

## FAITH TO MOVE MOUNTAINS

by Ellyn Tarrant, GTACS Parent for 34 Years

Perhaps my most-loved parable is the one explaining how faith even the size of a tiny mustard seed can move mountains. That has long been our mantra as we begin our 34th year of sending our children to the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools. At one point, we had ten enrolled from preschool to 12th grade. Fun fact: Our oldest graduated from St. Francis the year I gave birth to triplets! We are the Tarrant family and, indubitably, our calling card is our nine boys and five girls – or 14FORUS as my license plate reads.

With twins who graduated this past May, twelve are now counted as alumni and we have two more to go – a freshman and a fourth grader.

Invariably, the question asked most often is, “How do you do it?” The truth is we don’t go it alone. We

found GTACS when our first son was ready for school, and they’ve been lighting our path ever since. The academics, test scores, sports and extracurriculars are stellar, but it’s faith, love and kindness that keep us invested year after year. Prayer is everywhere. It begins and ends the school day, kicks off all sporting events and is sprinkled liberally throughout the week in school Masses, Rosaries, Grace Before Meals and time spent in the school chapels. Our children have simply become better individuals by interacting with priests, sisters and teachers who model the inherent value of serving others. Some of our best GTACS memories include sending our high schoolers on mission trips to Africa and Haiti; dishing up Glad Meals to the homeless; and volunteering at food pantries.

While there have been many highs, our story is not all roses: we lost our beautiful 19- year-old daughter Keegan to suicide in 2015. Afterward, we felt no judgment,



*The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches. – Matthew 13:31-32*

only compassion. Meals were delivered for months; the administration established The Keegan Mission Project to award scholarships in her memory; the entire school system annually donates shoes that we ship across the ocean to Keegan’s favorite charity – Kasisi Children’s Home in Zambia. And since her death, hundreds have turned out to remember her on Memorial Day at *The Jump* – a lively group plunge into chilly West Bay. A school parent donates part of the proceeds from event t-shirts to the Keegan scholarship fund.

Life as a family of 16 can be messy. Fourteen children ensure oodles of internal support – from drivers to built-in babysitters – but our real secret lies in who we have in our corner. For us, that continues to be our mustard seed and the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools. Always giving, mentoring and nurturing, our school community demonstrates in constant, small ways that faith really can move those mountains.



# PRINCIPAL CHANGES

## GTACS WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATORS, NEW LEADERSHIP ROLES



**Joe Carlson**  
*Principal*  
St. Francis  
Grades 9-12



**Maureen DeYoung**  
*Principal*  
St. Elizabeth  
Ann Seton  
Grades 6-8



**Jessica Lesinski**  
*Principal*  
Immaculate  
Conception  
Grades PK-5



**Erin Donnell**  
*Assistant Principal*  
Immaculate  
Conception  
Grades PK-5

GTACS is excited to announce several changes to our principal lineup for the upcoming school year! Mr. Joe Carlson has been appointed as the new principal of St. Francis High School to replace Dr. Erick Chittle, who is now heading up a Catholic school in Nashville, Tennessee. Additionally, Mrs. Maureen DeYoung has moved from Assistant Principal at Immaculate Conception to Principal of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Finally, Mrs. Erin Donnell will assume Mrs. DeYoung's role at Immaculate Conception Elementary as Assistant Principal.

### PASTORS OF OUR PATRON PARISHES

Rev. Don Geyman, St. Francis of Assisi and GTACS President  
Rev. Anthony Citro, Immaculate Conception  
Rev. Christopher Jarvis, Christ the King  
Rev. Ben Rexroat, St. Joseph  
Rev. Joseph Muszkiewicz, St. Patrick  
Most Reverend Jeffrey Walsh, Bishop  
Rev. Michael Class, SJ, Chaplain

## NOW OPEN! ST. FRANCIS PRESCHOOL FORMER HOLY ANGELS WING OF HIGH SCHOOL SERVING 3s AND 4s

In response to the growing demand for faith-based education and the increasing enrollment at Immaculate Conception, a "new" preschool has emerged to cater to the educational needs of 3- and 4-year-old children. Introducing St. Francis Preschool!

The decision to open St. Francis Preschool was driven by the desire to accommodate the increasing enrollment at Immaculate Conception while ensuring that families could experience a seamless transition through the various stages of their children's education.

The new facility has been remodeled and updated to provide a safe, engaging, and stimulating environment. The aim is to create a solid foundation that will enable them to flourish academically, emotionally, and spiritually as they progress through their educational journey.

As the doors of St. Francis Preschool swing open, we welcome families seeking a faith-based education for their young children. The establishment of this new preschool exemplifies the commitment of GTACS to provide comprehensive and values-driven education, ensuring that children are equipped with the tools to become well-rounded individuals.

PreK through grade 5 will continue to be offered at Immaculate Conception Elementary.



### THE GTACS CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION

**St. Francis Preschool**  
3s and 4s  
123 E. 11th Street

**Immaculate Conception Elementary**  
PreK through Grade 5  
314 Vine Street

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Middle School**  
Grades 6-8  
1601 Three Mile Road

**St. Francis High School**  
Grades 9-12 and administrative offices  
123 E. 11th Street



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## CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

### STUDENTS, FAMILIES RECEIVE SACRAMENTS

During the 2023 Easter Vigil, thirty-one students from our schools received at least one sacrament, with a good number of them coming into full communion with the Catholic Church through First Eucharist and Confirmation.

It is a joy for us to witness the openness of students and their families to learning about the faith, and their response to God's call to receive the gifts He has for them.

We thank our priests, deacons, catechists, and teachers who counsel and instruct all those who express an interest in becoming Catholic.

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*"We are too weak to discover the truth by reason alone" - St. Augustine*

## ETHICS & CULTURE

### PHILOSOPHY OFFERINGS IN-THE-WORKS

St. Francis High School is in the process of developing a cross-curricular offering based on philosophy, ethics, and culture. The goal is to help students grow in the following areas:

- Seeing the inherent dignity bestowed on each human person;
- Learning logical habits of thinking in accord with right reason so as to discern what will bring true fulfillment to our human nature;
- Understanding the complementary relationship between faith and reason;
- Assessing the role of culture in forming and shaping the way we see ourselves, others, the world, and God.

To learn more about this exciting initiative and how you can support it, please contact Wayne Mueller in the GTACS Advancement Department, (231) 995-8428 or [wmueller@gtacs.org](mailto:wmueller@gtacs.org).

## CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### RENOWNED RELIGIOUS FORMATION PROGRAM COMES TO GTACS

We are pleased to announce the addition of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) to our school's religious education offerings.



CGS is a prayerful, peaceful method of presenting Scripture and the Truths of our Faith to young children in an atmosphere of tranquil joy. It has been used in parishes and schools across the world for more than 60 years. It takes place in a prepared space called an Atrium. This space has developmentally appropriate materials for students which will allow them to develop their relationship with Christ through Sacred Scripture and the Traditions of the Catholic Church.

PreK and Kindergarten students will have the opportunity to visit the Atrium for presentations one hour per week. Over the course of the school year, we plan to open an Atrium for students in our 3s and 4s program (St. Francis Preschool). If you would like to begin to learn more, please visit <https://www.cgsusa.org/>.

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# PERFORMING ARTS

If you attended any of our performing arts event this past year, you can be sure of one thing: Our students are falling in LOVE with music! From the early successes in band and choir to the more polished expression of song by our jazz band, choir ensembles, and symphonic and marching bands, these kids are learning a LOT about music and having fun doing it.



## HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2023: CINDERELLA

Traverse City St. Francis continued its tradition of providing a delightful high school musical. The colorful costumes, brilliant choruses, and energetic routines were enjoyed by all.

## SAVE THE DATES! HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2024: ANASTASIA

Shows will be performed on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 pm and Sunday at 2:00 pm on the weekends of February 16-18 and February 23-25, 2024. All are welcome!

*Thank you to photographers who contributed to this page: Gerald Martineau and Jim Hardesty.*



Mezzo-soprano opera singer **Kate DeYoung** '12 returned home to the City Opera House in August 2023 to honor the community that brought her and opera together. GTACS Director of Performing Arts **Jamie Hardesty** accompanied Kate throughout her performance.

Former band members **Mark Smith** '23 and **Casey McCormick** '22 and junior Henry Boros are making recordings of all the different instruments (Quads, Bass Drum, Cymbals) for all the percussion cadences so that future generations can listen and practice!

Incoming 9th grader **Nate Gorman** has been writing out music for things that have been handed down aurally over the years, e.g., the snare drum part for the fight song.



**Derek Berta** '23 earned gold honors in Digital Cinema Production at the Skills USA Michigan Competition in April 2023.

**Anna Rossiter** '23 has been ice skating since she was 3 years old. She was recently selected to tour with Disney On Ice. The show will make a stop in Grand Rapids in February 2024.





## HOMECOMING 2022

The 2022 Homecoming Court was recognized during half-time of the October 8 football game. Congratulations to King **Joey Donahue** and Queen **Gwyneth Bramer**.

## 2023 HOMECOMING

Saturday, October 21  
3:00 pm at Thirlby Field

## HALL OF FAME

The Hall of Fame presentation will take place at half-time

### INDUCTEES

**KAREN<sup>†</sup> AND JERRY BUELL**

**CONNIE AND RICK<sup>†</sup> DENEWETH**

**TOM<sup>†</sup> GARTLAND**

**DEACON RENE AND  
JACQUELYN HOENSCHIED**

Information about the Hall of Fame along with nomination guidelines are available on our website.

<sup>†</sup> Posthumous awards

## GLADIATOR 2022/23 SPORTS TEAM RECAP

### Volleyball

LMC Championship

### Boys Tennis

Regional Championship

3rd Place in State

Tristan Bonanni 1 Singles

Owen Jackson State Champion 2 Singles

Carson Poole/David Ansley State Finalists 3 Doubles

Chris Bobrowski State Finalist 3 Singles

Tristan Bonanni All-State First Team

1 Singles

Owen Jackson All-State First Team Singles

Charlie King/Derek Berta All-State First Team Doubles

Eli Schmude/Max King All-State First Team Doubles

### Girls Golf

State Tournament Qualifier

### Girls & Boys Cross Country

LMC Championship – Girls and Boys

Regional Championship –

Girls and Boys

State Championship – Girls

State Runner-Up Championship – Boys

### Football

NMFL Legends Division Championship

District Championship

Regional Championship

Division VII State Runner-Up

Multiple Individual Award Winners –

NMFL, Region and State

### Girls Basketball

LMC Championship

District Championship

Maggie Napont – 1000 Point

Career Scorer

Gwyneth Bramer – 1000 Point

Career Scorer

### Boys Basketball

LMC Championship

District Championship

Regional Championship

Division III State Runner-Up

Wyatt Nausadis – 1000 Point

Career Scorer

Multiple Individual Award Winners –

LMC, Region and State

### Wrestling

Tyler Sheeran – State Finalist

Josiah Schaub – State Champion

### Alpine Ski (Co-Op)

Girls Team – 3rd Place in States

### Nordic Ski (Co-Op)

Josh Kerr - Pursuit Champion,

Individual Sprint Champion

Annie Paulson -

Individual Sprint Champion

Annie Paulson and Josh Kerr -

Team Mixed Sprint Relay

Ryan Donnell – 2nd in the Pursuit and

2nd in the Individual Sprint

### Girls & Boys Track

Girls Team – Conference Champions

Boys Team – Conference Champions

Girls Team Placed Eight Individuals

into State Finals

Boys Team Placed Nine Individuals

into State Finals

### Girls Soccer - A great season

### Girls Tennis

Conference & Regional Champions

4th Place in State

Mary Chittle 1 Singles

Audrey Lee State Finalist

Mary Chittle All-State First Team Singles

Mary-Kate Ansley All-State Honorable

Mention Singles

Lily Lurvey/Caroline Knox All-State

Honorable Mention Doubles

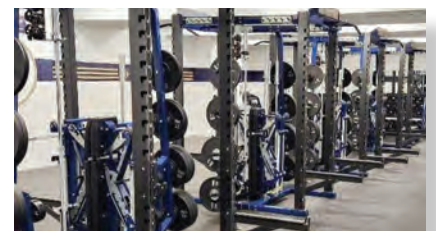
### Softball

Conference Champions

### Baseball - A great season



The Gladiator weight room underwent a significant upgrade recently. If you would like to contribute to the ongoing improvements, please contact Wayne Mueller at (231) 995-8428 or [wmueller@gtacs.org](mailto:wmueller@gtacs.org)







## BLESSED NORMALCY IN 2022/23

by Matt Bauman, GTACS Director of Academics and Technology

The 2022/23 school year may be characterized most by how blessedly “normal” it was.

After three academic years in which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our schools – sometimes a lot, sometimes a little – we were thrilled to start our school year without any restrictions. Our back-to-school events were joyful reunions, and our All System Mass in the gym was packed to the rafters with students and their families.

Now, as we begin to look at how well our students are doing, we find that a variety

of factors may have helped buffer our students from the pandemic’s impact.

One strategy was to use government EANS funds (Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools) to address COVID-related educational disruptions. Summertime K-12 tutoring opportunities were funded through this program and were well-utilized by GTACS families. Undoubtedly, this helped students catch up on any learning loss.

Generally speaking, it appears that our students and schools have test scores that fell far less dramatically than state

and national scores. It is evidenced by standardized test scores across all grade levels – there was a slight dip that was not as severe as national numbers and now the recovery is occurring more rapidly than the national numbers.

The work of closing the pandemic gap is not done or complete. Our teachers continue their good work poring over student data while they meet frequently in grade level or subject-level teams. Whatever comes our way, it remains our mission to assist parents in fully forming students’ minds, hearts, and souls. ✚





# MARCH FOR LIFE

St. Francis High School juniors and seniors attended the historic 50th annual March for Life in Washington, DC – the first after the overturn of Roe vs. Wade. Many graduating seniors listed this is experience as one of the highlights of their high school experience.



# GLADHANDER

Our 40th anniversary Gladhander 2022 was a highly successful sell-out event. Support for our online auction was also very strong, and we are continuing to fine tune that platform to make bidding even easier and more exciting.

Thanks to you, we were able to achieve net proceeds of \$436,521.

Our grand prize winner, who chose a vehicle arranged through Bill Marsh Auto, was Lisa Hunt of Kirkland, Ohio.

Plan now to attend Gladhander 2023, which is based on the mythical land of Narnia, or to bid on items via our online auction site!



GLADHANDER 2023

October 28, 2023

Free Preview Night on October 27 at 5:30 pm

Register to bid/purchase tickets at [gladhander.com](http://gladhander.com)

# TRADITIONS OF GIVING

The third Friday of each month being a day that students, for a donation of a dollar or more, may wear casual, non-uniform attire. This year, in addition to the charitable causes below, we held a special Jean Day to provide support to the citizens of Ukraine.

Students also gave alms during Lent to provide funding for water wells in Africa, donated baby care items to the Thrive Clinic, and brought in non-perishables for the Immaculate Conception Parish Food Pantry.

St. Vincent de Paul  
Boots for Kids  
TC Fire Department Christmas Toys  
K (Kiwaniis) Club/Builders Club  
High School Student Vocations  
Exploration Fund  
High School Mission Trips  
Armed Forces Retirement  
Home/8th Grade Service Trip  
5th Grade Service Trip  
to Feeding America  
Grand Traverse Area Right to Life  
McNulty School in Kenya  
Glad Meals



Since March 14, 2020, GTACS volunteers have provided grab-and-go lunches for outdoor pickup by those in need. We are grateful to the many supporters who have kept this important mission going. Glad Meals is funded entirely through donations. For information, contact **Maureen DeYoung** ([mdeyoung@gtacs.org](mailto:mdeyoung@gtacs.org)).



TCSF CLASS OF '55 REUNION



TCSF CLASS OF '75 REUNION

## ALUMNI NEWS TO SHARE?

Please contact the GTACS Advancement Department, (231) 941-GLAD.



**GRAND TRAVERSE AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
123 East Eleventh Street, Traverse City, MI 49684

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## 2023/2024

**October 21**  
Homecoming/Hall of Fame

**October 27**  
Gladhandler Preview Night

**October 28**  
Gladhandler

**January 28-February 3**  
Catholic Schools Week

**February 2**  
All System Mass

**February 16-18, 23-25**  
High School Musical

**April 22-26**  
8th Grade Washington, DC

**May 14**  
Festival of Arts

**May 16**  
Donor Appreciation &  
Fundraising Breakfast

**May 17**  
All System Mass

**May 24**  
Baccalaureate/Graduation



# SAINTS IN-THE-MAKING

## 2022/23 ENROLLMENT

PRESCHOOL THROUGH 5TH	650
6TH THROUGH 8TH	240
9TH THROUGH 12TH	360



GRAND TRAVERSE AREA  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS