

Legacies of Giving: A Family Rooted in Service, Faith, and Catholic Education

By Nate Tackaberry, Executive Director of Advancement, GRACE

In a world that often moves too fast to notice the quiet acts of kindness, the story of [the late] Mary Ellen Lamers and her family is a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of giving time and talent. Spanning three generations of Catholic school education, their legacy exemplifies what it truly means to serve.

It all began with Margaret Stern, mother of Mary Ellen Lamers. Margaret was a widowed woman of modest means who attended Catholic school in Brillion, Wisconsin. She saw the value of Catholic education and worked tirelessly to help Mary Ellen send her son, Chet, to St. Aloysius Catholic School in Kaukauna. Though she didn't have much, Margaret gave all she could, instilling a spirit of sacrifice and a love for faith-based education that became central to her family.

Years later, when Chet's children attended Notre Dame of De Pere (NDDP), Mary Ellen felt called to repay the blessings from her mother that had once been extended to her and Chet. She moved from Kaukauna to De Pere to be closer to her family, became VIRTUS certified, and immersed herself in the school's community.

Mary Ellen attended daily Mass with her grandchildren, comforted students during anxious moments, and created "worry



worms," small crocheted crafts to soothe little hands. After Mass one day, a student asked her for a hug, sparking a tradition as children began seeking her hugs on the way back from class. What started as a gesture for one student quickly grew, and she became affectionately known as "Grama Mary."

Teachers began noticing, too. "Grama Mary" visited classrooms as a guest reader, often with Chet, by her side. She quietly covered donated books for future classes and became a familiar face to students and teachers alike.

When Mary Ellen received the GRACE Outstanding Volunteer Award in 2024-25, it was a celebration of a life lived in service. Chet recalls the joy their family felt that day. After Mass, Chet had asked students to raise their hand if "Grama Mary" had read



to them, hugged them, or covered a book in their classroom. Countless hands filled the air, showing the undeniable impact of one person's time and talent.

Our GRACE community thrives when individuals answer the call to serve. We continue to be blessed by people like Mary Ellen in our schools and parishes. May her example inspire us all to give not just treasure, but our time and talent, because sometimes the greatest gift is simply being present in service.

Want to get involved? Start small. Attend a school Mass. Ask a teacher if they need classroom help. Inquire into your Site Advisory Council. Say yes to the next volunteer sign-up. Your legacy can begin with just one simple act.

SAFETY FIRST

a top priority. Through comprehensive parish partnerships, policy updates, facility enhancements, and strategic planning, we have significantly strengthened the safety and security of our campuses. Our efforts have included upgraded infrastructure, increased training for students and staff, and expanded partnerships with local law enforcement and experts.

These advancements reflect our unwavering commitment to creating a secure, nurturing environment where every child can learn and grow in faith.

However, ensuring the safety of our schools is not the work

Over the past five years, GRACE Catholic Schools have made school safety

of one person or group as it requires the vigilance and cooperation of our entire community. We ask all parents and guardians to partner with us by staying alert and speaking up if something seems concerning or if there is an opportunity to enhance security. As it relates to our own students, GRACE has a zero-tolerance policy for any weapons or threatening behavior.

Together, as a united Catholic community rooted in care and compassion, we can continue to make our schools safe havens for all.



Summer Facility Improvement Projects at GRACE Schools

Staff members and work crews all around GRACE spent the summer months improving their school's physical facilities! Thanks to the generosity of key donors, our GRACE Parishes, Site Advisory Council (SAC) fundraising, and GRACE funding several pressing needs have been resolved.

After fundraising for nearly 10 years, the St. John the Baptist Catholic School Boosters raised over \$100,000 to fund a complete gym floor renovation. The floor is safer and easier to maintain than the old wooden floor. Additionally, the Parish remodeled a classroom, with hopes of setting a precedent for facelifts to other classrooms next summer.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School was blessed to receive generous donations that made several major renovations possible. All classroom windows, many of which no longer functioned, were replaced with full-expansion windows, providing greater natural light, improved functionality, enhanced security, and added curb appeal. In addition, the school benefited from a much-needed electrical upgrade, which made possible the final gift: the installation of central air conditioning. These improvements now ensure a more comfortable, safe, and welcoming environment year-round for all who learn and work at the school.



At Holy Cross Catholic School, the kitchen was the fortunate recipient of an air conditioning system. With meals prepared daily in heat and tough weather, the A/C units are a welcomed improvement to their facility.



Students at the Resurrection campus of the Father Allouez Catholic School were greeted by brand new lockers as they entered the building. With the efforts of the SAC, and work of the Facilities Taskforce and Principal Dempsey, 150 old lockers were replaced with fresh, new green lockers.

Thank you to all who contributed to these and so many more worthwhile facility projects this past summer!





Investing in Our Teachers: Honoring the Vocation of Catholic Education

At the heart of the GRACE System of Schools, our nine vibrant Catholic school communities, is a mission grounded in faith, academic excellence, and a deep commitment to service. Every day, across our classrooms and hallways, over 300 dedicated employees live out this mission with grace and purpose. Among them, our teachers stand as the lifeblood of our schools.

Our teachers are more than educators. They are ministers of the Gospel, nurturing the minds and hearts of our students while inspiring them to grow in wisdom and faith. Their work is a true vocation, one that reaches far beyond textbooks and lesson plans. The impact they make lasts a lifetime, shaping children into compassionate, capable, and faith-filled individuals.

At GRACE, we set high standards for both academic achievement and spiritual formation. These expectations are only possible because of the commitment, energy, and love our teachers bring to their classrooms. The value we place on their work must be reflected not just in our gratitude, but also in the support and compensation we provide.

Teacher retention is not just a goal; it's a necessity. Research and experience confirm that students thrive when they are guided by consistent, caring, and qualified teachers. That's why supporting our educators spiritually, professionally, and financially is essential to the future of Catholic education in our community.

As we plan ahead, our Board of Directors and Trustees continue to be actively engaged in thoughtful and serious review of employee compensation across the entire GRACE System. This work is rooted in the belief that compensation should honor the dignity of the vocation our teachers have answered and sustain the excellence our families have come to expect.

Let us continue to stand with those who give so much of themselves to our students each day in every one of our GRACE Schools. Their calling is sacred and so is our responsibility to support them.

In Christ,

Kimberly A. Desotell

President, GRACE Schools

FATHER ALLOUEZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Francis Dempsey
920-432-5223 (Elementary)
920-336-3230 (Middle)
fatherallouezschool.org

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kari Peterson
920-468-0625
holycrossfamily.org

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Interim Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell
920-494-1931
holyfamilyschool.org

NOTRE DAME OF DE PERE

Principal: Mrs. Molly Mares
920-337-1115
notredameofdepere.com

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Jeff Young
920-336-3091
lourdesschooldepere.org

ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. David Gusloff
920-468-5026
saintbernardgb.com

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Gerene Thom
920-434-3822
sjbhschool.org

ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL/ CHESTERTON ACADEMY

Headmaster: Mr. Eric Schreiber
920-617-9542
sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell
920-432-8242
stmorgb.com

Executive Director of Learning Spotlight



As the 2025-26 school year begins, member schools are now under the guidance of new GRACE Executive Director of Learning, Dr. Stephanie Shedrow. A Green Bay native, Dr. Shedrow earned a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from UW-Madison and has most recently been engaged as an Assistant Professor of Literacy at St. Norbert College. Her role with GRACE began in early August.

Dr. Shedrow's position includes the support and guidance of principals in strengthening instructional practices and leadership, the development and delivery of curriculum, the expansion of professional development opportunities and initiatives to enhance student achievement.

Kimberly Desotell, GRACE President, comments, "Her expertise will be an invaluable asset to our system of schools as we continue to uphold and advance our high standards of learning and empower both teachers and leaders across GRACE."

Spotlight on the GRACE Board of Trustees

The GRACE Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight of the school system under the direction of the Board of Directors. Meeting every other month, trustees guide key areas including Advancement, Education, Facilities, Finance, and Governance, helping GRACE provide a high-quality, faith-filled learning environment for all students.

We are proud to highlight the chairs of our Board and Board committees, whose leadership plays a vital role in advancing GRACE's mission and vision throughout the school year. In future editions of our newsletter, we will feature additional Board members.

 NICK ANDERSON MEMBER OF ST MATTHEW CATHOLIC COMMUNITY CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2021 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I am proud to support GRACE because it provides a high quality, faith-filled Catholic education that is accessible and affordable for families in the Green Bay community. We are fortunate to also have strong public schools in our area so it is even more meaningful that so many families entrust GRACE to educate their children.	 SAMANTHA WAGNER MEMBER OF ST. NORBERT COLLEGE PARISH VICE CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2024 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I support GRACE because it provides a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment where children can grow — not only in their studies but also in their faith. GRACE offers every student the opportunity to receive an excellent education while exploring their beliefs and deepening their understanding of our Catholic faith.
 SUE AMTMANN MEMBER OF NATIVITY OF OUR LORD PARISH EDUCATION CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2013 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I was happy to be invited to join the Board of Trustees in 2013 and did so as a way to show appreciation for being a Catholic School principal, which I consider my best years of being an educator. It is a privilege and a joy to serve the extraordinary GRACE Community.	 CHET LAMERS MEMBER OF ST MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH FACILITIES CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2017 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I support GRACE because my beliefs align with the mission and values of Catholic Education. My children are blessed with a solid foundation that has helped them to learn acceptance, empathy, maturity and leadership because of their time in a GRACE school. I believe that GRACE has educators that care about our children and hold their best interests for each child above themselves.
 SARAH GREEN MEMBER OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH FINANCE CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2025 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I support the GRACE because it fosters excellence in education, and provides spiritual growth and a strong moral guide for the students throughout their entire time at the schools.	 KELLY WILLIAMS MEMBER OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH ADVANCEMENT CHAIR BOARD MEMBER SINCE 2019 <i>Why do you support GRACE?</i> I believe in the mission of Catholic education and supporting the schools that are thriving as part of the GRACE system. Serving on the board allows me to help steward resources to ensure we can continue to provide a strong academic foundation rooted in faith, values and community.

Behind the Scenes: Summer Curriculum Work Prepares Us for a Strong Start

By Laura Van Sambeek, Director of Curriculum, GRACE



While students and families have enjoyed a well-deserved summer break, our curriculum and instructional teams were hard at work to ensure every child has access to high-quality instruction from day one of the school year.

Preparing for Into Math: Our New K–8 Math Curriculum

One of the biggest shifts happening this fall is the launch of *Into Math* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for all K–8 classrooms. Throughout the summer, teachers and administrators engaged in professional development and resource review to prepare for a successful rollout. Training sessions focused on understanding the structure of the program, using assessments, and planning for instruction at varied levels. Training will continue into 2025-26.

We're excited about what *Into Math* will bring to our classrooms: more student engagement, stronger mathematical understanding, and better alignment across grade levels. With continued support throughout the year, our goal is a smooth transition that benefits all learners.

If you'd like to learn more about math instruction at GRACE, explore our Standards-at-a-Glance documents. These provide a clear overview of the required standards at each grade level and illustrate how they build vertically from Kindergarten through Grade 8 to ensure cohesive, focused instruction. Standards-at-a-Glance are also available for ELA, Religion, Science, Social Studies, Technology, Spanish, and Classical Education models.

Review of Star Testing Guidelines for 2025-26

Another area of focus has been updating and reviewing our approach to student assessment. This is done on a yearly basis and helps us ensure that assessment practices are effective and consistent across our GRACE schools. Updates for administering and using the Star assessments have been developed to support more consistent data practices.

This includes:

- Key preparation steps to offer students the most effective environment for testing.
- Updated data collection to more closely monitor student progress throughout the year and adjust instruction to meet student needs.
- Greater alignment with Wisconsin's literacy requirements including at-home reading activities and progress monitoring assessments.

These updates will help ensure that assessment results are meaningful and actionable for teachers, students, and families.



K–3 Literacy Work Aligned to Act 20

In response to Wisconsin's new legislation for every school, Act 20 legislation, our K–3 literacy framework has also been reviewed and refined. In the spring of last year and over the summer, a team of educators and administrators worked to:

- Realign our assessment practices to better reflect the skills and knowledge.
- Streamline the tools used in K–3 classrooms to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency.
- Clarify how results should be used to guide instruction and inform families.

These updates will strengthen the way we assess student's developing reading skills and ensure we are responsive to student needs from the earliest grades.

Launching a K–8 Literacy Leadership Team

We are also excited to launch a new K–8 Literacy Leadership Team this fall. This cross-school, cross-grade group of teachers and instructional leaders will work together throughout the year to:

- Review our current literacy programs and explore new options.
- Identify strengths and areas for growth across grade levels in literacy.
- Research and plan for a pilot of a new core literacy program.

This collaborative team will be key in guiding our long-term vision for literacy instruction and ensuring alignment with best practices.

Looking Ahead

The work completed over the summer has established a strong foundation for the 2025-26 school year. With thoughtful planning, updated tools, and the dedication of our teachers and leaders, we are entering the new school year more prepared than ever to support student growth.

We thank our families for your continued partnership and we look forward to sharing more as the year unfolds.

The Impact of Extracurriculars on Students

By Matt Riebe, Director of Athletics and Activities, GRACE

Athletics and activities can often be seen as the frosting on top of the cake that is education, putting the “extra” in extracurricular. They are optional, elective opportunities. Extracurriculars may not be required in order to graduate come the spring of a student’s eighth grade year or senior year, but their impact on the educational journey should not be overlooked. The purpose of the athletics and activities offered across GRACE is to support a well-rounded education, to supplement what is learned in the classroom and continue to foster a Catholic environment for students to thrive in.

Athletics isn’t for every student, nor does it have to be. Neither is every sport for a student who enjoys sports. But there likely is at least one extracurricular that does interest each student, even if they need to try it out to decide they enjoy it. That is why the participation aspect of extracurriculars is so important. The decision to join a team that together can achieve things they could not separately, allows students to truly grow.

Research shows that participation in an extracurricular activity, whether athletic

or not-athletic in nature, positively affects a students’ feeling of self-worth, social development, and academic engagement. It not only enables students to learn something new, but also encourages collaboration with others and helps develop healthy discipline. These are skills that can have a lasting impact throughout their lives. Specifically, the opportunity to participate on a team is crucial for students in elementary and middle school. The opportunity to join a group of people in any activity is never a guarantee as life goes on. In high school and beyond, the precedent of competitiveness certainly ramps up, requiring higher levels of commitment & prerequisite technical skills before joining. Now is the time to try something new, possibly a new activity a student will love for the rest of their life, without the pressure of winning or even being good at it. That’s why creating environments that allow all students to participate is vital. We want students to enjoy what they engage in.

Finding motivated adults to lead each of our extracurricular programs are essential to students having the option to grow and



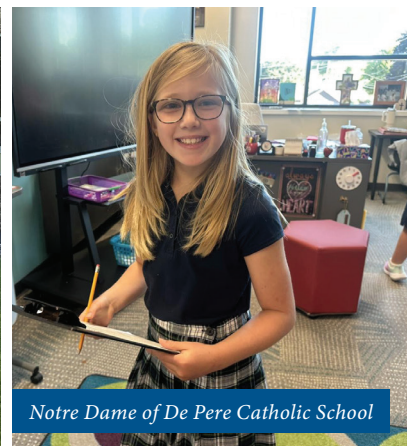
enjoy the time as a GRACE student. If you have a passion for a sport or hobby, please contact the school principal, the school’s site, athletic director, or me on how you can help start/lead a team/club.



St. John the Baptist School



Father Allouez Catholic School



Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School

Welcome Headmaster Eric Schreiber

St. John Paul II Classical School and Chesterton Academy are happy to welcome new Headmaster Eric Schreiber for the 2025-26 school year!

With an undergraduate degree in Theology and a master's in Pastoral Theology and Leadership, Mr. Schreiber is well-equipped to serve the GRACE community. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Leadership to deepen his knowledge and faith while advancing his personal and professional development. His dissertation topic is focused on Triad Methodology on Building Catholic Classical Schools. Not only that, but he arrives at GRACE with experience in the field.

He previously taught in Dallas and served as an administrator in Belgrade, Montana. With prayer, his trust in God to be a vessel of his work brought Mr. Schreiber and his wife Lindsey to GRACE.

"Though neither of us are originally from Green Bay – Lindsey is from Florida and Texas, and I'm from Denver – we're grateful to be planting roots here."

Headmaster Schreiber's promise to his new school families and staff echoes his deep belief to be a conduit of God's love and



mercy to those he serves within Catholic education. He sees Catholic education as a preparation for students to live a life oriented toward God. His goals center on being a partner within a community of parents and the Church to help form young men and women to be holy.

"By building relationships, naturally, partnerships will form by which we are all on mission together," says Schreiber.

"The best things about living in Green Bay has been the amenities of a big city without the traffic and chaos, the amount of greenery around our house and everywhere, the closeness to Our Lady of Champion Shrine, and the wonderful people of GRACE who have been abundantly welcoming with genuine kindness and concern."

Along with acquainting himself with local pastors and the GRACE community, Mr. Schreiber will continue to work on his doctoral dissertation. When he has free time,

he enjoys reading, carpentry, golf, and attending sporting events and concerts but for now, his main focus is bolstering Catholic education at St. John Paul II Classical School and Chesterton Academy.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

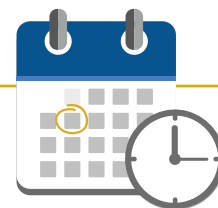


Holy Cross Catholic School



St. Thomas More Catholic School

Important Dates 2025



OCTOBER

- 28 Evening Parent/Teacher Conference 4pm to 8pm
- 30 Early Dismissal: Afternoon Parent/Teacher Conferences 12:30pm to 4:30pm
- 31 No School

- 10 No School: Diocesan In-Service
- 15 Father Allouez Catholic School: Brims & Bow Ties Event
- 15 Our Lady of Lourdes: Light up Lourdes Event
- 21 Early Dismissal: Teacher In-Service & End of First Trimester
- 27-28 No School: Thanksgiving Break

NOVEMBER

- 1 Chesterton Academy of St. John Paul II Classical School Priority Admissions Applications Open
- 8 Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School: Rise Up Raider Night

DECEMBER

- 22-1/2/26 No School: Christmas and New Year's Break



2025-26 Annual Appeal

St. John the Evangelist

The 2025-26 GRACE Annual Appeal launches on September 20 and provides an opportunity to invest in the mission of Catholic education. Rooted in faith and committed to excellence, GRACE schools form both minds and hearts, preparing students to lead with compassion, integrity, and purpose. Gifts to the Annual Appeal support teacher development, strong academics, and essential tuition assistance so that more families can access this transformative education. Together, across 9 schools and 23 parishes, we are building future leaders, faithful disciples, and thriving communities, one child at a time. Are you interested in donating? Scan the QR code for more information on how to donate.

SCAN ME!



LET US HELP YOU

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