



# St. Pius X / St. Leo School

## Alumni News

### Fall 2024

#### ***CHEERS TO 60 YEARS FOR THE CLASS OF 1964***

Members of the Class of 1964 gathered together on August 24, 2024 to celebrate their 60th class reunion. The reunion was held in the St Pius X Fr. O'Brien Parish Center.

When the Class of 1964 started first grade at St. Pius X in 1956, there were 55 students in the class. By the time they graduated 8th grade, their class had swelled to 115 students.

Class Ambassador **Linda (Chalupa) Speers**, shared a powerpoint with information about changes in enrollment through the years as well as the nuns, teachers, and priests who were at St. Pius X between 1956-1964.



Throughout the evening, there were 24 classmates participating in the reunion festivities including **Mary (Ehlers) Stallone** who traveled all the way from Alaska to attend. **James Kraus** also participated remotely from Spain! Members of the St. Pius X basketball and baseball teams were well represented at the reunion. The group had so much fun that they are already planning their next gathering!

#### ***50th REUNION FOR THE CLASS OF 1974***



The St. Pius X Class of 1974 held their 50th class reunion on September 20, 2024. Class ambassadors **Liz (Cortese) Fortina** and **Terri (Sutko) Walz** led the planning.

A group of 15 alumni started the evening with a tour at school. They were very interested in seeing the renovated cafeteria, the gym, and the church. Alumni reminisced about Spirit Week, decorating the cubby area outside classrooms, and their gradeschool teachers including Sr. Mary Victoria (1st) and Mr. Baker (7th). Sr. Kathleen Avery joined in the tour.

Afterward, 40 of the 156 graduates gathered at Tanner's restaurant on 119th and Pacific Streets in Omaha where they enjoyed food, spirits, and great conversation. St. Pius X sugar cookies made by Terri (Sutko) Walz were a big hit! Alumni had fun sharing memories of their favorite school lunches, teachers, and traditions from their elementary school years. They remembered classmates who have passed and appreciated those who traveled to attend.

**6905 Blondo Street, Omaha NE 68104**  
**402.551.6667**  
**www.spsl.net**

## PANTHER HAPPENINGS



### CLASS OF 1979

**Kathy (Kelly) Lynch** lives in Lafayette, CO and works as a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer. Kathy has four adult children: Caitlin, Kristen, Ryan, and Joe.

### CLASS OF 1989

**Ryan DeBolt's** business, Combover LLC, won the BBB Torch Award for Ethics in business. The award was announced in May and presented in September 2024.

### CLASS OF 1992

**Robin (Sausser) O'Callaghan** gave the commencement speech for the College of Design & College of Engineering at her alma mater, Iowa State University, in the spring of 2024. Robin is a Senior VP for Kiewit Industrial Group.

### CLASS OF 2008

**Taylor Walet** was married in Idaho in June 2024. The celebration was attended by SPSL Panthers including: **Parker Walet (2011)**, **Nick Zuerlein (2008)**, **Rachel Walet (2013)**, **Marshall Lane (2008)**, **Emma Shoemaker (2013)**, **Curtis Pelster (2008)**, **Dave Hohman (1979)** and **Jack Shoemaker (2011)**.



**Zoe Ursick (2008)** married **Patrick Davlin (2009)** in a ceremony in Omaha on September 28th.



### CLASS OF 2012

**Madison Golden** graduated from Iowa State University in May 2024 with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. She works for VCA Animal Hospital in Omaha.

### CLASS OF 2014

**Hayley Golden** graduated from Iowa State University in May 2022 with an Industrial Design degree. She works remotely from Chicago for FNBO as a UX product designer. Hayley is newly engaged and planning a Spring 2026 wedding.

### CLASS OF 2015

**Hannah Rodrick** works at Creighton University as a marketing project manager for admissions.

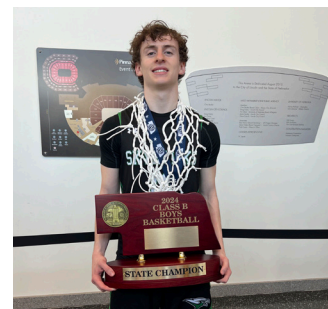
**Erica Steiner** is a Research Assistant at the Institute for Human Neuroscience at Boys Town National Research Hospital. Erica came to SPSL School in the spring of 2024 to present to our junior high students as part of their unit on neuroscience.

### CLASS OF 2020

In March 2024, **Maeva Davis** was honored by Creighton University as a Grit Scholar sponsored by the Heider Family Foundation. Maeva was also honored with the Duchesne Spirit of Kindness Award.

**Kenadie Rudloff** was Marian Girl of the Year, the highest honor bestowed on a senior at Marian.

**Will O'Doherty**, a senior captain on Skutt Catholic's Class B State Championship team in basketball, was named to the Class B Omaha World Herald first team all-tournament team. In addition, Will received the NCPA Academic All-State Award which is recognized for academic excellence, leadership and significant contributions in their Nebraska School Activities Association activity for basketball.



**Lilly Risch Bakhit** was team captain of the Duchesne Academy Mock Trial team that won the Nebraska State Championship. Lilly and classmate **Sophie Owens** both were awarded the Duchesne Prize in May 2024.

### CLASS OF 2021

**Connor Smith** is a National Merit Semifinalist. This honor places him in the top 1% of all high school students nationwide. Connor is a senior at Mount Michael Benedictine High School.



**Tommy Novotny** passed his Eagle Board of Review in May 2024 – six months before his 18th birthday.

## CLASS OF 2022

**Charlotte Holcomb** was awarded the Core Value winner for Compassion at Marian High School in May 2024.

**Lucy Mendenhall** was honored by The Bloc, Inc for the 20 under 20 awards in Arts and Entrepreneurship. She founded Camp Rock in the summer of 2020. What started with 15 campers has blossomed into an annual camp serving 80 campers.



## CLASS OF 2023

**Violet Christen** was awarded the Core Value winner for Service at Marian High School in May 2024.

## WELCOME TO THE ALUMNI CLUB

SPSL was excited to welcome the Class of 2024 into the Alumni Club on May 16, 2024. We wanted to share a few special things about this year's graduating class:

- A record number of graduates received the President's Education Award, awarded to students for outstanding academic achievement.
- **Ben Borer (2024)**, son of Kersten and **Jody Borer (1988)**, was awarded the **Bernie Jackson** Memorial Scholarship. Ben was selected for this scholarship because of his positive attitude, excellent work ethic, and his caring approach to others.
- 23% of the Class of 2024 has a parent who also attended SPSL. SPSL is proud that alumni choose to send their students to our school.



Jody Borer (1988)  
& Ben Borer



Bernadette Martens (1991)  
& Hudson Chapman



Shawn Coyle (1993)  
& Helen Coyle



Elizabeth McCarthy Engel (1989)  
& Luke Engel



Shelley Bodnar Haynes (1993)  
& Noah Haynes



Doug Jalbert (1999)  
& Aveiya Jalbert



Keri Quilty Milliken (1994)  
& Hunter Kreifels



Rebecca Merrill McCreery (1993)  
& Anna McCreery



Mary Baye Novotny (1987)  
& Kathryn Novotny



Justin Rudloff (1996)  
& Kelsey Rudloff



Zach Sauer (1991)  
& Matthew Sauer



Sarah Witt Saucier (1994), Leah Saucier,  
& Tim Saucier (1993)



Michaela Messenger Smith (1990)  
& Thomas Smith



Kate Martens Stricklett (1990)  
& Leveret Stricklett



Dave Weist (1987)  
& Jason Weist

# ALUMNI NEWS

## 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 March 19, 2024 and September 20, 2024 (Alumni designated by graduation year).



### *Rita Costello*

Rita Bianchi (1966)  
John J. Griffith (1974)

### *Caressa Jones (2015)*

Elizabeth Rogan

### *David Keller Sr.*

Michael Blum  
Mary Jo Bueltel  
Thomas and Connie Dunham  
Robert and Ruth Dunkman  
Michael and Mark Egermier  
Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)  
Patrick and Mary Hurley  
Dale and Tara Kaisershot  
Bob and Judy Keller  
Marilyn Keller  
Michael and Michele Ludden  
John and Carol Maginn  
Craig and Mary McCloney  
Jean and Jane McGill (1985)  
Margaret Peterson  
Margaret Puig  
William Rucker  
David and Linda Shanahan  
Daniel and Claudia Stock  
Myrna Vatnsdal  
Heidi Willenborg  
Maurice Zach

### *Pat Kobza*

Rita Bianchi (1966)  
Michael and Kathleen (Kirk) Burns (1978)  
Edward and Jane Dineen  
Shirlee Goaley  
Joseph and Pamela Grier  
John J. Griffith (1974)  
Brent and Paula Holder  
James and Kim Jackson  
Margaret Jenkins  
Karen Kable

Marilyn Mailliard  
Gabriella McTate  
Bob and Mary Nowaczyk  
Thomas and Anne Pogge  
Carole and Daniel Steier

### *Maxine Perrotto*

Thomas and Susan (Goodman) Biodrowski (1979)  
Edward and Deanne Haffke  
Tom and Nancy (Frederick) Herbert (1968)  
Tim and Doreen Herbert  
Larry and Mary Masin  
Patrick Masin  
Kathleen and Scott McGill (1986)  
John and Cheryl Smedra

### *Barbara Pryor*

Timothy McMahon & Debra Monaco-McMahon (1969)  
Steven and Beckie Stec

### *Dennis Snyder*

Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)

### *Barbara Walsh*

Ligita Balodis-O'Dair  
Angela Barela  
Barbara Bohan (1982)  
Phillip Bohan  
Russell and Janette Burton  
Krista Cox  
Connie Gudenrath  
Teresa and Robert Hillebrandt (1968)  
Frances and John Walsh (1970)

### *Herman Weist*

LaDonna Ahlers  
Denny & Bev Brown  
Mary Jo Burns  
Luvern and Joyce Gubbels  
Barb Haesaert  
Jesse and Lora Hansen  
Michael and Mary Harrell  
Tom and Margaret (Guziec) Hoarty (1962)  
Leisa Kolberg  
Vic and Jane Stevenant

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



## OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY

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

Danielle (Soby) Bemis	Class of 1993
Warren Fortezzo	Class of 1962
James E. O'Connor	Class of 1967
Kitty (Smith) Tirone	Class of 1978
Caressa Jones	Class of 2015

## MARRIED COUPLES OF ST. PIUS X

A group of friends and family gathered together on August 16, 2024 to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of James and **Jeri (Deras) Regan (1968)**. Through conversation, the group of couples realized that they were all married at St. Pius X Church! The Regans were married at St. Pius X on August 17, 1974; Keith & Teri Deras were married there in 1978; the Burns were married at SPX in 1988, and Carter Deras & Helen Burns' were wed there in 2021. They shared stories of their weddings, and they could not pass up the opportunity to take a photo together.



*Keith and Teri Deras, James and Jeri Regan, Carter Deras and wife, Helen Burns, and Michael and Kathleen Burns.*

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT SPSL

### ***Will you become an Education Partner at SPSL?***

There have been a few changes around SPSL over its 68 years of educating young students. In the early years, SPSL classrooms were filled with teachers of religious orders, and our school was tuition-free. With the change to lay faculty, parent paid tuition became a central source of funds to operate our school, and that has increased as the cost of a Catholic education rises each year.



Tuition and fees for the 2024-25 school year are \$3,925 per student, while the actual cost to educate a student at our school is \$7,572. Approximately 30% of SPSL students qualify for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines. Parents continue to pay as much tuition as they are able, and our two Parishes continue to provide significant financial support, yet 40% of our families need tuition assistance.

**You can help!** The Education Partners program at SPSL matches willing donors with students in need. Will you become a partner in education with a SPSL student? If you can do so, please return the enclosed envelope with your donation to help with tuition for a student in need. Any amount is helpful! Your contribution is entirely anonymous, and the student's family is simply told that a generous donor has assisted the student financially. A few times a year you will receive a note from your student partner updating you on his/her progress.



As members of the SPSL school community, you understand the benefits of a SPSL education. We hope you will consider a gift to pay those benefits forward to deserving students today by becoming an Education Partner.

St. Pius X / St. Leo School's 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! Questions? Contact Michaela Smith, 402-551-6667, [michaela.smith@spsl.net](mailto:michaela.smith@spsl.net)

# SPSL TODAY

## FRESH START IN THE SPSL CAFETERIA

It was a very busy summer around SPSL School as we worked hard to bring much needed updates to the school cafeteria. The goal was to create a more efficient and enjoyable space for the SPSL school lunch program, Extended Care Program, and community events.

The original cafeteria featured brown tiles, pink columns, and wood paneling on the walls. The Cafeteria Transformation turned our 60 year old school cafeteria into a



**Before**

multi-purpose space featuring new flooring and tiled walls, a cloud ceiling, new shades, the addition of water bottle filling stations, and updated audio visual equipment. The renovation includes new doors along with functional storage and desk space for Extended Care. The kitchen floor was also refinished.

The school cafeteria is now an inviting space where students and staff enjoy spending time. SPSL School is grateful for the generous gifts from alumni, parents, and friends in support of this important capital improvement for our school campus.



**After**

If you would like to see the new space, please contact Alumni Director Michaela Smith at [michaela.smith@spsl.net](mailto:michaela.smith@spsl.net).

## SPSL SPIRIT WEAR

St. Pius X / St. Leo School SpiritWear is open periodically throughout the school year. It will be open November 4-17 with delivery to SPSL on or around December 9. Many Alumni apparel offerings are available. Visit our school website at [spsl.net/spiritwear](http://spsl.net/spiritwear) to check out the latest spirit wear offerings. **GO PANTHERS!**

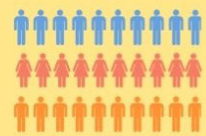


# SPSL SNAPSHOT 2024-2025

## MORE THAN A SCHOOL, IT'S A COMMUNITY

**684 STUDENTS**

Students from 43 different zip codes in the Omaha area including 96 students speaking a language other than English at home



**CLASSROOMS 30**



Homerooms educating students in Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grades

**94% CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Graduates from the Class of 2024 who are now attending a Catholic high school with a rigorous educational program



**TUITION ASSISTANCE 40%**



Families seek tuition assistance each year and 30% of families qualify for free and reduced lunch under federal guidelines

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

## EVENTS

UPCOMING

### OCT 20 CLASS OF 1979

The Class of 1979 will be gathering at Big Fred's Pizza (1101 S 119th Street) to celebrate their 45th Reunion! Please visit the SPSL Alumni Facebook page for more information.

### APR 4 CLASS OF 2000

Shane Stratman of the Class of 2000 is thinking ahead to a 25th Reunion! Ideas are starting to form to connect Spring of 2025 in conjunction with St. Pius X Pasta Friday on April 4th. If you would like to help, please contact Shane at [sstratman@snbomaha.com](mailto:sstratman@snbomaha.com)

If you wish to help plan a reunion or be a Class Ambassador for your class, please contact [michaela.smith@spsl.net](mailto:michaela.smith@spsl.net).

### USE YOUR QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS ("QCD") TO HELP SPSL

As you consider your QCD this year, please consider SPSL School as your charity of choice!

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. QCDs can generally be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year. A QCD is excluded from your taxable income. It is always recommended that you consult with your attorney and financial advisors on financial matters.



## JOIN US FOR PRESERVING OUR PRESENCE, SUSTAINING OUR LEGACY

All SPSL Alumni, Parents of Alumni, and friends are encouraged to gather at Creighton Prep the evening of Saturday, October 19, 2024 for the St. Pius X / St. Leo School



Fall Fundraiser: *Preserving Our Presence, Sustaining Our Legacy: A Night at the Museum*. You are an important part of the SPSL community, and we would be honored to celebrate the past, present, and future of SPSL with you. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year, and it provides much needed support for our school operating budget.

Our Fundraiser includes cocktails and appetizers, a plated dinner with auctions, raffles, and an open bar all evening long! Funds raised 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 or contact SPSL School at 402-551-6667.

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.



We hope to see you at the event on October 19. Thank you for supporting St. Pius X / St. Leo School!

### ON THE CALENDAR

**Wednesday, November 20, 2024:** Grab dinner at Qdoba on 120th and Blondo 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, December 3, 2024:** Please consider participating in an online giving opportunity: Giving Tuesday! Proceeds will support the SPSL school mission.

**Saturday, January 25, 2025:** Save the date for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Round-Up at St. Pius X / St. Leo School. Contact Emily Abboud at [emily.abboud@spsl.net](mailto:emily.abboud@spsl.net) for more information or to set up a tour.

**Friday, May 9, 2025:** 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.

**Thursday, May 15, 2025:** Class of 2025 Graduation Mass at 8:30 am at St. Pius X and Graduation Service at 7:00 pm at St. Leo the Great.

**Monday, May 19, 2025:** The 21st Annual SPSL Golf Tournament will be held at the Field Club Golf Course. Email [michaela.smith@spsl.net](mailto:michaela.smith@spsl.net) to join in this 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](http://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 email to: [michaela.smith@spsl.net](mailto:michaela.smith@spsl.net)

Or visit [www.spsl.net/alumni-profile](http://www.spsl.net/alumni-profile) to update your contact information online.