

Spirited Perspectives



Summer 2011

↑ Blessed Trinity students crown the statue of Mary outside St. Peter's Church on May 4th.

BLESSED TRINITY HIRES A NEW PRINCIPAL!

Mr. Patrick O'Keefe was the unanimous and top choice of our search committee for a new principal—comprised of members from our school board, corporate board and faculty and all three parish priests. His appointment became effective July 1st. Sue Kerr left Blessed Trinity to become principal at Carondelet in Minneapolis.

Mr. O'Keefe grew up attending Saint Pascal Baylon School on the East side of Saint Paul. After completing his undergraduate studies and Master's Degree of Education at the University of Notre Dame in the ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) program, he began his teaching career at Our Lady of Sorrows School in McAllen, Texas. He taught there for two years before becoming their Assistant Principal in June, 2007.



Principal Patrick O'Keefe

Blessed Trinity to continue our essential mission of wholly educating children to their greatest potential as images of God. I am truly honored and blessed to be joining such a wonderful, inclusive community. I am excited to return to my roots in the Twin Cities area."

Richfield is also welcoming two new pastors. Father Tom Krenik was transferred to Risen Savior in Burnsville and Father William Martin has taken over as pastor at St. Richard's Church. Father Tony VanderLoop was transferred to St. Henry's in Monticello and Father Jerry Dvorak has taken over as pastor at St. Peter's Church. Father Dvorak has been named Blessed Trinity's Canonical Administrator.

From Principal O'Keefe, "It is my pleasure and honor to join this excellent school community as the new Principal of Blessed Trinity Catholic School. I look forward to partnering with the dedicated staff and parents at

Blessed Trinity has been truly blessed with all those who have served our school in the past; and our blessings have continued with the experience, energy and enthusiasm our new arrivals have already brought to us!



"Thank you so much for allowing me into your lives and for sharing with me the responsibility

OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

by Ann Garland, Financial Administrator

In late February, Blessed Trinity was asked to host one of the bus tours associated with the CSA (Catholic Services Appeal) Ministry Discovery Visit and Leadership Dinner. I was overwhelmed with how wonderfully it turned out. Blessed Trinity was honored with a chance to show off our school and we took that honor and RAN with it!

The middle school choir met the fifty guests at the door with Mona Myott directing and the folks just plain stopped to listen—it was so astounding. All evening they spoke about what a wonderful impression of true hospitality it had made on them. The group walked



BT's Middle School Choir

through St. Peter's Church, which was quiet and beautiful, and then into Ray Dillon's classroom, which was perfectly clean from black boards to desktops. Kathy and Keith Holley and Mabel Sanchez Garcia gave a true and heartfelt witness to what they have gained from their children's education at Blessed Trinity. All the while, our ten students stood (chairs were filled with guests) perfectly in the corner, listening attentively.

Our middle school Science teacher, Brian Stock, spoke sincerely and really eloquently about our academic excellence; how we take kids where we get

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NEW iMAC LAB INSTALLED ON NICOLLET CAMPUS

We have exciting news at Blessed Trinity! Our Nicollet campus computer lab was outfitted with 28 new iMac computers as well as an Apple server, wireless, and some electrical updates needed to support the hardware. The cost of the new Mac lab was well over \$28,000. All of this was thanks to the Legacy Grant. The Legacy Grant was a \$10,000,000 gift to FOCUS (Friends of Catholic Urban Schools) three years ago.

FOCUS supports twelve Catholic schools that serve families who qualify for free or reduced lunch (FRL) according to federal guidelines. That same grant pays for professional development for our teachers, reimburses us for our standardized testing costs, and gives us about \$420 in tuition assistance for every student who qualifies for FRL.

It was very exciting to be the recipient of such a grant. The switch from ten year old PC's to brand new Apples was amazing!

What this means for BT is a huge upgrade in technology the students are using every school day. The Nicollet lab is used by the 4th through 8th graders and was installed in 2004 with refurbished PCs and so was in great need of replacement. The Legacy money made it possible for us to get ahead on our technology plan. It gave us additional time to raise more funds—as the computers on Penn Campus are also in need of replacement.

Nicollet Campus' old computers were cleaned up, with some free software added, and then given to Blessed Trinity families who were in need of a computer at home.



of educating our school children in the traditions of our faith. I love working with such involved

Thank You BT DONORS

Did you happen to hear the Blessed Trinity radio ads on Relevant Radio earlier this year? Those ads were made possible by a generous donation from Justin Torres, a St. Peter's parishioner and friend of Catholic education at Blessed Trinity. Another long-time friend, Mary LaRock, boosted our middle school Science program by donating money to purchase a variety of new items for our Science lab. In addition, and because of many other generous donors, Blessed Trinity was able to install four more IWBs (Interactive White Boards) this spring!

Council of Catholic Women
(Assumption)
Bernie Bernauer
Bette Hedstrom
(memorial donations)
Bob Hall
Dale & Loretta Johnson
Dick Fleming
(from his estate)
Don & Amy Menke
Don & Joan Keis
Ellen Hirschey
Father Mike Tix
Florence Habegger
Gary & Terri Johnson
Gerald & Janet Peichel
Irene Kupfer
James & Lisa Michaels
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James Couillard
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Justin Torres
Karl & Barbara Walstrom
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Phil & Rose Murray
Ray & Joyce Korsten
Rick & Ann Garland
Ruth Goltz

Sandra & Gary Heinz
St. John's in Savage
Stephen & Mary Santos
Sue Kerr
Susan Shand
Thomas & Ruth Bernatz
Veronica Landherr
William & Beth Joens
William & Mary Book
William Belkengren
(charitable fund)

Every donation counts!

We are grateful to everyone
on this newest list of
Friends of Blessed Trinity!

UNIVISION—CHANNEL 13 IN MINNEAPOLIS & ST. PAUL

As the leading media company connecting Hispanic America to the content it craves, Univision has the insights, tools and resources needed to help Blessed Trinity communicate effectively with our local Hispanic population.

Univision is uniquely positioned—and Blessed Trinity would love to take advantage of that by producing a television commercial and airing it over a one month time span. We have been meeting with account executives from Univision and they have offered a great deal to Blessed Trinity. For an investment of \$1,500, Univision is willing to air a commercial—created by Blessed Trinity with audio recorded in Spanish—fourteen times per week for four weeks, which equates to 56 airings in one month!

Programming would be carefully selected and would include weekday afternoons along with late night and network news and the very popular primetime telenovelas (which are like TV “novels” and are watched by whole families).

But in order to move forward Blessed Trinity must identify a donor or donors willing to cover the cost of the airings. If you are interested in learning more please contact our marketing director at melissa@btcsmn.org. If you would like to make a donation toward this worthy initiative, please send a check payable to Blessed Trinity in an envelope marked “Univision Ad Campaign Fund.”

parents, parishioners, alumni and stakeholders who are willing to help out and share themselves





BLESSED TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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7540 Penn Avenue South (PreK-Grade 3)
Richfield, MN 55423
612-869-5200 / 612-866-6906
www.btcsmn.org

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OH, WHAT A NIGHT! *(continued from page 2)*

them and move them to the point that they come back and thank us...and much more. He did a quick active board demonstration. By this time the guests' jaws dropped!

Father Mike Tix spoke of how Assumption had responded to the Archbishop's request for an "Hispanic mission." It was filled with emotion. Father Mike is a real friend to Blessed Trinity. He was a great bus driver and friend of the choir people (it wouldn't surprise me to learn that he was influential in choosing Blessed Trinity as a stop along the tour—what a friend to Blessed Trinity!). Our group had the only priest who was driving a bus!

Our guests entered the bus as the middle school choir, standing on the steps, serenaded them again. Father Mike drove the full, big coach bus to the Basilica. It was there that the kids had pizza and

then served dinner to the adults. Mabel Sanchez helped with keeping them organized. At one point I saw the Archbishop talking to two of our students. I went over and introduced them, made sure he knew they were from Blessed Trinity, and he gathered all the BT students and gave them a special blessing, touching each forehead. He said they could take the next day off from school!

The ride back was terrific, too. Some said "We forgot the kids!" but no, Mabel had gotten them aboard the bus and they were sitting respectfully and nicely. I was so proud!

We were just plain blessed to have been given this opportunity and to have done so well. I am grateful to all involved in the planning. We were so lucky to have been given a chance to show off our school, parents and students!



for the benefit of our school and our children." ~ Sue Kerr (outgoing principal)



**Clearly
Catholic**

**Intentionally
Inclusive**

**Academically
Excellent**

Introducing Blessed Trinity's Educator Emeritus—Mrs. Jo Culnane

Mrs. Jo Culnane has taught for thirty-nine years in our Richfield Catholic schools, and has been with Blessed Trinity since the consolidation. She has prepared numerous students to be successful thinkers and writers as they moved from eighth grade to high school. She hears from many of them who thank her for holding them to high standards and expecting them to learn. The writing skills they built with Mrs. Culnane as 13 and 14 year olds continue to come in handy even into adulthood.

Even more important than the academic lessons students have learned from Mrs. Culnane are the life lessons steeped in the traditions of our Catholic faith. Jo Culnane wears her heart on her sleeve when it comes to her love and reverence for the Church. Her students recognize and appreciate her sincere faith. They see her practicing what she teaches. Mrs. Culnane doesn't think complaining is a Christian activity, so complaining and excuse making is not tolerated. She believes in humility and service toward others and expects the same from her students. She is famous for coining a phrase to name those who feel rules do not apply to them: Privileged Characters. Mrs. Culnane cares about Christian moral development even more than creating great thinkers and writers. She excels at both, however.

As Educator Emeritus, Mrs. Culnane will retain some of her teaching duties and will also serve as a mentor and homeroom teacher for Blessed Trinity's middle school students and faculty. In her honor we are starting a fund called the "Jo Culnane Catholic Studies Endowment" for the purchasing of religion curriculum to ensure that

students well into the future will have access to high quality text books, Bibles and other curricular materials for their religion classes at Blessed Trinity. Mrs. Culnane has made a dramatic impact in the lives of many colleagues, students, and their families. We are so grateful she is willing to keep giving to Catholic education here at Blessed Trinity.

If Mrs. Culnane has touched your life, we would love to hear from you. Please consider sending your story via email to Terry Braun, Blessed Trinity's Development Director. Her email address is BraunT@btcsmn.org.



Jo Culnane Catholic Studies Endowment

Please consider a donation to the Jo Culnane Catholic Studies Endowment Fund to further the legacy of high standards and quality in Catholic education championed by Mrs. Jo Culnane and to help purchase religious materials at Blessed Trinity.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

My/Our Gift is \$ _____

Payment enclosed (check payable to Blessed Trinity)

Bill my credit card: Visa Mastercard

Card number: _____ Expiration date: _____

3-digit V-Code (found on back of card): _____ Signature: _____

Alumni IN THE NEWS

Congratulations!

Erik Johnson

Erik brought home a silver medal as part of the 2010 Olympic Hockey team!

Kelsey Metz

Richfield's 2011 Athena Award winner!

Angela Nordstrom

Academy of Holy Angel's
National Merit Scholarship
(Commended)

Alex Elvidge

Academy of Holy Angels'
Star Athletics Award
Alex will be attending Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical University where he will
play college soccer.

Dan Zielke

ABC6 News Excellent Educator!

**Katelyn Caron * Robert Frerich
Hannah Gallucci * Jacqueline Hartmann
Lara Holley * Elizabeth Mattson
Natalie Reihlake * Miranda Rich**
Seraphine Ireland Chapter of the
National Honor Society (NHS)
at Academy of Holy Angels

Grassroots Innovation & Renovation

Blessed Trinity parents led a grassroots effort to renovate the St. Peter's and St. Richard's gyms. The goal was to raise enough money and manpower to replace gym pads, fix a drinking fountain, remove a stage that was deemed unsafe, and replace bent and broken basketball hoops.

In 2005, Jesse and Annie Foley, Blessed Trinity parents, began to offer summer basketball camps as a way to build community and get kids and families excited about Blessed Trinity and about hoops. Because Jesse had been the head boys' basketball coach at Academy of Holy Angels, he knew all about camps and had the ability to bring high school kids in to help. All who helped did so on a volunteer basis and no one was ever paid. Over \$10,000 was raised in six years' time!

Jesse and Annie also formed a team of hard-working parents who, with the money raised from the camps, stopped dreaming and started doing. With the help of the parishes, they were able to oversee the installation of new gym pads and basketball hoops with height adjusters for the younger kids at both gyms and a new drinking fountain at St. Peter's. Also at St. Peter's, parents tore down the stage and built a new wall to provide seating for spectators. Along the way, grandparents and parishioners heard about the efforts and donated money as well.

Today, students are enjoying safer, more aesthetically pleasing gymnasiums for physical education classes and Blessed Trinity Tiger's practices and games. What a great effort from so many who cared enough to make a significant change for the better!

Registration Goes On-Line using Cornerstone

Registration at Blessed Trinity Catholic School has always been much like registration at most Catholic grade schools—paper driven. But not this year! Blessed Trinity administration worked very hard to provide a user friendly on-line registration system for current and new families interested in registering for the 2011-2012 school year.

The system Blessed Trinity chose is called Cornerstone. According to Blessed Trinity's Technology Coordinator, Jill Elfering, "Cornerstone is a student information system. It is an integrated system that includes all data for students, parents, teachers and courses in one place. We'll have just one location for all of our school data: report cards, calendar, attendance, hot lunch, tuition & billing,

gradebook, emergency alerts, correspondence, and more. Parents will be able to log in to see how their student is doing in classes, the status of their tuition billing, the school calendar and much more once it is all 'live' and working. It will also allow us to track students as they move on to alumni status and connect with prospective students who may be interested in attending Blessed Trinity."

Many schools are moving to this type of system. The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis just went through a process of selecting a system to support/recommend throughout all archdiocesan schools and selected Cornerstone—making us ahead of the curve!



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