



ACE Fellowship News

Building a movement in service to Catholic schools

Alliance for Catholic Education
154 IEI Building
Notre Dame, Indiana
46556

Fall 2009

From the Director's Desk

Chuck Lamphier

What an exciting time for our movement in service to Catholic schools! ACE Fellowship is becoming a force of lasting, positive influence on children, families, communities, the nation, and the Church. At the local level, hundreds of dedicated Catholic school champions work to ensure that high quality, faith-based education is available to all. And nationally, the Fellowship is winning friends to the mission of Catholic schools and preparing members spiritually and professionally to be agents of change.

That's why I'm grateful that you're reading this newsletter, which will give you a glimpse of this movement. I know you share my conviction that the values of spirituality, community,

and service, on which ACE Fellowship is founded, are needed now more than ever. ACE Fellowship is the good news in so many communities—a powerful expression of the Spirit!

Inside these pages you will read about our Advocates for Parental Choice Symposium this past summer. You'll learn about what our regions are up to this year, review the latest in Catholic education and ACE news, and be inspired by stories of hope. You will also be invited to meditate on the gift of prayer.

Please spread the word about our movement by forwarding this newsletter to your colleagues and friends. Catholic schools are too important to

children and families for us to keep ACE Fellowship quiet! Then drop me a note at clamphie@nd.edu to let me know how we can build our movement in your community.

Yours in fellowship,

P.S. Did you see the new NBC commercial featuring ACE? Check it out at <http://www.youtube.com/nddotedu>

Where the Spirit is stirring

Fr. Lou Delfra, CSC

It would be hard to count how many times as a priest I have to answer questions about "the vocation crisis." The questioners almost always assume I will have a gloomy response to match their own despondency.

Then, I start talking about what I know about young people's commitment to the Church. I talk about the 180 ACE teachers currently teaching in Catholic schools, the 83 ACE principals and administrators currently leading Catholic schools, the 24 Fellowship communities figuring out new and inspiring ways to live lives of prayer, community, and service to Catholic schools.

I tell them about the 15-20 people who come on the Fellowship Religious Vocations Retreat each year, now three years running. I tell them about the Marriage and Family Retreat we have held the

last 3 years on Lake Michigan. And then I ask them, "So, which vocation crisis are you talking about?"

The point, of course, is not that there is no vocation crisis! There is – the Church is in DESPERATE need of new life and leadership. Nowhere is this more often evident than in Catholic schools, as you well know. Rather, the point is that **we need to stay focused on the myriad ways the Holy Spirit is at work** in our lives and in our communities.

Where we are willing to see the Spirit stirring, and also become willing to respond to those stirrings with energy, commitment, our talents, there the Church is renewed in amazing ways – often new ways – time and time again. This has been so since the beginning of the Church in the



Acts of the Apostles, and this has always been one of the trademark characteristics of graduates of the ACE programs, and members of the Fellowship.

We know the Spirit is at work renewing the Church, and we are a part of it! May we as Christ's body embrace that renewal this year in our hearts and in our communities. May we the Church receive with open hands God's blessings of inspiration and hope!

Inside this issue:

National News	2
▪ Summer 2009 Symposium Review	
▪ Staff Changes	
▪ Fall Fellowship Forum	
▪ Annual Retreat Update	
▪ Save the Dates	
Regional News	4
▪ Regional Round Up	
▪ Camp SCAN	
▪ New Fellowships	
▪ Student Funnies	
Catholic Ed News	6
▪ DC's Voucher Program	
▪ Handbook of Research on School Choice Book Review	
National ACE News	7
▪ New ACE Program	
▪ ENL program	
▪ IEI Conference on Catholic Schools	
▪ Shout-outs	
Signs of Hope	8
▪ St. Joe Grade School	
▪ Pressley Awards	
▪ Saints Among Us	
Following the Spirit	9
▪ The Gift of Prayer	

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.

Anne Lamott



National Fellowship News

ACE 2009 summer programs spotlight parental choice

In 2005, the Catholic Bishops of the United States wrote: "As the primary educators of their children, parents have the right to choose the school best suited for them. The entire Catholic community should be encouraged to advocate for parental school choice and personal and corporate tax credits, which will help parents to fulfill their responsibility in educating their children."

ACE Fellowship has taken seriously the bishops' call to educate



Attendees listen attentively to Gerard Robinson of the Black Alliance for Educational Options.

our members on this important issue. In the summer of 2009, the Fellowship launched its inaugural Parental Choice Symposium, which convened 17 Fellowship members for a two week intensive seminar on the legal, social, economic, and moral issues related to parental choice.

The first week of the symposium brought to Notre Dame the most influential academics and policy makers in the parental choice movement. In seminar-style courses, participants studied under such experts as Dr. Howard Fuller, founder of the Black Alliance for Educational Options; Dr. Patrick Wolf, 21st Century Chair of School Choice at the University of Arkansas; and Phylicia Lyons, President and CEO of School Choice Illinois.



Symposium participants pose after a day of learning.

The second week provided on-the-ground immersion in the birthplace of the modern parental choice movement—Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There participants worked with grassroots organizations, local families who benefit or wish to benefit from the Milwaukee Choice Program, Catholic schools, and elected officials.

In between the two weeks, many Fellowship members and other friends of Catholic education gathered for the annual Summer

Fellowship Forum. This year the Forum served as a 48-hour crash course on parental choice and the Fellowship's efforts to build a movement in service to Catholic schools.

Many regard the ability of families, especially the poor and marginalized, to choose high quality educational options for their children to be the civil rights issue of our time. ACE Fellowship is proud to stand on the side of the poor who hope to secure an excellent faith-based education for their children.

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21

Spirit-led changes: Hellos and Goodbyes for Fellowship staff



Steve Calme

After spearheading the (hugely successful) summer symposium on Parental Choice, Steve Calme

hung up his ACE Fellowship hat to enter the Chicago province of the Jesuit novitiate this fall.

During his tenure, Steve brought his deep love for God and great sense of humor into every pursuit, from his pastoral care of



Regional Fellowships to his work with ACE Chile to his spearheading of the newsletter. We are grateful for his service here and anticipate partnering with him in new ways in the call we share to support Catholic education. Please keep Steve in your prayers as he begins this new chapter in his life.

With Steve's departure, we welcomed Ann Berends to the ACE Fellowship ranks. Ann comes to us from Nashville, Tennessee, where she served most recently as a project man-

ager for Vanderbilt University's National Center on School Choice. Prior to that, she served in an amalgam of roles—from children's literacy to ministry to communications—that, she says, "providentially led me straight to the ACE community!" We are delighted to have her on board.



Ann Berends



National Fellowship News

October 2009 Fall Fellowship Forum fires up

October 9-11 is Fall Fellowship Forum Weekend at Notre Dame. Regional leaders will gather on campus for strategic planning and leadership formation, centered around the theme "Building our House on Rock."

Every year, the Fall Fellowship Forum provides ACE Fellowship leaders with an incredible opportunity to brainstorm, collaborate, and pray together. Throughout the Forum, this group will engage in conversations and provide input regarding the current needs and next steps for the ACE Fellowship as a national movement.

The weekend promises to generate a multitude of ideas and plans for furthering the mission of Catholic schools within the 24

regional areas where these leaders have cultivated the ACE Fellowship's presence. Among the topics of discussion are the urgent needs of Catholic schools, articulating the Fellowship's message, and strategies for growing and sustaining our membership.

True to our mission, our daily work will be grounded in prayer



Red House on Rocks Sandra Kensler 2009

together. We ask all of you to keep our leaders in your prayers throughout the weekend. May the Holy Spirit guide our efforts as we continue building this movement in service to Catholic education.

Many thanks in advance to all of our regional representatives for their participation in what we hope will be a Spirit-filled weekend!

Save the Dates



Fall Fellowship Forum

- **Friday, October 9 — Sunday, October 11**

Friday evening

- 5:30 pm Reception
- 6:30 pm Progressive Dinner: *How is the Spirit calling ACE Fellowship?*
- 8:30 pm Mass
- 9:30 pm Social

Saturday

- 9:00am *Winning Support of our Mission*
- 2:00pm *Cultivating Active Fellowship Leaders and Members*
- 5:30 pm Vigil Mass
- 7:00 pm Dinner
- 9:00 pm Social

Sunday morning

- 9:00 am *Creating High Quality Programming*
- 10:30 am Closing Prayer

National retreat plans focus on regions this year

Last year, the ACE Fellowship staff hosted four "Destination Retreats." Members were invited to select their favorite locale and gather for a weekend of spiritual renewal. These were wonderful weekends of rejuvenation for groups from around the country.

But an interesting revelation occurred over that time. Though the retreats were advertised nationwide, the vast majority of participants chose to attend one near home, surrounded by friends, highlighting this fact: *the power of the Fellowship comes from the sense of community that is built at the regional level.* The Regional Fellowship applications this fall confirmed it; many are already planning to host regional retreats and days of reflection this fall or spring.

These plans hold so much promise as the ACE Fellowship con-

tinues to expand that we want to make a special effort to support them. Thus, rather than hosting a series of Destination Retreats, ACE Fellowship will focus its spiritual formation efforts on regions this year—with one exception should there be interest in a national retreat. Here's the plan:

- If any Regional Fellowship hosts a retreat for 20 or more people, a member of the Fellowship staff and/or a Holy Cross priest can be available to participate and help facilitate as needed.
- If regional leaders wish to expand retreat plans beyond the original proposal and budget, ACE Fellowship will assist with costs.
- ACE Fellowship staff will compile a set of retreat resources – a "pre-planned retreat" – for any regional community that wishes to use them.

The three pillars of ACE reflect a powerful truth: **the strength, energy, and love that we rely on in our service to Catholic schools are best nurtured when we gather as a community in prayer.** Thank you for working with us as we seek the best ways to offer spiritual formation within such a rapidly growing movement!

For those who would like a national retreat, we are exploring the possibility of hosting one next spring on Notre Dame's campus. If you are interested, we need to hear from you! Call or email us at ace.fellowship@nd.edu or 574-631-3165.



ACE Fellowship Football Masses

- **October 3**—ND vs. Wash
- **October 17**—ND vs. USC
- **October 24**—ND vs. BC

All masses will be held in the Fisher Hall chapel 30 minutes after the end of each game. We look forward to celebrating the Eucharist with you!

ACE Football Tailgates

- **October 3**—ND vs. Wash
- **October 17**—ND vs. USC
- **October 24**—ND vs. BC

Stop by our tent (located just southwest of Mendoza College of Business) for a bite and a chat before the games!



Regional Fellowship News



Regional Round Up

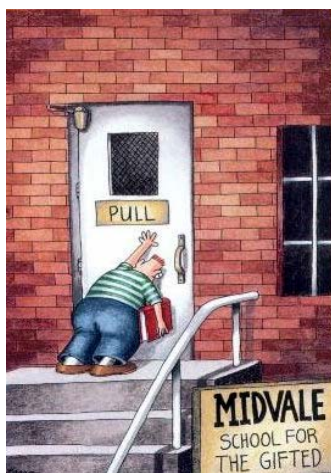
The **Arizona** Fellowship has a new chair: Jeremy Moreno. Among the many goals of the group this year is to have a morning retreat with an afternoon of canoeing to follow.

In **Austin**, Catholic schools lost a powerful voice when Bishop Gregory Aymond moved to his new assignment in New Orleans. Thus, the Fellowship intends to follow Aymond's example, especially by promoting Catholic schools among the Latino population.

The **Bay Area** group is furiously making preparations for their second annual Trivia Karaoke Night. This blended social event was a hit last year, and the group hopes to match its success by raising over \$5,000 this year!

Also building on their past success, the **Boston** Fellowship will continue FAFSA Night at Trinity Catholic High School and a scholarship fundraiser linked with the Boston marathon. They will also involve local advocates in letter-writing sessions to support parental choice.

Among the activities the **Chicago** Fellowship will hold next spring is a morale-boosting celebration and fundraising event for teachers, creatively christened the "Salary Freeze Ball."



The **Columbus** Fellowship recently held their first fundraiser to support the SPICE program, which enables children with mild and moderate disabilities to receive a Catholic education.

In addition to continuing signature events such as its annual Irish Trivia fundraiser, the **Dallas** Fellowship is creating a committee to research and establish a Diocesan High School Scholarship Program, with the ultimate goal to make the fund self-sustaining.

The **Denver** Fellowship, eager to support the "dedicated teachers who are over-extending themselves to meet the needs of their students and school communities," will provide two schools with service days, retreats, and fundraisers this year.

Our **Dublin** team will combat teacher isolation with monthly Fellowship gatherings, bi-annual retreats and service days, and recruiting events at St. Patrick's and Trinity Colleges.

Meeting the challenge of distance between group sites, the **Gulf Coast** Fellowship aims to strengthen and sustain its membership with two Wine and Cheese Information Nights in Mobile and Biloxi, and mass attendance and post-mass barbecues in Mobile and Pascagoula.

The **Houston** Fellowship continues mentoring their local GRACE teachers as this UCCE program begins its second year. Plans include bringing together the greater community of Archdiocesan teachers in events scheduled throughout the year.

Expanding on their outreach to six Mother Theodore Catholic Academies last year, the **Indianapolis** Fellowship will offer their Saturday mass/breakfast/service to four nearby schools struggling with finance and enrollment.

The **Los Angeles** Fellowship is off to another great year as they welcome the new ACE and PLACE teachers to LA and begin planning for the first of their two curriculum sharing nights.

The **Nashville** Fellowship will focus on building a partnership with St. Henry Church and School, seeking ways to help the school and its students share their time, talent, and treasure with under-resourced diocesan schools, especially in the diocese's rural areas.

With the success of last spring's Saturday Fun program, the **New Jersey** Fellowship looks forward to expanding the event, which offers extracurricular enrichment and athletic opportunities to students at Sacred Heart School.

The **New York** Fellowship plans to deepen their relationship with Cristo Rey New York High School, hosting regular masses with the school community and seeking to become a regular presence at the school's development events.

One of the newest additions to our regional network is the **Philadelphia** Fellowship. Leaders in Philadelphia will focus on building their community by establishing strategic partnerships and supporting a local school.

The **Portland** Fellowship is the other new addition to our network. This group will also seek to build relationships with Catholic school supporters and networks between schools. This

fall and next spring, the group will host a camp at a suburban Catholic high school for urban Catholic middle schoolers.

Among **St. Louis** Fellowship's plans this year is to inform their community about issues surrounding parental choice. They will have several informational events at parishes and schools.

The **Seattle** Fellowship (a.k.a. Seattle Catholic Action Network, or SCAN) will focus part of its energy on young adults, holding monthly masses and two game watch nights. The group will also host its signature Camp SCAN next summer.

The active **South Bend** Fellowship aims to establish an ongoing relationship this year with the new diocesan superintendent and to strengthen its relationship with the local Magnificat school.

The **Twin Cities** Fellowship will focus on both teachers and students this year, making teacher recruitment presentations at the University of St. Thomas' Catholic Studies department, initiating a grant-writing program, and holding three retreats for San Miguel Middle School students.

Our friends in **Washington, D.C.** are planning multiple events this year, including their annual School Cleanup Day, their annual Trivia Night fundraiser, reading and math nights, and a student retreat.



Regional Fellowship News

Camp SCAN: ACE's cure for the summer gap blues

The Seattle ACE Fellowship, known as the Seattle Catholic Action Network (SCAN), marshaled its energies and resources to address a pressing need of Catholic school parents by hosting Camp SCAN at the beginning of this past June.

In Seattle, Catholic schools begin their summer vacation one week before public schools do. During this "gap week," Catholic school parents struggle to find childcare, sports camps, or educational enrichment for their children. The Seattle ACE Fellowship solved this predicament by hosting a one-week camp for children in the inner-city Catholic schools.

Camp SCAN activities were a combination of fun learning opportunities and play, and afforded children a host of exciting and eye-opening experiences

around Seattle. Among them: SCAN member and chemistry doctoral student Pauline Alokolaro led children in a host of science activities. Campers blew up balloons with baking soda and water, made ice cream using liquid nitrogen, concocted slime, learned about magnets, and created art with shaving cream and food coloring.

Every day included field trips, too. Students visited Seattle University, took a trip to the Imaginarium Children's Museum, and toured Safeco Field and St. James Cathedral. Children also learned about serving their community by sorting food at a Seattle emergency food center.

Planning and implementation of Camp SCAN took the hard work of many members of the Seattle Fellowship, and included

forging partnerships with the University of Washington, which donated science supplies, and Bishop Blanchet High School, which provided the use of a school bus. Along with SCAN members, Bishop Blanchet students volunteered during the week.

Camp SCAN provided Catholic school children and families with a terrific opportunity for academic enrichment—to say nothing of an enjoyable week! Congratulations on an ambitious and successful service project in the spirit of ACE Fellowship!

Fellowships beget Fellowships: New groups build ACE momentum

The movement in service to Catholic schools is building momentum! With each passing year, more individuals from all walks of life learn about ACE Fellowship and join our mission. This year, our national movement grows even larger with the addition of two Regional Fellowship communities.

The Portland ACE Fellowship (known as the Portland Educators Catholic Action Network, or PECAN) begins this year under the leadership of Stephanie Blumenson, a PACE graduate and teacher at LaSalle Catholic College Preparatory. Following the terrific example of the Seattle ACE Fellowship—and with Seattle's ongoing mentorship—the Portland Regional Leadership Team is working to bridge the

gap between inner-city and suburban Catholic schools, and to win friends to the ACE Fellowship's mission.

We also welcome the "Philly Phellowship," with its leaders, ACE 13 graduates Flannery O'Connor and Mike Montgomery. The Phellowship looks forward to developing some key partnerships this year. They hope to offer regular service to the students of St. Martin de Porres School, to form a relationship with the diocese and superintendent, and to forge connections with key supporters at local universities.

The Portland and Philadelphia Fellowship Regions join twenty-two other groups that are responding to the Spirit's call to

sustain and strengthen Catholic schools while breathing life and vitality into the Church. ACE Fellowship's commitment to spirituality, community, and service are very much alive in its regional networks

From the mouths of babes

Children's prayers...

Dear God,
Please send Dennis Clark
to a different camp
this year.
Peter

Dear God,
I think about
you sometimes even
when I'm not praying
Elliott

Dear God
Maybe Cain and Abel
would not kill each so much
if they had their own rooms.
It works with my brother
Larry

And proverbs...

Here's how a group of first graders completed the second half of some well-known proverbs:

- No news is.....impossible.
- Love all, trust.....me.
- An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.
- Strike while the.....bug is close.
- A penny saved is.... not much.
- Don't bite the hand that... looks dirty.
- Where there's smoke there's.. pollution.
- Children should be seen, not spanked or grounded.



National Catholic Education News

The boost kids need: Catholic schools and the DC voucher program



Parents and students rally for school choice in Washington, D.C.

The word is in: after three years of federal funding, the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) in Washington, D.C. is succeeding. Low-income students who took advantage of government vouchers to leave their public schools for private ones made great strides in reading, performing consistently higher in that subject than students who stayed in the public schools. What's more, parents of these children are thrilled as they witness the positive change the OSP has introduced. Their rates of satisfaction with the schools, and their sense of security within them, are off the charts.

This is great news, not just for the children or the OSP, but for Catholic schools, in which over half the scholarship recipients are enrolled. Vouchers—and Catholic schools—are giving struggling kids the educational boost they so desperately need.

The time for action is now! It's not too late to encourage our congressional leaders to carry the flag they've already hoisted. Every one of our Senators and Representatives can help save this program. Contact yours today.

Now for the bad news. As reported by Patrick Wolf, who is overseeing the evaluation of this four-year program, math scores for OSP students did not improve. (Researchers are currently addressing this discrepancy.) And Congress has yet to ante up with more funding to keep the program going beyond its fourth year.

Go to <http://acefellowship.wordpress.com/make-your-voice-heard/> and follow the links. Lend your voice to this issue, and you lend your voice to hundreds of under-served kids—and the Catholic schools that are helping them.

New book of research gives high marks to Catholic schools

As the range of school-based choices for parents has steadily expanded, so too has the debate about the difference parental choice makes. Is it fair? Is it effective? Does it increase segregation?

Enter the *Handbook of Research on School Choice* (Routledge, 2009), the aptly titled volume that provides the first comprehensive review of what is known about parental choice today.

Clearly structured by type of choice and covering the range of perspectives, the *Handbook's* chapter on Catholic schools affirms that in every subject area except science, students in Catholic schools outperform their peers in traditional public schools. Recent research has attempted to account for this effectiveness—as well as the consistently lower science scores.

Among the findings for success are that Catholic schools typically operate as communities

rather than bureaucracies, which seems to encourage student performance. According to the chapter's author, Professor Helen Marks, "Shared values, a common agenda, and caring relationships [are] linked to high levels of teacher commitment, student engagement, and student achievement" (p. 487).

What then of the lower science scores? Here Dr. Marks points to research suggesting that, because Catholic schools run on smaller budgets than traditional public schools, they lack the necessary tools (e.g., equipment, personnel) for garnering a higher performance from their students in that subject area.

Given its size and scope, the *Handbook* is surprisingly readable. The editors and authors have translated rigorous research findings into comprehensible prose accessible to a variety of readers. To find it online, go to <http://www.routledge.com>.

42 Catholic Schools receive the National Blue Ribbon School Award



The NCEA reports that the National Blue Ribbon School Awards were recently announced and

of the 50 private school recipients, 42 were Catholic schools.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan named the 314 winners

on September 15. The U.S. Department of Education chooses the Blue Ribbon schools every year based on academic superiority or significant student achievement gains.

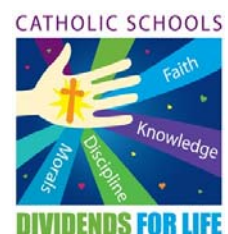
This year's Blue Ribbon schools will attend the award ceremony in Washington, DC next month.

Indiana okays K-12 tax credit

Handbook of Research on School Choice contributing author Adam Schaeffer, also of CATO Institute, recently blogged that **Indiana is the latest state to approve a K-12 scholarship tax credit program.** Despite the economy and the opposition of the teachers' union, the Indiana bill passed in the Senate 34-16 and the House 61-36, with nearly 30% of Democrats supporting it.

Mark your calendar

Catholic Schools Week is January 31-February 6, 2010.





National ACE News

New ACE program targets students with special needs

All children deserve the opportunity to receive a Catholic Education. Many don't get it because they lack financial resources. But some don't get it because schools lack resources for special education. In this no-fault situation, Catholic schools want to provide a quality education to children with special needs, but the teacher training and resources are not available.

In response to this need, Joyce Johnstone, Ryan Senior Director of Educational Outreach in the Institute for Educational Initiatives, has created a certification

program to prepare Catholic schoolteachers to instruct children with mild to moderate disabilities. The 18 credit hour certification program



Dr. Johnstone

will begin next June for experienced Catholic schoolteachers across the nation.

Participants will spend two weeks on Notre Dame's campus taking six credit hours and complete the remaining 12 credit hours online in the fall and spring semesters. Dates for the on-campus courses are June 19 to July 3, 2010. Costs for the 18 credit hour program plus room and board in the summer are \$9,000; however, generous scholarships are available, and most participants will pay about \$4,500 to \$5,000.

ACE expects 40 to 50 candidates in the first cohort, with two sections of classes. For more information, contact Molly Frabutt at frabutt.4@nd.edu.

ACE English as a New Language program offers master's within two years

The new program for special education builds on the success of ACE-ENL (English as a New Language), which began three years ago. Both

programs aim to offer a master's degree in inclusionary practices within the next two years.

Interested in ACE-ENL? You'll be a great fit if you...

- Want to add a new ACE acronym to your identity: ENLacer!**
- Have a special commitment to Jesus' call to welcome the stranger: ACE-ENL will give you the skills to reach English language learners in your classroom.**
- Are itching for time at Notre Dame but can't commit an entire summer: Our summer session is just two weeks—the rest of the coursework is online!**
- Need some brain exercise: Become a Notre Dame graduate student again and earn 18 credit hours leading to an ENL endorsement in Indiana. (Indiana has reciprocity with most states' ENL, ESL or ELL licenses.)**
- Teach in a school that has or wants to welcome English Language Learners: ACE-ENL will allow you to be the English as a second language resource person for your school. Part of our mission is to help you train your colleagues.**
- Long for the spiritual nourishment ACE offers: Join us this summer and let us minister to you!**

Contact Clare Deckelman Roach (croach1@nd.edu) to learn more.

IEI conference considers Catholic schools' future

Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, president emeritus of the University of Notre Dame, once said that, "The university is where the Church does its thinking." Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) and ACE take this responsibility seriously.

From September 20th through September 22nd, IEI and the Seton Education Partners co-hosted a conference titled, "Financing At-Risk Catholic and Faith Based Schools: Exploring Alternatives to School Closures." Participants gathered at Notre Dame for serious and spirited discussions about how to keep Catholic schools, especially those in the inner-city, open and focused on mission.

The conference took up questions such as: What are the roles

of public financing and private philanthropy in keeping Catholic schools open? How should school closures be handled in light of the ongoing work of other schools in close proximity? Can and should charter schools be part of the solution for faith-based schools, and are "faith-based charter schools" an oxymoron or an opportunity?

The prospect of converting Catholic schools to charter schools or, as some have suggested, forming "wrap around" schools in which religious instruction would be offered before and after classes but not during the traditional school day, is increasingly being examined as a solution to keeping these schools open. In a number of dioceses, local leaders are experimenting with such school conversions because of unus-

tainable financial situations and a desire to make high-quality educational options available to families.

As a "working conference," organizers planned two days that would result in concrete action steps, calls for additional research, and other practical follow-up. Next steps are now being planned.

While the questions surrounding the financing of inner-city Catholic schools can be difficult and at times contentious, Notre Dame is committed to being a place where ideas can be discussed and thoughtfully debated.

Shout-Outs!

The **ACE Service Through Teaching** program was highlighted in the Spring 2009 edition of *Education Next*, a journal that covers current research in education policy and school reform. The article pointed to ACE as one of three top-tier alternative teacher certification programs in the country. Find it at <http://educationnext.org>.

Fr. Tim Scully, CSC, got a shout-out, literally, from **Bono** at U-2's September concert in Chicago. This was the second public recognition Fr. Scully has received from his famous fan, affording him the undisputed moniker: ND's Rockstar in Residence.



Bono



Signs of Hope

Good News

Enrollment is up?? The attraction of St. Joseph Grade School

At a time when Catholic school news seems filled with words like “struggle” and “closure,” a phrase like “highest enrollment since the 1950s” is bound to attract some attention.

It’s true – at St. Joseph Grade School in South Bend, Indiana, the 447 students now enrolled make up the largest school population in nearly five decades. Given that statistics place the peak of U. S. Catholic school enrollment during the early 1960s (www.ncea.org), this fact is more than just remarkable. It begs the question – *What’s their secret?*

Not surprisingly, conversations with principal Suzanne Wiwi, pastor Fr. John DeRiso, CSC, and middle school teacher (and ACE 13 graduate) Maggie Schroeder reveal some answers. At the core is a school culture that folds together a lived tradition with a continuous push for improvement. From children to faculty to parishioners, at St. Joe everyone’s contributions are valued, everyone works together, and because of it, everyone grows.

DeRiso references the charism of St. Joe’s founding order, the Congregation of Holy Cross, when he describes the parish’s ministry of education as second in importance only to the celebration of the Sacraments. Indeed, the parish-school partner-



St. Joseph Grade School, South Bend, IN

ship here is one reason for the school’s success. It is remarkably strong now—though it wasn’t always so.

When Wiwi became principal in 1989, the parish was facing a shrinking population and considerable debt. A graduate of St. Joe herself, Wiwi was determined to turn things around. In the mid-1990s, fellow St. Joe alum Fr. Tony Szakaly, CSC, became pastor, and together their efforts brought about a renewed enthusiasm for the school.

DeRiso describes this as a time of formation within the parish – a reminder of the central place of education within the Holy Cross mission. That formation continues today, as school news is regularly shared from the pulpit on Sundays and children abound in the pews at 10:00 Mass. “The success of the school,” DeRiso says, “has brought so much life and enthusiasm to the parish.”

BACK PAGE>

Modern Day Saints

Volunteer Mom / Photographer GERALYN HELLER champions St. Ann’s

As schools across the country stretch their marketing dollar, one Nashville school has found a creative – and free! – marketing tool, thanks to the volunteer efforts of GERALYN HELLER.

Also a member of the Nashville ACE Fellowship, GERALYN is the mother of three girls at St. Ann School. Her dedicated volunteerism makes her a regular sight in the school hallways. In particular, her evolving efforts in media relations have been wonderfully successful in shaping the school’s image in the local community.

It all started because she loved taking pictures of events at St. Ann. Despite having no back-

ground in media relations, GERALYN decided to send a few photos to local papers, along with brief captions. They were printed. She started writing articles and found that those would often be printed, too.

The idea soon arose to invite media reps to attend major school events, to see for themselves the goings-on at St. Ann. GERALYN recalls wondering, “How do you catch a reporter’s interest? What format gives them the most info?” She did some research and, she explains, “the standard St. Ann press release was born.”

Now, GERALYN estimates that she dedicates two to 10 hours a

BACK PAGE>



This picture of St. Ann’s students’ crazy socks during Catholic Schools Week was published in Nashville’s Westview newspaper.

Do you have a great signs of hope story about a school, a modern day saint, an inspiration?

Email Ann at a.berends@nd.edu!

Pressley Award recipients inspire in service to Catholic schools

The ACE Fellowship was pleased to recognize Veronica Alonzo (ACE 4) and Michael Motyl (ACE 8, ALP 5) with the 2009 Michael Pressley Award for Excellence in Catholic Education.

Both work in Texas Catholic schools, Dr. Alonzo as a teacher at Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas, and Mr. Motyl as principal of Guadalupe Regional Middle School in Brownsville. A peer-

nominated award, it commemorates the life and work of ACE’s inaugural academic director, Dr. Michael Pressley. Congratulations to these inspiring servants of Catholic schools!



L to R: Michael Motyl, Donna Pressley, Tim Pressley, Veronica Alonzo



Following the Spirit

The Gift of Prayer

Ann Berends

What is prayer, exactly? Most of us have some sense of its definition—it's the way we communicate with God or the saints. We speak, they listen and respond. Often we think of it primarily as intercession, and no wonder: the word itself comes from the Latin *precari*, which means, *to ask*. And so we do: "Give us this day our daily bread." "Lord have mercy." "Pray for us sinners."

Dig a little deeper into this topic, though, and we learn that prayer is even more than asking. The Bible tells us that prayer is also silence. "Be still before the Lord" (Psalm 37:7). It is groaning. "The Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26). It is mystery. "Deep calls to deep" (Psalm 42:7).

Fr. Thomas Keating reminds us that prayer is God moving within us, igniting even our desire to pray as a gift, an invitation to be in relationship with him. Madame Jean Guyon encourages us to think of prayer as resting in God's love. And perhaps St. Augustine

captures all of these ideas best when he writes, "True, whole prayer is nothing but love."

Prayer is as awesome and ordinary as discovering a burning bush in the middle of a workday's routine. It is as systematic and intuitive as drawing away from life's noise to the quiet of a lonely place.

Prayer is whatever we do that opens us to the presence of God. We are standing on holy ground. Prayer doesn't put us there; it makes us aware that we are already there. Through it, "we awaken ourselves to the God in us and let him enter into our heartbeat and our breathing, into our thoughts and emotions, our hearing, seeing, touching and tasting" (Henri Nouwen).

Prayer, then, is talking and listening to God. It is silence and groaning in him. It is working and resting, watching and waiting for him. Prayer is a practice, but over time it becomes more than a function of faith. It becomes an attitude of heart.



Christ. Emile Nolde, @1910

*Prayer is
whatever we
do that opens
us to the
presence of
God*

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
unuttered or expressed,
the motion of a hidden fire
that trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
the falling of a tear,
the upward glancing of an eye,
when none but God is near.

Prayer is the contrite sinners' voice,
returning from their way,
while angels in their songs rejoice
and cry, "Behold, they pray!"

Prayer is the Christians' vital breath,
the Christians' native air;
their watchword at the gates of death;
they enter heaven with prayer.

O Thou, by whom we come to God,
the Life, the Truth, the Way:
the path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray!

James Montgomery

Suggested reading

Ephesians 6:14-18

Stand firm, then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of

prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Reflect

Consider what prayer means to you—what joys and/or fears it elicits in you. Then reflect on how, as this passage suggests, prayer is central to our ability to "stand firm" in our life and work.

Pray

Gentle Savior, thank you for the gift of prayer. Teach us to pray, trusting that all our prayers lead us into your open arms. Amen.



Our Father in Heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right.
Do what's best—as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals;
Keep us forgiven with you
and forgiving others.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes! Yes! Yes!

Matthew 6:9-13

The Lord's Prayer, from *The Message* (2002), a modern American translation of the Bible by Rev. Eugene Peterson.



St. Joe's success is no secret

FROM PAGE 8

Within the school, Wiwi's holistic approach to education and focus on instructional improvement have been central to the school's resurgence. Schroeder calls St. Joe a "growing school – always trying new things." She praises Wiwi's gifts for making teachers feel valued and for obtaining every possible resource for professional development. (Wiwi, she adds, is a *master* at securing Title funding).

Beyond this, Wiwi ensures that every improvement effort is school-wide. Teams of teachers attend workshops together and then meet to implement new strategies throughout the school. Wiwi even arranges for subs during the school day to allow for longer, focused team meetings.

The result is an environment

where students thrive and graduate prepared. As DeRiso states, "The value of this school is displayed in the graduate that leaves here." Locally, St. Joe graduates are known for their strong foundation not only in academics, but in faith, athletics, the arts, technology, and leadership.

More than anything, this is a community that recognizes its blessings and turns to God in gratitude. The word DeRiso, Wiwi, and Schroeder continually use is "blessed," especially when speaking about the many dedicated families who make up the larger St. Joe family.

DeRiso sums it up best when he says, "At the heart of it, we're just grateful to God for blessing this place."

Modern-day saints: GERALYN HELLER

FROM PAGE 8

week to sending about a half-dozen press releases a year and photos and announcements about school events at least once a month, sometimes more. In a given year, she can have at least five full articles published in local newspapers, along with numerous photos and even the occasional TV news bit.

She reflects, "I'm really blessed that I get to stay home with my kids, so I feel the need to do something that contributes to their environment in a significant way."

School pastor, Rev. Phillip Breen, has been particularly supportive. He encourages GERALYN to photograph even the school's Masses and prayer services. He recognizes that her photos provide a valuable record of signifi-

cant aspects of the life of the school community.

Once referred to as "the best-kept secret in West Nashville," St. Ann has now earned a solid reputation as "that school where something is always happening."

Even the HELLERS' pediatrician once noted that the school's PR efforts were generating a lot of buzz. The doctor's mom had commented that St. Ann seemed to be in the news every week! GERALYN laughs as she recalls, "The girls said, 'Mom does that.'"

Have you moved? Changed your contact information? Email or call us!
We want to hear from you!

engage, educate, empower, endure
engage, educate, empower, endure
The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Fellowship is building a movement in service to Catholic schools. We work to win friends to the mission of Catholic schools, to form members spiritually and professionally to be agents of change in Catholic education, and to organize and mobilize members to have a lasting positive impact on children, families, communities, the nation, and the Church by championing Catholic schools.
engage, educate, empower, endure

ACE Fellowship
University of Notre Dame
154 IEL Building
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Phone: 574-631-3165
Web: www.ace.nd.edu/fellowship
Email: ace.fellowship@nd.edu

Fellowship Staff
Fr. Lou DeFra, CSC delfra.2@nd.edu
Chuck Lamphier clamphie@nd.edu
Meghann Robinson mrobinso@nd.edu
Aaron Wall awall@nd.edu
Ann Berends a.berends@nd.edu

Building a movement in service to
Catholic schools