Character Counts

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

Quality education is the cornerstone of Holy Family. We often share good news with you about the highly successful academic outcomes of our students, based on a rigorous curriculum and skillful, focused teaching.

Along with academic achievement, there is a growing acknowledgment that character counts as much as, if not more than, academic success. Essential character strengths are the best predictors of a successful life. The research is riveting, and the impact for our children is profound.

Nationwide, educators have invested millions of dollars and a decade or more focused on improving basic skills and using data to measure outcomes, and yet U.S. student achievement remains flat.

Researchers Dr. Martin Seligman and Dr. Chris Peterson define character as abilities and skills that you can learn and practice. This means that character strengths can be taught! If character is not fixed or innate, then everyone has an opportunity to determine their future life experience, by learning and practicing essential character strengths.

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Researcher and professor Dr. Angela Duckworth has long studied the effects of **self-discipline**, one of the essential character strengths. Her work shows that scores derived from a September measure of self-discipline were better predictors of students’ year-end grade-point averages than their IQ scores.

**Grit** is another of the researchers’ essential character strengths- a combination of perseverance and resilience that creates a commitment to achieve, despite any obstacles. A twelve point Grit Scale measures such things as: do new ideas distract me from previous ones; do I finish what I begin; setbacks don’t discourage me. High Grit Scale scores predicted better than West Point’s own evaluation system which new students would survive first round training!

“**Learning is hard...often daunting, exhausting and sometimes discouraging...To help chronically low-performing but intelligent students, educators and parents must first recognize that character is at least as important as is intellect.**”

—Angela Duckworth

Character counts, and for the young “Go-Getters” enrolled in Holy Family programs, these essential strengths are emphasized from the youngest learners to the oldest students. Stories from our alumni provide strong testimony. Through intentional teaching of character strengths, children are inspired to find successful pathways to faith, family, and careers.

Did you know ... where our students live?

The majority of students reside in Chicago’s West Side communities of Austin, East and West Garfield Park, North Lawndale, and West Humboldt Park, all among Chicago’s lowest-income neighborhoods. These neighborhoods struggle to address a crime rate of double Chicago’s city-wide average, where drug abuse is five times more prevalent and homicides occur three times more often. Because of you, Holy Family is making a difference to the children and families living in these neighborhoods.

Come visit and see for yourself essential character strengths in action at Holy Family! You will be greeted when you arrive by a child who is thankful for your visit and who shows appreciation for the opportunity to attend school. This is **gratitude** at its best...and we feel the same about you and the many friends and donors who are a part of our family. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Susan Work, Ph.D.
President

“**The character strengths that matter so much to young people's success are not innate...They are rooted in brain chemistry; and they are molded, in measurable and predictable ways, by the environment in which children grow up... Society as a whole can do an enormous amount to influence their development in children.**”

—Paul Tough, How Children Succeed
Holy Family Makes the Grade
We are excited to announce 2013 challenge grant awards

Our friends at the Kemper Educational and Charitable Fund have awarded Holy Family a $25,000 Challenge Grant with a dollar for dollar match for all NEW and INCREASED individual contributions in 2013. If you are giving for the first time, your entire gift will be doubled in value and if you are a current donor, any donation above your 2012 donation will be doubled in value, up to a total of $25,000. We are grateful for this significant support.

We have been awarded another challenge grant in the amount of $10,000 from an anonymous foundation. Their gift will help support our new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiative with a dollar for dollar match. Select donations will be eligible to help us meet this challenge.

Chapel Builds Character
If you’ve ever made a visit to Holy Family School, chances are you have had the opportunity to share in the unique weekly chapel experience. Led by Chaplain Leslie Hunter and Principal Cheryl Collins, chapel is more than just a lively mid-week break, with the chance to sing and get moving to tunes like “Lean on Me” and “Father Abraham.” Chapel services are at the heart of Holy Family, bringing out what is best in each student and focusing on building essential character strengths, and the “fruits of the spirit.”

The goal of everything that happens during chapel is to touch the hearts of the students and teachers, so that their minds and spirits are nurtured for another week. At the core of this is the conversation and reflection that happens among the students in response to the teaching shared by Chaplain Hunter. Principal Collins invites the students to spend time reflecting about the week's theme and prepare a thoughtful response.

The themes and students’ responses provide an ongoing opportunity for teachers to help students apply the lessons to their own lives, both in school and at home. Often teachers draw on the weekly chapel teaching to guide students who are having a conflict, and encourage students to write about how that week’s lesson can show them the way past their challenges. Chapel gives students the foundation of faith and character to face each day knowing that they are part of God’s loving family.

Chapel Reflections

“I am going to win the race of life. To me giving up on your dreams is like giving up on yourself. There were times I wanted to give up, but God gave me a sign to keep my head up and keep reaching for the stars. I thank God so much for believing in me, never giving up on me, and always blessing me.”

“To stay ‘plugged in’ means to be focused. Focus means to think and pay attention and concentrate. Focus is finishing what you need to do. Winners stay focused. My dad has to stay focused to work hard, so do I.”

“Treat people like you want to be treated. You don’t have to rush during life – take time to make the best of it. Check yourself before you check others. God is looking down with a smile when we do the right thing.”

“I will not be afraid to be a go-getter because I know there is someone who is going to help me. That person is God. He will tell me what to go get. I want to do good in school. I want to go to college. I want to do my best.”
Ask Rev. Jack Finney about giving and you will find out he has thought a great deal about the topic! A retired Lutheran pastor, Jack recently became the newest member of the Holy Family Forever Legacy Society. Jack attended several Holy Family Benefits as a guest of Board alum Richard Tribble, and was drawn to the mission of faith-based urban education. “I chose Holy Family because I wanted to include a quality education for inner city children as a part of my estate plan,” remarks Jack. “Holy Family is doing the work very successfully. I knew the organization would meet my desire to give the opportunity of an education to someone less fortunate.” Jack believes that part of dying is to leave behind a legacy that can keep giving. “I was raised with a deep feeling of abundance, even though we may have actually had very little compared to others. I was taught that money is meant to be spent for the things you need, saved for the things you want and most important – to give. I asked a participant at a workshop once what was his proudest moment. He answered that it was funding a scholarship for an inner city student. I knew right then that I wanted to feel that same sense of fulfillment. It took about fifteen minutes to change my will to include Holy Family, but the difference an education makes will last a lifetime. The amount we leave may be large or small, but it will make a difference. I think knowing we helped someone achieve their dream of an education makes us feel more complete.”

Established in 2000, Holy Family Forever is the organization’s planned giving program, and accepts gifts through bequests, securities, property, insurance policies, retirement plans or life income plans. Gifts can be designated to help scholarship students now, or help students in the future. To learn more about the Holy Family planned giving program please contact us. We welcome new members throughout the year.

We gratefully acknowledge generous members of Holy Family Forever, and thank you for including Holy Family as part of your legacy. Please let us know if there has been a change to your plan, or if you wish to send us additional information about your planned gift.

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**Holy Family Forever**

**Legacy Society Members**

These thoughtful donors have notified us of their intended estate gifts to Holy Family.

Bob & Mary Anderson  
Dan & Carrie Dauner  
George & Char Elder  
Rev. Jack Finney  
John* & Carol Freidheim  
Walter* & Jennifer Grandberry  
Glen Gronlund & Shirley Beito Gronlund  
Lucy Infelt  
Bob & Nancy McGowan  
James & Kathryn* Murphy  
Bob & Nancy Nagel  
James* & Suzanne Neaylon III  
Joanne Pringle  
Joseph* & Tami Pringle  
Virginia Rempe  
John & Gloria Rowley  
Gordon & Elsie Selbo  
Richard Tribble  
Russ & Ann Westby  
Mitch & Susan* Work  
Warren & Barbara Zemke

*Holy Family Board Members
REACH FOR THE STARS 2012 Fall Event was a tremendous success! More than 370 guests—including many new friends—came out to support Holy Family at The Meadows Club in Rolling Meadows. As always, the students stole the show, with performances by two of our choirs and a special presentation by a former student, making for a truly memorable evening. Generous donors shared the spotlight in the evening’s success by raising nearly $200,000 in proceeds for the children of Holy Family. Special thanks to our hard working Benefit committee and our sponsors who helped make the evening possible.

Photos (clockwise from top left) Grace Wagner, Board member Dan Badovinac, and Will Wagner; Principal Cheryl Collins, Eric Collins, Board member Walter Grandberry and Jennifer Grandberry; Bob Provost and Jody Pringle; Tom and Jeannie Tisbo.

This year’s fall benefit is November 15, 2013 at The Meadows Club.
Located on the historic Homan Square campus, we are a safe place where children excel academically, grow spiritually, find hope, and expand their life experiences.