

Students and chaperones from Guardian Angels Central Catholic who attended the March for Life event in Washington, D.C. were, from left, front: Kaitlyn Watson, Grace Neiman, Regan Dorcey, Xavier Steffensmeier; back: Carol Franzluebbers, Jared Minnick, Andrew Franzluebbers, Lisa Gatzemeyer, Max Einfalt, Charissa Steffensmeier and Nicole Watson.

Marching with a purpose

Eleven from GACC attend March for Life event in Washington, D.C.

Some were first-time marchers, and a few were repeat marchers. Either way, the 2017 March for Life in Washington, D.C. left a lasting impression on the eight students and three chaperones from Guardian Angels Central Catholic who attended the event.

And for those 11 who took part in the 'March,' it was almost beyond words to be a part of something that held so much importance.

"It was amazing knowing that we were doing something that we valued and believed in. It just showed that we were not alone," Bluejay sophomore Jared Minnick said.

This year's March for Life

marked the 44th annual Pro-Life rally, which commemorates Roe v. Wade. And once again, thousands of people showed up to pledge their support.

"To see so many people stand up and march just completely blew me away," added Minnick, who was making his first March for Life trip.

Last year's event ended with adversity when students were stranded due to a snowstorm. This year, the trip out to Washington, D.C. started with a little adversity of its own when Nebraska was hit with an ice storm.

And while some schools weren't

able to make the trip because of the ice, GACC wasn't one of them.

Local marchers left for the nation's capital on January 25 and returned five days later. For chaperone Charissa Steffensmeier, this trip wasn't like anything she's ever experienced.

"This was a really powerful statement to have hundreds of thousands of people coming together in one place to express their message, that people truly do believe in the importance of life from conception to death," Steffensmeier said.

See **MARCH FOR LIFE**, Page 2



**GACC's
2009
graduate
Taylor Leff-
ler will be
ordained a
Transitional
Deacon at
St. Cecelia's
Cathedral.**

Leffler to be ordained

By Delores Meister

Guardian Angels Central Catholic alumnus Taylor Leffler ('09) will be ordained a Transitional Deacon at St. Cecelia's Cathedral in Omaha on May 26.

He will preach as a deacon Sunday, May 28 at the 10 a.m. Mass at St. Mary's Church.

Leffler is a fourth generation member of St. Mary's Parish.

Taylor is the son of Diane and Dana Leffler, and the grandson of Doreen and the late Donald ('49) Leffler.

Blessings counted at GACC

Hello Alumni,

The week of February 29-March 3 we celebrated Catholic Schools Week at Guardian Angels Central Catholic.

This week provides the students with a reminder of how blessed they are to be able to attend a Catholic school in which we put our faith at the forefront of all we do, and of course have a little fun too!

The week's activities included things such as an all school Mass, living rosary, March for Life Presentation, spelling bee, movie at the Community Theater, creating crafts for the area nursing homes, and a fun Friday afternoon of bingo and volleyball.

Thank you to the Catholic Schools Week Committee who put in a lot of time planning and preparing for these activities.

Catholic Schools Week also provides the staff with the opportunity to reflect on the blessing that it is to work at a Catholic school. People often say that working at a Catholic school is more of a vocation than a job.

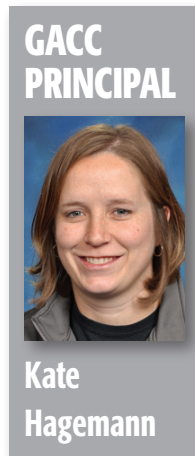
We are lucky to have so many dedicated staff members who choose to carry out their vocation at GACC. It takes all of us – students,

parents, staff, and of course the community – working together to allow Catholic education to continue to flourish.

Catholic Schools Week provides us with a small reminder of the things that we are thankful for year round.

Sincerely,

Kate Hagemann



MARCH FOR LIFE: GACC goes to Washington, D.C.

FROM PAGE 1

The diversity at the march was something that really struck Steffensmeier.

The backgrounds and ethnicity of the marchers was widely varied, but there was one common purpose behind marching. That tied perfectly into the theme of this year's march: "The Power of One."

"There's so much meaning behind that. It could be one person making a difference or many people coming together as one to make a difference," Steffensmeier said.

There were many impactful moments during the march, but

for Minnick, one particular aspect really stood out.

"There were moms and dads on the sides of the street holding signs that said, 'I regret my abortion.' Just seeing how distraught they were really stuck out to me," Minnick said.

GACC junior Regan Dorcey made her third trip to the annual march, and each year has been a life-changing experience in its own way.

"Each march is different. Each has its own special spin. Last year we got stuck in the snowstorm, and people asked 'why would you want to go again?' Dorcey said.

"But it's not for the trip. It's

about the fight against abortion. Each trip has its special mark and makes you want to fight abortion even more."

Dorcey, much like Minnick, knows the fight's not over. And if the opportunity to return to D.C. presents itself, both students said they'd definitely return to march once again.

Guardian Angels Central Catholic students and chaperones marching were: Kaitlyn Watson, Grace Neiman, Regan Dorcey, Xavier Steffensmeier, Jared Minnick, Andrew Franzluebbbers, Lisa Gatzemeyer, Max Einfalt, Charissa Steffensmeier, Nicole Watson and Carol Franzluebbbers.

Bowling leads Kreikemeier to KC life

By Delores Meister

What started as an ordinary activity turned into a life-changing event.

Chris Kreikemeier graduated from Central Catholic in 2000 with a spontaneous enthusiasm toward whatever activity was around at the time.

"In 2001, I joined the Knights of Columbus so I could participate in the K C bowling league," he said.

Soon, in addition to spares and strikes at the bowling alley, he was frying fish at fish fries, serving scrambled eggs at breakfasts, putting gravy on mashed potatoes at dinners, helping little kids with basketball and handing out Tootsie Rolls after Mass.

With his "lets-do-it" attitude, Kreikemeier was having fun serving his community and church. He also learned that the Knights are the largest fraternal service organization in the world.

In 2008, he married Tiffany, who readily joined the fun of Knights activities. As a married man, Kreikemeier appreciates that the Knights' foremost mission is promoting Catholic families and providing financial security through insurance.

In 2014, District Deputy Gene Cihacek asked Chris to step up his leadership role to get more young men involved in re-invigorating and strengthening their families and parishes. The Knights stand as a repudiation of the negative messages of some social media. Would he be Grand Knight?

Grand Knight Kreikemeier, having grown up in the digital era, converted print communication to digital technology, using email, texts and more active messaging on-line.

Kreikemeier recruited more than 75 new members. At the Nebraska State KC convention, he received the state recruitment award, was advanced to District 42 Deputy and was one of six state delegates selected with his family to attend the Knights Supreme Council Convention in Toronto, Canada this past August.

"Attending the Supreme Convention was a life-changing event. It was an honor and a privilege," Kreikemeier said.

At the Memorial Mass during the Supreme Convention Kreikemeier, he wore his 4th Degree Knights' regalia and was in procession with 100 priests, 45 bishops and 12 cardinals. He understood the scope of the unity and charity of this active world-wide organization supporting families in their everyday lives in their homes, parishes and Nation.

Kreikemeier learned that the Knights grew from humble beginnings helping widows and orphans. In 1882, Father Michael McGivney asked his parish men in New Haven, Connecticut to provide food and money for the immigrant factory workers' widows and children who (before social security and Occupational Safety and Health OSHA) had no means of support. From this beginning of charity and unity the



Chris Kreikemeier (middle) the 2015-2016 Star Council Award. Chris is pictured with his wife Tiffany and children Braxton and Hailey.

organization of Knights was formed. It was named after Christopher Columbus to embrace all-American ethnic cultures. Over the years, the Knights became engaged and developed life insurance and faith-based institutional investing.

The West Point St. Joseph's Council was organized May 8, 1921. Kreikemeier learned that his deceased grandfather Anton "Tony" Kreikemeier was a third degree member from the 1930's on. Tony wore his KC emblem pin with pride and passed it to his son Brian, who then gave this to Chris. The Knights are a



Knights of Columbus State Deputy Tony Hergott (middle right) presents Chris Kreikemeier ('00), middle, the 2015-2016 Star Council Award. Also pictured are, from left, Gene Cihacek, left, and current Council #2272 Grand Knight Justin Steffensmeier ('00), right.

Local KC council receives national award

By Delores Meister

The Knights of Columbus St. Joseph's Council #2272 of West Point was recognized as the 2015-2016 Star Council by the Supreme Council.

Knights of Columbus Nebraska State Deputy, Tony Hergot, presented the local membership with the national recognition.

Chris Kreikemeier, who was Grand Knight at the time, accepted the plaque.

Kreikemeier was also the top state recruiter, and he and his family will be featured in the national KC

magazine, Columbia.

Gene Cihacek received the State Star District Deputy honors. Jeremy Borchers was the top agent.

Justin Steffensmeier of Dodge is serving as 2016 - 2017 Grand Knight.

"As Knights, we strive to be men of character and conviction, dedicated to uphold the Gospel principals while selflessly serving our family, church and communities," Hergot said. "We are committed to Pope Francis' message of charity, unity and reaching out to those in need."

KREIKEMEIER: Bowling introduces Chris to KC life

FROM PAGE 3

Kreikemeier family tradition.

The 134-year-old organization maintains stability by continuing to recruit young members. Besides the Americas, Knights are in the Philippines, France, Mexico, Canada and Poland.

Kreikemeier recently returned

from the Knights of Columbus National Headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut, where he was a panelist on a world-wide webinar.

As a follow-up to help with national recruitment at New Haven, Kreikemeier was on a first-ever live panel webinar for recruitment. He will be in a recruiters' video presently in the making to be used world-wide.

Kreikemeier still bowls with the Knights of Columbus League every Wednesday night.

"West Point is the only KC league in the state. The West Point eight-lane bowling alley will host the 2018 KC Tournament," Kreikemeier said.

His bowling scores?

"Variable," he confesses with a grin.



Nick Krajicek, seated in the cockpit of an F-16 fighter jet, is a Major in the U.S. Air Force and flies with the Thunderbirds. He grew up in West Point.

Krajicek soars with Thunderbirds

By Tom Kelly

Nick Krajicek says challenges have always motivated him.

"I remember teachers and coaches challenging me," said the 39-year-old who grew up in West Point and graduated from Central Catholic High School in 1995. "They wanted me to get outside my comfort zone."

Those experiences, he said, helped lay a good foundation for his current job. Major Krajicek pilots an F-16 fighter jet as a member of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

Krajicek moved to West Point with his parents, Gus and Carol, and three siblings when he was in the fourth grade.

"I thought it was the worst thing that could ever happen," he said. "I wondered how my parents could do such a terrible thing to me."

Like most kids, it didn't take

long to adjust to his new home and school. Growing up in a rural community was a good thing, he said.

"Working for Dick Reppert helped me develop a work ethic," Krajicek said. "I learned what real work is."

He said his high school Spanish teacher, Marlene Knobbe, helped broaden his view of the world.

"She travelled quite a bit, shared her experiences with us students, and she challenged us to see and experience as much of the world as we could," he said. "She would have been proud of me when I was in Puerto Rico (for a recent show). I spoke a little Spanish."

While in high school, Krajicek represented Central Catholic at the R.E.A. Youth Leadership Camp. There, he met his future wife, Tisha.

Krajicek enlisted in the National Guard right out of high school

and went to basic training in Ft. Benning, Ga. After basics, he came back to Nebraska and started college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It was there he started dating Tisha.

After completing college, Krajicek went to Warrant Officer School and then into Initial Entry Rotary Wing training, all at Ft. Rucker, Ala. Upon completion he came back to Nebraska and went to work for Union Pacific as a Supply Chain Manager.

While working for the railroad, he was a traditional guardsman, flying UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

In 2002 and 2003, his Guard unit was deployed to Kosovo as part of the ongoing stability operations there. In early 2004, Krajicek separated from the Army and joined

THUNDERBIRDS: WPCC graduate in U.S. Air Force

FROM PAGE 5

the Air Force.

Before joining the Thunderbirds, Krajicek served as the wing director of staff and an F-16 instructor pilot at Osan Air Base in South Korea. He has logged more than 3,600 flight hours as a military pilot, with more than 650 hours of combat experience.

As a member of the Thunderbirds, he is away from his home in Las Vegas about 220 days a year. The team will perform in 71 air shows at 39 locations this show season.

At the Puerto Rico show, Krajicek met up with his wife and daughters, Aubrey, 12, and Addison, 9. Families travel to show locations at their own expense, but Krajicek said it was nice to spend his free time and see the sights with them.

Krajicek said he knows his job is not without risk. A fellow pilot safely ejected, and his plane crashed after a flyover at the Air Force Academy graduation in June.

However, Krajicek says he and the rest of the team train and prepare as thoroughly as possible to ensure safety for the Team in the air and the spectators on the ground.

Pilots must log at least 750 hours of flight time in Air Force fighter aircraft to qualify for the Thunderbirds. They undergo flying evaluations and performance reviews.

The Thunderbirds came into

existence in 1953. The team was created to represent the Air Force and demonstrate the professionalism of its personnel, which now number 680,000. Of that total, 18,000 are active pilots.

The team, which consists of 12 officers and 120 enlisted personnel, begins training in November. They fly more than 100 sorties during the practice months. The first air shows of the season start the following March.

"It's very much a building block approach," Krajicek said. "At the start of training season, we are about 20 feet apart. We keep moving in a little at a time."

During shows, Krajicek said, planes are just a few feet apart in some formations.

"The diamond formation is the tightest," he said. "Our wings are about 36 inches apart."

There is very little room for error, especially for the slot pilot.

"All of the positions are uniquely different. I cue off the Commander/Leader," Krajicek said. "I also have to look at the other pilots and adjust my position to them. I don't have much of an out from my position in the slot. I'm tucked in between the wingmen, just behind and below the Commander/Leader. The biggest thing is we have to trust each other."

Every show site is different, and they practice before each performance.

"Most of our flying is visual," he said. "We fly the show off of visual references on the ground such as school buses and truck trailers. It's

pure stick and rudder flying."

Krajicek said he loves flying the F-16. "It's not a difficult plane to fly," he said. "The Thunderbirds have been flying them since the mid 1980s. It's very controllable."

Krajicek said members of the team are expected to be physically fit.

"First of all, we are representing the Air Force. When we're flying, we pull up to 9 Gs. It's pretty demanding, physically and mentally," he said. "I like to do a lot of cardio and weightlifting. It's up to each of us to train how we want, but we take it pretty seriously."

A Thunderbirds officer serves a two-year tour of duty. That way, three of the six pilots change each year, ensuring continuity. Krajicek has another season (through January, 2018) with the team.

His family enjoys the military lifestyle.

"Aubrey has been in six different schools," he said, "including Italy, South Korea, and now Las Vegas, where the Thunderbirds are stationed," he said.

And he finds time to share stories with younger brother Aaron, who is also in the military. He is in his 16th year with the Army National Guard.

After his current assignment, he plans to do at least one more tour of duty (normally three years) in the Air Force.

"Our family has talked about it, he said. "As long as I'm still effective and my family is enjoying it, I'll stay for many more assignments."



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JayFest June 9, 2017

Alumni Banquet June 10, 2017

‘Superior’ one-act season

It was a successful season for the Guardian Angels Central Catholic one-act team. The Bluejays received a pair of Superior ratings at the Mid-State Conference and C2-2 District competitions.

At districts, GACC fell one point short of qualifying for a state berth. They were edged out by Howells-Dodge.

Being recognized as outstanding performers were: Hannah Kreikemeier, Grace Neiman, Emily Reeson, Jena Wimer, Marci Franzuebbers, Tyson Snodgrass, Jared Minnick, Noah Hass and Damian Birchem.

At conference one-act, Outstanding performers were: Hannah Kreikemeier, Grace Neiman, Emily Reeson, Jenna Wimer, Bobbie Ortmeier, Jared Minnick, Noah Hass and Stephanie Hagedorn.

Neiman also was awarded Best Supporting Actress out of all 10 schools.

The directors and coordinators for GACC’s one-act were Sister Elizabeth Ann Miller, Emma Stokely, Sarah McGill and Mary Lauritzen.

“We couldn’t be prouder of the



Hannah Kreikemeier, right, and Sarah Hrbek perform during GACC’s public one-act performance.

hard work and winning performance put forth by all the cast,

crew and student directors,” Sr. Elizabeth Ann said.



NEW BUS for Guardian Angels Central Catholic. The bus was purchased with the help of a grant and generous donations.

GACC BLUEJAYS SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT



LAUREN WOBKEN

signed her national letter of intent to join the University of South Dakota softball program. Wobken, a senior at Guardian Angels Central Catholic, was a three-year starter for the Bluejays. Signing with Lauren are her parents, Tim and Roni Wobken of Scribner.

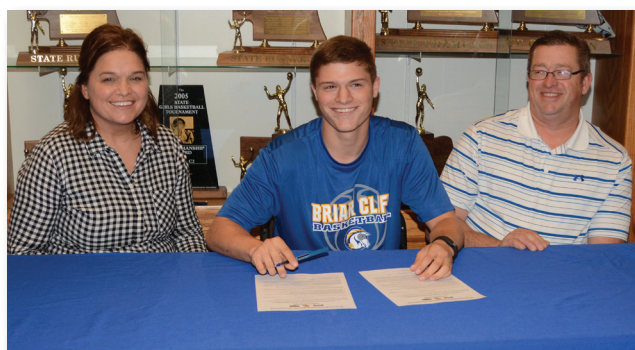


HANNAH HUNKE

signed her national letter of intent to join the University of Nebraska-Omaha women's golf program. Hunke, a senior at Guardian Angels Central Catholic, was a four-year starter for the Bluejays' boys golf team. Signing with Hannah are her parents, Jeff and Missy Hunke of Snyder.



MADDIE KNOBBE signed her national letter of intent to join the Wayne State College volleyball program. Knobbe was a three-year starter and four-year letter winner for the Bluejay volleyball team. Maddie is the daughter of Scott ('89) and Patti Knobbe.



KOBE SLAUGHTER signed his national letter of intent to join the Briar Cliff men's basketball program. Slaughter was a two-year starter and letter winner for the Bluejay boys basketball team. Kobe is the son of Brad and Marla Slaughter.

BIRTHS

Reggie '03 & Brooke Franzluebbers: son Jordy Allan born 1/16/17

Kylie '10 & Brenn Kai: son Leo William born 2/24/17

WEDDINGS

Chelsee Leitow '08 & Jacob Hohenhaner: married on 12/3/16

Kirsten Klitz '11 & Logan Owens: married on 3/4/17

DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Harlan Buerman '44: date of death was 7/20/16

Terry Batenhorst '77: date of death was 7/23/16

Mollie (Grashorn) Minds '49: date of death was 8/6/16

Virginia (Ernestl) Leitzke '48: date of death was 8/31/16

Robert Neesen '67: date of death was 9/26/16

Rosa Lee Guenther '49: date of death was 11/6/16

Joseph Schlautman '52: date of death was 11/19/16

Arnold Fast: date of death was 11/26/16

Rita Mae (Roberts) Blankenau '54: date of death was 1/3/17

John Vonnahme: date of death was 1/25/17

Frank Ridder '68: date of death was 3/15/17

Juanita Shanahan McGonigal '36: date of death was 8/27/16

Angela Uhing Stander '37: date of death was 2/26/17

Patricia LannanPiccolo '47: date of death was 12/2/15

Jerry Mahlberg '49: date of death was 12/18/16

George Tingelhoff '56: date of death was 2/16/17

Kathleen Rickabaugh Ziska '57: date of death was 6/17/14

Robert Kappius '57: date of death was 3/18/17

Note: Announcements can be sent to ranaeobrien1@gmail.com

GACC girls capture D1 title

GACC's 20th consecutive trip to the girls state basketball tournament was a successful one as the Bluejays captured the Class D1 state championship. Their title came thanks to a 53-50 double overtime win over Dundy County-Stratton.

The GACC boys also had a successful trip as they earned a runner-up finish, also in D1. They fell to Lourdes CC 47-44 in their title game. More on both games, as well as the state wrestling tourney in February, will appear in the May 'News from the Nest.'

GACC celebrates Catholic Schools Week



Above: GACC students playing Bingo during CSW were Jayden Ehrisman and Matthew Onate. Left: GACC students make a CSW banner.

Photos courtesy of Sr. Elizabeth Benvie

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