selection of those answers:

Hilton Sanchez—“One day, Jesus came to Earth and this is what he saw. Jesus was very happy because he saw families going to church. He was also sad because he saw friends fighting. Jesus could see that people were respecting nature and protecting endangered animals.

“As he walked along the Earth, he saw countries at war and divorced families. So Jesus continued walking and he saw all the pollution. Sometimes, he saw people performing good services and also people taking part in the sacraments. Jesus said, ‘With prayer, the world can be a better place.’”

Taylor Wendland—“I think that Jesus would like our Earth because of our art. Using our talents such as music and sports would please him, too. Jesus is happy when we take care of nature. Loving others is one of the best ways to make him happy.”

Parker Gianoli—“I think that Jesus would not be pleased with the wars, immigration issues and the endangered animals. He would be disappointed in the broken commandments. He would be sad at seeing children in pain. He would like that the Bible is still being used today.”

Cecilia Seufert—“Jesus would find that people care about the environment. Recycling is one of the ways that people are doing their part. Planting trees is a tradition many communities have adopted. These are just a few of the ways that Jesus would see that we are taking care of the Earth.”

For Henning, the answers the students gave reflected her hope for the class.

“My hope for the third-grade students this year is for them to connect what we learn from our books to their everyday lives,” she said. “We talk quite a bit about how God wants us to live and what that means to them. They learn about the sacraments, Scripture and prayer. But more importantly, I want them to know how those things can help make a difference. How can they be the change in our world?”

—Lynn Henning

Guardian Angel Guild raises funds to help students with learning disabilities

By Mary Ann Wyand

Guardian angels are a continual source of help for God’s people.

The whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of guardian angels,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains. “... From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession” (§934-935).

For half a century, Catholic education in the archdiocese has benefited from the charitable work of a dedicated group of guardian angels who tirelessly raise funds for resource programs and resource teachers at schools and St. Mary’s Child Center in Indianapolis. Since 1959, members of the Guardian Angel Guild in Indianapolis have helped God’s children with developmental disabilities to reach their educational potential at Catholic schools and look forward to a better future.

Guardian Angel Guild members and guests celebrated the organization’s 50th anniversary on Sept. 24 during a luncheon in Indianapolis. The theme was “Celebrating Yesterday, Envisioning Tomorrow.”

Guild president Ginny Maher, a member of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis, said the volunteer organization began “when a group of mothers put their heads together and got into action” to ensure that students with learning disabilities receive the resources they need at Catholic schools.

Maher said five decades of fund raisers have benefited hundreds, if not thousands, of students with special needs. During 2009, she said, the guild distributed more than $32,000 to archdiocesan schools to support resource programs, students and instructors.

“Looking to the future, Maher said the guild hopes to serve more students; financially support more resource programs in schools and establish an endowment for future needs.

“We continue our mission to help children with developmental disabilities to reach their potential,” she said, “through testing and support to succeed in every aspect of their educational endeavors.”

During his keynote speech, Evansville Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger—a former archdiocesan vicar general, chancellor and superintendent of schools—thanked the guild members for helping Catholic school students with learning disabilities.

“The Guardian Angel Guild had a key role, and still does have a key role, of providing that kind of assistance to our Catholic schools,” Bishop Gettelfinger said. “There is no way to even describe what kind of an effect you have had on these young people for a lifetime.”

He praised the guild members for “the effort that all of you make on an annual basis to raise funds then generously contribute to help young people” with special needs to be able to receive a Catholic education.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Guardian Angel Guild’s financial support dating back five decades enabled Catholic schools and St. Mary’s Child Center to serve students with learning disabilities, he said, even before federal and state disability laws required public schools to provide special education coursework.

During the early years, Guardian Angel Guild members also helped tutors who needed help with mathematics and reading skills at some of the Catholic high schools and grade schools in Indianapolis. Now there is a resource room or special education teacher at each Catholic school in the Indianapolis area.

Guild members said it has been a pleasure to help the archdiocese serve parents who want a Catholic education for their children with learning disabilities.

Maher said the guild continues to help pay for diagnostic evaluations, special equipment, technology, educational materials and extra training for teachers to better serve students.

“We also help with the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education’s SPRED program (Special Religious Development for children with special needs),” she said, as well as “instructional materials for students with language challenges, autism, Aperger’s syndrome and dyslexia to pinpoint what they need and then provide the equipment that would best assist them.”

“It’s such a good feeling to think that we are maybe making a difference in a child’s life,” Maher said, “by offering something that they need.”

Above, in her religion class at St. Monica School in Indianapolis, third-grade student Taylor Wendland imagines Jesus coming to Earth and saying, “With prayer, the world can be a better place.”

Left, third-grade student Hilton Sanchez imagines Jesus coming to Earth and saying, “With prayer, the world can be a better place.”

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After 50 years in classroom, teacher still inspires students

By John Shaughnessy

When Marilyn Dever-Miles retires as a teacher someday, she will head to her hair-hairsty closet where she has stored boxes filled with notes and cards from her students of the past 50 years. Notes thanking her for preparing them for college.

Letters of appreciation for how the demands she made of them now help them in their jobs.

Birthday cards telling her how much of a difference she has made to their lives.

"Some day when I retire, I'll get the boxes out and I'll go through them and I'll cry," says Dever-Miles, who teaches English at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. "The students used to send me notes. Now, they send e-mails. Those mean so much. One of them does not just make your day, it makes your year."

At 71, Dever-Miles has been "making the days" of students for five decades—making those days more challenging and inspiring.

"At 50 years, to still be viewed by your peers and your students as the most energetic and passionate teacher, I just find that startling," says Chuck Weisenbach, Roncalli's principal.

"After 50 years, she's still at the top of her game. Kids swear by her, even more so when they get to college. My wife and I have two kids who have had her as a teacher. They just adore her, and they have such respect for how much they have benefited from her. She can just flat out teach."

Spend time with Dever-Miles and her passion for teaching teenagers fills her words and her facial expressions.

"Kids keep me going," she says with a smile that glows. "They are so full of energy, and they are so full of hope. Maybe it's also the challenge of staying ahead of them. Sometimes they win, and sometimes I win."

As she shares that last thought, her eyes get bright, and even flash a touch of mischief. Her look becomes a mixture of warmth and intensity when she talks about her approach to teaching.

"Hold a tight rein and you're O.K. Let up when you're dead," she said. One of my goals is to be a good example. I want them to see a good example of a good Catholic woman—someone who is modest, who is humble, who is friendly, and is someone who is fun. Never discount fun—I think we do sometimes. It's good for them to see me go to church, too. Kids hate a phony, and they look for it in adults. You better not be a phony if you want their respect."

While she seeks respect, she also demands punctuality and organization from her students.

"I want to teach them things they'll need later in life," says Dever-Miles, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. "Organization and punctuality are the two biggies for me. I don't allow tardies, and I don't take late assignments."

She teaches English—and stress writing, grammar and vocabulary—because she believes it's the foundation of so much of what people do in their careers. She teaches at a Catholic school because she sees the difference that an emphasis on faith can have on students.

"I went to a Catholic grade school, a Catholic high school and a Catholic college," says the 1960 graduate of now Marian University in Indianapolis. "We get the basics of our religion, and we can practice it every day. The kids can go to Mass every day. We can pray in class. And we really push service. Your religion is more accessible here."

"Someday when I retire, I'll get the boxes out and I'll go through them and I'll cry," Dever-Miles said.

She introduced the concept to students during National French Week when she gave them a baby keepsake box. Students had to guess what was inside the boxes before they opened them. Laying inside, the students found a snail shell that came with a person's profile. Students were matched with a snail profile that had some of their same interests and even fears.

"Laughter filled my room," Dever-Miles recalled. "The students had to pick a name for their snail and then introduce their snail to the class. Students have enjoyed the project. "It was nothing like I had ever done before," Kristin Simms said. "I will always remember this experience."

"I have six semesters of college professors and you still knock them all out of the park. ... I learned how to always like my best, and always take the time to correct my mistakes. I am very conscious of bringing materials to class, and being on time. You truly made a difference, Mrs. M. Miles."

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At 71, Roncalli High School teacher Marilyn Dever-Miles has spent 50 years leaving her mark on the education and the lives of her English students.

Zany experiment with snails adds fun and creativity to class

Katie Aebersold used in her zany experiment to add fun and real-life communication skills to the French classes she teaches at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville.

With her left hand on a French translation of the Bible and her right hand raised, junior Catherine Aubeley became the first student to take the oath—to adopt a snail.

"I, Catherine, swear to take full responsibility for the escargot named Raul, to provide him with safe housing, adequate clothing and educational opportunities,... also to swear to never spill salt or eat shrimp, lobster or crab in the presence of my escargot. So help me God."

Before the ceremony ended on Nov. 30, 11 French students became proud adoptive parents of their very own snail. Since then, the snails have helped the students communicate better in French.

"I was looking for something that would help them communicate real-life situations in the French language," Aebersold said.

As a adoptive parents, the students had to introduce their snails to teachers and staff members around the school in French. They have also used the French language to write about experiences they have created for their snails.

"Before this, they wrote about themselves and that's hard," Aebersold said. "This has made them more creative with the language and more comfortable with it. They're making houses for the snails, and they'll have to take them on spring break with them. They'll have to send me a postcard from wherever they are."

A first-year teacher at Providence, the 24-year-old Aebersold discovered the snails at www.adoptanescargot.com while searching online for teaching resources.

She introduced the concept to students during National French Week when she gave them a baby keepsake box.

"I was looking for something that would help them communicate real-life situations in the French language," Aebersold said.

At 71, Roncalli High School teacher Marilyn Dever-Miles has spent 50 years leaving her mark on the education and the lives of her English students.

"It was nothing like I had ever done before," Kristin Simms said. "I will always remember this experience."

"I have six semesters of college professors and you still knock them all out of the park. ... I learned how to always like my best, and always take the time to correct my mistakes. I am very conscious of bringing materials to class, and being on time. You truly made a difference, Mrs. M. Miles."

"I want to teach them things they'll need later in life," Dever-Miles said.
A meaningful victory
CYO group uses basketball to help youths with disabilities

By John Shaughnessy

During 36 years of working for the Catholic Youth Organization, Bernadette Price has always appreciated those moments of sportsmanship when young players show they know there is something more important than the numbers on a scoreboard. A nother one of those splendid moments came into focus for Price as she snapped numbers on a scoreboard.

Bernadette Price has always appreciated those moments of sportsmanship when young players show they know there is something more important than the numbers on a scoreboard. A moment that is remembered is when the Good Shepherd-CYO group used basketball to help youths with disabilities.

The Good Shepherd-CYO group has been the longest group to volunteer here,” says Jim Porter, the recreation director for Damar. “The other thing for our kids is that they are competitive, and they wanted to play against other talented teams. That really gives them a lot of confidence and makes them feel good about what they are doing.”

The criterion continues on the basketball court, too. “I am amazed at how busy kids are today and how competitive things in our world can be,” Price says. “Here we all mix and mingle together. It shows the youth of today are definitely headed in the right direction.”

Meaningful victories
The Damar team eventually lost that first game. They didn’t get a win during the rest of the season either, at least not on the scoreboard, but Porter said more meaningful victories were gained.

“When I tell our kids that the CYO group is coming, they always view it as a positive. To them, it means, ‘K ids are coming and we’re going to do a fun activity.”

“It’s good for them to have that interaction with the CYO kids,” Porter says. “Research shows that for children in treatment, their length of stay is shortened when they’re around positive social peers.”

So when Porter extended the offer to have a boys’ basketball team from Damar play in the CYO league, the Damar staff viewed it as another winning situation for the youths who are developmentally disabled and behaviorally challenged.

Their involvement was enhanced when the Good Shepherd teams offered to serve as mentors for the Damar team.

One of the biggest impacts for our kids has been being around positive social peers,” says Jim Porter, the recreation director for Damar. “The other thing for our kids is that they are competitive, and they wanted to play against other talented teams. They really give them a lot of confidence and makes them feel good about what they are doing. That confidence developed from the first time the Damar players stepped onto the court.

For a lot of the first half of our first game, our guys were ahead,” Porter notes. “That set the tone to make our guys feel they belonged. They had some anxiety about this because they viewed this as a real basketball league. For them to feel they belonged was just great.”

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That confidence developed from the first time the Damar players stepped onto the court.

The criterion continues on the basketball court, too. “Damar has shaped who I’ve become through high school,” says Brooke Propes, a member of Good Shepherd Parish and a senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “We go there a lot, and we get to know the kids. They have so many challenges, and yet they’re usually smiling. The children there make me realize how lucky I am. It’s changed my relationship with God and others. It’s made me think about what I might want to do later in my life—maybe work with people who have disabilities. I love Damar.”

It’s all part of the difference that volunteering can make in the lives of young people, Price says. It also shows just how special teenagers are today, she adds.

“I am amazed at how busy kids are today and how competitive things in our world can be,” Price says. “Here we all mix and mingle together. It shows the youth of today are definitely headed in the right direction.”

A lasting connection
That small moment reflects the great connection that has existed between the youth group at Good Shepherd Parish and the young people at Damar Services Inc., a program that strives to enable people with developmental disabilities to lead successful lives.

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**Prayers for God and Mary**

By Mary Ann Wyand

**BEECH GROVE**—“I pray the rosary.”

Holy Name School eighth-grade students in Beech Grove are proudly wearing T-shirts they decorated with this message. They made the T-shirts after watching a “YouTube” video during religion class about a teenager who promoted his Catholic faith as well as his devotion to Jesus and Mary in this way.

Benedicteine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Tell City, taught her the Marian prayer during her childhood. Sister Nicolette gives one handmade rosary to a Holy Name student every week to promote this devotion.

Father Stanley Pond, the pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, blesses the students’ rosaries after school Masses.

Sister Nicolette displays dozens of rosaries and 10 Marian images on a 4x5-foot bulletin board with information about some of the 200 titles of Mary throughout the world.

During religion class on Jan. 13, Holy Name eighth-grade students said their teacher inspires them to pray because she has a strong faith and deep love for Jesus.

Ashley Keeda said she drew large, colorful letters on her T-shirt with bright markers because she wants to make a bold statement about her Catholic faith. She understands the rosary is important to her because it’s a way to talk to God and Mary. Ashley said, “and whoever you’re praying for or whatever you’re praying for, I think it helps.”

Ben Coons drew a cross on his T-shirt next to the words, “I’m Catholic,” Ben said, “and I want other people to know about God and the rosary. I really calms me to pray the rosary because I know that God is listening. I’ve been praying to God for so long that I know he’s there.”

Jamal Hayden said she learned how to pray the rosary in the second grade when she was a student in a class with a student who was preparing for First Communion.

“Ever since then, we have prayed the rosary,” Jamal said. “Ithelps me get closer to God and makes me feel closer to his mother, Mary. We pray the rosary a lot. On Thursdays, we go to [eucharistic] adoration and pray the rosary. It helps us understand our faith a little better.”

Taylor Burger said her friends who are Catholic don’t understand why she prays the rosary.

“I play soccer and some of the kids who play soccer I even care about.” Taylor said, “I tell them that it’s how I grew up and how I trust God. ... I think it’s a form of prayer so God can call you, and Mary can help you through your troubles.”

Jash Cannaday said he recently prayed the rosary for a cousin who was very sick with cancer.

“I think the guy in the video was more interested in the rosary than most people are,” Jash said. “He wanted everyone else to know about the rosary, and that when you pray the rosary you become closer to God. If more people do pray, then God is with us more of the time.”

Tristan M. orphaned he says he likes to pray, “I think when you’re praying you feel more comfortable,” he said, “and you feel like something is coming around and embracing you. I like with the rosary, you feel like it might be a part of you somehow. Especially when it’s blessed, you feel like you’re doing something that’s important, and you’re doing something that doesn’t only just help you. It helps others. It’s not only that I want to get other people to pray the rosary. I want other people to know that I pray the rosary, too.”

Tristan said his teacher inspires him to be faithful because, as a religious sister, she promises to live a life of prayer. “It inspires me that nice women like her take so much time out of their lives to pray and pray,” he said. “It just shows that she wants to go to heaven like all of us.”

During the lunch break, Sister Nicolette said she has been a Sister of St. Benedict for 24 years and a teacher for 25 years. A few years ago, she felt called to learn more about Marian devotions.

“I feel like I know and love God so much more because I’ve have in my entire life,” Sister Nicolette said. “I love that I am continuing to grow in my faith. I think the rosary has helped me to get more in touch with my relationships with Mary, our Blessed Mother, and her son, Jesus.”

She asked her sisters to donate their extra rosaries for a classroom display. “Every rosary is so unique and so beautiful,” Sister Nicolette said. “I’ve given several away because sometimes the students become attached to a certain rosary. At the end of the school year, I allow them to take one if they want it. “I just fell in love with the devotional part of the Church, and I don’t want my students to miss out on that.”

It seems like the older I get, the more devotional I have become. I love adoration, and I love that my students are learning about the practice of praising God in adoration and by praying the rosary.

Sister Nicolette said she is pleased that her students are willing to pray the rosary.

“They love it,” she said. “They come in and pick a rosary off the [bulletin] board and pray. I teach grades four through eight, and all my students enjoy doing that. I have students who tell me all the time that it’s so calming to be able to walk in the classroom and pray even a decade of the rosary.”

During spring break last year, she spent three days with her mother in Tell City learning how to make rosaries.

“I’ve since then, I’ve been making rosaries every day,” Sister Nicolette said. “I love that it’s a gift that my mother gave me. I think that’s wonderful because the Blessed Mother is so important in my life, and it’s important to me that my mother taught me how to do this.”

“When my mom and I sit down and make rosaries, a whole new level of peace and calm comes into both our hearts,” she said. “And what do we have in the end? We have a beautiful gift that we can give to people to encourage them to pray.”

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**Holy Name School eighth-grade students Ben Coons, right, and Jake Farnworth, left, of Beech Grove pray a decade of the rosary on Jan. 13 during religion class. Ben, Jake and other classmates recently decorated T-shirts with the message “I pray the rosary” to promote their Catholic faith as well as their devotion to Jesus and Mary.**
Back home again

Former student returns to lead two Catholic schools

By John Shaughnessy

The phone call that changed Philip Kahn’s life and led him to return home after 22 years came from a friend he has known since the first grade.

The caller wanted to know if Kahn (pronounced Kain) would be interested in returning home to help ensure the future of the Catholic schools that had shaped his life and the lives of so many other people.

As Kahn listened to the caller, the then-40-year-old executive for Eli Lilly & Co. in Indianapolis became increasingly intrigued about applying to become the president of the two Prince of Peace Schools in Madison—Pope John X X X III School and Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School.

“She knew I loved the schools,” Kahn recalls. “The more I went through the interview process, the more I got excited about the opportunity. I always felt they were my schools even though I was gone for a number of years. Coming back to help try to make them bigger and better was a motivating factor for me.”

Kahn got the job, and since a week ago he’s been enjoying the responsibility of taking the two schools to an even higher level.

“It’s really been pretty neat,” says Kahn, a 1987 graduate of Shawe. “My wife and I are back home, and I’m helping the schools I grew up in. It’s neat knowing that every day at work can lead to something new and exciting for the community. It’s a close-knit community down here. There are 400 students pre-K through seniors. It’s a family atmosphere. We are the Catholic schools here. A lot of dedicated people have helped Pope John and Shawe be the great places they are.

Kahn’s main focus is to increase the enrollment and the fundraising success of the schools.

“My goal is to ensure the legacy and future of these schools in this community for a long time to come,” Kahn says. “I was traveling around one day, I truly believe we have a diamond in the rough down here. As great as our product has been, we’ve just scratched the surface. If we can raise more money and improve the product, it would be better for everybody. I’m excited.”

Part of that excitement comes from returning home to Madison with his wife of 12 years, Tania, and their two sons, Philip, 4, and Connor, 1. After graduating from Shawe in 1987, Kahn attended a college in Alabama and later served as an assistant basketball coach at colleges in Georgia and South Carolina before taking a job with Lilly in 2003.

Six years later came the life-changing phone call from a friend he has known since the first grade—Jill Mires, the principal of Pope John X X X III School.

“He’s always had leadership skills since high school,” Mires says. “I thought of him and how he had been in the education field and the business field. I thought that mixture would be a good combination for us. He’s very friendly, very outgoing, a people person. And he has a true love for the schools. They’re very dear to him.”

Kahn’s difference-making ability has already been noticed by Jerry Bohnolt, the longtime principal of Shawe High School.

“He’s worked extremely hard,” Bohnolt says. “We see a lot of positive things headed in the right direction. He’s made himself available to every family and every person on staff. He’s the right fit for what we needed. It appears he has all the qualities to get the job done.”

Kahn says. “In traveling around a lot, I truly believe we have a diamond in the rough down here. As great as our product has been, we’ve just scratched the surface. If we can raise more money and improve the product, it would be better for everybody. I’m excited.”

Coming home is Kahn’s way of paying some debts from his past.

“I’ve always felt like whatever successes I’ve had, and the person I’ve become religiously, were molded by the education and the environment I’ve experienced at these two schools,” he says. “My mom sent me to St. Mark School in Indianapolis as a single mom. It meant a lot to me when I was away, but it meant even more when I was away from the situation. This is my opportunity to give back.”

ISTEP scores for archdiocesan students

well above state averages

Catholic Schools Week Supplement

The Criterion  Friday, January 29, 2010

ISTEP+ Combined Results

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* Only includes grades 3 to 8 in Fall 2008 & Spring 2009

Students at St. Mark School in Indianapolis celebrate the glory of a beautiful autumn day in 2009.
Committee charged to find new Catholic education leader

By Sean Gallagher

William Kuntz knows what it means to find a winner. He won the Super Bowl with the New England Patriots and coached Roncalli High School's first state championship football team in 1985. And for nearly 25 years since, Kuntz has worked in the business world, finding winning professionals to fill open positions for businesses across the country.

Still, when Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein asked Kuntz to be the chairperson of a committee charged to find the next executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for Catholic education and faith formation, he was taken aback at the task put before him.

“My initial thought was, ‘This is not a job. How are you going to replace Mickey Lentz?’ What a challenge we have here,” said Kuntz, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

Annette “Mickey” Lentz, who has led the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Education (OCE) for 13 years, announced last June that she would be stepping down from the position she had been named the new chancellor of the archdiocese.

During her time leading OCE, 24 schools in the archdiocese have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools, more than any other diocese in the country. Lentz was principal of St. Mark School in Indianapolis in 1985 when it became the first Catholic school in the archdiocese to be so honored.

The current graduation rate at Catholic high schools in the archdiocese is 98 percent, with 97 percent of those graduates going on to college.

After considering this resume of success, Kuntz took a different perspective on finding the next leader for OCE.

“What a great opportunity for someone because of Mickey Lentz,” he said. “It really is an attractive job, I believe, in part because of what Mickey has built—the people that she’s surrounded herself with at OCE, the processes that are in place.”

For her own part, Lentz sees a lot of importance in this search for the future of Catholic education and faith formation in central and southern Indiana.

“Education, at this time, is at many, many turning points,” she said. “There are just a lot of things that need to be considered in education and in catechesis and faith formation. And it’s very important that we find a leader who can take us to the next level in these areas.”

The timeline of the work of the search committee, according to Kuntz, will be to make recommendations of finalists to fill the position by mid-April.

It is hoped that the next executive director could begin work soon thereafter or by the start of July at the latest. “It’s an exciting opportunity for those of us on the search committee,” Lentz said. “And certainly it’s one that we’re all taking very seriously. We want to do a great job for the archdiocese.”

“The talent and the passion that [the members] bring to the search committee position us to do the job well. We’re committed to do it to the very best of our ability.”

Part of that will be to cast a wide net for candidates. “I think it’s very important that we find a person of vision and leadership who can take us to the next level of education and faith formation,” Lentz said. “That’s a great opportunity for someone, because of what Mickey has built.”

Kuntz considered that role a football coach. “I think there will be a large candidate pool because the job is very attractive,” Lentz said. “It’s a very meaningful position. On the flip side, we’re looking for a pro who has a lot of experience but who has not been around too long in this world.”

As Kuntz reflected on finding a winning professional to serve as executive director of OCE, his thoughts turned back to his experience as a football coach.

“We’re going to expect our new executive director to win Super Bowls in the world of education, just like Mickey has.”

Catholic Schools Week Supplement

Tuesday, January 29, 2010

2009-10 facts about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Summary

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis operate as an extension of the family to unite faith and educational excellence through Gospel values, high educational standards, prayer and sacraments to achieve the teaching mission of the Church—learning, teaching and sharing our faith. The schools accomplish their educational mission through responsible use of resources generously shared by the parents, faculty, parishioners and the larger community. There are 72 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis: 61 are elementary schools (29 in Marion County) and 11 are high schools (7 in Marion County). Seven of the high schools are interparochial (archdiocesan) and four are privately owned.

• More than 1,800 dedicated people staff the schools.
• 57 elementary schools have before-school and/or after-school extended care programs.
• 48 schools have preschool or day care programs.
• 7 Indianapolis city-center schools serve 74 percent minority, 47 percent non-parishioners and approximately 78 percent qualified for Federal Lunch Program.
• 6 city-center schools were formed into a collaborative in 2004, now known as the M Other Theodore Catholic Academies, to serve urban families, mobilize and control the finances for the schools, share resources and staff, and minimize the financial burden of these schools for support.
• Catholic schools in the archdiocese cost more than $100 million per year to operate and save Indiana taxpayers more than $24 million each year (estimated).
• The graduation rate for the Catholic high schools is more than 98 percent (in four years or less), and more than 97 percent of graduates go on to higher education.
• Eight National Blue Ribbons have been earned by schools in the archdiocese since 2003.
• 25 schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have earned a total of 31 Blue Ribbons since 1983, the most by any archdiocese in the country.
• Schools are using information technology in instruction, and see replacement and renewal and training for technology as a high priority.
• Catholic schools are currently involved in a four-year Strategic Management and Development Process to build their capacity for strategic planning, attract enrollment and raise funds toward their preferred future.
• The Schools Team of the Office of Catholic Education works to provide guidance, support, training, and processes for curriculum development, assessment, school accreditation, school safety, administrative employment and leadership development for school administrators and teachers.

Project EXCEED Continuation and Replication

Project EXCEED (Excellence in Catholic Education: Expectation for Education) represented a commitment to raise school academic achievement through a new set of Three Rs in Catholic schools. The project was the result of a historic $12 million challenge grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. to private schools in Marion County for school improvement from 2002-06.

The challenge to the archdiocese was to attract an additional $6 million in capital dollars and $20 million in operating support to complete the project.

Interal level in these areas.

The archdiocese is at the forefront of this high school (9-12): 5,643

Preschool: 1,779

Elementary (K-8): 15,138

High school (9-12): 5,643

Religious composition:

Elementary: 90 %

High school: 90 %

Non-Catholic: 10 %

NOTE: Aproximate demographic figures for seven Indianapolis city-center schools are: 74 % minority, 47 % non-parishioners and approximately 78 % qualified for Federal Lunch Program.

Average tuition rates, first child (estimated):

Catholic: $5,458

Non-Catholic: $4,015

Interparochial high schools: $7,000

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

Estimated operating costs of Catholic schools in the archdiocese FYE 2008:

Elementary schools cost-per-pupil: $4,683

Interparochial high schools cost-per-pupil: $8,135

Total operating cost of archdiocesan schools: $100 million

(Estimted at 2008-09 K-12 enrollment (18,817) excluding capital costs and private high school costs)

Annual savings to Indiana taxpayers (estimated):

$214 million

(Estimated at aggregate Indiana public school 2008 K-12 composite estimated expenditure per pupil of $11,366-2008-09 Catholic School K-12 enrollment (18,817 students) excluding private high schools)

Annette “Mickey” Lentz, executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for Catholic education and faith formation, sits among the approximately 1,000 students from Catholic schools from across the archdiocese during a Catholic Schools Week Mass celebrated on Jan. 31, 2007, at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Annette “Mickey” Lentz, executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for Catholic education and faith formation, was taken aback at the task put before him.

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Annette “Mickey” Lentz, executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for Catholic education and faith formation, talks with students at the annual A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Security awards luncheon on March 6, 2008, at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

Catholic schools:

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High schools: 61

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The bond of belief

High school sports strive to teach values and deepen faith

By Bob Kelly
Special to The Criterion

The spirit and intensity often rise to a higher level when teams from Catholic high schools compete against each other in sports. And yet there is a bond that connects the coaches and student-athletes of these schools—the bond of faith.

In fact, one of the emphases of Catholic high school sports programs is how coaches strive to deepen their players’ faith during athletic seasons.

Ty Hunt, the head coach of the varsity football team at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, works hard to get his players involved in events where they have the opportunity to get in touch with their faith.

“One of the first things I did was to start going to Mass as a team on the Fridays before we play the game,” Hunt says. “We have started to transfer this program over to our basketball teams, too.”

“We take the kids to the chapel, not to pray for a good performance or a win, but to instill upon them it is to pray for their blessings of good health and to give thanks for the support we get from our community.”

The girls’ basketball program at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis also looks for opportunities to help the players build their faith in God and each other.

“We have a pre-game devotional, and we look at a passage of Scripture and find other motivational tools, such as poems to help them build life lessons,” says a licia Michaeelsen, an assistant girls’ basketball coach at Bishop Chatard High School.

Michaeelsen recalled how the team reached out to others last season by raising money to support cancer research. “I think the girls got a lot out of it because they were doing something special, and it just did not pertain to athletics,” she says.

As the head coach of the girls’ volleyball program at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Missy Marsh has her team end each game with a prayer. She also tries to build team camaraderie and character through community service efforts.

“We are involved in a program called ‘Lucious’ Training Wheels,” Marsh notes. “The girls teach special-needs kids how to ride a bike. It shows them how they can be a role model, and they find out that there is more to life than just playing the game of volleyball.”

Besides trying to help build the players’ faith in God, the girls’ softball program at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School has another goal—building the teammates’ faith in each other.

Scecina softball coach Tom Moorman sets aside times during the season when he doesn’t have a practice so the student-athletes can help each other with homework or assist each other with other concerns in their lives.

“It is to help build faith in each other so they can count on each other, and become friends and not just teammates,” Moorman says. “There is more to it than competition.”

Jean Kesterson says that faith is at the core of the girls’ volleyball program that she coaches at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

“We talk about our mission statement when we play we want to set the example through our good sportsmanship.”

(Submitted photo by Bob Kelly)

Father Thomas Moorman
Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School softball coach

‘It is to help build faith in each other so they can count on each other, and become friends and not just teammates. There is more to it than competition.’

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And yet there is a bond that connects the coaches and student-athletes of these schools—the bond of faith.

In fact, one of the emphases of Catholic high school sports programs is how coaches strive to deepen their players’ faith during athletic seasons.

Ty Hunt, the head coach of the varsity football team at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, works hard to get his players involved in events where they have the opportunity to get in touch with their faith.

“One of the first things I did was to start going to Mass as a team on the Fridays before we play the game,” Hunt says. “We have started to transfer this program over to our basketball teams, too.”

“We take the kids to the chapel, not to pray for a good performance or a win, but to instill upon them it is to pray for their blessings of good health and to give thanks for the support we get from our community.”

The girls’ basketball program at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis also looks for opportunities to help the players build their faith in God and each other.

“We have a pre-game devotional, and we look at a passage of Scripture and find other motivational tools, such as poems to help them build life lessons,” says a licia Michaeelsen, an assistant girls’ basketball coach at Bishop Chatard High School.

Michaeelsen recalled how the team reached out to others last season by raising money to support cancer research. “I think the girls got a lot out of it because they were doing something special, and it just did not pertain to athletics,” she says.

As the head coach of the girls’ volleyball program at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Missy Marsh has her team end each game with a prayer. She also tries to build team camaraderie and character through community service efforts.

“We are involved in a program called ‘Lucious’ Training Wheels,” Marsh notes. “The girls teach special-needs kids how to ride a bike. It shows them how they can be a role model, and they find out that there is more to life than just playing the game of volleyball.”

Besides trying to help build the players’ faith in God, the girls’ softball program at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School has another goal—building the teammates’ faith in each other.

Scecina softball coach Tom Moorman sets aside times during the season when he doesn’t have a practice so the student-athletes can help each other with homework or assist each other with other concerns in their lives.

“It is to help build faith in each other so they can count on each other, and become friends and not just teammates,” Moorman says. “There is more to it than competition.”

Jean Kesterson says that faith is at the core of the girls’ volleyball program that she coaches at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

“We talk about our mission statement when we play we want to set the example through our good sportsmanship.”

(Submitted photo by Bob Kelly)

Father John Hollowell celebrates Mass on Sept. 25, 2009, for members of the varsity football team of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. As a chaplain, teacher and assistant football coach at Cardinal Ritter, Father Hollowell celebrates Mass on the Friday afternoon before every football game—continuing the emphasis that head coach Ty Hunt has of making faith a crucial part of the teenagers’ football experience.

Above, during a basketball game on Dec. 19, 2009, Bishop Chatard High School basketball player Nikki Kimack, left, is part of the Lady Trojans’ swarm that surrounds Neely Marks, a player from Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School. Cathy Doyle, right, and Rachael Kimack add to the pressure.

Left, a Scecina softball player heads toward home plate in a game during the 2009 season. Scecina softball coach Tom Moorman strives to build his players’ faith in each other and in their relationship with God.