

MAKING THE GRADE

NEWS FROM THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM

JUNE 2016

A FOND FAREWELL TO OUR TEACHERS WHO RETIRE THIS MONTH

Our schools have been very blessed to have so many wonderful and gifted teachers over the years. This year, we say goodbye to a number of amazing faculty members who will retire or move on to new adventures. You have all made a significant impact on our schools, students and fellow staff members. We value your contributions to our Consortium community. Those teachers who are retiring represent nearly 150 years in Catholic education! We send you off with a special retirement prayer, and a feature of each of these very special teachers from our five school communities. Blessings to each of you as you embark on this next journey.



REFLECTION FOR RETIREMENT (O'Donohue, 2016)

This is where your life has arrived, after all the years of effort and toil. Look back with graciousness and thanks on all your great and quiet achievements. You stand on the shore of new invitation to open your life to what is left undone. Let your heart enjoy a different rhythm when drawn to the wonder of other horizons. Have the courage for a new approach to time. Allow it to slow until you find freedom to draw alongside the mystery you hold, and befriend your own beauty of soul. Now is the time to enjoy your heart's desire, to live the dreams you've waited for, to awaken the depths beyond your work and enter into your infinite source.

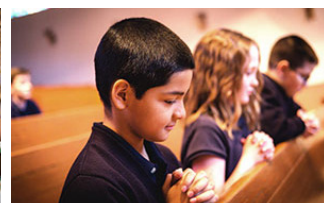
TEACHERS RETIRING THIS MONTH

Rita Adams - Holy Cross School

Rita Adams has been inspiring young minds for 26 years. Her service in Catholic education began at St. Thomas More School in 1991. She joined the Holy Cross team in 2004. Throughout her career in Catholic education, she taught kindergarten, first grade and second grade.

Adams holds a deep commitment to strengthening Catholic education. She was a founding member of the St. Thomas More School Board and served as director of Religious Education at St. Thomas More Parish overseeing the religious education, Sunday school and Vacation Bible School programs. Additionally, as a dedicated volunteer for Daniel J. Gross High School, Adams chaired several Celebration Auction committees for nearly ten years.

During her teaching career, Adams was an active member of numerous staff committees, and has been a great role model for both staff and students. She often demonstrated the value of continuing education by seeking ways to develop and enhance her teaching ability. She never stopped learning. She has been instrumental in helping second graders at Holy Cross School prepare to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion for the past eight years. We are grateful for the gifts Adams has shared with our school communities and wish her a very happy retirement!



TEACHERS RETIRING CONT.

Maureen Vesely – Holy Cross School

Since 1976, Maureen Vesely has been an integral part of the Holy Cross team. During her 40-year teaching career, she has taught fourth, fifth and sixth grade. Vesely served on a number of archdiocesan committee writing teams for core subjects including math and science. Each year Vesely was instrumental in preparing students for the archdiocesan math contest and was an active member of school-level committees. She initiated many programs that are still a vital part of the curriculum at Holy Cross School, including the Science Fair and Outdoor Education.

Vesely also initiated and organized the Wierzbicki Scholarship program in honor of her friend and colleague, Linda Wierzbicki. The scholarship is awarded annually to eighth-grade students at Holy Cross who will continue their education at area Catholic high schools. Vesely supported her fellow teachers and mentored many new staff members. She truly exemplifies the title, "Master Teacher."

Outside the classroom, Vesely was an active member of the Holy Cross Booster Club and spent many years coaching youth sports programs at Holy Cross. We are grateful for her service and wish her many blessings in her retirement!

Janet Costello – Our Lady of Lourdes School

Janet Costello is a legacy at Our Lady of Lourdes School and we wish her well on her retirement! Costello spent her entire 25-year teaching career at Our Lady of Lourdes and taught both fourth and sixth grade. Costello, an alumna of Our Lady of Lourdes, also sent all four of her sons to Lourdes for their elementary education.

Among the things Costello said she will miss most about teaching is her students' enthusiasm for learning – when students were excited about discovering a science concept, discussing their faith or learning the history of our nation.

"Teaching in a Catholic school allowed me to share my faith and encourage the students to ask themselves how they can share their faith and become disciples of Jesus," said Costello.

As for retirement, she plans to spend more time with her family and friends and hopes to improve her golf game!

Dave Miller – Our Lady of Lourdes School

We thank Physical Education teacher Dave Miller for eight great years at Our Lady of Lourdes School. Miller, a 36-year teaching veteran and Catholic education advocate, will officially retire this month. Before coming to Our Lady of Lourdes, Miller taught at Roncalli Catholic High School for 28 years.

Miller said that teaching at a Catholic school is a blessing with many benefits. He loves being able to talk with students about their faith and help them live the values of their Catholic education. Miller will miss seeing students daily and learning from every student he encounters.

Miller said he values the wonderful Lourdes' families and the strong friendships he has made over the years and said the faculty members at Lourdes are "second to none."

Miller's retirement plans include continuing to teach as a substitute teacher, spending time with his eight grandchildren and wife, and traveling.

Sue Franco – St. Thomas More School

"In having a Catholic education growing up, I knew that I always wanted to teach in the Catholic schools," said Sue Franco, second-grade teacher at St. Thomas More School. Franco will retire this month having spent 15 of her nearly 19-year teaching career at St. Thomas More School.

Teaching second-grade at a Catholic school was special to Franco and she said she will miss preparing students to receive First Holy Communion, attending School of Faith sessions, and weekly school Masses. Franco will especially miss the supportive families at St. Thomas More.

"As I begin a new chapter in my life, I will never forget the wonderful people God has placed before me through these wonderful years," Franco said. "I will continue to pray for you and the Consortium schools. I may be ending my teaching career in the Catholic schools however, I will be able to teach and pass on all that I have learned to my new granddaughter in September."

**A SUMMER PRAYER
FOR OUR STAFF
AND STUDENTS**

**ENJOY
YOUR
SUMMER!**

A Summer Prayer (Author Unknown)

Long warm days...

The pace of life slows...

A time for picnics and rest in the shade...

Lord, help me to rest awhile in the cooling shade of your presence. Slow down my restless heart and fill me with gentle compassion for all your people.

Amen.

TEACHER FEATURES – A NOTE OF THANKS TO THESE SPECIAL TEACHERS



Kathy Dostal – St. Bernadette School

Kathy Dostal has taught at St. Bernadette School for 25 years. She enjoys not only teaching students how to read, but teaching students about the importance of reading in their daily lives.

"It's wonderful to see my students' growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year," said Dostal. "It is so exciting to see their faces light up when they pick up a story and read it from start to finish!"

Dostal also appreciates that a career in Catholic education has granted her an opportunity to teach her students about God, in addition to praying and attending weekly Masses with them.

According to Dostal, "The best thing about St. Bernadette is the enthusiastic students and the supportive parents. The students are fun to teach and the parents are so wonderful. I feel very lucky to teach at such a warm and caring place."

Dostal treasures the time she spends with family and friends. She also enjoys going to movies, out to dinner and reading outside during the summer months. We thank Kathy Dostal for her continued dedication to Catholic education at St. Bernadette School!

Michael Bezousek – Sts. Peter and Paul School

Michael Bezousek, fourth-grade teacher, has spent ten years shaping young minds at Sts. Peter and Paul School. Bezousek appreciates the imaginative and fun nature of his students.

"They are interested in learning and have a great sense of humor," said Bezousek.

Moreover, Bezousek appreciates the Sts. Peter and Paul community and feels the faculty and staff have become an extension of his own family. They work together helping their students learn and grow, as well as helping each other succeed as educators.

Bezousek began his tenure at Sts. Peter and Paul as the Computer/Resource teacher and enjoys discovering new and innovative ways to help students learn.

Bezousek and his wife both attended Catholic schools and realize the value of Catholic education. He understands the spiritual growth and prayerful environment that Catholic schools provide.

This summer Bezousek will enjoy time with his wife and one-year-old son Toby. He also plans to catch a few Creighton athletic events and a blockbuster movie or two. We thank Michael Bezousek for his continued dedication to Catholic education at Sts. Peter and Paul School!

COOL NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

On April 21 the Consortium schools had the opportunity to share our Case Statement for support and our schools' story with the Archbishop's Committee for Development. Founded in 1972, the Archbishop's Committee for Development (ACD) works to ensure the successful future of Catholic schools, parishes, ministries and agencies throughout northeast Nebraska. The ACD has been instrumental in archdiocesan growth and accomplishments for more than 43 years and today has a membership of 190 members.

During the meeting held at Gross Catholic High School, Consortium representatives Chris Nelson, principal of Holy Cross, and Cory Sepich, principal of Sts. Peter and Paul, updated ACD members on literacy initiatives, enrollment growth, and professional collaboration among faculty at our Consortium schools.

"Any time we have the chance to share the good news of Catholic education it's a celebration," commented Nelson. "Attending the ACD meeting provided me with an opportunity to share the exciting news about guided reading and how this instructional approach to literacy allows our faculty to see the specific needs of their students, and respond accordingly to help students grow in their reading abilities."

"It was a great event and amazing to see all the people across Omaha who are so invested in our Catholic schools," said Sepich. "What I found impressive was their shared investment in *all* of the schools, not just the school that is part of the donor's parish or the one that they or their family attended."

While ACD members in attendance represented a number of parishes from across the Omaha metro area and nearby rural communities, members showed keen interest in what the Consortium schools are doing to help Catholic education thrive. The warm welcome and support our Consortium team received from ACD members was uplifting and validated the great accomplishments our schools achieved this past year.

For more information on the Archbishop's Committee for Development, please contact the Office of Stewardship and Development at 402.557.5650.

To view a video of our Consortium representatives presenting at the April ACD meeting, visit www.omahacsc.org

COMING SOON...ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM

This fall the Omaha Catholic School Consortium will launch its first annual giving program, *Together in Christ - Five Schools, One Mission*. The *Together in Christ* Annual Fund is a collaborative effort to sustain our schools financially, continue our tradition of academic excellence, and maintain affordable tuition.

Tuition covers less than half of the cost to educate a child at our schools. The remaining amount is covered by parish support and through development efforts like the *Together in Christ* Annual Fund.

In order for us to accomplish the goals of our Annual Fund, we must energize and motivate the community to support this important effort. We are currently seeking volunteers to help share the good news about our Consortium schools and demonstrate to donor prospects why our schools are worthy of their investment. To learn more about our Annual Fund or to volunteer, call 402.590.2815.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS!

Thank you to all who supported our member schools with a gift during Omaha Gives! With your help we raised \$2,245 – a 49 percent increase from last year's total! Your generosity will help us ensure that Catholic education thrives in the south Omaha community for generations to come. We hope that you will share the news of your generosity and encourage others to take part in this great day of giving in Omaha next year.

If you missed out on Omaha Gives! don't worry. You can still show your support with a gift today to our schools by visiting <http://www.omahacsc.org/support-our-schools/> and making a secure online donation.



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/.

Like Us on Facebook!



We've almost reached 100 likes on Facebook! Our page following continues to grow and we need your help to share our stories! Be sure to like the Omaha Catholic School Consortium page on Facebook and encourage friends of our schools to do the same! This is our one-stop shop for updates, events and information from our member schools!

This is a publication of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium

To submit a story idea contact: Nicole Evans, director of Development at nlevans@archomaha.org

Visit our website at: Omahacsc.org

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 many abilities to excel and become faith-filled leaders in service to God and others.

Omaha Catholic School Consortium

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

Sources:

Catholic Digest. (2016). Summer Prayer and Blessing. Retrieved June 2, 2016 from <http://www.catholicdigest.com/articles/faith/praying/2012/06-18/a-summer-prayer-and-blessing>.

O'Donohue, J. (2016). Mass for Teacher's Retirement – Reflection. Retrieved June 2, 2016 from <http://www.galwaydiocese.ie/>.