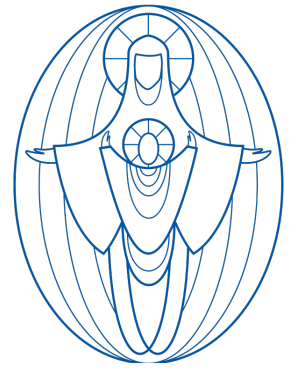




From the Heart



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

WELCOMING – CELEBRATING – LEARNING

A message from Rod Picklyk, IHMS Principal



While we are now in a new calendar year, the IHMS “new year” began in September with a picnic attended by nearly 500 students, staff and families. It was a perfect way to celebrate after two years of social distancing and periods of remote learning, and to welcome new families to our school community, especially those who fled the war in Ukraine.

The school year has already been filled with notable moments: Four volleyball teams took to the court; two were victorious and brought home league banners! It was heartwarming to see the students back on the stage, sharing their performing arts skills to capacity crowds at two Christmas concerts and a St. Nicholas performance. In January, we celebrated the Theophany with the blessing of water and of the school, and the grades 3-6 girls choir carolled not only at the Festival of Carols, but in the community as well. With sadness we prayed for the time we had with Monsignor Michael Buyachok before his passing. We think back to the generous time and energy he shared with our school with fondness and gratitude. (see p. 3).

In its 117-year history, these last few may be the most unique, with both a pandemic and a war impacting our school. The IHMS community is to be commended for the positive approach taken to address the challenges that have come our way. Under extraordinary circumstances, students ultimately had productive and fruitful learning experiences during COVID, and continued to grow academically, physically, socially, culturally and spiritually.

Just as the pandemic seemed to wind down, the war in Ukraine ramped up. As a community of students, staff, parents, alumni and friends of the school, we have risen to the occasion, welcoming more than 60 students whose families fled (read about Sasha on p. 2). Newcomer students and families are adjusting to their new life and benefiting from supports provided by IHMS.

Thanks to generous donors and supporters like you, all school fees have been waived to help families get a start in their new country. English language programming has been enhanced (more on p. 4), and parent information sessions have helped ease the transition. Perhaps unknowingly, the Ukrainian students and families have ‘given back’ as well. As much as we have provided for them, they have shared their giftedness, enthusiasm and excitement within our community tenfold, and have truly enriched life at IHMS.

It’s heartwarming to see students learning in bright and vibrant classrooms, participating in athletics, performing in concerts, accessing the latest technology, learning new languages and playing musical instruments. It’s gratifying to see them develop new friendships, with a sparkle in their eye and smile on their face.

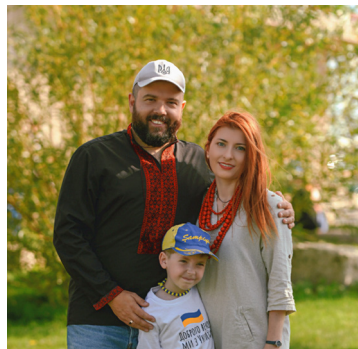
Immaculate Heart proudly offers an exciting place to learn and grow with many more events and activities. Basketball season is underway. ‘I Love to Read Month’ is in February. And at the end of March we look forward to Ukrainian Week! IHMS continues to provide a variety of learning opportunities and experiences for all students to excel academically, to grow in their faith and culture, and to develop their character and leadership skills.

Thank you to all alumni for supporting Immaculate Heart, especially over these recent years. Your ongoing support, thoughts and prayers are very much appreciated. God Bless.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS... FROM KHARKIV TO WINNIPEG

Six-year-old Sasha was in Kharkiv with his parents, Olena and Sergiy, when shells began to rain down on the city at 4:30 a.m., February 24, 2022. In those first few hours, the family sought safety in the subway station, the nearest bomb shelter. With shells flying so loudly that the parents covered Sasha with their bodies to protect him, they returned to their home, quickly packed necessities and collected a few favourite toys and a book. They left their life behind and rushed, first from the city, and then from their beloved country, for safety. Olena shares their story.

Although we did everything to make the evacuation easy and comfortable, despite how easily our brave boy endured life on the road, when we reached Germany, Sasha began to experience the reality of what had happened very deeply. He missed his relatives and friends, his room and toys, and he



asked for the attack on Ukraine to end sooner. Other days, he would sit for hours and draw tanks, explosions, buses and Ukrainian flags.

We organized activities with other children and explored German towns, nature and architecture. But travel is not what a child who did not ask for danger to uproot his life needs. We saw that our son – like every child – deserves a peaceful life, with stability and the routine of school.

When we arrived in Canada we were very excited about the opportunity for Sasha to attend IHMS. The day came to meet Mr. Picklyk, and Sasha saw his new school for the first time. In each window were Ukrainian flags drawn by children – just like the ones he liked to draw himself. He became so happy!

It has been a joy to see how quickly a normal childhood life returned to our son. We have learned that he has highly developed mathematical abilities, and his knowledge of the English language (which he has liked a lot and learned almost from

birth) has improved at an astonishing rate. He loves his teachers, and wants to be like the principal when he grows up. He gets ready for school with joy in the morning, and, if you can believe it, it can even be difficult to bring him home. Moreover, while receiving a spiritual education, which is so necessary in our times, he has delighted us with the knowledge of prayers, and with his own reflections on the nature of good and evil.

We cannot express how grateful we are to everyone who works in the school. It has become a huge moral support and consolation to us for these months. In fact, crossing its threshold warms our souls, much as crossing the threshold of our new home.



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We think we are doing well, despite our personal experiences, which seem now like a bad dream. I started working full time, helping other Ukrainian newcomers. Sergiy is the best husband and father in the world, and is also working to take care of our family. Our love keeps us really strong, counting our blessings and smiling every day. We like to volunteer in our free time, to attend Ukrainian events, and to keep supporting Ukraine. It means so much that Canada is very multicultural and respects traditions, enabling citizens to also keep your ethnicity, identity and connection with your homeland.

We pray that good people have strength, protection from harm, and justice, in whatever form God sees fit.



It's been a homecoming of sorts for Katherine (Washchyshyn) Fox. In November 2022, Katherine joined the Lubov SSMI Foundation as CEO, to support the ministries of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, including IHMS.

"It has been terrific to reconnect with the IHMS community, especially throughout the Christmas season," says Katherine. "My face hurt from smiling at the productions, and I found myself with leaky eyes as the K-3s sang The Friendly Beasts, which has always been a family favourite."

Following IHMS, Katherine attended St. Mary's Academy and earned a BA in French at University of Manitoba. She began her career in communications, branding and public relations at St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, then moved to Toronto, helping national and international clients build their brands, and then worked with not-for-profit organizations and on diversity programs for CHUM Limited (which included stations across Canada like MuchMusic, CityTV and BOB-FM). In 2007 she returned to Winnipeg, joining the executive team of HSC Winnipeg to lead the hospital's communications activities. She was most recently vice president, marketing and communications, for Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba.

"The mission To serve is to love is powerful, especially at this time of uncertainty when the world could use a little more love," says Katherine. "It is a privilege to be part of this team, and I look forward to working with the staff, alumni and board at IHMS to help serve the needs of students and families."

Thanks to you, more than 60 Ukrainian students like Sasha and his family have been welcomed to the IHMS community.

Generous donors have contributed nearly \$90,000 since February 2022 to support the educational needs of Sadochok to Grade 8 students and their families at IHMS.

Donations are used to enhance in-school supports like English as an Additional Language, and offset tuition, supplies, uniforms, and other costs.

Needs will continue into the future as new students are arriving every month.

You can help!

Donate today at lubovfoundation.ca.

A FAMILY COMMITMENT

“Hi. I’m Mark. You’ll be seeing me quite a bit.”

What began as a cheeky introduction to a young Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate principal by a spirited IHMS student has become a life-long promise.



The Galarnyk brothers – Basil (‘74), Nestor (‘78) and Mark (‘84) – and their families have indeed been familiar faces around the Sisters’ works since they first attended IHMS. From Basil’s and Judy’s fundraising for Lubov and IHMS, to Nestor’s culinary skills and Maria’s work at Holy Family Home, to Mark and Sonya’s visit to and support of the Home of Hope in Lviv, the whole family have never been far from the SSMIs and their mission to serve.

“The Sisters are one of the few groups that look after us from cradle to grave,” says Mark, reflecting on why he and his family continue to

be involved with the SSMI community. “When we’re younger, we’re helpless and need some guidance. And then at the other stage of life, near the end, we are also helpless and need the Sisters’ guidance to help prepare us for the next world.”

All three boys and Basil and Judy’s daughters, Nattalka (‘04) and Zorianna (‘07), are IHMS super-niners. And when it was time for the boys’ beloved baba, mother and aunt to need extra care, Holy Family Home provided a warm, loving environment.

Mark looks back at his years at IHMS with a smile and a chuckle. “It was a simpler time. We went to class, we had recess outside, we played soccer baseball or on the twirler. There were no gadgets. Sure, we got into some trouble...”

Eyes still twinkling, he shares, “Think about it. At IHMS, we were together from kindergarten until grade nine. While lots of people think about high school as being formative, it’s really only three years. IHMS was a foundation. It was family.”



“We believe in the school, which is doing good things, and has so much potential. It has always welcomed kids and families from all over, including now, during the war. We want to continue contributing to its success.”

–Mark

All these years later, “the gadgets” have also provided an opportunity to keep those lifelong relationships alive through social media.

“A lot of us are still connected,” Mark says. “I can tell you what they’re doing and where they are. And Mrs. Naurocki and I talk regularly on Facebook!”

When their girls visited at IHMS, Basil was involved in the raffle and silent auction for the tea. As owner of Galarnyk Insurance – a long-time sponsor of the school – Basil is also involved with the Winnipeg Ukrainian Golf Classic. This group has designated funds raised at their annual tournament to SSMI-related causes three times over the years, including raising a remarkable \$10,000 in August 2022 to support newcomer students to IHMS.

“We had already decided that Lubov would be the beneficiary of the 2022 tournament, and then the war broke out,” says Basil. “This was a way we could rally the community to make a difference for families seeking refuge here, and ensure new kids to Canada could have the same terrific school experience that I and our kids had at IHMS, while tuition would be one less thing for parents to worry about.”



A life-changing experience for Mark and Sonya Galarnyk was their 2019 visit to the Sisters’ Home of Hope in Lviv.

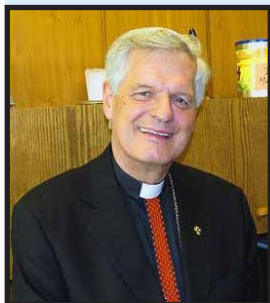
“The Sisters saw a gap, a need, and created a safe place for young women who were preyed upon, who would be on the street,” Mark says. “These young women didn’t have the opportunity to succeed otherwise. But the Sisters give them guidance, support and love. The girls learn to be self-sufficient, to be loved and to be wanted, to have a sense of belonging and self-respect.”

There are currently 20 girls ages 17 to 23 living in the Home of Hope, all of whom are currently in school or working. And most importantly, are thriving.

“While we can’t help all, we can help some. The Sisters go where the need is greatest. I know they are making a meaningful impact.”

Eternal MEMORY

Monsignor Michael Buyachok 1939 - 2022



Monsignor Michael Buyachok always held education in the forefront of his commitments, and supported IHMS for many years. After he returned to Winnipeg to become pastor of Cathedral of Sts Volodymyr & Olha, he was very much present in his support. He graciously opened the doors for the monthly IHMS liturgies held at the Cathedral. He encouraged other priests of the Eparchy to be celebrants at the Liturgy as well as be supporters of the school. The annual IHMS Tea, the annual IHMS Fundraising dinner and other school functions were supported with his presence as well as his financial contributions. His recognition of the value of quality education, rooted in faith and culture to enhance the development of young people, was close to his heart throughout his life. For this IHMS is grateful for the support and friendship of Monsignor Michael over the years.

We offer our sincere condolences to his loved ones. He will be missed.



Вічна його пам’ять!

WORKING WITH NEWCOMERS

Since spring 2022, the IHMS community has welcomed more than 60 newcomer children and their families to the school. Your generosity has not only provided funding for tuition, uniforms and school supplies, but has enabled IHMS to expand resources to support language and learning needs. Ola Paulic (currently on maternity leave) and Natalia Radawetz share their experiences helping the newcomers thrive in their new environment.

What is your role in helping newcomer students to IHMS?

OP: I am a Special Education Resource Teacher. I welcome, assess, and support newcomer children and youth to the IHMS family. Growing up as a second-generation Canadian, I've always had a deep-rooted desire to help support families where English is not the primary language at home.



NR: I have taken on English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in addition to my role as the school librarian (my formation is in the area of museum education programming, where I have developed, and implemented countless education programs) and am passionate about literacy

and learning. I speak, read and write Ukrainian (albeit poorly in comparison to the beautiful Ukrainian I am hearing from the children!). These skills have certainly been put to good use in this role.

How do you work with new students? Could you describe what a "session" or lesson with you might look like?

OP: Sessions typically involve a healthy mix of one-on-one work (for assessments), and targeted English language learning in small groups. With younger students, we typically begin with building foundations of the English language including letter and sound recognition, rhyme production, manipulation of phonemes, and theme-based vocabulary. As they get older, we still work with themes but our focus is more on expressions, verb tenses, grammar, and conversational English. All of these groups of course spend a solid amount of time working on building relationships with others – we have found board games help facilitate this process in an authentic and purposeful manner.

NR: At the beginning of the year, we spent significant time teaching basic behavioural expectations, common greetings and phrases. We use teaching tools such as flash cards, books and games to provide visuals, as well as literacy resources from the Winnipeg Public Library like BOOKFLIX. (The students absolutely love an alphabet book put to song called, CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault.) We vary the lessons, so some days we dialogue (in English) and work on printing/writing skills. Other days we play fun literacy games, and we are creating storylines together.

What have you learned most from working with these children?

OP: Resilience! Our students left their lives halfway across the world, and arrived to another one where everything moves at a different pace and in a different language. They are adjusting to new rules, routines, and expectations, and learning a different culture and way of being. As their confidence increases, they become more willing to engage in English language work. The most rewarding part is when a student who has been reluctant to speak in English comes to ask something like "how are you doing", or "good morning."

NR: I have learned that the human spirit is capable of so much. Each family's experience is unique, ranging from which region they have fled, to their different journeys which brought them to Winnipeg and our school. You could draw a full circle over Ukraine connecting the towns, cities and regions they come from. The languages all differ too. I have also learned not to take the tiniest of things for granted. One of my students (amidst a discussion about favorite treats) described in detail (in English!) how biting into a "Romashka" chocolate took her right back to her village and to her Babusia. She teared up as she spoke and you could see the deep yearning for home in her eyes. And in one of our EAL sessions, we were discussing favourite places we have visited around the world. Every one of them, without hesitation, answered, "Kyiv" or "Kharkiv" or "Odesa" (their home cities) and others simply said "Ukraine – home!"

What advice would you give to newcomers who will join the IHMS family?

NR: I would tell them that they are truly becoming a member of the family when they join the IHMS community. Everyone cares



about each other and about doing the best they can possibly do. We can't imagine all that they've been through, so we strive to be as accepting as possible.

OP: One of the biggest concerns coming from families I've spoken with has been: how are my kids doing? How are they picking up English? We have to give our students time to adjust. To feel safe. To be comfortable. Once we give them time, the rest will come. Then too, if families need support we as staff are available to help provide support the best that we can. We are blessed to have staff that can speak Ukrainian.

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:



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