Lourdes, community unite for Catholic Schools Week

Lourdes Academy celebrated an all-system mass at St. Raphael the Archangel Church during Catholic Schools Week.

In the middle of a long winter, it’s easy to get caught up in the frustration of cold, snow, hours spent shoveling, and the occasional car trouble. Winter also, however, provides an opportunity to come together as a community, whether it’s by donating time, helping a neighbor clear a driveway, or giving a friend a ride to work or school. At Lourdes Academy, our annual Catholic Schools Week celebration provides an opportunity to get involved in the community through our cornerstone values of faith and service.

Lourdes held its all-system Mass on Thursday, January 30th. It was presided over by Fr. Doug LeCaptain, Fr. Matt Simonar, Fr. Jim Jugenheimer, and Sister Pam Biehl. It was wonderful to see our schools come together as one to celebrate our faith, as well as to reflect on new ways to put the values of the Gospel into living action through service.

Reflecting on our faith, our students, faculty, staff, parents and Oshkosh area parishes committed to service by organizing a food drive to help the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry. Together, we were able to donate almost 30,000 pounds of food thanks to community-wide generosity. Seeing the combined effort was a wonderful reminder of how much we can do when we are willing to cooperate and share resources in common.

In order to celebrate this spirit of togetherness, Catholic Schools Week also featured our 3rd annual Scooter Hockey Tournament. Three hundred participants on over 40 teams competed in three divisions. Faculty, trustees, students and parents all actively participated, and our Cabrini campus secured the spirit award by fielding the most teams. The tournament was well-attended, and it provided another excellent opportunity to reflect on the spirit of community that binds Lourdes Academy and, indeed, the City of Oshkosh together.

As we anticipate the warmth of spring, our system continues to look forward to new opportunities to express its faith through service and communal participation. Our students, faculty and staff know the challenges we face, but with the help of the individual gifts given to each and every one of us, we are confident that we can meet them together.

Thank you for your continued support.

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Traditional students at Lourdes Academy have not experienced a life of communism or what it’s like to live in a society trying to rebuild since the fall of it. And they likely have not experienced a life with limited access to very basic necessities and education.

Yet, each year, students from around the globe visit Lourdes and share experiences like these. Students come to Lourdes Academy through several different programs including Global Outreach, which seeks to renew the principles of Christianity and service in the former communist countries of Central/Eastern Europe through the Catholic youth. Since the program started in 1996, 32 students have visited Lourdes in their junior year then returned home to implement the Christian principles they have learned.

Gergely Fekete of Hungary is one of three students visiting Lourdes this year through Global Outreach.

“Through Global Outreach, I got to know a lot of people and the American culture,” Fekete said. “I became more mature and received a better view of the world. I will always be grateful for this opportunity.”

Fekete is staying with host parents, Mike and June Haig, who consider their Global Outreach students an extension of their own family.

“The biggest thing we’ve gotten out of our experience as a host family is that you gain a family in another country,” June Haig said. “It’s amazing how the students’ families become your family and you become part of their family.”

This year, Lourdes Academy is also home to two students from Burundi, Africa. Olivier Ndorimana and Jean-Michel Muhumbo came to the United States through Burundi High School Students in USA – a new program initiated by the Burundi Education Fund (BEF), Inc. The BEF is a charitable organization formed to support students and schools in extreme poverty in Burundi, Africa, and help them become self-reliant adults who can help break the cycle of poverty.

“Boys are boys, no matter where they’re from or what language they speak.”
~Laurie Brooks

“I wanted to have a better education, experience America and develop my communicative skills in the English language,” Ndorimana said. “I have improved my English, made friends, and been involved in different school activities.”

Olivier is staying with Bob and Laurie Brooks, whose sons Joe (’11) and Jim (’13) graduated from Lourdes, and Jack is a Freshman. The experience has been as educational for the Brooks Family as it has for Olivier.

“We’ve learned so much from each other,” Laurie Brooks said. “We’re learning about Burundi, which is the 3rd poorest country in the world; the struggles of the families, particularly Olivier’s, who live there; and the sacrifices that Olivier and his family made to bring him here to learn and study. The most interesting thing we’ve learned, though, is that boys are boys, no matter where they’re from or what language they speak. They laugh, wrestle, scheme, and play just like brothers would.”

“Our international students add to the rich diversity in the student body, add unique perspectives to class, and allow our students to understand and participate in global issues in more personal ways,” said Lourdes Academy 6-12 Principal Mike Mauthe. “We are blessed to have faith-filled young men like Gergely and Olivier who demonstrate the Lourdes Academy Way and quickly become important parts of our community.”

Lourdes international alumni have experienced success bringing Christian values home to Europe. Dr. Orsolya (Orsi) Paterne Cisky (‘97-’98) of Hungary and her husband introduced Hungarian language children’s liturgies to local parishes in Szeged and are active in teaching teenagers about relationships, intimacy and love, and self-knowledge. Tomas Kadlec (’01-’02) founded a Boy Scout troop in his home country of Slovakia. And Kinga Gorog (’09-’10) of Hungary is active in her parish in Kaposvar as well as in her Christian community when she visits home in Budapest.

Consider hosting an exchange student

Would you like to be part of an experience that enriches the life of a young person and provides an opportunity for academic and spiritual growth? Consider hosting a foreign exchange student. Contact the representatives below to learn more.

Global Outreach - Fr. Larry Seidl
920-722-4914
ljseidl1949@gmail.com
globaloutreachprograms.com

Burundi High School Students in USA - Egide Nimubona
920-540-7486
enimubona@educateburundi.org educateburundi.org
The third generation of Lourdes Academy is in the building!

During a family Thanksgiving celebration, Dan (’99) and Chelsea (Alt-’00) Buttke were preparing to sit down to dinner. As is common with many holiday celebrations, the room was filled with the commotion of feeding young children and making final meal preparations. As the guests were about to take their first bites of food, their son, Jackson, a 4-Year Enrichment student at Lourdes Academy Elementary, quietly asked, “Aren’t we going to pray?” And with that, Jackson led the entire family in a prayer he sings at school before meals.

“That was a pretty proud moment as a parent, and one that I think goes back to the Catholic values he has been taught even in a short time at Lourdes,” Dan said.

Jackson and his brother, Liam, are among many third-generation students currently attending Lourdes Academy. Dan’s mother Mary (Kerrigan) Buttke (’70) also graduated from Lourdes High School. For Dan and Chelsea, who attended Catholic schools from preschool through college, the decision to send their own children to Lourdes Academy was an easy one.

“Lourdes is a family, both literally and figuratively,” Dan said. “When Jackson started the 3-Year Preschool program in the fall of 2012, he was in class with his cousin, Izabel Gelhar, but on day one when we walked into school, it was just awesome to see the other parents. I think I had gone to school with about half of them, and it was great to see that they were passing on the Lourdes tradition to another generation of their family.”

Izabel’s parents are Chelsea’s sister, Jennifer (Alt-’98) and Joseph (’98) Gelhar. Joseph’s brother, Matthew (’00) also married his high school sweetheart, Tiffani (Mosling ’99).

“You see it all over,” Dan added. “People staying closely connected with the Lourdes family, returning to Oshkosh and getting involved either as parents, employees, volunteers or other supporters of Lourdes Academy.

The level of pride and commitment is undeniable, and the way it all stays so connected to Lourdes from generation to generation is inspiring.”

That close family environment is what drew Mary to Lourdes when selecting a school for Dan.

“I have always felt a special bond among the Lourdes community,” Mary said. “As a parent, I knew that there were many people looking out for my son throughout grade school, middle school and high school. I am thrilled to see my grandchildren at Lourdes, and I am thankful that Dan and Chelsea are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to provide a Catholic education for their children.”

Educating Hearts & Minds

Bill (’66) and Bev (’66) Schuster’s experience in the Catholic school system and Lourdes Academy helped lead them to the two guiding principles they used when raising their four children. 1) It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful. 2) It is vital that when educating our children’s brains, we do not neglect their hearts.

These same principles were supported by Lourdes and its faculty making Lourdes the obvious choice for their children—Laurie Muller (’91), Julie Maslowski (’92), Suzy Schuster (’95) and John Schuster (’97). Many things have changed at Lourdes through the generations, but the moral foundation on which it was built remains.

“With five grandchildren now in the system, it warms our hearts to see these principles are still being practiced,” Bill and Bev said.

Julie and her husband, Mike Maslowski (’92), have two children in the system, Max (Grade 3) and Mia Grade 5).
Lourdes is effective at striking a balance between academic excellence and the development of personal growth and moral character in the students it serves,” Julie said. “Nowhere in education will you find a greater sense of community.”

The small class sizes and individual attention appealed to Susan Schuster when deciding to enroll her son, Zach (Grade 3), at Lourdes Academy. “The Lourdes system provides a safe environment for kids to grow in every part of their personalities,” Susan said. “Having fewer students in each class opens the door to trying a variety of activities and gives them a fantastic opportunity to build their confidence and find their true talents.”

Like his grandma and grandpa, Zach is fond of his teachers. “They have nice teachers,” Zach said. “There are no bullies, and if there are problems, they are taken care of right away.”

Lourdes in Their Blood

Bob (’72) and Nancy (Wolf-’73) Reichenberger placed great value on the morals instilled in them as young high school students.

“We learned more than just from the books, we learned good morals, how to build good character and how to use our religious education in our everyday lives,” Bob and Nancy said.

Bob and Nancy both returned to Lourdes after graduation, Bob as a football and baseball coach and Nancy in the Development and school office. Their ties made choosing Catholic education an easy decision when their own children, Erica Mullen (’95) and Jared Reichenberger (’99), started school.

“We wanted to be involved in our children’s education and we wanted them to go to school with other kids whose parents felt the same way,” Bob and Nancy added.

Erica and Jared were involved in athletics and co-curricular activities in high school and, in fact, Erica was one of three girls to first join the boys soccer team. Like his father, Jared returned to Lourdes as the coach of the Lourdes Squires 5th Grade football team and Erica’s husband, Rob, teaches third grade at Lourdes Academy Elementary – Cabrini where their two children are enrolled. Charley (Grade 2) and Ryder (Kindergarten) love their Lourdes friends and Charley adds that she enjoys learning about God.

“When it came time to choose a school system for our children, it wasn’t really a choice,” Erica said. “We didn’t choose the Catholic school system, rather we feel it chose us. We know our children are not only getting a great education, but a faith-based education, which is a must for us.”

Deja Vue

Patty (Muza) Lorfeld (’70) refers to her years at Lourdes High School as the best four years of her academic life. The quality of education, along with the religious and moral guidance, was the foundation for her future, and she wanted to same for her children.

“We decided that we would have more parent input/ involvement in their education at the Catholic/parochial schools,” Patty said. “Lourdes always found a way to meet our children’s individual needs.”

For Patty’s daughter, Paula Hamer (’97), the individualized attention and education stand out as top selling points.

“Not only did we have able and qualified teachers, but they were willing and able to spend time with students that wanted extra assistance or accelerated teaching after school,” Paula said. “Lourdes was not a cookie-cutter institution, but still provided an important background of a solid education to each student. It is important that my children continue to have available to them the basics to build their futures upon, along with the Catholic-based values that the institution was created to promote.

Paula’s son, Lukas, who is in kindergarten at Lourdes Academy Elementary, loves his friends and his teacher and looks forward to learning new things.

Lourdes is Family

Sally Jean (Gauger) Cuttill was a member of the first graduating class of Lourdes in 1962. She remembers the closeness of the students and teachers (nuns for the girls and brothers for the boys), as well as the values instilled in her.

“Our children, Mike (‘83), Chris (‘86) and Kim McGuire (‘89) were sent to Lourdes to obtain a good education, a sense of values and to prepare them for their own futures,” Sally said. “Watching our grandchildren attending Lourdes, participating in some of the same sports and activities that I did, and that their parents, aunts and uncle
Reflections of an Alum
By John Cleaver ('69), Teacher

Times have surely changed! Being asked to write an article for the alumni newsletter immediately brought back memories of the time I spent as a student at Lourdes as a member of the Class of ’69. It was a terrific four years not only filled with learning but meeting people that even today I count as some of my closest friends. The memories of the teachers, classes, dances, games and homecomings are treasured.

Then graduation, college, a job, and a family. Fast forward to 1992 and my daughter, Meg, entered Lourdes. Three years later, my son, John Jr., entered Lourdes and so did I. But now I’m a teacher of business and technology. After all, that is what I went to college to become, a teacher. The process took 23 years.

A few things about Lourdes have changed. My business classes are taught upstairs in room 205. No longer are “boys downstairs, girls upstairs.” The internet and smartphones have replaced the encyclopedia for research; graphing calculators have replaced slide rules; and computers, email and all things electronic are the norm. During this time, my son was the athletic director for a few years and my wife, Jan, currently works in the guidance department.

This year is my 19th year of teaching at Lourdes and I truly enjoy the students, my colleagues and the Lourdes family. I have been blessed to have had Lourdes be such an instrumental part of my life.

Planning a reunion? Lourdes can help.

Lourdes Academy is available to assist classes planning reunions. To obtain a class list or to learn how you can hold your event at Lourdes Academy, contact Linda Wolfgram at 920-426-3626, ext. 541 or lwolfgram@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org


Head-to-Toe Apparel Winner

Congratulations to Mary Chapman (’71) of New York who won the Head-to-Toe Lourdes Academy apparel drawing for updating her information online. For the latest LA fashions, check out The Armory, “Where Knights go to get outfitted.” The student-run school store is located inside Lourdes Academy 6-12 at 250 N. Sawyer St., Oshkosh.
Mark Your Calendars

May
4  Lourdes Academy Middle School Choir Concert Commons, 2 p.m.
7  Lourdes Academy Middle School Band Concert Commons, 7:30 p.m.
13 Lourdes Academy High School Band Concert Commons, 7:30 p.m.
19 Lourdes Academy High School Choir Concert Commons, 7:30 p.m.

June
1  Lourdes Academy High School Graduation Castle Gym, 2 p.m.
5  Lourdes Academy Middle School Graduation Castle Gym, 6 p.m.
20 Tee It Up for Kids Lourdes Academy Golf Outing Lake Breeze Golf Club

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Hear what fellow alumni are saying about their time at Lourdes. If you have a favorite memory you’d like to share, email it to Karen Boehm at kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.

I owe my love of chemistry/science to Mr. Behring. Because of him, I made science my life as a Medical Technologist/Chemist for over 30 years! The best memories involved my second love of music…band, chorus, and the musicals. And who can forget social “networking” at Shakeys? High school truly was the best time of my life. Can’t wait for our next reunion to see everyone.

~Patti Cappert, Class of 1974

Dissecting fetal pigs in Mr. Trader’s Biology class; trying very hard but really not getting Trig and Calc in Mr. Knobloch’s Math class; loving English with Mrs. Mengeling.

~Elizabeth Wiske Unze, Class of 1993