

SPSL Alumni News

Volume 32, Number 1, Fall 2021

St. Pius X / St. Leo School
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CLASS OF 1964 CELEBRATES ITS 57TH REUNION

After having a grand time gathering for a 55th reunion in the summer of 2019, the Class of 1964 was not waiting for a milestone year to gather together again. Instead, members of the class celebrated together on August 21, 2021 in the school cafeteria (lovingly referred to as the place where it all began) for the Class of 1964's 57th reunion.

The Class of 1964 reunion committee consisted of Mary Ervin Wolcott-Breci, Joannie (Karpf) Husted, Karen (Mullen) McElroy, Jack Steiner, Jim Kilker, Linda (Chalupa) Speers, Tim Sutherland, Irene (Scholz) Kethan, and Mike Zahm. The reunion committee worked hard to connect with their classmates and invite them to attend.

The reunion featured a school tour, a slideshow of old and newer photos, a fantastic playlist of songs released in 1964, and a table of memorabilia (including the original girls school uniform and beanie provided by Rita Bianchi (1966)).



Attendees of the Class of 1964's 57th Reunion

Medical issues unfortunately prevented some from attending in person. However, to make the festivities more accessible there was a Zoom that several alumni joined to reconnect with their classmates. Whether attending in-person or virtually, our alumni

enjoyed catching up and sharing memories of their grade school days.

The Class of 1964 will celebrate its 60th reunion on August 24, 2024. In the meantime, classmates hope to gather casually from time to time. To receive communications about gatherings or help with future reunions, email Class Ambassador, Linda (Chalupa) Speers at lspeers7@gmail.com.

CLASS OF 1987 GATHERS IN MEMORY OF CLASSMATES

Alumni from the St. Pius X / St. Leo School graduating Class of 1987 joined together on August 28, 2021 to honor two beloved classmates who have passed away: Derrith (Loneman) Murphy who passed in 2018 and Ryan Otterberg who passed in May, 2021.

Mike Swartz organized the event, which included members of the Class of 1987, along with family friends of Derrith and Ryan, attending Mass at St. Pius X followed by a gathering in the Father O'Brien Parish Center. Some attendees brought photos from their grade school days. Memories of Derrith and Ryan were shared throughout the evening. Keeping with tradition from their last class reunion, attendees took a group photo that included a cardboard cutout of Pope Francis.



PANTHER HAPPENINGS



Class of 1966

- **Lani Dukat** resides in Lees Summit, MO and is currently enjoying retirement.
- **Patrick Kerrigan** was awarded the Pope St. John XXIII Award by Roncalli Catholic High School. This award honors Pope St. John XXIII and recognizes outstanding service to “children and friends of God.”

Class of 1972

- **Teresa (Oswald) Miller** met her husband Chuck in German class at UNO and married in 1998 at St. Leo the Great. Teresa’s hobbies include making greeting cards.

Class of 1985

- **Dave Mainelli’s** book entitled *How to Be Lonely* was published and is now available on Amazon.

Class of 1987

- **Jenny (Harrell) Buckholz** and her husband Tim adopted a newborn, Camryn Rose, in October 2020. They reside in Kansas City, MO where Jenny works as an organ procurement coordinator for Midwest Transplant Network.



Class of 1990

- **Mary (Healey) Charlton** was awarded a National Cancer Institute grant as principal investigator for research that focuses on a collaborative network intervention to improve the quality of cancer care in rural hospitals.



Class of 1997

- **RJ Heck-Jenders** is currently the Front End Specialist at buybuy Baby in Omaha and is training on the sales floor.

Class of 1998

- **Rachel (Istas) Prudhomme** and her husband Nick were excited to welcome a baby girl, Elizabeth Anne. Elizabeth joins two big brothers at home: Matthew and William.



Class of 2001

- **Jason Korth** attended Creighton Prep High School. Jason currently resides in Omaha.

Class of 2007

- **Jonathan Rieschl** is a member of the Omaha Police Department’s new recruit class that was welcomed in May 2021.

Class of 2008

- **Hannah Tjaden** was named to the Midlands Business Journal’s Top 40 Under 40, Class of 2020. Hannah is an accounting professional at Union Pacific and recently led important projects for the Fortune 500 company. She attended Duchesne Academy and Creighton University.

Class of 2014

- **Will Johnston** received 1st place in the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum Competition at Wichita State University.

Class of 2016

- **Dylan Albracht** and his band Alkyvad joined with Dylan’s father, Greg Albracht, and his band Race 2 the Bottom to hold a concert in August 2021 to help homeless veterans.

Class of 2017

- **Daniel Osborn** was awarded the “Mr. Skyhawk” award by Skutt Catholic High School. Daniel is now attending UNO for college.
- **Ethan Owens, Michael Walsh, Javi Macias, and Will Wharton** (2018) were on the Lacrosse state championship team for Creighton Prep High School in the Spring of 2021.



- **Will Buechler** graduated from Creighton Prep. He is now attending Rockhurst University and playing on the golf team.



Class of 2018

- **Abby Wessling** scored a perfect 36 on her ACT exam. Abby is a senior at Mercy High School.
- **Ethan Noon** was named a Commended Student in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Ethan was among the top 3-4% of PSAT test takers.

Class of 2020

- **Abi Howard** played the role of Hannah, **Graham App** was Pastor Bruno and Wells' Dad, and **Evan Martin** (2019) was cast as Parker in Marian High School's production of Freaky Friday in April, 2021. **Martha Engel** was on the sound crew, **Rylee Gregg** (2017) worked backstage, and **Murphy Mertz** (2017) was a Student Stage Manager.

WELCOME TO THE ALUMNI CLUB

The SPSL Alumni Club gained 71 new members when the Class of 2021 graduated on May 20, 2021. The graduates and their families were able to celebrate with an in-person graduation ceremony at St. Leo the Great, followed by a dance for the graduates. During their last week of school at SPSL, our school community sent them off with our traditional "Blessing Walk" through the school. We know these Alumni will go on to do many great things. Congratulations to the Class of 2021!



OUTING FOR THE CLASS OF 1979

The Class of 1979 recently gathered together at The Blatt in west Omaha. This gathering presented an opportunity for friends and classmates to see one another, whether they were able to attend the last reunion or not. These Panthers enjoyed spending time with one another, and they look forward to the next reunion for their class.



Alumni from the Class of 1979: David Steinbach, Jim Stratman, John Hower, Mike Bunach, Mike Durkan, Michael Salisbury, Doug McNeely, Joe Kirby, Tim Brown, Margaret "Peg" (Henry) Saal, Aline (Gamache) Lanzourakis, Sharon (Anderson) Nouhan, Sue (Cannon) Pflug, Scott Pachunka, Teresa "Tessie" (Griffith) Fallon, and Pat Thompson.

Upcoming Class Reunions

The Class of 1971 will celebrate its 50th reunion on Saturday, October 23, 2021! They are planning to attend Mass at St. Pius X at 5:30 pm followed by a school tour, and socializing. For more information, please contact Class Ambassador, Jadine "Jay" (Burns) Manson at jaymanson@mymetroappraisers.com.

Calling all classes graduating in 6's and '1s – It's reunion time! Please be sure your contact information is updated at <https://spsl.net/alumni-profile/> so we can let you know about the latest reunion news. To help plan a reunion or to be a Class Ambassador for your class, please contact SPSL Alumni Director, Michaela Smith at michaela.smith@spsl.net.

These graduating classes have a milestone reunion this year:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 5 Years: | Class of 2016 |
| 10 Years: | Class of 2011 |
| 20 Years: | Class of 2001 |
| 25 Years: | Class of 1996 |
| 30 Years: | Class of 1991 |
| 50 Years: | Class of 1971 |

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES



Memorials and Tributes are a wonderful way to remember or honor a loved one. Listed below are donations received from or in honor of Alumni for the SPSL

Education Endowment Trust Fund between 3/6/2021 and 9/17/2021. (Alumni designated by graduation year.)

Kaye Baye

William and Kathryn (Zender) Jurgensen (1971)

Marion Bianchi

Rita Bianchi (1966)

Marcia Bieker

Patty and Tom Griffith (1972)

Patrick Kerrigan (1966)

Judy and Tim McAndrew (1966)

Kathy (Landy) McMillan (1969)

Rod and Corrine (Umatum) Miller (1966)

John and Lucille Respeliars

Allen and Rose (Fallon) Roeder (1962)

Don Byers

William and Kathryn (Zender) Jurgensen (1971)

Warren "Tim" Kable

Richard and Carol Allred

Greg and Liz Easley

John and Terri Ellis

Robert and Jeanne Gilmore

Dave and Linda (Weinert) Hahn (1966)

Tony and Nancy Haske

Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)

Tony and Jan Jasnowski

William and Kathryn (Zender) Jurgensen (1971)

Fran Kocmich

John and Mary Longo

Robert Martens (1964)

Eileen (McAndrew) Martens (1969)

Jerry and Joy Stillmock

Mariann Stubbs

Richard and Jeanne Weiner

Mary and Terry Zach (1971)

Betty Markham

Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)

Anne (Kirby) Mitchell

Patrick Kerrigan (1966)

Colleen (Griffith) Sudbeck (1980)

Mary Leslie (Lewis) Walker (1962)

Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)

Irvin Wickert

LaDonna Ahlers

Mary Kibbe Baines

Shawn and Tina Coyle

Mary and Tim Coyle

Thomas Kildee and Mary Lynn Coyle (1962)

Frank and Patricia Dowd

Robert Martens (1964)

Eileen (McAndrew) Martens (1969)

Victor and Patricia Massara

Frank and Elsie (Klug) Moran (1977)

Daniel and Iona (Klug) Pavlik (1977)

Rose (Fallon) Roeder (1962)

Michael Wuerfele

Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)

We apologize if there are any omissions or misstatements in the Memorials and Tributes. SPSL is incredibly appreciative of all gifts to our school.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY



The St. Pius X / St. Leo School community extends its deepest sympathy to the families of:

Gary Bouckhuyt

Class of 1963

Edward Fuxa

Class of 1990

Patricia (Hard) Hansen

Class of 1970

Ryan Otterberg

Class of 1987

Michelle (Suiter) Serlet

Class of 1971

Mary Leslie (Lewis) Walker Class of 1962

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS ("QCD") BENEFIT SPSL

If it is time for you to start taking a QCD, please think of St. Pius X / St. Leo School. Generally, if you are age 72 or older, IRS rules require you to take required minimum distributions each year from your tax-deferred retirement accounts. A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA, payable directly to a qualified charity. Amounts distributed as a QCD can generally be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions for the year. The QCD is excluded from your taxable income. This is not the case with a regular withdrawal from an IRA, even if you use the money to make a charitable contribution later on. If you take a withdrawal, the funds would be counted as taxable income even if you later offset that income with the charitable contribution deduction. Always consult with your attorney and financial advisors, but you may also direct questions to michaela.smith@spsl.net.

WILL YOU BECOME AN EDUCATION PARTNER?

We need your help!

For many years, St. Pius X / St. Leo School was tuition-free, but those days have long passed. Our two parishes, St. Pius X and St. Leo the Great, continue to provide significant financial support for our school, but the cost of Catholic education rises each year, which results in mounting tuition costs for current school families.

Tuition and fees for the 2021-22 school year are \$3,560 per student while the actual cost to educate a student at our school is \$6,447. Approximately 30% of SPSL students qualify for free or reduced lunch under the federal guidelines, and 40% of our students receive tuition assistance.



You can help! The Education Partners program matches willing donors with students in need. Will you become an education partner? If you can, please return the enclosed envelope with your donation, which the school will apply toward the tuition of a student in need. *Any amount is helpful!*

There are no meetings, dinners, or other public recognition. Your contribution is anonymous, and the student’s family is simply told that a generous donor has assisted the student financially. A few times a year you receive a note from your student partner updating you on his/her progress.

As Alumni who have experienced the benefits of a SPSL education, we can pay those benefits forward to deserving students today by becoming Education Partners. The SPSL School motto is “More than a School, It’s a Community.” And it is a community—a community of people from the past, the present, and the future working together.



Become an Education Partner today! Contact Michaela Smith at michaela.smith@spsl.net.

SPSL SNAPSHOT 2021

MORE THAN A SCHOOL, IT'S A COMMUNITY

661 STUDENTS

Students in Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade from 35 different zip codes in the Omaha area including 105 English Learners



AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

21

Students per homeroom with additional academic services provided by 14 full time reading and math resource teachers



24 SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships awarded to the 71 graduates in the Class of 2021



DONATIONS 40%



Students receiving tuition assistance this school year with 30% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch under federal guidelines

WWW.SPSL.NET

St. Pius X / St. Leo School is a diverse community forming students in the Catholic faith to excel in academics and service to others.

BERNIE JACKSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, the Bernie Jackson Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a St. Pius X / St. Leo School 8th grade graduate who will be attending Creighton Prep High School the following year. This year the scholarship was awarded to Peter Morris, son of Stacy and Norah (Swartz) Morris (1989). Peter was awarded the scholarship because of his positive attitude, excellent work ethic, and his caring approach to others. The SPSL School community is grateful for this generous scholarship. Congratulations, Peter!



were excited to honor them with this award this year. Steve and Sarah's children all graduated from our school: Emily Monzu (2016), Elizabeth Monzu (2018), and Andrew Monzu (2021).



The "Volunteer of the Year"

Award is named in honor of St. Pius X's founding pastor, Rev. George Kempker. A former marine chaplain, Fr. Kempker was given the task in 1954 to build a parish from two blocks of cornfields for 500 families. He trusted in the power of the Holy Spirit and children's prayer, and he believed a purposeful "call to action" would become a keystone for this new community. This award honors those who embody the spirit of volunteerism by endowing their gifts and collaborative energy to champion our mission, share our stories, and provide tremendous support to our students and school community.

SPSL SPIRIT WEAR

St. Pius X / St. Leo School Spirit Wear is open numerous times throughout the school year. It will be open October 25 - November 15, 2021 with delivery in time for Christmas! Visit our school website at <https://spsl.net/spiritwear/> to check out the latest spirit wear offerings. GO PANTHERS!



FUTURE SPSL ALUMS



Do you have a Future SPSL Alum? Submit information regarding your new little one to the SPSL Alumni Director (michaela.smith@spsl.net) within one year of birth and we will send you a "Future Panther" t-shirt or onesie and publish the good news in an upcoming SPSL Alumni Newsletter.

2021 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sarah and Steve Monzu (1998) were honored as the St. Pius X / St. Leo School 2021 Rev. George Kempker "Volunteer of the Year" Award winners. Steve and Sarah have made a positive impact on the SPSL community in so many ways, and we

SPSL STUDENTS SHARE THEIR SPSL SUPERHEROES

Our students were asked to tell us who in the SPSL School community is a superhero and why. Here are some of the responses we received:

"Mrs. Swift makes learning so fun and also she made learning easier for us." - Ethan S.

"Miles (the therapy dog) is a superhero because he makes people happy." - Jett A.

"Mr. Sepich is so good at being the Principal. He is so kind." - Olivia N.

"Mrs. May helps me with reading and math." - Jack B.



MISSION STATEMENT FOR SPSL SCHOOL

St. Pius X / St. Leo School is a diverse community forming students in the Catholic faith to excel in academics and service to others.

JOIN US FOR "HEROES AMONG US!"

All SPSL Alumni are encouraged to gather at Creighton Prep the evening of Saturday, October 16, 2021 for the St. Pius X / St. Leo School Fall Fundraiser: Heroes



Among Us! The chairs for the event are current SPSL parents Christine Henningsen, Maureen (Hoarty) Kubat (1991), and Bridget Mendenhall.

Heroes Among Us! will celebrate the countless heroes in our school community who have helped us navigate the pandemic while continuing to serve our students with compassion. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year, and it provides much needed support for our school.

Our Fundraiser includes cocktails and appetizers, a plated dinner with silent and live auctions, raffles, and more. Funds raised will support capital improvements for our school, teacher education, technology, the SPSL endowment trust fund, and our school operating budget. You may purchase event tickets online using this QR code.



Even if you are unable to attend the event in person, you may still participate by using your smart phone and bidding online. You may sign up to participate in this way using the QR code as well.

Please be aware of the following protocols for those attending our event in-person:

- While we are very much looking forward to the scheduled in-person event, please know that our event is subject to change as a result of the pandemic and/or any gathering protocols at our host site. If that occurs, we have contingency plans for an alternate event.
- We are planning to use outdoor space at Creighton Prep for the Cocktail Reception (weather permitting).
- We strongly recommend that all attendees be vaccinated. Vaccinated attendees offer an extra layer of protection to keep everyone safe.
- Masks will be required at the event.
- Even with implementation of COVID safety protocols at the fundraiser, risks remain and

we cannot guarantee that attendees will not be exposed.
• Attendees should self-screen before attending the event and stay home if they have symptoms of illness.

We hope to see you at the event on October 16. Thank you for supporting St. Pius X / St. Leo School!

ON THE CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 17, 2021: Grab dinner at Panera Bread on 78th and Dodge Streets between 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm and 20% of your purchase will revert to SPSL when you identify your purchase as part of the SPSL fundraiser night event.

Tuesday, November 30, 2021: Please consider participating in an online giving opportunity: Giving Tuesday! Proceeds will benefit the SPSL Annual Fund and provide needed support for the operating budget of our school.

Saturday, February 5, 2022: Save the date for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Round-Up at St. Pius X / St. Leo School. Contact Kim Ramsey at kim.ramsey@spsl.net for more information or to set up a tour.

Friday, May 6, 2022: SPSL students will participate in the annual Race for Education, a fundraiser involving walking, running, snow cones, and fun. This is a great way to support SPSL.



Monday, May 23, 2021: The annual SPSL golf tournament will be held at the Field Club Golf Course. Join us for a day filled with golf, fun, and friends.



For more information on all our upcoming events, visit the St. Pius X / St. Leo School website at www.spsl.net.



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ALUMNI - TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

We want to hear from you! Is there any interesting news or events that have happened recently in your life? Did you get a new job or a promotion? Have you recently been married or added a new member to your family? Have you moved? We encourage you to share your news with us and your fellow alums.

Name (Maiden and Married) _____

Address _____

Street City State Zip

E-mail Address _____

Phone (____) _____ St. Pius X /St. Leo Class of _____

High School Attended _____ Year of Graduation _____

Sibling's Names _____ Spouse's Name _____

Name and Ages of Your Children _____

Business _____ Position _____

School Currently Attending _____ State _____

News for Our Alumni Newsletter _____

Please mail to: St. Pius X/ St. Leo School, 6905 Blondo Street, Omaha NE 68104-4600
Attention: Alumni News

Please fax to: 402-551-8123

Please email to: michaela.smith@spsl.net or submit your update at: www.spsl.net/alumni-profile

If you are a parent receiving this newsletter rather than the graduate, please ask them to update their address with us.