End of Year Challenge!

Every donation to A&F&F Tuition Assistance Fund will be matched dollar-for-dollar through December 31, 2018.

This Christmas give a gift to honor someone who values Catholic education. See page 7 for details.

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COS Starts Year with 10% More Students and a New Board of Directors

Community of Saints is on a roll. Student enrollment is up 10% this year, the third consecutive year it’s risen. Contributions for A&F&F’s tuition assistance increased by a phenomenal 28% in 2017-18 (see page 4 for annual report). Capping off these gains is the installment of a new Board of Directors (BOD) whose 12 members bring a wealth of expertise and community leadership to govern the school.

The new Board is part of an initiative supported by the Healey Foundation, a national foundation based in New Jersey, which is dedicated to ensuring the future of Catholic schools. COS was one of a handful of schools in the Archdiocese singled out to receive funding and professional support from Healey with the goal of implementing best practices, achieving sustainable growth, and laying the groundwork for long-term success. “COS had everything we were looking for,” said Lisa Anderson with the Healey Foundation. “They have strong leadership, drive, enthusiasm, and the willingness to truly make changes that will help them keep moving forward.”

Continued on page 10
Dear Alums, Friends and Families of Community of Saints,

Once again this year COS has an enrollment increase of 10%; new families have come to choose COS as a partner in the education of their children. You are what makes it possible for low and moderate income families to choose a high-quality Catholic education for their children. Your generosity makes tuition manageable for these families.

COS has a great faculty and a strong administration. They are committed to students, they get to know students as “family,” they see their work, not as a job, but as a vocation.

For the past 50 years I have had the privilege of being a parish priest living and serving in inner urban Twin Cities Catholic communities. In each of those years I was blessed to be integrally involved in the life of a Catholic school.

I chose to become a priest because I wanted to do something that would make a difference in the life of a community and in the lives of families. What I learned was that Catholic schools are anchors of neighborhood communities and they are “institutes of evangelization” — places where young people are educated to live the love of God in their daily lives. I learned that Catholic schools do make a difference. I learned that Catholic schools save and change lives. I found how to spend some of my energy in a way that would make a difference in the life of a community and the lives of families.

I am deeply grateful to God for the gift of being able to use my talents and energy in support of Catholic education. I am very grateful to you. You make the work of Catholic education possible because of your generosity — without you COS would not be.

In gratitude,

Father Steve Adrian
Pastor, Community of Saints
You Can Honor Fr. Steve by Supporting Catholic Education

Fr. Steve’s commitment to Catholic education began with his first assignment in 1968 at Incarnation Parish in Minneapolis where he was also associated with Regina High School. During his 34 years at St. Matthew’s he not only directed the education programs on campus but was also involved with Archbishop Brady High School. His commitment and devotion to Catholic education fueled his participation in the formation of Community of Saints Regional Catholic School in 2012 and continues today as he serves as its pastor. The Stephen J. Adrian Education Fund in support of Community of Saints Regional Catholic School is a fitting tribute to this grand tradition.

Please consider supporting Fr. Steve’s mission of Catholic education by making a special donation in his honor. Your tax deductible gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar by a group of generous, long-time friends of Fr. Steve. Make checks payable to: The Stephen J. Adrian Education Fund. Send to: Community of Saints Regional Catholic School, 335 Hurley St. E., West St. Paul, MN 55118. Donations online are welcome at http://www.communityofsaints.org/aff.
Alums & Friends & Families 2018 Annual Report

Record Breaking $275,827 Raised from 524 Donors

As COS enrollment has risen, so has your support for tuition assistance. Your generosity resulted in a 28% increase in giving this year. Since 90% of COS families rely on tuition assistance from A&F&F, your contributions are more important than ever. As one of our committee members said recently, “This money isn’t icing on the cake. We still need money to make the cake.”

We do want to stop and acknowledge the always impressive philanthropy of our contributors. Your largesse on behalf of COS students is inspiring. Simply put, the school would not exist without it.

Since 2007, you've helped keep a promise that tuition will not be a barrier to any family seeking a Catholic education for their child. At Community of Saints, every family pays something, but no one is ever turned away.

Thank you for your continued support.

2017-2018 Donors

PILLAR ($15,000+)
Roy and JoAnn Ferber
Tom McKeown and Mary Cullen McKeown
Josette Salah / St. Anthony of Padua's Friends

PACESETTER ($10,000-$14,999)
Carlo and Virginia LaManna
Larry McGough

LEADER ($5,000-$9,999)
Anonymous
Susan and Tony Alleva
Boss Foundation
John Curran
Janeice and David Hodgson
De Lisle
William and Bonita Frels
Kent Family Charitable Trust
Phil Paquette
John Riehle
Allen and Diane Volkenant

EDUCATOR ($2,500-$4,999)
Fr. Steve Adrian
Richard Cates
Jacqueline Cosgrove
Joseph and Doreen Cullen
Herregan Distributors
David Koenen
James and Jan Kunz
Thomas and Mary O'Neill
Daniel Schadegg
Deborah Sundquist

SUSTAINER ($1,000-$2,499)
Anonymous (3)
Frank Brewer
Audrey Brucker
Fred Commers
Norbert and Mary Ellen Conzemius

Norial and Mary Ellen Conzemius Fund of the Catholic Community Foundation
Mary Kay and Michael Cooney
Hugh and Melissa Cullen
Thomas J. Doyle
Carol and Lawrence Engelmann
John B. (Jack) Ferber
Elizabeth French
Jean Froehle
John and Shirley Haney
Francis J. Jacobs
Steve Karbon and Eileen McMahon
Tom and Cynthia Kleckatsky
George Kronschnabel
Krisy and Doug Lieber
Mary Ellen Malone
Fr. John Malone
Mark Miller and Anne Cullen Miller
Marjorie Mountain
John and Jane Perkovich
Thomas and Sandra Reding
Patricia Rolewicz
Tom Rolewicz Jr.
Leonard Schmidt
Jerry and Marilyn Sexton
Eugene Sitzmann
Michael Smiley
Bill Szaiba
James Wicker
Yvonne Wilhelm

BENEFACCTOR ($250-$499)
Roberta Barger
James and Arlene Barnhart
Jeffrey Barthe
Roger Beaubien
Theresa Bock
Mary Sue Brass
Peter Butler
Stephen and Ellen Casey
Cerenity Care Center
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Judith and Dale DeBlieck
Mark Del Vecchio
Richard Dunn and Margaret Lee
Gail Einhorn
Daniel Gangl
Catherine and Steve Garvey
Jim and Tedi Gesell
Gary and Kathy Groettum
Elizabeth Grundner
William and Joyce Herzog
Patricia Holmes
Thomas Kabesh
Sharon Koran
Mary Ann Kosel
Bettie L. Kunik
Christine L'Allier

PATRON ($100-$249)
Eric Abraham
Francine Anderson
Elizabeth and William Arend
Marlyn Bach
Elaine Bache
Steven and Nancy Bade
Monica Bahls
Bank Cherokee
Bob Bejblik
Beth and Tim Bellon
Edward and Kathleen Benoe

John P. Lang
George C. and Carol Lang
Ernie Maier
Chuck McBeain
Donna and Peter McCarthy
Roger Newmaster
Mary Ann Ogden
Mary K. Orme
Steve and Vicky Orme
John and Ann Piepel
Barbara Rau
Mary Rogers
J. Michael and Carol Schneider
Tony Sitzmann
Thomas Smith
Russ Sudeith
Robert and Barbara Verstraete
Terrance Votel
Mary Walsh
Toni Wilburn
Peter Willems
Gifts Given to Honor Frederick Commers (1936–2018)

“People Never Knew How Generous He Was”

Fred Commers was the quintessential St. Paul Catholic. He attended St. Mark’s grade school, went on to Saint Thomas Academy, and then earned a degree from St. Thomas College. Afterwards, he went into the family business, Commers Interior, which he combined with a successful career in commercial real estate.

Despite his achievements, Fred’s family and friends describe a man whose modesty masked a big-hearted approach to giving. “People never knew how generous he was towards so many different causes,” reported his sister Annette (Commers) Patient.

For years Annette served as the volunteer librarian at St. Matthew’s, a role she currently fills at COS. Fred also loved books, and Annette remembers when he learned about her work at St. Matt’s, he told her to go to The Red Balloon Bookstore and buy whatever she needed; he would pick up the tab. “Fred believed that reading was the basis for everything,” Annette explained. “He knew the school operated on a shoestring, and this was just one way he chose to help.”

Fred was also a generous contributor to A&F&F’s tuition assistance fund from the earliest days. In its first year, when the fledgling committee was just beginning to raise money for what seemed like an impossible goal, Fred and his wife Molly made one of the largest contributions, giving the group real momentum.

Friend and A&F&F committee member, Tom McKeown, wasn’t surprised. “When Fred gave that money, it was his way of advocating for the school,” Tom said. “He didn’t give a big speech, he just did it.”

Fred died peacefully on May 30, surrounded by his three sons, Chris, Tim, and Steven.

Thank you to Fred Commers’ family and friends for their generous contribution of $4,530 in his memory. In honoring Fred, you’ve shared the gift of Catholic education.
Sr. Pat DeBlieck grew up on a small farm in southwestern Minnesota and expected to become a wife and mother. That changed during her freshman year at the College of St. Catherine, when after hearing a sermon, she decided to dedicate her life to God. She joined the Sisters of St. Joseph, became a nurse and midwife, and spent decades providing health care to indigent women and children along the U.S.–Mexico border in Texas. In one of the poorest areas in the country, she routinely treated up to 80 pregnant women a day and delivered as many as 100 babies in a single day.

After she’d been diagnosed with terminal cancer, Sr. Pat’s family wanted to honor her in some way. When her cousin, Dale DeBlieck asked, Sr. Pat requested that contributions be made in her memory to support tuition assistance for students at Community of Saints.

Dale enlisted the help of his sister-in-law, Brenda DeBlieck, who got busy sending out letters. “We gathered names from an earlier family reunion and invited everyone to honor Sr. Pat by making a donation to the school,” Brenda explained. They also reached out to Sr. Pat’s former classmates, neighbors, and friends. “People stuck a little cash or a generous check in an envelope and sent it in, sometimes with a nice note,” Brenda said. “It was really heartwarming.”

Family members remember Sr. Pat as cheerful and humble. “She had a wonderful spirit,” Brenda recalled. “Even at the end, she would ask about others, never thinking of herself.”

Sr. Patricia DeBlieck died peacefully on July 30 at the Carondelet Center on the St. Catherine University campus where she first discovered her vocation.

Gifts Given to Honor Sr. Patricia DeBlieck, CSJ (1938–2018)

“The School Had a Special Place in Her Heart”
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

Your contribution is tax deductible and all gifts made by December 31, 2018, will be matched 100% up to $7,500.
ANNUAL report

TRIBUTES IN MEMORY OF, continued
Janice Ferber
Leona and Kevin Bretschel
Joe and Carol Gabriel
John Gabriel
George and Yvonne Gangl
Thomas W. Geng
Deceased members of the George family
John, Sadie, Theresa and Gerard George
Russell M. Gesell
Vern W. Gloskowski
Goin family
Erlinda (Campa) Gustafson
Gerard Gutzmann
Greg Haller
Carolyn Anderson Hamblin
Bernice O’Connor Hambrick
John and Elvira Hanson
Louise Heinrich
Robert Holmes
Catherine Jacobs
Gregory Jenniges
Audley and Lucy Jones
Ray Jones
Tom Kaliszewski
Rolly Karels
Elaine Marie Kegler
Hank Koenen
Mary and Ed L’Allier
Harry and Kay Lauen family
Bernard and Genevieve Lotzer
Jerome M. Mandel
Joseph and Theresa Marthaler
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McKane
Gerald Mikkalson
Joanne Miller
Jane Murphy
Deacon John Murphy
John Nafus
John Neff family
Margaret, Harry and Marlene Newmaster
Fr. John O’Neill
Vangeline Ortega
Marian Osendorf
Ann Palumbo
Anthony and Ann Palumbo
Robert and Edel Ruth Pavlak
Carl and Delina Petschauer
Jerome Pietruszewski
Lynne Pietruszewski
Sr. Edwina Raymond, CSJ
Bill J. and Cel Rindfleisch
Rob Romero
Larry Ryan
Josette Salah
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Richard Shields
Louis and Inez Sitzmann
Theodore Snyder
Teresa Sports
Bob and Jeanne Stadt
Agnes Stefaniak
Pamela, Robert Sr., and Lucille Stickler
Randy and Steve Straus
Steve Stremski
James Super
Charles and Vicky Thomas
Eileen Trei
Alvin and Dorothy Valerius
Joseph P. Van Guilder
Ann Marie Walker
Leonard and Catherine Weegman
Don Weigenant
Amanda Weyer
Christopher and Lena Willems
Herman Wolters
Yoda and Tonka
James Abraham Youness

2017 Give to the Max Day

We raised $12,850 on Give to the Max Day in 2017.
Donations support our Student Experience Fund which focused on health and wellness in 2017-18.
Anonymous (4)
Elizabeth and William Arend
Karen and Dan Boden
Andrew and Jean Clausen
Gregory and Cheryl Gosgrove
Jon and Joan Deluney
Robert White and Argerie Diaz-White
Richard Dunn and Margaret Lee
JoEllen Flak
Cathy Goaley
Mary Grady
Emily Gulbranson
Mary Ellen Gutzmann
Mary Ellen Gutzmann
Michael Johnson
Fr. Kevin Kenney
Thomas and Ruth King
Jim Korman
Christopher and Annmarie Kraker
Bridget Kramer
Mike Kramer
Julie Kuzi
Jackie Lackner
Krissy and Doug Lieser
Mary Clare Luckjohn
Stephen and Teresa McCurdy
Terry and Bebe McTeague
Nikki Miller
Marge and Wayne Milner
Katie Miskovic
Lynn Miskovic
Barb and Jeffrey Moore
Joel and Meghan Moore
Jessica Morales
Denise Muske
Janet Odalen

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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.

Susan and Tony Alleva
Victoria Baker
Patricia Blaskie
Alice Bobick
Mary Sue Brass
Corinne and William Brengman
Vivian Byers
Clement and Molly Commers
Hugh and Melissa Cullen
Joseph and Doreen Cullen
John Curran
Timothy Dalzell
Mark Del Vecchio
Carol and Lawrence Engelman
Mary Jane Ferber
Roy and JoAnn Ferber
William and Bonita Frels
Elizabeth French
Jean Froehle
Robert Hinze
Patricia Holmes
David and Mary Hottinger
Fr. Bradley Jenniges, OSB
Thomas Kabesh
Steve Karbon and Eileen McMahon
Mary Ann Kostel
James and Jan Kunz
Joseph Mansur
Tom and Mary Cullen McKeown
Thomas and Mary O’Neill
Pat Palmer
Margarita Probst

John Riehle
Mary Ann Roscoe
Josette Salah / St. Anthony of Padua Friends
Christopher Schletty
Carol Schreiner
Corinne Schuster
Jerry and Marilyn Sexton
Eugene Sitzmann
Tony Sitzmann
Georgene M. Sorenson
Dorothy Turcotte-Tait
Michael Vasterling
Terrance Votel
Peter Willems
COS Student Featured at Aim Higher Gala

COS seventh grade student, Isaac Garcia, was the Aim Higher Scholar featured at the 6th annual Night of Light. The Aim Higher Foundation was established in 2011 to provide tuition-assistance scholarships to students seeking to attend Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese. The Night of Light is the organization’s primary annual fundraising event.

“The event is the perfect opportunity to show our donors, supporters, and friends the impact a scholarship can have on a child’s life,” explained Jean Houghton, president of the foundation. “When children can access the life-changing benefits of a school like Community of Saints, their God-given talents flourish.”

Every year, the Night of Light highlights schools and students from the 83 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Isaac was chosen in recognition for his volunteer work on behalf of the homeless people in his neighborhood. Isaac’s story was featured in the Spring 2018 issue of The Good News.

The invitation, while an honor, is one that would strike terror into the hearts of many adults, since it involves giving a three-minute speech in front of an audience of 500–600 people. But Isaac handled it like a pro. “Isaac was completely poised. He wowed the crowd not only with his words, but with his maturity,” reported Houghton. “He received three standing ovations during his speech. More importantly, however, he made his family and his school proud.”

The Foundation made a video about Isaac for the event. You can view it by going to COS’s website at http://www.communityofSaints.org and clicking on the link.
COS Starts Year with More Students and a New Board of Directors, continued from page 1

COS’s new BOD brings a valuable knowledge base in areas such as marketing, development, finance, and facilities, as well as strong connections to the community. While school advisory councils are common, COS is one of only a few Catholic elementary schools with a Board that has governance authority.

The Board is chaired by Melinda Frias, a St. Michael’s alum and school parent, who works for Thomson Reuters in marketing technology. “The role of the Board is to help provide form and focus for the vision of the school,” Melinda explained. “We have a very close partnership with the school leadership. Our responsibility is to help crystalize how we live our mission and define how we are accountable.”

After the Board began meeting in February, its first action was to take a closer look at the school’s mission, vision and values. “We really wanted to hone in on our identity, what we offer and what the school stands for,” said Melinda as she described a six-week process of discernment.

In the end, the BOD decided what sets COS apart is a unique blend of faith, inclusivity, and love. “We are committed to creating a school where every student knows they are welcome and has a sense of belonging. The education piece is very important,” Melinda points out. “But before you can engage a student academically, they have to feel like they belong. That sense of belonging can make or break the learning experience.”

Principal Bridget Kramer agrees and welcomes a governance structure which allows her more time to focus on improving education outcomes for COS students. Bridget ticks off a list of areas where the BOD has taken the lead. “Board members with marketing expertise are helping us design a new website. Board members in banking and finance are helping us keep our fiscal house in order. The Board negotiated and signed off on the school’s 20-year lease, and when the school needed a new boiler, the Board played a central role in getting it financed, purchased, and installed.”

Assembling a BOD with the necessary acumen is central to the Healey Foundation’s methodology, which seeks to update the traditional Catholic school model. “We can’t expect principals to do everything and be experts in all these areas,” Lisa Anderson pointed out. “Under Community of Saint’s new governance structure, the Board can formulate and enact policy and assumes financial accountability. They evaluate the principal, but don’t get involved with education decisions. As the Canonical Advisor, Fr. Steve has jurisdiction over the school’s Catholic identity. The Board provides leadership everywhere else.”

COS Plays a Special Role in Educating Students

As a first generation immigrant, Melinda is a strong advocate for the special role COS plays in educating students who are often overlooked and undervalued. “My parents had a lot of jobs before becoming small business owners,” she observed. “They worked hard and focused on giving their kids a better life. My appreciation for the obstacles they overcame are part of what drives me to support COS.”

Melinda is also motivated by a future she envisions for her young daughters. She recounts an experience she had representing Thompson Reuters at a business leadership conference. “It was a large gathering of leaders and I noticed there wasn’t a lot of diversity. I also noticed that the people who looked like me were the service people. That bothered me,” she confessed. “Someday when my daughters are in their careers, I don’t want them to feel that they are alone in the room. I want them to have a sense of belonging. That’s really at the heart of the school’s mission of faith-based education. Our students can advance academically with confidence. They’ll know they belong. That’s what I’m excited about.”
NEW BOARD TAKES ON PROJECT

School Wars Up with a New Boiler

When Community of Saints Board of Directors held their first meeting last February, one of the items on the agenda was the school’s failing boiler. Everyone knew it would have to be replaced before the next winter. A committee was formed to address the problem.

One of the Board members involved on the project was Phil Boelter. As a financial consultant with the non-profit Catholic Finance Corporation, Phil has years of experience helping Catholic schools and parishes access necessary resources and reduce the overall costs of financing capital expenditures.

Phil helped COS navigate the process of securing a loan from the Catholic Finance Corporation (CFC). “Community of Saints was well qualified for the loan based on their success in retaining students and raising funds,” stated Phil. “We have a 20-year lease so it’s a 20-year loan. But the expectation is that we’ll pay that off early with some dedicated fundraisers.”

Phil brings to the COS Board an uncommon mix of experiences, that blends a career in banking and finance with a Masters of Divinity degree. His accountant-like professionalism masks a deep commitment to the faith communities he serves, especially evident when he talks about his role at COS. “It’s such a blessing to be able to work with a community that is so supportive of its students and so fully aware of its Catholic mission.”
Calling all graduates from St. Michael’s, St. Matthew’s, St. John Vianney, and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Everyone is welcome on Reunion Sunday! We have a special call out to members of the class of 1969 who will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary this Spring. Don’t miss the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and former classmates.

For more information, contact Doug Lieser at DLieser@communityofsaints.org or call the school at 651-457-2510.

Pictured above is Sr. Mary Laurence with her 6th grade class in 1948.