

# THE GOOD NEWS

FROM ALUMS & FRIENDS & FAMILIES

Providing tuition assistance to students at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School



## End of Year Challenge!

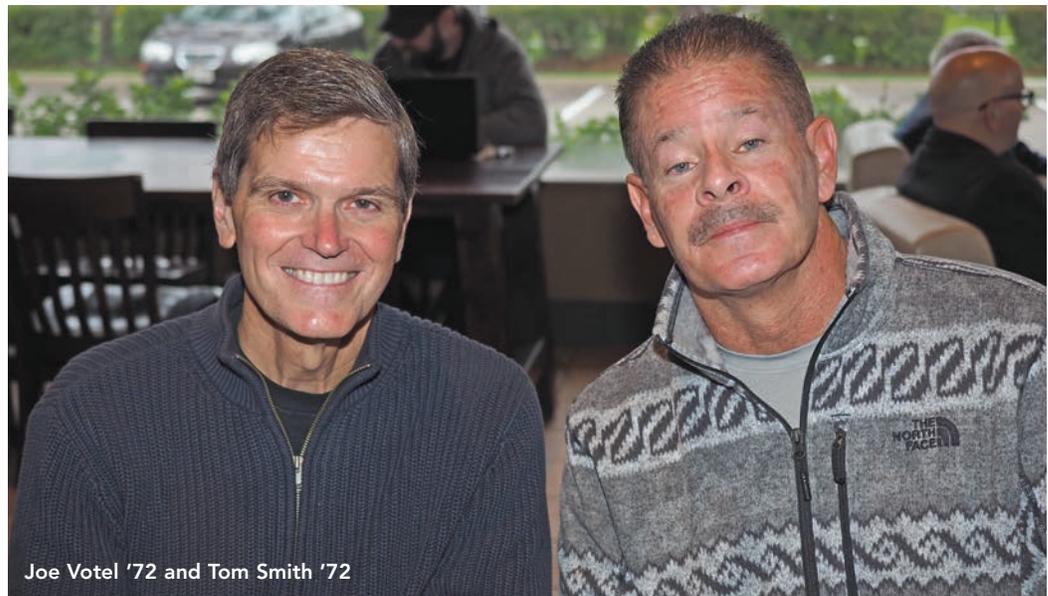
Every donation to A&F&F Tuition Assistance Fund will be matched dollar-for-dollar through December 31, 2019.

## Honor A Loved One...

who values Catholic education. See page 8 for details.

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Joe Votel '72 and Tom Smith '72

PHOTO BY PEG LINDLOF

Former Classmates — Retired 4-Star General & Police Chief Share Experiences on Storied Careers

## Service, Faith & Leadership

Back in 1972, no one would have predicted that Sr. Carol Ann's eighth grade homeroom at St. Matt's included a future four-star general AND a future Chief of Police. And yet, it did. Tom Smith served as St. Paul's Chief of Police from 2010–2016. His classmate, Joe Votel, was promoted to four-star general in 2004, and in 2016, President Obama appointed him to be Commander of U.S. Central Command, where he supervised the U.S. military in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He retired from the military on March 28, 2019.

We invited them both to share a few things they've learned over the course of their exceptional careers. While Tom attended St. Matt's since kindergarten, Joe transferred in the summer before 8th grade, so we began our conversation by asking Joe what he remembered from his year at St. Matt's.

## Remembering St. Matt's

**JOE:** I think there were three 8th grade classrooms at the time, with about 25-30 kids in a class. Our teacher, Sr. Carol Ann, was a notable personality — a pretty tough lady and very demanding in the classroom. She held us to pretty high standards.

— Continued on page 3

## MESSAGE FROM **father steve**

### Alums, Families, and Friends,

This issue contains a rather lengthy piece on two of our Alums — Joe Votel and Tom Smith. Although these two men have had unique careers, their personal lives and their values reflect the values COS works to instill in our students every day.

The roles of parents and families are central to the development of a young person. I was privileged to know Jean and Bud Smith and Hank and Patricia Votel. Hard work, honesty, dedication to family and community, respect for learning, strong self-esteem and at the center of it all, a strong faith life — these are the values the Smiths and Votels brought to their children.

Joe and Tom have agreed to meet with students and families and friends of COS; they have agreed to speak about their lives and what a Catholic education means to them. They are eager to encourage students to bring their best to their work as students.

COS has many success stories — these are but two. Our Alums do make a difference and bring the values they learned here and at home into their adult lives.

All of this is possible because of you. COS grew by 18% over the past year. Most of our families earn low or moderate incomes, and the full cost of tuition is not possible for them; they need substantial financial aid. Your generosity makes it possible to say to the community “no student will be denied a Catholic education at COS because of family finances.”

Thank you for your continued and generous support of COS. Pray for us, with growing enrollment and ownership of the campus come changes. These changes pose new challenges and opportunities.

In gratitude,

Father Steve Adrian  
Pastor, Community of Saints



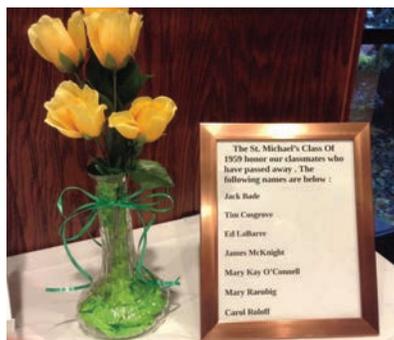
Fr. Steve with Joe Votel and Tom Smith.

PHOTO BY PEG LINDLOF

## Class of '59 Celebrates 60th Reunion

Members of St. Michael's Class of 1959 celebrated their 60th reunion by gathering for dinner at Joseph's Grill on October 13. One of the organizers, Corrine Thomas Martin, said the group had a wonderful afternoon sharing memories and renewing friendships. It's been 30 years since their last reunion, but now the former classmates plan to get together every other month to keep in touch.

If you'd like to connect with this group, reach them by email at [StMikes@yahoo.com](mailto:StMikes@yahoo.com) or Facebook page [St Michael's class of 1959](#).



Members of the Class of '59 also marked the occasion with a contribution to Community of Saints. (Front row L-R) Corrine Thomas Martin, Carol Davis, Roberta Cosgrove Barger, Sandy McMonigal Hughes, Karen Weismiller Beaudette, and Helena Stevens Byrne. (Back row L-R) Charles Gudim, Terry Gott, Richard Reis, Jenny Riebe Livings, Gerry Kegler, Gerry Dufour, Mary Kay Harrison Cooney. *Alums missing from picture who also attended: Gayle Snyder White, Father George Graftsky, and John Martineau.*

LEFT: Remembering deceased classmates: Jack Bade, Tim Cosgrove, Ed LaBarre, James McKnight, Mary Kay O'Connell, Mary Raeubig, Carol Roloff

## Faith, Leadership, Service, continued from page 1

My first real interaction with kids at St. Matt's was playing football down at Baker Field. The coach was a guy named Joe Rowan, another interesting personality. He was the coach for pretty much everything — football, basketball, baseball. I thought he was a great guy.

St. Matt's had a reputation as kind of a scrappy sports school. We were smaller than some of the other Catholic schools, but we always wanted to compete with the premier schools. In 8th grade we actually made it to the city championship playoffs for baseball. It was a big deal for St. Matthew's to be there.

**TOM:** We were pretty good in football that year, too. We had some really good athletes.

**JOE:** We were good in football. We weren't that great in basketball, but baseball was the best sport for St. Matt's that year.

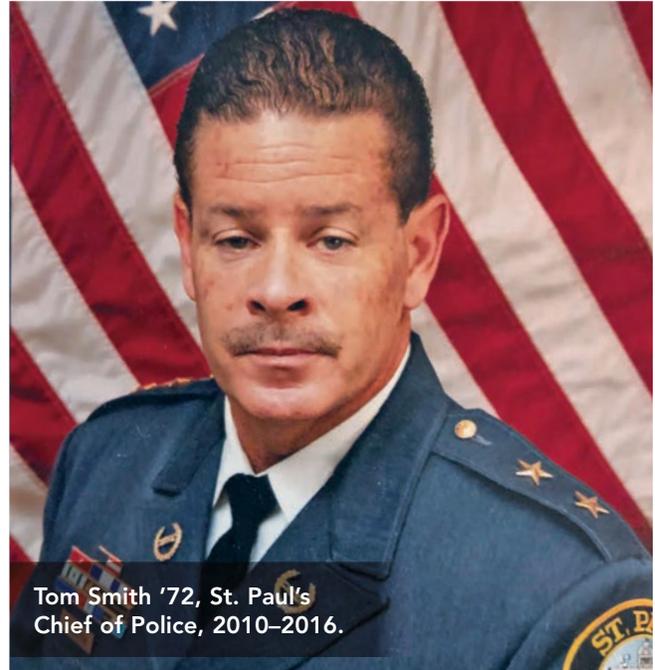
## Discovering Your Vocation

**TOM:** I've told this story many times. I was leaving Neighborhood House, where I'd just been awarded a scholarship to play football at Inver Hills Community College. As I came out, I ran into an individual who was known to be a very bad person. He went to Humboldt, where I went, and he'd been arrested numerous times. I remember that day, he looked at me and said, "You need to be a cop. We need more police officers from the West Side, and you're the one." Here's this guy who I didn't get along with, who just had a bad demeanor, telling me this. It was a chance encounter, but I never forgot it.

That wasn't the total reason. I grew up in a neighborhood of fathers who were firefighters and police officers. At one point, I remember thinking I wasn't going to have a college football career much longer, it wasn't working out that well. I knew I wanted to do something where I could give back to the community.

**JOE:** In 1968, my family visited my oldest brother Dick, who was living in Baltimore. One of the places he took us was to the Naval Academy in Annapolis. I had no perception of what this place was, but I was so impressed by it. I remember telling my dad, "I want to come here for school." His response was, "That's nice."

When I got to Cretin and started looking at colleges, I got serious about it. I ended up at West Point, not the Naval Academy, but it really kind of started with that trip to Baltimore. I was intrigued because it was so



different, it was so organized. I liked that aspect of it. Once I got into high school, I had people who encouraged me to pursue it. My mom and dad were very strong supporters. But it was an unusual choice at the time. I remember some people wondering, why would you want to throw your life away by joining the Army? I wasn't mature enough to appreciate everything they were suggesting with that, but nonetheless, I went ahead with it.

I showed up at West Point having never visited the place, and my feeling upon arriving was instant regret. I thought, "What did I just get myself in to?" But you don't have much time to think about it, and the next thing you know you're several months down the line. At that point, I thought, "Okay, I can make it, I can do this."

## Faith Tested & Strengthened

**TOM:** My faith was tested the most when I ordered the investigation of our own Archdiocese. My life was threatened, my family was threatened. The news media would interview me and say, "You're Catholic, and you ordered an investigation?" People thought I would be lax, but I was very forward in that investigation, and instead of lessening my faith, it strengthened it. It was my faith and support from others that helped me push the investigation forward which eventually led to positive changes and new oversight for the Archdiocese.

— Continued on page 4

**Faith, Leadership, Service, continued from page 3**

It all started at St. Matthew's. The Catholic education we had, the strong moral values we were taught, I never forgot that. We learned what's right and what's wrong, and sometimes what is right is very unpopular. Through it all, my faith has kept me going, that idea that we need to go forward, do good things, and make things right.

**JOE:** Tom captures it pretty well. If you don't believe in something, you'll believe in everything. I wouldn't describe being part of the military as a religious experience, but it is a very spiritual experience. You get kids, young men and women who come from across the country, from a variety of different values and beliefs, but for the most part they're very, very spiritual. When things get difficult, that is what you fall back on.

The worst night of my military experience, we lost 37 people in one evening in a combat situation. It was devastating. Somehow, in this great moment of despair, to figure out how you move forward — it is all about values. It's all about how you treat people. It's all about how you look at things.

I think a Catholic upbringing taught you how to treat people. One of the things you learn over time is that everyone out there is dealing with something, everybody has challenges in their life. So, you have to make sure you account for that. You have to be kind in your approach. You would not necessarily think in the military we would care about that, and I don't mean we mollycoddle people. But I think my Catholic upbringing gave me the grounding to be sensitive, to be kind, to recognize that people come from different experiences. That we have to put trust in a higher power to help us through.

## What It Takes to **Lead**

**TOM:** I used to tell men and women at every level of the police department — you don't work for me, I work for you. A good leader brings resources to the men and women who work for them. Serving the people who work for you develops trust, and to me, if there's one thing that makes a great leader, it's trust. Without trust it doesn't matter what rank you are, you can be a general, a chief of police, a sergeant, a captain, if people don't trust you, they're not going to follow you. They might have to follow orders but they're not going to follow you into battle. That's where the rubber meets the road and you find out if people really trust you, because if they do, they'll do anything. It doesn't matter how cold it is,



doesn't matter if they're hungry. They'll do whatever you ask them to do. Trust and serving others has been my mantra and still is.

**JOE:** I subscribe to the inclusive approach to leadership — meaning you try to listen, try to understand what people are telling you. You try to involve them in the problems you're solving out there. That's my general approach to things.

Good leaders lead by example. They share in the danger, or the other aspects that they're asking people they're leading to go through. If you're a leader, people watch you all the time. They watch how you treat your family, how you balance your life, so this idea of setting an example, being a role model is really an important aspect of leadership. I think there are many people out there who want to do the right thing and sometimes they need examples to help them.

It's not just what we do, it's important how we do it. Like how we conduct ourselves on the ground. With soldiers, when you get to a point where you close with your adversaries, and they're at their weakest point, somehow, you've got to preserve the humanity here. You've got to recognize that hey, this person can't fight anymore, now he's become our responsibility. Now you have a moral obligation to protect combatants. I think this is a really important aspect of the professions Tom and I have chosen, and there are a lot more people who subscribe to that.

## Advice For COS Students

**TOM:** I run a mentoring program at Humboldt, and the one thing I tell students: never let anybody tell you that you can't achieve your dreams. I've seen firsthand how a lot of the kids who come from new immigrant families, or maybe they're inner city kids, there are a lot more bumps in the road for them. Not for all, but for many.

You have to mentor young people so that they know they have the same opportunities that Joe and I had. The message to the kids is, you have to work hard, and you'll have to make some sacrifices along the way. I don't know about Joe, but as a kid who used to get in trouble with law enforcement, I never thought I would ever rise to the rank of Chief of Police. But with good mentors and a Catholic education, I had that opportunity. That's where I think the kids at Community of Saints have that leg up. They're getting that Catholic education. I've come to some of Father's events, I'm so impressed with those young people.

**JOE:** My advice would be, grow where you're planted, don't let people get in the way of your ambitions. We've got a lot of challenges in our country, but this is still

America. This is still the land of opportunity. Kids from all different parts of the country can come and do whatever they want. That's still the case today. I see it all the time in uniform.

I would like to pick up on Tom's idea of mentoring. We as a society do have a responsibility to help kids develop the right virtues and other things they'll need to succeed in life. We should teach them prudence, the ability to discipline and govern yourself. We should teach them passion, the ability to love something enough to work for it, even when it's difficult. We should teach them patience, the ability to deal with hard things and get to a satisfactory solution at the other end. These are really important things. I think, for me, a Catholic education contributed to that, but it wasn't just a Catholic education. It was my parents, it was my family, the neighbors, it was the coaches I had. It was everybody that came together and helped mold me into the person that I became. It's really important.

Whatever your dream is, go for it. You want to be the Chief of Police, go for it. You want to be in the Army, go for it. You want to be a doctor, go for it. You can get there in this country.

## Friends for Decades... They Finally Got to Go Fishing

Joe Votel, Shawn Doyle '72, and Bill Creamer '72 have been friends since their days at St. Matt's. All three attended Cretin together and they've stayed close ever since.

Joe explained that every year his old friends plan a fishing trip. "They go up to Canada, and every time they've asked me, I've been unable to go," he said. "Shawn called me last year and said, 'Hey, we're going fishing in May. Do you want to go?' And I said 'Yes!'" Joe said the trip was one of the best things that's happened since retiring.



ABOVE: Shawn Doyle '72, Joe Votel '72, Patrick Green, and Bill Creamer '72.

INSET: Joe lands a big one while fishing with his good friends.

LEFT: For his retirement, Joe's friends presented him with a custom-made fishing rod with the Army Rangers emblem.



## Alums & Friends & Families 2018-19 Annual Report

### 441 Donors Contributed \$257,420 for Tuition Assistance

When Community of Saints first opened in the Fall of 2010, it was one of the first regional schools in the Archdiocese, and there were a lot of unknowns. Now, nine years later, COS is thriving and is seen as a leader in Catholic education for its constant push to improve academics and for building a strong, diverse school community.

The story of the school's success is the story of a community that has stood together in support of a promise: that tuition will not be a barrier to families seeking a Catholic education for their child. Since that commitment was first made 12 years ago, A&F&F supporters have contributed \$2.1 million to back it up.

Community of Saints is your school. It wouldn't exist without your support. Over 90% of the students at the school receive tuition assistance, and your contributions have opened the doors for these children to get a Catholic education. **Thank you for making the promise real.**

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*Continued on page 8*

**Word of mouth is key to the school's growth as one parent shares her story with COS Principal.**

*I just learned that someone I'd talked to about COS decided to bring her daughter to our school and she's in Bella's class! That's wonderful. She said after I told her about COS, she went to an Easter egg hunt and her daughter didn't get many eggs. Two girls came up to her and said, "We see you didn't get a lot of eggs, take half of ours." My friend asked the two girls what school they go to and it was COS. She said it was a sign and she knew she had to make the switch! Anyway, I'm so glad she took my advice and she told me that their family is so happy with their decision to come to our school.*

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 John Riehle  
 Marion Mueller Schaps  
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet  
 Teri Jo Sports  
 St. Matthew's Catholic School  
 St. Matthew's 8th grade  
 Class of 1943  
 St. Matthew's 1950 classmates  
 St. Matthew's Class of 1969  
 All the wonderful teachers  
 I had at St. Matt's  
 St. Michael alumni  
 The family of Robert Stickler  
 Karen (Robinette) Thompson  
 Jim Wicker

## Tributes In Honor Of/ In Memory Of

### IN HONOR OF

Father Steve Adrian  
 Sister Anne Becker  
 Mrs. Vivian Boyle  
*St. Matthew's kindergarten  
 teacher in the 1950's & 60's*  
 Community of Saints students

### IN MEMORY OF

Barbara Absey  
 Vonnie Allie  
 Liz Arend  
 Hildegarde Rosenberger  
 Armstrong  
 Chuck & Brett Barger  
 Ervin Barrett  
 Frances Tinucci Belford  
 Cornelius & Lucille Bertrand  
 Joseph & Catherine Blaeser  
 George L. Bohrer  
 Arnold & Susan Brucker  
 Carol Roloff Casey  
 Joseph Cayetano  
 Fred Commers  
 Tom Conlon &  
 Dr. Tom Conlon  
 Francis & Gertrude Cosgrove  
 Hugh Cosgrove  
 James T. Cruz & John F. Cruz  
 Deceased members of  
 St. Matthew's Class of 1949  
 Sister Patricia DeBlicke  
 Michael J. Demco Jr.  
 Brian Dufour  
 Janice Ferber  
 Robert Follmer, Sr. &  
 Stephen Follmer  
 Bernadine Franciscus  
 Paul H. Frank  
 Leona Fretschel  
 Joseph & Carol Gabriel &  
 John Gabriel  
 Della Gangl  
 George & Yvonne Gangl

## Honor a Loved One With a Gift in Their Name

This Christmas, give a gift in honor or in memory of someone in your life to celebrate their commitment to Catholic education. One hundred percent of your donation goes to support tuition assistance for students at Community of Saints.

Use the enclosed envelope or mail your gift to:  
**Community of Saints**  
 335 Hurley St. E.  
 West St. Paul, MN 55118

*Make checks payable to Community of Saints.*

You can also give online by visiting  
[www.communityofsaints.org/supportourschool](http://www.communityofsaints.org/supportourschool)

*Your contribution is tax deductible and all gifts made by December 31, 2019, will be matched 100% up to \$10,000 thanks to the generous support of an alum and good friend of COS.*



John Garvey  
 John T. Garvey  
 Russell M. Gesell  
 Kay Goehl  
 Kay Karpinski Goehl  
 Hank Goers  
 Carol Grundei  
 Anthony & Terese Guldan  
 Alice R. Hanson  
 John & Elvira Hanson  
 Louise Heller Heinrich  
 Sr. Mary Isadore  
 Catherine Jacobs  
 Mary Ann DeMuth Jolly  
 Roger L. Josephson  
 Tom Kaliszewski  
 Liz Karbon  
 Ted Ketchmark  
 Richard J. Kisch  
 Cy & Mary Kosel  
 Ed Krueger  
 James A. Lancette  
 Genevieve & Bernard Lotzer  
 Jerry Mandel  
 Myrna McNeal  
 Gerald Mikkalson  
 Ryan Mikkalson  
 Bob Miller  
 Agnes Mooney  
 Angie Mulwee  
 John Nafus  
 Shirley Nicolas  
 Father John O'Neill  
 Ardis G. Osland  
 Christine Pavlak  
 Robert L. & Edelruth Pavlak  
 Carl & Delima Petschauer  
 Jerome Pietruszewski  
 Joyce Poechmann  
 Joseph & Vivian Rhode

Dan Riehle  
 Mary A. Riehle  
 Bill & Cel Rindfleisch  
 Joseph A. Rogers III  
 Bob Roloff  
 John Scanlan  
 William P. Shaughnessy  
 Louis & Inez Sitzmann  
 Theresa Sports  
 Bob & Jeanne Stadt  
 Jacob Thomas Stanger  
 Agnes Stefaniak  
 Alvin & Dorothy Valerius  
 Joseph & Maria Van Guilder  
 Mary & Peter Vogel  
*Parents of James Vogel*  
 Leonard &  
*Catherine Weegman*  
 Al & Mary Wenker  
 Amanda Weyer  
 Marie A. Willems  
 Herman Wolters  
 Donna Ziemer

### 2018 Give to the Max Day

**We raised \$11,119 on Give to the Max Day in 2018. Donations support our student experience fund which focused on classroom upgrades and resources in 2018-19.**

Anonymous (3)  
 William Arend  
 Dan & Karen Boden  
 Brooke & Michael Brown  
 Judy & Ralph Brown

John Capistrant  
 Joan & Jon DeLuney  
 Jean & Richard Diaz  
 JoEllen & Nathan Flak  
 Melinda & Javier Frias  
 Cathy & Doug Goaley  
 Eric & Katie Hartz  
 Michael Johnson  
 Father Kevin Kenney  
 Thomas & Ruth King  
 Christopher & Annmarie Kraker  
 Bridget Kramer  
 Matthew Kudwa  
 Julie Kuzj  
 John Lamey  
 Maggie Lee & Richard Dunn  
 Toulee Ly  
 Teresa & Stephen McCurdy  
 Bebe & Terry McTeague  
 Marge & Wayne Milner  
 Katie Miskowic  
 Joel & Meghan Moore  
 Jessica Morales  
 Janet & Ronald Odalen  
 Nancy Poechmann  
 Kyle & Emily Reckinger  
 Janelle Rohr  
 Barb & Garry Ruhlmann  
 Laura Sanchez  
 Richard & Pat Schletty  
 Jaquel Smith  
 Barbara Tesch  
 Bradley & Beth Tressell  
 Argerie Diaz-White &  
 Robert White  
 Carol & Jim Yannarely  
 Nick Yannarely  
 Dan Yentes  
 Michelle Youness

### Other Contributions

Throughout the year we receive additional contributions in the form of restricted and unrestricted gifts and grants. Thank you to the following individuals and foundations for supporting our students.

Aim Higher Foundation  
 Assumption Parish  
 Vivian Byers School Endowment  
 Catholic Community Foundation  
 Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSOE)  
 Coca-Cola Give  
 Roy & JoAnn Ferber  
 GHR Foundation  
 Mark & Ilze Hager  
 Healey Foundation  
 Mary & Ken Herriges  
 David Hottinger &  
 Mary Kaul-Hottinger  
 Mary Kaye & Jim Kramer  
 Carlo & Virginia LaManna  
 Katie Miskowic  
 Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish  
 Paul & Teresa Ramos  
 St. Matthew School Endowment  
 St. Matthew's Parish  
 WEM Foundation

### Loyalty Circle

Our Loyalty Circle honors individuals and families who make a lasting impact on our students and school. Their generosity is critical to our mission of educating all families who desire a Catholic education for their children in this region. Membership in our Loyalty Circle is based on a history of consecutive giving, significant financial support, or inclusion of Community of Saints in estate plans.

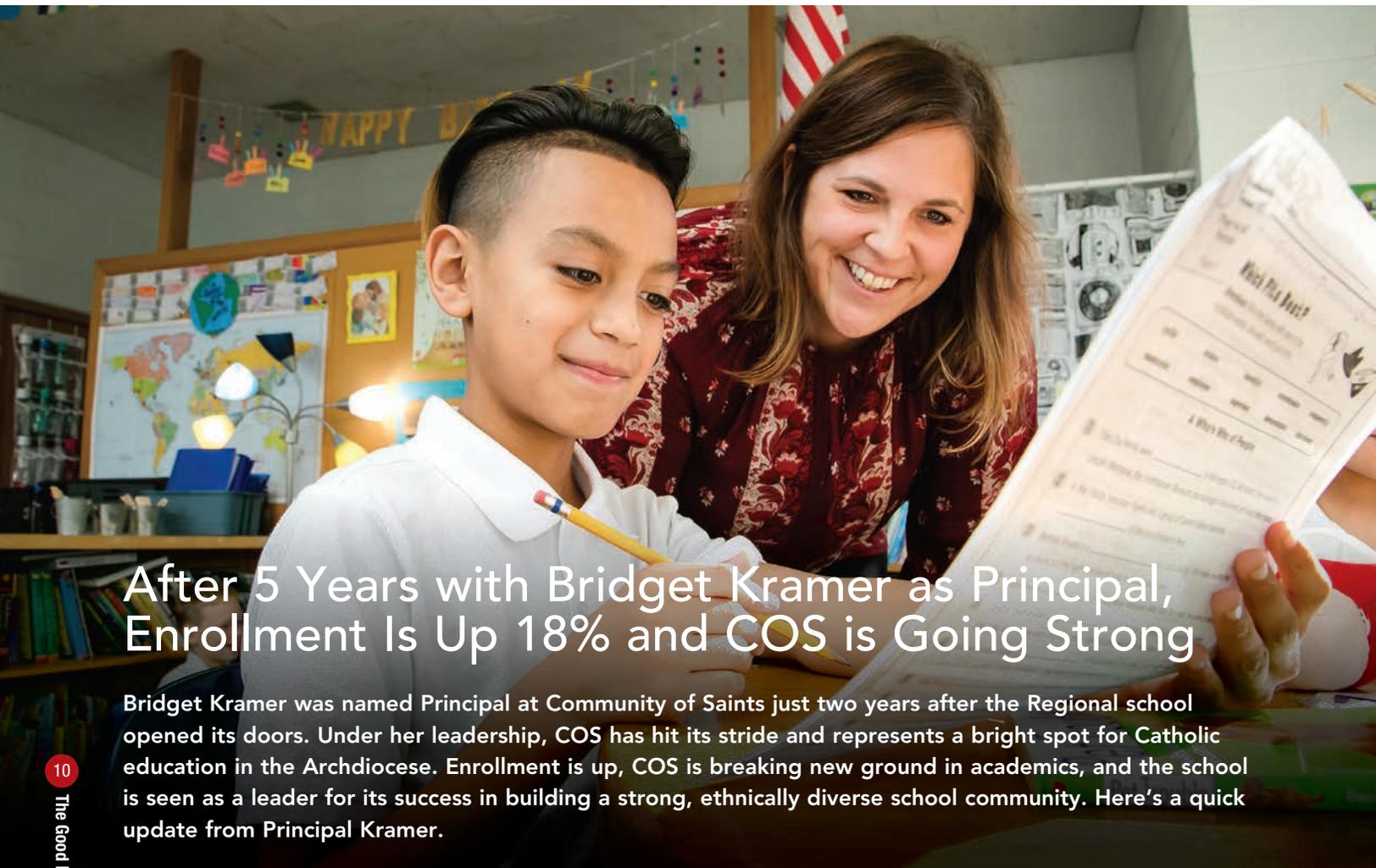
Father Steve Adrian  
 Susan & Tony Alleva  
 Victoria Baker  
 Patricia Blaskie  
 Patricia & Daniel Blaskowski  
 Alice Bobick  
 Mary Sue Brass  
 Corinne & William Brengman  
 Audrey Brucker  
 Clement & Molly Commers  
 Jacqueline Cosgrove  
 Hugh & Melissa Cullen  
 Joseph & Doreen Cullen  
 John Curran  
 Timothy Dalzell  
 Mark Del Vecchio  
 Thomas Doyle  
 Joanne Dufour  
 Carol & Lawrence Engelmann  
 Jack Ferber

Roy & JoAnn Ferber  
 Mary Jane Ferber &  
 Carolyn Jones  
 Bill & Bonita Frels  
 Elizabeth French  
 Jean Froehle  
 Jim & Tedi Gesell  
 Kathleen Gobeli  
 Mary & Ken Herriges  
 Robert Hinze  
 Patricia Holmes  
 David Hottinger &  
 Mary Kaul-Hottinger  
 Father Bradley Jenniges, OSB  
 Thomas Kabesh  
 Jim Korman  
 Mary Ann Kosel  
 Mary Kaye & Jim Kramer  
 Jim & Jan Kunz  
 Janet Lackner

Carlo & Virginia LaManna  
 Bernard & Colleen Lancette  
 George & Carol Lang  
 Maggie Lee & Richard Dunn  
 Mary Leibl  
 Joseph Mansur  
 Larry McGough  
 Mary Cullen McKeown &  
 Tom McKeown  
 Eileen McMahan &  
 Steve Karbon  
 Lee & Judith Morhar  
 Eileen Norton  
 Thomas & Mary O'Neill  
 Pat & Tony Palmer  
 Margarita Probst  
 John Riehle  
 Tom & Patricia Rolewicz  
 Mary Ann Roscoe  
 Ralph Roubal

Rita Ryan  
 Josette Salah  
 Christopher Schletty  
 Carol Schreiner  
 Corinne Schuster  
 Jerry & Marilyn Sexton  
 Eugene Sitzmann  
 Tony Sitzmann  
 Georgene Sorenson  
 Russ Sudeith  
 Barbara Turucci  
 Dorothy Turcotte-Tait  
 Michael Vasterling  
 Allen & Diane Volkenant  
 Dick Votel  
 Terrance Votel  
 Peter Willems





## After 5 Years with Bridget Kramer as Principal, Enrollment Is Up 18% and COS is Going Strong

Bridget Kramer was named Principal at Community of Saints just two years after the Regional school opened its doors. Under her leadership, COS has hit its stride and represents a bright spot for Catholic education in the Archdiocese. Enrollment is up, COS is breaking new ground in academics, and the school is seen as a leader for its success in building a strong, ethnically diverse school community. Here's a quick update from Principal Kramer.

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### "We're Willing to Try New Things"

COS is implementing two multi-year academic programs in partnership with the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education. "We're willing to try new ways of doing things, to see what works," explained Kramer. "That's become part of our culture now. Our students benefit, and our families see the difference."

### Grants from University of Notre Dame

**Blended Learning** combines the strategic use of technology in the classroom with intensive small group instruction. In the classes where it was piloted last year, the school saw significant growth in MAP standardized test scores. The program is being expanded to the entire school this year.

**STEM** is an interdisciplinary approach to teaching science, technology, engineering and math, and will be phased into all grades over the next three years. The program not only helps students improve test scores for math and science, it also promotes critical thinking and problem solving. COS is one of only nine schools in the country, and the only private school, chosen by Notre Dame for the program.





## “It’s One of Our Greatest Strengths” Faith Serves as Foundation

“Our faith serves as the foundation of everything we do,” explained Kramer. “One of our greatest strengths has been teaching the students the idea of servant leadership.” The school recently updated its religious education curriculum with one that is based on Social Justice. The school’s student leadership team helps organize student service projects throughout the year. The school also places a priority on finding ways for religious education to mirror the school’s ethnic diversity.

## “We Want to Keep Our Small School Experience” Expanding Resources to Manage Growth

In Bridget Kramer’s first year as principal, enrollment was 160, and then dropped to 136 in her second year. Enrollment has risen every year since then and has now climbed to 205 students, a 50% increase over the last four years. “We can feel the growth,” Kramer acknowledged. “And we’re working on how to manage it.” This year, the school has expanded Title 1 services, has added a full time phys-ed teacher, who also teaches Health to middle school students, and added a part-time English Language Learner instructor to work with teachers in the classrooms.



## “I Have the Best Staff in the World!” COS Reports 100% Staff Retention

When it comes to the school’s successes, Kramer is quick to give credit to her staff, who she says are “totally on board with our mission.” Kramer was worried about teacher burnout by implementing the Blended Learning and STEM programs at the same time. Instead, teachers have been energized by the challenge. “Our first-grade teacher, Sue Maher, has 31 years of experience, and she describes Blended Learning as a game changer,” said Kramer. “Sue says the new programs have pushed her to be a better educator.”



## “As a Mission School, Finances are Never Easy” COS is Thankful for Generous Support

Kramer remembers back to the days when she first became principal, when she wasn’t sure if she could make payroll for the year. Now, in her sixth year, finances are more stable, and she’s been able to shift from a mindset of how to keep the doors open, to working with the school board on a vision for the future. Even as she appreciates the opportunity to look forward, she knows the school will never be on easy street. “We rely on third-party support to fulfill our mission, so you can never take anything for granted.” Kramer stated. With enrollment up to 205 students, Kramer is thankful for the continued support of A&F&F which has made it possible to fulfill the promise that tuition will never be a barrier to family’s seeking a quality Catholic education for their child.

**COMMUNITY OF SAINTS  
REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

335 Hurley St. E.  
West St. Paul, MN 55118-1605

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO  
JEANNINE MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Jeannine is one of our school parents and she is responsible for all the beautiful photos of students in this issue. Thank you Jeannine!

To see more of Jeannine's work visit her website at [Jeanninemarie.com](http://Jeanninemarie.com)

**WHEN IT COMES TO SERVICE —  
STUDENTS JUST DO IT**

Service is a core value at COS, and students learn by doing. Whether it's raking leaves for an elderly neighbor, staging a food drive for local food shelves, or raising money to help young people with cancer, students at all grade levels participate, and student leaders help choose and organize the activities. For more school news, go to pages 10–11.