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ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY, JAMESTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA

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HISTORIC MOMENT OF LEADERSHIP

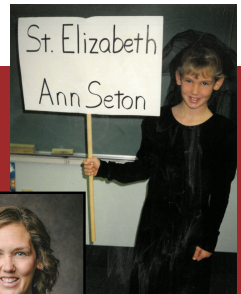
Welcoming Mrs. Haas

St. John's Academy is celebrating a milestone 135 years in the making. For the first time in our school's long and storied history, an alumna of the Academy has taken on the role of principal. We have been honored to welcome Mrs. Melissa Haas, SJA Class of 6th Grade in 2001, as the new leader of our school community.

Melissa's story is deeply woven into the fabric of St. John's Academy. She attended our school from preschool through sixth grade, forming the early faith, character, and academic foundations that shaped her calling as an educator. After building a career in teaching and raising her family, she has returned home to Jamestown, and back to the school that helped form her, now ready to serve the next generation of students.

As she grows into her new role, Mrs. Haas does so with a profound sense of gratitude and appreciation for those who came before her. She often reflects on the extraordinary foundation of faith that has been established by the countless teachers, principals, and staff members who came before her. These dedicated men and women poured their hearts into nurturing students academically, spiritually, and personally. Their legacy has created the strong and vibrant Catholic community we know today. Melissa recognizes that we "stand on the shoulders of giants," and she steps into those "big shoes" with reverence and a sincere desire to honor their work.

At the same time, Melissa brings a fresh energy and a deep commitment to continuing our tradition of academic excellence. She is passionate about forward-thinking education and ensuring that St. John's Academy remains a leader in high academic standards. Her many years of teaching experience gives her insight into the evolving needs of students, and she is enthusiastic about supporting our teachers as they incorporate innovative practices into the classroom while staying rooted in the rich Catholic identity that defines us.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

St. John's Academy

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE - ROOTED IN FAITH

SINCE 1890



From the Principal's Desk

Dear St. John's Academy Families and Friends,

As we move into summer and reflect on the 2025–2026 school year, I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for each of the 254 students who walked through the doors of St. John's Academy this school year, from our confident 8th graders preparing for their next chapter to our youngest Kids' Kingdom students discovering school for the very first time.

In Matthew 19:14, Jesus reminds us, "Let the little children come to me." What a blessing it is to spend our days nurturing the hearts, minds, and faith of these children entrusted to our care. Their laughter fills our hallways, their curiosity fills our classrooms, and their joy fills our school. Learning is loud. Learning is messy. Learning is meant to be fun. The energy and excitement our students bring each day make St. John's Academy such a special place to be.

I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to our incredible faculty and staff. This year brought change, and change is not always easy. Yet through every challenge, our teachers and staff continued to lead with grace, patience, faith, and unwavering dedication to our students. Even in seasons of transition, God continues to guide our school community forward with purpose and hope. I could not be more thankful for the commitment and love our staff pour into this school every single day.

As I reflect on this year, I am reminded that the true foundation of St. John's Academy is not measured in dollars, but in the countless acts of service, kindness, volunteerism, and dedication shown by our families, staff, parish, and supporters. ***A thriving school is built by so many people willing to invest their hearts into its mission, and for that, I am deeply grateful.***

As we cross the finish line of this school year, we are already looking ahead with excitement and anticipation for what is to come in the 2026–2027 school year. While summer offers a well-deserved time for rest, family, and adventure, we will certainly be counting down the days until the joyful faces of our amazing students walk through our doors once again.

Thank you for your continued support of Catholic education and for the trust you place in St. John's Academy. May God bless your families with a safe, restful, and joy-filled summer.

With gratitude and faith,

Melissa Haas
Principal
St. John's Academy



Our Mission:

St. John's Academy provides academic excellence in a Catholic environment to inspire lives reflective of the Gospel.

Our Vision:

St. John's Academy, will continue to strive to be an institution that forms the whole child through an authentic Catholic education based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church and to be distinguished in instruction and learning.

Our Core Beliefs:

- Encountering Christ
- Cultivating Virtue
- Inspiring Christ-like Relationships
- Academic Excellence
- Safe Environment

In Memoriam

St. John's Academy remembers our alumni, friends, and family.
We apologize for any omissions.

Richard Hamkens died 12/23/25 - Class of 1957

Thomas Matchie died 12/29/25 - Class of 1953

Ceilia (Wanzek) Newton died 1/7/26 - Class of 1949

Daniel Pollard died 1/11/26 - SJA Parent

Lorraine Greenwood died 1/12/26 - friend of the Academy

Jay Smith died 1/12/26 - SJA Alumni

Anne (Baenen) Nelson died 1/19/26 - Class of 1959

Yvonne (Albrecht) Szarkowski died 3/21/26 - Class of 1951

Catherine (Feton) Gruber died 3/14/26 - Class of 1957

James Kropp died 5/27/26 - Class of 1979

Please send memorial information to sarah.sankey@k12.nd.us or call 701.252.3397

WELCOMING MRS. HAAS CONTINUED...

Mrs. Haas continues in her efforts to intentionally get to know our students, staff, and families. Whether she is greeting students at the door or at lunch, visiting classrooms, or participating in school traditions, she is immersing herself in our community with warmth and curiosity. Her leadership is marked by a desire to listen, learn, and build strong relationships.

As we look to the future, we are blessed to have Mrs. Haas guiding St. John's Academy. Her journey has come full circle. From student to principal, she brings with her both a lifetime connection to the Academy and a forward-looking vision for its continued growth. With heartfelt respect for the legacy she inherits and great hope for what lies ahead, Mrs. Haas is poised to lead our school into its next chapter of faith, excellence, and service.



Melissa, far right, with her parents, Ray & Chris Mering, sisters Jennifer & Sarah and brother Ray .



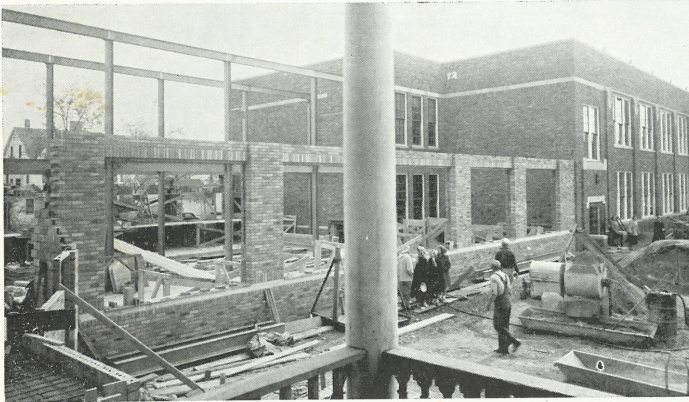
Class of 2001

Back Row: Beverly Jacobson-Principal, Deacon Michael Parrotta, Fr. Bernard Plau, Fr. Scott Sautner, Mrs. Carol Richardson
Fourth Row: Mrs. Velma Yaskin, Zachary Welding, Samuel Larson, Joshua Lundberg, Melissa Moring, Tyler Looyson, Briana Smith, Michael Mooradian, Michael Greff, Mrs. Donnell Huber
Third Row: Brandon Dale, Karlie Richardson, Jessica Laber, Chelsea Johnson, Nicolas Spinningby, Matthew Ritter, Jacob Ems, Alex Kaiser, Logan Fietak.
Second Row: Kimberly Schweitzer, Amanda Goldade, Michaela Fisher, Nadia Lemir, Kelsey Jager, Colten Kohler, Laura Zink, Kristi Falk.
Front Row: David Haas, Jordan Wilhelm, Katherine Ukstad, Jordan Mathison. Not pictured: Jessica Kropp.

Breathing New Life into a Historic Space

the SJA Basement

Up It Goes---Brick by Brick

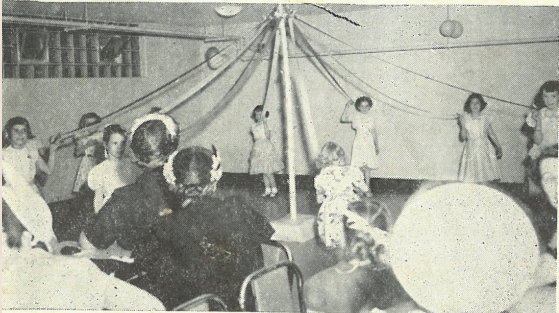


Excitement mounts as the Beck addition mounts. Spring (or soon after) of '51 will find St. John's a \$150,000 addition richer.

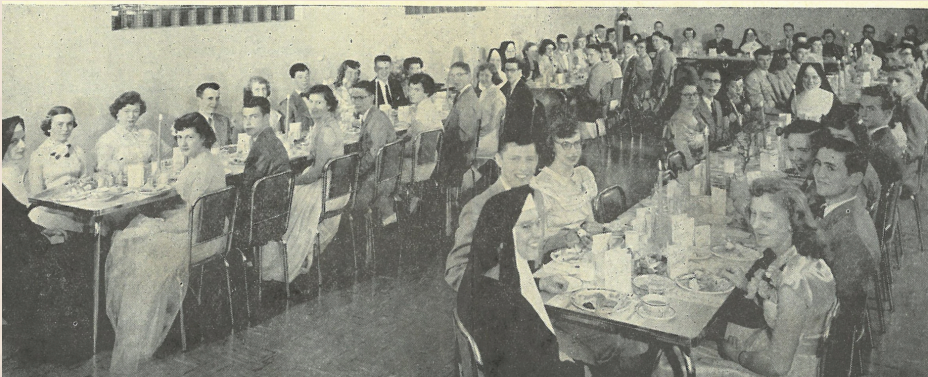
Since 1890, St. John's Academy has continually adapted its campus to serve the needs of its students. Classrooms have expanded, programs have grown, and spaces have evolved with each new generation. **Few places on our campus tell that story quite like the basement beneath our school.**

Constructed as part of the "Beck Addition" in 1951, for many alumni, the basement holds cherished memories. It served as a gathering place for school banquets, meetings, and celebrations. During the 1950s and 1960s, students danced the night away at homecoming events held within its walls.

Band, Dancers Entertain!



Students perform for their grandmothers. Taken from the Eagle Newspaper, May 1953



1953 Junior & Senior Prom Banquet, with an 'Easter Parade' Theme

1953 Homecoming Dance



A familiar sight at many a Homecoming and other activities is the stagline. Here, Donald Falk, Bill Emo, Leslie Wilmot, Jim Gengler, Dennis Baenen, Bob Schirber, Ray McCommon, and Dick Ringuette are lined up watching the Homecoming proceedings.



The 1957 Homecoming Royalty pause momentarily to smile for the photographer before the recessional begins. Left to right are: Charles Frey, Mary Ellen Seitz, Frank Hassler, Cleone Fried, Queen Sandy, Mike McCarthy, Margaret Reardon, Dan Wagenmann, Cleo Krapp, Ray Greenwood, Mary Kay Niemeyer, and Leslie Carter.

1958 Mardi Gras Dance, following the Carnival



"Dancing to the Bop" looks like fun here as Bob Schirber and Mary Ellen Seitz, Jim Exner and Carolyn Linstaedt, Dennis Baenen and Bonnie Baenen (not shown) do a little lively stepping.



The Mardi Gras evening seems to be enjoyed by all as these small groups chat between dance numbers furnished by the "Hidden Hi-Fi."

Since its inception, the basement of the 1951 addition has mainly been used as a cafeteria for students. **For 70 years, St. John's students lined up there for daily lunch as the basement became the school's cafeteria, serving as a hub of activity and fellowship.**

Not only a cafeteria and banquet hall, it would often host other special occasions such as showcasing projects, presentations, or opportunities to invite family and community members into our school.



Lunch with Mayor Kourajian! Circa 1999



Thanksgiving Lunch 1983



4th Grade State Project Presentations



Following the completion of our major campus addition in 2020, the basement entered a new season of service, as the cafeteria was moved upstairs to the new Gallagher Commons. As renovations continued throughout the original portions of the building for the next several years, the basement space became an essential storage area. Building and construction materials, extra desks, classroom furniture, event decorations, and countless supplies found a temporary home there as our campus transformation continued.



Parents come to build Ginger Bread Houses with their students



This year, however, a dedicated committee of teachers and staff, under the leadership of Principal Haas, envisioned something more.



With the new 2020 addition and renovations continuing thru 2024, the SJA Basement becomes a much needed storage area for construction materials, event decor, & classroom furnishings.

Through countless hours of planning, organizing, and hands-on work, the basement has been thoughtfully transformed into a vibrant new space for students. **While a portion remains dedicated to organized storage** (behind blue curtain seen in pictures), **nearly two-thirds of the area has been reimaged as a creative and welcoming environment that serves students in new and exciting ways.**

While there are some finishing touches that need to be made over the summer, students were able to utilize the space the last month of the school year!

At the heart of the renovation is a much-needed art space where students can create, explore, and express themselves. **The expanded area provides**

room for projects and experiences that simply were not possible before. Beyond the art space, the renovated basement now includes several flexible, multi-purpose areas designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and community.

Students can gather in a comfortable reading area, enjoy games and puzzles with classmates, challenge friends to a game of foosball, or simply relax in a comfortable environment that encourages connection and creativity. **The space reflects our commitment to educating the whole child, not only academically, but socially, emotionally, and artistically as well.**

One of the most meaningful touches is the inclusion of the historic fireplace mantel that once stood proudly in the upstairs library. Rather than allowing this beautiful piece of St. John's history to remain tucked away, it has been given new life and purpose as a centerpiece in the renovated space. Its presence serves as a reminder that while our campus continues to change, we remain deeply connected to the generations who came before us.

As we celebrate 135 years of Catholic education, the basement's transformation stands as a fitting symbol of St. John's Academy itself. The room has served many purposes over the decades—dance hall, banquet room, cafeteria, storage area, and now creative learning center. Through every chapter, it has continued to support the mission of our school and the students who walk its halls.

We are grateful to the teachers, staff, and leaders whose vision and hard work made this transformation possible. *Most importantly, we are excited for the countless memories that will be created in this renewed space for years to come.*

Some spaces simply grow old. At St. John's Academy, they grow with us.



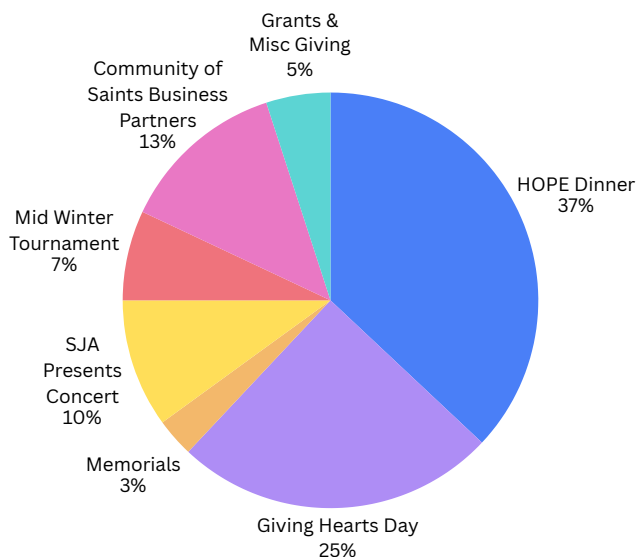
Advancing Our Mission

St. John's Academy
Advancement Director

*In a world overflowing with information, it's more critical than ever that our schools focus on more than just facts and figures. **As Christians, we are called to foster not only knowledge but also wisdom—rooted in truth and virtue.** This approach is vital in shaping individuals who are not just informed but also transformed.*

Hello SJA Alumni & Friends,

Virtues are part of our everyday vernacular at St. John's Academy. The students are encouraged each week to embrace a virtue, and practice it in their interactions with their fellow students and teachers. It is something that becomes second nature for them as the year progresses. A few weeks ago, the entire student body had the privilege of honoring our latest class of 8th Grade Graduates with a Mass at St. James Basilica. The logistics of getting over 200 students across the two-block walk to the Basilica is akin to herding ducklings... hoping one doesn't stray away from the line! As we gathered and filtered outside, I was reminded of our mission as I followed the students walking. Our 1st graders were walking with their 7th grade prayer partners, all 2 by 2, quietly focused on the task at hand. The older students were being terrific role models for their young, impressionable companions without even realizing it – and instilling the virtues of respect, orderliness, kindness & prayerfulness. Witnessing the mature growth in our students always impresses me. Knowing once they leave these hallowed halls, those virtues are instilled in them and will hopefully carry forward in their daily lives.



Winter and spring were busy seasons at the Academy. By hosting the Newman Midwinter Challenge basketball tournament in January and the SJA Presents Tigirlily Gold concert in April, we demonstrated responsibility and loyalty as a strong community partner in Jamestown. Both events brought significant tourism revenue to local businesses, and we were pleased to share them with the surrounding region.

Thank you for your faithful dedication to our students, teachers and staff, as they grow and nurture their Christian faith within their classrooms and extra-curricular activities. We are blessed by the support of our alumni and friends; it is through your generosity we can inspire our students to lead a virtue-filled life. Please feel free to stop by and visit the Academy any time you are in the area – we love to see you!

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

This will be our Bible verse theme for the upcoming school year - we gratefully welcome your support of our students at:

stjohnsacademynd.org/annual-fund



Pam Perleberg

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TIGIRLILY GOLD PERFORMS IN JAMESTOWN

Excerpts from the Jamestown Sun, April 2026 — Tigirlily Gold is set to perform in St. John's Academy's benefit concert on Saturday, April 18, at the Jamestown Civic Center.

"We never thought we could get an act of this caliber and size to come to small-town USA, but being that they are North Dakota girls themselves growing up in Hazen, North Dakota, I figured it was worth a shot to ask," said Pam Perleberg, advancement director at St. John's Academy.

The country music duo consists of Krista Slaubaugh and Kendra Olson, who are sisters. "We get so excited when we get to play back home in North Dakota," Slaubaugh said. "We get to see so many familiar faces every time we play back in North Dakota, whether it's literally family members or friends I grew up with, and it just really feels like a family reunion."

St. John's Academy has been hosting an annual benefit concert since 2024. The past two years was the Legends of Rock Concert. Perleberg said organizers wanted to bring in different music artists since the same type of concert was put on for the first two years. She said bringing in a different type of music artist could also draw a different crowd.

The concert is possible with the help of sponsors and a Jamestown Tourism grant. "We're very grateful for that, of course, and we'll have signage up all over the arena for all of our sponsors," Perleberg said.

Slaubaugh said Tigirlily Gold wanted to perform for St. John's Academy benefit concert because it is for a good cause. "Anything to do with education, Kendra and I have always been strong supporters of, and whatever we can do to help people," she said. "We've always felt like it's our duty to give back to communities, especially North Dakota communities. They helped us so much when we were growing up."

Perleberg said attendance is expected to surpass the Legends of Rock Concert in 2024. She said about 1,500 tickets have been sold for the Tigirlily Gold concert as of Friday, April 10.

"Looking at our numbers over the last two years, we always spike the week of for ticket sales," she said. "So I'm hopeful that that will happen again and that the weather cooperates as well."

The concert begins at 7 p.m. when Rogue Royal performs. Rogue Royal includes Alexis (Barnick) Deters, who attended St. John's Academy. "It's fun to have a tie-in for the local aspect as well," Perleberg said.

Slaubaugh said Tigirlily Gold will perform its most popular songs and a newly released song called "Country and Midwestern."

"We also are going to play a couple new ones from an album that is going to be coming out this year," she said. Slaubaugh said "Country and Midwestern" is inspired by growing up in North Dakota. She said Olson came up with two new characters named Barb and Sheila.

"When we started writing the song 'Country and Midwestern,' we thought we could do it justice by sharing it as Kendra and Krista, but we also thought maybe we need Midwestern alter egos to really do the song justice," Slaubaugh said. "... They are genuine characters, and I feel like everyone knows a Barb and Sheila, so it's been really fun for us."

She said "Our main reason we love to play music is to bring people joy or distract them from life's daily wear and tear on you," Slaubaugh said. "I think music is one of the things that lets people escape and embrace people together."





ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY

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2025-26

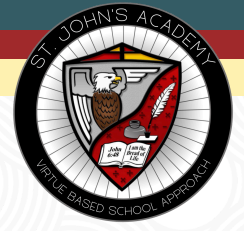


Save the Date

HOPE DINNER & AUCTION
OCTOBER 24TH 2026



“Encourage one another and build each other up.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11



Community of Saints



Learn more about our Community of Saints Program on our website!
stjohnsacademynd.org



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Our Mission:

*St. John's Academy provides academic excellence in a Catholic environment
to inspire lives reflective of the Gospel.*



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St. John's Academy Eagles

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