

President for a Day: An Interview with Three Students from St. John Paul II Classical School

By Samantha Nachtwey, GRACE Director of
Marketing and Communications

This year, the GRACE Riverside office welcomed some very special guest leadership. Marie (6th grade), Sam (5th grade), and Rose (Kindergarten) from St. John Paul II Classical School (SJPII) each spent a day serving as President or Vice President. They traded their typical school supplies for a seat at the leadership table, a tour of the facilities, and a look at how our school system operates. We sat down with them to talk about their school, their faith, and being the boss for a day.

Q: What do you love most about your school and a typical school day?

Marie: It is such a welcoming community where you feel included immediately. My favorite parts of the day are lunch, recess, and the passing periods, because there is such a great sense of togetherness and I love to laugh with my friends.

Sam: I really enjoy how we team up with other schools, like running cross country with GRACE Holy Family. I also like humanities because we play a tag game based on the books we are reading; it's great to have fun while we learn. No matter where you go here, people are ready to help you back up if you get knocked down.

Rose: I like the learning stations and playing with my



friends! My best friend is Callie and we have so much fun at recess. It is a very good place to learn and I really like going to Gym class.

Q: Can you tell us about a teacher or a subject that has made an impact on you?

Marie: I really like History, especially learning about the Egyptians. My second grade teacher, Ms. Megan, also made a big impact because she is so faithful and nice; you feel like you can talk to her about anything.

Sam: Academically, I have improved a lot in spelling and math. I have specifically enjoyed exploring long division this year.

Rose: Ms. Miller is fun and Ms. Ellis is really nice. Mrs. T is a very nice gym teacher, too.

Q: How has your school helped you grow in your faith?

Marie: The teachers build a foundation in elementary school and help you keep caring about it in middle school. When the whole school prays at Mass, I feel like we are all connected by God.

Sam: I like singing at Mass and listening to the word. We also pray the Rosary and go to Adoration, which helps me realize how to connect closer to Jesus.

Rose: In the Atrium, we learned about the "pearl of great price," which means giving your whole heart to God. I also like to listen to the Word of God during Mass.

Q: What would you say to a student who is thinking about joining your school?

Marie: I would tell them it is a very welcoming community with amazing teachers and great learning.

Sam: I would tell them that it is fun to explore everything here. There is always someone ready to help you out.

Rose: It is a good place to make friends!

Q: What was the best part of being the “President for a Day” at the Riverside Office?

Marie: I liked meeting the team at the office and visiting the GRACE Father of Allouez school building.

Sam: It was great to see how the office works and meet the people who help run our schools.

Rose: I got a hat and a pin and a cool highlighter! It was fun to see the big GRACE Father Allouez when we visited that school.

Q: Now that summer is here, what are you most excited to do?

Marie: I am looking forward to volleyball, the beach,

and jumping on the trampoline with my five siblings.

Sam: I will be training for cross country and finding new ways to have fun with my friends before school starts again.

Rose: I love playing soccer. I am playing with the eight-year-olds now because I am getting really good!



Hearing our students describe their schools as welcoming communities where they grow closer to Jesus sets a wonderful tone for the future of GRACE.

As GRACE President Desotell reflected: “The time I spent with these students was a powerful reinforcement of the promise and potential within our schools. Their energy, curiosity, enthusiasm, and faith-filled hearts remind us exactly why Catholic education is so vital. It was an honor to share the leadership table with Marie, Sam, and Rose, and to see firsthand how our mission is truly coming alive in our students.”

Watching these young leaders step into their roles with such confidence gives us great excitement for what lies ahead.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

New Leadership for a Bright Future: GRACE Announces New Principals



MRS. LAURIE ERICKSON
PRINCIPAL,
HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

We are excited to share that Mrs. Laurie Erickson has been named the new Principal of GRACE Holy Family Catholic School, effective July 1, 2026. Currently serving as the Assistant Principal at Holy Family and Assistant Principal at GRACE Notre Dame of De Pere, Mrs. Erickson is a dedicated, faith-filled leader who provides the steady, familiar leadership needed to maintain school momentum.

Mrs. Erickson brings over 30 years of experience in education, including roles as an Educational Administrator and Program Specialist for the New Mexico Public Education Department. She holds a Master of Arts in Education from Northern Michigan University and is a licensed School Administrator. “I am truly honored to lead the staff and students at Holy Family,” Mrs. Erickson shared. “I am inspired to help them seek their full potential within a community rich in tradition and faith.”



MRS. JESSICA A. NEJEDLO
PRINCIPAL,
OUR LADY OF LOURDES
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Jessica A. Nejedlo has been named the new Principal of GRACE Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, effective July 1, 2026. Having served as the school’s Supportive Consultant since 2023, Mrs. Nejedlo brings a wealth of institutional knowledge to ensure a seamless transition for students, staff, and families.

Mrs. Nejedlo offers more than 20 years of experience in elementary education, including roles as a Reading Interventionist and International Baccalaureate (IB) Curriculum Coordinator. She holds a B.S. in Elementary Education from UW-Green Bay and a Reading Teacher Certification from UW-Stout. A devoted member of the parish community, Mrs. Nejedlo’s leadership is grounded in faith and deep community roots. We are confident she will guide Our Lady of Lourdes toward continued growth and success.

Please join the GRACE system in warmly welcoming
Mrs. Erickson and Mrs. Nejedlo to their new leadership roles!



Building Momentum: A Summer of Growth and Grace

Kimberly A. Desotell, GRACE Schools President

As we step into the heart of summer, there is a distinct sense of momentum building across our GRACE community. While our hallways may be quiet, this is a season of intentional activity and joyful anticipation. We are hard at work preparing for a new chapter, and I am invigorated by the way God continues to bless our schools through innovation and mission-driven leadership.

This growth is most visible in the many new families joining us for the upcoming year. To those of you entering our community for the first time, I want to say welcome home. Choosing a school is a significant decision, and we are honored to partner with you in the educational journey and spiritual formation of your children. We are eager to witness the unique contributions your family will bring to our mission.

This sense of welcome extends to our professional staff as well. Behind the scenes, our principals are busy greeting new faculty members, leading orientations, and onboarding the talented educators who will guide our students this fall. This diligent work ensures that we are ready to serve with excellence, compassion, and faith the moment our doors open. I am particularly excited to share that our leadership is also expanding with the addition of two new principals and a new Director of Student Services, whose expertise will be instrumental in the year ahead.

In reflection on our progress this summer, I am so pleased to share that enrollment continues to trend at a very stable and healthy level as we continue to experience growth. The sustained interest in our Catholic schools serves as a testament to the value families place on a rigorous, faith-based education. We are grateful for this continued trust and opportunity to extend the reach of our mission to even more students.

As we journey through this month, we look to the example of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, whose feast day we celebrate on July 14. Her life was defined by a courage and deep, prayerful commitment to Christ. Her legacy reminds us that holiness is often nurtured in the quiet of the home and through the daily rhythm of faithful families. This is a beautiful reflection for these summer months as we spend more time with those we love.

We are already preparing a place for you and look forward to the day our schools are once again filled with the energy of our students. Until then, I wish you a season of rest, safety, and many summer blessings.

See you very soon!

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

Principal: Mrs. Laurie Erickson
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: Mrs. Jessica Nejedlo
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: Dr. Eric Schreiber
920-617-9542
sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/

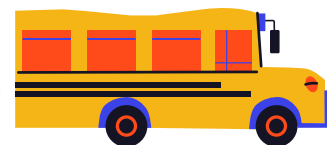
ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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



Faith, Fun, and Focus: Navigating the Back-to-School Transition

By Laura Van Sambeek, GRACE Director of Curriculum



Summer is a wonderful season of fun, relaxation, and invaluable family time. It's a chance to rest, play, and let our imaginations take flight—and those experiences are incredibly important when it comes to preparing for a new school year! We want to harness that natural excitement and energy our students bring to the classroom after a summer off. With just a few simple strategies, you can keep that vibrant summer spirit alive while gently preparing your child for the academic journey ahead. As GRACE's Director of Curriculum, I am excited to share a few easy, powerful ways to keep your children's brains "school ready" while still enjoying every last drop of summer.

1. Revive the Reading Routine!

It's incredibly easy to fall out of the habit of daily reading during the busy summer months. However, re-establishing a 20-minute daily reading routine right now is one of the best things you can do for your child's academic stamina. Did you know that reading just 20 minutes a day adds up to over 1,500 minutes of reading? That gives your child a massive head start for the school year. Sneak those 20 minutes whenever you can—in the car, before bed, or down by the lake—and watch how much easier the transition back to the classroom becomes.

- **Level it up (Comprehension):** Ask your child open-ended questions after they read to reinforce their comprehension and critical thinking.
- **Level it up (Writing):** Challenge your child to write a "sequel" to their favorite book. It's a fantastic, low-pressure way to spark creative writing and imagination before school starts!

2. Spot the Everyday Math

The "summer math slide" can be one of the most notable academic setbacks when students return to the classroom. You can fight that slide simply by drawing attention to the math all around us on a daily basis! Heading to the pool? Read the depth signs and identify the measurement labels. Going to camp? Have your child calculate the start and end times to figure out the elapsed time in between. Cooking dinner? Discuss fractions and liquid measurements using



cups, quarts, and tablespoons. The opportunities are endless, and these quick everyday discussions make a massive impact on your child's mathematical readiness for the fall.

- **Level it up (Computation):** On a road trip? Have your child look at license plates and either call out the numbers, add them together, or multiply them based on their grade level.
- **Level it up (Financial Literacy):** At the grocery store or a local ice cream shop? Have your child estimate the total cost of a few items, determine if you have enough cash, or calculate the change you should receive.

3. Keep the Faith in Motion

Our spiritual journeys don't pause when the school year ends. In fact, summer is a beautiful season to step back and marvel at everything God has created and gifted to us. Look for spontaneous moments to pause and thank God for your family's favorite memories—whether hiking in the woods, playing with friends, or boating on the lake. You can also use these weeks to experience the liturgy in new ways. Heading "up north"? Locate a local parish within our Wisconsin dioceses to attend Mass. Busy weekend ahead? Find a peaceful weeknight Mass to switch things up. Even if you are short on time, taking advantage of a weekday confession, a brief prayer session, or Eucharistic Adoration at a nearby parish is a powerful way to recharge your family's spiritual battery.

- **Level it up (The Prayer Journal):** Encourage your child to create a simple summer prayer journal. Use it as a quiet space to draw or write down God's weekly blessings, cultivating a heart of gratitude before the school year begins.
- **Level it up (Scripture Connections):** Read the upcoming Sunday Gospel together as a family before heading to Mass. Ask your child: "What is Jesus teaching us in this story, and how can we practice that virtue with our new classmates and teachers this year?"

Summer is a sacred time to connect with family, learn

through play, and experience God in new and vibrant ways. By intentionally weaving these simple reading, math, and faith moments into your final weeks of summer, you are partnering with us to ensure your child

steps into the classroom with confidence.

From me and the entire team at GRACE, we wish you a safe, joyful, and faith-filled summer. We cannot wait to welcome your children back to school!

Summer in Spirit: A GRACE Summer Faith Challenge

The July heat is officially here! Whether your family is at the beach or in the backyard, we invite you to join the GRACE Summer Faith Challenge. This simple, four-week challenge is the perfect way to stay connected and keep your faith strong while school is out. Feel free to adapt these activities to fit your summer plans!

- Week One:** Prayer Power Up Find a creative spot for a ten-minute family prayer session. Whether you are around a campfire or during a long car ride, lead your children in a moment of stillness to connect with the Lord together.
- Week Two:** Sunday Mass Adventure Visit a new parish for Sunday Mass. Exploring a different church is a great way for your family to experience the beauty and welcoming nature of the Universal Church.
- Week Three:** Secret Acts of Kindness Spread the joy of the Gospel by looking for small ways to surprise others with Christ-like love, such as weeding a neighbor's garden or leaving a kind note for a friend.
- Week Four:** Scripture Spotlight Choose a Bible verse from the Sunday Gospel as your weekly family theme. Write it in sidewalk chalk or post it on the fridge to spark meaningful dinner-table conversations.

There are no logs to turn in, so just check off each week as you go! We wish you a month filled with laughter, safe travels, and plenty of grace.

☐ WEEK 1	☐ WEEK 2	☐ WEEK 3	☐ WEEK 4
			
PRAYER POWER UP	MASS ADVENTURE	SECRET KINDNESS	SCRIPTURE SPOTLIGHT



The Kasel Family

Our family's experience with Holy Cross Catholic School has been truly amazing. The teachers and staff are incredible! They are caring, dedicated, and genuinely invested in each child. You will notice a safe and welcoming environment where students feel encouraged to learn and grow every day.

This community and its commitment to their students is unlike any other. From engaging classroom activities to supportive staff and excellent communication with families, this school has made a lasting positive impact for our family. We are incredibly grateful for Holy Cross!



Answering the Call: A Talent Spotlight on Jessica Melchert

By Nate Tackaberry, GRACE Executive Director of Advancement



Sometimes, a calling unfolds in unexpected ways. For Mrs. Jessica Melchert, middle school religion teacher at GRACE Father Allouez Catholic School (FACS), the path to the classroom began in athletics and parish faith formation. Armed with a background in Athletic Training

and Strength & Conditioning, she first worked with young athletes before coordinating religious education at St. Sebastian Parish in Seymour.

Then came an unexpected invitation from the former FACS principal to fill in part-time “just for a few months.” Nearly 30 months later, Mrs. Melchert is preparing for her

third full year at FACS. “I feel that teaching in a Catholic school was a direct vocational calling from God,” Jessica shared, “to help guide students in how we live out Christian values every day.”

As an educator, Catholic school graduate, and parent of three FACS students, she considers teaching a blessing and a responsibility to evangelize. She credits much of her inspiration to her mother, a teacher who modeled faith and a love for sharing Jesus.

Mrs. Melchert’s story reminds us that Catholic education is a vocation rooted in forming disciples for life. As a GRACE community, sustaining and valuing those who answer this call is how we ensure Catholic education thrives for generations to come.

Building for the Future: Summer Updates Across Our GRACE Schools

By Anja Marshall, GRACE Web Content Specialist

Holy Family Catholic School: School Improves Storage Situation

When Holy Family Catholic School's middle level students return for the 2026-27 school year, they will be in for a big surprise!

Dr. Stephanie Shedrow, Executive Director of Learning, explains, “Holy Family is getting student lockers! We are excited to have them installed this summer and offer them to our middle school students in the fall.”

Dr. Shedrow and Dr. Jamie Tyrrell, 2025-2026 Interim Principal, have worked diligently to coordinate this project this past school year. It is anticipated that this will be a welcome addition.

Mrs. Laurie Erickson, incoming Principal and former Assistant Principal, reports, “With the approval of Father

Quinn, the administrators ordered 75 lockers, which will be installed on the top floor where the majority of our middle school classes are held. The addition of lockers

will ensure that personal belongings are organized and stored in a secure, private manner. We are very excited to provide this improvement for our students.”

Now that this storage situation is well in hand, 2026-27 is sure to be a win-win for the students and the school!

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School: Gifts Keep on Giving

At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, the gifts of improvements that were generously donated and installed last summer have added greatly to the comfort and quality of the facility this past 2025-26 school year.

With new full-expansion windows in all of the classrooms, there was a significant difference both aesthetically and efficiency-wise as well.



Mrs. Sue LaLuzerne, Administrative Assistant, reports, “It’s given the school a modern look on the outside, certainly, and a much brighter feel on the inside.”

She can also attest to the appreciation for and success of the new central air conditioning system. “That was a huge relief when we had such a warm fall. Also, we had close to 700 people in the gym for our spring musical in May, and the cool air when we have bigger functions is wonderful.”

This summer, there will not be as dramatic a change for OLOL School, with some classrooms getting a furniture refresh, along with the normal cleaning maintenance throughout the campus, all in preparation for a new 2026-27 school year.

St. Thomas More Catholic School: East Side Parishes Align Leadership

In an effort to ensure a vibrant parish life with effective pastoral care for all the faithful, Bishop David Ricken announced the linking of Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Philip the Apostle parishes. On July 1, Father Jose Lopez Vargas became the Pastor of both. Working as the lead with the collaborative help of another priest and a deacon, Father Jose is sharing pastoral responsibilities and services for the two communities.



Father Jose maintains his role as spiritual leader at St. Thomas More Catholic School.

Dr. Jamie Tyrell, Principal of St. Thomas More, states, “St. Thomas More is incredibly fortunate to have Father Jose’s leadership guiding the students, faculty, the staff, and the

families, and we look forward to supporting Father Jose as he is able to bless more lives.”

Principal Tyrell will apprise families and staff of any possible changes, such as Mass times, that may take place as arrangements continue to be made.

Father Jose adds, “Please keep us in prayer [as we move ahead]...God will provide.”

Holy Cross Catholic School: Relocation Brings Brand New Campus for Fall

We are excited to let you know that Holy Cross Catholic School is moving! Holy Cross Parish and GRACE have teamed up to transition the school to a new campus location at 3994 Wequiock Road, Green Bay, WI 54311. Stay tuned for more updates as we make this exciting move!

Located just a few miles down the road from its current site, the move reflects our ongoing commitment to

strengthening Catholic education while positioning Holy Cross Catholic School for continued growth, expanded programming, and long-term vitality. This move offers improved classroom environments, increased flexibility for programming, and space to foster deeper collaboration among students, faculty, and families. While its close proximity ensures continuity for Holy Cross Parish and current school families, it also creates new possibilities for innovation and development for our Preschool to 8th grade school.

This significant undertaking was made possible by the generosity of Holy Cross Parish and an anonymous benefactor. Reflecting on the spiritual mission behind the move, Abbot Gary Neville noted, “Holy Cross school has been a leader in excellent Catholic education since 1868. The relocation to Wequiock Road will allow us to carry on that legacy in an updated and enhanced educational environment.”

“We are guided by our faith and strengthened by our entire community,” states GRACE Holy Cross Catholic School principal, Kari Peterson. “This foundation allows us to move forward with confidence, knowing that Holy Cross Catholic School will remain a nurturing environment where students continue to learn, grow, and thrive for generations to come.”

Holy Cross will open on the first day of school this fall, August 26, 2026. Families will be receiving additional information regarding transition details, open house opportunities and fall start up information.

For continued move updates, please follow GRACE Holy Cross Catholic School on Facebook (www.facebook.com/HolyCrossFamily) or call the current school office at (920) 468-0625.



WE ARE GRACE:

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
GROWING IN FAITH, ROOTED IN TRADITION

WE ARE MOVING!

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL WILL BE RELOCATING TO A NEW CAMPUS!

3994 Wequiock Road, Green Bay, WI 54311



1822 Riverside Drive
Green Bay, WI 54301

Important Dates 2026



JULY

7/6-7/31: GRACE: Gold Summer Camp

AUGUST

8/1 - 8/20: Last Application Period of Wisconsin Parental Choice application for the 2026-27 school year. (Opens at 8a.m. on Aug. 1. Closes at 4p.m. on Aug. 20)

8/19: Teachers' First Day

8/26: First Day of School

8/28: Holy Cross School Blessing

SEPTEMBER

9/7: No School - Labor Day

9/25: Early Dismissal - Teacher In-Service

The GRACE Academic Calendars for the 2026-27 and other important dates are available online at gracesystem.org | About Us | Calendar.

Staying Connected

There are many ways to stay connected with GRACE Schools throughout the summer and into the next school year. We release newsletters like this seasonally, and archive them on our website (gracesystem.org.) Additionally, a GRACE-wide calendar highlighting important events is available online, as well as all the latest news from our blog at your fingertips.

For school-specific information like supply lists, dress codes, and other helpful information, please visit each individual school's website, or call the school office.

- fatherallouezschool.org
- stmregb.com
- holycrossfamily.org
- saintbernardgb.com
- lourdesschooldepere.org
- sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org
- notredameofdepere.com
- sjbhschool.org
- holyfamilygreenbay.com

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