



From the Heart

ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL, IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY ACADEMY,
AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE FORGED ON FLORA AVENUE

This year marked two major life milestones for me. It was sixty years since I started attending Gr. 2 at St. Nicholas School. It was also forty years since my mother, Stephania Skrypnyk Hryniuk and Baba Skrypnyk reposed, in the Lord. In Mother's last lucid moments, she told me that if I needed support, in her absence, to contact the Sisters Servants (SSMI) and to keep in touch with family and school friends. In October 1981, I marvelled at how powerful Mother's advice would be.

Within hours of Mom's passing, my bridesmaid Rosanne Zulak appeared with a platter of food. Her father Steve Zulak, the contractor who built IHMS, had recently passed away that month. Then Sr. Laura and Sr. Anne appeared after school, with scriptural references for Mom's obituary, as well as her favourite desserts. Our dear friend, Christine Sahan Rogers, a brand new mom, appeared with a pot of chili to feed all the mourners that day. These women reminded me of "myrrh-bearing women". They tried to ease our family's grief, bringing food for the body and condolences for the soul.

As this school year started, I was again flooded with memories of that initial Gr. 2 year, sixty years ago. In those first weeks of school, I quickly made acquaintances who became dear friends, well into my retirement.

They would celebrate and mourn life events with us. Their families had also attended the school and were friends of my Mother, her Skrypnyk family and my brothers, Bill and Terry. We have come to experience the nurturing power of multigenerational friendships formed at the school.

For many years, several original Gr. 2 friends continued to meet at least twice a year with our children. The kids remain friends, sharing many values. Daughter Stephanie reminds me the feelings of kinship, comradery and community were nurtured also by beloved teachers. Recently, when pandemic restrictions were lifted, our families reconnected to celebrate a grandchild's birthday. In these times of constant change, we marvel at the longevity and interconnectedness of these school-based friendships. During the pandemic, many precious school friends made an effort to do check-ins.

We think these school relationships contributed greatly to our wellbeing, as we stayed connected in times of family crises and the current pandemic. When we read this newsletter, daughter Stephanie reminds me that we are part of a wonderful tapestry of IHMS friendships that support us, in times of joy and tribulation. We think that these

school-based friendships may have also contributed to the strong community spirit and resilience of people educated in the North End.

I personally remember attending frequent liturgies, saying prayers at every break and listening to someone read the lives of saints and singing carols, as we did our seatwork. Many of the spiritual practices developed at school, enhanced learning and helped us to deal with family and health crises, chemotherapy, cancer recovery, and the current pandemic. In their unique ways, the teachers also kept us in tune with events in the world and anchored daughters Katya, Stephanie and me with faith, stability, hope and leadership skills, in our safe haven of the community, at 650 Flora, in the heart of Winnipeg's North End.

Thank you to the SSMI, teachers and support staff for the skills which equipped us for dealing with life in a very complex world. Thank you to Principal Mr. Picklyk, past and current Administrations, Staff, School Boards and Volunteers like the Fidelity Social Club who enhanced the school and created a wonderful mosaic of memories for generations of families

- Carol Hryniuk-Adamov ('68)



Katya ('99), Carol's brother Terry Hryniuk ('58), Carol ('68), Stephanie ('03)

Photo taken at the 2015 St. Mary's Academy Marian Awards for Excellence. Carol was one of the award recipients.

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IHMS REFLECTION

Joseph Wawrykow attended St. Nicholas/Immaculate Heart of Mary School from 1960-68. "I started off in the old building, but in my second or third year, we moved over to the new building that had been erected next door. I liked the old building, which had a sort of charm, but came to like the new school building even more." There was a core group in his class—about twelve in number—who moved through the Grades together. "It was a good group of kids, and we all got along, and enjoyed our time together, inside the classroom and out. I recall with especial fondness Theodore Kuzie, who was my best friend, and Carol Hryniuk, for her academic excellence." The teaching staff in those days consisted almost exclusively of nuns, although Joseph recalls a layman who taught PhysEd. The teachers were "strict but fair," and certainly cared for their students and "taught them well."

Joseph attended West Kildonan Collegiate for high school, and then the University of Manitoba. At WKCI, he met Dianne Phillips. They dated throughout their time at the U of M, and got married just before the two of them went off to Yale University for doctoral studies. Dianne, a specialist in late medieval art, received her PhD in Art History, Joseph his PhD in Religious Studies.

Immediately upon graduation from Yale, Joseph was hired to teach Theology at the University of Notre Dame, where he has spent his entire academic career. Notre Dame's Department of Theology is held in high esteem in the academic world. In recent surveys, it has been ranked the Number One Department of Theology/Religious Studies, ahead of Oxford and Cambridge and other North American and European Universities. Joseph is a full Professor in Theology, responsible for teaching undergraduates and graduate students the history of Christian theology, both East and West, in the early and medieval periods. Joseph has also been active over the years in departmental administration, leading various programs, undergraduate and graduate. He is currently Director of Theology's large and thriving doctoral program, a position he has held for many years. His work with graduate students has received University recognition; in 2020, he was awarded the University's major award for excellence in doctoral teaching and mentoring.

Joseph's specialty is the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, arguably the greatest of the scholastic theologians. His published work has dealt mainly with issues of grace, and, Christology (the thematic reflection



Joseph with his wife Diane

on the person and work of Jesus Christ). He has attained an international reputation as a scholar of Aquinas, and is in demand as an invited lecturer on Aquinas at other American and European institutions.

Joseph and Dianne have one son, Nicholas (interesting choice of name!). Nicholas did his undergraduate work at Yale, and is now a doctoral student in Mathematics at the University of Michigan. When Joseph retires (which is still a few years away), he and Dianne will likely return to Canada; they deeply miss the peace and stability of their homeland.

- Joseph Wawrykow ('68)



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CUSTODIAN, DONOR, HOSPODAR & FLOOR HOCKEY CHAMPION

These are only a few of the many titles that can be given to Mr. Ivan Fil, long time employee and friend of Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

Moving to Canada in 1993, Ivan landed a position at the Ukrainian Reading Association, it was from there that he could see Immaculate Heart of Mary School and knew that it was a place that he would like to work someday. In 1998 that desire to

work in a Ukrainian Catholic School became a reality. "Each day since then it has been an experience of great joy working with such a dedicated group."

Mr. Fil's priority from the beginning has been to keep the School clean and safe. The School continues to use the original heating system because of the outstanding maintenance work of Ivan. During his tenure, not a day of classes have been canceled because there was no heat or other catastrophes like flooding. He has also been able to take on additional projects that have helped improve the learning experience for the students, like installing projectors in each classroom.

The opportunities to participate in historical events are moments that are dear to Ivan. He remembers fondly the 100th Anniversary celebrations, connecting with former students, hearing their stories, and appreciating the rich positive history from St. Nicholas School to today. Two other important events that were precious moments was when the School hosted the visitations for Major Archbishop Lubomyr Husar and then Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk. Meeting these Church leaders was an honour.

Mr. Fil is grateful to the many students and volunteers that helped him prepare (at times for an entire week) for the many concerts and the Annual Tea. Over the years, some of these relationships stand out because of their dedication to offer help whenever needed, without even being asked. This is not a surprise because of the kind, welcoming, gentle person that Ivan is, always making those around him feel welcomed.

Being a part of a staff/student community has been endorsed over the years in many different ways, like being invited to be on the School's Floor Hockey Team with the boys. Winning the championship three times, he treasures these moments and is proud to have his name included on the Floor Hockey Cup displayed at the School.

Mr. Fil's dream is to one-day walk through the halls of a new School that is modern, accessible and even a better place for the students to excel and the whole community to gather.

ALUMNI UPDATES



Brittany Serebnitski (nee Lasko) ['03]

Immaculate Heart of Mary School, its teachers and close knit community played a key role in laying the educational, cultural and social foundation upon which I am built. My time at IHMS inspired me to pursue a career in the Education field to strive toward providing children the same foundation and experiences I still reminisce about today. I am currently working in Seven Oaks School Division as a Learning Support Teacher. For me, teaching in a pandemic was not ideal as in person learning is so important to support our students, but I commend my fellow staff and students for rising to the challenge of adapting and navigating through remote learning in creative ways. I also enjoyed connecting with my students online and found positive in being able to devote increased one on one time with students to assist with their learning. I am currently continuing my education journey as I works toward my Masters of Education in Inclusive Education.

Brittany Serebnitski (nee Lasko), class of '03, got married in September of 2020 to her husband Alexander Serebnitski. They met through a joint performance between their two dance groups, Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble and The Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble. The groups performed a dance called Hora Hopak which celebrates both the Ukrainian and Israeli cultures together in a unified piece. This sparked them to join each other's dance groups, allowing them the opportunity to travel to Ukraine and Israel in a joint tour with the two dance groups, and they continue to share their love for dance together in Rusalka.



Danika Picklyk ('07)

I graduated in 2007 as a super niner! I went on to graduate from St. Mary's Academy and then I received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Manitoba while playing on the University of Manitoba Women's Volleyball team. After U of M, I completed the Bachelor of Nursing program at Red River College, and have been working at Children's Hospital as a Registered Nurse for just over a year now!

Tanner and I met through my sister Hannah Picklyk. They were in a couple classes together in University and became friends. Hannah decided she had to introduce the two of us (thanks to her she gained another brother!). Six years later we celebrated our wedding day on October 1st, 2021, the most perfect fall day. Our ceremony was at St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church, and we had our reception at Starlit Point. The day was everything we could have imagined and more, especially after planning through a pandemic, it was extra special having our closest family and friends all together. It was a party well worth waiting for!



Alexis Ilithya Serghanuk ('13)

After graduating IHMS, I went on to do high-school at University of Winnipeg Collegiate (starting '14) and then went onto Carleton University in '17 to study my Bachelor of Sciences honors degree in psychology and minor in neuroscience and mental health. I'm currently doing my Masters at Kings College London (England) in neuroscience, psychiatry, and psychology *combined*. I'm looking forward to becoming a registered psychologist/mental health practitioner when I'm done.

IHMS was the school that truly started it all for me. A great balance between spirituality, culture, and fantastic academics which prepared me for high school studies (especially in math and science) and invoked a sense of confidence in me by the time I reached University because I knew how to write exams and study effectively. I carried my catholic faith with me the whole time, and I'm extremely grateful for experiencing the divine liturgies and religious celebrations at IHMS that helped solidify my faith.

Eternal MEMORY



Sister Mary Basil Kunanec, SSMI 1931 – 2021

A devout teacher, Sr. Mary Basil educated many students across Canada throughout her life. She was a kindergarten teacher at IHMS in the early 70's.



Victoria (Subtelny) Tychois 1944 – 2021

Vicky attended Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy from 1958 to 1961. She had a deep love for the Blessed Mother and worked hard at School in order to be chosen to "crown" the statue at the

School on Aberdeen. A memory shared often was about her sneaking into the "theatre/dance room" to "try on" the Sister's habits.



Andrew A. Ban Fedorkiw June 22, 1990 – October 25, 2021

Andrew attended IHMS from 1996 to 2001. During his time at school he always had stories to share about how much fun it was and how attentive the teachers were. He especially enjoyed recess a time to place 4 square with his fellow classmates.

HAPPENINGS AT IHMS

Blessings of the season to all of our alumni!

Although the pandemic has caused life to slow down in some instances, this fall, the activities and opportunities for the students at IHMS are in full swing! It's amazing the variety of events that continually reflect the vibrant community we have here at Immaculate Heart of Mary School. Whether it is in academics, extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, Christian service projects or faith formation, it is clear that Immaculate Heart continues to be a school with a difference.

During this Pylypivka season the students are getting into the Christmas spirit. The children are learning Ukrainian songs and verses to welcome St. Nicholas, in a COVID safe way, at the beginning of December. Preparations for the virtual Christmas Concert production is underway ... songs are being rehearsed, auditions are taking place, and costumes are being gathered. The children are also preparing their hearts for baby Jesus' arrival by focusing on act of kindness and as well supporting the needs of Welcome Home.

On top of all these activities there are volleyball playoffs, Debate Team practices, the Annual Book Fair, the Tech Club is meeting, report cards and parent / teacher conferences.

When the students return from their Christmas break we look forward to celebrating the Feast of Jordan in front of the ice cross, and as well, beginning the basketball season.

As mentioned before ... a very vibrant community!

Thank you to the alumni for your ongoing support of all the programs and events that take place at the school. Whether it be serving on committees, financial support, or spiritual support your generosity is very appreciated. May you and your families be blessed with very peaceful Christmas season.

God Bless,
Rod Picklyk, Principal



Share
AN UPDATE

Do you have an update you would like to share? Did you just get married or have a baby? Where are you living? What have you been up to? Let us know by sending an email to alumni@ihms.mb.ca

Have you moved? Newsletter still showing up at your childhood home? Let us know your new address! Email us at info@lubovfoundation.ca so we can update your records!



A seat is saved for *you.*

With the holiday season approaching, why not make a gift to purchase a chair in honour of someone?

We invite you to support our campaign to help purchase new chairs for special events. For every donation of \$100, you will be acknowledged with a permanent donor recognition piece (decal) on each chair.

Make a gift online at ihms.mb.ca or call 204-942-0443

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor:



Thank you to our alumni who contributed to this issue. If you have news or stories you would like to share, please contact:



1085 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB • R2W 3S1
204-942-0443
info@lubovfoundation.ca