



THE GOOD NEWS

August/September 2012
Issue 31

FROM ST. MATTHEW

The community of St. Matthew exists in the world as a visible expression of God's love



**St. Matt's FunFest
ONE NIGHT ONLY
Saturday, Sept. 15
5-10 p.m.**

All the fun's been packed into one night. Bring your friends, neighbors, kids and grandkids to celebrate a St. Matt's tradition.

Mom Credits St. Matt's School and Parish for Family's Success

For those of you who are regulars at Bakers Square on Robert Street, you may already know Sunnie Valdez. She's been a waitress there for the last four years, a job that has served as the primary source of income for herself and her three young children, Naudia, 9, Ricky, 8 and Navea, 6. The two girls attended St. Matt's last year and she's hoping all three will be at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School this fall.

Like all good waitresses, Sunnie is quick to strike up a conversation, and if she knows you're from St. Matthew's, she's quick to point out how much she credits St. Matt's School and parish for her family's success. "When it felt like all was lost," she said, "They were the hands underneath me, supporting me."

"I was really in a tough spot," Sunnie stated bluntly, recalling the family crisis that led her to St. Matt's five years ago. "I was looking for childcare and didn't know who to trust with my kids." Her confidence in Fr. Steve led her to St. Matthew's Childcare Center where she enrolled all three children. As each child reached kindergarten age, they began attending St. Matthew's School. The oldest now is entering 4th grade.

Doug Lieser, St. Matthew's Principal and the current President of Community of Saints, recalls first meeting Sunnie. "You could see that she was an incredibly hard working lady with a lot on her table. It was clear she needed help," Doug said. "Sunnie wanted to hear what we thought was best for her kids and she always followed through on recommendations we would make."

Son Diagnosed with Hearing Loss

When Sunnie's son, Ricky, was in kindergarten, his teacher recommended that his hearing be tested. Results showed that he had hearing loss in both ears. Sunnie worked closely with Doug Lieser and the school counselor to determine Ricky's needs. "They really held my hand through the whole process, explained what needed to happen and helped me figure out what was the right place for him." With Doug's encouragement, Ricky transferred to Como Elementary, which had a program for children with hearing impairments. Ricky graduated out of that

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Community of Saints 7th grade student, Aliah Lopez, models the middle school girls' uniform.

MESSAGE FROM **father steve**



Fr. Steve is the former pastor at Saint Matthew's and chairs the A&F Committee.

Dear Alums and Friends of Saint Matthew's School,

One of the challenges of the past year has been to encourage and assist current Saint Matthew families and West Side residents to see Community of Saints Regional School as their own.

West Siders have a fierce loyalty to their neighborhood and are reluctant to see opportunities in West Saint Paul as their "own."

Yet, the fact is, Community of Saints Regional Catholic School is the "new incarnation" of Saint Matthew's School.

The staff is heavily Saint Matthew's teaching staff, the student body in large part is made up of West Side and Saint Matthew families, the President and overall leader of the school is Doug Lieser, former Director of Education and Principal of Saint Matthew's.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a story about Sunnie Valdez and her three children. This is a success story that can and will be replicated at Community of Saints. The Valdez family found in Saint Matthew's a caring and welcoming community. Sunnie and her children Naudia, Ricky and Navea found hope and a new beginning at Saint Matthew's.

The spirit of Saint Matthew lives anew at Community of Saints. Community of Saints declares proudly in its mission statement that it seeks "to change and to save lives."

The Valdez family is a flesh and blood testimony to the truth of that statement.

So, with anticipation and enthusiasm for a new chapter in the saga of Saint Matthew, I come to you, alums and friends, and appeal to you for your continued support to make a high quality, effective Catholic education possible for Naudia and Ricky and Navea and hundreds of other children.

Our kids succeed and our families thrive; and you are the reason all this is possible.

I am committed to do all in my power to advance and grow Community of Saints School for the families of Saint Matthew and the West Side.

God bless you.

Father Stephen Adrian

Fundraising Update:
\$118,529

Thank you for your continued support of tuition assistance. Your contribution has made Catholic education a reality for many West Side —families. See pg. 7 to learn how your gift is doubled till Sept. 30.

In Appreciation of John Riehle ('57)

In the mid-1990's, after I had sustained a number of heart attacks, the Saint Matthew Church Council and Finance Council insisted that I hire a parish pastoral administrator to oversee the temporalities and growing programs of Saint Matthew's parish. This was to allow me to devote my time and energy to lead through preaching and teaching and direct the sacramental life of the parish community.

It was at that point that Mr. John Riehle came into my life and the life of Saint Matthew's, although John is an alum of Saint Matthew's School and was raised in the parish.

John's ministry has been a blessing to me and to our parish. It would be hard for me to detail the multi-faceted nature of John's contributions to our parish. Beneath all that John did for and with us, he was and is a man of deep faith and a strong commitment to the life of the Church.

John retired from life-long professional church ministry on July 1 of this year.

May he know only the goodness and gracious love of God.

Father Stephen Adrian



John Riehle with his six grandchildren. John will continue to serve as a member of the A&F Committee.

Mom Credits St. Matt's School, continued from page 1



Sunnie says, "Our family is doing great now." Parents Ricardo and Sunnie with their children (left to right) Naudia, 9, Navea, 6 and Ricky, 8.

"I want my kids to be close to God. With a faith-based education they'll have that and so long as they do, the sky's the limit."

SUNNIE VALDEZ

program last year and Sunnie is hoping that he will attend Community of Saints in the Fall.

"I know they would welcome him with open arms," Sunnie said when explaining why it's so important to her that her children attend Community of Saints. "It's not just the top quality education," she said. "It's the love and support and extra guidance they get. To be frank, I didn't have much involvement with the church growing up. I've had a rough life. I want my kids to be closer to God and I know that St. Matt's and now Community of Saints will give that to them."

Tuition — Couldn't Do It Without Help

Sunnie concedes that making ends meet on her income as a waitress isn't easy. "There've been times when I had to choose between food and other things," Sunnie admitted. Without tuition assistance, she never could have sent her kids to school at St. Matt's and she's thankful both for the help she's received and the generous spirit in which it's been given. "I pay what

I can," Sunnie said. "The school never made me feel like I was less important just because I didn't have money."

Making the Change to Community of Saints

Sunnie thinks her kids are excited about the changes the school year will bring. For her part, she's not concerned about moving to a new building. "It's what's in the building that counts," she said. "It's all the support and love there. As long as Doug Lieser is there and Fr. Steve is still there raising money for the school and helping out, I have faith that it will all work."

When thinking about the future for her children, Sunnie points out that she didn't go to college, but she expects her children to go. "I work a job. I don't have a career," she said. "It's my hope that my kids will have careers."

That's not all she hopes for. "I want my kids to be close to God," Sunnie says with conviction. "With a faith-based education, they'll have that and so long as they do, the sky's the limit."

SCHOOL UNIFORMS AT COMMUNITY OF SAINTS

The Challenges of Catholic Urban Education

Doug Lieser, formerly St. Matt's Principal and current President of Community of Saints, explains the special challenges an urban Catholic school faces and what made St. Matt's so successful.

What St. Matt's did so well and what we plan to continue to do at Community of Saints, is build individual connections with kids and their families.

Urban education brings special challenges. Many of the students from St. Matts come from families with a much higher poverty rate than other Catholic schools. With poverty comes stress and that affects learning. A lot of people take for granted things like knowing they have enough food for the day. That's not true for many of our students. They come to school with that stress, and whether they know it or not, it impacts them.

When our school provides a stable environment, it allows these students to have a comfort level where they can learn. Students know they are cared for when they're with us and they know we want them to be successful. We hold them accountable, which sometimes means having some tough conversations, but the goal in the end is to make their life better.



Community of Saints 6th grade student, Miguel Vazquez, is wearing the middle school boys uniform. Students will only be required to wear ties on special days.



Community of Saints 4th grade student, Xavier Garcia, shows off the uniform for boys in grade K-5.



Community of Saints 3rd grade student, Gabriela Haider, is sporting the new jumper, the uniform for girls in grade K-5.

A&F IS THE #1 SOURCE FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE

St. Matt's never turned anyone away because they couldn't afford tuition. That commitment will continue at Community of Saints. "We work our tails off to find the money for these kids to get a Catholic education," said Doug Lieser, President of Community of Saints.

St. Matthew's Alums & Friends is the #1 means of support for tuition assistance. The money people contribute goes directly towards helping low income families get a Catholic education for their children. At St. Matt's School, 90% of families received tuition assistance.

St. Matt's Brother & Sister Alums Win Awards in High School

Two recent St. Matt's graduates, **Marissa Franco ('08)** and her brother **Johncarlo Franco ('09)**, both received recognition for their high school achievements. They are the oldest of Chris and Santino Franco's four children. Their youngest daughter will attend Community of Saints this fall.

Johncarlo Franco Wins ExCel Student Award

The younger of the two, who goes by Carlo, received this year's ExCEL Award, which is given to an academically successful high school junior who shows leadership qualities and commitment to community. Carlo finished the year with the top grades in his class; he ran the Humboldt newspaper, was captain of the football team and was on the track and field team. He also finds time to coach youth sports and is a mentor for junior high students.

Marissa Franco Wins Athena Award

Marissa, who graduated from Humboldt in June, received the Athena Award, given by metro area schools to their outstanding senior female student-athlete. She also received the H-Blanket Award, which comes with a \$500 scholarship, and the Constant Curry Scholarship from El Rio. Her accomplishments include being a member of

the National Honor Society, on the "A" Honor Rolls, student council member and student mentor. She played varsity volleyball, basketball, and softball, lettered and served as captain in all three sports, and was all-conference for two. The awards also took into account Marissa's service to the community which included coaching West Side youth sports teams for basketball and softball. As a co-captain for basketball, she led her team's effort to raise \$1000 for Neighborhood House's Food Shelf.

First in Her Family to Attend College

Marissa will be the first in her extended family to attend college. She's going to the University of Minnesota and wants to major in education so she can become a teacher. "It's a huge deal because I'm the first," Marissa explained. "My little cousins in school who didn't know if they could make it to college, they see me and they know, 'If Marissa can do it, I can do it.'"

Last year, 79% of St. Matt's grads who attended Cretin-Derham Hall High School were on an honor roll.

Alum is Awarded Full Ride for PhD Program

Four years ago, **Rachel Goldenstein ('04)** was featured as one of four St. Matt's classmates who'd gone on to do very well at Cretin Derham Hall High School. This spring she graduated with honors from the University of St. Thomas with a B.S. degree in biology and she continues to excel academically. She was awarded a full-ride at the Mayo Graduate School to pursue a PhD in immunology.

Rachel describes the field of immunology as being very broad. "I'm interested in autoimmune diseases, Type One diabetes, cancer research and treatments," she says with the enthusiasm of a kid in a candy shop. "What's really cool about Mayo is they have a great connection with the clinic so you have the opportunity to put ideas into action."

It will take five years for Rachel to earn her PhD. We looking forward to hearing how it goes.



Rachel on graduation day with her family. L to R: Bridget ('10), Daniel ('09), Becca ('07), Rachel ('04), Scott ('79) and Kathy.

St. Matthew's FunFest

Saturday, September 15, 5-10 p.m.

Those of you who are members of the parish know this already — this is a challenging time at St. Matthew's. We're experiencing an almost overwhelming amount of change. Our school is moving, the parish is clustered and there's a new pastor. Frankly, it's a lot to deal with all at once. But what can be done about it?

Karen Thompson ('59) has a suggestion — come to St. Matt's FunFest. If that sounds a little trite, Karen has an explanation. She's chairing the event this year and says that with all the changes going on, the FunFest is a tradition that reinforces what's great about our community.

Change is a part of life and there are things at St. Matt's that will change, but the FunFest is a chance to have fun and celebrate who we are as a community."

— KAREN THOMPSON

"We're keeping tradition," Karen said. "St. Matt's has been doing the FunFest for many, many years. The community knows us for this event and it's got a great reputation. Change is a part of life and there are things at St. Matt's that will change, but the FunFest is a chance to have fun and celebrate who we are as a community."

Even the FunFest will change a bit this year. Everything will be on Saturday night, including kids games, bingo, bottle lotto, bar food and all the booths. So bring your friends, neighbors, kids and grandkids for a fun night to celebrate a great St. Matt's tradition.

If you're interested in donating items or your time, contact the following committee chairs.

Animal Rescue	Jan Lackner	457-4766
Bakery	The Rosary Society	
Bottle Lotto	Al and Kathy Schowalter	451-6150
Bingo	Ken and Pat Kasheimer	455-2645
Brats, Burgers & Fries	The Men's Club	
Children's Games	Joyce Osborne	457-1651
Holiday Items	Pat Moser and Bea Schueller	227-6261
Paddle Wheel	Dean Steinbrenner	
Pie & Ice Cream	Sister Anne Becker	224-9793
Posters	Marion Wolters	488-6416
Root Beer Floats	Donna Shepherd	457-9288
Tacos	Sue Nowak	222-3968
Smoothies & Pretzels	Kathy Goldenstein and Jan Casillas	455-8683
Ticket Raffle	Corrine Brengmen	
Face Painting	Anna Horn	453-9021
Set Up	Pat and Karen Kachel	222-0953



St. Matt's Girl Scouts will be sponsoring the Cake Walk again. There will also be Bingo and Face Painting.



FUNFEST'S
ONE NIGHT ONLY!

BRING YOUR
KIDS AND
GRANDKIDS!

From the Editor

A&F Celebrates Five Year Anniversary with a Challenge for You!

Alums & Friends has been raising money for tuition assistance for over five years now and thanks to you, we've raised nearly \$700,000. No other Catholic elementary school even comes close to achieving what we've done at St. Matt's. And we haven't done it with one or two big donors; our success is largely due to hundreds of small to medium contributions, from as little as \$2 to as much as \$200 or more.

Because of your generosity, St. Matt's was able to ensure that tuition was never a barrier to West Side families seeking a high quality, Catholic education for their children.

The Challenge

We need you to keep supporting students that would have gone to St. Matt's, but who are now going to Community of Saints. We know it's not in the same building and the name is different, but as the biggest of the three schools, St. Matt's spirit and ethos is alive and present at Community of Saints and is worthy of your support.

The A&F Committee has met twice monthly for the last five years to coordinate the effort to raise tuition assistance for the school. Front row L-R: Joe Cullen ('78), David Hottinger ('81), Jerry Sexton ('44), Tom McKeown, John Riehle ('57). Back row L-R: John Scanlan, Fr. Steve Adrian, Roy Ferber ('59), Eileen McMahon, Fr. Michael Rudolph.



By Giving Now — Your Gift is Doubled

To help us make our goal this year, we have a fundraising challenge from **an alum who has agreed to match dollar for dollar every contribution we receive until the end of September.** That means any contribution you make from now until the end of that month is doubled. If you give \$25, the match turns it into \$50; if you give \$100, the match makes it \$200. Whatever the amount, your contribution goes directly towards providing a high quality, Catholic education to students whose families could not otherwise afford it.

Now's the time to pitch in and make sure we keep St. Matt's School tradition alive by ensuring a quality Catholic education is available to every child on the West Side. Thank you for your continuing support.

— Maggie Lee, Editor

Thank you Jerry!

He may not like it, but I have to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary commitment to St. Matthew's School shown by **Jerry Sexton ('44)**. Jerry was one of the people who first conceived of Alums & Friends. In fact, he was the one who roped me into editing the newsletter — he's a very persuasive guy. As a founding partner of Sexton Printing, he also donated the printing and design services for the newsletter — a significant contribution which supplemented his even greater donations of both time and money.



Jerry Sexton ('44)

This summer, Jerry has semi-resigned from the A&F Committee. Basically, he's excused himself from attending our bi-monthly meetings but will still help call donors and use his formidable talents to encourage contributions.

Good News Will Come Out Four Times per Year

Jerry's also retired from his printing business and is no longer in a position to donate those services. Consequently, we've decided to publish the newsletter four times a year instead of six. We'll also seek sponsors to defray printing costs.

Jerry has been a great mentor to me and I consider him to be an equally good friend. On behalf of my own children, as well as all the students at St. Matt's School, and now, Community of Saints, I'd like to thank Jerry for all he's done to keep Catholic education going strong on the West Side.

— Maggie Lee, Editor



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www.communityofsaints.org

The Community of St. Matthew

Hall Ave. and Robie St.
St. Paul, MN 55107

Parish Office: 651-224-9793

Weekend Liturgies:

Saturday - 4 p.m.

Sunday - 9 a.m.

www.st-matts.org

EVENTS calendar

**SCHOOL PRAYER MASS — September 5, 9 a.m.
Community of Saints, 335 East Hurley, W. St. Paul**

Everyone is welcome to join the students for the first Mass of the school year at which Archbishop Nienstedt will preside.

ST. MATTHEW'S FUNFEST — September 15, 5–10 p.m.

All the fun packed into one night – bingo, bottle lotto, kids games, face painting, bake sale, brats & beer, pie & ice cream! Bring your family, friends, kids and grandkids to enjoy a favorite St. Matt's tradition. See pg. 6 for details.

MARATHON FOR NONPUBLIC EDUCATION — October 6

Students will be seeking pledges to raise money for Community of Saints throughout the month of September. In addition to making pledges, community members can volunteer on the day of the marathon. For more information, call the school office at 651-457-2510.

**ST. MATTHEW'S MEN'S CLUB
WINE TASTING — November 9, 7 p.m.**

Over 70 different wines will be available to sample plus select cheeses and a tempting chocolate fountain. Admission is \$15 and tickets can be purchased at the door of the Social Hall. Guests can order wine at discounted prices through Nowak Liquor. For details, contact Tim Nowak at timothy.nowak@unisis.com

TURKEY BINGO — November 10, 5 p.m.

Win a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner! The Men's Club will be sponsoring this event in the Social Hall. For details, contact Tim Nowak at timothy.nowak@unisis.com