

Spring 2015

Upcoming Events:

May

- 14 - Last Day for 8th graders
- 15 - 8th Grade Banquet
- 17 - 8th Grade Graduation
- 18 - Scholarship Winners Announced
- 20 - Omaha Gives
- 21 - Last Day of School

Aug

- 23 - August Rush

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SMS Mission:

"To provide a Catholic education that nurtures students' hearts and minds to become servant leaders in an ever-changing world."



St. Mary's School Alumni Newsletter



December Alumni Event was a Success!

Thank you to all those who attended the Sunday, December 21, 2014 Alumni Event! **66 attended the 12:30pm Mass and reception, including 32 alumni** and of those, **35% of our 65 graduation years were represented!** The Alumni who were there included: Teri (Byrne) Marx ('66), Janet (Cook) Clerc ('67), Debra (Cook) Kettleson ('69), Matt Delaney ('06), Patti (Ferrante) Nastase ('61), Sean Giles ('04), Julie (Grant) Petr ('75), Dean F. Hascall ('68), Christina (Hascall) Legner ('91), Dane' (Huck) Ames ('86), Diane (Hupf)

Lechner ('97), Kevin Hupf ('99), Mike Hupf ('04), Chrissy Hupf ('08), Paula Hupf ('08), Breanna Koch ('04), Katie Kotlik ('00), Terry Loeffler ('58), Larry Ortega ('69), Suzy (Peters) Godwin, Michael Polak ('72), Ben Reckmeyer ('11), Megan Roberts ('08), Alan Swiecicki ('89), Mary Ellen (Vacek) Reckmeyer ('74), Mikaela Schmitz ('12), Michaela Sullivan ('09), Randy Walther ('76), Joey Walther ('14), Don Zurcher ('65), Nancy (Zurcher) Pawloski ('66), and Heather (Zurcher) Kinsey

('87). Former teacher Susan Gold also attended!

A big thanks also goes out to Fr. Denny for presiding at the Mass and to the current school families who helped with the event.

We look forward to having another Mass & reception in Q4 2015, so stay tuned for information! If you'd like to volunteer to help with the event, contact Alumni Relations Chairperson Christina (Hascall) Legner ('91) (see contact info at left).



Photo at left: Some of the Alumni who attended the Sunday, December 21, 2014 mass and reception. Larry Ortega ('69), Mike Hupf ('04), Terry Loeffler ('58), Nancy (Zurcher) Pawloski ('66), Don Zurcher ('65), Heather (Zurcher) Kinsey ('87), Katie Kotlik ('00), Janet (Cook) Clerc ('67), Terri (Byrne) Marx ('66), Paula & Chrissy Hupf ('08), Michaela Sullivan ('09), Dean F. Hascall ('68), Julie (Grant) Petr ('75), Kevin Hupf ('04), Dane' (Huck) Ames ('86), Suzie (Peters) Goodwin, Christina (Hascall) Legner ('91), Michael Polak ('72), Joey Walther ('14), Randy Walther ('76), Debra (Cook) Kettleson ('69), Breanna Koch ('04), Patti (Ferrante) Nastase ('61), Alan Swiecicki ('89).

Photo at right: Some of the Alumni who have children/grandchildren currently at SMS and those students. We currently have 15 alumni—Dane' (Huck) Ames ('86; 4), Cindy (Wessling) Donahue ('80; 1) Sean Giles ('04; 1), Suzy (Peters) Godwin (1); Patrick Kettleson ('95; 1); Breanna Koch ('04; 1); Patrick Kouba ('77; 2); Joanna (Jungers) Lee ('89; 3); Christina (Hascall) Legner ('91; 4); Jennifer (Mayhan) Lillion-Targy ('85; 1); Adrienne (Kibler) McGargill ('85; 1); Mary Ellen (Vacek) Reckmeyer ('74; 1); Alan Swiecicki ('89; 2); Willie Wessling ('87; 3); Janet (Jungers) Yale ('91; 2)—with 28 children at St. Mary's! Ten of those 28 students are also grandchildren of 3 of our alumni (Dean Jungers ('56), Dean F. Hascall ('68), and Debra (Cook) Kettleson ('69))! Will your family be a legacy family? Call the school to enroll your child/grandchild today (see school contact info at left)!



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Class Photos:

For those of you who have been in the school's north hallway off the gym lobby, you've seen the wonderful "St. Mary's Hall of Fame", with class photos from the various graduation classes. We are blessed to have most of them, proudly on display for all to see. We are missing a handful though, so if you have a class photo for one of the years listed below, contact Alumni Relations Chairperson Christina (Hascall) Legner ('91) (contact info on page 1).

1955, 1965, 1967, 1969*, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975

*do have their 7th grade photo

Class Captains:

We would like to identify a "Class Captain" for each of the graduation years. These individuals will help the Alumni Relations Committee communicate with their respective classes and will support Alumni Relations Committee in various capacities as they are available/interested. Please see below for the Class Captains we've secured already. THANKS!! If your graduation year is not listed, that means we have a need for a Class Captain for your class. We'd love to have you volunteer! Contact Alumni Relations Chairperson Christina Legner (contact info on page 1) with questions/interest.

Sarita (Troia) Penka ('63)
Larry Ortega ('69)
Julie (Grant) Petr ('75)
Willie Wessling ('87)
Melissa Renner ('88)
Janet (Jungers) Yale ('91)
Kellee Halliburton ('14)
Lia Rose Reckmeyer ('15)

Alumni Relations-Sponsored Bag Toss Tournament at August Rush!

Who remembers the Columban Fathers Festivals?!?!? Like so many cherished events that sadly fall by the wayside because of lack of volunteers, the Columban Fathers Festivals of old were impacted by that too. We are blessed that the Targy Family has worked so hard to bring the event back! Mark your calendars now for the **3rd Annual St. Mary's August Rush event on Sunday, August 23rd 3pm-8pm on the Columban Fathers grounds!** This year's family-friendly event is set to be a joint-venture between Youth Ministry, School Development, and the Home & School Association (PTA). There will be live music, a beer & wine garden, food, games, and more! Among the games will be an **Alumni Relations-Sponsored Bag Toss Tournament.** Plan to pair up with a classmate or spouse/child/parent/friend. Entry to the August Rush event is free. Entry in the Bag Toss Tournament will be a free will donation. Proceeds will go toward Alumni Scholarships (for the second year in a row the St. Mary's Home & School Association has offered three \$1,000 scholarships and the goal is that eventually the Alumni Community can finance these opportunities ourselves!). The Bag Toss Tournament free will entry fee will start that ball rolling! Contact Alumni Relations Chairperson Christina Legner with questions (contact info on page 1), to enter the tournament or to volunteer for the event. Spread the word and be sure to attend!!

The Cook's - A St. Mary's Family Yesterday & Today!



If you have any history with St. Mary's, chances are you know the **Cook family**. You either went to school with one of the **12 children of Bob & Mary Ann** or attended with one of their numerous **grandchildren (18 of whom graduated from St. Mary's)**. You also probably remember Mrs. Cook as well. She worked at the school as a Teacher's Aide for almost two decades and always had a big smile for all the students. We are blessed to have **30 of the Cook clan**—which includes the Pearce, Clerc, Kettleson, and Brown families too—as **St. Mary's graduates** and a handful of others who did attend for some of their elementary school years. Currently there is even a **great-granddaughter in Pre-K this school year!** St. Mary's parish and school, as well as the City of Bellevue, have been blessed by the Cook's over the years. Many have said they are one of the best examples of family unity, love, and devotion that any of us have been fortunate enough to witness. Mrs. Cook passed away in 2008 and in January of this year Mr. Cook joined her in heaven. For the last several years the family was able to share responsibilities to help care for Mr. Cook in his home and it was a beautiful thing to see. Let's hear it for the Cook Family, a St. Mary's School Family yesterday and today!

Cook Family St. Mary's graduates: Rosanne (Cook) Stangl ('65), Kathy (Cook) Pearce ('66), Janet (Cook) Clerc ('67), Debbie (Cook) Kettleson ('69), Steve Cook ('70), Paul Cook ('72), Doug Cook ('73), Mary (Cook) Zoucha ('75), Edel Cook ('76), James Cook ('78), William Cook ('79), John Cook ('81), Bobby Pearce ('88), Heather Pearce ('91), Jami (Brown) Byrd ('94), Patrick Kettleson ('95), Billy Pearce ('95), Doug Pearce ('96), Jeri (Brown) Remmen ('97), Paula (Brown) Phillips ('98), Christine Clerc ('00), Amanda Cook ('02), Alicia Kettleson ('02), Jackie Clerc ('03), Kristen Cook ('04), Sean Clerc ('05), Emily (Cook) Sisco ('06), Patrick Cook ('08), Michael Cook ('10), Laura Cook ('11), and Addison Kettleson (2024!)

Congratulations Larry ('69) & Jackie Ortega - Heart of Mary

The St. Mary's Heart of Mary Award is presented to an **outstanding individual or couple who have made significant contributions to St. Mary's School.** The annual award is given to the individual/couple at the "Spring for the Children" Benefit Auction. At this year's March 28th event, Larry ('69) and Jackie Ortega receive the 2015 SMS Heart of Mary Award. The Ortega's currently chair the St. Mary's School Development Committee, as well as its Adopt-A-Student Program and Marketing/Recruitment subcommittees; help with the Benefit Auction and fireworks stand; serve as EHMC (Jackie) and lector (Larry); are active members of various groups (Scouts (Larry), Knights of Columbus (Larry), and MOMS (Jackie)), and much more. They lead by example and are inspiring!

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Survey Responses:

THANK YOU to the 15 of you who responded to the survey that was included in the Fall 2014 Alumni Newsletter.

Below are some of the responses to #8 "Favorite St. Mary's Memory":

"Going to church every morning. Hot lunch once a month. The nuns..." -Debra (Cook) Kettleison ('69)

"2008 Spring Musical - I had a solo and I played Jesus..." - Patrick Cook ('08)

"Recess - building snow forts along the fence." -Jennifer (Everett) Elman ('77)

"8th grade banquet." -Sean Giles ('04)

"Graduation" -Shane Giles ('08)

"Hot lunches in the church basement once a month. The giant school carnivals." -Julie (Grant) Petr ('75)

"...Spring programs/musicals....the middle schoolers participated in...Every year was something new and different, but they were all a blast." -Ben Reckmeyer ('11)

"8th grade banquet." -Christine Redding-Wagner ('83)

"...Cheerleading at basketball games. First Communion at the base chapel. May Crownings." -Sarita (Troia) Penka ('63)

"May Day celebrations" -James Vacek ('65)

"...volleyball team was started...when I was in the 7th grade...great to be part of something new..." -Mary Ellen (Vacek) Reckmeyer ('74)

"close friendships" -Mary Pat (Zurcher) Luvison ('68)

"May Crowning and Confirmation" -Mary (Hascall) Tyner ('66)

Survey is still printable from the school website (Alumni page, in Fall 2014 newsletter.

Teacher Spotlights

Miss Peg Kallman - Music, Drama, Algebra



Years Teaching: 15 years (all at St. Mary's School - and parishioner for 42 years, cantor for 38 of them!)

Family: One of Mike (deceased) and Jacquie Kallman's 12 children. Has lived in Bellevue since 1973 after dad retired here from the US Army. At least 6 of the Kallman kids (and dad) have been teachers at some time or another and one of the sisters is Principal at Christo Rey High School in Kansas City, MO. All of her siblings work in jobs that serve others: lawyer, vet, pharmacist, meteorologist, teacher, principal, consultant, CPA, project manager, etc.

What she enjoys most about teaching: "I enjoy the spark in someone's eye when they understand something they did not before - that "Aha!" moment when a student learns something new and can explain it to another person."

Why she chooses to teach at a Catholic School: "I choose to teach at a Catholic school because I enjoy being able to make connections with our faith and what we are learning. I appreciate the opportunity to share my faith and especially my love for the ministry of singing at church."

What sets St. Mary's apart from other schools: "Our school has the feel of a family. We care about and for each other. The teachers all work together to create a learning environment that is nurturing to students' minds and hearts as our mission statement says. We believe in our students and each other and help each other whenever we can to promote the education of the whole person. We share ideas and prayer together, and we collaborate to make the overall vision of our school a reality. The teachers want to be here - and so we are!"

Miss Carol Sheridan - 8th Grade Homeroom & Religion; Middle School Language Arts & Literature



Years Teaching: 32 years (last 12 at St. Mary's School)

Family: Blessed with four siblings and their spouses; fourteen amazing nieces and nephews; and ten great nieces and nephews. These people are her greatest joy. And they love her!

What she enjoys most about teaching: "I love teaching for a number of reasons, but probably the most rewarding thing is to see students grow in their love for reading."

Why she chooses to teach at a Catholic School: "I chose to teach in a Catholic school because my faith has always been important to me. I was raised in Catholic schools, and it just seems like home to me. I love being able to share my faith throughout the day with students."

What sets St. Mary's apart from other schools: "St. Mary's has incredible families. The support I have received by students and parents has been tremendous. I look forward to working with the students each day. Thank you for the opportunity to grow as a teacher and a Catholic at St. Mary's."

Thank You & Best Wishes to Faculty Retiring/Moving

We will be saying good-bye to the following St. Mary's School faculty/staff at the end of this 2014-2015 school year: **Mrs. Cheryl Castle** (Principal; event planning), **Mrs. Becky Feagan** (4th grade; retiring), **Mrs. Michelle Middendorf** (Kindergarten; moving to Oklahoma), and **Mrs. Linda Sweeting** (Computer/Technology; moving to Florida)! We thank them for their years of service at St. Mary's and wish them all well on their next adventures! We look forward to welcoming their successors to our amazing school!

A Great School Then, An Even Better School Now!

You can read about all of these in **more detail on our website**, but here's just a sampling of some really cool stuff that's been going on at St. Mary's...two teams compete in St. Vincent de Paul hosted Book Bowl on 2/6 and they place 1st & 3rd; 3rd annual Chess Tournament was held 3/21; Koch Foundation gave \$10K to the Adopt-A-Student program; Gym Mural was dedicated on 3/27 and artist Kaitlyn Embury ('04) and donor Dr. Charmaine Ortega ('71) were present; 1st annual Wits Clash was held 4/11; 6th & 7th graders have Science Fair; Cornhusker Motor Club Foundation awarded \$500 for library; 7th graders dissected starfish; and much more! Don't miss out! Have your family's St. Mary's story continue. **Enroll your child/grandchild today and spread the word to other families. St. Mary's is a place to awaken greatness in a child!**

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Prayer of St. Francis:

*Lord, make me an instrument of
Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow
love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, Grant that I may
not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to
understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are
pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life.*

Stewardship - Time, Talent, & Treasure

Benefit Auction March 28th - Thanks for everyone's help to raise \$94K+!

The 21st Annual "Spring for the Children" Benefit Auction was held Saturday, March 28, 2015 at the Livestock Exchange Building in South Omaha. There were **~20 alumni in attendance**. We also had alumni purchase raffle tickets in response to the letter that was sent out in March.

THANK YOU! Everyone's efforts helped raise \$94,618.48 (net/profit) for our beloved school! Save the date for **next year's event, Saturday, April 9, 2016** at the Livestock Exchange Building. General Co-Chairs for next year's event will be returning couples Ed & Joanna (Jungers) Lee ('89) and Brian & Bernadette Miller. Kati Wilwerding has joined the Auction 2016 leadership team.

Adopt-A-Student (AAS) - Help Educate OUR Tomorrow - Envelope Enclosed

St. Mary's School's commitment to prepare Christian Leaders for the community through academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment is as strong as ever. Some cannot afford a Catholic education, but we believe every child should have the opportunity to receive one. In the 2014-2015 school year, 23 of our families (42 children/20% of our students), were in critical need above and beyond what is received through the St. Mary's Tuition Assistance Program. **YOUR gift can help bridge the gap** and assure a great Catholic education for those in need. **No gift is too small. YOU can make a difference! See donation envelope included in this mailing.**

Omaha Gives! - Give to St. Mary's on May 20th!

Omaha Gives! is an annual 24-hour charitable challenge to benefit metro-area nonprofit organizations. This community give-together begins at **midnight on May 20, 2015 with a minimum gift of only \$10!** You can even **schedule your gift starting May 1st**. Set a reminder, mark it on your calendar, and/or tie a string around your finger! Give and encourage others to do the same! Go to <https://www.omahagives24.org/>, find St. Mary's, and give! Watch your email to find out how you can multiply your gift with matching donors. Contact Christina Legner (see page 1 for contact info) to ensure your email address is in our alumni database.

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