Kyle Schleis’ path to the principal position at Lourdes extended far beyond a resume and interview. In fact, Schleis credits God for putting the pieces of the puzzle together that pointed him to Lourdes Academy.

Prior to joining Lourdes Academy, Schleis taught Math and coached basketball, wrestling and golf at Horicon and Kaukauna high schools. He also served as athletic director for Kaukauna for two years. But with family in the Fox Valley, he felt drawn to the area. His sister lives in Oshkosh, and his brother and sister-in-law live in Omro with their first child, Lexi, who is also Schleis’ Goddaughter.

Prior to coming to Oshkosh, Schleis was a youth leader at a church in Appleton coaching kids in their relationship with Jesus Christ. He joined St. Raphael the Archangel Parish in Oshkosh and immediately began getting involved as a lector and Eucharistic minister. But it was an unexpected phone call that opened the door to Lourdes. He received a voice mail from St. Raphael asking him to consider becoming an usher. His intended call back message turned into a conversation about the principal position.

“I called back at 8:30 p.m. on a Wednesday and Fr. Doug [LeCaptain] answered,” Schleis recalled of his conversation with the pastor. “He said I needed to apply for the principal position. I reflected and prayed and decided to apply. It’s the only position I applied for. I feel so fortunate to be here. It’s a family atmosphere and I’ve received a warm welcome from the students and staff.”

Schleis’ goal is not to make a lot of changes, but rather to listen and learn how to take Lourdes to an even better place with its climate and culture. He started his tenure by meeting with juniors and seniors, the school leaders, to learn what they liked about Lourdes and what they wanted to see improved. He also had the opportunity to hire the new staff at Lourdes Academy Middle and High School—quite an undertaking with six teachers and staff retiring in May with more than 150 collective years of experience.
Each new staff person is matched with a mentor to ensure a smooth transition at Lourdes Academy. Joining Lourdes this year are:

- Emily Boyce - MS/HS Campus Minister
- Kelly Carter – HS Business & Technology
- Josh Klopf – System IT Director
- Laura Lemancik – HS Physics
- Katharine McArthur – HS Social Studies
- Carrie O’Connor (‘96) – HS Biology
- Barb Reed (‘74) – HS Chemistry, AP Chemistry
- Stacy Smith – HS Physical Education
- Kimberly Wells – 7th & 8th Grade Science

Among the new staff are two Lourdes Academy alumni – Barb (Muza) Reed and Carrie (Buzzell) O’Connor who reflected on their own Lourdes experiences.

“Lourdes Academy has a wonderful reputation for educating the whole student,” Reed said. “I received a great education at Lourdes, especially with Mr. Bill Behring. I am honored to be teaching in the footsteps of Mr. Behring and Mr. Paul Trader.”

“I am excited to be back at Lourdes!” O’Connor added. “It feels like coming home again. Mr. Trader and Mr. Behring were my amazing science teachers and inspired my love for science. I look forward to continuing to offer our students a challenging science curriculum.”

The mix of new and veteran staff members brings both fresh ideas and energy, and experience and stability. Staff, students and families have one thing in common—a sense of family.

“I’m surprised by how sincere and unanimous the sense of family has been no matter who I’m talking to, whether it’s first, second or third generation families,” Schleis added. “This is home. This is our family.”

When you think back to your days at Lourdes, what memories come to mind? Is it a favorite teacher, going to a dance, cheering on fellow Knights at a game? For more than 50 years, Lourdes Academy has been creating traditions and memories that help students grow in confidence and character. We have been nurturing scholars, leaders and men and women of faith.

These experiences would not be possible without your help. Each year, generous supporters like you provide the resources needed to make a Lourdes Academy education a reality. Some of the ways your support is helping include:

- Tomorrow’s Leaders program
- Scholars career development experiences
- Cutting edge STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) curriculum
- Fine arts, athletic & other extra-curricular experiences
- College preparation
- Tuition assistance for families in need
- Support for our outstanding teachers

Help continue the Lourdes Academy tradition by making a gift to the Lourdes Fund. Watch for our annual appeal in your mailbox in November or contact Karen Boehm, development director, at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.

Continuing the Tradition

Lourdes celebrates the tradition of Catholic education with the third generation Erickson/Kraus/Laib family.

Standing: Lena (Erickson) Kraus (‘90), Dan Erickson (’97), Carol Erickson (‘66), Kathleen Erickson (’92) and Hobey Kraus (‘15). Seated: Teddy Kraus (’16), Dave Erickson (’65) and Sophia Laib (‘19). Not pictured: Nara (Erickson) Laib (’88), Nathan Laib (’22), Ella Laib (’29), and Sam Kraus (’11).
Feeding the masses

Before it was even a buzzword, Peter Kuenzi ('84), owner of Zuppas in Neenah, was creating a “Farm-to-Table” experience for his customers with fresh ingredients, locally grown produce and food, and spices and vegetables from his own garden. Whether you’re dining in, having lunch delivered or enjoying a catered meal from Zuppas, you are sure to enjoy a delicious dish with the finest ingredients. But Kuenzi admits, it took some work for the concept to catch on in the Fox Valley.

Kuenzi took his first cooking class at Lourdes Academy—“Survival for Singles.” He enjoyed the class and the Home Economics teacher, Mrs. Rosemary Williams, who encouraged him to explore cooking as a career. He enrolled in Fox Valley Technical College after high school, and when he was certain of his career path, he transferred to the Culinary Institute of America in New York where he earned his bachelor’s degree.

He completed an internship at a Marco Island, Florida, hotel and eventually made his way to Chicago where he worked at a fine dining restaurant for five years.

“I enjoyed the trendy little restaurants in the Chicago food scene,” Kuenzi said. “I knew other chefs and we went to each other’s restaurants. In the late 1980s and 90s, we were using fresh produce. Now we’re seeing that happen here. When I first got back, it was harder to get products or to get things to catch on.”

But catch on it did. Zuppas provides upscale quality for the average lunch person’s schedule. It also caters to large groups including business lunches and meetings, weddings, and special events. Zuppas is a regular caterer at the Paine Art Center and Gardens, The Waters and Fox Cities Performing Art Center. Kuenzi considered franchising the business at one time, but decided instead to focus his efforts on one location.

Rather than expanding his business, Kuenzi’s reward comes in the form of satisfied customers and staff and in sharing his passion for good food. He is regularly featured on Fox 11’s Good Day Wisconsin and Living with Amy cooking segments.

“I’m happy with what I’ve done. I’ve built a nice business,” Kuenzi said. “I’m doing this long term, not for a quick buck. I want to have a life and run a business without it becoming completely consuming.”

The life and times of Diamond Al

His first day out of high school, Ellien “Al” Osmus ('63) started a job at Krumrich’s Jewelers in downtown Oshkosh where he worked part time for five years while studying education at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Owner Gaylord Krumrich recognized Osmus’ creative flare and put him in charge of redecorating the store and designing display windows. He also built up a clientele which included some of Oshkosh’s leading ladies like Alberta Kimball and Mrs. Frank Turner.

By 1968, Krumrich was nearing retirement and wanted Osmus to take over the store. But Osmus’ father, a veterans services officer for Winnebago County, strongly encouraged him to pursue a career in teaching where he’d have summers off, health insurance and a retirement package. He loved his years as a teacher but always felt drawn to diamonds and gemstones.

Al Osmus (AKA Diamond Al) points to an Oscar that was given to him by movie director and friend L. Savitz who was filming on location near his home.

“I loved working with little kids, especially higher performing autistic kids,” Osmus said of his work in special
education. “They are great artists and math geniuses. But I should have stayed with the jewelry store. I regret not making that major decision.”

He taught four years in Whitefish Bay but was unable to tolerate the Wisconsin winters. He eventually made the move to Florida where he taught special education for 35 years and was named Teacher of the Year for the Miami School District in 1999. In the years following his retirement, he rekindled his interest in the jewelry business and became a certified gemologist. He’s been hooked ever since. He consults with local jewelers to create designs for unique stones, including a 6 carat flawless yellow diamond from Australia, which he purchased this summer.

“I light up when I talk about diamonds,” Osmus said.

“I’m so passionate about it. They are God’s artwork; I don’t know how else to describe it. People have no idea how much goes into the cutting of a stone. When I see diamonds, especially in natural light, it’s like a miracle.”

Osmus is publishing an audio book about his life titled, “The Life and Times of Diamond Al.” Reflecting on his time at Lourdes brought back a flood of wonderful memories, especially being involved with the theater program with Brother Edward.

“Being involved in theater sparks an interest and love of music that lasts a lifetime,” Osmus recalled. “My four years at Lourdes formed my life, but I wasn’t really aware of it at the time. It gave me an everlasting faith and great possibilities.”

### Changing the face of medical research

Brian Wadzinski’s Turkey Creek Biotechnology company is changing the face of medical research.

Brian Wadzinski (’79) and his wife own a piece of property in west Tennessee he calls his little piece of heaven. An outdoors enthusiast, Wadzinski was sitting in a deer stand on the property when he got the inspiration to combine agriculture and biotechnology in his new venture Turkey Creek Biotechnology.

After graduating from Lourdes, Wadzinski went on to earn a B.S. in Chemistry and Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in Pharmacology at the University of Wisconsin Madison. He joined the Department of Pharmacology at Vanderbilt University as an assistant professor in 1993 and has done extensive research in the biochemistry and pharmacology fields. As a principal investigator, Wadzinski has received considerable funding from the National Institutes of Health and has published nearly 70 papers in various journals, including a Science paper. But it’s his more recent endeavor that he is most proud of.

“The thing I’m very excited about is a year ago I started my own company with two colleagues,” Wadzinski said. “I’m founder and CEO of Turkey Creek Biotechnology, an organization dedicated to raising antibodies that recognize molecules of biomedical importance.”

Scientists at Turkey Creek Biotechnology are developing alpaca antibodies that recognize multiple proteins, including proteins present in a variety of pathogens, cancers and other diseases. The major purpose of antibodies is to help the body remove foreign substances, such as pathogens and toxins. Antibodies can also be used in biomedical research, diagnostics and the clinic. The process of using the body’s own immune system to fight disease, or immunotherapy, is a rapidly growing field of medicine.

Turkey Creek Biotechnology is focusing on alpacas because of their unique immune system.

“The antibodies alpacas produce are extremely valuable,” Wadzinski explained. “They are heat and acid stable and can pass the brain-blood barrier. They are also relatively easy to clone.”

The research being done on alpaca antibodies at major academic centers and drug companies is breaking new ground in medicine but not at the risk of animals.

“We are not sacrificing animals,” Wadzinski clarified. “We take a little bit of blood and purify the antibody and/or clone the cDNA encoding the antibody.”

The company is in its early stages. Turkey Creek Biotechnology is currently making antibodies for its own research and the research of colleagues. A great deal of work needs to be done before those antibodies can be developed into a diagnostic for specific diseases and even more work to develop it into a drug to treat diseases, such as cancer.

“We are currently working with colleagues at Vanderbilt but are looking for angel investors or venture capitalists to take the company to the next step,” he added.

### Share your story

Do you have a story you’d like to share for The Shield? Contact Karen Boehm at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.
Knight Sighting in Italy

Laura Saporiti was a foreign exchange student from Italy who spent her senior year at Lourdes Academy. She’s returned to the U.S. for several reunions over the years, but in June, she hosted classmates and life long friends in her current home of Menton, France. Pictured upon their arrival in Menton are: Mary Callinan Pomroy, Donna Lee, Mary Koplitz Bozik, Laura Saporiti Lomazzi and Suzy Dempsey Canziani.

Jesus returns home to Lourdes

Following an all-system mass at St. Jude (Sacred Heart site), Lourdes Academy 6-12 students process back to school in silence behind the consecrated Eucharist. The event is a visible reminder that Jesus Christ is present in our school throughout the year.

Please stay in touch

We hope you are enjoying The Shield. To continue receiving the alumni newsletter and other updates from Lourdes Academy, please update your information on the Alumni link at lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.

Knights at La-la-la-Lambeau

Nolan (‘27) and Haleigh (‘21) Gibson were hoping for a chance encounter with Aaron Rodgers during a visit to Lambeau Field this summer, but they got something even better. Larry VanAlstine, the first lay person to work at Lourdes Academy and member of the Lourdes Athletic Hall of Fame, was their tour guide for the day. Go Knights!

Lourdes Academy Booster Club
Packer Tailgate Party

Sunday, November 13, 2016
Green Bay Packers vs. Tennessee Titans
Lourdes Academy High School Bill Behring Commons
Doors open at 10:30 a.m. • Kickoff at noon
Tickets $25 each (Age 21 and over please)

Door prizes, Complimentary Bloody Mary Bar, Silent Auction and more
One lucky winner will win a $500 cash prize

Tickets available at the door (limit of 250 will be sold), at the Lourdes High School office or by emailing Todd Kaull at tjaull@gmail.com.

Proceeds benefit K-12 student-athletes

Calling all military personnel

Lourdes Academy would like to honor its alumni who are serving or have served in the military. If you or an alumni you know is a veteran, please email Karen Boehm at kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org by October 15 with the branch of the military and years of service.
Planning a reunion? Contact Shannon Gibson at 920-426-3626, ext. 541 or sgibson@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org for assistance. Lourdes Academy offers free mailing lists and facilities usage for Lourdes class reunions.