



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK SUPPLEMENT

Making Christ present in the world

Gina Kuntz Fleming
Archdiocesan Superintendent
of Catholic Schools

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt 19:14)

Recognizing parents as the first teachers of their children, the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools is grateful for the opportunity to serve more than 22,000 young people in Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana. It is through this ministry of education and formation that our outstanding pastors, school leaders, teachers and staff members make Christ present in the world each day ... and help our students do the same!

In today's world, success is defined in various ways. Some base success on annual gross income; others on overall material wealth; and still others on job title or ranking within an organization.

As Catholics, we know that God will not measure our success on worldly treasures. What ultimately matters is the extent to which we love and serve him by loving and serving others—by making his presence known through all we do and say.

Christ is evident in the holistic, engaging and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture and life provided through Catholic school ministry.

Our Catholic schools prepare students through rigorous academics, diverse experiences, prayerful discernment and service opportunities so that they are ready not only for post-secondary learning and healthy career paths, but also for heaven. Our faith is interwoven into all aspects of who we are and what we do in Catholic education.

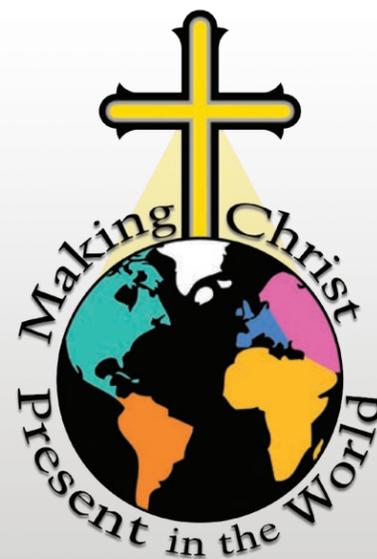
Christ's love is seen through service, prayer and the celebration of sacraments. Christ's hope is witnessed in the impressive ways in which young people use their gifts of art, music, intellect or athleticism. And Christ's joy is cherished as young people are observed applying what they have learned in an effort to honor and glorify God.

To see this for yourself, please step

into a few of our Catholic schools as you enjoy this year's Catholic Schools Week supplement in *The Criterion*.

May God bless you always,

Gina Kuntz Fleming





School leader shares the beauty of God's creation on adventures with students

By John Shaughnessy

There may not be a better plan for showing high school students the true beauty of God's creation than the one that Joseph Hollowell has continued to shape and share for nearly 40 years:

Take a group of youths to one of the most breathtaking places in the world. Let them wake up in the crisp mountain air. Send them hiking and climbing mountains that stretch toward the heavens and stretch their limits. Put them in rafts that rush through white-water rapids—the cold water soaking through their clothes and the thrill soaking into their skin. Gather them around crackling campfires at night to share their experiences from the day and from their lives. Then have them sleep beneath skies where stars shoot across the blackness, where stars shine with their intended brilliance.

And when the beauty and wonder of "God's country" surround them, deliver this message to the youths:

"If you look at the effort that God has put into this physical beauty, how much more beautiful is his intention for his people?" Hollowell says. "My goal is for the students to come back with a sense of their own wonderful gifts and the gifts all people have. Ultimately, we're trying to get them to realize they're an even more important part of God's creation."

That goal has been at the forefront of the Summer Field Study program that Hollowell started in 1982 as a young science teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Now, the 65-year-old Hollowell is preparing to lead the 41st such trip for juniors and seniors in high school. That wilderness adventure to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado in June will also be his last one, as the longtime

president of Roncalli plans to retire at the end of the school year.

Through the years, nearly 3,100 students—including Hollowell's 11 children—have participated in the two-week journey, traveling to wilderness areas in Alaska, California, Montana, Texas, Wyoming and Colorado, the state where Hollowell fell in love with the beauty of the mountains as a graduate student. Most of the students on these trips have come from Roncalli, Bishop Chatard High School and Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, all in Indianapolis.

"We're taking kids who are just done with their junior and senior years in high school," Hollowell says. "They're at a transition place in their lives. For the first time for a lot of them, they're away from home. We ask them to think about where they are in their life and where they're going. We talk about vocation—'What are you going to do with your God-given talents? How are you going to share those gifts with others?' We want them to think about their calling in life."

He also wants them to have fun—and challenge themselves.

"There's not a day that goes by that we're not hiking in the mountains, just immersed in the beauty and grandeur and massiveness of God's creation. The grandeur stops people in their tracks. You see the amazing, beautiful world we've been gifted with by God."

"We also put them in a lot of challenging positions with people they don't always know. We challenge them to get more out of themselves. We've had 150 people climbing up Long's Peak in Colorado—14,255-foot high. Climbing a 14,000-foot mountain peak is a major physical accomplishment. Anybody who's been up there never forgets the beautiful view and the physical challenge of more than 24 hours of getting up and down it."

The journeys have a life-changing impact on many of the youths.

"I can't tell you how many times I've gotten e-mails or letters saying, 'This is the best two weeks of my life,'" Hollowell says. "They make all kinds of



Archdiocesan high school students experience the adrenaline of rushing through white-water rapids—one of the many adventures during the annual Summer Field Study program led by Joseph Hollowell, president of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, for nearly 40 years. (Submitted photo)

new friends, they leave with a plan, and they feel closer to God."

While the journeys have changed lives, one trip ended up saving lives.

"When we were up in Alaska, we saw four people fall into a glacier river as they were trying to cross it, and they got swept downstream," he recalls. "We were looking for our own place to cross when we saw this happen to them. We found big pieces of driftwood and formed a human chain to pull the four people out. I don't think they would have made it without us being there to help them."

As he prepares for the last trip from June 8-21, Hollowell knows the Summer Field Study program has done more than touch and shape the lives of the youths who have taken the trips and the adult volunteers who have guided them. It has also deeply touched and shaped his life.

"I do know what an extraordinary gift it has been. I look at it as a gift from God. I marvel at the beautiful things it's

done for so many youths and adults, and I'm grateful to be a part of it. I've always had a love for the outdoors and outdoor activities, and this allows me to do something I love in a way that provides others the opportunity to experience the joy I get when I'm out in God's creation."

He also views the experiences as an extension of the Catholic faith he holds dear.

"The beauty of God's creation moves people. In the Catholic faith, we talk about the three-prong approach to introducing people to the idea of God—the presentation of truth, the presentation of goodness and the presentation of beauty."

"This particular program starts out by introducing people to the beauty. It's very difficult for people to be immersed in these unspoiled, alpine environments and not be moved by it. The beauty of these environments stays with people—and they instinctively feel there's a creator. It just takes your breath away." †

Retreat leaves its life-changing mark on teachers and students

By John Shaughnessy

NEW ALBANY—Elizabeth "Libby" Wright Saldanha was on retreat once when she heard a phrase from God that has continued to impact her life and her role as a teacher—"Take me with you."

"My ministry as a teacher is a role I fully believe has been entrusted to me by God," says Saldanha, last year's recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese. "Though my classroom responsibilities are hugely important to me, I feel my most influential role lies in my calling to be a living witness to our faith each and every day."

Saldanha lives that approach at Holy Family School in New Albany, where she teaches seventh-grade religion and seventh- and eighth-grade social studies.

In 2015, she and her teaching partner Sarah Green noticed that their seventh-grade students didn't have the usual tight bonds that had connected previous classes. Remembering the retreat that had a major impact on her life, Saldanha suggested that concept to Green, and the two teachers developed a retreat program based on the theme, "Encounters with Christ."

The retreat, which continues today, includes a service project, bonding activities, the sacrament of reconciliation and a traditional Seder (Passover) meal. It also involves an experience for the students "to look at God face to face"—eucharistic adoration—Saldanha says.



Leading her students to "encounters with Christ" has always been the primary goal for Elizabeth "Libby" Wright Saldanha, a teacher at Holy Family School in New Albany. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

"It gives me chills to remember so many of the students' reactions to their first adoration experience," Saldanha recalls about that first group. "The kids looked changed and energized when they came out of there. One student said, 'That was the first time I felt God was talking to me.' They formed a relationship they didn't have before."

"It continues to transform hearts year after year."

Saldanha's heart has also been touched by such moments of grace and faith.

"When former students come back and ask me to sponsor them as they make their confirmation, or when a good friend asks me to be a spiritual mentor as a godmother to her infant son, there is no feeling that's equivalent. When others are able to see the love and devotion I have for my faith, I know I am serving our God well." †

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Garden helps plant the seed of helping others

By John Shaughnessy

Hannah Radford's face lights up with joy as she talks about working in her school's garden that produces fresh vegetables for families in need.

Daniel Kent has a similar expression when he mentions how he and his fellow students contribute money and collect food items to help people in Haiti.

"Realizing that people need our help energizes us to help," says Daniel, an eighth-grade student at Christ the King School in Indianapolis with Hannah.

Hannah's and Daniel's reactions are exactly what Christ the King principal Ed Seib was seeking when he started the Catholic Charity Collaborations program at the school three years ago.

"I wanted to show the students what it's like to help others, to plant the seed of putting our faith into action," Seib says. "I used a Pope Francis quote, 'Let us protect Christ in our lives so that we can protect

others, so that we can protect creation.' It was a way of living out that quote, not only to each other but to other people in the world."

In the program's first year, the school community focused on a different charity each month, including helping homeless families at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis and refugees and immigrants through Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

"We asked the directors what they needed. The kids would bring in the items, and we'd have a freewill offering at one of the school Masses," Seib says.

"The next year, we let the kids come up with different ideas, and we let them run with it. We spent half the year donating money for the Haiti lunch program. Christ the King has a couple sister parishes in Haiti that we share with St. Matthew [the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.] We raised \$1,200 for that."

The school community also raises vegetables for the food pantry of the

Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Indianapolis, by planting a garden. More than 200 pounds of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini and strawberries were donated to the pantry last year.

"They write back saying how thankful they are to give fresh produce to people," says Hannah who has planted seeds, picked weeds and assembled planter boxes in the garden with fellow students. "The little kids and we work in the garden. It's good to see all of your work pay off and help other people in the community."

Both Hannah and Daniel appreciate how the program involves all the students in the school because it shows



Students at Christ the King School in Indianapolis work together in the garden to grow produce to help people in need. (Submitted photo)

the younger children the importance of helping others at any early age.

"It makes you feel more fortunate, and you're thankful for what you do have," Daniel says. "And when you receive the thank-you letters, that makes you happy." †

Teacher and student learn together the blessing of lifting up each other

By John Shaughnessy

Like many teachers in Catholic schools, Jillian Hollins remembers a certain student who struggled in one of the first classes she taught.

Hollins also remembers how she helped that student, and how that student influenced her as a teacher.

"I knew she had potential, but she couldn't keep up with the class, finish assignments or even just complete simple tasks," recalls Hollins, a finalist for last year's Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

"I talked with her parents and learned that she had been through a lot as a young

child. We got her the help that she needed, and she began to improve in her work. It was amazing.

"What I did that year is now what I do all the time in my job as a teacher. I want nothing but success for my students. I will find anyway possible to help them achieve success. If they do happen to fall down, we work together on how we are going to pick each other up."

Hollins also strives to include the Catholic faith in all her fourth-grade classes at St. Louis School in Batesville.

"In science, we learn that everything we have in this world was created for

a reason. God has a great plan, and everything we have has a purpose," she notes. "In math, I teach the advanced

group of learners. I am continually telling the students, 'You are so lucky. God gave you this great brain. Now, it's your job to use it to its greatest potential.'

"In English, reading and spelling, I am able to relate Gospel stories to the terms, vocabulary and words that I'm trying to get the students to learn. We read and write about God, his influence in our lives, and how we can use our faith in all situations."

Hollins also considers herself as a role

model for her students, "showing them my Catholic faith by living like Jesus."

"From the moment they walk into my classroom in the morning, I try to read their emotions and then have a positive effect on their lives. I want them to feel comfortable in our classroom and to come to me with anything. Being a Catholic educator allows me to not only influence how well they perform in the classroom, but how they treat others, and their attitudes about life, friends and school.

"I do this by giving students the same love, respect and encouragement as my own children. This takes a great deal of heart, and I put forth all of mine for my students." †



Jillian Hollins



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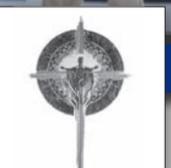
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ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS NORTH DEANERY SCHOOLS
CELEBRATE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK!



Principal shares five keys for creating positive school culture

By John Shaughnessy

If you're around Rob Detzel for a while, you're likely to get a box of candy, a card or a story from him—like the telling one he shares about a Mr. Foster.

"He was my old principal and boss," says Detzel, now a principal himself at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg. "I had an offer to go to another school—my alma mater—and when I went in to talk to him about it, he said, 'You have to do what is best for you.'"

"At that point, I decided to leave and take the new job. At the end of the day, he came to my classroom and said, 'I still want you to do what is best for you, but I don't want you to leave. You are a great teacher, and it would be a big loss for us if you left. I should have told you that earlier.' After that, I knew I was staying even though I would make less money. I just wanted to feel valued and know that I was appreciated. I have never forgotten that lesson."

Detzel shared that story—and the reasons he gives cards and boxes of candy to people—with an audience of educators during the Blue Ribbon Schools National Conference in Orlando, Fla., on Dec. 14.

They were all part of his presentation on "Positive School Culture"—a presentation that stems from his 26 years as an educator in Catholic schools. That includes 2018 when he was the principal of St. Cecelia Catholic School in Independence, Ky., when it earned the honor of a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education.

In his presentation, Detzel shared his

five principles for creating a positive school culture.

'Establish relationships'

For Detzel, candies and cards are essential parts of his efforts to establish relationships, which he considers key to creating a positive school culture.

"Invest in people!" Detzel says. "Relationships are perhaps the most important part of establishing a school culture that is perceived as—and breeds—caring."

In the first week of a school year, Detzel brings boxes of truffles when he meets with the police chief, the fire chief, the mayor, the mail carrier, business owners and local principals and superintendents in the community.

"You will need the support of these people at some time," he says. "It is just a little way to say thank you for what you do for us. People appreciate the gesture and feel valued."

He also meets individually with everyone on his staff, asking them about their families, what is great about the school, and what can be done better.

He also makes sure he has a selection of cards to share with people in the school community, whether it's offering congratulations, sympathy or gratitude.

The idea for the cards "came from a professor of mine at Xavier University who said to always have different cards on hand because as the leader of your school, sentiments should come from you, and cards are a fantastic way to express them," Detzel says.

"When people feel valued, they are more likely to work harder and work better."

'Find the right people that fit your culture'

Detzel says that hiring good people is "the most important thing" a leader can do.



Principal Rob Detzel is completely focused as he participates in a fun typing competition with fourth-grade students at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg. (Submitted photo)

"A culture of greatness requires that you find the right people that fit your culture. Then you develop and coach them by mentoring and training. Then empower them and let them do what they do best."

To find the right people requires spending more time getting to know the people interviewing, he says.

"We meet someone for 30 minutes and call their references and hire them," he says about the usual process. "We need to spend more time on the hiring process. Call more than their references. Google them. Check their social media accounts."

'Get out of the ivory tower'

At the start of a school day, Detzel greets the students. He also makes time to visit every classroom every day. And if a child has been sick, he welcomes the student back when he or she returns.

For Detzel, it's all part of being visible and being positive. He also instructs teachers to share positive phone calls and e-mails with parents.

"Parents fear phone calls and e-mails because they are usually made because their children are either sick, hurt or in trouble," he says. "Teachers should make at least two positive calls and/or e-mails a week."

In response to this approach, Detzel has seen parents "reciprocating with calls of their own," creating better communication and a more positive connection with teachers.

"Being positive doesn't just make you better, it makes everyone around you better. I can't guarantee you that you will succeed by being positive, but I will guarantee you that you will not succeed by being negative."

Praise, promote and smile

Detzel shares another story about the importance of promoting the great parts of a school. It's a story from his previous school where 21 clubs and activities were offered to students, but the parents' ratings of those experiences for their children were "only in the 60s" out of a possible 100.

"The teachers were furious because they all volunteered for a club," Detzel says. "I told them that this is why we do the surveys. Our problem was not that we didn't offer enough clubs and

activities, but that we didn't promote them enough. That year, we posted club pictures every day on social media. We featured them in our parent newsletters. We sent out updates on mass e-mails. That year we only had 19 clubs and activities, but our parent survey rating for clubs and activities was in the 90's.

"The lesson was that you can do great things, but unless you promote them, your stakeholders will not be aware of the wonderful things you are doing for your students."

It's one more step toward creating a positive school culture, he says.

"Praise everyone and give them room to grow. Creating a culture where people are afraid to fail leads to failure. We learn from our mistakes and become better."

'Make it cool to do the right thing'

Detzel says the fifth principle for creating a positive school culture is built on this foundation: "Have the fortitude to start change. Make it cool and people will follow."

To emphasize that point, he shares a story about Bill Eubank, the maintenance person at his previous school.

"We had problems with the rooms being really messy, and Bill couldn't get to each room every day," Detzel notes. "He asked me if he could start a clean room contest for each week and announce the winners on the PA on Friday, with the yearly winners getting a prize the last week of school. I said yes, and he organized the whole thing."

"The kids got really into it. When I announced the different grade level winners each week, you could hear the roar of cheers all the way in the office. The school was never that clean before, and it freed Bill up to do the things we needed him to get done. You have to hire good people and let them do their jobs and they will do amazing things."

Detzel believes that sharing the Catholic faith with students, staff, parents and the community is at the heart of establishing a positive culture.

"Being a Catholic is all about having faith, being positive and helping others. Those are three things that will lead to a positive culture. A positive school culture goes hand in hand with our Catholic faith." †

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Students lead service program to help fight hunger

By Sean Gallagher

Students participating in service projects is a staple of Catholic education.

From the youngest students in grade schools to high school seniors, students in Catholic schools reach out to those in need because they're being formed to follow the example of Christ.

Many of these service projects are created and guided by school staff members. But a successful program at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis has had students in charge for two years of all aspects of its efforts to provide food for students in need in Catholic schools in the Indianapolis West Deanery during breaks in the academic year.

The "Backpack Blessings" program has been funded by a grant from the archdiocesan St. Francis Xavier Home Mission Fund.

Cardinal Ritter seniors Chloe Olejnik and Gabriella Hicks, both members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, have overseen it from its inception.

"We both are very active in our home parish, and when we were given the opportunity to potentially give back to kids that we used to play against in CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] sports, or go to school with, there was nothing we'd rather do," said Chloe. "Service is a very important aspect in both of our lives, and the ability to provide services to fellow Catholic school kids is truly amazing."

The pair and other students involved in campus ministry at Cardinal Ritter keep in contact with principals of schools in the West Deanery, plan the food items that fill backpacks, schedule food drives at the high school, purchase any additional needed food items and distribute the backpacks to the schools.

"It is 100 percent them taking the responsibility," said Cardinal Ritter president Jo Hoy. "I don't have to do anything. They run things by me for logistics and legalities. But everything else is handled by them—every bit of it. It's been beautiful."

Liz Ramos, principal of St. Michael-St. Gabriel Archangels School in the West Deanery, said that usually 25 of her students benefit from the program each time the backpacks are distributed.

"What's great about it is that you have students helping other students," Ramos said. "It's not just adults realizing that this is the right thing to do. Students are recognizing a need and are trying to make sure that these [other] students and their families are benefiting from what they're able to do."

Overall, 150 backpacks are sent to six schools in the deanery before each break. Although they have helped lead the program from the start, Chloe and Gabriella are determined to continue in the hard work it involves.

"At the end of the day, there is so much need everywhere," Chloe said. "Having the ability to provide backpacks full of food to children who have inadequate food sources is a blessing to us."

She also appreciates that the program embodies the Catholic faith at the heart of the life of her high school.

"Cardinal Ritter is more than a school, we are a family," Chloe said. "Everyone here looks out for each other and makes an effort to help those in need. Service is not only something we are encouraged to do, but it is expected. This project allows for us to provide service to our feeder schools, and help our own future Raiders."

Since Chloe and Gabriella are both seniors at Cardinal Ritter, their leadership



Gabriella Hicks, left, and Chloe Olejnik, both seniors at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, hold bags that they and fellow students filled with food for students in need in Catholic schools in the Indianapolis West Deanery. The student-driven "Backpack Blessings" program is in its second year and provides food for 150 students in the West Deanery during three breaks in the academic year. (Submitted photo)

of Backpack Blessings will conclude at the end of this academic year. But they hope the program will continue in the years to come.

"We both hope that after we graduate this year, the program will continue as well as grow into something even bigger," said Gabriella. †

The West Deanery Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

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Archdiocesan schools earn national recognition

By John Shaughnessy

The tradition of academic excellence in the archdiocese continued this school year when two Indianapolis Catholic schools received national recognition as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education.

When the communities of Immaculate Heart of Mary School and St. Thomas Aquinas School were recognized in September, they extended the archdiocese's success concerning this national award.

Archdiocesan schools have received 35 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence honors since the program started in 1982, according to Gina Fleming, superintendent of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Only 362 schools in the country received the distinction this year, including just 50 non-public schools.

"The criteria a school must meet to be eligible for this award is appropriately ambitious, and both Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas met or exceeded expectations on both fronts," Fleming said. "This does not happen by accident. It is through God's grace

and the daily diligence and care of teachers, staff members, school and parish leaders, parents and students that such a prestigious honor can be achieved."

Immaculate Heart of Mary principal Ronda Swartz said, "What I am most proud of is that our school was able to achieve one of the most prestigious academic honors while remaining dedicated to our mission—to making God known, loved and served in all that we do. All Catholic schools are blessed with this understanding and the opportunity to weave faith into all that we do."

St. Thomas Aquinas principal Nancy Valdiserri noted, "Daily, we try to remember our blessings—that we are here to serve God and each other. We are very lucky to belong to a diverse, loving community that promotes social justice, high standards and the love of learning."

For Fleming, the continuing national recognition of archdiocesan schools reflects the comprehensive approach that Catholic schools in the archdiocese take to education.

"In our Catholic schools, we focus on the holistic development of every young person we serve," she said. "Given that all are made in the image and likeness of God, it is our responsibility to help students develop their gifts fully so they can honor and glorify God in all they do." †



St. Thomas Aquinas School students Emmerson Bloede, left, Lauryn Klitzman and Genevieve Maminta celebrate with ice cream treats after their Indianapolis North Deanery school received national recognition as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education. (Submitted photo)

Shared mission shapes Catholic schools in the archdiocese

Criterion staff report

Every day across the archdiocese, Catholic schools share in the same vision, mission and values to educate children spiritually, academically, socially emotionally and physically.

Here are the cornerstones of Catholic education in the archdiocese, as shared by its Office of Catholic Schools.

Our Vision

Ours will be an archdiocese where every Catholic school community flourishes by having the professional and spiritual leadership it needs to advance the mission of the Church and where every professional is supported, every family is engaged, and every child, regardless of race, culture, socio-economic condition,

or learning need, is nurtured in mind, body and spirit.

Our Mission

With open doors, open arms and open hearts, the Office of Catholic Schools supports the formation of young people through holistic, engaging and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture and life as modeled by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our Shared Values

Open Doors:

- We believe that Catholic schools serve as a vital ministry of the greater Church.
- We believe that Catholic schools should be accessible and affordable.
- We believe that the viability and vitality of Catholic schools are the responsibility of all the faithful.
- We believe in shared leadership with pastors, school leaders and commissions/boards under the direction of the archbishop and guidance of Church teachings.

Open Arms:

- We believe in fostering positive

relationships that exemplify the love of God.

- We believe that Catholic school communities are enriched by the unique image and likeness of God that is present in each individual.
- We believe that formation best occurs within faith-filled cultures of learning that are inclusive.
- We believe that parents are the primary educators of each young person and that it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to support the domestic Church.

Open Hearts:

- We believe that Catholic schools are part of the evangelizing mission of the Church, forming disciples through the intentional integration of faith, culture and life.
- We believe that "excellence" is defined by and achieved through the growth and holistic development—spiritual, intellectual/academic, social, emotional and physical—of the individual within the context of community.
- We believe that professional educators in Catholic schools are valued ministers of the faith who strive to live the universal call to holiness. †



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Archbishop encourages seniors to turn to God amid struggles

By John Shaughnessy

BROWNSBURG—For Ryan Flick and Eliza Leffler, the message that Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shared with them and their peers during the annual Archdiocesan High School Senior Mass hit close to home.

“I liked the archbishop’s homily about humility and hope—and how he connected it to the next chapter of our lives, whether it’s college or whatever vocation we’re called to,” said Ryan, an 18-year-old senior at Roncalli High School and a member of St. Jude Parish, both in Indianapolis.

Eliza also appreciated the archbishop’s understanding of the hardships that high school seniors have faced in the past four years.

“He knows how tough it is—the struggles of being a senior and trying to figure out next year,” said the 17-year-old senior at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School and a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, both in Indianapolis.

At the beginning of the Mass on

Dec. 2 at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg, Archbishop Thompson greeted the seniors from across the archdiocese with these words, “What a wonderful time to be together in your senior year. There’s joy and excitement and anticipation, but also knowing there’s almost a starting over in just a few months as well—all for the glory of God.”

The archbishop continued his focus on the connection between God and the seniors in his homily.

“Jesus came to make people be aware that God desires to be in an intimate relationship with each and every one of us. God desires to bring us that peace, that joy, that sense of healing to our very spirits, to our very lives.

“He gives us the strength and grace we need to persevere in the struggles and challenges and hardships of our lives. He calls us to be people of hope, to expect the unexpected, the unimaginable—to be ready and prepared for the many blessings and the ways God continues to grace us, even in the hardships and difficulties of life.

“You as seniors, you didn’t get to this point without hardships, without challenges—whether in your individual lives, whether in your homes, whether in your classes, whatever it may be, but you got here. You have other hardships and challenges ahead, but you also have a great hope, a belief in your future.”

The archbishop encouraged the seniors to include God in their future, to keep him close.

“May that future not be without God’s grace, not without being Christ-centered wherever you journey, wherever you go, whatever you do. That you allow that intimacy of God’s grace to permeate your beings, to continue to guide and lead



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses for a photo with students from Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis after the annual Archdiocesan High School Senior Mass at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg on Dec. 2. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

you and lift you up as people of hope, as people of joy.

“We celebrate today the nearness of God to us—how God is near and dear to us each and every moment of our lives, each and every fabric of our relationships. We are indeed not worthy, but the healing grace of God continues in our lives.” †

Teacher becomes student to deepen her own bond with Christ

By John Shaughnessy

For Kristin Campbell, her approach as a teacher always led to one main goal.

At St. Mary School in North Vernon, Campbell constantly strived “to guide my classroom in a way that cultivates every student’s relationship with Christ.”

That approach led her to become a finalist for last year’s Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

This year, it has led her to take a break from teaching to focus on deepening her own relationship with Christ as she continues to

pursue a master’s degree in theology at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

“This is one way for me to respond to the call for holiness,” Campbell says. “The master’s is a way of deepening my faith by increasing my knowledge of the Catholic Church through theological reflection, studying spiritual texts and enhancing my prayer life.”

In leading her junior high students at St. Mary School, Campbell had already set an example of studying her own faith deeper—starting with the time

when she prepared to be received into the full communion of the Church.



Kristin Campbell

“Because I am a convert and did not have the Catholic faith for the first 22 years of my life, I soak up every minute of it now and have a great appreciation for the sacraments and traditions of the Church,” she says.

At the beginning of every school year, Campbell would share her journey to the Catholic faith—“and how lost I was before I found the faith.”

Now, she is wondering about the next

path that God has for her life.

“The [master’s degree] program is allowing me time to discern my role in the Church while seeking formation opportunities,” she says. “At this point, I am enjoying my time at home raising my three children with no specific plans upon the completion of my master’s.”

A return to teaching is a possibility.

“Teaching has always been such a part of my identity, and I greatly miss working with children and sharing my faith journey with them. I am open to returning to teaching at some point if this is where I am led through my discernment process.” †

SOUTH DEANERY SCHOOLS CELEBRATE CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:6

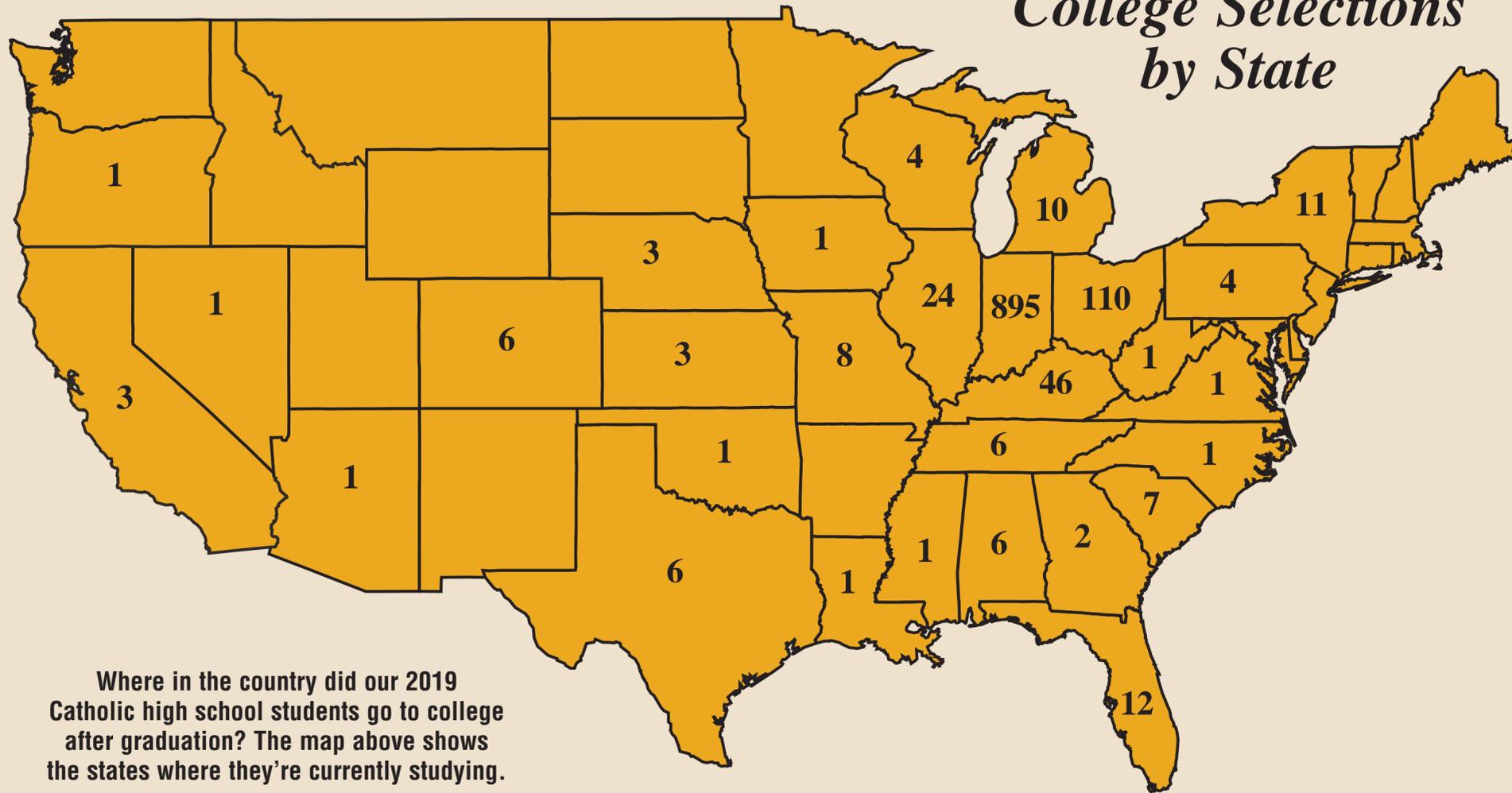


ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Catholic Schools

Making Christ Present in the World

Class of 2019 College Selections by State



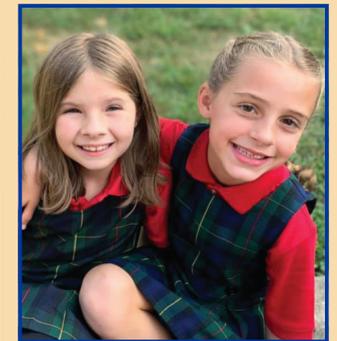
Where in the country did our 2019 Catholic high school students go to college after graduation? The map above shows the states where they're currently studying.

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(“Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools”; National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools)



Alumni of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

	# Reported	% of Total Staff
Number of alumni who are certified/licensed staff members in our schools	534	24.0%
Non-certified/non-licensed staff members who are alumni	202	9.1%
Number of those reported above who are alumni of the school where they are currently employed	283	12.7%
Number of schools with students and/or staff participating in a mission trip this school year	15	
Number of schools with students participating in a study abroad program this school year	4	

Seminary

1 graduate of the Class of 2019 entered seminary after his high school studies

Vocational/Trade School

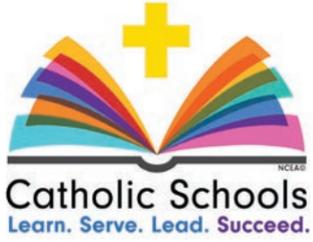
22 graduates of the Class of 2019 entered vocational or trade school after their high school studies

Military

7 graduates of the Class of 2019 entered military service after their high school studies

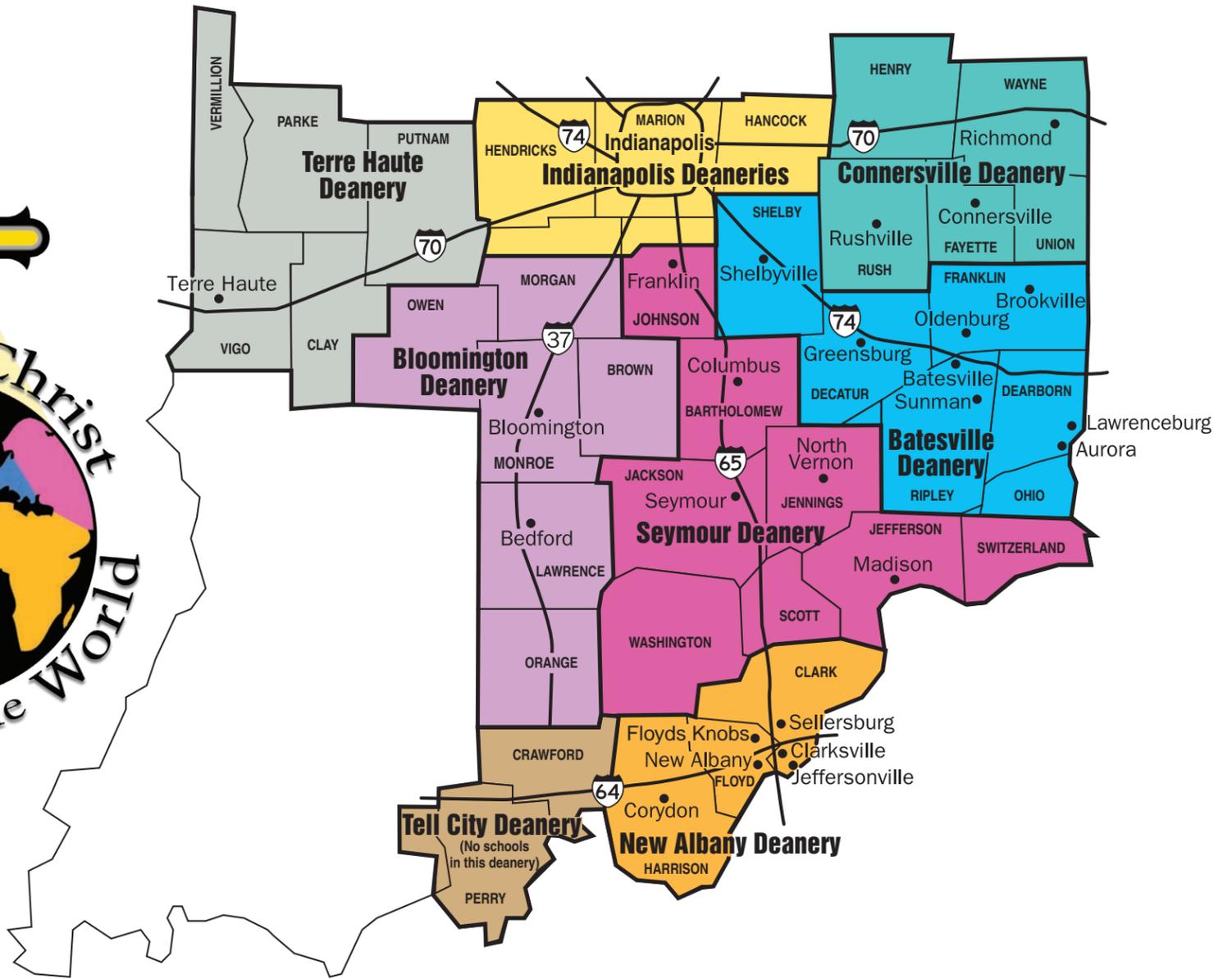
Workforce

26 graduates of the Class of 2019 entered the workforce after their high school studies



Catholic Schools

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS



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

Brookville
St. Michael School (PK-8)
275 High St.
Brookville, IN 47012
765-647-4961

Greensburg
St. Mary School (PK-8)
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

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

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

Bloomington Deanery

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

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

Connersville Deanery

Connersville
St. Gabriel School (PK-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 (PK-6)**
801 W. Main St.
Richmond, IN 47374
765-962-4877

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

New Albany Deanery

Clarksville
Our Lady of Providence
High School (9-12)
707 Providence Way
Clarksville, IN 47129
812-945-2538

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

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

Floyd County
St. Mary-of-the-Knobs
School (PK-8)
3033 Martin Road
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119
812-923-1630

Jeffersonville
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
School (PK-8)
1842 E. Eighth St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
812-283-3123

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

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

Sellersburg
St. John Paul II School (PK-8)
105 St. Paul St.
Sellersburg, IN 47172
812-246-3266

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

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

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

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

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

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

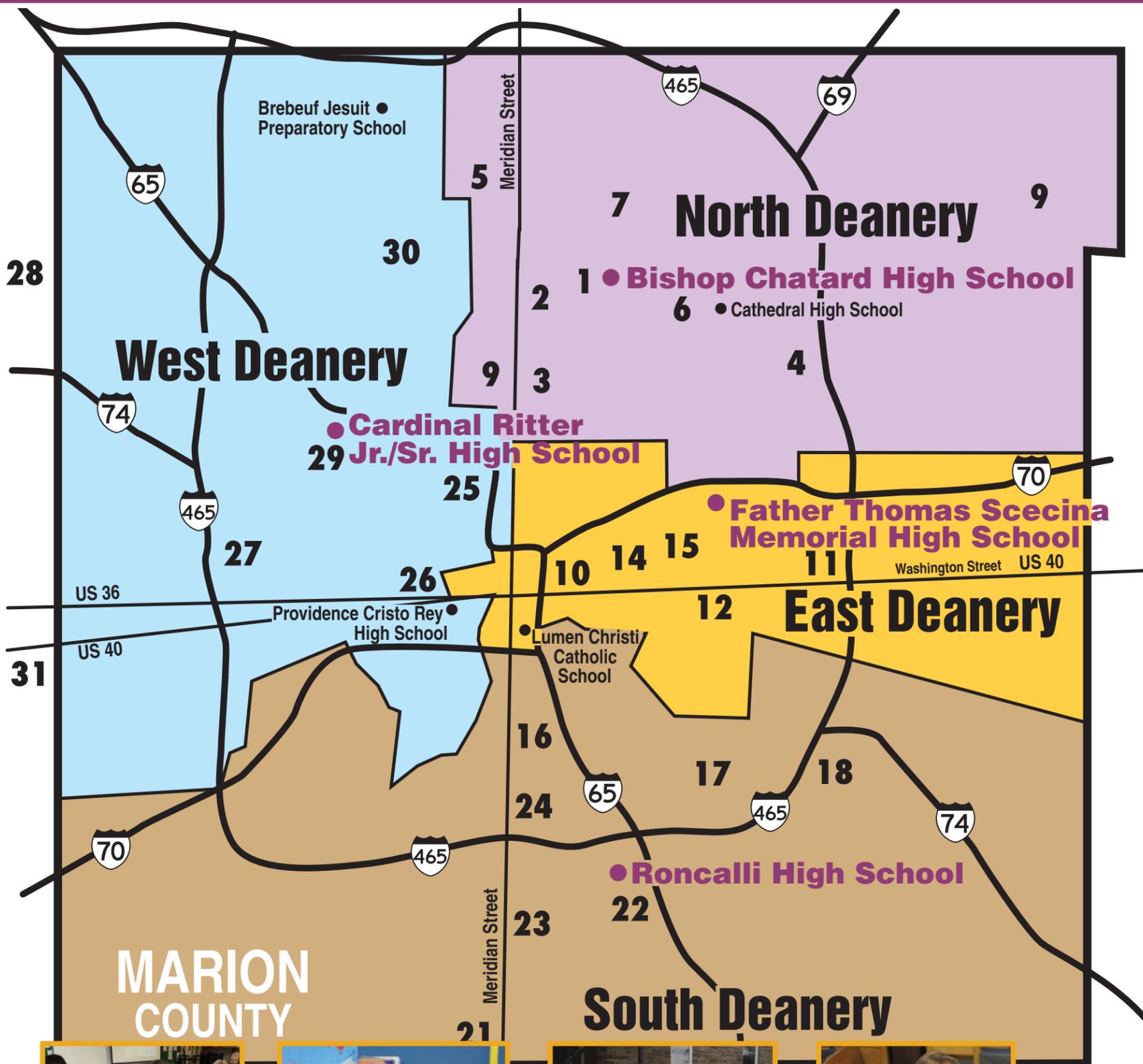
Terre Haute Deanery

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

Private High School

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

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 (PK-8)**
500 E. 42nd St.
Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-283-1518
- 4. St. Lawrence School (PK-8)**
6950 E. 46th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46226
317-543-4923
- 5. St. Luke the Evangelist School (K-8)**
7650 N. Illinois St.
Indianapolis, IN 46260
317-255-3912
- 6. St. Matthew the Apostle School (PK-8)**
4100 E. 56th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-251-3997

- 7. St. Pius X School (K-8)**
7200 Sarto Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46240
317-466-3361
- 8. St. Simon the Apostle School (PK-8)**
8155 Oaklandon Road
Indianapolis, IN 46236
317-826-6000
- 9. St. Thomas Aquinas School (PK-8)**
4600 N. Illinois St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-255-6244

Indianapolis East Deanery

- **Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School (9-12)**
5000 Nowland Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-356-6377
- 10. Holy Cross Central School (PK-8) ***
125 N. Oriental St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-638-9068
- 11. Holy Spirit School (PK-8)**
7241 E. 10th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46219
317-352-1243

- 12. Our Lady of Lourdes School (PK-8)**
30 S. Downey St.
Indianapolis, IN 46219
317-357-3316
- 13. St. Michael School (PK-8)**
515 Jefferson Blvd.
Greenfield, IN 46140
317-462-6380
- 14. St. Philip Neri School (PK-8) ***
545 N. Eastern Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-636-0134
- 15. St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School (PK-8)**
1401 N. Bosart Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-353-2282

Indianapolis South Deanery

- **Roncalli High School (9-12)**
3300 Prague Road
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-787-8277
- 16. Central Catholic School (PK-8) ***
1155 E. Cameron St.
Indianapolis, IN 46203
317-783-7759
- 17. Holy Name of Jesus School (PK-8)**
21 N. 17th Ave.
Beech Grove, IN 46107
317-784-9078

- 18. Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ School (PK-8)**
3310 S. Meadow Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46239
317-357-1459
- 19. Our Lady of the Greenwood School (PK-8)**
399 S. Meridian St.
Greenwood, IN 46143
317-881-1300
- 20. SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi School (PK-8)**
5901 Olive Branch Road
Greenwood, IN 46143
317-215-2826
- 21. St. Barnabas School (PK-8)**
8300 Rahke Road
Indianapolis, IN 46217
317-881-7422
- 22. St. Jude School (PK-8)**
5375 McFarland Road
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-784-6828
- 23. St. Mark the Evangelist School (PK-8)**
541 E. Edgewood Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-786-4013
- 24. St. Roch School (PK-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 (PK-6) ***
2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-926-5211
- 26. St. Anthony School (PK-8) ***
349 N. Warman Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46222
317-636-3739
- 27. St. Christopher School (PK-6)**
5335 W. 16th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46224
317-241-6314
- 28. St. Malachy School (PK-8)**
330 N. Green St.
Brownsburg, IN 46112
317-852-2242
- 29. St. Michael-St. Gabriel Archangels School (PK-8)**
3352 W. 30th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46222
317-926-0516
- 30. St. Monica School (PK-8)**
6131 N. Michigan Road
Indianapolis, IN 46228
317-255-7153

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

Private Schools

- **Lumen Christi Catholic School (PK-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

* Notre Dame ACE Academies



Teacher passes love for service and Haiti on to students

By Natalie Hoefer

Even as a child, Chris Schwartz believed she had “a servant’s heart.”

Now, as the 6th-8th grade religion teacher for St. Bartholomew School in Columbus, Schwartz is passing on to her students this value of serving.

The students have embraced it—as well as her passion for those who live in the poverty-stricken country of Haiti. It’s a love that developed through Schwartz’s involvement with St. Bartholomew Parish’s twinning relationship with St. Anne Parish in Limonade, Haiti.

“They live in one of the poorest areas in the western hemisphere,” she notes. “Yet they’re so full of joy and love. We all feel that void sometimes, and they know how to fill it with God.”

‘Education is the power out of poverty’

Schwartz, a nearly-lifelong member of St. Bartholomew Parish and a graduate of its school, became involved with the parish’s Friends of Haiti (FOH) mission in the 2000s, when she served as the faith community’s assistant—and then later interim—youth minister.

“Every year [the youths] take a Haiti mission,” she explains. “I had the blessing of taking a youth group to Haiti for the first time in 2010.”

Since then, she has returned to the country nine additional times. And each time she goes, says Schwartz, “I show [the religion students] pictures, answer their questions. I really focus on the missionary heart in this [class]room.”

While on mission, she’s served in many roles—construction worker, gravel-layer, health care assistant and teacher, to

name just a few.

But there are plenty of ways Schwartz helps stateside, too. Through the years she has worked on and raised money for numerous FOH projects.

She currently serves as the ministry’s school representative, finding ways for the students to support the mission and help the children of Limonade attend school.

She also serves on the ministry’s committee supporting an adult literacy program in Haiti. Schwartz assists with and participates in annual fundraising events to support the program, and encourages her students to volunteer, too.

“Education is the power out of poverty,” she says. “It’s just as important for the adults to learn to read and write as it is for the children.”

‘Raising money for a purpose’

Of course, being well-fed and having a source of income are important to overcoming poverty as well. A flood in Limonade in late 2016 threatened both of those components, sweeping away gardens and livestock like cows, goats and chickens.

So Schwartz and other FOH members came up with the “Christmas Chicken Challenge.”

“The idea was to have people donate \$10 to buy a chicken” from non-affected areas of the country and in the neighboring Dominican Republic,” she explains. “The goal was to buy enough so each child at the school [in Limonade] could bring a chicken home to their family.”

“The kids [at St. Bartholomew] took initiative and wanted to help. They got into it, knowing they were not just raising money, but money for a purpose.”

Through their efforts, enough money was raised to provide not one but two chickens per child—plus one for each teacher and staff member at the school.

“The kids love to hear the stories,” says Schwartz of the impact the project made. “We learned that two children, it’s now their business to feed the chickens and raise money for their family. These kids are providing for their family. I get so emotional thinking about it,” she says, pausing to hold back tears.

And her students don’t just help the children of Haiti when natural disasters strike. Each of Schwartz’s 6th-8th grade classes helps pay the tuition for a child of Limonade to attend school.

“I always tell the kids that we need to use our gifts and talents to help others,” she says. “Well, they turned that around and applied it to me!”

“I had told them that I do photography on the side. So they said, ‘Well, Mrs. Schwartz, why don’t we use your gift and raise funds. You take portraits and we’ll create Christmas cards.’”

She and the students created different backdrops. Then with the students helping as “elves,” Schwartz offered 15-minute time slots for parishioners to take their family Christmas photo for a donation.

“All the money goes to the Haiti students, and extra money goes to other Haiti programs,” she explains. “It’s been very successful.”

‘These are our brothers and sisters’

When it comes to helping the Haitians of St. Anne Parish and Limonade, there is so much more involved than raising money or serving on a mission trip.

“We talk a lot about giving of our time, how that’s a big gift you can give—that, and love,” says Schwartz. “And I tell them, ‘You can do that right here in school. There are kids right here in front of us who need help and love.’ We sometimes overlook them because they’re just part of our world.”

There are faith lessons and life lessons through serving others that Schwartz



Chris Schwartz, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and middle school religion teacher at the parish’s school, poses with Louvenyz Bouchette in 2016 during a mission trip to Limonade, Haiti. (Submitted photo)

hopes her students learn.

“The life lesson is to always try to seek God’s will no matter what,” she explains. “And to learn that they do have something to give. Love is powerful when you allow yourself to be part of it.”

As for the faith lesson, Schwartz says she wants her students to know the importance of reading and memorizing Scripture. But she also wants them to learn that “it’s powerful to live it out,” she says.

“I think we always think someone else is taking care of something. But God gives us opportunities to do something. So often we pray for God to help, and he’s looking down saying, ‘I did—I sent you!’”

And in helping, says Schwartz, one of the most valuable lessons is learned: the importance of creating relationships.

“Building up that relationship to really understand and immerse yourself is key,” she explains. “We’re in solidarity, we walk together.”

“These are our brother and sisters.” †

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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school.holyspirit-indy.org

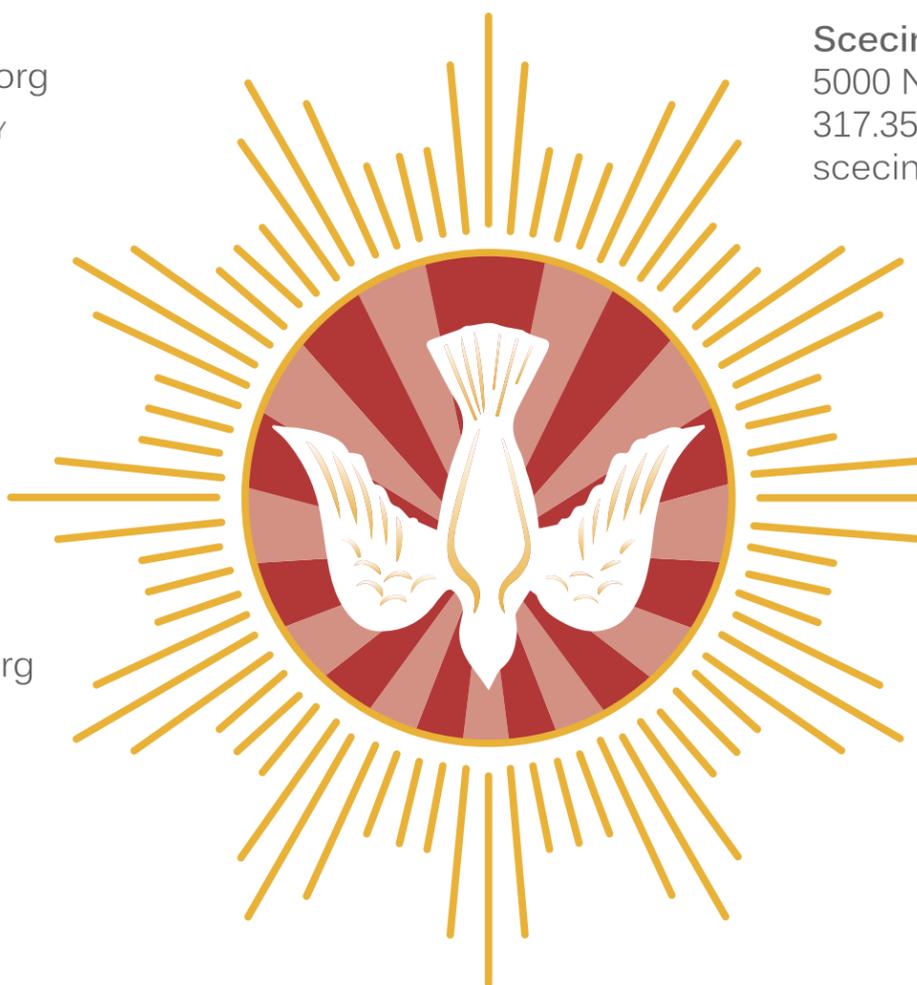
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littleflowerparishschool.org

Our Lady of Lourdes
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ollindy.org

Seccina Memorial High School
5000 Nowland Ave
317.356.6377
scecina.org

St. Michael
515 Jefferson Blvd
Greenfield
317.462.6380
school-stmichaelsgrfld.org

St. Philip Neri
545 N Eastern Ave
317.636.0134
stphilipindy.org
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CHECK OUT OUR SCHOOLS DURING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK JANUARY 26-FEBRUARY 1.



Pilgrimage brings teacher closer to students, family

By Sean Gallagher

BROOKVILLE—As Amy Kersey walked amid many holy places in France during a pilgrimage in France last fall, she found that her heart sometimes reached across oceans to the people she loved.

The second-grade teacher at St. Michael School in Brookville often felt that her students, fellow school staff members and family were right there with her as she prayed for them.

The formation in faith that she received at St. Michael when she was a student prepared her for this chance-of-a-lifetime pilgrimage that has already had a positive effect on her work as a teacher.

The Sept. 29-Oct. 10 pilgrimage was led by Father Sean Danda, a former pastor of St. Michael, and was sponsored by St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, which the priest now leads.

The pilgrimage's itinerary included visits to Lourdes, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in 1858; the beautiful gothic cathedral in Chartres; and the shrines of St. John Vianney, St. Thérèse of Lisieux



Headstones in the form of crosses are seen in the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France. Amy Kersey, a second-grade teacher at St. Michael School in Brookville, visited the cemetery as part of a pilgrimage to France last fall. (CNS photo/Christian Hartmann, Reuters)

and St. Catherine Labouré.

Kersey and the other pilgrims also viewed the places where these and other saints grew up and lived as adults.

"We saw how they grew up in their family life," she said. "You get goose bumps. It was nice to see that these were normal people, but then they were called."

That helped her appreciate her own call to Catholic education.

"I didn't start out in education. I wanted to go into physical therapy," Kersey said. "But I honestly feel that I have been called here, to a Catholic school. Just like they were called, I feel like I've been called."

She's also been called to be a wife and mother. That primary vocation in her life took center stage when she and the other pilgrims visited the Normandy beaches where Allied soldiers invaded France on June 6, 1944, D-Day, and the nearby cemetery where the thousands of American soldiers who died in the attack are buried.

This part of the pilgrimage was moving for Kersey because, at the time, her husband was deployed to Afghanistan as an employee of the U.S. Defense Department. He returned home to Brookville shortly after she came back from the pilgrimage.

"It made me think of all those people that gave their lives for us," said Kersey through tears. "Growing up, I didn't think about those things. But now I know how it feels as a wife and a mother. I prayed for those people who died for us, and for all the families who are currently going through what I was going through."

For Kersey, the D-Day sites moved her as much as the shrines of saints.

"Jesus gave his life for us," she said. "And these men and women gave their lives with no thought. They just did it for others and for our freedom."

For Kersey, the community at



Amy Kersey helps second-grader Jackson Boggs on Jan. 9 at St. Michael School in Brookville. Kersey is the school's second-grade teacher. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

St. Michael School and her work there to pass on the faith to its students cannot be separated from her life with her family.

"Some people have a job and they go home," she said. "For me, it's continuous. Me spreading God's word, sharing it with my students all day is continuous with me having that with my family. I don't have to put it aside when I go to work. I continue to do it all day long."

And the students she serves feel close to her.

St. Michael's third-grade students, who had Kersey as a teacher last year, made cards for her before she left on the pilgrimage

"I was kind of nervous because she was going to be gone for so long," said third-grader Virginia Sacksteder. "It was kind of exciting. She went to France. That's a really cool place."

St. Michael is also like family for Kersey because it's been a part of her

family for generations.

Her mother, Janet Deutsch, was a student there in the 1950s. She and her three siblings attended school there. And her two sons also went to St. Michael.

Now she's its second-grade teacher, helping to prepare her students for first reconciliation and first Communion. Her mom helps her, volunteering two days a week as a teacher's aide in her classroom.

"I think she's a very good religion teacher," Deutsch said. "She instills in them that you need to go to Mass every Sunday. She's determined. I just feel blessed that she's doing it."

Back in her classroom, Kersey noticed that the pilgrimage has had a lasting effect on her, helping her remain calm and trustful in God amid the many daily duties of a Catholic school teacher.

"The littlest things just don't bother me anymore," she said. "Now, I just know that it will all work out." †

NEW ALBANY DEANERY SCHOOLS

New Albany Deanery
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PK-12



PROVIDENCE



HOLY FAMILY
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CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Holy Family School, New Albany
St. Joseph Catholic School, Corydon
St. John Paul II Catholic School, Sellersburg
St. Mary of the Knobs Catholic School, Floyds Knobs

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2020



St. Gabriel alumnus project with school class opens ‘new doors’ to Japan

By Natalie Hoefer

CONNERSVILLE—In a school in the town of Okuizumo, Japan, sixth-grade students have developed a recent curiosity about how to raise corn and pumpkins. And they were amazed to learn that there are more than just large cities in America.

Meanwhile, at St. Gabriel School in Connersville, sixth-grade students sampled Japanese mochi rice, seaweed and candy. They marveled at such things as a real sumo wrestling belt and a certificate written in Japanese script.

The educational experience developed through a video exchange between sixth-graders of both schools. The project was the brainchild of two teachers in Japan—one being 25-year-old St. Gabriel alumnus Cameron Tipton.

Since the summer of 2017, Tipton has taught English as a second language (ESL) at six schools in the Okuizumo area through the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program, JET for short.

The project between the two classes began when he was approached by a fellow ESL teacher in Okuizumo.

“The lesson we were working on over there was teaching sixth-grade Japanese students how to introduce their hometown [in English],” says Tipton. “He asked if we could take a video of the sixth-graders here [in Okuizumo] introducing their town in English, and send it to the sixth-graders at St. Gabriel” where Tipton’s mother teaches second grade.

“I got the idea of, well, if we send one to [St. Gabriel], what if they send one back, introducing Connersville to the Japanese students.”

‘A fun experience’

Susie approached Mary Harcourt, who teaches social studies and science for fourth through sixth grades at St. Gabriel. Harcourt says she “jumped on the chance. We had already studied world super powers, so the timing was great. The kids did all the work.”

In the video, students displayed pictures of items they discussed, like combines and the local train station. They demonstrated how to dribble a basketball and throw a football. One student held a crucifix, another brought in a corn stalk, and one student talked about her family’s pumpkin farm.

“We really enjoyed it,” says Lyla Davidson of making the video.

Her classmate, Paolo Amora, adds it was “a fun experience exchanging and learning about their town and their culture.”

Connersville youths were surprised by some things they learned from the Okuizumo students’ video.

For instance, says Dylann Edwards, “They all had the same color of skin and hair, but we have people with different skin color, and people with different colored hair.”

The students were fascinated by their counterparts’ mention of the popularity of sumo wrestling in Japan. They even had the opportunity to see videos of Tipton participate in—and even win rounds of—a sumo wrestling tournament in Okuizumo.

As for the Japanese students, Tipton says they “were surprised when they heard kids their own age speaking native English and had trouble understanding them—they’d only heard us [ESL teachers] speaking very slow, simple English.”

The St. Gabriel students were not overly fond of the sweet mochi rice. Nor



Riley Keal looks at a certificate in Japanese script as Cameron Tipton answers questions about Japan in the background during his visit to the sixth-grade class of his alma mater, St. Gabriel School in Connersville, on Jan. 10. Tipton teaches English as a second language in Japan and helped coordinate a video exchange between his Japanese sixth-grade students and the sixth-graders at St. Gabriel. (Submitted photo by Susie Tipton)

did they care for the seaweed Tipton brought back and gave them to sample when he visited them on Jan. 10 while home for a few weeks.

But they liked the Japanese hard candy, and they were interested in his sumo belt and a certificate written in Japanese script.

“Overall, they enjoyed hearing about Japan and learning some new things,” Tipton says of his time with the students. “At the end, Harcourt asked if anyone would be interested in visiting Japan, and almost everyone raised their hand.”

‘Accomplished my goal and more’

Tipton says his hope for the video exchange and his visit to the St. Gabriel sixth-graders was to “introduce them to the world beyond Connersville,” a world he discovered by teaching English in Japan. He started during the summer of 2017 after graduating from Indiana University with a major in history and a minor in Japanese. He plans to teach in the JET program

through one more school year.

“I really enjoy living there,” says the Connersville native. “The kids are great, the teaching is great.”

He hopes to do another project with Harcourt, perhaps another video exchange.

As for the current video exchange, Tipton says, “It got my students interested in Indiana, a state they’d never heard of. The [St. Gabriel] kids here have seen my videos, seen sumo, learned about a little town in Japan they never heard of. It opened new doors for the St. Gabriel students and for my students in Japan.

“I think it accomplished my goal and more.”

(To see the video the St. Gabriel sixth-grade students sent to the youths in Japan and to see other videos about St. Gabriel alumnus Cameron Tipton’s life in Japan, go to www.youtube.com/user/iZaBeCameron/videos.) †

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

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How can we AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers

My child is enrolled at a Catholic school.

I meet these eligibility requirements:

- Indiana resident
- My family is between 100% and 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP

CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM INCOME LIMITS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR				
	69% of Reduced Lunch Eligibility	100% of Reduced Lunch Eligibility	150% of Reduced Lunch Eligibility	200% of Reduced Lunch Eligibility
# of Persons in Household	Annual Household Income Limit for a 90% Indiana Voucher*	Annual Household Income Limit for a 90% Indiana Voucher**	Annual Household Income Limit for a Tax Credit Scholarship (of 50% Indiana Voucher***)	Annual Household Income Limit for a Tax Credit Scholarship (of 50% Indiana Voucher****)
1	\$15,862	\$23,107	\$34,660	\$46,213
2	\$21,476	\$31,284	\$46,925	\$62,567
3	\$27,089	\$39,461	\$59,191	\$78,921
4	\$32,703	\$47,638	\$71,456	\$95,275
5	\$38,316	\$55,815	\$83,722	\$111,629
6	\$43,929	\$63,992	\$95,987	\$127,983
7	\$49,543	\$72,169	\$108,253	\$144,337
8	\$55,156	\$80,346	\$120,518	\$160,691
9	\$60,770	\$88,523	\$132,784	\$177,045
10	\$66,383	\$96,700	\$132,784	\$193,399

Number Include All Adults in Household

Note: Income levels are determined in accordance with the *Income Verification Rules* document available at www.doe.in.gov/choice.

For a household size of 11 or more:

*Add \$5,613 to the annual limit for each additional member for a "90%" scholarship.

**Add \$8,177 to the annual limit for each additional member for a "90%" scholarship.

***Add \$12,266 to the annual limit for each additional member for a "50%" scholarship.

****Add \$16,354 to the annual limit for each additional member for a "50%" scholarship.

What are Tax Credit Scholarships?

The Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship Program provides scholarship support to families who want to enroll their children in the Catholic 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), AND
- A student who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A student who is enrolled in an eligible Catholic 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 12-13 years. Current Catholic school students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply?

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 www.i4qed.org/sgo.

Additional local scholarships may also be available. Contact your local Catholic school.

I'm moving my child in grades K-12 to a Catholic school from a public school.

I meet these eligibility requirements:

- Indiana resident
- Apply before September 1, 2020
- 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:

My family is at or below 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

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

My family is at or below 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level and my child qualifies for an IEP.

K-12 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 K-12 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 Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart), AND
- A student in grades K-12 who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A sibling received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR
- A sibling living in an "F" school area, AND/OR
- A current Catholic school student in grades K-12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship in a prior year, AND/OR
- A student who qualified for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

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 12-13 years. Students enrolled in a Catholic school CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for an Indiana school 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 www.doe.in.gov/choice.

Pre-K vouchers are available in all counties throughout Indiana. For more information, log onto www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4932.htm.



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