

THE FULL CURL



Monroe Catholic

Announcements

- The athletics department at Monroe is selling Christmas Wreaths. Last year we sold over 600 wreaths. Currently, we have sold just over 300. I've told Mr. Siddall he needs to hit 450 in his first year or we need to start looking for his replacement. Please consider buying a wreath and helping Abe stay employed!

Kudos

- A big thank you to Megan and Chris Bunch for their willingness to move our three sheds, so we can have space for the new garage that will house our Sprinter Van.
- A big thanks to Ella Coxon and Grace White for agreeing to join me for the 2nd Full Curl Podcast.
- A big thanks to all those who have said "Yes" to helping us gather content highlighting the wonder of our school and the accomplishments of our students and alumni.



Dear Parents:

Welcome to edition number seven of The Full Curl. *Don't forget to buy your Christmas wreath, or several for all of those who may work in your office. **Today is the last day to purchase a wreath!** Buying a Christmas wreath for a co-worker is a great way to say thank you, or simply Merry Christmas.*

I suspect all of us have something we have wanted to make happen as professionals in whatever career we have pursued. I can't speak to other professions, but as an athletics director at a private school, I know for me, it was the desire to have two vans as transportation for our athletics teams AND other various student activities, such as student government or the Academic Decathlon (ACADECA) team. For the better part of the last seven years, the idea of having two vans was my personal White Whale.

Of course, I was biased in the matter. Having lived that job, I personally knew the struggle of finding rental vans. At first glance one might think it would seem easy. You make a call, get two vehicles, and you're all set. Ha, I wish. It seemed like you always had to make seven calls, and the price always seemed to go up. For some reason, it seemed like over time it was easier to find a full curl ram on top of a mountain than a 12 or 15-passenger van that was available at the times we needed it. Finding vans became so

School Needs

- **We could use about 1 million Alaska Airline miles** to help with a variety of travel needs at the school. The miles would help with HIPOW packages, but also help possibly provide an opportunity for our students to travel for school related items, such as faith-based Jesuit Retreats.
- **PTO would love to have more folks who are interested joining their organization.** Info on how to join is in this week's column if you are interested.
- **Mrs. Wallace is always looking for quality substitute teachers.** Please notify her if you are interested.

challenging I honestly looked into starting a business and renting them myself.

I knew securing the vans would be a huge boon to the school. In fact, there would be three victories to acquiring the vans. First, the athletics director would not have to spend time trying to find them. This would be more time Abe could spend trying to sell Christmas Wreaths. Second, we would save roughly \$8,000-\$10,000 a year, depending on the year, by not renting vehicles. Third, we would get those vans logoed up and everyone would see the FAMILY logo and the big Ram head when we traveled. Every time we crossed town, someone would see that van and our logos. I looked at it as free advertising.

Yes, there was definitely the matter of having to raise the money. I fully understand the mentality, especially when we were in the darkest of financial times, of wanting to raise money for the necessity of heating the building as opposed to spending money on what could be construed a luxury item. This makes sense and while I never liked not being able to pursue the vans, I'm a good soldier and continued to go about my job as best I could.

Upon being named director of schools, one thought kept coming back to me: How do I make these vans a reality? How do I catch my White Whale? One of the first things you do when you take on a role such as director of a school is share your vision and dreams. Sometimes, when doing so, it turns out the person you were telling those dreams and visions to might just have the ability to help you. Well, this is exactly what happened to me. Through one of these conversations with a member of our community, I was told there might be a donor who would be willing to help us.

I'm not going to fib. I started to get a little excited. I checked in with the diocese to make sure there were no hold-ups on their end, related to insurance or anything else I may have over-looked. I got the green light and called my contact to let her know Operation Sprinter Van was a go.

Over the next six or seven weeks, I learned the donor was Dennis and Mary Wise. Dennis, with the love and support of his wife, has had his hand in countless acts of kindness throughout our community. I've never met Dennis, but I have heard from enough people to know this is an extraordinarily generous human being who not only has the means to help others, but does so often. My contact played the role of intermediary and kept me in the loop with a text here, or a word when I saw her, there. Over the course of my experiences as a coach or athletics director, I've learned to temper expectations. I try not to get too excited about things such as these. The reasoning is sound — if you don't get too excited, you can't feel too disappointed when whatever you are hoping for doesn't happen.

Days went by and then it started to seem more and more like this was actually going to happen. Then my contact called to let me know the donor had a stipulation — we needed to be able to store the van

MCHS Sports Trivia

TRIVIA QUESTION:

This week the Jr. high basketball team will head to Valdez. 16 years ago we took our first Jr. high basketball trip. Tell me where we went and what communities we played in, along with how we traveled down and back.

RULES

To win the trivia contest, you must give me the answer IN PERSON. Emails, texts and phone calls will not suffice! Remember, only one guess per household. The first person to correctly answer the trivia question will win an MCHS T-shirt.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

The three current staff members who came on board at Monroe in 2008 were Mrs. Krause, Mr. Riggs and myself

SMALL PRINT

The spouse of the Director of Athletics, parents and STAFF who work directly inside CSF are not eligible for participation in The Full Curl trivia competition for 24 hours after the emailing of The Full Curl.

inside, to ensure it was out of the cold and elements. This made sense. I mean, if you are going to spend \$90K on a vehicle, you should be able to expect it be well taken care of. Unfortunately, we do not have a garage here at the school. One thing I have learned about this job, just when you are about to celebrate, you often find another challenge around the corner. However, another thing I learned about this Community, is no challenge is insurmountable.

Over the next week, as conversations regarding the van continued, I looked into options for a garage. I envisioned us paying for supplies and finding folks in our Community who could help us raise the building over a short amount of time, maybe in the spring or summer. Ultimately, I was told materials would still run us around the \$100K mark. Spending \$100K to house a \$90K vehicle seemed like a marginal victory at best. Then I spoke to Peter Garcia, who's son, Isaac, played basketball here at Monroe. Pete works at Alaska Dreams Inc., which is owned by Meini and Annmarie Huser. Alaska Dreams Inc. is a company specializing in building metal structures across Alaska. I told Peter about the van and we made a date for him to come over and look at our property to see if they could put something up that would be able to ultimately house two vans.

Peter made it over the Friday before HIPOW. We walked around the back with his younger son Josh, a fifth grader here at ICS. Josh was integral to the operation, as he helped his dad work the tape measure. We looked at a couple of options. Peter showed me some pictures of a building he could put up. The building looked ideal and we had the space for it. Peter handed me the papers and said, "I have spoken to Meini and Annmarie. We'll take care of it." I paused for a moment and responded, "Pete, I hate to ask you this, but I've learned in this job I need ask, when you say take care of it, you mean we buy it and you'll put it up?" To which Peter replied, "We'll take care of it."

It's hard to express my feelings in that moment. Truly, I felt like crying. The generosity of so many people was almost overwhelming. I walked into the office, which as you might imagine was already abuzz with HIPOW a day away and told them what had just transpired. Let's just say it was a wonderful way to start the weekend of HIPOW.

I started to believe this was really going to happen. I found myself daydreaming about this van. Then it happened. I received a text saying Mr. Wise was going to give me a call. I remember waiting in my office several years ago, waiting for Brad Stevens, then the Celtics head coach, to call so I could discuss some thoughts he had shared during a basketball clinic while he was the head coach at Butler, to help me with my thesis as I was working toward my master's degree. I remember waiting by the phone, nervous, my heart pounding. That experience paled in comparison to my waiting by the phone for Mr. Wise to call.

The phone rang and I answered, trying to calm my voice. Mr. Wise introduced himself and could not have been nicer. He let me know a deal had just fallen through, but then he secured a different van at a

different dealership that he felt would actually be better. I just tried to be as polite and grateful as I could, while dancing in the HIPOW storage area, and hoping nobody was watching.

The van was purchased and a driver was found by Mr. Wise to drive the vehicle from Phoenix, where it was purchased, to Fairbanks. About ten days ago, I got the call and drove over to check out the new vehicle. The van was covered with dirt, the tell-tale sign of a vehicle that had been driven four thousand miles and on the Alaska Highway. My White Whale sat before me and despite the dirt, it was one of the most beautiful sights I had seen. I opened the doors and she became even more beautiful. Heated seats, Bluetooth and enough storage in the back to handle a fair portion of a team's luggage. I could not stop smiling.

Befitting the generosity of Mr. Wise, the vehicle was kept for a few days, to ensure it could be detailed before given to the school. I saw our mutual friend at the school on the second day of parent-teacher conferences and she asked me if I would like to drive over with her to pick it up. Of course I said yes. The van looked amazing. I could see my reflection in the door of the van. I drove it back to the school as if I had 32 dozen eggs in the back. I pulled up along the HIPOW doors and called Lynne Puryear. I asked her to grab Patty Walter and come outside. Lynne turned the corner and gasped, while looking back at Patty and telling her to hurry so she could see what I was driving. Both were beyond thrilled and shared in the joy of our great fortune.

The good folks at Simard Automotive gave us a great deal on some new studded winter tires and the winterization of the vehicle. We still have to have the van "wrapped" by the folks at Auto Trim Design, but we are hoping that will happen in the next week. Soon, you will see the nicest van in town being driven and have no doubt which school it belongs to.

There is great joy in seeing an idea come to fruition, especially when the idea takes the generosity, and kindness of others to help make it possible. There are so many people within our Community who made this happen, and I am grateful to them all. The splendor of this place is the understanding that we continue to shape and mold young people, from the time they get here, whether it be in pre-K, fifth grade, or as a freshman, and turn them into extraordinary adults who will someday make the community they live in better — following the example of so many who made this van possible. It brings great joy to my heart to know every year we graduate a group of seniors who may one day do something such as this for their community.

Now I just need to figure out how to get the second van.