

The  **of Cedar Valley Catholic Schools**

Special Edition
Winter 2010

“Pro deo et communione ducere et servire....For God and Community, to Lead and to Serve.”



The Mission of the Cedar Valley Catholic School System is to proclaim the person and message of Jesus Christ in worship, community and service, through a unified system of Catholic education that develops life-long faith formation and learning. Cedar Valley Catholic Schools nurture the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical development of our students by integrating academic and co-curricular instruction with gospel values.



CEDAR VALLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

“One Faith, One Hope, One Future”

Welcome to this special edition of The Voice of Cedar Valley Catholic Schools! This issue is dedicated to informing you – our community, parishes, parents, and alumni – about the wonderful things happening in our Cedar Valley Catholic Schools as we strive to educate the minds and invigorate the souls of our students. This issue will also update you on our Capital Campaign and its momentum as we move forward to providing future generations with Catholic and academic excellence.

We’d also like to invite you to keep informed of all the wonderful events going on in our Catholic Schools by visiting us at the following websites:

- Columbus Catholic High School – www.columbushigh.org or friend us on Facebook at Columbus Catholic High School
- Blessed Sacrament School – www.blesac.blessedsacrament.iowapages.org
- Sacred Heart School – www.cvcatholic.sacredheart.iowapages.org
- St. Edward School – www.stedward.sted.iowapages.org
- Cedar Valley Catholic Schools – www.cvce.org

EDUCATING THE MINDS

“Our Students and Our Schools”

The Cedar Valley Catholic School system currently has 1,092 students enrolled in their classrooms providing quality education to children in preschool, elementary, middle school, and senior high school. For the school year 2010-2011, Sacred Heart is at 108% enrollment from the previous year, and St. Edward is at 105%. Almost all of the CVCS students who completed grade school at Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, and St. Edward enrolled at Columbus High School. Preschool enrollment increased from 151 students last year to 163 students this year, with two schools having students on a waiting list wanting to enroll.

All of the elementary schools offer state-certified day care for children, with Blessed Sacrament offering child care beginning at age 2, and St. Ed’s and Sacred Heart offering care starting at age 3. The day care is available to any parents who desire a safe, loving, and educational environment for their children all day or before and after school hours. Child care is available year-round, with summer activities including swimming lessons, library, and field trips. Over the last several years, enrollment in our day care centers has doubled.

CVCS offers appropriate age-related and challenging academic curriculum for students. Columbus students may enroll in challenging honors and Advanced Placement courses at Columbus, and seniors may dual enroll in college credit classes offered at Hawkeye Community College and UNI. Students may also earn college credit in Advanced Placement courses by achieving a designated score. Elective classes are offered to students who wish to enjoy a well-rounded education in music, art, and vocational/life skills.

All children have different learning needs, and teachers strive to provide the best education to students at all levels of learning. One example of this involves reading and math. Students in the elementary schools are placed into specific reading and math groups based on their current learning needs. Teachers are then able to differentiate instruction for students who need extra help, as well as provide more challenging instruction to other students. Each of the grade schools has two certified skills teachers on staff to provide additional assistance to those students who need extra help or to provide challenging opportunities to gifted students.

CVCS provides one of the highest technology educational programs available in the state of Iowa. Each of our teachers has a laptop computer to prepare interactive and engaging lesson plans. Many classrooms have LCD projectors and interactive white boards. In addition, our schools have a variety of technology equipment including digital microscopes, class sets of flip videos, class sets of iPod touches, digital cameras, and iPad centers for preschools. In the 2011-2012 academic year, all students in grades 6-12 will be provided with a personal laptop computer to use throughout the year as technology is integrated into the classrooms.

CVCS students receive religious education classes and preparation for the Catholic sacraments. In addition, all of our preschools and elementary students participate in Spanish, music, and physical education classes, each provided by a certified teacher.

Each school offers a variety of extracurricular and co-curricular activities to help students become well-rounded individuals. Sports, show choirs, concert choir, concert/pep/jazz band, drama, musicals, speech, academic decathlon, service clubs, Battle of the Books, math contests, and other activities are available to develop social skills and sportsmanship at various grade levels.

Tuition assistance is available to families who wish to have their children attend Catholic schools. Last year, over 375 families attending CVCS schools received over \$500,000 worth of financial aid through CVCS tuition assistance budgets and the Our Faith, Our Hope, Our Future School Tuition Organization (STO).

INVIGORATING THE SOULS

“Our Catholic Faith”

One of the most important characteristics about our Catholic schools is our ability to teach our children about God and about our faith. Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart and St. Edward each have a weekly Mass and also celebrate Holy Days. Students participate in the Mass as greeters, lectors, servers, choir members, cantors, and chime ringers. Each class has an opportunity to plan and prepare a liturgy during the year to learn about the entire process preparing for a Mass. The students interact with parish priests during the homily to answer questions and grow in their knowledge of our Catholic faith. The students also look forward to meeting with their parish priest in the classroom to discuss and answer questions about our faith.

Likewise, Columbus Catholic High School has a weekly prayer service, monthly Mass, and celebrates Holy Days. Students plan the Masses with guidance from our Campus Minister and participate in all of the ministries.

Students attending CVCS schools receive instruction of our Catholic faith on a daily basis through religion classes as well as preparation for receiving Catholic sacraments. Our students are provided with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice a year. At Columbus Catholic High School, religious education is expanded to include coursework in Values, Drug Prevention, Human Relationships, Hebrew Scriptures, World Religions, Christian Morality, Christology, and Social Ministry. All freshman, sophomore, and junior students participate in small Faith Sharing groups with adult leaders once per month.

Students in many elementary grades and all Columbus Catholic High School grades have class retreats during the school year where they are taken off campus to Hickory Hills, the Catholic Retreat House, or other local areas where structured activities allow students to reflect individually and as a group on a variety of religious topics.

Another amazing feature of our religious faith is that, from our research, Columbus Catholic High School is the ONLY high school in the nation that has 24-hour “Adoration” in their school. Think of that – 24 hours of prayer, seven days a week – people praying for special needs, or thanking God for what He has given us, or

praying for people who are suffering or hurting, or praying for guidance. What a wonderful example for our youth to see people from our parishes connecting to God through this Eucharistic Adoration.

“Service to Our Community and Our World”

"God grant me Serenity to appreciate the unique gifts of my students,
Courage to challenge them to do their best,
and Wisdom to help them become all that You created them to be."

Service is an active component in each of our schools, and CVCS provides great learning opportunities that take place both inside and outside of the traditional classroom. Our students have a variety of talents and are encouraged to share those talents and gifts with others. They also learn how to help people who are less fortunate throughout the community and world.

Students at all three grade schools participated in a “Bridge to St. Bridget’s Project” during the 2009-2010 school year where they made necessary bags, collected food, and raised money to assist families in Postville who had family members deported. In addition, each school participated in numerous individual school service projects. Here is a sampling of just a few of the many great service projects our students performed during the past two school years.

Blessed Sacrament

In Fall, 2009, the sixth grade class participated in the “Rock Our World” project, and the students will again participate this year. Forty schools from six continents embark on a journey together to learn about music, curriculum, and each other. An important piece of the program is the direct contact students have with others from around the globe. Classes meet on-line to chat with each other throughout the project via Skype.

During the Fall, 2009, the project focused on tolerance. Students talked together to find solutions to intolerance in their schools, families, communities, countries, and the world. Blessed Sacrament hosted a Holocaust museum for their school, where students took the role as a child during that time era. This class also created a song that they learned and performed. The end result was a video posted to iTunes and You Tube. Take a look at the video at the following website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvhPv5mNzmU>

For the Fall, 2010, season of Rock Our World, Fablevision founder, author, and illustrator Peter Reynolds will join teachers and students as they learn about the topic of peace and computer animation. Peter and his company donated two copies of their animation software “Animationish” to each school involved in the project. The goal of the project is for each school to create a two-minute video showing their animated vision of peace.

Other service projects conducted by Blessed Sacrament students:

- A fundraising project initiated by two seventh grade students raised money to paint the daycare windows.
- A sixth grade project focusing on animal abuse was highlighted in the newspaper and on KWWL.
- K-1 students bring canned food items each month for the church pantry.
- Grade 2-3 students write letters each month to the parish elderly and homebound.
- Grade 4-5 students visit River Hills School each month for activities with handicapped students.
- Grade 6-8 students complete service hours each semester in four categories - church, parish, community and family.
- Each grade 7-8 student is partnered with a staff member and meets each month to plan collaborative activities to do together.

Sacred Heart

Sixth grade students conducted a town hall meeting in April, 2010, at the Waterloo Public Library with over 80 community leaders, elected officials, police officers, attorneys, a judge, and family and friends. The students discussed the problem of underage and high-risk drinking in our community and broke into small groups with attendees to discuss what could be done. The information was shared with the community and the Cedar Valley's Promise Substance Abuse Task Team. The students presented this information as guests on the news talk show at KBBG radio. These students then successfully petitioned to prevent the opening of a liquor store one block from their school and church. As a result, the individual who was planning to open the liquor store withdrew his application. This project was featured in newspapers and websites throughout the United States as an example of students making a difference in their community.

Sacred Heart students "raised the roof" by collecting enough funds to pay for the cost of a new roof on a Habitat for Humanity Home in Waterloo. The school hosted world-renowned singer and full-time music missionary, John Angotti, author of the Habitat for Humanity song, and presented the check to the local Habitat Chapter.

Other service projects conducted by Sacred Heart students:

- Fourth and fifth graders provide friendship at monthly meetings with residents at Ravenwood Care Center.
- Students collect pop can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Iowa City.
- Student spread Christmas cheer in December by caroling at the local Barnes and Noble bookstore.
- Sacred Heart was the winning school for HyVee's smartpoints contest and received a free interactive smartboard for a classroom.
- Students created a quilt for a Sacred Heart student who underwent brain surgery.
- Students collected cans of food for the parish food pantry.
- Students volunteered to serve at community meals which were held at Sacred Heart.

St. Edward

Sixth grade students studied the problem of homeless people. The students then visited the Salvation Army and acquired a list of needed items. They collected over 20 boxes of donated items within three days. The students raised \$1,116.34 to give to the Salvation Army to purchase a TV and DVD for the children's toy room. They collected books, mind games, markers, paper, and other items from classmates to give to children when they come into the shelter. The students also made 18 tie blankets in different sizes and colors for the shelter.

Two students completed their Eagle Scout service projects at St. Edward School by renovating the gymnasium and boys' locker room during the summer of 2010.

Other service projects conducted by St. Edward students:

- Care packages were sent to soldiers overseas.
- Sixth graders meet monthly with residents at Manor Care to provide companionship.
- First graders meet monthly with St. Edward parish retirees to build relationships,
- 7th and 8th grade students prepare meals at the Catholic Worker's House.
- Sixth grade students prepared and presented a bullying awareness project.
- Sixth grade students painted and renovated a room at the Hospitality House.
- Students of all grade levels sang Christmas carols and rang bells for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive.
- Students collected money for the Salvation Army to help to fill local food pantries.

- Student Council sponsored a mini dance marathon with assistance from the University of Iowa to increase awareness of pediatric cancer and to raise research money for the University as they work to find cures for children affected with the disease.

Columbus Catholic High School

- The two Columbus show choirs sang for a Mass at each of the parishes during the school year. Many of our musicians serve as cantors or participate in choirs at their individual parish each week.
- Several Columbus students helped set up and prepare for the Annual Mayor's Run downtown in which all CVCS and public school fourth grade students participate. Members of our Columbus Choir sang the National Anthem before the race began.
- Ten Columbus students used their day off from school and volunteered to accompany Country View residents on a trip to the 100th National Cattle Congress.
- In November, 2008, Columbus students participated in the "DoSomething.org" challenge, a national contest to help feed the hungry in their communities. The students collected 210,000 cans of food, placing FIRST in the nation. The 2009 Canned Food Drive at Columbus raised a record amount of \$11,600 for St. Vincent de Paul to help feed hungry people in the Cedar Valley. Our Columbus Service Club periodically serves meals at the Salvation Army.
- During Catholic Schools Week, over \$5,000 was raised by the students during their "Change for Change" drive to help people in Haiti after their devastating earthquake. CVCS also collected two semi-trucks of furniture and necessities to send to people in Mississippi after their Hurricane Katrina. Students filled sandbags to protect Sacred Heart School as well as other buildings during several floods in the Cedar Valley. They also picked up debris in Parkersburg after a tornado devastated the city.
- In the fall, 2009, Columbus was selected as one of only 40 schools in the nation to participate in a special "Walk for Water" project for Impossible to Possible. Participants raised over \$8,000 in this walk to help build water retention units to help provide water for people in Kenya.
- Every year, the National Honor Society sponsors two blood drives to help the American Red Cross provide blood to accident victims and ill people.
- Thirty-two Columbus students attended the Fall Leadership Conference in October, 2010, at UNI where they learned about leadership and also participated in a service activity.
- Several students attended the March for Life in Washington, DC in 2009, to show support against abortion. Students are planning to attend the event again this year.
- The football team annually participates in the Pathways Annual 5K Run/Walk for a Drug-Free Community. Columbus has received awards the last 4 years for having the most participants and will participate again during the last weekend of October. The team was also recently recognized in the "You've Got Class" segment on KWWL for their work with the handicapped residents of Country View.

“CVCS Service Learning and Leadership”

Our CVCS Service Learning and Leadership Coordinator works with students to connect classroom curriculum with identified community issues and needs. Service Learning engages students in projects that serve the community and builds their social and academic capacities.

The Coordinator works with students in each sixth grade classroom to introduce the six steps of service learning which include investigation, planning and preparation, action, reflection, demonstration of results and celebration, and sustaining the service project. Service Learning and Leadership is incorporated at the high school level with Columbus students and staff implementing service in their classes.

Each service learning project must meet the following requirements:

- Meet a community need
- Coordinate with the school and community (agency)
- Provide time to think, talk, and write about the service
- Provide opportunities to use new skills and knowledge
- Enhance what is taught in school

One sixth grade Service Learning class at St. Edward elected to work with the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, focusing on the problem of racism and bullying. The students prepared a comprehensive youth survey on racism and disbursed over 500 surveys to CVCS middle school students and to one local public middle school. They compiled the information and created a report of their research which showed that racism and bullying is an issue that needs to be addressed with middle school students. The students worked with the Commission to create a brochure which is now used with middle school students throughout the Cedar Valley. The students were the keynote speakers at the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights Luncheon in February and received the “Outstanding Youth Award” presented by the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights and their Board of Commissioners at the luncheon.

The sixth grade class at Blessed Sacrament elected to fight animal abuse and focused on helping to pass Puppy Mill Bill HF #2280, which was made into law in Iowa. Students met with the Director of Iowa Voters for Companion Animals, who discussed the proposed bill and how this issue relates to animal abuse. The Director and students wrote letters to local government representatives expressing support to pass the bill. The students were able to see first-hand how government works and how they can make a difference on a local issue. The students also prepared Power Point presentations and designed display boards and brochures for the Cedar Bend Human Society regarding animal abuse.

As a follow-up to that project on animals, students in grades 3-8 attended a presentation in March by the Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation Project. The students learned about Iowa’s wildlife and what to do if they encounter a wild animal. In April, the students had a “day of awareness” where they collected donations for the Cedar Bend Humane Society. The students also built ten squirrel houses out of materials they secured from a local veterinarian and a building contractor. Those houses are now used by the Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation Project.

At Columbus, a number of Service Learning projects were completed during the 2009-2010 school year:

- The AP History class students presented a program to over 200 WWI and WWII vets and community members at the Grout Museum. The students presented a slide show of places they had visited on their trip to Europe and took the opportunity to honor and thank the veterans who made such a sacrifice for our freedom.
- The Food and Nutrition classes prepared meals for Mother's Day for the Women and Children's Shelter and for the Salvation Army.
- Computer Skills class prepared 16 unique invitations to a special Open House at Hawkeye Community College that were sent to foster care students who were graduating from high school.
- Twenty Ecology class students visited local agencies that help with ecology, shared the information they learned with other students and the community, and have worked to implement more recycling projects within Columbus.
- Clothing classes have sewn catheter bag holders for residents at Country View.

HOW OUR SCHOOLS ARE DOING

"Our Successes"

CVCS is showing success in academics, fine arts, and extracurricular activities, and we strive for continuous improvement in all areas. Recent statistics and information on what is happening in CVCS schools:

- Almost all Columbus Catholic High School students take the ACT exam during their junior and/or senior year, and the majority of seniors continue their education at the postsecondary level upon graduation. For the 2009-2010 school year, the Columbus ACT exam average was 23.2, while the state average was 22.2 and the national average was 21.3
- All 81 students of the senior class graduated on May 23, 2010, and all of those students are currently or will be continuing their education at the post-secondary level. One student is on a Student Exchange program and will enroll in college upon completion.
- CVCS scores increased 14% in Reading Comprehension at the fourth grade, the grade level reported to the State of Iowa.
- The CVCS schools are a charter member of the Coalition of Lighthouse Schools as we work towards our implementation of a 1:1 laptop student ratio for all students in grades 6-12 beginning in the Fall, 2011.
- Sacred Heart upper elementary and middle school students participated in the first LEGO League Robotics Program, a sport for the mind. First LEGO League (FLL) introduces young people to the fun and excitement of science and technology while building self-confidence, knowledge, and valuable employment skills.
- Columbus High School finished in 4th place out of over 200 small schools in the statewide all-sports standings compiled by the *Des Moines Register* for the 2009-2010 school year. This is based upon high-caliber performances by several teams at various State Tournaments.
- A record number of students participated in the Columbus Show Choirs. Columbus Sound Coalition earned a Division I rating at state contest, and Sound Connection earned a Division II rating. The Concert Choir narrowly missed a Division I rating at state contest.

- During the 2009-10 school year, Columbus presented the fall play "The Unusual Suspects" and the spring musical "Crazy for You," which was performed at the Oster Regent Theater in Cedar Falls. Over 80 students participated in these two dramatic/musical events. The recently performed fall play "Alice in Wonderland" was a success, and students are looking forward to this year's spring musical, "Bye, Bye Birdie!"
- The middle school band program participated for the first time in a group contest and received a Division I rating.
- Columbus choir students performed with John Angotti during his Christmas concert at Gallagher-Bluedorn in Cedar Falls.
- A record number 81 students competed in the regional Academic Decathlon, hosted by Columbus High School. Several students placed in the top three in the areas of interview, speech, and knowledge.
- Many Columbus students traveled and participated in religious, educational, and service trips including the National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City; the Right to Life March in Washington D.C.; the Close-up Trip to Washington, D.C.; and the AP European History Trip.
- Columbus art students won a number of awards at the WaMAC conference art show.
- A new Drama Club was started, and a number of students participated in speech and drama contests. One student qualified for the All-State Small Group Speech festival and received a Division I rating.
- Two other clubs were also formed during the 2009-2010 school year. Service Club was formed with students actively participating and promoting service in the Cedar Valley. Right to Life Club was formed to increase awareness of the sanctity of life – including the life of unborn babies.
- The Columbus Dance Team received Division I ratings in three different categories at state contest.
- A Columbus student was selected as the Waterloo Exchange Club student of the year, and another student received the Waterloo Exchange Club Girls Basketball MVP Award.
- Columbus had a number of athletes and teams qualify for state tournaments during the 2009-2010 school year, including three wrestlers, one bowler, one boy in tennis singles, two boys in tennis doubles, the boys' golf team, the girls' tennis team, the boys' tennis team, and the baseball team. The boys' tennis team placed first, and the boys' golf team and girls' tennis team placed third. The baseball team placed as state semi-finalists. Individual champions included the doubles tennis team in boys, with an individual tennis player placing third. Boys soccer, girls and boys tennis all won conference championships during 2009-2010.
- This fall, two Columbus girls have consistently placed first, second, or third in several major swimming events in numerous swim meets. The Columbus football team won the conference and district title with a 7-0 record and advanced to the state football playoffs. The Columbus girls' volleyball team won the regular season conference title and advanced in regional play in the state tournament.

“Our Teachers”

Our CVCS teachers and support staff are an amazing group of dedicated, caring professionals who work every day to provide students with a nurturing and encouraging environment for learning. Each CVCS teaching staff member possesses a valid teaching license issued by the State of Iowa, and all of our schools are accredited by the state of Iowa. CVCS has a variety of teaching experience from new college graduates to teachers with over 40 years of experience and everywhere in between. This variety provides a broad perspective to share tried and true ideas that have worked in the past, as well as opportunities to explore new and exciting teaching methods to engage students.

Of the 91 CVCS teachers, 33 have earned Master’s degrees in addition to their Bachelor degrees in teaching. CVCS encourages the development of teachers in many ways including a mentoring program for new teachers, tuition assistance for teachers continuing their education towards a master’s degree, and numerous in-service and educational opportunities where staff members partner to improve education in our schools.

As mentioned earlier, 4th grade reading scores significantly increased 14% in test scores last year. The gains are attributed to the K-5 Teacher Professional Development in-service which was conducted last year creating engaging, rigorous literacy environments. National Literacy Consultant, Dr. Gail Saunders-Smith, provided teaching demonstration lessons in small group reading instruction for all K-5 teachers to model and to train our teachers in cognitive coaching during reading for higher level comprehension. This year, CVCS will focus on implementing what was learned at an even deeper level by focusing on the importance of nonfiction text in our classrooms and in teacher instruction. Research advocates students to read and to be exposed to a 3:1 ratio nonfiction to fiction because of the variety of higher level thinking, analyzing, and consumers of information our students will need to perform proficiently and expertly as adults (Duke, 2009).

During the past two summers, a number of our teachers attended summer technology “boot camps” to become proficient in the use of our technology in order to better implement technology in the classrooms. Our teachers also attend summer and/or night classes for additional professional development in their teaching methods.

The staff of our three elementary schools meets regularly with each other and with the school principals and priests for teacher in-service training for professional development and to improve communication among our schools as we all strive to provide the best education for our students.

“Our Administrators”

CVCS is blessed with experienced, industrious, and future-oriented administrators who facilitate the educational mission of our schools. Our administrative leaders consistently display their Catholic faith through their commitment to our schools and their individual parishes. They participate in a variety of parish activities and ministries and also participate in community events, such as recently being locked up to raise funds for MDA.

Jeff Frost is the Director of Education of CVCS, and joined our system on July 1, 2010. Jeff graduated from Wartburg College with a Bachelor’s degree in Arts in History Education and a Minor in Athletic Coaching. He received his Master’s of Education degree from UNI. Jeff taught Social Studies and coached for 11 years at Vinton High School, before moving to Waterloo West High where he was an Assistant Principal and Athletic Director for nine years. Jeff was named Northeast Iowa Athletic Director of the Year in 2007 and was First Vice President of the Executive Board of the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association.

Tom Ulses is the Principal of Columbus Catholic High School. Tom is a graduate of Briar Cliff University and Iowa State University and received his Master's degree in Education Administration. He taught English for seven years and was a 7-12 principal for four years before joining Columbus in 2006. Tom was a co-presenter at the 2010 National Catholic Education Association Convention where he talked about "Columbus 101," a class started in 2008 to assist incoming freshman better transition to high school from middle school.

Nancy Stirm is the Principal of Blessed Sacrament and is in her tenth year in that position. Nancy began her teaching career at Immaculate Conception in Gilbertville, and then substitute taught while her children were young and at home. She joined Blessed Sacrament in 1989 as a second grade teacher and became Principal in 2002. Nancy is a graduate of UNI, where she earned her Bachelor's degree and completed her Master's, along with a Certificate in Principal Leadership.

Amy Sandvold is the Principal of Sacred Heart and is in her third year with CVCS. Amy is a graduate of UNI where she earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees as a K-12 Reading Specialist, as well as an Advanced Studies Certificate in Educational Leadership. Amy taught at both elementary and middle school levels as a classroom teacher, reading teacher, and literacy coach for 14 years and served at the Iowa Department of Education as an Education Programs Consultant before joining Sacred Heart as principal in 2008. Amy is also the author of two books. Her first book, *The Fundamentals of Literacy Coaching*, led to her being selected as an Emerging Leader Coach for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Her second book, *The Passion-Driven Classroom: A Framework for Teaching and Learning*, was just released on October 4 by Eye on Education. Amy has also written on the topic of "Building Positive Relationships with All Families for the Thinking Classroom Peremena" for *A Journal for the International Reading Association*.

Pam Schowalter is the Principal of St. Edward's and is in her third year with CVCS. Pam earned her Bachelor's Degree from North Adams State College, majoring in Early Childhood Education, with minors in Special Education and English. She earned two Master's Degrees from Wheelock College in Boston, specializing in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. She earned her Specialist Degree in Educational Administration from Drake University. Pam has over 20 years in both the public and parochial system.

"Our Communication with Parents"

Parents play a critical role in the education of their children and are their first and primary teachers. Working in partnership with the CVCS staff, parents fulfill a variety of important roles to ensure their children are learning. Parents and CVCS staff partner together to benefit the children. Parents assist with the formation of Catholic values in their children and by volunteering in classrooms and in the PTO.

Each school works diligently to communicate frequently with parents. Individual school newsletters written by the elementary principals are e-mailed or sent home with students on a weekly basis. The Columbus principal e-mails parents daily with Columbus announcements and information and also e-mails comprehensive information at the end of each week. Each school has a website that is kept up-to-date with various activities and issues happening in the individual school. PowerSchool is used by CVCS teachers and allows parents to check on the progress of their student in every class. Frequent updates on current academic performance are communicated to parents through the at-risk reporting procedure through PowerSchool. Any student who shows signs of academic struggle at the middle school level receives these at-risk reports so that parents and teachers can partner to support success. Parents are encouraged to check on their child's grades and discuss any concerns with their child and/or teacher frequently, rather than waiting for the parent-teacher conferences.

“Concern for Our Students’ Physical Well-Being”

The Healthy Kids Act was signed on May 13, 2008, to encourage students to become more active. A staggering statistic shows that obesity in children has tripled over the last thirty years. CVCS has implemented several initiatives to educate children on healthy food choices and activities. Healthy treats are provided for parties. Lunch menus are carefully reviewed for appropriate nutrition levels. Every student in grades K-5 has at least 30 minutes of physical activity, and every student in grades 6-12 has at least 120 minutes per week of physical activity. Beginning with the class of 2012, every graduating student will complete a course that leads to certification in CPR. All CVCS elementary schools and Columbus High School participate in the Presidential Fitness Awards. Students work to improve individual performance on flexibility, agility, cardio, and their time in the mile run.

CVCS encourages physical fitness in students and offers a wide variety of sports for students in grades 5-12, as well as activities such as show choir and dance team. Our schools offer a variety of athletic camps and physical fitness classes for middle school and high school students during the summer months to help them achieve and maintain an appropriate activity and fitness level.

Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, and St. Edward kindergarten through eighth grade students have the opportunity to help fight heart disease and stroke, our nation’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers. The students participate in the American Heart Association’s Jump Rope/Hoops for Heart event during their physical education class. Along with doing this as a service to our community, the students talk about the importance of being physically fit and ways we all, young and old, can become healthier for ourselves and our families. The students learn that it is not too hard to jump rope and is something they can do on their own. They also learn that jump roping for ten minutes is equivalent to running a mile! Prior to the Jump Rope/Hoops for Heart event, the students ask relatives and friends to sponsor them. The donations help fund potentially lifesaving research and educational and community programs on heart disease and prevention.

Each individual school promotes physical activity. For example, Sacred Heart students and parents join together in their annual “non-fundraiser fundraiser” by implementing an Activity-a-Thon where students participate in a day of activity by collecting donations from sponsors. Blessed Sacrament students participated in a Fall Fitness Day sponsored by the Iowa Sports Foundation. The students walked around the school grounds from 1:25 to 1:55, and parents were encouraged to join their children.

“Our Parishes”

The parishes of Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, St. Edward, St. Patrick, and Queen of Peace benefit from our Cedar Valley Catholic Schools. Many students utilize the skills they learn at their school Masses to the weekend Masses as they assist the priests as altar servers, or serve as lector, or are part of a choir, or greet or present the gifts with their family members. These students also serve their parishes in other ways such as:

- Assisting at their church’s Fall Festivals in the dining room, with children’s games, or by making gift baskets for silent auctions.
- Raking leaves, planting flowers, or picking up litter to help beautify the church grounds.
- Cleaning the church for holidays.
- Changing missals as they need to be replaced.
- Providing babysitting services with an adult during Masses.
- Assisting with Children Liturgy of the Word sessions.

HOW WILL THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HELP OUR SCHOOLS?

The general goal of the Cedar Valley Capital Campaign is to preserve and modernize our Catholic Schools. We need our parishes, our alumni, our community, and our entire Catholic family to come together to help our Catholic schools maintain our tradition of excellence. What will the Capital Campaign do for our schools? How can you help? Read on . . .

4 Priorities

Increase the Endowment

Endowment funds are truly the long-range answer to ensure that the doors of our Catholic Schools stay open. The increased endowment will promote financial security, cost containment, tuition assistance, and just compensation for teachers.

Catholic Middle School

The middle school years are pivotal and abound with individual potential and opportunity. Currently, we attempt to provide quality middle school experiences in three buildings. By creating a new consolidated middle school program, we will be able to offer a dynamic, broad range middle school education, utilizing state-of-the-art resources and our best middle grade teachers at one site. Curricular and non-curricular opportunities for middle grade students will increase significantly. The new middle school program will be uniquely designed to improve the way we care for these students and educate them in faith and core subjects.

Facility Improvements

Blessed Sacrament School, Sacred Heart School, St. Edward School, and Columbus Catholic High School require maintenance, repair, and modernization. Renovations are long overdue to increase building safety and security, to improve technology, and to create learning environments conducive to a 21st century education.

Program Enhancements

Our programs need additional materials and staffing to maintain their standard of excellence. If we are to equip our youth with learning skills and values to help them excel in the modern era, we need to continue to update our curriculum and dedicate the resources to improve outcomes.

3 Reasons

Why Cedar Valley Catholic Schools?

For nearly 140 years, generations and thousands of children have come to know and love God in our Catholic Schools and benefited from a values-based education. They developed the basic skills and values to relate to the world around them, and put their faith in action through lives of service all over the world. From the classroom to the boardroom, from the playhouse to the courthouse, our Catholic School alumni have worked hard to improve the quality of our lives.

Why Me?

We are the beneficiaries of a legacy founded upon the collective commitment and sacrifice of previous generations, who envisioned Catholic Schools as the key to a future of opportunities for their children and generations to come. Our ancestors in the faith made the necessary sacrifices to make their dreams a reality. The values they instilled in us shaped the people we are today. As beneficiaries of their legacy, God invites us to demonstrate our gratitude by ensuring a future of opportunities for the next generation.

Why Now?

The Catholic Schools of the Cedar Valley are at a crossroads. The time has come to preserve and enhance our schools and ensure the opportunity for a Catholic School education for all children, now and in the future. Our school buildings need maintenance, repair and modernization; our programs need additional materials and specialized staffing; and there is great need for tuition assistance for families and competitive salaries for teachers. If nothing is done, the evolving and ever growing educational needs of our students will jeopardize the financial ability of the parish and school system to meet these needs.

2 Gifts that Matter Most

The Gift You Received

Obviously, we have received many gifts for which we are truly thankful. But the gift of values that our parents, teachers, priests, nuns and parishioners modeled for us through lives of faith, sacrifice, commitment and service, is a gift that sustains us throughout our lives. Catholic Schools opened doors of opportunity for us that made it possible for us to lead, achieve, and succeed in life.

The Gift You are Willing to Share.

Please give prayerful consideration to supporting the *One Faith, One Hope, One Future* Campaign and to helping Cedar Valley Catholic Schools open doors of opportunity for our children, our neighbors, our parishes and community for generations to come.

1 Objective

Moving from “Good” to “Great”... Modernizing and Preserving OUR Cedar Valley Catholic Schools!

Please join the several hundred people who have already made monetary donations and pledges to support this Campaign, including our current parish priests and the priests who faithfully served our schools and parishes in the past. Help us to continue providing excellent Catholic education through our Cedar Valley Catholic Schools.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE CVCS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

In 1956, Father A.A. McAvoy launched a 3-year campaign by asking Catholics throughout the Cedar Valley to consider “a day’s pay a month for 36 months” to help the fund drive for Columbus High School. By 1959, he had nearly \$2 million in pledges. May we ask you to prayerfully consider “a day’s pay a month”? Whatever you pledge – 12 months, 36 months, or 60 months – what matters most is that you join us by committing to help Cedar Valley Catholic Schools fulfill the responsibility to our youth and to our Church.

How do I obtain a pledge card?

If you have not yet received a pledge card, please call Mike Knipp or Darlene Hatton at the CVCS Development Office at 319-232-1422.

How do I pay my donation to the Campaign?

You may pay your donation all at once, or you may spread the donation over a period 5 or fewer years. Donations may be paid by electronic withdrawals from your bank account, by cash or by check, or charged to a credit card.

Are there other ways to donate?

Some donors have elected to make a donation to the Capital Campaign by naming Cedar Valley Catholic Schools as the beneficiary on a life insurance policy or donating shares of stock. If you wish to make a contribution through this method, please contact Mike Knipp at 319-232-1422.

Can I talk with someone to learn more about the Campaign?

In addition to Mike and Darlene at the CVCS Development Office, we have dedicated volunteers from each of our parishes who are fully informed of the details of the Campaign and who would love to meet with you to discuss any questions you may have about the Campaign. These volunteers also call people in our Catholic community to help raise the funds needed for this Campaign. If you would like to have one of these volunteers meet with you, please call the Development Office at 319-232-1422.

The founders of Catholic education in our community provided the vision and resources to make Catholic Education a reality in our community. Now it is our turn. . . Please help Cedar Valley Catholic Schools continue to make a difference in the lives of children in our community for many years to come. Thank you for your support!

*One hundred years from now, it will not matter
What kind of car I drove,
What kind of house I lived in,
How much money I had in my bank account,
Nor what my clothes looked like.
But the world may be a little better
Because I was important in the life of a child.*

