

SPRING 2024

THE IRISH CONNECTION

A publication for alumni, family, and friends of the Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo

Future Families Edition

*An introductory look at
St. Augustine Cathedral School,
St. Monica Catholic School,
and Hackett Catholic Prep*

Heath
Baldwin sets
Big 10 all-
time record in
Heptathlon
see pg 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Men's and Women's Track both win Academic All State Award
- Class of '24 announces ceremony shift to Chenery Auditorium
- St. Monica and St. Augustine authors publish responses to, "If you give a kid a Catholic education..."
- Students spearhead outreach to reconnect alumni veterans





In the midst of assembling an *Irish Connection* filled with dozens of thoughtful, theological, scholarly, and athletic reasons to choose a CSGK school, three things came to light in February that brilliantly shine on who we strive to be.

In the name of family and the traditions that surround it, some of our Hackett students began receiving letters from grateful alums currently serving in the military. A sample is featured right. These are in response to letters sent by HCP students earlier this year as part of a campaign to reconnect with as many of our alumni veterans as possible—active, retired and families of deceased veterans. This project has been a great reminder of how significantly our alumni have represented us in preserving our freedom since 1851. This project will be featured in our Fall Edition.

Focusing on the spiritual and artistic, our elementary and middle school students have been on a mission to express their sacred thoughts in fun and poignant ways. Through the adaptation of the classic children's book, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, 15 different classrooms produced their versions of, *If You Give a Kid a Catholic Education* (Sample shown below). These will be featured in the Summer *Irish Connection*.

And in the *Academics meets Athletics* realm, in addition to being the 2023 D4 State Champions in Men's Track, the men's and women's teams learned they won the D4 Academic All State Award. See page 8 for the story.

And finally, a special thanks goes to the students, parents, teachers and alumni who shared their thoughts and testimonials explaining their personal connections and appreciation throughout this edition. They speak from the heart of our family in beautiful ways.

Keith Crowell

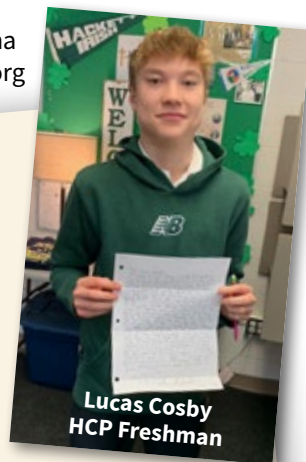
Keith Crowell, Advancement Director
Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo
KCrowell@cskgk.org

No child will be denied a
Catholic Education
due to financial need

(269) 381-2646 x106

From the heart: Active military alumni respond to student letters

Lucas Cosby, HCP Freshman, is one of a dozen Hackett students to receive responses to letters sent to active-duty alumni, part of a CSGK initiative to reconnect with our active-duty alumni and veterans. This project will be featured in our fall edition. If you're a veteran and you haven't been contacted yet, or if you have information on deceased alumni veterans, please contact Tyline Zimmerman at tzimmerman@cskgk.org or 269-381-2646.



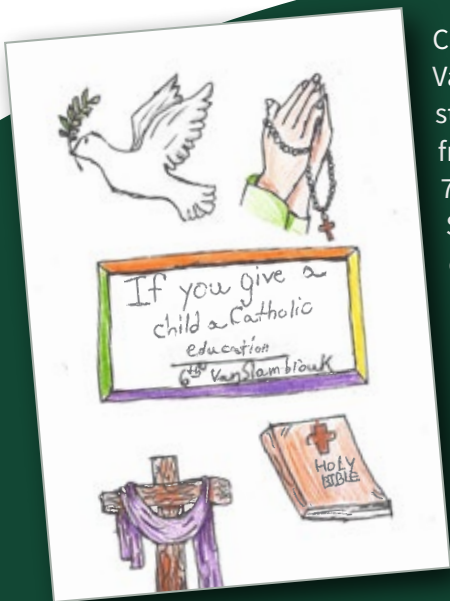
Dear Lucas,

Thank you for your letter. It really made my day. I went to Hackett from 2013 to 2017 and played football and basketball, and ran track. I remember Magistra Marillier was my Latin teacher, Mr. Adrian was my history teacher and the band was a bunch of nerds and some of my best friends.

The time I spent at Hackett was some of the best times of my life. When they say HCP becomes your family, they mean it. The things you learn in the classroom and what you learn about yourself will put you so far ahead in life—make the most of your time there.

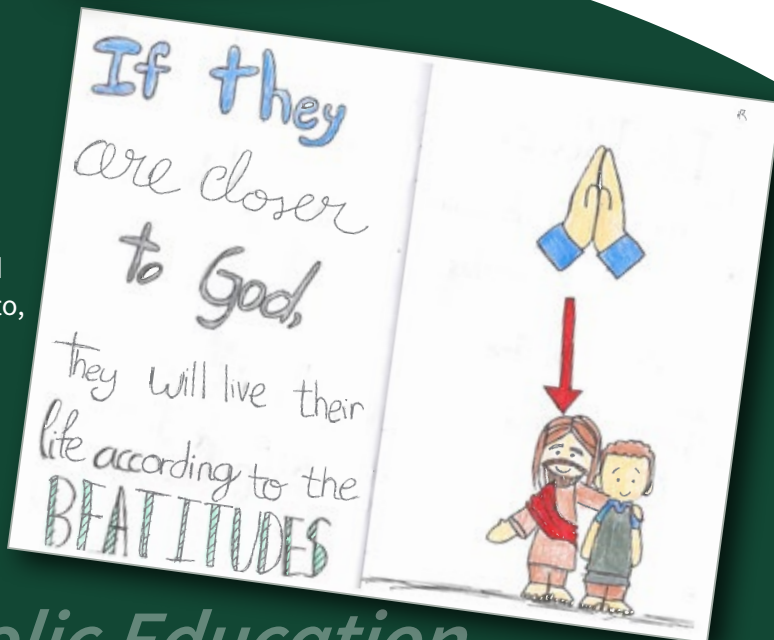
Right now, I serve as an infantry platoon leader in the first armored division and have already deployed to South Korea and participated in multiple tank live fires. If you want to know more about the Army, feel free to send me an email and I'd be more than happy to answer your questions. Hope this letter helped you out and enjoy your next 3 years at Hackett. Go Irish!

1st Lt Kaelen Redmond, HCP 2017



Cover art from book by Mrs. VanSlambrouk's 6th grade students, with interior pages from book by Mrs. Phillips' 7th grade students. Both from St. Augustine. 15 classrooms of K-8 students at St. Monica and St. Augustine completed books filled with responses to, "If you give a kid a Catholic education..."

More to come in the summer edition.



If You Give a Kid a Catholic Education...

Our Blessed STORY Begins



"The priests were great. They were patient and they had a passion to help kids explore questions. I needed that."

Carrie Drake, St. Monica K-12 and HCP Class of '03

Our community is blessed with wonderful and diverse options for education. Public and private, large and small, each with a unique personality.

Catholic schools have been a cornerstone of education in the Kalamazoo community since 1851, and their adaptive strength has enabled their evolution through the eras.

Today, CSGK schools include two preschool through 8th grade schools—St. Augustine Cathedral on Michigan Avenue downtown and St. Monica Catholic on Kilgore Road near Westnedge—and Hackett Catholic Prep, also on Kilgore Road. Each school has high standards of academic excellence and, in the realm of high schools, Hackett is a perennial powerhouse in Division 4 athletics, while offering diverse opportunities in the arts and sciences.

**COME
LEARN
MORE**



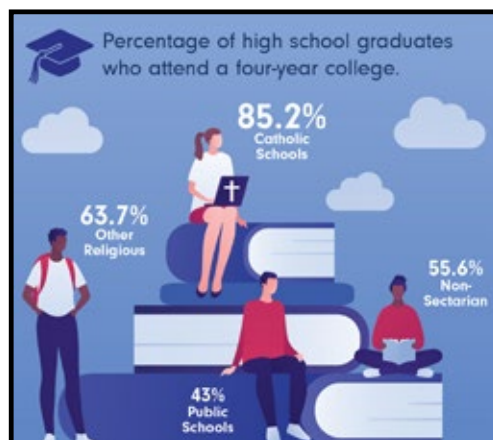
To schedule a tour or learn more about any of the CSGK schools, contact **Katie Ackerman**, CSGK Enrollment Director at **kackerman@cschk.org** or **269.381.2646 x114**.

Uniquely structured for how students thrive

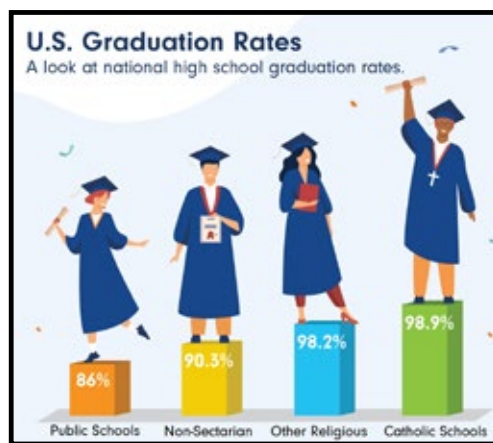
Students absorb new concepts in different ways and teachers seek to respond to each student's unique preferences. Many elementary grades and high school classes are taught with smaller class sizes and priority is always given to allow for more individual attention.

Traditionally Catholic, many faiths

Established under the Sisters of St. Joseph, and later under the guidance of Marianist Brothers, CSGK schools remain solidly in the traditions and teachings of the Catholic faith. Within this approach, Catholic and non-Catholic students are welcomed by a culture of curiosity that encourages varying viewpoints based on mutual respect.



Sources: Broughman et al. (2021); Irwin et al. (2022)
92% of HCP 2023 Seniors enrolled in a four-year college



Sources: Broughman et al. (2021); Irwin et al. (2022)
100% of HCP Seniors graduated in 2023

"We are always looking for ways to integrate our Catholic faith into our science classes. One of our projects in Biology includes students researching and giving presentations on noteworthy Catholic scientists."

Margie Stone
HCP Science Teacher

"I am lucky to be one of the central contacts for every student that comes to Hackett and from our first conversation, we begin to talk about what success will look like to them, here and after graduation. For some students their original vision sharpens over their four years and for others, it changes dramatically as they experience new concepts. Hackett is a great place to explore, and I enjoy helping to guide them through that journey."

Betsy Ulbrich, HCP Guidance Counselor

All CSGK schools are accredited by the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools



ST. AUGUSTINE
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

600 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo

“Welcome to St. Augustine Cathedral School. We are committed to providing our preschool through eighth grade students a Christ-centered environment where they can grow in faith, knowledge and stewardship. We value our partnership with parents and enjoy their active participation in their children’s education and in the life of our school. Our programs provide an academically rich environment, while encouraging participation in extracurricular activities outside of the classroom.

We invite you to learn more about St. Augustine by scheduling a tour with me or a Parent Ambassador.”

Andra Zommers, Ed.D
Principal, St. Augustine
Cathedral School



Andra Zommers, Ed.D.
Principal



Fr. Robert Creagan
Rector

St. Augustine Cathedral School and St. Monica Catholic School both offer outstanding learning environments, geared for academic, creative and spiritual development from preschool through 8th grade.

Students from both schools complete 8th grade well-prepared for high school, grounded in a solid foundation of Christ’s teachings. Both schools offer and encourage participation in team sports and band, as well as drama in partnership with Hackett Catholic Prep.

★ Our ★
K-8s
★ Rock ★

St. Augustine Cathedral School provides a Christ-centered education geared towards cultivating students’ faith and values and developing their intellectual and creative gifts. In age-appropriate ways, students are taught to proclaim the gospel message, build Christian community, participate in liturgical worship, and live a life of service to others.



“I choose to teach at St. Augustine because it is a supportive community where faith is the main focus in everything we do.”

Becky Megyesi
1st Grade Teacher
St. Augustine

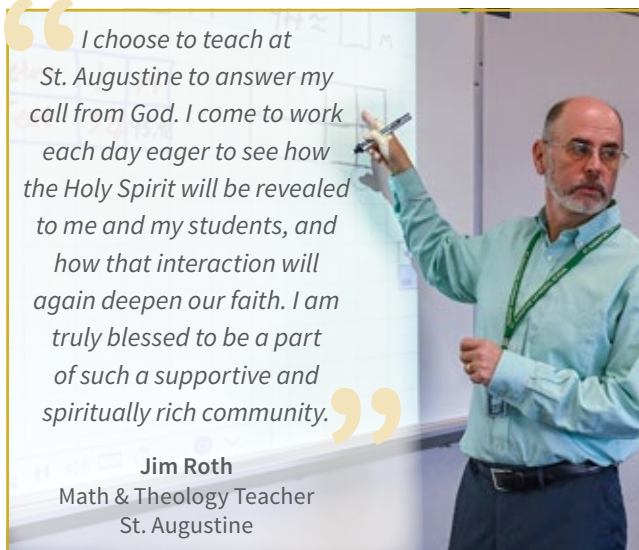
St. Augustine’s environment is nurturing, with an emphasis placed on individual attention. Core studies include Theology, English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Phonics is taught for spelling and vocabulary while multi-sensory and tactile approaches are used to present new concepts, combining group and individual work.

In addition to course studies, students also participate in art, physical education, music, band, library, Spanish as well as many other educational experiences. An array of after-school programs are available, provided in a safe and structured environment.

Opportunities for older students include Science Olympiad, Girls on the Run, Boy and Girl Scouts, cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track.

“I choose to teach at St. Augustine to answer my call from God. I come to work each day eager to see how the Holy Spirit will be revealed to me and my students, and how that interaction will again deepen our faith. I am truly blessed to be a part of such a supportive and spiritually rich community.”

Jim Roth
Math & Theology Teacher
St. Augustine



The principals of St. Monica and St. Augustine are eager to meet and talk about their schools. The brief summaries provided here offer a glimpse of the special attributes of each school, however, a discussion and tour will offer a more complete look at the similarities and nuances.

To learn more about either school, including scheduling a meeting with the principal, contact CSGK Enrollment Director Katie Ackerman at kackerman@csgk.org or 269-381-2646.

St. Monica students follow the Catholic Liberal Arts Education (CLE) curriculum, an approach to learning that aims to include instruction on the virtues, and a love of truth, goodness, and beauty in ordinary lesson plans. With a goal of breaking down the segmentation of subjects, CLE lessons focus on time periods, and ultimately, faith.



Catholic and non-Catholic students at St. Monica learn about the Catholic faith in an environment of mutual respect, where participation in the sacraments and the elements of Mass are accepted by choice. Students are immersed in a setting that establishes a foundation set in virtues and morals for a lifetime of faith.

For middle schoolers, St. Monica athletics include boys and girls basketball, cross country, trap, track, and for girls, volleyball. Additional parent-run groups and teams are also available for various age groups, including soccer and Rocket and flag football.



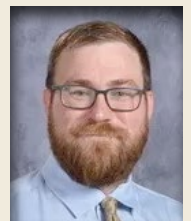
530 W. Kilgore Rd, Kalamazoo

“On behalf of our dedicated faculty and staff, we welcome you and invite you to consider becoming a member of our St. Monica Catholic School family.

As a member of our school family, you will quickly come to see that we have both a very dedicated faculty and staff, as well as a strong parent volunteer group. We work together to instill Christ’s teachings as our students develop. I look forward to meeting you in person.”

Jordon Beery, M.A.
Principal, St. Monica

Mr. Jordon Beery, M.A.
Principal



Fr. Russell Homic
Pastor



“I love how our teachers support the kids.”

Jen Holder
St. Monica Parent



1000 W. Kilgore Rd, Kalamazoo

“Welcome to Hackett Catholic Prep. Intentionally and joyfully Catholic, Hackett remains a welcome place for families of all faith backgrounds. In a world that seems constantly in flux, Hackett is rooted in the solid foundations and intellectual tradition of 3,000 years of Western education. Please schedule a tour so we can meet in person and discover together how Hackett can become an eternally blessed fit for your child.”

Trevor Scoles
Principal



Trevor Scoles
Principal



Fr. Russell Homic
Canonical
Administrator



Fr. Tom McNally
Chaplain

Academics



Students are challenged by a core curriculum designed to provide highly effective preparation for their chosen paths after high school. From their first day at HCP through graduation, an ongoing connection with the academic counselor allows students to

establish goals and stay focused, for their high school years and their plans after graduation.

Partnerships with the Math and Science Center (KAMSC), EFE, KVCC and WMU allow students additional opportunities.

In 2023, 96% of HCP graduates enrolled in a two- or four-year college. While college study is the most common pursuit for students, in typical years, graduates also pursue paths in the military and professional trades.

Requirements for graduation include:

Subject	Units
Theology	4
English	4
Social Science	3
Mathematics	3
Science	3
Fine Arts	1
World Language	1
PE and Health	1
Business	1
Electives	3
Total	24

Nine areas of AP study

1. Biology
2. English Language
3. English Literature
4. U.S. History
5. World History
6. Spanish
7. Latin
8. Calculus
9. Statistics

Athletics



At HCP, students are encouraged to try new sports and experience the camaraderie enjoyed as part of the team dynamic. Students are also offered the flexibility to play multiple sports as much as schedules allow.

As a perennial Division 4 powerhouse, HCP finished the 2022-2023 season as MLive's regional *Ultimate High School Champion*. Schools in all divisions compete for this designation on an equal platform, with accumulated points awarded based on performance in elimination tournaments.

Based on MLive's formula, Hackett accumulated 91 points, earned with a State Championship in Men's Track, Regional Championships in Women's Basketball and Cross Country, and Men's Baseball and Tennis, and District Championships in Men's Soccer and Basketball. See story July 19, 2023, mlive.com/kalamazoo/ultimate.

The Arts



Led by a talented faculty, student opportunities to experience and develop in visual, musical, and performing arts, are offered at a high caliber level. Music groups include marching and performance bands and an annual musical play featuring traditional favorites. Visual arts allow students to develop their creative abilities through drawing, paints and other media.

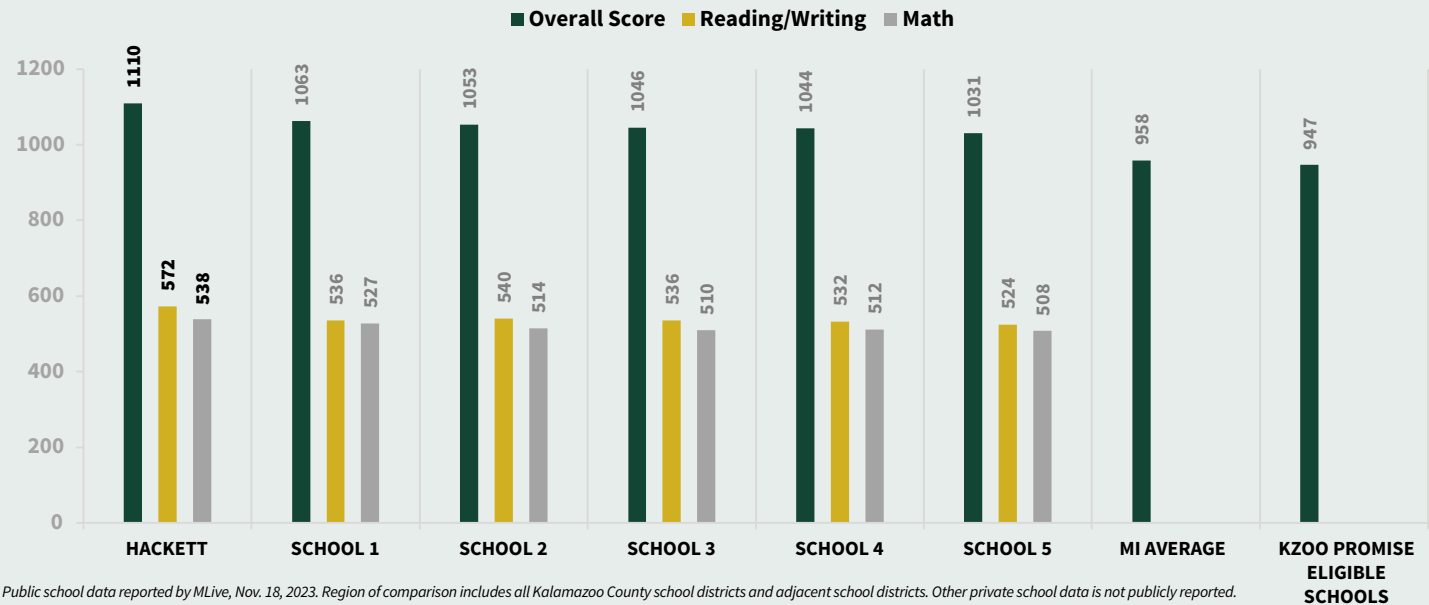
Student Life



Throughout their four years at HCP, students develop a closeness that often carries through an entire lifetime. Through sports, the arts, service opportunities, and other activities, the eternal teachings of Christ preside over daily life, articulated by devoted clergy, teachers, coaches and staff, with the expectation that His teachings will be modeled by students.



SAT SCORES-2023 AVERAGE
HCP COMPARED WITH REGION'S TOP 5 PUBLIC SCHOOLS



A Launching Point for Dreams



HCP alumni perform on some of the world’s biggest stages

- Nichole Bachmann, 2013**
TV News Reporter, Executive Producer and *Studio 10* Host, WILX Lansing
- Heath Baldwin, 2019**
MSU Male Athlete of the Year 2022-2023; Big 10 record holder in the Heptathlon
- Christian Bartholomew, 2020**
U of M Football National Champion, Wide Receiver, 2024
- Karen Campbell, 1995**
Television series Producer and Writer, including *Raised by Wolves* (2018-current) and *Dexter* (2010-2013).
- Sidney Chenier, 2023**
Full ROTC scholarship, congressional recommendation to the Naval Academy and acceptance into the Merchant Marine Academy. Upon graduation from Ole Miss, Chenier will commission as an officer and be assigned to flight school at NAS Pensacola. Also see page 11.
- Mike Daniels, 1995**
Television series Producer and Writer, including *The Village* (2019), *Shades of Blue* (2016), *Sons of Anarchy* (2008).
- Phil Detolve, 2002**
Grammy Award winning Re-Recording Mixer; four-time Grammy nominee, including in 2023 for *Bono & The Edge: A Sort Of Homecoming With Dave*

- Letterman*. Also in 2023, Detolve served as Assistant Sound Editor on the musical/documentary, *Taylor Swift, The Eras Tour*.
- Diana Ganz, 2000**
- ▶ Business executive and entrepreneur, Co-founder, Suitshop.com
 - ▶ MIT Sloan School of Management, Sustainability Initiative Advisory Board
- Megan Ganz, 2002**
- ▶ Emmy Award Outstanding Comedy Series, *Modern Family*, Supervising Producer, 2014
 - ▶ Two-time Emmy Nominee Comedy Writing, *Modern Family*, 2014-2015
 - ▶ Executive Producer, Director, Writer, *Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, 2017-current
- Steve Jbarra, 2006**, Owner and President; **Trey Conner, 2006**, COO Founders, Grand Rapids Gold NBA G-League
- Fr. Thomas McNally, 2005**
Chaplain, Hackett Catholic Prep and Parochial Vicar, St. Monica Catholic Church
- Ryan Stasik, 1995**
Bassist, Umphrey’s McGee

“We were very happy our daughter was able to dual enroll at HCP and KVCC. She graduated from HCP with her high school diploma and an associate degree from KVCC and she is currently enrolled as a Junior at Grand Valley. We estimate that overall, we saved over \$30,000 in tuition.”

Jenny Wallace, HCP Alumni Parent

“Although we are not Catholic, we were welcomed by the Hackett Catholic Prep Family with open arms. The Hackett faculty and staff have exceeded our expectations with their thoughtful and caring concern for their students. The religious teachings are intriguing to our son and Theology is one of his favorite classes with Deacon Lucas being one of his most respected teachers. We are pleased that his exposure to the Catholic religion is proving to be a positive and valuable experience.”

Al & Jennifer Higdon, HCP Parents

News from the World of Hackett

Men's, Women's Track Both Take Academic All-State Honors

Following a successful 2023 Track season that ended with the Hackett Men taking the Michigan D4 Championship, a second wave of recognition was bestowed in February as it was announced that both the Men's and Women's teams also won the D4 Academic All State Awards for highest combined GPA.

The Women accumulated a combined total GPA of 3.986, closely followed by the Men at 3.909.



“The math department at Hackett strives to meet the unique learning needs of all our students. Instruction is driven by the Common Core State Standards which brings real-world applications to our courses. Teachers use creative strategies to add interest and variety to the classroom and they are available both before and after school to provide additional instruction and support.”

Molly Williamson, HCP Math Teacher

Hackett Chapel Given Renewed Radiant Brilliance

Blending elements of iconic Catholic art, art teacher Paddy Aiden created a radiant chapel feature at Hackett designed to illuminate the presence of God. By developing the impression of light radiating from the cross, combined with the quatrefoil imagery, the new image provides an enhanced uplifting element. Special thanks go to staff members David Peters and Bob Henning, and students Emma Bartholomew and Earl Higdon for their help on the project.



“The English program at HCP allows students to follow an honors program with English A.P. courses. The success of our program is based on reading well, writing with a purpose and clearly expressing original thoughts. Our instructors promote a love of reading and writing; every English teacher is a published author holding graduate degrees in English. We teach what we love.”

Michael Deschamp
HCP English Teacher

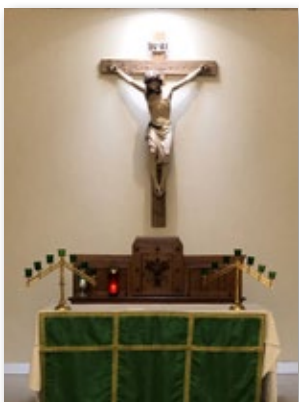




Photo courtesy of MSU Athletics

Heath Baldwin, HCP 2019, set an all-time Big 10 record in the Heptathlon at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championship March 9. Baldwin finished second overall with 6,238 points, a 238-point improvement over his previous school record while achieving four personal records and two season-best marks.

“Dual enrollment at Hackett while attending a community college offer a unique opportunity at a higher level of educational experience that teaches independence and adaptability.

The journey of dual enrollment not only accelerated my academic advancement but also instilled in me valuable life skills, proving that the challenges were worth every moment for the significant personal growth it fostered.”

Breanna Wallace, '23, HCP Alumni

Students Improvise as Campus Declared a Backpack-Free Zone During Spirit Week Festivities



February 13 was declared, “Anything but a backpack” day, and in addition to the solutions shown, a bicycle, a herby curby recycling bin, a touring future student, and several items of luggage were implemented as temporary replacements for carrying the day’s necessities.



Max Keenan Heads to Czech Republic

2019 Hackett grad Max Keenan has announced that he has signed to play soccer for Slovan Velvary in the Czech Republic. Following his senior year at Hackett, Keenan played at WMU before transferring to Wisconsin, where he played in 2023.

Velvary was in first place of the 16-team CFL B Division with an 11-3-1 record at the time of his signing. As translated from the team’s website:

REINFORCEMENT!
Velvary continues to strengthen and welcome another foreign acquisition! Midfielder MAXWELL THOMAS KEENAN is coming to us from faraway Michigan (USA) for transfer! 🍌
Welcome to Velvary, MAX! ⚽

9

Hackett Announces Graduation Move

Hackett Principal Trevor Scoles has announced a move to Chenery Auditorium for Hackett’s 2024 graduation ceremony. Chenery opened in 1924 in the original Kalamazoo Central High School and serves as host to a variety of musical and other arts events, including various Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and Gilmore Keyboard Festival performances.

“This is a beautiful community resource that’s long been a part of our city’s tradition,” says Principal Scoles. “It will be the perfect setting for honoring our graduating seniors.”

Plans are to continue hosting graduation in this venue in future years.

“I was in the U.S. Army for six years, I’m a physician, and did my Internship and Residency at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. I still LOVE Hackett and have praised it to others all my life!”

Martin Locey, '69, HCP Alumni

Students log overtime with service and activities

It was a typically busy winter season as students from all three schools participated in a variety of activities. From left to right, top to bottom:

- First Day Shoe Fund;
- St. Monica Boy Scouts;
- Pro Life Day with Respect Life;
- Innovation Expo at WMU;
- Seber Tans Accounting;
- St. Monica Christmas caroling;
- Irish Dance;
- Junior Achievement Titan Challenge;
- Jamming with Zero Sun and Julian Barry;
- teachings of Bishop Lohse;
- The Nutcracker ballet.

Emily Marillier, HCP Latin Teacher

Emily Marillier, HCP Latin Teacher

Dear CSGK Family,

I'm writing to you today from my adopted home in Mississippi as a freshman at Ole Miss.

From my earliest days of Young 5's at St Augustine, and all the way through my graduation at Hackett Catholic Prep, I can recall being reminded almost daily that I belong to the Creator of the Universe. That His love for me is so great that despite my shortcomings and failings as a daughter of His, I am so important to Him that he sent His only Son, Jesus, to die for me. It is in that that I find my identity and rest knowing that I belong to a great and loving God.

I had so many role models growing up, helping me discover where my place is in this world. My parents, teachers, and other staff members at CSGK all played an important role. Although I'm still an unfinished work, I have seen a lot of the initial forming and building that has been done and is credited to those named above.

I have set my sights on the sea and naval service as I've now been appointed a Midshipman in the US Navy ROTC. I hope my future holds great stories of service and teamwork, dedicated to a common good though sacrifice and patriotism. I love our county and feel an overwhelming sense of duty to participate in protecting the values I grew up with. My parents pointed me towards my patriotic duty nearly at birth with my dad singing me to sleep with his rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner every night. My mom told me stories of my great-grandfather, a first Lieutenant paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne in WWII, which also helped me along the way.

Once in school I was promised that God had great things in store for me and that I was to listen to His calling and direction for guidance. Staff at both schools helped build and encourage me. I was taught hard work, perseverance, and prayer. High school brought sports teams and the lessons that came from those were plentiful. I was never a star athlete or someone that took center stage/court but was made to understand that everyone on the team contributes and lifts others for shared success.

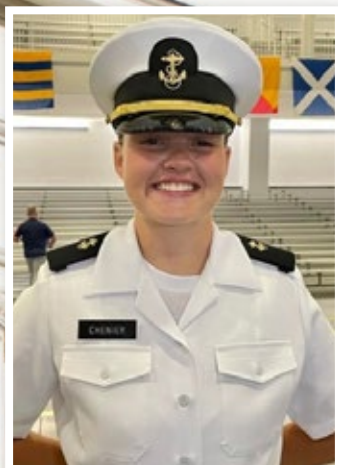
I have found a home at Ole Miss. As I listen to professors and students, I keep seeing a common theme; people are wondering who they are. Some are struggling to fit in while others insert themselves in groups or with behaviors that harm them, just to quench a need to belong.

I attend the only Catholic Church in the county, St. John the Evangelist. I have taken it upon myself to bring others there with me, sometimes very reluctantly, and other times with the reasoning of needing a ride. Either way, off to Mass we go! I've been challenged because of my faith and what I believe numerous times. Because of the strong foundation and training I received from St. Augustine and Hackett, I can respond to these challenges and engage people with the Truth in love.

CSGK taught me that as I grow and discover new things about myself, I can lean into my faith and trust that God has a plan for me and that I am loved and priceless in His eyes. I have great joy in this and love sharing it with others. Thank you CSGK. You are in my prayers.

Gratefully,

Sidney Chenier
Class of 2023 HCP



"Because of the strong foundation and training I received from St. Augustine and Hackett, I can respond to these challenges and engage people with the Truth in love."

THE IRISH CONNECTION

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CSGK.org



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or email tzimmerman@csgk.org

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contact Keith Crowell, Advancement Director, at kcrowell@csgk.org

An evening in
ITALY

H HACKETT
CATHOLIC PREP
MORE THAN HIGH SCHOOL

Save the Date

Join us for dinner, drinks,
dancing, and auction as we raise
funds and celebrate Hackett!

Saturday
April 13, 2024

5:30 pm • \$80/person

Shamrock Celebration
Hackett Catholic Prep Gymnasium
Bring your smart phone for the silent auction and
angel items bidding
RSVP online at bidpal.net/2024shamrock
Please email us with any questions
hcpshamrock@gmail.com

Superintendent Margaret Erich Announces Retirement

Margaret Erich, Executive Director of Catholic Education and Superintendent of the Office of Schools, has announced that she will complete her service with The Diocese of Kalamazoo effective June 30.

Erich has been a faithful and energizing part of area Catholic schools for 24 years, beginning her service in Catholic education as a teacher and principal at St. Mary Elementary School and St. Monica Elementary School, both in Kalamazoo.

In 2000, Bishop James A. Murray appointed her as Assistant Superintendent. Erich served in that position until being appointed Superintendent of schools in 2007 by Bishop James A. Murray, and in 2009 was named Executive Director of Catholic Education by Bishop Paul J. Bradley.

“As a senior at Hackett, who also attends the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) and plays sports, I’ve been grateful for my teachers and coaches helping me integrate all these activities.”
Sean Pierucci, ‘24, HCP Student

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
of Greater Kalamazoo



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CATHOLIC PREP
MORE THAN HIGH SCHOOL