

THE GOOD NEWS

FROM ALUMS & FRIENDS & FAMILIES

Providing tuition assistance for Community of Saints Regional Catholic School

End of Year Challenge!

Every donation will be matched 100% — up to \$7,500 — through December 31, 2016.

Give a gift to honor someone who values Catholic education. See pg. 8 for details.

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Archbishop Hebda Visits COS

See story on page 10.

Photograph by Peg Lindlof

From the Editor

COS Prepared to Carry On St. Michael's Tradition of Catholic Education

After 150 years of Catholic worship, effective Monday, November 28, the Archdioceses of St. Paul and Minneapolis suspended operations at St. Michael's Church of West St. Paul. The loss is felt by the entire community.

We've received many questions about how this change affects Community of Saints, which is located on St. Michael's campus. On page two, Fr. Steve provides details about the broader impact. Below, we address the most urgent concerns.

Will the school move? No.

The Archdiocese is committed to maintaining the school at its current location.

Has it hurt enrollment? No — enrollment is up.

Community of Saints' enrollment increased about 10% this year (see pg. 3). The preschool is at capacity and the number of students continuing into kindergarten has increased each year of operation.

Will suspending St. Michael's Church have a financial impact? Yes.

While Community of Saints currently pays for maintenance staffing and 80% of utilities, the school will likely be responsible for all facilities expenses in the future.

Can the school afford it? Yes.

This event was unexpected, but diligent efforts on behalf of the school administration to create stable funding and strong partnerships have put COS in a good position to manage the additional costs (see pg. 9).

St. Michael's parish was known for its enduring commitment to Catholic education. Now, with your help, that commitment will be carried on at Community of Saints.



Moving Forward

What's Next for Our Community with Operations at St. Michael's Suspended

Dear Alums, Family and Friends of Community of Saints:

Over the past four months there has been much happening here on the "home front." One of Community of Saints sponsoring parishes and its landlord, St. Michael, has suspended operations. For several years the parish population has dwindled and with that, the parish revenue has fallen. It is no longer possible for St. Michael to continue basic operations — pay salaries, pay the heat and light bill, etc. The parish just plain ran out of money — and had no reasonable way to change the parish direction. The parish continues as a legal entity, although no parish activities take place and there are no longer parish members or religious services.

Impact on St. Matthew's and Our Lady of Guadalupe

Over the past two years St. Michael, St. Matthew and Our Lady of Guadalupe were "clustered," that is, one pastor served all three parishes with the help of an assistant priest and three deacons. The "cluster" is now abandoned and both St. Matthew and Our Lady of Guadalupe have their own priest.

Fr. James Adams, who was pastor of the clustered parishes, has been reassigned to the parish cluster in Marysburg, Cleveland, Le Center and Le Sueur in Southern Minnesota. Fr. Andrew Brinkman will serve as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Fr. Robert Kelly, a Dominican priest, has been assigned to St. Matthew, in addition to his obligations as a chaplain at North Memorial Medical Center in Robbinsdale. Starting in December, St. Matthew's will have a 10 a.m. Sunday Mass in addition to the Saturday 4 p.m. Mass.



Archbishop Hebda with Fr. Steve Adrian and altar servers (clockwise) Mari Tressell, Isaiah Anderson, Jose Garcia, Connor Nicolay. Fr. James Adams (2nd row, far right), who has served as pastor of St. Michael, St. Matthew and Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLG) since July 2015 has been reassigned to a cluster in southern Minnesota. Fr. Andrew Brinkman (2nd row, center) has been named pastor of OLG.

Impact on Community of Saints

Community of Saints (COS) is going strong. We have an almost 10% increase in the number of students this year, and we have a good financial base, thanks to people like you. Beginning in December, COS will assume responsibility for the St. Michael campus. St. Michael Church will become the chapel for COS — there we will celebrate regular Mass, hold prayer services and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We will also use that space for our Christmas and end-of-the-year concerts.

I intend to negotiate a long-term lease of the school property — ten or fifteen years. COS is embarking on a new stage of life, more opportunities, more responsibilities, and thus a greater chance to make a difference in the lives of our students.

This issue carries our annual report. I thank each and every one of you who made this fundraising year so successful — our best year ever. I thank you for your continued commitment to the education of our students — and they are "our students." We, all of us, are Community of Saints. I thank you. I pray for you often.

Yours truly,

Father Stephen Adrian
Canonical Administrator of Community of Saints



St. Michael Church will become the chapel for COS where students celebrate regular Mass, hold prayer services and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

COS Enrollment UP Almost 10%!

School Families Spread the Word

In a year when most Catholic schools saw their enrollments decline, the number of students at Community of Saints has increased by about 10%. New families have come from all over the community and across all grade levels.

Even more noteworthy, almost all of the new families came as referrals from current school families, a strong endorsement of a thriving school environment. "It's a sign of the school's success," said COS principal, Bridget Kramer. "Families believe in this school and want to help make it great."

New Family Last Year — Big Booster This Year

In 2016-17, Rachel Brostrom has daughters in third grade, second grade, and kindergarten. Rachel came to COS last year when she switched schools in December 2015. Even though she's relatively new to COS, she's already become a big booster.

Rachel is a single mom who was raised as a Protestant, but she values what Catholic education offers. She wanted all of her children to go to Catholic school but tuition was a barrier. "I'm divorced with four children and I don't get child support," explained Rachel, who works full-time as a hair stylist. "It's hard when you're doing it by yourself."

At the start of last year Rachel had enrolled her children in public school, but it soon became clear to her that the school wasn't a good fit. "It was a challenge to

get them to go to school every morning," Rachel said. "They'd be crying, and when you're in kindergarten and 1st grade, you should be excited to go to school."

Rachel first heard about COS from some of her clients whose children attended, and she'd even visited the school the summer before. Finally in December 2015, she decided to transfer her daughters to COS. "I was nervous but the girls had a great first day," she said. "They made friends instantly. They liked their teachers, and every day they're excited to get up and put on their uniforms."

Rachel felt immediately welcomed into the school community. "Right from the start, parents were reaching out to me, asking if there were any resources that we needed," she said. "They made the transition a lot easier."

Thankful for Faith-Based Values and School Culture

Rachel is especially thankful for the faith-based values that are integral to her daughters' education. "I love that religion is part of what they learn every day," she said. "That's so important to our family." Rachel reports that her daughters have asked to become baptized into the Catholic faith, a decision that Rachel supports.

Now Rachel is promoting the school to other parents. She recently encouraged a friend from high school to go on a tour. "She's a single mom like me, so she doesn't have a lot of money either," Rachel explained. "I told her my kids are happy. Class sizes are small and I love the diversity of the school. It's a great environment."

Tuition Assistance Makes It Possible

For Rachel, what makes COS possible is the tuition assistance she receives. "If we didn't get help with tuition, I wouldn't be able to afford to send my kids," Rachel stated. "That was a big factor in our decision. Ms. Kramer understood that and she worked to accommodate our budget."

Rachel is hopeful that her friend's son will be part of next year's COS kindergarten. In the meantime, she's content with her own children's positive attitude towards school. "Honestly, my kids are so happy." It's evident that their mom feels the same way.



Rachel's daughters hold certificates showing they each received Star Student awards in their classes for the same week. Left to right: Isabella — Kindergarten, Layla — 2nd grade, Anna — 3rd grade.

COS Students Make Big Impact at Cretin-Derham Hall

by Amanda Reding '13

Enrollment at Cretin-Derham Hall High School (CDH) is 1,215, roughly nine times larger than at Community of Saints (COS). Since COS started four years ago, 15 COS alums have continued their Catholic education at CDH. When you compare numbers, some people may think these 15 students would be lost in the crowd. The reality is that although few in number, COS graduates have made a big impact at CDH.

To better understand, I talked to Admissions Director, Tony Leseman, CDH class of '01. One of my first questions was if CDH values diversity as much as COS does. "Diversity is one of our core seven values," Mr. Leseman responded. "CDH is one of the most diverse Catholic high schools in the metro area." He went on to say that CDH appreciates its long-standing partnership with COS as well as the variety of cultures its graduates have brought to CDH. "CDH is grateful for its long-standing partnership with Community of Saints. We're aligned with the mission of making a quality, Catholic education accessible to all students," he added.

COS Alums Perform for School-Wide Assembly

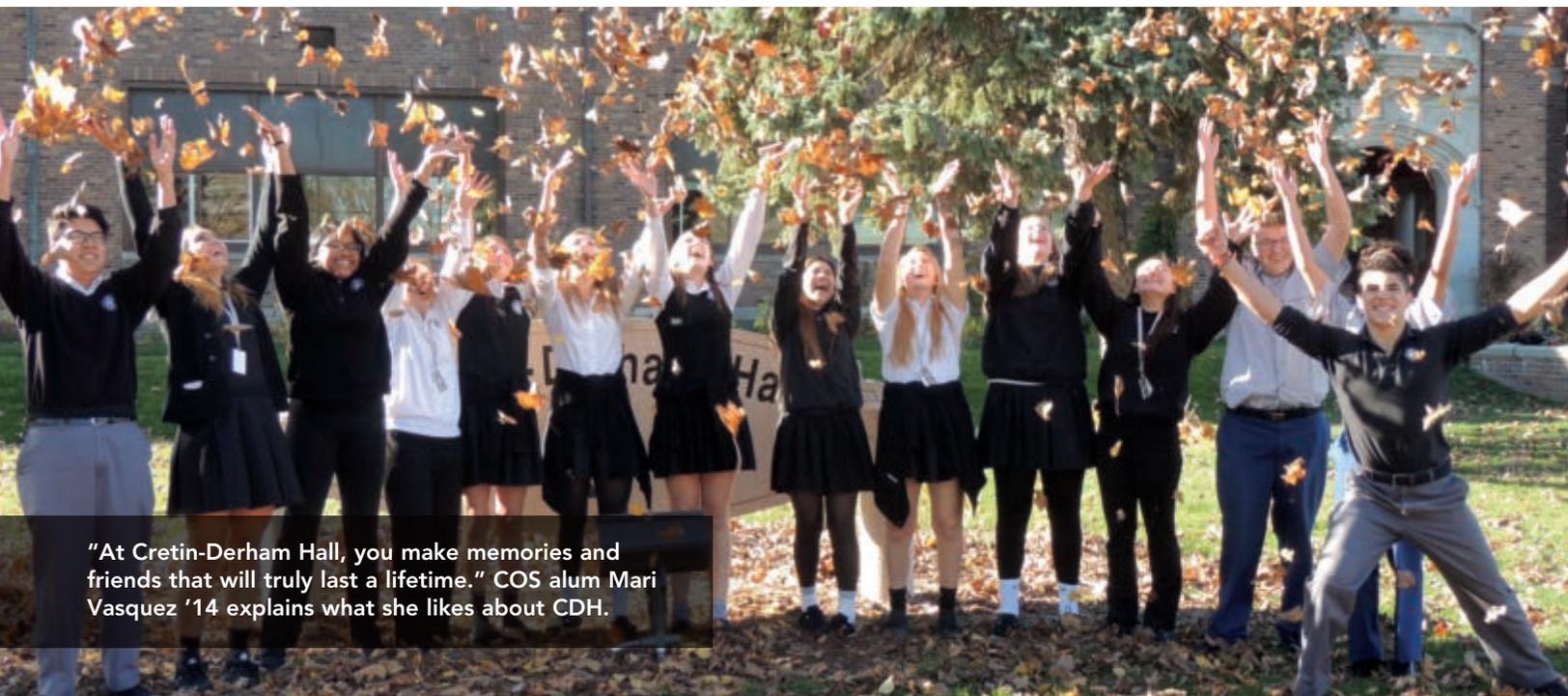
At one of our most recent school-wide assemblies we celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. The celebration included a traditional folkloric Latin dance, performed by two COS alums, Mari Vasquez (who attends CDH) and Ruiz Acosta, along with two more young people from Our Lady of Guadalupe. "I've performed this dance

many times before a variety of people and it's harder when it's people you know," Mari admitted. "But the desire to show people my culture and how unique and important it is gave me the courage I needed."

That sense of pride in community is one of many lessons we learned at COS and will take with us for the rest of our lives. Ninth grade student, Isaac Enríquez-Olvera '16, says that another lesson is the importance of maintaining a good relationship with teachers. "This is truly important," Isaac pointed out, "because if I ever need extra help, the teachers know me and my character and are glad to help." CDH Junior, Autam Mendez '14, chimed in "Being open to new things is one thing that I brought with me from COS to CDH." She added another, "COS is a small school and being an older kid there, the younger kids really look up to you." I agree. For me personally, this was also something that helped me become the leader I am today. The fact that there were always so many little eyes looking around and watching your every move drives you to want to do the right thing, to make these young children proud.

Alums Stand Out for Athletic Success

COS students have also made a large impact at CDH through athletics. Two students who have excelled are Paige Goaley, grade 10, and Autam Mendez. Both girls played on varsity teams as freshmen and between the two of them, have completed seven seasons of varsity



"At Cretin-Derham Hall, you make memories and friends that will truly last a lifetime." COS alum Mari Vasquez '14 explains what she likes about CDH.

Since COS's first graduating class in 2013, 15 alums have gone on to CDH. From left to right: Terrina Martinez, Lili Silva, Max Karas, Jennah Garibay, Amanda Reding, Miguel Vazquez, Allie Reding, Aliah Lopez, Autam Mendez, Mark Vasquez, Isaac Enríquez-Olvera, Paige Goaley, Kayla Maloney, Mari Vasquez. Not pictured, Sarah Garcia.



sports in three years. Even though she is only a junior this year, Autam was named captain of the varsity basketball team.

Just like at COS, athletics at CDH promote leadership. When I asked Paige and Autam how their leadership skills have developed because of their involvement in athletics, they were quick to answer. "With leadership comes responsibility," Paige said. "Through the soccer and basketball programs, I've learned how to be a leading voice both on and off the field." "Being a starter and a captain, you have to lead in a positive way as much as possible," Autam explained. "I try to make others around me better and influence them both on and off the court."

COS Alums Uphold Tradition of Service

In almost 13 years of Catholic education, service to others is another lesson that has stuck out. In 3rd grade, I remember walking across the street at St. Matt's every week to spend time with the elders at Wilder (Cerenity Senior Care). Seeing the simple joy that you can bring to someone's day, even as a third grader, was a magical experience. Now at CDH, I've been able to make an impact on those in need through a program called Empty Bowls. In exchange for a contribution, guests are served a simple meal that consists of one bowl of soup and a piece of bread. Afterwards, they are invited to take home a ceramic bowl. The bowl symbolizes all of the people around the world whose bowls are often empty because they never quite have enough to eat. The money raised at Empty Bowls goes to Heifer International, which donates animals to people in Third World countries to help them become more financially stable.

Over the 15 years since the Empty Bowls project began, graduates from St. Matthew School and now COS

have been leaders. Members of the Goldenstein family, Rachel, Becca, Daniel and Bridget Goldenstein, played a large role for many years. This year will be my third year on the planning committee and my sister Allie Reding, grade 10, has just signed up. "I joined Empty Bowls because of where the money goes," Allie explained. "Heifer International is a strong organization that really helps people get back on their feet. It gives people the opportunity to become self-sustaining."

Another program at CDH that helps influence leadership is the JROTC program. All three of the young men from the most recent COS graduating class, Max Karas, Mark Vasquez, and Isaac Enríquez-Olvera, are involved in JROTC. "I wanted to join JROTC because it teaches you leadership skills," Max Karas explained. "This is an important opportunity that I know I wouldn't get anywhere else." Isaac agreed, "The program also really helps you become part of a close-knit community made up of kids who all want to be leaders."

COS Grads Answer the Question: Why CDH?

I asked the group why COS students should come to Cretin-Derham Hall, and everyone was quick to answer. "At CDH, it may seem like it's a bigger school, but the reality is it's a lot like COS," Allie said. "Everyone knows everyone, including students, faculty and staff, and they really care." "They also go out of their way to help you no matter what," Max responded. Autam joined in, "It's a place that lets you be yourself." Mari finished with something that rings true for me. "At Cretin-Derham Hall, you make memories and friends that will truly last a lifetime." Overall, Community of Saints students are more than prepared when coming to CDH. The transition is easy and we all certainly know how to make a big splash.

Alums & Friends & Families 2016 Annual Report You Set a New Record — Over \$190,000 Raised!

Our donors' generosity never ceases to amaze! The grand total for this year is \$191,225, all of which goes to provide tuition assistance to students at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School.

Your support matters because 70% of students at COS qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. That's one of the highest rates for Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese and helps explain why over 90% of families rely on tuition assistance in order to attend.

At Community of Saints, every family pays something, but no one is turned away. Thank you once again for making it possible for us to fulfill that commitment.

PILLAR \$15,000+

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 Marcela Wartman
 Marian Wolters
 Barbara Zimmer

IN HONOR OF

The wonderful Notre Dame nuns
 who taught me at St. Matt's
 Father Steve Adrian
 Mackenzie and Kaylin Clausen
 Sister St. Luke Copeland
 Sister Claudette Hudalla, SSND
 Sister Laverne Hudalla, OSB
 Lannon Family
 Tom and Mary McKeown
 Donna Meyers

WHO ARE COS STUDENTS?**COS Families Are
Members of the
Following Parishes**

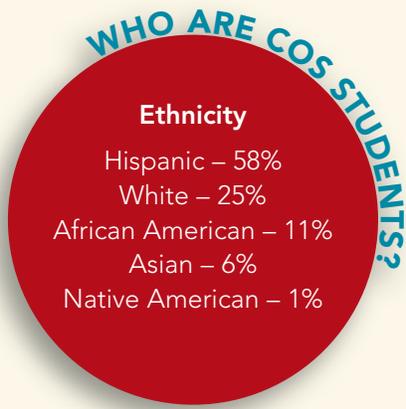
Our Lady of Guadalupe – 30%
 St. Matthew's – 20%
 St. Michael's – 19%
 St. John Vianney – 2%
 Other Catholic Parish – 15%
 Non-Catholic – 13%

Katie Miskowic
 Michael Mooney
 Frank Peters and Family
 Jerry Sexton
 Marie M. (Wiplinger) Sudeith
 Karen (Robinette) Thompson
 Tressell Family
 Allen and Diane Volkenant
 Amanda Weyer

IN MEMORY OF

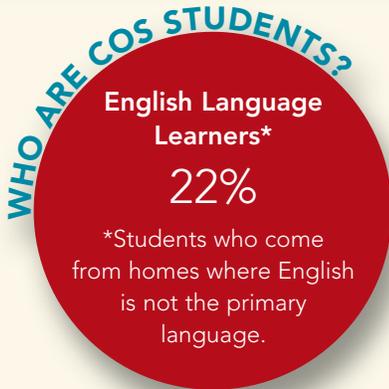
Deceased members of St. Matt's
 Class of 1950
 Josephine Joseph App
 Charles and Brett Barger
 George Becker
 Eleanor Bisciglia
 George L. Bohrer
 Arnold and Susan Brucker
 Edward Buckrey
 Mike and Rose Campa
 Magdalen Corrigan
 Francis and Gertrude Cosgrove
 Hugh Cosgrove
 Patricia Danmeier
 Loy Danner '54
 Ed DeFoe
 Edward and Virginia Deziel
 Thomas N. Doyle '75
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 Dan Yentes
 Rose Youness
 Michelle Youness
 Michael Youness



Honor a Loved One with a Gift in Their Memory

This Christmas, give a gift In Memory of someone in your life who valued the gift of Catholic education. One hundred percent of your donations go to support tuition assistance for students at Community of Saints.

All gifts made by December 31, 2016, will be matched 100% up to \$7,500.



"The school is going to need broad support into the future because of our high need for tuition assistance."

GARY WILMER,
COS SCHOOL BOARD

WEM Foundation Awards \$100,000 to COS Both A&F&F Fundraising and Grants Needed for Financial Stability

The WEM Foundation, founded by retired Cargill CEO and philanthropist Whitney MacMillan, announced that it is giving Community of Saints an unrestricted grant of \$100,000 for each of the next three years. Principal Bridget Kramer expects to use a portion of the funds to cover the school's additional facility costs as it takes full responsibility for maintaining the school building. "It will help us with the transition," Ms. Kramer explained. "We're also looking at investments that will improve the school property and enhance the learning experience."

The gift from the WEM Foundation is one of the largest made this year to a Catholic elementary school in the Archdiocese. COS is one of three Catholic schools to receive the award and the first school east of Minneapolis to ever receive WEM funding.

Contributions Still Needed

For anyone who thinks their contribution isn't needed now because of the WEM Foundation gift, COS board member Gary Wilmer has a message. "We're not on easy street just because we got this grant," he said. "The school is going to need broad support into the future because of our high need for tuition assistance."

Before retiring last year, Mr. Wilmer was the assistant superintendent of Catholic education for the diocese. He knows firsthand the financial challenges schools face and how important it is for them to think ahead. "It's really difficult with the cost of running a school," Mr. Wilmer said. "Most families at COS need significant help with tuition, which makes the challenge even greater."

Mix of Fundraising and Grants Provide Financial Stability

To make sure the school has the resources it needs, COS leadership has deployed a successful strategy that includes fundraising and actively seeking new grants.

This year, Alums & Friends & Families set a new fundraising record for tuition assistance. With 70% of COS students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch, those funds play a critical role in the school's viability.

WEM is one of several foundations committed to Catholic education that have awarded COS with substantial grants this year. Each of the Foundation's cite the school's commitment to making a

high-quality, Catholic education available to all children, without allowing tuition to become a barrier.

School principal Bridget Kramer expressed her gratitude for the WEM Foundation's gift and believes it validates the school's hard work to establish itself as a leader in serving a diverse community. "WEM views us as a good school that could use some extra resources," she said, pointing out that it was a competitive grant. "We were chosen from among all the nonpublic schools in the Twin Cities, both Catholic and private."

WEM's commitment to provide \$300,000 over the next three years gives the school a strong financial foundation. Mr. Wilmer agrees the grant is a major accomplishment but advises against complacency. "We need to be vigilant and plan for the future," he stated. "And we need everyone to continue to support the school as much as possible."

"Community of Saints is a beacon of hope on St. Paul's West Side. The school provides a multi-cultural education experience that meets the unique needs and abilities of each student."

AMY GOLDMAN,
GHR FOUNDATION, CHAIR AND CEO



During Visit, Archbishop Sees School in Action

In October, students and families at Community of Saints got treated to a school Mass led by Archbishop Bernard Hebda. It was the Archbishop's first visit to the school.

COS Principal Bridget Kramer had planned to invite the Archbishop to the school this year, and given the pending changes with St. Michael's Church, the time seemed right.

"We really believe in our mission of serving children," explained Ms. Kramer. "We have a diverse student body, a strong Catholic identity and we wanted the Archbishop to see that for himself."

The Archbishop seemed to revel in the opportunity to engage with the students. During the homily, he walked up and down the church aisles, telling the children about how Pope John XXIII had been called to serve God. Then he asked students what they think God is calling them to do. As hands shot up, the Archbishop called on students who gave answers ranging from doctor to hairdresser, football player to architect. He praised all the responses and went on to say how blessed we all are to have a school that prepares students so well for their future.

Impressed by Math Class that Sings

After Mass, the Archbishop met with the principal, who took him on a tour of the school. At one point, after dropping into the third grade math class, the Archbishop asked students to do a math problem. When it came time for the students to round the answer, the teacher reminded them to sing the rounding song. "It's a rap and all the students were singing and dancing, clearly having a great time," Ms. Kramer said with a smile. "When they

were done, the Archbishop asked them to sing it again so he could record it on his phone. He said he'd never seen a math class where students also got to sing and dance." The Archbishop later shared the video with Ms. Kramer, who posted it on the school's Facebook page.

Ms. Kramer admits she was a little nervous about meeting the Archbishop but once they began walking around the school, she felt very confident. "He got to see how excellent our teachers are, what a positive climate we have and how we're helping students reach their academic potential," explained Ms. Kramer. "We also talked with him about what we've done to get to this point, and all the partners who've helped us."

Engaging Young Minds

The Archbishop listened more than he spoke but he praised the school for its accomplishments. "We need to do all we can to help develop the gifts and potential of each child," he said. "Community of Saints has clearly found a way to do that by engaging young minds."

"The Archbishop has such good energy," Ms. Kramer said. "He is committed to the students and he supports our efforts to provide a quality Catholic education to children regardless of their family's ability to pay. We're very excited about his leadership."

Ms. Kramer also appreciates the Archdiocese's commitment to consult with the school as it makes decisions concerning St. Michael's Church. "We've received strong support from the Archdiocese's leadership and it's clear that our school is valued," observed Ms. Kramer. "They see the importance of us staying where we are and serving this community. That's a good thing for our families."

Students Add Service to Annual School Fundraiser

Every fall, Community of Saints (COS) students participate in the Minnesota Marathon for Nonpublic Education. Over the course of several weeks, students seek sponsors for a walk-a-thon to raise money for the school. Last year, students brought in enough donations to replace the school's aging

playground equipment. Money raised in 2016 will go toward the purchase of 30 new Google Chromebooks.

This year, in addition to fundraising, COS students made community service a part of the event. During the month of October, each class completed a service project that would benefit their immediate neighborhood. Assistant Principal Athena Novack explained the change. "With the Marathon, we're asking people for money to help us. So why

not go out and help others?" she asked. "It's a way the kids can pay it forward."

Thinking about Other People's Needs

A big part of the process was deciding what to do. Students in grades K-8 were asked to come up with some ideas for projects, talk them over and then vote. Projects included picking up trash, raking leaves, writing letters to veterans and sending thank-you cards to police officers.

"The kids had good conversations," Ms. Novack commented. "It really got them to think about other

people's needs and pushed them to come up with specific ways the students could help."

Simple Things Can Make a Difference

The 1st and 5th grade students partnered to make Halloween cards for Meals on Wheels recipients. "I think the importance of what they were doing really sank in when the woman who runs the program came to pick up the cards and thanked the class in person," said 1st grade teacher Sue Maher. "She explained how some people are very lonely and a simple thing like a card can really make their day better."

Their teacher believes the experience gave the 1st graders a strong sense of pride and helped them see that even though they're young, they can make a difference in someone's life. The students plan to continue to volunteer with Meals on Wheels throughout the school year.

And that's the whole point, explained principal, Bridget Kramer. "Service to others is a huge part of the Catholic tradition," she pointed out. "Through service, our students learn how to apply religion in a productive and helpful way. They live out our mission when they serve the community."



1st grade students make Halloween Cards for people who receive Meals on Wheels.



Kindergartners partnered with their 8th grade buddies to go out and pick up trash.



3rd grade class wrote letters and gave treat bags to police officers. Here they are holding hand prints for officers to put on their lockers and high-5 as they go out on duty.



8th graders raked leaves and did yardwork for neighbors who needed help.

**COMMUNITY OF SAINTS
REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

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