



Summer 2022

THE GOOD NEWS

FROM ALUMS & FRIENDS & FAMILIES

Providing tuition assistance to students at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School

Our Biggest Challenge Ever! \$80K Dollar-for-Dollar Match

This alum-sponsored match in honor of Fr. Steve Adrian's 80th birthday goes until June 30th. Help us reach the goal!

Page 2

INSIDE

>> Fr. Steve's Column
Page 2

>> What's Next for COS Alums
Pages 4-5

>> What's Next for 8th Grade Graduates
Pages 6-7

(BELOW) Bella Ramos '18 receives AAA Award for outstanding academics, athletics, and artistic performance. Page 5



What's Next for COS Alums

As the Class of 2022 graduates from 8th grade and prepares for high school, we also caught up with Community of Saints (COS) alums who are heading to college and graduate school. Find out what they have to say as they prepare for what's next, and reflect on the role COS has played in their lives. Pages 4-7

PHOTO BY JEANNINE MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Mixing Work, Fun & Philanthropy

St. Matthew's Men's Club Supports COS and Parish Communities

The Lenten Fish Fry at St. Matthew's has earned accolades over the years as one of the most popular in the Twin Cities. The driving force behind all that golden fried fish is the Men's Club at St. Matthew's, who always seem to find a way to make hard work both fun and profitable. For the fish fry, the Men's Club is responsible for all the planning, coordinating, and cooking; then they partner with other parish groups to serve dinners in exchange for a share of the proceeds. The school community helps on two Fridays, so COS gets a double share. "Fish fry money goes towards Home & School activities and the annual 8th grade trip to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center," explained Principal Bridget Kramer. "That's just one of many ways the Men's Club helps the school."

The Men's Club has a long history of supporting the school. Member Tim Nowak admits it takes a little more effort to coordinate since the school is off campus, but club members continually step up to provide funds for things that aren't covered by the budget.

They recently invited COS athletic director, Jason Wong, to attend their monthly meetings, which led them to donate \$1,600 for new baseball and softball uniforms. "All the uniforms were really old. In fact, one of our softball teams was going to have to wear volleyball jerseys," said Wong. "When kids play sports, you want it to be an exciting moment

— Continued on page 3

MESSAGE FROM **father steve**

Dear Alums, Friends, and Families of Community of Saints:

It was 15 years ago that Alums & Friends & Families came to be. The cost of Catholic education was making it difficult for many West Side families to see Catholic school as an option for their children. I invited a handful of people to come together and brainstorm with me about the future of Catholic education in our West Side community.

Among those gathered were Jerry Sexton, a man with a deep passion for Catholic schools, and Joe Cullen, a graduate of St. Matthew's School. It was clear to all that the issue at stake was the ability to help families afford Catholic schools and thus build school enrollment. It was the youngest member of the group, Joe Cullen, who spoke up and challenged us to commit to raise \$150,000 and increase enrollment by 50 students before the beginning of the next school year. The rest is history!

In 15 years, Alums & Friends & Families have raised more than \$3,100,000, every penny of which went to tuition assistance, making Catholic education possible for hundreds of students from low and modest income families.

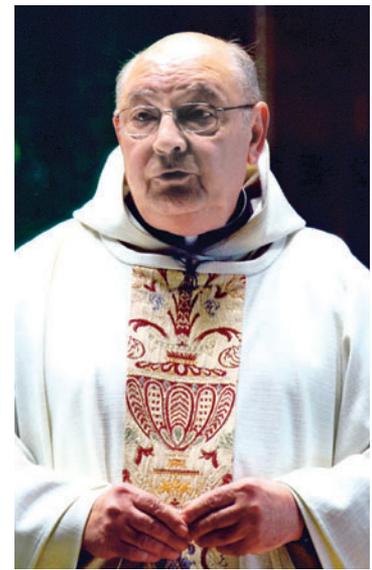
School administrators, teachers, or I could speak about the effect of your generosity in making a difference in the lives

of young people, but we could not do it as well as the graduates of COS. This issue carries testimony of COS students as they finish 8th grade and also COS alums as they complete their high school education and embark on the adventure of college.

These success stories are your success stories. You are the "angels" who sheltered these students through COS and helped them develop their God-given gifts. Without you the mission of COS could not take place.

On the occasion of my 80th birthday, Hugh and Melissa Cullen offered a challenge grant of \$80,000. Every gift you make between now and the end of June, up to \$80,000, will be matched. I invite you to seriously consider making a gift to COS and thus continue to make Catholic education possible for *your* students — they really are your students!

With gratitude,
Stephen Adrian
Canonical Administrator of COS



**DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR
MATCH THRU
JUNE 30TH**

**\$80,000 Challenge Grant from Hugh & Melissa Cullen
Alum's Gift Honors Fr. Steve**

To celebrate Fr. Steve's 80th birthday, Hugh and Melissa Cullen will match all contributions for tuition assistance up to \$80,000 through June 30th. "We wanted to show our appreciation for Fr. Adrian's service to the parish and Community of Saints," Hugh explained. "We've also been impressed with the work being done at the school and we'd like to see that continue."



Hugh, a 1973 graduate of St. Matthew's School, and Melissa are long-time supporters of Catholic education. The couple also contributed \$20,000 for the COS board of directors to use as a matching grant for the school's *Building Our Future on Good Ground* capital campaign. Once matched, the gift will complete the campaign's \$1 million fundraising goal. The Cullen's combined gift totals \$100,000.

GIVE TODAY!

Use the enclosed envelope or visit www.communityofsaints.org to make a contribution. If you have questions, please call Doug Lieser at 651-457-2510.



Men's Club Mixes Work, Fun & Philanthropy, continued from page 1

Men's Club meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. in St. Matthew's Social Hall. Everyone is welcome!



(ABOVE) The Men's Club tends the bar for events in St. Matthew's Social Hall. (L-R) Dean Steinbrenner and Bill Lynch are ready to pour.

(LEFT) L-R: Men's Club members Mark Evans, Joe Stevens, and Bob Bejblik, batter fish for the Lenten Fish Fry.

when they get their jerseys. Thanks to the Men's Club, it was a huge morale boost for the kids."

In recent years, the Men's Club has also raised money to help some COS families at Christmas. "The Men's Club provides gift cards that we distribute to about 15 or 20 families in financial need, so they can celebrate the Christmas holiday," said Principal Kramer. "For families who are struggling, their support makes such a difference."

Getting Back on Track Post-Pandemic

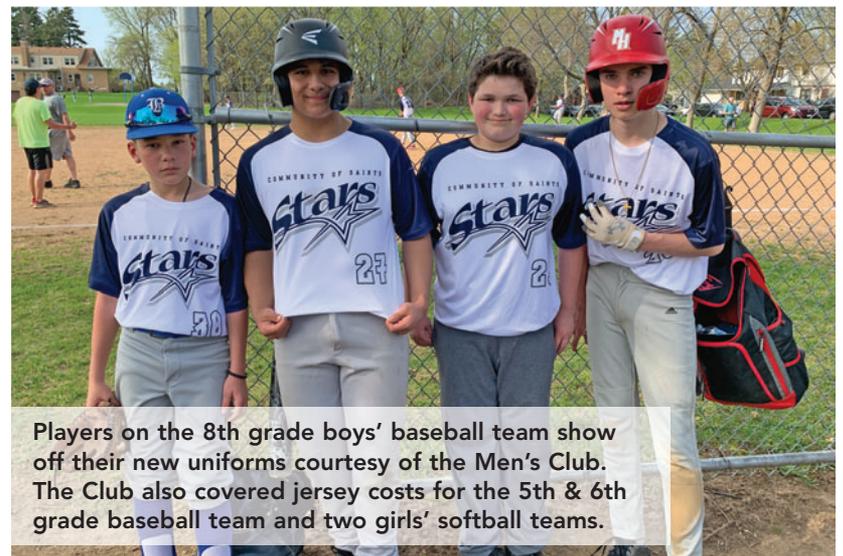
Nowak says the group is eager to get back to doing all the events and activities they used to before the pandemic, as well as adding some new ones. Last winter, the Men's Club worked the concession stand for *Winterfest* at the Dodge Nature Center, where they sold burgers and brats hot off the grill. The event organizers were so impressed they invited the Men's Club back in May to run concessions for *Rock the Barn*. "We had to get a license from the health department to do *Winterfest*," said Nowak. "So now we can rent a booth and do concessions at other community events around the area."

Some of the Men's Club activities are purely for fun, like the July 13th trip to Miesville to watch the Mudhens baseball game. The cost is just \$3 for a ticket and the Men's Club pays for the rest, including a bus to transport the group and refreshments for the trip. "We

like to get people together and have a good time," said Nowak, adding, "We hope everyone gets vaccinated and boosted, even if we need boosters every six months, so we don't let this virus rule our lives."

New Members are Welcome

Everyone is welcome at the Men's Club, whether it's to help at an event, or just have some fun. To sign up for the trip to Miesville or to learn more about other Men's Club activities, email timothy.nowak@usfamily.net.



Players on the 8th grade boys' baseball team show off their new uniforms courtesy of the Men's Club. The Club also covered jersey costs for the 5th & 6th grade baseball team and two girls' softball teams.

What's Next for COS Alums

ALIAH LOPEZ '14

**Earned a BA from the University of Minnesota, College of Liberal Arts
 Majored in biology and the environment with a minor in Spanish studies
 Enrolled in graduate program at University of Minnesota to earn Master's in education**



Now that I've got my Bachelor's degree, I'm enrolled in a program at the College of Education that will meet the requirements to become a high school life science teacher. I'll earn my teaching license in a year, and then in two more semesters I'll have a Master's in education. I've received scholarships to cover most of the costs.

I started on this path my freshman year. I wasn't happy in my classes, and I wasn't doing well. I asked Miss Katie (COS Preschool Director) for a job, and she hired me to work in the Extended Day room helping students after school. I loved it! That's when I began to consider a career in teaching. Ms. Kramer (COS Principal) has played a huge role in my journey to become a teacher, including writing a recommendation for me for graduate school. In my undergraduate education classes, I always gave examples about things I learned from Ms. Kramer, so my classmates at the U really got to know her. COS helped me grow so much. The school really feels like a family to me.

ALYSSA GOPLEN '18

**Graduated from Two Rivers High School
 Attending Inver Hills Community College**



I plan to get my general course-work out of the way next year and then get my four-year degree in education so I can be a teacher. I've been teaching my stuffed animals since I was three years old! One of my jobs now is to help with the afterschool program at COS. Back when I was in middle school at COS, I used to tutor kids after school. I've always been really passionate about teaching.

I thrived at Two Rivers High School because COS prepared me so well. I'm very proud of my 3.8 GPA. I had worries about being in a class of 400 students, but I applied lessons from COS, like developing good relationships with teachers so they'll help you. I also would have been lost without the lessons in faith from my teachers and Fr. Adrian. Sometimes life is scary, and at COS I learned that God's always there for you. That's made me really strong.

Advice to Class of 2022: Just remember where you came from and who was there for you. COS taught me that we're all part of a community that works together — we're a team. That helped me get back on track if I ever started drifting. I always go back to COS and think about how I can carry on the virtues and values they taught me as I live my life today.

BETHANY GOPLEN '18

**Graduated from Two Rivers High School
 Attending Winona State University**



I'm considering two possible career paths. I like hunting and fishing and living life outdoors, so one plan is to major in criminal justice and environmental sciences to become a conservation officer. I'm also interested in nursing because my mom is a

nurse. This summer I plan to work as a Certified Nursing Assistant to see if I like it.

Having such a small class at COS helped me realize the kind of education I needed for how my brain works. I need that one-on-one. I also learned it's important to ask questions and form a good relationship with your teachers. All that gave me confidence.

Advice to Class of 2022: If you go to a big public school, don't feel like your faith is something you have to hide. People are respectful of what you believe. Everybody comes from somewhere and people are pretty understanding.

BELLA RAMOS '18
Graduated from Two Rivers High School
Attending University of St. Thomas



Ever since I was little, I thought I would do something in the medical field. In high school I took physiology and anatomy classes, and I really liked them, so I plan to study nursing. There's a big need for nurses right now and I like helping other people. I especially like working with younger children, so I might consider pediatric nursing.

Advice to Class of 2022: Try new things in high school, even if you're on the fence about it. Joining clubs or trying new classes can help you make friends and learn more about yourself and what you like to do. Remember, your teachers want to see you grow!

AAA Award Recipient

Bella was one of two students at Two Rivers High School to receive this award which recognizes outstanding performance in academics, athletics, and the arts. Bella has a 3.9 GPA, was named All-Conference in Volleyball, and made the Academic All-State Volleyball Team. She has also been an active participant in Two River's choir.

MARI TRESSELL '18
Graduated from Chesterton Academy of the St. Croix Valley
Attending University of Mary in Bismarck, ND



My current plan is to major in biomechanics, which is the study of how the body moves. If I like it, I could get a Master's in physical science. I like the idea of being able to help people and there's a lot I could do with those degrees in the medical field. I'm excited about going to University of Mary because I know a lot of people who'll be going there, plus, they have a program where I can get a Bachelor's degree in 2.5 years which will save a lot of money.

At COS I valued the relationships we had with the teachers. They were all really kind. When I wanted more challenging work, they would provide it, which helped prepare me for high school. Chesterton is a small school, like COS, but they use the Socratic method, where teachers ask a lot of questions during class to help students develop critical thinking skills. That took a few months to get used to.

Advice to Class of 2022: What you put into your homework is what you'll get out of it. The more effort you make, the more you'll learn. People say that all the time but it's true.



MADISON NOWAK '18
Graduated from Two Rivers High School
Attending Waldorf University
in Forest City, IA

A bowling scholarship is going to cover about 75% of my costs for college. I was shocked when I saw what the college offered me because I thought I would get a much lower amount. The scholarship actually brought me to tears because now I can go to college and not worry about where the money's coming from.

I'm leaning towards getting a degree in criminal justice and minoring in business. Ever since I was little, I've thought about becoming a police officer because my uncle was a police officer and I wanted to follow in his footsteps. If I don't do that, I'm interested in starting my own business.

Advice to Class of 2022: Don't get too far behind in your schoolwork. You might have a job, play sports, and have lots of friends, but you still need to stay on top of your homework. Also, make a good impression on your teachers. If they see you putting in the effort, they'll help you.

GABE FLORES '18
Graduated from
Two Rivers High School
Attending St. Mary's
University of
Minnesota in Winona
or the University of
St. Thomas



What's Next for 8th Grade Graduates



JAZIEL ENRIQUEZ-OLVERA CRETIN-DERHAM HALL HIGH SCHOOL

I started at COS in 6th grade. It was challenging at first, but the community helped me out and I quickly made friends. Before that I attended L'Etoile du Nord (St. Paul's French immersion school). My parents are from Mexico and they lived in Quebec before moving to St. Paul, so they wanted me to learn French. My parents mostly speak Spanish, so now I am fluent in English, Spanish, and French.

I'm looking forward to going to Cretin-Derham Hall next year. I already knew what it was like because my brother went there, and I got to know it better this year because I was on the Varsity wrestling team.

At COS, my favorite classes were probably social studies and science. I'm also in STEM Club, where we've been building robots and then learning how to write code to make them do things. After high school, I plan go to college to study engineering.

"If you come here, they will welcome you with open arms."

I'm going to miss the teachers and students here at COS. I've known them for three years and they helped me get through the pandemic, and other things, as well. The community here is great. Everyone will help if you need it. If you're stuck on something, they will help. If you come here, they will welcome you with open arms.

Congratulations to Jaziel for receiving a Flaherty Scholarship to attend CDH. The award supports high potential scholars in economic need.

CHRISTOPHER NUÑEZ & JOHNNY KRAKER SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

JOHNNY: When the high schools came to visit, I started thinking about Saint Thomas Academy as an option, and after I shadowed, I knew I wanted to go.

CHRIS: It's kind of a plus that we're both going.

JOHNNY: There's no bus so we're going to have to carpool.

CHRIS: But it's going to be hard leaving COS.

JOHNNY: Our class is very close. I think we're close in part because we went through the pandemic together.

CHRIS: My mom got really ill from COVID, and she had to go to the hospital for a few weeks. At one point it looked like she might die but thank God, she's here and she's fine. But it really took a toll.

JOHNNY: I split my time between my parents but at my mom's, we share a very small apartment with my older sisters. My mom lost her job at the start of the pandemic, and she didn't have a job the whole time. It was hard but no matter what was happening, if it was crazy at home, we could all come to school, and we had each other.

CHRIS: I'll be playing football for STA and I'm hoping I can get a football scholarship for college. It's important to my mom that I do good in school and finish college. Going to college is a dream for me and a dream for her as well.



"...it's going to be hard leaving COS."
— CHRIS

"Our class is very close. I think we're close in part because we went through the pandemic together."
— JOHNNY



**YDIDYA MEHERETIA
ST. AGNES OR
ROSEVILLE HIGH
SCHOOL**

"Our class is just amazing."

I started at COS in November of 6th grade. Then in March we had to shut down for COVID. I knew some people already, and they introduced me to others. So, I made friends with my best friend's friends, if that makes sense. The pandemic actually brought me closer to most of my friends because I talked to them more during Zoom meetings.

My parents are from Ethiopia, and I was born in Lebanon. We came to the United States when I was three years old. We were supposed to go to Missouri, but something happened so we came to Minnesota instead and we've stayed here.

After high school I'll go to college and study to be either a lawyer or a doctor. My own doctor has inspired me to become a doctor so I can help others. I'm interested in becoming a lawyer because I want to give people rights. I don't like it when things aren't fair.

Our class at COS is probably the best class. We like encouraging other people. We're always fun. We're serious when we need to be serious. We're kind to each other, we show respect, and we do our work. Our class is just amazing.

**NICO CORTEZ-ORME
CRETIN-DERHAM HALL HIGH SCHOOL**

When I toured Cretin-Derham Hall and shadowed a student, I liked seeing the students' artwork hanging in the hallway and how the teachers were teaching. I also like that they're building a STEM workshop. I'm interested in that because I'm in the STEM Club at COS.



I really love music and I'm teaching myself how to play the guitar and I play some piano. I'm interested in music because it's expressive and you can interpret it in many ways. I'd like to be good enough to teach people how to write music so they can turn their love of music into something they can use to express themselves.

At COS the teachers want to set you up so you can do things by yourself, know how to help yourself, and be more independent. They're hard on you but they also support and help you. It's helped me become a good student.

"At COS the teachers want to set you up so you can do things by yourself...and be more independent."

**JASMINE CASTILLON
TWO RIVERS HIGH SCHOOL**

I came to COS in 4th grade. It was scary at first, but now I love my class. We're all very close. Whoever you sit next to, they'll talk to you.

This year I've been volunteering in the pre-school. I get to school at 7:15 am and volunteer until about 8:10 am. Sometimes I stay and help after school, too. I like being with the little kids and experiencing what they do in the morning. You sort of get to be a kid again. It's giving me experience so when I'm older, if I want to go into working with kids, I have more life lessons about what it takes to be with kids.

Next year I'm taking all AP classes. It's a big step but I feel ready. I'm really independent and I want to explore new things. After high school I want to go to college and get a good job so I can help my younger brother pay for college. It's really important to my parents that we both go to college.

One of the things I learned at COS is that everyone's not going to look like you, and everyone has their own problems. You can't picture someone in your head and be judgmental towards them. We learned how to deal with people who aren't like us, because everyone's different in their own way.



"We learned how to deal with people who aren't like us, because everyone's different in their own way."

**COMMUNITY OF SAINTS
REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL**
335 Hurley St. E.
West St. Paul, MN 55118-1605

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 3673

The Good News is published
quarterly by



Editor: Maggie Lee

COS Principal: Bridget Kramer
Email: BKramer@communityofsaints.org

Advancement: Doug Lieser
Email: DLieser@communityofsaints.org

COS Phone: 651-457-2510

Web: www.communityofsaints.org



Congratulations

to the 8th Grade Graduating **Class of 2022!**

Front Row — left to right (kneeling): **Bonnie Jondro, Noel Sevilla-Martinez, Michaela Robbins, Ricardo Cook, Katie Haynes, Henry Diaz, Maurice Srey, Pedro Yanez, Sophie Stecher, Lucy Rodriguez.**

Back Row — left to right (standing): **Annalysse Hallman, Luciano Bostwick, Francisco Martinez Hernandez, Aviana MuGoodwin-Belmares, Angelica Franco, Johnny Kraker, Jasmine Castillon, Bernard Muske, Yaretzi Bautista, Jaziel Enriquez-Olvera, Christopher Nuñez, Nico Cortez-Orme, Lorenzo Ramos, Ydidya Meheretia, MacKenzie Moran, Gaby Hoban, Valeria Rivera, Makayla Moran.**

PHOTO BY JEANNINE MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY