

THE FULL CURL



Monroe Catholic Schools

Announcements

- **The Alumni Picnic is set for Friday, June 21st.**
- **The 1st Annual Monroe Catholic Alumni Golf Scramble will also be held on June 21st. All info can be found here: <https://www.catholic-schools.org/golfscramble.html>**
- **There is still room in the basketball clinics being held this summer, including the first camp which starts this coming Tuesday. Please contact Coach O at 907-322-9043 if you are interested in signing up your child.**

Kudos

- A BIG thank you to **Christina Woodward** for taking on the President position for PTO, to **Kayla Mailloux** for taking on the Vice President position, to **Natalie Kuelker** for taking on Treasurer and to **Elissa Kenna** for continuing on as Secretary!



Dear Parents:

I wore shorts to work today, which can only mean one thing – we made it through the school year and summer is upon us. I thoroughly enjoyed my first year, which was full of challenges and successes and opportunities to improve. In the end, what makes any experience worthwhile is the people you connect with along the way. It's the people with whom you build relationships and community. Nobody builds an environment that values family and community as well as Monroe.

I would like to round out the school year with an update on our status. A "State of Monroe," address, if you will.

Coming into this job, I felt our biggest challenge was increasing enrollment. Financially speaking, enrollment is what makes the difference regarding our budget; it is tuition that funds our programs, pays our staff, and provides for repairs and upgrades. However, the impact of enrollment goes deeper than these items. Enrollment impacts the number of athletic programs we can have and the overall vibrancy of those programs. This goes beyond athletics and

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.

includes our Academic Decathlon teams, Student Council and any other clubs, retreats or extracurricular activities our students participate in.

For reference, we started the school year with 340 students (174 ICS, 166 Monroe). We ended the school year with 329 (168, ICS, 161 Monroe). My goal for next year is to see us with 350 students to start the school year and by the start of the 2025 school year, I 'd like to see us at 375.

We know the focus must be on elementary enrollment. A growth of elementary students will ultimately help grow our high school. That is where we need to focus. We continuously strive to communicate to the greater community how special our school is. I believe with every fiber of my being, that there is no place a child can go to school where they will be loved and known at the level they are here at Monroe. By the time a third grader gets to Ms. Ward's class, I promise you she doesn't just know of that child, she KNOWS that child. She knows what makes that child special and how to help that child reach their potential, both as a student, and as a person. The value of this cannot be overstated. Nobody does this better than we do.

The growth of the elementary coincides with the hiring of a new principal. Mrs. Parrish will leave behind a huge hole to fill. Change is hard, but I love new beginnings. I am optimistic that we will be able to communicate the level of excellence a child receives in our elementary and how they will continue to grow through our junior high and high school. I envision two kindergartens—in fact with twenty-three current kindergarteners—we are closer than ever to making that dream happen. I would love to hire more elementary teachers!

To help us grow enrollment, I looked for ways to grow our presence in the community. We contracted with Lifted Marketing, a local company who began helping us better market our school, students, staff, alumni, and entire community within the greater Fairbanks area. We have learned a great deal through this process. It is challenging to quantify the impact of our efforts with social media, but I do believe it has been impactful and I believe we are just scratching the surface regarding how impactful it can be. I am excited that with the help of Lifted Marketing, we have

MCHS Sports Trivia

TRIVIA QUESTION:

There is No trivia question for this edition.

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

No question last week.

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.

been provided a road map that will allow us to conduct the marketing of our school through social media, on site, and with our own staff. With this structure in place, we will continue to communicate who we are as a school and as a community and what makes us so special. It will only get better as we spread our message to more people.

There is more to enrollment than growing our brand locally through social media. We need to look at all options. We are planning a Carnival in the fall. I want to explore hosting an Open House. We need to get parents and children in the building to see who we are and what makes our community both unique and beautiful. It's always easier to do nothing. That's not my way. We need to look to do more and not just more for the sake of it, but MORE BETTER. I want more people to walk in the door and see Mrs. Wallace's smile. I want more people to experience the energy of an educator like Mrs. Keill. I want more people to feel the love and care Mrs. Kenna brings to the kindergarten class and Mrs. Wood to her 6th grade class. I want more students to know about, and participate in, Ms. Ward's Space Club and German Club.

When it comes to enrollment, and I said this over and over when I got the job, nobody is more impactful than our students and our parents. I am hopeful each of you will continue to be advocates for our school and share the wonder of this place with anyone who might be interested. Your help in this process is critical. If you have any concerns, please contact me. I tell my players all the time, be someone who wants to know the truth. If there is something we can do better, I want to know.

As Director, there was no shortage of aspects to the job I knew nothing about. I had never been a part of a board or been responsible for preparing for board meetings. While I can think of plenty of things that might be more enjoyable to do on a Wednesday night once a month, our board meetings have been something I look forward to. The people who comprise this group are amazing and genuinely care about our school. Working with them has been joyful and the knowledge I have gained has been enlightening. I love that this group is over the top supportive and at the same time willing to disagree with me and explain why I am wrong. They are always focused on leading us in the right direction. I want to thank these folks for welcoming me and

supporting me through this first year.

I had no idea what we needed to do to move our school and foundation forward. However, it became clear we needed to have a CFO on site, someone I could talk with and share ideas. It also became clear we had to find an HR director – something we had never had in my 16 years here. All of this needed to be accomplished while finding someone to replace our Master of Technology, Matt Gray. I am happy to report these positions are filled and we are moving in a great direction.

Staffing is always a challenge and right now it is the biggest issue we have on the school side. We need an elementary principal, an elementary counselor, and at least three teachers on the high school side. I don't think my team would win many games if we were playing with four players and everyone else had five on the court. We need to be fully staffed and we need to find the right people. We need to find folks who are outstanding in their field, who also believe in our mission, are faith-filled, and energetic.

The other half of my title is President of the Monroe Foundation. I don't know how much I actually knew about running a school, but I can tell you I knew even less about running a Foundation. Fortunately, just as is the case with the school, we have incredible people responsible for running the Foundation. The HIPOW ladies are amazing. This year they will raise somewhere north of 1.5 million dollars, all of which supports our school and mission.

The Foundation is an extraordinary organization, responsible for organizing the biggest fundraiser in Fairbanks, HIPOW. Beyond the event of our annual dinner and auction, the Foundation runs and manages fundraisers throughout the year. These ladies never get a break. Speaking of HIPOW, we broke records, despite an inadequate sound system that made our Fund-the-Vision live portion extremely challenging. These learning experiences will provide a means to make HIPOW even better this year.

Amanda's hiring of Patty Walter is at the top of the list of the many great decisions she made. Walking into Patty's office daily is one of the highlights of my job. Her knowledge and ideas—with the help of the foundation staff—have moved us forward; I am excited to see what the future will bring. This year we reorganized the Foundation. No longer does everyone work directly for me. We have a clearly defined organizational chart that allows for greater autonomy and communication. I am hopeful this will continue to help us evolve and grow as a Foundation and improve our already highly successful fundraising efforts. I am very excited about the direction we are heading.

The ladies in the Foundation helped me tackle one of my greatest challenges, teacher salaries. Our Spring Fundraiser just crossed the \$160K mark yesterday and if we get to \$170K I feel like we will be able to sustain the 4% raise increase given to our teachers. This fundraiser and the support of the Foundation has helped us send a message to the greater Fairbanks community. That message is this: During a time of financial struggle for many, our teachers are being given much deserved raises. It's our teachers – the lifeblood of our school - who will continue to strengthen who we are by providing an exemplary educational experience. I am proud of this message, and I am grateful to the staff in the Foundation for their help in making it happen.

The school year has been filled with amazing moments for me, personally. I will never get used to someone handing me a \$25K check in support of our teachers. The feeling of making a phone call to share news of your latest fundraiser and then listening as they tell you they will donate \$20K or \$10K is a feeling I cannot explain. The admiration I have for this school and this community, and the love and support shown by those who are a part of it makes me smile every day.

There were too many moments of joy to write about, but there are a few that really stand out. Seeing, for the first time, the van donated by Dennis and Mary Wise will be something I will never forget. Our victory over West Anchorage in the first round of state and then going toe to toe with East Anchorage were special moments. When I recall our St. Patrick's Day Raffle and Dinner, and the folks who showed to be a part of the event, (an event we were not able to hold since 2019 due to Covid) I smile. Every morning, I greet our students at the front door. That encounter with our students provides me the warmth and energy to get through the day and to tackle it with enthusiasm.

As I mentioned, there were challenges and opportunities. I intend to make sure we have more vegetables at next year's staff Christmas party. I need to create a more detailed organizational chart for the school and don't get me started on getting the sound system installed. There were bigger trials that I don't need to elaborate on, but as I tell my players, all experiences are worthwhile if you learn from them. I can tell you, my education has been steep but rewarding. Just like our students, I learn something new every day. This year has been special and more than anything, what I have learned is what I already knew...

There is no place like Monroe.

With Grace, Faith and Passion,

Frank Ostanik
Director of Schools
CSF