Lourdes Academy has long envisioned bringing all of its PreK-12 students onto one campus. After nearly a decade of dreaming about it, the project is moving forward.

Lourdes Academy partnered with Ganther Construction to develop plans to renovate and expand its existing middle and high school campus on the corner of Witzel Avenue and Sawyer Street in the center of Oshkosh.

“Lourdes High School has been our flagship school for 60 years,” said Lourdes Academy president John Dinegan. “What better way to celebrate the anniversary of Lourdes opening in 1959 than by launching a project to expand our Catholic school system six decades later.”

The plans include the addition of a new high school wing and elementary school shared space, as well as an elementary school gymnasium. The existing space would also be renovated to accommodate middle and elementary school classrooms and shared spaces, as well as other upgrades. The project would cost approximately $10 million.

This endeavor is a partnership between Lourdes Academy, local parishes (Most Blessed Sacrament, St. Jude, St. Raphael and St. Mary – Omro & Winneconne) and the Diocese of Green Bay.

“Our parishes and the diocese are committed to Catholic education and have thrown their support behind the project,” Dinegan added.

Lourdes partnered with the nationally-recognized firm, Changing Our World, to conduct a feasibility study to determine the scope and sequence of the project. The study took into account feedback from more than 500 face-to-face interviews and online surveys with parishioners,
alumni, families and friends of Lourdes.

Participants overwhelmingly approved of the plans going forward. The study also determined that Lourdes Academy could raise $6 million to $8 million in a capital campaign, in addition to the $1.5 million raised five years ago, which is being held in a designated fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation.

As a result of the Feasibility Study, Bishop David Ricken has given his blessing for Lourdes Academy to begin plans for a capital campaign this fall. (Exact time lines have yet to be established.)

“We are excited to move forward and see this project brought to life,” Dinegan said. “The plans allow us to bring our entire Lourdes family together on one campus while making the best use of our existing space. This unification has been made possible because of our strong partnership with our parishes and diocese, and we are grateful for their support.”

To learn more about Lourdes Academy’s renovation and expansion project, visit www.Lourdes.today, “About Us” tab, “Our Future” link. Or contact John Dinegan at (920) 426-3626, ext. 537 or jdinegan@lourdes.today.

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**Bringing Jesus Home**

Lourdes Academy students and staff begin each school year by bringing Jesus home to Lourdes. An all-system mass at St. Jude Parish, followed by a silent Eucharistic Procession back to Lourdes High School is a visible sign that Jesus is present in our school. “Live Jesus in our hearts...forever.”
Joe Weber (‘13) had a promising future running for Lourdes Academy and hoped to earn a running scholarship to attend UW Madison. He was a member of the Lourdes Cross Country team, placing third at state his junior year. But Weber passed out at the finish line at the state meet, and things went downhill from there.

“That never happened before,” explained Weber. “I couldn’t run. I was always tired, and every race felt super hard.”

At the end of his senior year, despite numerous negative blood tests and no visible trademark signs, he was finally diagnosed with Lyme Disease. The diagnosis put an end to his running career as he started on the road to recovery, but it opened doors he never imagined possible.

Weber’s grandfather, Bill Krueger, who had a hobby of owning and flipping vintage motorcycles, dropped off a vintage bike for Weber to work on during his senior year.

“I had never worked on a motorcycle before, so I went on YouTube and figured it out,” Weber explained. “It started up and ran well, and I got addicted. Now I buy bikes, fix them up and sell them.”

Weber’s focus has always been vintage motorcycles because they are the least expensive and easiest to work on. He admits that the process has taught him patience. It’s not uncommon to purchase a motorcycle thinking it’s going to run, then dig into the motor only to find other issues with it.

“It’s not the end of the world if you buy a bike and it doesn’t work,” Weber now realizes.

Once he became proficient at repairing and restoring vintage motorcycles, Weber started an online business fixing other people’s motorcycles. Since that time, he’s purchased and repaired or restored more than 400 bikes.

Last year, Weber started a YouTube channel, 2vintage, which has taken off. His brother Charlie, currently a junior at Lourdes Academy, is his faithful sidekick helping to work on bikes and ATVs and race them for the YouTube forum. Charlie expressed an interest in the bikes early on, so Joe gave him his first bike, and he’s been hooked ever since.

“We make content that we know will get a lot of views,” Weber said. “People comment on the old bikes and tell us what they want to see next. We feature different bikes and ATVs and how they ride. Our first video had zero hits but after the sixth one, it blew up. We set a goal of 100,000 subscribers and reached that this year.”

Weber has been using eBay to buy the parts needed for his business, but recognized an opportunity to create a more affordable platform to buy and sell motorcycle parts. With a new goal in mind, Weber and business partner Jeff Steig started Lap Two, an online community for people to come together to buy and sell parts for motorcycles, ATVs, and other motor-related vehicles. Where eBay charges 10 percent and sells a little of everything, Lap Two charges half of that and focuses specifically on motorized vehicle parts.

“It’s a community for people with the same passion where they can buy, sell and bid on parts,” Weber explained. At the time of this article, he was working on the shipping portion of the website. Once that is finalized, parts can be uploaded to the site. In the future, Weber hopes to add a forum where people can share their bikes and builds.

In between bike builds, Weber is finishing his final year at UW-Platteville as a Business major. He studied Mechanical Engineering for 3.5 years but made the switch to business after his experience with 2vintage and Lap Two.

Weber’s original dreams of running may not have materialized, but new dreams have emerged.
“I think God had a plan for that,” he said. “I would have gone to school in Madison for running, and I wouldn’t have had the motorcycles or the YouTube channel.”

Weber’s grandfather, who recently turned 85, continues to follow his business and his YouTube videos. Check out Weber’s new business venture at www.laptwo.com.

Mathe dedicates career to serving

When Ben Mathe graduated from Lourdes Academy in 1995, he planned to attend UW River Falls and play football with a friend. But after a semester, he realized he wasn’t quite ready for the discipline required for college. He moved to Arizona with former classmate Adam Wiatrowski who was attending Arizona State University. It was a fun time in his life, but Mathe felt he was lacking direction.

“I experienced life a little bit before I entered the military,” he explained. “But I needed some guidance and direction.”

He had an uncle in the Navy who challenged him to “get his stuff together,” and in July 2000, he enlisted in the Navy as an E2 and enrolled in college. He made rank quickly. In 2009, Mathe was selected for chief petty officer (E7) after only being in the Navy nine years, about two to four years faster than normal.

“The military provided discipline and direction in my life,” Mathe said. “I knew I wanted to be an officer, but I had to get a degree to earn a commission.”

Mathe continued to take online classes for about 10 years as he was able, and in 2012, he completed a degree in Aerospace Engineering through Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He completed Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as an officer in the Navy in 2012. He later earned a Master’s degree in Sports Management through the American Military University.

Throughout his military career, Mathe has traveled all over the world. He completed boot camp in Chicago, followed by school in Pensacola, Florida. He spent three years at his first duty station in Spain and married his wife, Heather, on the Rock of Gibraltar. He was stationed on the USS Nimitz and has been deployed in the Middle East, Malaysia, Guam, Hawaii, and India to name a few.

Their sons, Ethan (13) and A.J. (5), were born in San Diego and Mason (10) was born in Japan. They’ve weathered hurricanes and survived earthquakes. But they’ve enjoyed many benefits of military life too.

“What I enjoy about the military is the people,” Mathe said. “The people who join are essentially 1 percent of the population in the United States. They are willing to sacrifice themselves for their country and for the greater good. The ability to work with them and lead them is inspiring and motivating. Seeing what people will do for the greater good—that’s why I keep coming to work every day.”

Mathe is currently a Lieutenant in charge of improving maintenance efficiencies and effectiveness for nine squadrons responsible for the deployment of an aircraft carrier. He specializes in Continuous Process Improvement and ensures that business practices and processes for aircraft maintenance are being done in a certain way. The crew is adopting practices that are effective and efficient.

“I make sure a critical mass of people is trained,” Mathe explained. Mathe recognizes that family support is an important aspect of any military career.

Mathe has been married for 15 years. He’s spent time apart from his wife and children on deployment and would like to finish his career in the states.

“Being in the military, if you’re fortunate enough to have a good spouse, and that process is done well, your kids become resilient and confident. They’ve moved around and have had to make friends. They are good kids, and they work hard. But the impact of good-byes are difficult.”

He currently coaches football at El Capitan High School where they live in Lakeside, California. He has enjoyed his military career and plans to retire in 2022.

Please stay in touch

Would you like to receive important updates on events happening at Lourdes Academy? Have you moved recently? If so, please update your information by clicking on the “Alumni” link at www.Lourdes.Today. Be sure to check out exciting events and get the scoop on the Lourdes Alumni Association.
Alumni Memorial Mass
Tuesday, November 26, 2019
Lourdes Academy High School
Castle Gymnasium
Mass 9:20 a.m. • Brunch 10:20 a.m.
Each year, Lourdes Academy holds an Alumni Memorial Mass to pay tribute to the alumni and staff who have gone before us. This year’s mass will be held Tuesday, November 26 in the Castle Gymnasium at Lourdes Academy High School. A brunch for families of deceased alumni and staff will follow the mass. For more information or to make reservations, contact Gabrielle Jacobs at (920) 426-3626, ext. 534 or gjacobs@lourdes.today.

Awards & Recognition Dinner
Friday, April 24, 2020
LaSure’s Hall
5:30 p.m.
Join Lourdes Academy as we celebrate our outstanding alumni at the 10th Annual Awards & Recognition Dinner. Gather your friends for an evening of fun, fellowship and fond memories as we recognize our Outstanding Alumni and Distinguished Stewardship Award winners and induct the newest members into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Tee It Up for Kids Golf Outing
Friday, June 12, 2020
Lake Breeze Golf Club, Winneconne

60th Anniversary All-Class Reunion
Saturday, June 13, 2020
Lourdes Academy High School
For information on upcoming events, contact Karen Boehm at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdes.today.
Welcome Back Alumni!

Class of 1980 - 40th Reunion
Saturday, August 22, 2020
Lourdes Academy High School
110 N. Sawyer Street

60th Anniversary
All Class Reunion
Saturday, June 13, 2020
Lourdes Academy High School
110 N. Sawyer Street

Contact Karen Boehm at 920-426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdes.today for assistance with your reunion. Lourdes Academy offers free mailing lists and facilities usage for Lourdes class reunions.

The Class of 1994 celebrated their 25th class reunion in July.