

# MAKING THE GRADE

## NEWS FROM THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM

MARCH 2016

### **Dear Friends of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium,**

On behalf of the Consortium team, our 110 faculty members, and five principals, thank you for being a part of our school community. By enrolling your children at our schools and by sharing the gift of your time, talent and treasures with our schools, you help us to ensure the future success of Catholic education in southeast Omaha!

I wanted to take this opportunity to not only thank you for your support but also to share a little bit about myself. My name is Donna Bishop, and I'm the assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Omaha. I also serve as the executive director of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium. I am blessed to be able to work with the dedicated staff at these five schools and the nearly 1,500 students they serve.

While I am new to the Omaha metro area, I am not new to Catholic education. I am a graduate of Gehlen Catholic School in LeMars, Iowa. Before joining Omaha's Catholic School Office, I was an assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Sioux City, a principal at St. Michael's School in South Sioux City, an elementary and preschool teacher, and a development director.

I have a bachelor's degree in Applied Science with an emphasis in K-8 education from Westmar University and a master's degree in

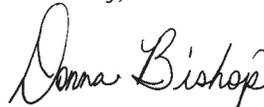
Educational Leadership and Special Education Supervision from Drake University.

God has blessed me with three grown children, that are products of Catholic education, and two grandchildren.

My two oldest children and grandchildren live in Colorado, and I visit them as often as I can. My youngest child is currently completing a Speech Pathology internship in Hawaii. Lucky her! I enjoy spending time outdoors, bike riding and being a grandmother.

I look forward to sharing my expertise and passion for Catholic education with each of the Consortium schools. Although we have accomplished much in the first three years, we still face a number of challenges ahead. Be assured that our team is dedicated to addressing the challenges and helping our students and schools thrive. Through this collaborative community of schools, we are achieving more efficient cost management, curriculum enhancements, staff development and classroom innovations. Your support makes this consortium of schools not only possible, but also successful!

Sincerely,



Donna Bishop

Executive Director  
Omaha Catholic School Consortium



## Registration Update

We are so grateful to our families for navigating the new registration process. We realize that this was a big change for everyone but are hopeful that by implementing these changes now it will make the registration and tuition payment process much more efficient in the future.

## Open House Update

Our schools hosted many new families at open houses the week of Feb. 22. The open houses offered prospective students and their families a chance to see each school up close and personally meet with teachers and staff. Thanks to everyone who helped with these important recruitment events.

## New Videos Promote Consortium Schools



We hope you will take a few minutes to view the new video that tells the story of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium. We've also produced one-minute videos for each of our five schools. You might even see some faces you know. We are grateful to the principals, teachers and students who participated in the videos and helped demonstrate why our Consortium schools are so wonderful!

Click [here](#) to view the video and please share with your family, friends and neighbors!

To view the school videos, visit [www.omahacsc.org/member-schools/](http://www.omahacsc.org/member-schools/) and click on your school's name.

# COOL NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

## OLL Students Explore Creativity During Genius Hour

For one hour each week, kindergarten through eighth-grade students at Our Lady of Lourdes are in the driver's seat, determining for themselves what they want to learn. Genius Hour is specific time set aside each week for students to explore a subject of their own choosing and then present what they've learned to other students.

Students in fifth through eighth grades explored their creativity with the global cardboard challenge. They were given one class period to create something with cardboard and recyclable materials in small groups. They also brainstormed about ways they could help their community or school and then chose a project to make the idea become a reality via a website, podcast, video, art project or any means to communicate what they learned.

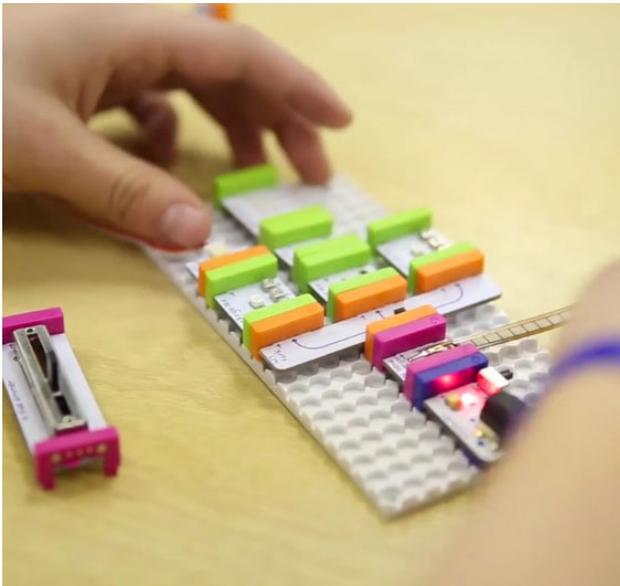


Ideas that came out of brainstorming sessions included learning a new language, how to code, researching and creating models of navy ships, and learning how to knit.

## Holy Cross Introduces Maker's Space

Holy Cross is offering an opportunity for students to imagine, innovate and create. Maker's Space is an after-school program that began at the end of September and is open to students in grades kindergarten through eighth. Students meet one to two times per month and can choose from three categories of guided activities: fabrication, tinker and monthly.

Fabrication projects offer students a variety of materials from felt to denim that they can glue, hand stitch or sew to make creations come to life. Patterns and examples are available, but students are also encouraged to create their own designs or use materials they already have at home.



Tinker projects let students disassemble, dissect and rebuild small electronics such as clocks and cell phones. Learning how electronics are put together and understanding basic electricity are the first steps needed in order to learn how to create new machines or explore robotics.

Monthly guided projects focused on recycling and encouraged students to take materials that might be thrown away and instead, make something new. For the fall project, students created nets from bread bags, newspapers and hangers and enjoyed catching the last bugs of the season with them.

## St. Bernadette to Expand Pre-Kindergarten



St. Bernadette School is expanding its pre-kindergarten program and will be open for new students in Fall 2016. St. Bernadette Principal

Lynn Schultz said that parents have expressed a need for expanded pre-kindergarten offerings. The school sent out a survey to parents and the response was positive. The expanded pre-kindergarten classrooms will be housed in the convent attached to the parish offices. About 50 children will be accommodated in the new space.

### The program will offer:

#### Preschool (3 year old):

Tuesday and Thursday (7:50 to 11 a.m.)

- Cost: \$80 per month (10-month school year)

#### Pre-kindergarten (4 year old):

Monday, Wednesday, Friday (7:50 to 11 a.m.)

- Cost: \$100 per month (10-month school year)

#### Pre-kindergarten (4 year old):

Monday through Friday (7:50 to 11 a.m.)

- Cost: \$140 per month (10-month school year)

#### Pre-kindergarten (4 and 5 year old):

Monday through Friday (7:50 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.)

- Cost: \$335 month (10-month school year)

St. Bernadette pre-kindergarten program prepares students socially, emotionally, spiritually, and academically while having fun in a warm, nurturing, and secure environment. Students are allowed to grow both mentally and physically as well as foster independence through morning circle time, centers, stories, rhymes, music, and movement. In the past few years the number of students remaining at St. Bernadette for kindergarten has been relatively high. "We do a great job of preparing kids for the kindergarten experience," said Schultz.

For information about St. Bernadette's pre-kindergarten programs, contact Lynn Schultz, principal, at [lschultz@stbernadetteschool.net](mailto:lschultz@stbernadetteschool.net) or call 402.731.3033.

## St. Thomas More Students Support Bethlehem House

This year to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, St. Thomas More focused on its school's charisms of Courage, Holiness, Intellect, Leadership, and Service to teach students about how Catholic education is an extension of putting God's plan into action.

As part of this focus, during January students were asked to bring pennies and spare change to benefit the Bethlehem House, a shelter for expectant women in Omaha that provides

education, guidance, and a home throughout their pregnancies. The goal was not only to support the Bethlehem House but also teach students the importance of the Catholic social teaching of respect for life and dignity of the human person through service to others. The class with the most contributions won an ice cream party. Additionally, Mr. Mark Daeges, junior high teacher, and Mr. Salvatore Sampugnaro, third-grade teacher, agreed to shave their facial hair if students raised \$1,000. Happily students raised over \$1,400 and both Mr. Daeges and Mr. Sam are sporting some very clean-shaven faces!

## Alumni, We want to hear from you!

Attention alumni of Assumption, Holy Cross, Holy Ghost, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Agnes, St. Bernadette, St. Bridget, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary, St. Peter, St. Stanislaus, St. Thomas More, and Sts. Peter and Paul – we want to hear from you! Let us know where you are today and we'll keep you in the loop about what's happening at the Consortium schools. To register, go to [omahacsc.org/stay-connected/alumni/](http://omahacsc.org/stay-connected/alumni/).

## Support Our Schools

It is through generous support from individuals, alumni, and area businesses that we are able to bring quality Catholic education to nearly 1,500 students. To discover how you can help strengthen our schools by giving the gift of your time, talent or treasures, please contact Nicole Evans, director of Development at [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org) or 402.590.2815.

This is a publication of the Omaha Catholic Schools Consortium

To submit a story idea contact: Nicole Evans, director of Development at [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org)

Visit our website at: [Omahacsc.org](http://Omahacsc.org)

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### Mission

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium provides academic, administrative and financial support to its member schools to ensure students have access to an exceptional education in a nurturing and culturally unique environment, where they are encouraged to explore their Catholic faith and become Disciples of Christ. We are committed to Catholic education that will thrive in our community for generations to come.

### Vision

We will be recognized as a sustainable model for Catholic education with schools that challenge students of all abilities to excel and become faith-filled leaders in service to God and others.

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Omaha Catholic School Consortium

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Para hablar con alguien en Español, favor llamar 402-557-5570.