



New principal all about the kids

The smile on her face tells it all. Paula Peatrowsky is awfully excited to be at Guardian Angels Central Catholic. She was hired as the school's new elementary principal.

Peatrowsky is thrilled to join the GACC staff and is eager to learn about the culture and traditions of the school. She's equally thrilled to work with teachers and build relationships with students.

As a mom, there's nothing Peatrowsky loves more than her kids. As an administrator in education, Peatrowsky wants to treat every kid like they are her own.

"The kids are what matter the most to me. I want to make sure we're doing everything we can to treat them like they are our own kids. I want to help them become the best they can be," Peatrowsky said.

"The whole reason I do what I do is for the kids. I want to give them the best opportunity possible."

Treating kids like her own comes down to showing students love and compassion every day, Peatrowsky noted. Being a positive influence is important as well.

"With everything you do, kids are learning from you. You have to set an example and be that role model for them," Peatrowsky said.

Peatrowsky has been a role model in education for many years now. She previously worked at Omaha Public Schools for 26 years. During that time, Peatrowsky spent the past 11 years as an elementary principal for OPS.

That experience will serve her well at GACC. High School Principal Kate Hagemann is excited to



Paula Peatrowsky was hired as the new elementary principal for Guardian Angels Central Catholic.

GACC School improves ceiling, lighting

A year ago, Guardian Angels Central Catholic School made some major renovations to the first floor of their high school building.

The work done in 2018 included removing asbestos, as well as installing a new ceiling and new lighting. This past summer, the same work was done to the high school's third floor.

Guardian Angels Central Catholic released a statement about their improvements saying, "new ceilings plus new lighting equals a better learning environment."

High school principal Kate Hagemann had this to say about the improvements:

"The new ceiling and new lighting have greatly improved the atmosphere of third floor and have improved the learning environment.

"It has a brighter and more inviting appearance for both the students and staff. We greatly appreciate all of the people who donate their time and talent to the projects, along with those who help contribute financially."

Hagemann added that the plan is to complete the second floor of Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School during the summer of 2020.

To see actual photos of the school improvements, turn to page 6.

Emails Wanted:

Please send your current email address to ranaebrien1@gmail.com to receive our online edition of "News from the Nest" throughout the year.

NEW PRINCIPAL: GACC School

FROM PAGE 1

see that experience in action.

"First of all, I'm super excited because we got one of the best people possible to fit this position," Hagemann said.

"I'm really excited about the passion that she brings, the ideas that she brings and the experience that she brings. She is going to make me a better leader and a better principal."

GACC hasn't had its own elementary principal since the 2009-10 school year. So with Peatrowsky coming aboard, she will provide a beneficial boost to the school, Hagemann added.

Peatrowsky and Hagemann both said that the teamwork approach will be a key part to what they do as the school moves forward. Hagemann likes the direction GACC is heading. Adding Peatrowsky to the staff will only make it better.

"Paula being here is going to mean great things for the students, staff and families of GACC School," Hagemann said. "What we have right now is really good, but we want to make GACC great. I think with Paula and I working as a team, we can do that together."

A vital part of that 'teamwork' will be teachers and staff members at GACC. For Peatrowsky, developing a strong relationship with teachers is what builds the foundation to a solid education.

"Being a support to teachers is definitely a passion of mine," Peatrowsky said. "When teachers are supported and taken care of, great things will happen in the classroom. Great things will happen for the kids."

Peatrowsky said one of her first goals of the job is getting to know people. She wants to build relationships with students, staff and families, both in the school and the community.

West Point itself was a big draw for taking this job. Peat-

rowsky grew up on a farm in a small town (Cedar Bluffs).

As for her husband, Alan Peatrowsky, West Point is his hometown. He was a 1995 graduate of WPCC, and will now commute to Omaha where he works as a police officer. The couple has two daughters, Cassie (age 14) and Joelle (age 11).

"This was just a perfect fit for us," Peatrowsky said. "We wanted to raise our girls in a small town. Having a faith-based education was important to us too."

Both Paula and Alan have family in West Point, which added the draw of coming here.

And while Omaha to West Point will be a change, it's one that Peatrowsky is excited about, especially professionally.

"I'm super excited about working in a smaller school. I really feel like you can accomplish more in a smaller setting," she said.

With that small-school setting, Peatrowsky said in her short time here, she's already witnessed a willingness to work together from the GACC staff.

"I've noticed how flexible everyone is; how willing they are to step up and do things," Peatrowsky said. "It's just a common theme with everyone here. Everyone is a team player."

Another theme with being at GACC is a faith-based education. Being able to pray in school and helping students grow spiritually will be a huge plus to working at the school, Peatrowsky said.

Growing up, Peatrowsky was always around kids, whether it was baby sitting or teaching Sunday school, she enjoyed time with youth. So for her, there's no better feeling than helping students grow and evolve, not only in the classroom but as individuals.

Being able to fulfill her passion in a community like West Point is a perfect fit for Peatrowsky.

Father Matt excited to call West Point home

Father Matt Niggemeyer arrived in West Point over the summer, and already, he can tell there is something special about this community.

For Niggemeyer, it's the people that make West Point so special, and the reason why he is excited to call West Point his new home.

"I love West Point. I've been really impressed by the sense of community here," he said. "There's not only a dedication to the church, but to the faith as a whole. I really admire that.

"As a priest, it's always wonderful to engage with people of faith and just walk with them in that faith. You can tell that West Point is really a caring and tight-knit community."

Niggemeyer came to West Point July 1, which was his first day as Associate Pastor of St. Mary's Parish in West Point. He will join pastor of the church, Father Steve Emanuel.

Niggemeyer, who is excited about building relationships with members of the community, said the same is true with Emanuel. "There is a lot of excitement being able to work with him," he added.

"Father Steve has been great. Honestly, he's one of the best, if not the best, I've ever had the chance to work with," Niggemeyer said. "I have nothing but good things to say about him."

In addition to being Associate Pastor, Niggemeyer will focus on Hispanic ministry in West Point, which he did at his former parish, Holy Name in Omaha. Father Matt was also the chaplain at Roncalli Catholic High School the past two years.

Starting in August, Niggemeyer will be active with Guardian Angels Central Catholic School. He will teach sophomore and junior Theology as well as 8th grade Spanish.

Niggemeyer won't be far from his childhood home, Omaha. He was a 2007 graduate of Burke High School, and it was during his



Father Matt Niggemeyer took the role as Associate Pastor at St. Mary's Parish in West Point. He will also teach at GACC School.

time in high school that he first heard, and accepted, God's call to become a priest. The summer after his junior year in high school is when Father Matt first knew he had received 'the call.'

"It took me a couple of weeks to accept it instead of fighting with the Lord. I kept going to the Adoration Chapel to pray. I would say 'Lord, I have a better idea, but He kind of won that discussion,'" Niggemeyer said with a chuckle.

"What made the decision easier for me was the example of good priests," Niggemeyer said. "I had the privilege of being surrounded by a lot of good priests."

After accepting the call, Niggemeyer attended Conception Seminary College in Missouri. He also went to North American College in

Rome, and was ordained a priest in 2015.

His first assignment was at Sacred Heart in Norfolk.

Father Matt said he loves being able to share his faith with people. One of his favorite things about being a priest is hearing confessions and being able to heal hearts.

"The neat thing is that in the confessional, I get to see Christ walking into someone's pain and brokenness, and bringing them freedom," Niggemeyer said.

In his leisure time, Father Matt likes to fish, read lots of books and spend time with fellow priest friends.

"I'm just excited to get to know the people of this community and share my faith with them," Niggemeyer said.

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity celebrate 150 years

By Delores Meister

Everyone has been touched by the silent services of the Sisters practicing the spirit of St. Francis for the past 134 years. They have been present to school children, the sick, the elderly, the homeless, to whomever had a need.

When the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of their group five hundred miles away, the West Point area could celebrate with them.

From birth in St. Francis Hospital, to health care at the medical center, to inpatient and outpatient health care to hospice care and final breath the spirit of St. Francis is here through the deeds of these dedicated and consecrated women.

This women's community had its origins in Wisconsin 150 years ago. The religious order of Catholic Sisters trace their beginnings to five women in a small commu-

nity in rural Wisconsin 150 years ago four years after the end of the Civil War and four years after Nebraska became a state.

They were teachers who chose to follow the Gospel way of St. Francis of poverty and simplicity. Through the love of God they adopted the Franciscan spirituality of love, care and respect for life at all stages from natural birth to natural death. It is the acceptance of all nationalities and all economic groups.

Education wise, it was a time when eighth grade graduates could become teachers. While the Sisters spent time studying the ways of St. Francis along with their emphasis was on teacher knowledge and teacher training.

Through the years the Sisters' focus has always been "better teachers, better schools." Other young women knocked on the



NEW FACULTY

Ashley Prinz was hired at GACC School as a new 1st grade teacher. She has three children, two boys and a girl, and is married to Jason Prinz. Jason is a 2003 graduate of Central Catholic High School.

See **150 YEARS**, Page 5

Students, teachers return to class

**GACC
PRINCIPAL**



**Kate
Hagemann**

The 2019-2020 school year is off to a great start. The energy provided by having the students back in the buildings is awesome. As educators we love the start of the year.

This summer we were able to complete many improvement projects around campus. The third floor of the high school was the biggest improvements. We completed the asbestos abatement, new ceiling, and new lighting right in time for school to start.

The changes greatly improved the learning

environment for our staff and students. Each of our elementary classrooms received a new Smartboard as well.

The students and staff are excited to learn all of the educational capabilities of these new boards. Both of these projects were possible because of the generosity of people like you. We greatly appreciate your continued commitment to providing our students with a high quality, faith based education.

Visitors are always welcome in our schools. Do not

hesitate to stop by any of the buildings on any day. We would love to give you a tour.

This year Homecoming is the week of September 30-October 4. The Homecoming Mass and tailgate will be Wednesday, October 2. Mass will start at 6:00 with the tailgate to follow. All are invited to attend. Homecoming football game is October 4 at 6 p.m.

Thank you for continued support of Guardian Angels Central Catholic. It's always a great day to be a Bluejay!

150 YEARS: Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

FROM PAGE 4

door to join them.

The Sisters' purpose was the education of the growing youth without any exception of religion or nationality so that not only Catholic children but also children of all religions and nationalities may have their chance.

While the Sisters were organizing at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, in Gierboldehausen, Germany another small community of Franciscan Sisters organized and were teaching in Catholic schools when Otto von Bismarck, the Imperial Chancellor of the new German Empire in 1871 issued Kulturkampf (conflict of cultures).

The May laws of 1874 confiscated all German Catholic Church property and closed Catholic schools expelling the Sisters who now had nowhere to go. They were forced to leave Germany, and looking for a new home in America, and the Franciscan Sisters at Silver Lake graciously offered the Sisters a home with them.

The exiled Gierboldehausen Sisters were accepted into joining the Wisconsin order in 1876 when the two communities decided to amalgamate.

The convent building was inadequate, a new wing to the convent was constructed in 1878 to be destroyed by a lightning storm in 1881. The motherhouse convent was rebuilt.

Four years later in 1885 in West Point Father Joseph Ruesing requested Sisters to teach the German speaking children of the pioneer emigrants at the opening of Guardian Angels School in West Point.

Three teaching Sisters and one Sister housekeeper arrived by train to open March 5, 1885. The first Catholic school in Nebraska where boys and girls were taught together. Ninety students were enrolled and the continued presence of Sisters in our schools remains to this day 134 years later.

Because of horse transportation many farm children stayed at the school during the week, so the Sisters cared for the boarders at the "boarders house," which was the third floor of the school building.

In the 1900's as society changed, teaching methods from conservative clinging to drill in fundamentals to new progressive methods were introduced. As society was moving from rural to industrialized cities, educating the Sister teachers took on new challenges.

Better teachers, better schools were always the focus. Advanced degrees, summer schools, always working to acquire new teaching skills and more subject knowledge to pass on to their students were lifelong commitments of the Sisters.

Teacher preparation was a pressing need and all teaching Sisters made every effort to meet and even surpass public regulations for state certification to earn higher degrees.

By 1900, one million children in the United States were being educated without financial aid from the state.

World War I in 1917-18 was difficult for those of German ancestry with families in Europe. German language was no longer used in prayers and school.

The present Guardian Angels building with the high school was built and opened in September, 1918. At Guardian Angels for several decades there was a Sister in every elementary and high school classroom.

The present Central Catholic corporation and building materialized in 1962. But education was only a part of life.

• In 1923-24 construction of a 22 bed hospital annex with an operating room and nursery was added as a south front wing to St. Joseph's Home. Fr. Ruesing asked the Sisters to staff the hospital.

The Sisters came with service to others in a spirit of Christian charity through the apostolic works of

the community meeting the needs of the community again during changing times.

Around 1944 people of the area recognized the first floor of St. Joseph Home developed in 1922 for use of hospital services, was not adequate for the growing population of the county. With the leadership of the local physician Dr. W. C. Anderson, a committee was formed to raise funds for a separate building if the Franciscan Sisters would own and staff it.

With the permission of the Bishops of Green Bay and Omaha hospital construction began. The 75-bed West Point Memorial Hospital was dedicated in 1950. The name was later changed to St. Francis Memorial Hospital.

In 1959, 50 Sisters were in West Point with 14 Sisters at St. Joes, 18 Sisters at Memorial Hospital and 18 Sisters at Guardian Angels School.

The century-old mission statement at the hospital continues: "The Mission of St. Franciscan Care Services Inc. is to live and to promote the healing mission of Jesus Christ by exercising Christian responsibility of the health of our community."

Dinklage Medical Clinic was added in 1998. Wimmer Wellness was built later and hospice services were provided. Extensive building updating was done in recent years.

Today the entities are under the umbrella of Franciscan Care Services.

• In 2019, Franciscan Sisters go where they can best serve carrying on the work of elevating the poor and unfortunate.

While great problems must be met and solved with justice to all realizing the safeguard of peace is social justice, which brings contented people.

West Point businesses owners, workers, farmers and their wives up and down West Point's Main Street, have been taught to practice the Franciscan spirit as our community thrives.

Alumni Scholarships Available

Dinklage Foundation continues their commitment to Cuming County, education

The Louis and Abby Faye Dinklage Foundation of Wisner will make available a number of \$1000 scholarships for alumni of Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School who are full-time college students.

An application form is required for this scholarship even if you have received it in previous years. These scholarships may be applied to vocational training programs or a bachelor degree program where you are enrolled full-time.

They are not applicable for second bachelor degree or master degree programs. Also, if you have received four previous awards, you are no longer eligible.

Some of you may have given transcripts for last Spring. The

school counseling office needs transcripts or proof you will successfully complete the Fall 2019 semester and proof of enrollment for the Spring of 2020.

Additionally, if you are a non-traditional student and working on your first degree, you may be eligible for an alumni scholarship.

If you have just started post-secondary education and do not have a transcript yet, please provide current grades for the fall semester and proof of enrollment for the Spring Semester 2020, or a copy of your Spring Semester Schedule for 2020.

Application forms are available at the high school counselor's offices or on the school websites under the tab School Counselor and then

the tab Alumni Scholarship.

The completed application form must be submitted to the school counselor's office on or before December 6.

You must provide proof of successfully passing courses for the fall from your college/university and proof of enrollment for the Spring Semester or your Spring Semester Schedule.

Scholarship funds will be distributed in January/February upon verification of successful completion of fall semester and enrollment of the upcoming spring semester.

Anyone desiring further information may contact Leslie Kreike-meier, School Counselor (402-372-5326).

Updated look at GACC:



GACC VB holds alumni night

The Bluejay volleyball program held an alumni night on September 12. All former players were invited to attend GACC's match against Boone Central.

Approximately 70 former players attended. GACC head coach Kate Hagemann said that created for a very special night and a terrific atmosphere for volleyball.

All former players who attended received a free T-shirt and special recognition during the match. Hagemann thanked all the former players for their continued support.

Bluejay volleyball began its program in 1971. Since then, GACC has won four state titles and three-runner-up finishes.

BIRTHS

Ben '11 & Julia Eilerts: daughter Emma Jean born 6/11/19

Emily (Steffen) '11 & Jack Arterburn: son Quentin Joseph born on 7/10/19

Mackenzie (Einfalt) '12 & Tyler Eisenmann: son Jayce Tyler born 7/23/19

WEDDINGS

Jordan Hagedorn '13 & Cotey Hanson: married on 6/22/19

Makenna Kreikemeier '14 & Austin Weborg: married on 6/22/19

Gabrielle Knobbe '14 & Kyle Lindhorst: married on 6/29/19

Christy Fast '02 & Tim Lens: married on 7/6/19

Amanda Oligmueller '09 & Eric Benzel: married on 7/20/19

Kendra Hagedorn '07 & Kane Fry: married on 8/3/19

Bradee Rief '12 & Travis Schiefelbein: married on 8/17/19

Melanie Stratmann '14 & Derek Aschoff: married on 8/31/19

Austin Kreikemeier '12 & Christina Ross: married on 8/31/19

DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Agnes (Lueckenhoff) Schlecht '45: Date of death 5/31/19

Philip Ernesti '84: Date of death 7/2/19

Gerald Reiman '59: Date of death 7/4/19

Leroy Schuetze '63: Date of death 7/14/19

Dolores (Ulrich) Emanuel '41: Date of death 7/27/19

Geraldine (Vyborny) Oeser '50: Date of death 7/30/19

Mary Ann (Andres) Dembowski '49: Date of death 8/5/19

Bernice (Hunke) Johnson '48: Date of death 8/8/19

Sr. Judanne Stratman '56: Date of death 8/14/19

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

Alumni asked to update their info on GACC website

The Guardian Angels Central Catholic website created a link for alumni. The 'Alumni' link can be found under the 'Supporters' tab. There, alumni can update their contact info.

That link is: <http://www.gaccbluejays.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Supporters%7CAlumni>. In the near future, the website will also feature an alumni directory and pictures.



Bluejays excited for new season

A new fall sports season is underway, and GACC athletes are excited about the new year. Among Bluejay athletes competing this fall were three seniors: Hanna Knobbe, Casey Doernemann and Marissa Hunke. They were featured on the front cover of the West Point News' 2019 fall sports tab.

Development Office
419 E. Decatur St.
West Point, NE 68788

Non-Profit Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
West Point, Nebraska

Permit No. 97



Guardian Angels Central Catholic

419 E. Decatur
West Point, NE 68788

402.372.5326 (High School)
402.372.5328 (Grade School)

