



Growing DISCIPLES

Issue No. 4 | Fall 2022

ST. THERESA SCIENCE TEACHER TAKES FLIGHT!

Science teacher Ronda McCarthy is always designing the next experiment with her students -- even when those experiments take her beyond the boundaries of gravity! She was recently selected to participate in the Embedded Teacher Program, a partnership between the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium, the National Space Society, and the Zero Gravity Corporation (ZERO-G).

McCarthy first learned about the ZERO-G flight opportunity from a fellow educator while presenting at a conference in Houston, Texas. The colleague connected McCarthy with Dr. Kevin Crosby, Carthage College Physics Professor and director of the NASA Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium. Crosby uses ZERO-G flights to research microgravity environments. This research is crucial to the future of long-term human space habitation. As part of this research, Crosby has taken teachers up on microgravity flights to help inspire student interest in research and engineering.

McCarthy's journey led her to attend the Embedded Teacher Workshop in the fall of 2021 at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. While attending the workshop, she explored the physics behind microgravity and its influence on the behavior of fluids.



St. Theresa science teacher Ronda McCarthy

"Dr. Crosby was amazing and patient as he taught us about the physics needed for our microgravity experiments," shared McCarthy. "We also learned about cutting-edge research for performing surgery in space from a medical researcher in Louisville, a research team from Kentucky, a team from Kennedy Space Center, a research team from Duke University, and a group of student researchers from Iowa State University."

Following the workshop, McCarthy developed a proposal in collaboration with her students outlining experiments to test microgravity. Her proposal resulted in an invitation to join the Embedded Teacher Team in the spring of 2022. Click [here](#) to learn more about her journey.

ST. JOSEPH EXPANDS CAMPUS

This summer, St. Joseph Catholic School announced it will expand its campus to serve a growing student population and to better serve all members of its community. Project plans include the addition of two new early childhood classrooms, three new middle school classrooms, a large multipurpose space that will serve as a parish activity center and school gymnasium, and an elevator to improve building accessibility.

"Our goal is to provide a safe, modern school and parish campus that meets the needs of all members of our growing community," said Jodi Halligan, school administrator. "Additionally, this project will create a sense of renewed pride in St. Joseph School and Parish."

The addition of two new early childhood classrooms will allow the school to offer three-year-old preschool in addition to the currently provided four-year-old prekindergarten. In addition, St. Joseph athletics will have a home court for the first time in the school's history with the new multipurpose space. Click [here](#) to learn more.



ATTENTION SCHOOL PARENTS: SHARE YOUR STORY!

As parents of students attending a Diocese of Des Moines Catholic School, you know better than anyone the value a Catholic education can provide a child. We invite you to share your Catholic school story with us so we can share the good news of our Catholic schools with prospective families and members of our parish communities.

Click [here](#) to share your story in a short Google form.



Saint Albert Catholic School, Council Bluffs

MAKING OUR SCHOOLS ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Did you know that nearly 40 percent of our students receive some form of tuition assistance, and 100 percent benefit from a parish subsidy to make tuition more affordable?

All Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools provide tuition assistance to families unable to pay the full tuition rate due to a demonstrated financial need. However, no family is turned away for inability to pay full tuition.

Ensuring our schools are accessible to all families who desire a Catholic education for their children is at the heart of our mission. Click [here](#) to learn more about available tuition assistance.

There are many resources to help make a Catholic education at our schools more accessible, including:

Catholic Tuition Organization (CTO)

CTO is a charitable organization that receives voluntary cash contributions from Iowa taxpayers and allocates those funds as tuition assistance to eligible families who attend a Catholic school in the Diocese of Des Moines. Last year, CTO awarded more than \$3.2 million in tuition assistance.

Parish/School Scholarships

Some schools in the Diocese of Des Moines offer scholarships to students through a parish or school-specific scholarship fund.

Ignite Capital Campaign Tuition Assistance Endowment

An endowment for tuition assistance established through the Ignite Capital Campaign to complement CTO assistance, which currently provides around 35% of the demonstrated need of our school families.

529 Educational Savings Accounts

A 529 plan is an investment account individuals can use to save for qualified education expenses, including K-12 Catholic school tuition.

BISHOP'S CELEBRATION RAISES OVER \$95,000 FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE

The Diocese of Des Moines hosted its inaugural Bishop's Celebration of Catholic Schools on August 27 at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Indianola, IA. This event united the Diocese of Des Moines community in celebration of the life-changing impact faith-centered education at its schools has provided for more than 120 years.

The event kicked off with a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Joensen, Fr. Chris Reising, Fr. Adam Westphal, Fr. Michael Amadeo, and Fr. Stephen Orr. Mass was followed by a dinner and awards ceremony honoring six individuals for their contributions to Catholic education. More than 250 supporters of Catholic education were in attendance that evening, and the event raised over \$95,000.00 to support tuition assistance for students attending the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools.

The event's success was a collaborative effort by the Catholic Schools Office, Office of Stewardship and Development, and the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa



Event chairs included Tracy Deutmeyer and Matt Edwards, Stephanie and Spencer Cox, Annie and Andrew Salgado, and Christy and Dan Sullivan. In addition, a large contingent of volunteers helped plan and execute the event, including nine St. Thomas Aquinas Knights of Columbus members, 54 student volunteers from Dowling Catholic High School and Des Moines region Catholic elementary schools, and dozens of other volunteers from throughout the metro. Top-tier event sponsors included Mercy One, FACTS, the Catholic Tuition Organization, and Steier Group.

"My fellow event chairs and I were pleased to be part of this inaugural event," said Tracy Deutmeyer of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Ankeny. "A unifying event for all the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines to celebrate our Catholic identity and the individuals behind the mission was long desired and appreciated by all in attendance. You could sense the commitment and energy behind our schools' important work throughout the event. We want our children to better know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, and our schools, parents, and supporters are integral in that work."

Plans for next year's event are already underway, tentatively slated for September 2023.



ADMINISTRATORS RECHARGE AT ANNUAL FAITH RETREAT

The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic School administrators from across the diocese participated in an annual faith retreat on Thursday, September 22. This school year's theme, "Rooted in Christ," was echoed throughout the day as they gathered at St. Thomas More Center for a beautiful day of reflection and community.

Relationship building is crucial to a thriving school culture and high-performing teams. According to Education World, "Retreats not only can improve teaching techniques, but build staff morale and cohesiveness as well." Moreover, retreats can help reduce and prevent staff burnout by enhancing school culture -- a leading indicator of staff satisfaction.

A 2020 study found that seventy-five percent of education professionals surveyed

said faculty culture and school atmosphere were among the most important factors when choosing a place of employment. That same study found that only 35 percent of individuals surveyed cited salary and benefits as important factors (ISM, 2020).

The retreat featured keynote speaker Paulette Chapman, who led the group in prayer and reflection throughout the day. Participation in "Share Prayer" and a Visio Divina activity, coupled with time for individual reflection and guided small group discussion, allowed the administrators the opportunity to strengthen their relationship with God and one another. In addition, the beautiful weather and peaceful surroundings at St. Thomas More Center provided the perfect backdrop to time outside and a chance for rejuvenation after all the activity of starting the school year.

Sources:

Education World. (2015). Retreat, Review, Recharge! Retrieved September 27, 2021 from www.educationworld.com.

Independent School Management (ISM). (September 20, 2020). A Positive Faculty Culture Can Help Prevent Teacher Burnout. Retrieved September 27, 2021 from isminc.com.

SHELBY COUNTY STUDENTS DISCOVER SOIL CONSERVATION

Fourth-grade students at Shelby County Catholic are getting a lesson in environmental science, specifically soil conservation, with help from local conservationist Christina Groen. As a member of the Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN) and Shelby County Conservation Board, Groen helps educate the community about environmental topics that affect all Iowans.

"We live in an agriculture-based society. The farming practices we use must preserve our resources for future generations," said Ann Andersen, Shelby County Catholic Principal. "Farming practices have changed, and our students must understand the impact of these changes on the environment that supports all life."



Shelby County Catholic School, Harlan

This collaboration with Groen is a new initiative and the first time students at Shelby County have had the opportunity to learn about soil conservation. Soil conservation involves various techniques designed to protect the soil from degradation. As a living ecosystem, all the organisms that make the soil their home are essential in producing a fertile, healthy environment. Moreover, a healthy soil ecosystem is crucial to human life and food production. The lessons provided by Groen aligned with state education standards for history and gave students insight into best practices in soil conservation, including terraces, crop rotation, buffer strips, and windbreaks.

"Harlan, like many other rural communities, is an agricultural-based economy," shared Andersen. "Soil conservation practices help ensure positive agricultural outcomes for our economy and our future."

Groen will continue to provide environmental and cultural lessons to students at Shelby County Catholic throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

GET JAZZED UP ABOUT SAINT ALBERT!

We invite you to get jazzed up about Saint Albert Catholic! The school recently launched a new video that showcases how this birth through 12th-grade school educates children during their formative years and prepares them to positively impact our world. View the video [here](#).



ST. PIUS ELEVATES ITS SCIENCE CURRICULUM

As part of its commitment to academic excellence, St. Pius X recently rolled out Elevate Science™ by Savvas to complement its science curriculum. Elevate Science™ is an evidence-based approach that results in students demonstrating proficiency in science and engineering practices. Additionally, a recent study found that students in grades 6-8 who experienced Elevate Science™ had statistically significant science performance gains after just one year (Savas, 2021). In just one short school year, the implementation of Elevate Science™ and its related hands-on activities have improved students' proficiency and depth of knowledge in science. This enhanced knowledge will prepare them for future academic success and STEM careers.

"We chose Elevate Science™ for its robust, hands-on learning coupled with interactive digital content," said Alex Baranosky, St. Pius X principal. "Elevate Science™ will empower our school to offer an engaging science experience for students in grades K-8 that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learning styles."

In addition, school leadership applied for and was awarded a \$5,000 grant in 2021 from the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa to purchase lab equipment, materials, and incidental supplies to fully stock its science lab. Thanks to this funding, St. Pius students can participate in many hands-on science activities for years to come.

Building on the foundation of Catholic values, St. Pius X provides students with the opportunity for spiritual growth, the development of moral character, and academic success.

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools includes 16 schools serving 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa. Catholic schools in the Des Moines Diocese build Christ-centered, collaborative, inclusive partnerships with parents, students, and parishes to provide innovative academic excellence and inspirational faith formation. To learn more about the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools, visit dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools or email grow@dmdiocese.org.

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