

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

THE IRISH CONNECTION

WINTER 2024

12 pages of joyful reasons to support
our Catholic Schools Annual Campaign

 **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
of Greater Kalamazoo



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Congratulations to:

- St. A's Ryan Moyer selected as 'Very Best' in Michigan page 3
- Marek Butkiewicz sets new state record at Cross Country Finals page 9
- Hackett Football celebrates 500th win page 9

Hope, Joy and Blessings

Thank you, supporters, and be forewarned—this edition is filled with images of undeniable cuteness, faithfulness, and achievement of students and leaders serving God's earthly kingdom. A heavy dose of inspiration and joy as we kick off CSGK's Annual Appeal.

The buzz around the schools this fall has focused on momentum, optimism, and Holy Spirit's presence with waves of positivity in both measurable and blessed ways.

In measurable ways, our steady uptick in participation from alumni and donors has been exciting. Our Hall of Fame and Awards celebration in September maxed out the country club's capacity of 200 for an event that two years ago attracted 60 guests. Three weeks later, an annual donor reception drew nearly double the number of guests from two years ago.

From the perspective of blessed happenings, this edition celebrates several of the sweet moments from fall, including Hackett's 60th birthday Mass led by Bishop Lohse and the Memorial Mass on November 1, both on page 5.

The Irish's commendable fall sports season is summarized on pages 8-9, highlighting several teams and athletes who finished with outstanding seasons.

We are also pleased to feature our Student Ambassadors (page 4), a combined effort between HCP and CSGK Advancement. This program has really hit its stride this year, with students serving in various outreach capacities.

Enjoy, be inspired, and please prayerfully consider your gift to our Catholic Schools!

HCP Spanish Teacher Mark Voegel Plans Pilg



Covenant Scholarship

*Covenant Scholarship available to students: preschool-8th grade

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

*Must be an active and registered Parishioner
of one of the 8 supporting parishes.

Faith Filled Teacher Award Winners!



Ryan Moyer
St. Augustine
Cathedral
School,
Kalamazoo

Mr. Ryan Moyer is in his 9th year teaching 2nd grade at St. School. Mr. Moyer has a BA in Elementary Education from with minors in Math and Language Arts. He is certified to teach and MS math! Ryan Moyer grew up in Jackson, MI, attending St. Sea Elementary School and Lumen Christi High School, both schools! Mr. Moyer is proud uncle to a young niece and nephew, a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Church in Kalamazoo.

Mr. Moyer says about himself: "My favorite thing to teach is preparing my students to receive Reconciliation and the Eucharist. I enjoy integrating music into my Theology lessons, and I am a choir leader for our school Masses. Aside from teaching 2nd grade at St. Augustine. The staff is awesome, the parents are supportive, and I have a dozen former students visiting my room every day during the summer. I just to say 'hi'."

St. Augustine Teacher Ryan Moyer Honored as 'Very Best' in Michigan

St. Augustine second grade teacher Ryan Moyer received the 2024 Faith-Filled Educator Award by the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools (MANS) at their annual Education Conference in Detroit in October.

Each year MANS recognizes two teachers in Michigan who exemplify 'the very best in faith-based education,' who are passionate about their students and models of faith.

"Almost all of our students have been touched by the heart of Mr. Moyer," says St. Augustine Principal Andra Zommers. "Our community is blessed to have Mr. Moyer preparing young students to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the last nine years. He loves our Catholic faith, and he wants the same for all our students."

Students celebrated Mr. Moyer Day by wearing red, Mr. Moyer's favorite color, in place of their uniforms. The PTO provided treats for the entire school.

"Mr. Moyer has also inspired our school family to become a singing school, lifting our voices to praise God at each school Mass," says Zommers. "All of this comes from his love of Christ and his desire to help students grow in faith."

Pilgrimage on The Sacred Camino De Santiago Trail

In the centuries following the discovery of what are believed to be the remains of St. James in 833, the Camino de Santiago (*Way of James*) has provided a route of sacred Catholic significance. Next summer, Hackett Spanish teacher Mark Voegel will begin a nearly 500-mile journey on the trail.

Leading to the shrine of the apostle James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, the trail has three main routes with multiple trailheads originating throughout Spain, Portugal, and France, where Voegel will start his journey. Each route culminates at the cathedral shrine in northwestern Spain.

Over the course of the seven-week journey, Voegel will be accompanied on the trail by his wife Sharon, Principal of Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Three Rivers.

"This journey fulfills so many aspects of my personality," says Voegel who plans to complete the 484-mile route in June and July, averaging nearly 10 miles a day.

"In recent years, I've become especially driven to be in good

shape, and the conditioning required to endure seven weeks on a rugged trail in the summer heat is going to challenge me in new ways, and I think exciting ways," says Voegel. "But beyond the physical aspects, this will be a journey that I expect to bring me to new levels of spiritual awareness that I can't even imagine."

Besides the physical and logistical preparations, the Voegels plan to promote their plans as a means of raising both money and Catholic awareness. Funds raised throughout their endeavor will be evenly divided between their two schools, with 100% going to support Catholic education. Both plan to use their pilgrimage as an opportunity to educate their students of the trail's cultural significance in the Catholic faith.

"There is so much planning involved with this, but upon arrival at the trailhead, that phase ends and the unknown begins," says Voegel. "When I take my first step, I will do it with an open mind and heart for whatever God has in store. That excites me."

Student Ambassadors Serve as the Face of Catholic Schools

Hackett Senior Owen Widman's introduction to the high school's Student Ambassador program was typical of many in the group. "I wasn't really familiar with the program until Mrs. (Shelly) Germinder pulled me aside and asked if I would consider interviewing for it," says Widman. "But I was definitely intrigued by the idea when she explained it."

Student Ambassadors are a group of 30 juniors and seniors who are recommended by teachers, staff or current Ambassadors. The expectation is for two years of service, with roles in high-visibility outreach positions that include front-line assignments at CSGK events and community Mass held at HCP.

"This has been a rewarding reboot of a former program at Hackett," says CSGK's Tylina Zimmerman, who directs the program with Allie Stokes, CSGK Enrollment and Marketing Coordinator. "Last year involved a lot of fine-tuning the scope of the program and this year we have really hit the ground running."

Students interested in joining the program go through a rigorous process which includes an interview with Germinder and Zimmerman. "Since most Ambassador duties include

interacting with donors, alumni, parents, and potential new students, the interview is a key part of the process," says Zimmerman.

Ambassadors frequently serve as event greeters, a role that includes the ability not only to welcome guests, but also engage with them at receptions and in other social situations.

"One of my assignments this fall was to greet and escort guests for Hackett's annual Memorial Mass," says Widman. "Afterwards, at the reception, two other Ambassadors and I ended up sitting at a table with some of our senior ladies and we all ended up having a great time learning about each other."

Other service opportunities have ranged from writing thank you cards to some non-traditional positions such as serving as a cook and food runner at one of Fr. Bob Creagan's stately rectory dinners.

An impactful moment for two Ambassadors came in October when Thea Husovska and Grahm Zygadlo spoke to donors at an event at the Kalamazoo Country Club. (See transcripts of speeches on page 6.)

"I was blown away by Thea and Grahm," says Widman. "They delivered messages in ways that captivated that room. They raised the bar for me. We support each other and develop a deeper connection through events like that. We all had interesting conversations with some amazing guests that evening, and we definitely enjoyed bonding over the country club's desserts."



Photos by Rachel O

Hackett Celebrates 60th Anniversary, Memorial Masses



Thank you for my Catholic education



THEA HUSOVSKA

Since I was little I have always heard, “No child will be denied the opportunity of a Catholic education due to financial need.” Through this announcement, although your name as a donor is not concretely mentioned, you are the reason this statement can be fulfilled.

Today, it is my pleasure to stand here before you with a grateful heart and raise my appreciation for all the countless hours you have spent with the students, and for the gift of generosity you have given to the CSGK schools. Your support is crucial to us, as it provides many opportunities for the students that have a lasting importance. Through scholarships, you show your faith in each and every one of us and provide confidence to continue our work and education.

Through my high school experience, I continue to grow and reflect on the blessings I have received in my life, such as the opportunity to meet God in the classroom, and the constant dedication of the staff. But the biggest blessing is the ability of being viewed as a Child of God every day rather than just another number within the system. Because of this, I value the community aspect that this school provides for each student. As a 4-year scholarship recipient I have come to understand that without this gift my Catholic education would not have been possible. It has made me more responsible and dedicated because I recognize the sacrifice made for me.

Not only are you providing education, and fulfilling dreams, but most importantly you are investing in the future of students who will hopefully carry the torch of Catholic Faith. The education I have come to know is about bringing not just knowledge but faith, hope and love in the end. This Catholic education has always gone hand in hand with practical life and encourages us to live a charity-based life.

I have never doubted the vision of Catholic education, which is to bring people together and make this world a better place. I experienced this each and every day.

After being here since my childhood, I am proud of this community, but most importantly this education which has enlightened me in many ways. It helped me to see this world in an unselfish way, because our community is built on the Gospel’s idea of “love your neighbor as yourself.”

I have had the privilege of being raised through the Catholic Schools in the Greater Kalamazoo Area for all my life. This is something I pray each child will have the opportunity to experience and understand. Once again, many thanks for giving me and many others the opportunity to know and serve one another through the eyes of Christ, because everything I have is by the Grace of God. Through this, you are building your treasure in heaven by giving in this world. Thank you for becoming a part of the youth’s life and ambitions.



GRAHM ZYGADLO

My name is Grahm Zygadlo, and I am a senior at Hackett Catholic Prep. I have been privileged to attend Catholic schools my entire life.

Growing up in the CSGK community, I’ve been fortunate to meet and grow close with some very special people, some

of which I know I’ll carry relationships with past my time at Hackett.

Being at a smaller, Catholic school has been very beneficial to me in getting to know my peers and teachers, deepening my relationships with them and making me feel more comfortable in the classroom.

We’ve always been made to feel comfortable in the classroom, getting to share our thoughts and feelings regarding any topic, especially religion. Getting to talk about the Catholic faith in school, learning about it each day, has helped me grow as a Catholic myself.

Facing new questions each day, surrounded by those facing the same questions themselves, creates an environment in which we, as students, can challenge ourselves, and each other, to grow in knowledge and faith.

Receiving a Catholic education has brought me closer to God, and for that I am thankful. Being surrounded by a committed group of students and staff, I’m always enjoying the education I am receiving.

It is thanks to people like you that my peers and I can receive a Catholic education, and for that I thank you all. Thank you all for being here and for your support to our Catholic schools.

REMEMBER OUR SCHOOLS ON GIVING TUESDAY!



#iGIVECATHOLIC
ON GIVING TUESDAY

Tuesday, December 3

Be sure to take advantage of employer matching!

Follow the link and click on Catholic Schools
diokzoo.igivecatholic.org/organizations

All funds given through the diocese to our schools
will be forwarded to CSGK

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever! – 1 Chronicles 16:34

Support Our Annual Campaign with **AN INVESTMENT AND A GIFT**

Be the person who helps another child

- Discover God
- Experience belonging
- Pursue their vision
- Achieve beyond their wildest dreams



**Your gift will enable discovery and
dreams through God to become a
part of our children's daily lives.**

*And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple,
truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. – Matthew 10:42*

Your *gift* to the Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo Annual Fund can be made in several ways.

- 1) Pray for God's guidance and a joyful heart toward giving.
- 2) Give now - scan the QR code or go online to <https://www.csgk.org/annualfund>, or
- 3) Clip this remittance slip and return it with a check to CSGK now, or
- 4) Return this remittance slip in the envelope you will receive next week with your Annual Giving Appeal letter.



Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

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☐ Enclosed is my check to CSGK Please mail checks with this slip to:
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Account # _____ Exp date _____ CVV _____

Optional

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

Congratulations to Our Fall HCP Stan

FOOTBALL

Division Champions, District Champions, Regional Finalist

Keegan McCue	SAC All Division
Sam Finley	SAC Honorable Mention All Division
Marcus Whyte	SAC Honorable Mention All Division

SOCCER

District Champions, Region Finalist

James Whiting	All District, All Region, 1st Team All State
Liam Roth	SAC All Division, All District, All Region, 2nd Team All State
Yair Castro	All District, All Region, Honorable Mention All State
Alex Dumont	All District
Jack Henderson	All District
Cullen McBride	SAC All Division, All District, All Region, 3rd Team All State, Honorable Mention All Division
Max Nobis	All District, All Region, Honorable Mention All State
Santiago Ochoa	All District Honorable Mention
James Scothorn	All District
Sean Siems	All District
Christian Ynclan	All District

VOLLEYBALL

District Finalist

Elsie Copp	SAC All Division
Lucy Young	SAC All Division, All Region
Lily Cooper	SAC Honorable Mention All Division

GOLF

Coco Zygodlo	SAC All Division
Ally Oldham	SAC All Division
Alanna Mills	SAC Honorable Mention All Division
Elle Redinger	SAC Honorable Mention All Division; State Qualifier - Individual

TENNIS

Jude Coffman	All Conference, All State Doubles
Chris Ogrin	All Conference, All State Doubles
Andrew Alcaraz	All Conference, Honorable Mention All State Singles
Grahm Zygodlo	Honorable Mention All Conference

SOCCER



VOLLEYBALL



TENNIS



dout Teams and Athletes

CROSS COUNTRY

Boys and Girls both Won Regionals

Marek Butkiewicz All Conference - 1st Place
Region - 1st Place All Region
State - 1st Place, record time 15:09.7
All State

Sean Siems All Conference - 4th place
Region - 4th Place All Region
State - 14th Place All State

Kellen Siems Honorable Mention All Conference
Region - 11th Place All Region

Alex Dumont Honorable Mention All Conference
Region - 10th Place All Region

Emma Riker All Conference - 3rd Place
Region - 1st Place All Region
State - 18th Place All State

Brie Siems Region - 3rd Place All Region
Delaney McBride Honorable Mention All-Conference
Region - 11th Place All Region

Abby Ulbrich All Conference - 18th Place
Region - 8th Place All Region

Kate Van Es All Conference - 20th Place
Region - 9th Place All Region

Sean Siems
All State
Cross Country



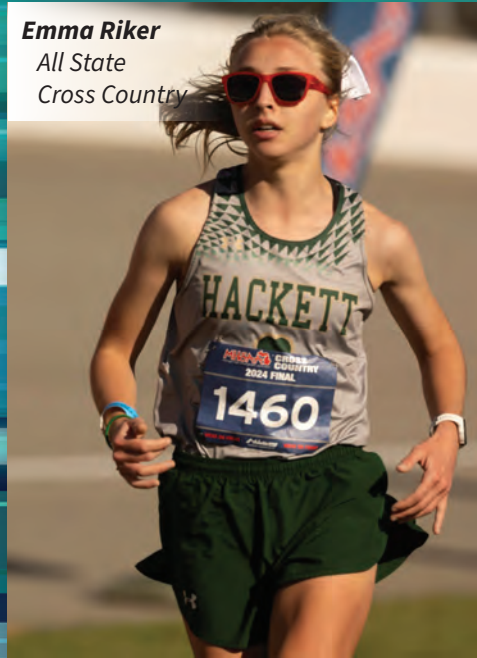
Marek Butkiewicz
All State
Cross Country
and
New State
Record



CROSS COUNTRY



Emma Riker
All State
Cross Country



FOOTBALL





Hackett was honored by the large number of first responders who attended our annual 9/11 memorial ceremony. Students and staff gathered outside for The Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, and a moment of silence while taps was played. Afterwards, first responders joined students in the library for a reception and discussion.



“ My preschooler came home from school and told me he learned that there are 3 people in God’s house: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While telling me this he did the sign of the cross. So blessed that my children are getting a faith-filled education. ”
St. Monica Parent



Artwork by Olivia Butkiewicz

“ We couldn’t be more confident in our decision to send our son to the Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo. The combination of a close-knit community, devoted teachers, and challenging academics has made a noticeable difference. To us, seeing our son thrive, feel supported, and look forward to school each day is worth every single penny. ”
Second grade parents, St. Augustine



Photo by Rachel O

Hackett Class of '89 celebrated with a September downtown reunion at Burdicks.

35th
Reunion



Karen Habra Smyth, Kelly Peppel Pastor, Mindy Ross Ketels, Christine Lee Gartner, Mike Haines, Jeffrey Cavanaugh, Lisa Robbins Cavanaugh, Jocelyn Detloff, Natalie Huff Valentine, Mike Doer, Kevin Ferrara, Brendan Donnelly, Leandro Filiputti, Sharon Rutten, Jennie Meyer Silva

St. Augustine High School Class of '64 celebrated with a September reunion at Travelers Craft BBQ.

60th
Reunion



“ We chose the Catholic schools for many reasons, including the strong commitment to living out our faith through action. We've been so happy with our choice and have found a welcoming community with dedicated, high quality teachers, focused on guiding our children to be well-rounded academically, spiritually, and physically. ”

St. Augustine Parents

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
of Greater Kalamazoo



ST. AUGUSTINE
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL



HACKETT
CATHOLIC PREP
MORE THAN HIGH SCHOOL



ST. MONICA
Est. 1958

A family of schools, learning together in faith now, preparing for the future.

IN MEMORY 2024

Vidosics, Steven J. '90	Mihelich, Joseph M. '57
Horrocks, Mickey '70	Laughlin (Rohr), Mary M. '55
Powers, Chuck "Bud" '55	Kinnane, Charles E. '65
Carey (Shields), Joan M. '62	Cowels, Robert H. '46
Wisser, James A. '64	Niedzielski (Leet), Joan '55
DeKam (Holton), Modesta '43	Misiasz, Mitchell R. '01
Johnson (Redmond), Mary '48	Frazier (Manifold), Marilyn E. '48
Fritz (Clark), Mary Jo '54	Cagney, Frederick J. '62
Schanz, Stephen J. '71	Foster, Ronald J. '55
Chappell, Steven K. '66	Woodhams (Banner), Mary '56
Boyle (Russell), Dolores '54	Waggoner (Kingsbury), Marilyn '44
Costello, Frank "Curt" '74	Thackara, Thomas W. '65
Barone, Samuel S. '46	Frybarger, Carmen '97
Reardon, Patrick J. '59	Renauld (Schmitt), Norberta
Lambert, David L. '58	Skartsiaris, Theodore L. '67

Please contact Tyline Zimmerman if you are aware of others who have passed in 2024.
(269) 381-2646 • tzimmerman@csgk.org

Alumni Memory

When I think back on my years at St. Augustine, I think how it prepared me for life. We went to Mass every school day from grade 1 through 12. The nuns were strict, and they wanted us to learn, and they made me a good student. I especially remember Sister Olympia, my 10th and 11th grade English teacher who inspired me to pursue college.

My family went to St. Monica starting when the parish was first organized about 1953. Father Nadrach, the first pastor, had an office in the back, lower part of the building on the corner of Buchanan St. He had a small altar in the room and held daily Mass there. I never went to St. Monica school. I was out of 8th grade before the school was built. I was at St. Augustine all 12 years.

Graduation meant we were faced with being drafted to go to Vietnam. I wasn't excited to join at the time since 500 servicemen were coming back every week in body bags. I enlisted to avoid the draft because I thought my chances of survival were better, nor did I then or now have any desire to kill anyone. I saw the draft as two years or life, whichever is shorter. The Navy offered a four-year enlistment.

I certainly had experiences I would never have had otherwise, and it changed my direction in life. I voluntarily stayed in the active Navy Reserve for an additional six years. My friends, Stephen, James, and Patrick, I think had careers they would have never pursued otherwise.

Merry Christmas,
Michael Gallagher, St. Augustine '62

THE IRISH CONNECTION

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Kalamazoo, MI 49008

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OPEN HOUSE

Learn more about our PreK-8 schools

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
of Greater Kalamazoo

St. Augustine Cathedral School

December 9 from 8am-10am

St. Monica Catholic School

December 11 from 9am-11am

If you can't make it to an Open House, call and set up a private tour with the principal.
St. Augustine 269-349-1945 • St. Monica 269-345-2444

