

THE NATIVITY JESUIT

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2013



Honoring Our Past. Celebrating Our Future. Nativity Celebrates 20 Years!

EDUCATING LATINO YOUTH FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

DEAR FRIENDS OF NATIVITY,

Spring is a time of renewal and change. At Nativity Jesuit Middle School - we find ourselves at a moment of rejuvenation in our school's twentieth year, a moment where we embrace our unwavering mission - Educating Latino Youth for Christian Leadership and Service - while acknowledging the leaders who have laid the solid foundation for us to grow. I have been honored to serve as board chair for the past two years and am incredibly grateful for the leadership of Fr. Jim Flaherty, S.J., who served as president during my tenure. Fr. Jim has served the Nativity community well, particularly in his outreach work with our many wonderful benefactors, yet his heart remains with teaching in higher education. For that reason, Fr. Jim has returned to Marquette University to give more fully of himself to the MU students and faculty. We thank Fr. Jim for his leadership and service.

The cornerstone of Nativity's foundation is none other than Larry Siewert. Larry, along with Fr. Bill Johnson, S.J., saw the need for Nativity in our community and courageously acted to fulfill a vision that has impacted many over the past 20 years. With Larry's wisdom and guidance, Nativity graduates are succeeding in high school, persisting in college, and navigating the work world. Larry fully embodies the spirit of Nativity - a spirit of generosity, love, and compassion. We hope you will join us in celebrating Larry's retirement and Nativity's twentieth anniversary at the Harley Davidson Museum on June 6, 2013.

As we find ourselves in a season of renewal, we welcome new leadership. Assuming the role of interim president at this time is Melodie (Hessling) Wyttenbach. Many of you may recognize Melodie as a former principal of Nativity. Since her time with us, Melodie worked for the National

Network of NativityMiguel Schools based in Washington, D.C., where she was responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the Nativity model in 60 schools across the country. Expecting a little one in May, Melodie and her husband, Chris, have returned to Wisconsin where she owns an educational consulting firm and is currently pursuing her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We are certain Melodie will be a source of energy and stability during this transition and will bring fresh insights as we envision the future of Nativity.

Finally, the vice chair of our board of directors, Dave Murphy, will assume the role of board chair. Dave, who has been a strategic partner during this time of change, is the current interim vice president for marketing and communications at Marquette

University. With Dave's experience in marketing and advertising, I'm confident Nativity will remain a well-known entity in our community and its impact will only grow.

I am truly honored and blessed to have served as board chair of Nativity. I have come to witness how this school truly changes lives and I recognize that Nativity would not exist without your support. I am grateful for your generosity. Thank you for your confidence in me and I look forward to celebrating Nativity's accomplishments and bright future on June 6th!

Sincerely,



MICHAEL W. ZIELINSKI
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



A TRUE STEWARD AMONG US, LARRY SIEWERT, RETIRES



After 20 years at Nativity Jesuit Middle School, success wears a Latino face for Larry Siewert. He helped found the school, served as its first principal, and became Director of Graduates eight years ago. He is retiring in June.

"I could tell you so many stories."

He cited a graduate who is completing a medical degree at Harvard this year. This man is the youngest of 10 and the first to finish college. He's a Marquette University High School graduate and a UW-Madison Rhodes Scholar. Another student is studying for his doctorate at the University of Illinois after putting himself through high school, college, and earning scholarships to complete a master's degree at the University of Michigan.

Larry recalled another impressive story where a young man did what he could to support his family after his father left. In addition to being a provider, during high school he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Despite these setbacks, he pushed through

and ultimately graduated from MUHS, earned his computer engineering degree from MSOE, is now married with a child, and has continued to support his mother, sister, and brother.

"Seeing the students succeed — what it does for them and their families—is very rewarding."

In Larry's current role, he follows the progress of the middle school students after they enter a local Catholic high school. He has been through it all with them – the good, the bad, and the ugly. When they needed help the most, Larry was often the first person contacted, and the one to drop everything to be there. He has taken phone calls in the middle of the night, sat in troubled homes, and celebrated countless special moments.

He stays in touch with the graduates and their families, providing assistance and encouragement, while they attend college, and maintains contact with them when they begin working.

An educator since he left Marquette University in 1963, Larry's entire life has revolved around his family and his career. He spent 28 years at MUHS as a teacher and its first lay principal before leaving to help start Nativity. He and his wife, Nancy, have five children and seven grandchildren.

Although he is retiring, Larry is confident the strength of the Graduate Support Program will continue under the direction of John Meuler, veteran teacher and newly appointed Director of Graduate Support.

The Nativity approach is key to successfully educating inner city children.

"It is deeply satisfying to help our students stay with Nativity, to thrive and then move forward."

— Larry Siewert

HONORING OUR PAST. CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE. NATIVITY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS!



FATHER BILL JOHNSON AND LARRY SIEWERT

co-founded Nativity Jesuit Middle School. NJMS opened its doors at St. Patrick's Church to 14 sixth graders.



1993

THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS,

the Trailblazers '96, head off to four area Catholic high schools.



1995-1996

NJMS MOVES

from St. Patrick's to its current location at 29th and Orchard.



2004

NJMS EXPANDS,

adding a 5th grade.



2005

NJMS,

with its 224 alumni, formally begins its Alumni Association.



2010

FATHER JIM FLAHERTY

becomes third President of NJMS.



2011

2013



SUMMER CAMP BEGINS WITH 14 STUDENTS

and is the cornerstone of the Nativity program in Mercer, WI.



THE GRADUATE SUPPORT PROGRAM

begins to support Nativity alumni who are attending Catholic high schools in the area.



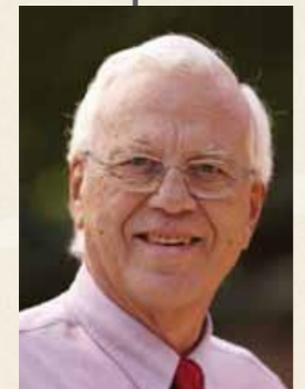
GREG MEULER

becomes second President of NJMS.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

welcomes first NJMS Alumnus, Eleazar Lopez, '97.



NJMS CELEBRATES

its Twentieth Anniversary. Co-founder Larry Siewert retires.

MENTORING—A GIFT FOR BOTH MENTOR AND MENTEE



Gerardo Martinez married his college sweetheart surrounded by all the people important to him in his life, including Bill and Joanne Pier.

The Piers met Gerardo shortly after he graduated from Nativity, as he was about to begin Marquette High. They were recruited along with others so each Nativity graduate could begin high school with a mentor. Bill, a retired pathologist, and Joanne, a retired nurse, weren't exactly sure what to expect, but decided to give mentoring a try.

“The next four years turned out to be a rich experience for both Gerardo and the Piers.”

The Piers shepherded Gerardo throughout high school by continuing to develop the personal and academic skills that Nativity had nurtured in him while in middle school. In turn, Bill

and Joanne learned more about Latino culture, especially the importance of family and extended family—and gained many fond memories along the way.

The Piers didn't let the language barrier become an issue; sometimes they had to use hand signals to communicate with family members. Gerardo's father, Gerardo Sr., often worked two jobs, and his mother, Yolanda, cooked at every Nativity gathering. Both parents were grateful for his Nativity and Marquette education and were always concerned about his academic performance. Bill and Joanne continually assured them that Gerardo was doing very well.

“It was very clear how hard both parents worked to make a better life for their children,” said Joanne. “It was amazing to see their resourcefulness, their perseverance and their desire to offer a better life to their children.”

The Piers filled in where needed by helping with homework, attending parent-teacher conferences with Yolanda or simply connecting with Gerardo regularly. After four years, when Gerardo graduated from Marquette in 2004, the Piers felt so connected to the Martinez family that when Nativity asked them to take on Eduardo, the youngest Martinez son who also was about to graduate from Nativity and begin high school,

their answer was a resounding yes. They stayed connected to both boys through college, Gerardo graduating from UW-Milwaukee in business and Eduardo from MATC in auto mechanics.

While playing a role in the boys becoming successful men, the mentoring experience turned out to be a gift for the Piers, too. Over the years, they were included in Martinez family events—everything from weekend brunches to baby showers and weddings. “The whole experience was a gift!” said Joanne. “We have wonderful memories and learned so much from the Martinez family. We value our own family more because of the experiences we've had with them.”

Nativity is always looking for those who would like to make a difference in a young man's life through mentoring. Men, women and couples have stepped forward just as the Piers did to offer their gifts and talents.

Those interested in learning more about the Nativity mentoring program should contact John Meuler, Director of Graduate Support at Meulerj@njms.org or by phone at 414-645-1060.

LONG-TIME DONORS FEEL NATIVITY'S MODEL REALLY WORKS



It took only a video presentation to hook the attention of George and Anna Clair Gaspar. Sitting in the living room of the Monroe's, friends of theirs from church, everyone's eyes were glued to Fr. Bill Johnson, Larry Siewert and teacher Annie Otto as they presented their goals for Nativity Jesuit Middle School, which had just started enrolling students a year prior.

“You could sense an enthusiasm in the room,” said George, a retired managing director of the petroleum research team at Robert W. Baird. “Here we saw a working school model that was successful.”

After taking a tour of NJMS, which at that time was located in St. Patrick's Parish on Washington Street in

Milwaukee, the Gaspars decided they wanted to contribute their money and time to the school. The year was 1995. They've been giving to Nativity ever since.

Milwaukee residents since the 1960s, the Gaspars have always been passionate about causes related to education.

George was a board member at Dominican High School, where their five children attended, and the couple is still active at Marquette University, where Anna Clair continues to serve as a member of the MU Women's Council. While they donate their money and time to several other organizations in the community, the Gaspars feel a special connection to

the students at NJMS.

“It's been exciting to observe Nativity grow over the years and see the students go to college.”

“It's wonderful to look back and see that what we've put into the school has turned into something good—student growth and their ability to achieve. Anna Clair and I have always been impressed with the students who've gone through Nativity,” said George.

George was also one of the founding board members at NJMS. He had a vision when he was board president—to broaden the community's interest in Nativity and to strengthen the school's leadership by creating a magnetism for young leaders to join the board and drive the school's future success.

Now as NJMS celebrates its 20th anniversary with 274 graduates, George and Anna Clair still feel that enthusiasm that captivated them almost two decades ago when they sat in their friends' living room and decided that Nativity was a worthwhile cause they wanted to support.



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20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION HONORING OUR PAST. CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE.



Join us on Thursday,
June 6, 2013,
from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at
The Garage at the
Harley-Davidson Museum
to celebrate Larry Siewert's
20 years of service and
Nativity's 20 years of
existence.

As part of the celebration, our goal is to raise \$200,000 for
an endowed scholarship fund in honor of Larry. This fund
will support Nativity alumni who currently attend Catholic,
college preparatory high schools in the Milwaukee area.
Please consider making a gift.

The featured speaker is Father Gregory Boyle S.J., author of
The New York Times Best Seller *Tattoos on the Heart*.

SAVE THE DATE

12th Annual Golf Outing
Blue Mound Golf & Country Club
Monday, August 26, 2013

Sponsored by:



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