

# CRUSADER UPDATE

Alumni, Development & School News

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

JAN. 29 - FEB. 2



## CELEBRATING CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN A BIG WAY



Catholic Schools Week was January 29 through February 2, 2024. Throughout the week, students, faculty, and staff celebrated Catholic education in the U.S. Events were held daily to observe what has become an annual tradition in our school.

- Monday: The week started with the Faculty Day of Prayer.
- Tuesday: Mass was in the Chapel followed by donuts in the lobby.

- Wednesday: Students participated in a Living Rosary.
- Thursday: All Day Adoration and the students wrote notes of support to our local clergy and seminarians.

- Friday: Mass was held with Bishop Hanefeldt.

The students did a great job participating and growing their faith.



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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES

Spring is in the air, and it's always a great time for new beginnings and to celebrate the blessings in our lives. The Grand Island Central Catholic Development Foundation has been a part of so many great efforts to make our school grow. This past year, we've seen the construction of a long-lived dream of an elementary school that is now a reality. The middle and high school have seen needed improvements of the cafeteria and kitchen, and we are continuously raising funds for the academic, spiritual, and emotional needs of our students.

The past few months have been focused on the details of the elementary school project and preparations for the May 2 Go Big GIVE fundraising event. We are proud to have raised more than \$9 million for the construction of the elementary school and we are continuing to raise funds for the start-up costs, playground equipment, and school's endowment. We're seeing more and more of the building every day and I cannot wait to hear the elementary children learning, playing, and growing in our halls next year.

The May 2 Go Big GIVE event is an online 24-hour fundraising event that helps us reach our fundraising goals. The \$75,000 goal helps us purchase Chromebooks for all Crusaders, improve our curriculum, and provide tuition assistance. We ask that you join us on May 2 for a day of giving.

I am grateful to have been able to spend more quality time with my family. It's during these times that my faith grows and I am reminded of the impact Grand Island Central Catholic has on so many families, and I am forever grateful. We could not do what we do without your support and the blessing of God.

Many Blessings,  
**JOLENE M. WOJCIK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



## A WORD FROM OUR ASST. PRINCIPAL

We continue to count our blessings with all of the wonderful things happening at our school. There's been plenty of changes from something that seems minor as painting our classrooms to opening up a new elementary school. But what remains constant is our students roaming the hallways, teachers filling young minds with knowledge, support staff doing what they do best, administrators offering support as needed, coaches developing our student-athletes, and parents advocating for GICC. Our school is also filled with memories of alumni along with the stories and legacies they leave behind.

Just like many on our staff, I wear many hats that include cross country coach, track coach, and Future Business Leaders of America adviser. Although I miss my time as a classroom teacher, I'm blessed to still have these opportunities to work with our students in various capacities. As the FBLA adviser, I have the privilege of working with students that make up our chapter Leadership Team. FBLA is a national student organization for students who are interested in any type of business or business education careers, or if they are unsure of a career path. Benefits of this group include: leadership development, career preparation, community service, networking with business and community leaders, and participation in competitions. These students gain valuable leadership skills that will continue to benefit them as they go through life beyond our school. I'm proud to be a Crusader and the continued success of our Crusader family!

Sincerely,  
**PHOU MANIVONG, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**



# CENTRAL CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Update*



The elementary school just marked its one year of progress and construction will be completed in the next few months. What was a blank slate, now looks like a school with classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and more. The exterior of the school is so close to completion with siding and preparation for the playground. Soon, we won't be able to tell the difference between the architectural rendering and the completed school.

But the building wouldn't be a school without the people. We have filled all our elementary teacher positions for now and look forward to seeing Mrs. Sarah Nordhues as Principal. Families are registering their students for school and spots are filling up. Enrollment will be capped at a certain point to ensure classrooms will have less than 25 students per class, and less than 20 students in each of the kindergarten classes. These educators are ready to welcome our future students where children will receive a well-rounded education filled with recess, art, music, P.E., and a wholesome faith-filled curriculum.

This is all possible because of our support. Families, parishioners, foundations, and business have all made the construction of this possible. We continue our efforts to raise funds for our endowment. The purpose of the endowment is to provide financial support to the elementary school to ensure its future. It will also serve to honor Bishop James Golka for his work and influence during his 25 years of service in the Diocese of Grand Island.

You can mail donations to the Central Catholic Development Foundation Office, 1200 Ruby Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803. Or you can complete a pledge by visiting us at [www.gicc.org/elementary-school.html](http://www.gicc.org/elementary-school.html).



*The main entrance is nearly complete with the wall paneling. A cross will be added to welcome students as they enter the building.*

*Classrooms have cabinetry, whiteboards, and lighting. The floors are being prepped for carpet, followed by furniture.*

*The pavement for the basketball court has been poured near the parking lot. The playground area is being prepped for equipment.*

# GRAND ISLAND CENTRAL CATHOLIC CLASS OF 1973

By Cathy Howard

I was hoping to lose 20 pounds before my high school reunion. But it turns out I'm tired.

So now, having given up all hope of a leaner, meaner version of my 68-year-old self, I sit in the lobby of Grand Island Central Catholic. Not only was I a student in this old school, but I've also been a teacher for 47 years. In truth I've never lived anywhere in my life as long as I've lived at GICC. On this warm September afternoon I'm waiting for my visiting classmates to arrive for a tour of their alma mater.

It occurs to me that not once in this last half century have I ever sat by myself in the lobby all alone - never. Not a single soul but me inhabits the building right now, and it's very peaceful. Occasionally during the school day as I walk through the empty old gym, I've laughed aloud at a flash back of my classmate Ron Ziller. The kid could push a mop across the gym floor in perfect imitation of Harry, our old janitor. It killed us every time.

But this is different. Much has changed in 50 years. The once dark lobby is now bright and welcoming. At one end of the hall is the magnificent new gym and a just-renovated cafeteria. At the other are the newer library and offices. Beyond that is the construction site of our brand spanking new grade school scheduled to open next fall. But the original floor is still here. I study the scuffed old tile thinking of all the times my classmates and I ambled across it on our way to class talking and laughing and joking. GICC is home to me.

At last I see a car pull up and sit up straight. It's Jeanie Fitzpatrick, one of my best friends from high school. I have not seen her in many decades - not since her wonderful mother and father moved away from Grand Island. Delighted, I hold the door open to greet my tiny friend, and as she waves and smiles, I feel the sting of foolish tears. Until that moment I don't realize how much I've missed this special friend from my youth. The warm, welcoming Fitzpatrick home on 18th Street was one of my favorite places in high school.

"Jeanie!" We laugh and hug. She is still

Jeanie - gracious, funny, pleasant and much like her wonderful mother. We do nothing but beam at each other for a full five minutes. Next comes Dianna Borowski who still boasts her beautiful, chiseled jawline and the ornery grin I always remember. Geri Koziol and her nice husband Sam come, too. Geri and her brothers and sisters lived right across the street from school, and her brother still owns the house and the family upholstery business.

"My parents always told me," Geri

Dave in the parking lot of the Saddle Club. John and Dave are obedient husbands accompanying us to an event that will bore them to tears. It's no surprise that they will eventually abandon us to watch football at the bar. It doesn't matter. By then, Barb and I are knee deep into conversation with our classmates.

Three wonderful friends - Karen Pfeifer, Susie Vogel and Barb Kosinski - have planned and organized this event to a gnat's nub. Barb leads us in grace. Thoughtfully, she remembers those of us who couldn't attend and the eight of us who are now in Heaven. We miss them all. I glance over at the memorial table and feel especially nostalgic for our Donny Leifeld and Johnny Lechner. What good boys they were!

The prime rib is tender, and the drinks flow. It's not long before we're scattering from table to table catching up on each other's lives. Lenny Sorahan, GICC's star athlete, is still the life of the party. He's working the crowd and making us laugh. My old classmate has

endured a heart attack and cancer, but you'd never know it. In fact, I am astonished by all these remarkable people. They've suffered unimaginable loss and sickness. Greg Walz spent the better part of a year tenderly nursing his wife Pam through stem cell treatment. Susie lost her husband many years ago, and lively Barb Kosinski lost a sweet daughter, her husband, and all her siblings. Then she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Dianne Davis agonizes about her eight-year-old grandson who is undergoing chemo for leukemia. Most of us are doing battle with the ravages of age: cancer, heart issues, knee and hip replacements and even dementia.

Danny Slattery, a talented musician and the lead in our long ago high school musical, has been forced to drop out of his band and abandon the guitar because of his ailments. "Danny," I say, "you move even slower than I do. We just get slower and slower, and then we die," I joke.

He shrugs his shoulders and smiles



remembers now, "that I was a year old when Central Catholic first broke ground." Her parents had a front row seat and remember the ground breaking and the original main structure rise up before them. We stare at the old brick and mortar in a kind of reverence. GICC has been here as long as we have.

Dianna recalls that her oldest brother George was a member of the first graduating class. He's 84 years old now and in ill health. In fact, Dianna will leave first thing in the morning to visit her ailing brother.

As we tour the building, I see the familiar school through the eyes of my classmates who have been away a long time. Jeanie pauses in Pat Kayl's old science room.

"I spent many hours in this old room," she recalls.

We could rehash those many memories forever, but it's time to join the rest of our classmates. My husband John and I meet good friend Barb Venhaus and her husband

philosophically. "That's the way it works!" he says.

But there is no death in this room. Tonight, we look at each other only to see the sweet 18-year-olds we were 50 years ago. I'm amazed by Patty Buhrman's still beautiful hair and Tom Moore's child-like grin. "Billy Jack" is what we always called Joe Whyte. Nobody under 50 will even know who that is. Tony Wassinger looks exactly like the actor Robert Mitchum, and Willie Mohr's eyes are still ocean blue. Terry Paustian giggles and is easily surprised - just the way she was in high school. Tonight she has brought her new companion who seems like a nice man.

"Are you good enough for her?" I ask him point blank.

He looks surprised. "Probably not. Is there a quiz?"

Barb Kosinski dashes around taking pictures and then places a video call to all of us -

including the 50 people who have not been able to attend.

"This way all of us can see each other and say hello!" she shouts gleefully. At once all our phones are chirping.

"What the..." Greg Walz holds up his phone and stares at the screen in bewilderment. "What do I do?"

We are a room full of 68-year-olds who don't know how to answer a group video chat.

"Someone go to the restaurant and find a child," I advise.

What a great comfort, I discover, to be surrounded by people who are as old as I am - people who aren't sure how to transition to retirement or use Venmo or know what FOMO means.

At Central Catholic where the students and almost all of my colleagues are young, it's easy to forget that nearly 70 years of parents

and kids and nuns and priests and teachers came before. When I finally retire, I will be the last person at GICC to remember Harry the Janitor or Sister Ellen Patrick. Nobody else will have any idea who 93-year-old Sister Nicholas was or why we called her "Speedy". They won't know about pep clubs or drill teams or how the nuns lined us up in the Little Theater to measure our skirts. They won't remember that we used to learn Latin or that the second floor art room was a big, lofty space with concrete and rafters. They'll have no idea what "jugs" are or remember that every Christmas Eve we sang The Messiah at Midnight Mass or that the junior and senior girls duked it out on the grid iron for the annual Powder Puff football game.

But the class of '73 remembers. Those memories feel like part of our genetic make-up. They've molded us into the fine, upstanding senior citizens we are today, by God.

Thank you for an evening to remember, Karen and Barb and Susie. Thank you, too, dear classmates and friends. Can we do it again in five years? That should give us plenty of time to practice.

By then we should know how to open a group chat.



# REUNIONS



Class of 2013  
10 Year Reunion



Class of 1978  
45 Year Reunion



**SAVE THE DATE**

**JULY  
12-13**

**Class of 1983  
40th + 1 Reunion**

*More info coming!*

Contact info:  
Dan Krick  
dankrick@kusudigroup.com

**LET'S GET  
together**

**Class of 1974  
50 Year Reunion**

Please send your contact info:  
'Lorrie' Loretta Schmitz:  
402-469-8900 or  
lorrieschmitz469@yahoo.com

'Dodi' Dorothy Mudloff Clinch:  
d\_clinch@hotmail.com

John Mueller: 402-984-9365 or  
johngmuellerjr@gmail.com

Joyce Jakubowski Ackles:  
303-669-2962



# ONE DAY. ONE MISSION.

Help pave the way for  
Central Catholic's future.

Go Big GIVE is an online, 24-hour fundraising event held in May that helps us reach our financial goals. **ON MAY 2, WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US FOR ONE DAY OF EXTRAORDINARY GIVING.** Let's come together to make a collective impact for our current and future students and keep Central Catholic thriving!



TUITION REIMBURSEMENT  
APPLICATION

Save the Date  
**MAY 2,  
2024**

## WHAT WOULD \$75,000 IN GIFTS MEAN?

- Chromebooks for all Crusaders
- 5-year renewal of curriculum improvements
- Tuition assistance

## THANK YOU TO OUR MATCHING DONORS!

Each will donate \$10,000 for a total of \$30,000 in matching funds!

- Mike & Jean Hamik
- Matt & Kristen Maser
- Anonymous

Donate online at:  
[www.gobiggive.org/organization/GICCFoundation](http://www.gobiggive.org/organization/GICCFoundation)

Or you can drop off or mail a check made out to "Go Big GIVE".

# OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

## MELVIN BRAHATCEK '79

Survived by his children, Misty Brahatcek, Dustin Anderson and Krystle Croker; three grandchildren; special friends, Dave and Cheryl Callahan; his beloved dog, Buster, and numerous cousins, other relatives and friends.

## DEBORAH "DEBBIE" CHRISTENSEN '67

Survived by her sisters, Sandra (Bob) Meinecke, Cindy (Allan) Payne and Pam Christensen (Don Beed); sister-in-law, Louise Christensen; many nieces and nephews; daughter-in-law, Michelle (Chris) Pasquinely and their children, Dominic, Adam and Rebecca; and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

## BRADLEY CZAPLEWSKI

Survivors include his parents, Brad and Sue and immediate family, Heather and Travis Meier, Carly and Mike Mallory, and Scott and Ann Czaplowski.; numerous nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins; dedicated care givers Dani Scheer and Misty Duerr.

## DRUE GELLATLY

Survived by his wife Minnie; children, William (Lunden) Gellatly, Sean (Jackie) Gellatly, Travis (Rena) Gellatly and Farra Gellatly; grandchildren, Jacob, Evan, Raegan, Hannah, Dax, Cooper, Landen and Ava; sisters-in-law, Betty Ondracek, Donna (Joe) Dugan, Patti (Mike) Applegate, Kathy Hancock Rother, Mary Racicky, Cheryl (Richard) Martinsen; brothers-in-law, Thomas Rother, Roland (Julie) Rother, Henry Rother, Bob (Rhonda) Rother, Ted Rother, Mike (Cindy) Rother, Stan (Patricia) Rother, Charles (Katrina) Rother and Sandy Rother.

## DANIEL HARMS '74

Survived by his loving partner for the last 15 years, Helene Klimas; children, Daniella (John) Freeman, Shannon (Scott) Bernitt, Adam Klimas; brother, David Harms; sisters, Carol (Frank) Boysen, Jodi Perrelet, Christine (Loonie) Wanek; sister-in-law, Mel Harms and numerous extended family members.

## DARWIN LEE

Survived by his children, Cheri and Cary DeMoss, Tracey and Philip Lukasiewicz, and Brian Lee; seven grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; brother-in-law, Mike and Deb Moeller; and sister-in-law, Nancy and Donald Smith.

## MARGARET MCCLAREN

Survived by daughter Michelle Hicks (Larry); daughter-in-law Shanda McClaren; two grandchildren and two step grandchildren; one great grandson; and nine step great grandchildren; brother-in-law Frank Siegler; many nieces and nephews; several great several great-nieces and nephews.

## KATHLEEN O'BRIEN '57

Survived by nephew Mike O'Brien (Lynn), niece Megan Mahan (Mike), nephew Mark O'Brien (Rosemarie), niece Mary O'Brien, niece Melissa Monaghan (Rob), nephew Jim O'Brien, nephew Steve O'Brien and niece Maureen Weber (Brian).

## THERESA URBANSKI

Survived by her husband, Thomas; children, Jennifer (Tyler) Hering, Amanda (Steve) Skradski, Alison (David) Johnson, Martin (Erin) Urbanski, and Thomas II (Jessica) Urbanski; fifteen grandchildren; sister, Cynthia (Harvey); brother, Dan Shafer; and sisters in-law, Mickey (Dean) Shafer and Marlene Vasicek; 11 nieces and nephews; great nieces and nephews and aunts and uncles.

## CINDY WILLEY '81

Survived by her husband, Kevin Willey; children, Jason R. (Samantha) Willey and their daughter, Sadah Willey, Giann (Brandon) Callahan and step-daughter, Lexee Callahan, Katie Wilson and her children, Cove R. Wilson and Hayden L. Skalka; parents, William and Joyce Ryan; siblings, Cheryl (Patrick) Rooney, Steve (Kim) Ryan, Jeff (Tracy) Ryan.

# MEMORIALS

January 1 - March 7, 2024

## DEBORAH ARTHUR MEMORIAL

Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar

## DOROTHY BONCZYNSKI MEMORIAL

Jeannee Fossberg  
Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar

## MELVIN BRAHATCEK MEMORIAL

Bob & Dianne Ziller

## MARK BRAMMER MEMORIAL

Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar

## CATHERINE KELLY BRANDON MEMORIAL

Michael Brandon  
Judy Heiserman  
Troy & Wendi Jensen

## DEBORAH CHRISTENSEN MEMORIAL

Barb Gowlovech

## BRADLEY CZAPLEWSKI MEMORIAL

Randy & Trish Curran

## DRUE GELLATLY MEMORIAL

Minnie Gellatly  
Matthew & Kristen Maser  
Tim & Jolene Wojcik

## HELEN GRENNAN MEMORIAL

Ted & Sue Grennan

## ROBERT GRENNAN MEMORIAL

Ted & Sue Grennan

## ANN HARMON MEMORIAL

Donald & Patricia Irvine

## JOHN HARRIS MEMORIAL

Pat & Linda Wenzl

## VIRGINIA HARRIS MEMORIAL

Pat & Linda Wenzl

## WILLIAM 'BILL' HARRIS MEMORIAL

Pat & Linda Wenzl

## JOE KOZISEK MEMORIAL

Brian & Deb Durning

## DARWIN LEE MEMORIAL

Ron & Christine Golka  
Dennis & Kathleen Hahn  
Daniel & Shelley Hill  
Darwin R. & Rae L. Lee Trust  
Jeff & Jolene Lies  
Dan & Barbara McIntyre  
Ronald & Evon Pawloski  
Michael & Marlene Rowley  
Robert & Judy Skorniak  
Stowell, Geweke, & Piskorski PC LLO

## JARROD LISKE MEMORIAL

Mary K. Chapman  
Leo & Maxine Liske  
Gladys Maciejewski  
Donna Wanitschke

## AUDREY MARX MEMORIAL

Mark & Judy Moravec

## NORBERT MATOUSEK MEMORIAL

Robert & Roseann Allen  
Steve & Terri Beck  
Cindy Beran  
D. R. Brittin  
Bill & Nancy Buchta  
Curran Funeral Chapel  
Don & Becky Dobesh  
Rosalie Greer  
Stan & Nancy Haney  
Steve & Deanna Hawes  
Wendi Chiarbos Jensen  
Anita Leschinsky

Hank & Elisabeth McDermott  
The Jeff & Kris Morrison family  
Leland & Betty Mossman  
Mark & Mitzi Mossman  
Bob & Michelle Mulligan  
Vern & Doris Rempe  
Steve & Kim Ryan  
Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar  
Brenda Tracy  
Norbert Wenzl

## MARGARET MCCLAREN MEMORIAL

Curran Funeral Chapel  
Larry Hicks & Michelle McClaren  
Marion & Nancy James  
Milvern & Betty Noffke  
Vern & Doris Rempe  
Charles & Nancy Roberts  
Sisters For Christian Community  
Curtis & Kristine Steinmetz

## MARY SCHLICK MEMORIAL

Gladys Maciejewski

## DAVID SCHMIDT MEMORIAL

Steven & Cheri Schmidt  
Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar  
Steven & Beckie Stec

## THERESA URBANSKI MEMORIAL

Don & Bev Brewer  
Cory & Mary Jo Chandler  
James & Kathleen Ganz  
J. J. & Kathie Green  
Michelle Hinze  
James & Mary Janky  
Randy & Cheryl Kosmicki  
Daryl & Janice McCaslin  
Loren & Carol Peterson  
Tom & Sue Pirnie  
Howard Schumann  
Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar  
John & Sarah Swanson

Marty & Erin Urbanski  
Thomas Urbanski  
Steven & Brandi Vasicek  
Kevin Willey

## CINDY WILLEY MEMORIAL

Bob & Penny Allen  
Ron & Kathy Arent  
Randy & Sue Barlow  
Guy & Christine Beeder  
Cindy Beran  
Ken & Mary Brand  
Dennis & Diane Carroll  
Mary K. Chapman  
Rod & Sue Clement  
Curran Funeral Chapel  
Melissa Davis & Wade Giesler  
Connie Dembowski  
Dennis & Kathy Dieckman  
Richard & Gloria Dolton  
Tom & Patricia Enck  
Jeannee Fossberg  
Joe & Laurie Gillogly  
J. J. & Kathie Green  
Mike & Jean Hamik  
Rodney & Dianne Harms  
Dan & Alicia Haussler  
Jim & Rene Hinman  
Richard & Sharon Jarecke  
Karen Johnson  
Scott & Laurie Kulus  
Kevin & Anita Larsen  
Phou & Morganne Manivong  
Ron & Kimberly McBride  
Dennis & Wendy McCarty  
Shay & Jacey McGowan  
Don & Marilyn Mehring  
Wayne & Sharon Meier  
Kevin & Patricia Nansel  
Dana Newman  
Saul & Yolanda Nuncio  
Liz & Jack Olsen  
Gordon & Colleen O'Neill

Pat & Amy Ostdiek  
Pat & Mary Phelan  
Rick & Lori Rasmussen  
Michael & Jennifer Redman  
James & Christine Rein  
Marvin & Dorothy Rief  
Steve & Kim Ryan  
Victor & Dani Ryan  
Vince & Alisa Ryan  
Jean Schlieff & Kristin Fisher  
Howard Schumann  
Bob & Penny Schwiager  
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Rebecca Stava-Hicklin  
Connie Swanson  
Roger & Deb Sweley  
Mike & Missy Tews  
Mike & Jean Wenzl  
Norbert Wenzl  
Kevin Willey  
Lonnie & Leann Wilsey  
Tim & Jolene Wojcik  
Bob & Dianne Ziller

## KATHRYN WOOD MEMORIAL

Steven & Cheri Schmidt  
Steve & Beckie Stec

## DOUG ZASTROW MEMORIAL

Marilyn Zastrow

## RICHARD ZASTROW MEMORIAL

Marilyn Zastrow



CENTRAL  
CATHOLIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION

1200 Ruby Ave., Grand Island, NE 68803

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Save the Date*

*A  
Starry  
Knight*

· 2024 ·

**Friday, November 22, 2024 | Riverside Golf Club**

**Knight Co-Chairs**

**Sean & Jackie Gellatly | Dr. Steve & Karla Schneider**