



## GRACE Receives Significant Anonymous Donation to “Invest in Teacher Excellence”

GRACE has announced a generous donation titled “Invest in Teacher Excellence.” The intention of this unprecedented gift was made possible through an anonymous benefactor’s strong belief in Catholic education and the professional development of GRACE teachers.

The “Invest in Teacher Excellence” program will serve GRACE teachers in two capacities, offering a GRACE Master’s Degree Path Program and initiating a Top Teacher Talent Award that will recognize exceptional teachers and provide a stipend to support continued teaching success.

The GRACE Master’s Degree Path Program gives GRACE teachers the opportunity to apply for one of 19 fully-funded graduate degree scholarships. The scholarship will cover the cost of tuition, books and fees of the graduate degree. GRACE teachers will apply to the graduate program, and the coursework will be

conducted in a cohort model, giving teachers the opportunity to learn together.

The Top Teacher Talent Award, centered on rewarding and reinforcing exemplary teaching in the GRACE system, will award \$1,000 to 20 classroom teachers who demonstrate strong classroom results in the areas of engagement, leadership and instruction through an essay application and portfolio of examples.

GRACE President Kimberly Desotell said, “We are thrilled to announce this and are completely humbled by the generosity of this benefactor. Their faith in GRACE teachers reinforces our commitment to our educators, giving them the tools needed for continued learning and continued excellence. This is an innovative and unprecedented opportunity to recognize high-quality teaching and learning in our GRACE schools.”

# President Welcome



Dear Members of the GRACE Community:

Summer greetings during this beautiful time of rejuvenation, relaxation and rest.

For this edition of our GRACE newsletter, I wish to elaborate on the issue of **School Safety**. Safety of our students, employees and visitors is our utmost priority. The safety, security and well-being of all children and adults is vital to our mission and something

we not only think about every single day but employ established practices and protocols on a daily basis. Several strategic factors have been initiated over the past 12-18 months across GRACE to maintain a high level of focus on safety in each of our schools.

**Adult Safety:** Standard practice by the Diocese of Green Bay for several years, employees and volunteers in all schools and parishes are required to have a complete background check and VIRTUS training on file prior to working in, visiting or being around children in our schools and

parishes. This stringent practice demonstrates the commitment to programs and policies that protect all children and youth. Every year a comprehensive audit ensures our compliance with these Safe Environment practices. Results of annual audits have proven that our GRACE practices related to adult safety are practiced and followed with fidelity throughout all of our GRACE schools.

**Building Safety:** Our principals and leadership teams have published personalized, complete and comprehensive Safety Building Plans for each school. These Plans are prepared in consultation with local police officials and authorities and all are consistently reviewed and approved by our GRACE Board of Trustees annually. Our GRACE Safety Committee (a system-wide leadership committee) reviews and monitors safety logs, safety drills and ongoing training conducted at each and every school site. All buildings hold routine fire, tornado and intruder drills.

**Internet and Email Safety:** Cyber Safety is a predominant need in the world's escalating technology landscape. With the increased

use and access to electronic devices, GRACE remains vigilant in our practices and training with respect to students and staff and our school-issued devices. Each building is equipped with state of the art firewall technology. Monitoring and reporting tools are utilized that recognize at-risk behavior and inappropriate content for all web browsing, Google chats, Google docs and email, etc. This monitoring is in place to offer protection from harmful content, phishing or malicious intent. Filters limit websites and staff are trained in how to respond to concerns and alerts. Parents are notified should there be any level of concern with their child's use of school issued electronic devices.

**Safety Coordinator:** New this fall as a proactive measure to further support our focus on safety, we are adding a part-time GRACE Safety Coordinator to the ranks of our GRACE team. Mr. Mike Reignier, a former police officer, will be employed to assist GRACE in our day-to-day efforts in addition to our long-term strategies related to safety. Mr. Reignier will spend time reviewing all Safety Plans in addition to serving as a resource to building principals and as a conduit to provide relevant safety and violence prevention training for our parent and staff groups. The addition of this role is to proactively adjust to the dynamic world around us. (Please see introduction of our GRACE Safety Coordinator on page 7 of this newsletter.)

Overall, GRACE is proud of our safe schools and we are committed to taking proactive safety measures to improve preparation and prevention. We credit our safety to our families who are highly engaged with their children and schools as we work together collaboratively to nurture healthy, vibrant, faith-filled learning communities. New families share one of the many top reasons they chose a GRACE school is for school safety and orderly structure. We remain strong in spirit and fortitude as we focus on ensuring our schools are a special and a safe place to learn, grow and work!

We hope your summer is filled with reading, writing, fun and most of all... safety! God bless!

*In Christ,*

**Kimberly A. Desotell**  
President, GRACE



## Enrollment For 2022-2023

Enrollment continues for the GRACE 2022-2023 school year. The non-refundable enrollment fee is currently \$125 per family. Current GRACE families received an email in January from their GRACE school via TADS with a re-enrollment link specific to each student. The link connects the family directly to the TADS website to complete the online enrollment process. Families with students new to a GRACE school are required to first submit an online admission application. Upon completion of

the enrollment registration questions for each child and payment of the per family enrollment fee, families are required to complete a tuition agreement and set up a payment plan. Completion of the process in its entirety must be done to reserve each child's seat at your GRACE school for Fall 2022.

Please know we are developing wait lists at several schools and grade levels at this time. For more information about enrollment, please visit [gracesystem.org/enrollment](https://gracesystem.org/enrollment).



## Golden Apple Teacher of Distinction

### CHESTERTON ACADEMY OF ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL

Headmaster: Patrick McKeown  
920-617-9542

[www.sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/  
chesterton-academy](http://www.sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/chesterton-academy)

### FATHER ALLOUEZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kay Franz  
920-432-5223 (Elementary)  
920-336-3230 (Middle)

[www.fatherallouezschool.org](http://www.fatherallouezschool.org)

### HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kari Peterson  
920-468-0625

[www.holycrossfamily.org](http://www.holycrossfamily.org)

### HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Jere Kubuske  
920-494-1931

[www.holyfamilygreenbay.com](http://www.holyfamilygreenbay.com)

### NOTRE DAME OF DE PERE

Principal: Mrs. Molly Mares  
920-337-1115

[www.notredameofdepere.com](http://www.notredameofdepere.com)

### OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Jeff Young  
920-336-3091

[www.lourdesschooldepere.org](http://www.lourdesschooldepere.org)

### ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Crystal Blahnik  
920-468-5026

[www.saintbernardgb.com](http://www.saintbernardgb.com)

### ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL

Headmaster: Mr. Alex Wolf  
920-617-9542

[www.sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org](http://www.sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org)

### ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Ms. Dana Vance  
920-434-3822

[www.sjbhschool.org](http://www.sjbhschool.org)

### ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Dr. Jamie Froh Tyrrell  
920-432-8242

[www.stmoregb.com](http://www.stmoregb.com)



Ms. Jessica Rinka, Kindergarten teacher at St. John Paul II Classical School, earned the Teacher of Distinction recognition from the Greater Green Bay Chamber as part of its 29th annual Golden Apple Awards program. Ms. Rinka is just one of 30 Teachers of Distinction selected in the Northeast Wisconsin region, and is representative of the talented and dedicated teachers and staff members throughout our school system who nurture the academic, spiritual and social development of our students.

Ms. Rinka is in her third year at St. John Paul II, one of nine schools in the GRACE system. She graduated from Carthage College with degrees in Elementary Education and Studio Arts, and a minor in Natural Science. After teaching middle school, she moved to De

Pere in 2017 and began working as a 4-year-old Preschool Teacher in the Children's Center at St. Norbert College before transitioning to her teaching position at St. John Paul II Classical School.

"I absolutely love being a teacher," Ms. Rinka said. "It is an incredible privilege and wonderful opportunity to be the person who inspires children to grow in their desire to learn through playing, exploring, investigating and collaborating with others."

"The fact that our Catholic faith gets to play such an influential role in our endeavors at school makes it even more worthwhile. Unplanned teachable moments that spark a child's sense of awe and wonder, leading to fantastic questions being asked and open-ended discussions taking place, are one of my favorite aspects of being a teacher."

Ms. Rinka said her desire to pursue a teaching career started early in life.

"In my eighth-grade yearbook there was a page where we were asked to write where we saw ourselves in 10 years," she said. "I wrote, 'A college graduate working as a teacher.' Several members of my family are teachers, including my grandpa, a few of my cousins and my aunt. Their work as educators, along with my love of learning, were two major influences in my decision to become a teacher."

Overall, 72 GRACE educators, representing every GRACE school, were among the area teachers nominated for Golden Apple Awards this school year. Congratulations and thank you Ms. Rinka for your commitment to our students and their families.



## Looking Ahead...

Please view the complete academic calendar online for important upcoming dates. It is available at [gracesystem.org/academic-calendar](http://gracesystem.org/academic-calendar). In addition, please visit our schools' websites for dates and information about fundraising events.

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL - AUGUST 24**

## Holy Cross Pledges to “Walk to Water”

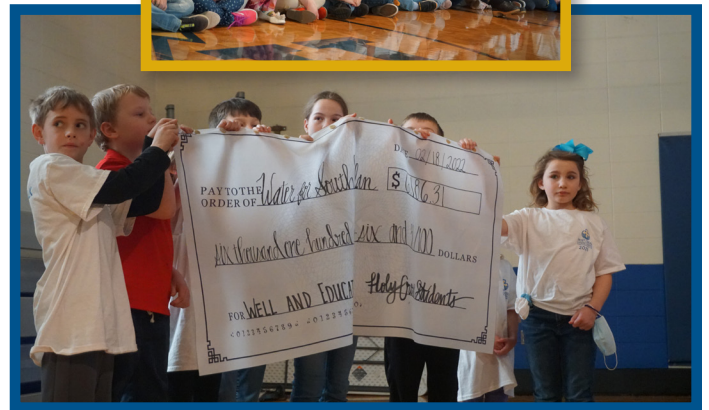
Holy Cross Catholic School students and staff embarked on a Catholic Social Teaching project over the course of the first and second trimester of the 2021-22 school year that will change and improve the lives of the people of South Sudan, Africa.

Early in the Fall, students in grades 4-8 read Linda Sue Park's novel, “A Long Walk to Water,” while pre-K through grade 3 classes read Park's re-telling of the same story for younger readers, “Nya's Long Walk: A Step at a Time.” The author focuses on the plight of the people of South Sudan who do not have access to the basic need of clean water.

Holy Cross Principal Kari Peterson comments, “We talked about how that impacts their life...and we imparted our actions to improve their situation simply out of that social teaching.”

After speaking with their Student Council, the students created an action plan: They presented the “Walk to Water” Project, a walk-a-thon which focused on collecting donations throughout the entire Holy Cross community. When the event concluded, they sent a check in the amount of \$6,240.31 to Water for South Sudan, Inc. This was enough to co-sponsor two wells and provide sanitation education.

Walk to Water was a school-wide effort for the annual STREAM program, which integrates science, technology, religion, art, and math. The teaching and learning process spanned all content areas. In science and engineering, students investigated water quality, learned about the water cycle, and created their own water purification systems. Using math, they calculated water needs and availability with predictions and estimation. Students used technology for project research and their art styles in the examination and replication of artistic styles from the tribes of South Sudan. Finally, they also created a slide show showcasing all of their research and results.



## Holy Family School goes “First Down For Trees”

Holy Family Catholic School's eighth grade International Baccalaureate group experienced community improvement by working alongside members of the Green Bay Packers this spring. The student-driven program got involved with the Green Bay Parks Department and was then invited to participate in a ceremonial tree planting that took place at Colburn Park in Green Bay. They planted over two dozen trees.

“The students were very proud of their accomplishments,” Holy Family Principal, Jere Kubuske said, “[and] seeing their hard work become reality.”

Students and staff also met Packer alumni and their president, Mark Murphy. This event was featured on a local Fox 11 news broadcast.

The initiative was part of the “First Downs for Trees” program, an effort that started in 2011. Their goal is to plant as many trees as the Packers scored first downs in the previous season. In 2021-22, the total added up to 406 trees, which included a variety of species ranging from flowering crab trees to maple. This project improved the green space within 16 area communities.



## St. Thomas More Catholic School Named Recipient of Library Grant



St. Thomas More Catholic School was one of 300 schools from 44 states across the country to receive a \$5,000 grant through the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. This year, the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries awarded \$1.5 million in library grants. Many of the libraries, including GRACE St. Thomas More Library will use the funds to update their collections.

"I am thrilled that children from 300 schools will soon have access to an updated library collection," Mrs. Laura Bush said. "Students across the country turn to books to discover the world around them, and we know that opening a new book opens the door to new opportunities and learning."

Dr. Jamie Froh Tyrrell, Principal of St. Thomas More Catholic School, said, "We are beyond grateful for such a generous gift, and we look forward to growing our library collection." Dr. Froh Tyrrell continued, "We hope to fill our library's shelves with a variety of fictional and informational titles that will spark our children's curiosity and grow their love of reading and learning. Our collection will be enhanced with high quality literature in both Spanish and English that aligns with our Catholic faith and values, and celebrates our bilingual and bicultural school."

Mrs. Bush revealed a summer reading list which includes recommendations for young readers through middle schoolers. GRACE schools publishes reading and literacy lists and tools to enhance engagement for our students through the summer months to counter the summer slide and ensure students are eager and ready for fall learning. Continuing reading practice over the summer months assists student learning and growth in all subject areas, not just ELA. This is why scheduled and consistent summer reading is one of the best ways to set your child up for success in the upcoming grade level.

The Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries supports school libraries with the greatest needs with the goal of encouraging all students to develop a love of reading and learning. Since its inception in 2002, it has awarded more than \$19.5 million to more than 3,300 schools across the country.

The George W. Bush Institute's Education and Opportunity work, which houses the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries, is generously supported by The Allstate Foundation.



# CatholicLink: Middle School Leadership Conference

By Linnea Svennes, CatholicLink Team Member, SNC '24

CatholicLink hosted its second annual Middle School Leadership Conference on April 1, 2022 at TiletownTech. This dynamic and interactive conference was designed and led by 15 servant leaders from Notre Dame Academy with assistance from 12 GRACE 8th grade leaders. Over ninety 7th grade students representing all nine GRACE schools and Roncalli Middle School took part in this leadership experience.

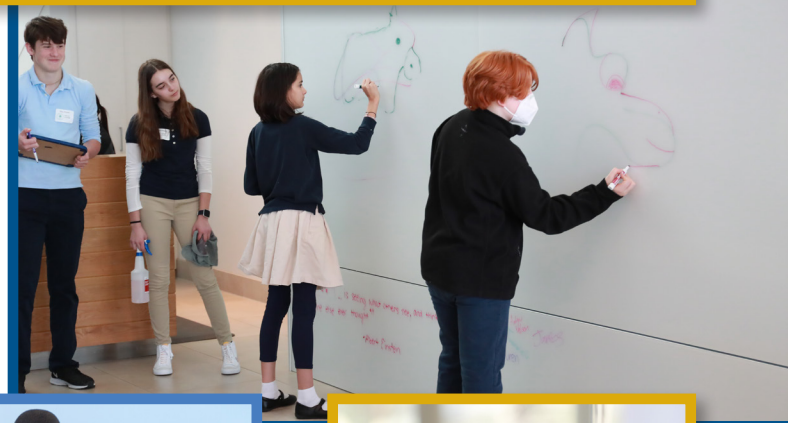
Participants applied to attend and were chosen because they portrayed leadership skills with the potential and motivation to become a great servant leader. The Middle School Leadership Conference was an all day event that strengthened the leadership qualities of the participants and provided opportunities for them to actively develop their leadership skills. The conference was focused around six qualities of a leader: Integrity, Purpose, Humility, Optimism, Teamwork, and Creativity.

The Notre Dame Academy and GRACE 8th grade students led small group activities where students learned more about each quality and how to live out these characteristics. The conference engaged students in groups with students from all schools, challenging them to meet new students while growing as leaders. Team building activities taught the participating students the importance of being a team player.

The middle school students gave the conference rave reviews. Principals expressed that their students loved the experience and meeting new friends. The students learned valuable lessons about what being a leader truly means and made comments such as, "I learned that leadership is more than being in charge" and "even the smallest person can make a difference."

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for GRACE and Notre Dame Academy student leaders to model leadership skills to younger students. The Notre Dame Academy students said they grew tremendously by teaching leadership to younger students. We believe every student is called to become a servant leader who passionately grows and shares their gifts and talents with the world.

Watch for more student leadership opportunities as the Notre Dame Academy students work with a CatholicLink team to expand upon their conference experience and share more character and leadership development opportunities with all GRACE students.



## GRACE Educators Receive Herb Kohl Awards

Two GRACE educators have been selected as 2022 Award Winners by the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation committee for the Student Scholarship, Teacher Fellowship, and Principal Leadership program based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mrs. Crystal Blahnik, Principal of St. Bernard School in Green Bay was awarded the Principal Leadership Award, which recognizes principals who set high standards for instruction, achievement, and character, and create a climate to best serve their students, families, staff, and community. Mrs. Tara Wildenberg, second grade teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School in Green Bay, was chosen as a Teacher Fellowship Award recipient, selected for her superior ability to inspire a love of learning in her students, her ability to motivate others, and her leadership and service within and outside the classroom.

These prestigious honors recognize extraordinary leadership demonstrated in the educational setting as well as outstanding academic scholars. In 2022,

100 Wisconsin teachers and 17 Wisconsin principals were recognized, and each winner was given \$6,000 individually and \$6,000 to their school.

Applauding Mrs. Blahnik and Mrs. Wildenberg, GRACE President Kim Desotell stated “this honor is a rigorous application process and an award that is recognized widely across our entire state of Wisconsin. In our GRACE system, we are most proud to have two winners this year, Mrs. Blahnik and Mrs. Wildenberg! This truly demonstrates the caliber and quality of our GRACE teachers and leaders!”

The Herb Kohl Foundation was established in 1990 by Herb Kohl, Wisconsin philanthropist and businessman. The Foundation has awarded more than \$28.3 million to Wisconsin educators, schools, and students. “Education is the key to the future of Wisconsin and our nation,” Kohl said. “I am very proud of the accomplishments of these educators and look forward to the continued contributions to our GRACE Schools in the future.”



Mrs. Crystal Blahnik



Mrs. Tara Wildenberg

## GRACE Announces New Science Curriculum

By Laura Blicharz, Director of Curriculum

As part of the GRACE curriculum cycle, the 2021-2022 school year was focused on science curriculum and development. Teams of teachers and principals met with Team Curriculum over the course of the year to not only develop the GRACE science curriculum, but also chose new science resources and materials for the 2022-2023 school year. After team meetings, publisher demonstrations, sample viewings, and more, GRACE has decided on two new curriculum resources that will be purchased for the 2022-2023 school year: one for grades K-5 and another for grades 6-8.

K-5 will be adopting Project Lead the Way (PLTW). PLTW is an innovative, hands-on, engineering-focused resource that excels on teaching and growing 21st century skills in students. This includes skills such as collaboration, innovative thinking, problem solving,

reflective thinking, planning, team building, and more. PLTW training for teachers will take place in August and the new resource will be ready to implement in the fall.

Grades 6-8 will be adopting a program called iScience published by McGraw Hill. iScience stood out to our middle school teacher representatives because it enforced the three key discipline areas: Life Science, Physical Science, & Earth and Space Science. In addition, the materials the program provides will prepare students for high school science classes. This includes non-fiction reading skills, hands-on collaboration experiments, academic writing, and more. Teacher training for the new iScience program will take place in August and will be ready to implement in the fall.

GRACE looks forward to seeing these two new programs in action this fall with our students and teachers!

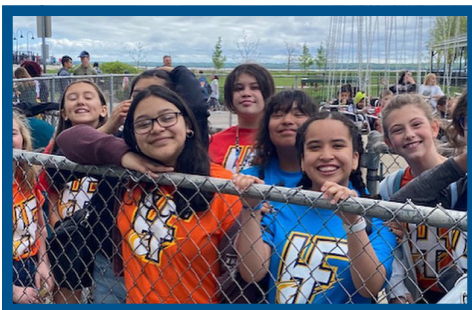
## Welcome Mr. Mike Reignier, GRACE Safety Coordinator!



Former Green Bay Police School Resource Officer and Detective, Mike Reignier has past experience in law enforcement as well as serving in the Marines. He holds a BA from UW Platteville and a MA from UW Oshkosh. His email is [safety@gracesystem.org](mailto:safety@gracesystem.org) and his direct phone number is 920-432-8242 ext. 105.



## Congratulations to all GRACE 8th Grade Graduates!



## LET US HELP YOU

**Call** 920-499-7330

**New Location** 1822 Riverside Drive, Green Bay, WI 54301

**General e-mail** [graceoffice@gracesystem.org](mailto:graceoffice@gracesystem.org)

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