



The Cross and Community

A Holy Cross Academy Newsletter



Issue No. 16 | October 2026



Family Faith Reflection:

October brings cooler days, colorful leaves, and a reminder of the beauty that comes with change. As our school year continues and schedules grow busier, this month invites us to slow down and notice the many ways God is present in our everyday lives.

October is also the month of the Holy Rosary, making it a wonderful time to bring prayer into your family's routine. Consider praying a decade of the Rosary together in the car, before bed, or on the way to an activity. Even a few moments praying together can help build habits of faith. This month, encourage your family to make prayer

a daily routine. Look for opportunities to see God not only in the big moments, but also in the simple, routine ones.

Scripture Reflection

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." — Psalm 107:1

May October remind us to approach each day with grateful hearts, trusting in God through every season, and sharing His love with those around us.

faith

Letter From Head Principal Mrs. Hunter

Though the temperatures of late have been deceiving, we are officially in my favorite season of the year. The crisp texture of the air, the crunch of leaves on the ground, the beauty of the light as flames dance in a backyard firepit, it all helps me breathe in a little more deeply and see with a clearer mind. Don't let that imagery fool you though, our campuses are still bustling with activity! October and November will see Grandparents Day at both the Intermediate and Middle School campuses, a Middle School Open House, HCPA's Trunk or Treat event, the annual canned food drive, Halloween parties, the end of our first trimester, class field trips, parent teacher conferences, Thanksgiving break, the start of Advent, and our largest fundraiser of the year: our Legacy Gala.

As I sit in meetings, help make plans, and navigate this leadership role, I often find myself thinking about the Saints of the Church who founded Religious Orders, hospitals, and also schools. They did so with remarkable faith - trusting that the Lord would provide for both the needs they could foresee and the ones they couldn't. And He did just that. The stories of His providence are abundant. The boldness with which those people followed the Lord's call, embraced the mission above the challenges, and rejoiced in His provision are an inspiration, yes, but also a reminder that

the work we do does not belong to us; it is His.

This vibrant community has so much to recognize, celebrate, and offer to the families we serve. The Legacy Gala is one important way that we do that, and it is also essential to our future together. We need your support to make this year's event a success. Please consider giving as you are able. We pray many prayers similar to the ones I imagine coming from the hearts of those great Saints. This is one way you can be an answer to those prayers for the people of Holy Cross Academy.

Gratefully,

Ms. Melissa Hunter
Head Principal
Holy Cross Academy



It's Gala Time!

Legacy Award Winners

Each year at the Legacy Gala, HCA recognizes individuals who exemplify our core values of Faith Formation, Academic Excellence, Community, Social Justice, and Stewardship. These special awards honor those whose dedication and service have made a lasting impact on our students, families, parishes, and HCA community.

We are proud to announce and celebrate this year's Legacy Award recipients!

Our Lady of Providence : Margie and Doug Allen

Annunciation : Rick Wedel

Seven Holy Founders: Mike and Maryanne Twellman

St. Michael the Archangel: Jon Givens

Holy Cross Academy : Amy Puckett

Tickets

Be sure to purchase your tickets before they sell out! Click [here](#) to buy your tickets or a table.

This Year's Fund-A-Need: HCA Community Cares Fund

At this year's Legacy Gala, our Fund-A-Need will support the HCA Community Cares Fund, created to provide tuition assistance to families who need additional support to make a Holy Cross Academy education possible for their children. Every gift to the HCA Community Cares Fund goes directly toward helping HCA families with tuition assistance—ensuring that financial circumstances do not stand in the way of a child experiencing the faith, community, and education that make HCA so special.

Raffles

Purchase raffle tickets [here](#)! Do not need to be present at the Gala to win.



It's Gala Time!

Live Auction Sneak Peek

Escape to Paradise: 7 Nights of Gulf-Front Luxury in Perdido Key



STL Sports Package - Premium tickets to see the STL sports: baseball, hockey, soccer, and basketball



The Best of The Hill: Dinner for 8 at Favazza's on the Hill



Silent Auction Sneak Peak

The Sensory Station



All Inclusive Suite Tickets - STL Blues



1 Pew at 8th Grade Graduation (x3)



Holy Cross Happenings

Mrs. Pancella at Powel Hall

Congratulations to our PreK-5 music teacher, Mrs. Pancella, who is among a select group of local music educators chosen to sing at a special concert with the St. Louis Symphony! This is the first time the "Extra Credit" program has been open to vocal/general music teachers. The concert will take place on November 1 and is open to the public. Get your tickets [here](#).

Service in Action

The handmade blankets created by our students at All Academy were recently delivered to two wonderful organizations: Family Forward, which supports foster and adoptive children and families, and Mother of Good Counsel Home, a Catholic skilled nursing facility cared for by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George. Both organizations were incredibly grateful to receive the blankets - especially knowing they were made with love by our HCA students.



Girl Scouts Spaghetti Dinner

Scouting America Troop 725G is hosting a Spaghetti Dinner+sides Fundraiser on **Saturday, October 24th** 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Seven Holy Founders Parish Hall. \$12/adult, \$8/child. Dine in or carry out available! Cash, check or card accepted.

Upcoming Events

October 17 - Trunk or Treat

October 18 - Middle School Open House

October 23 - Faith Family Rosary Day

October 25 - HCA choir sings at SHF

October 29 - Dad's and Donuts for ECEC

October 30 - No school, Teacher PD

November 2 - Uniform Resale

November 4 - Intermediate Campus Grandparents Day

November 6 - Trimester 1 report cards live

November 7 - HCA Legacy Gala & Auction

November 13 - No school, parent/teacher conferences

November 20 - DOT Day (Dress Out Today)

November 23 - No school, Teacher PD

November 24-27 - Thanksgiving break, no school

HAPPY
HALLOWEEN

We can all be part of Lu's Crew

October is Rett Syndrome Awareness Month. Two of our Eighth Grade students, Gita Anbukumar and Will Berry, sat down with Mr. Faust to learn more about this syndrome and how we, as a HCA community, can be more aware and supportive.

One in about 15,000 girls are diagnosed with Rett Syndrome. Mr. Faust's daughter, Lucy, is one of those girls. She was diagnosed at about one year old and today she's three years old and in preschool. Lucy can't walk or talk and often clasps her hands subconsciously. On the outside, it might appear as though she doesn't know what's going on around her, but she can actually fully understand what's happening around her.

When Lucy was born she was just like any baby and began making noises and rolling over. However, she never started crawling and Mr. Faust and his wife knew something was wrong. She was diagnosed and lost the ability to say any words she formerly could. Even though she has Rett, she is still a regular toddler. She wakes up, her parents help her get ready, she eats breakfast, and goes to school. After school, her grandma picks her up and they hang out until one of her parents can pick her up. She can do all these things a typical toddler does, sometimes it just takes longer. For instance, she talks using an eye-gaze device that tracks what she is looking at and says the word or phrase. It allows her to communicate even though she cannot speak or use sign language. When someone looks at Lucy, Mr. Faust says he wants them to see a kind, funny girl who's just like them. And in a lot of ways, she is. She can fully understand things, it just takes her longer to communicate and express her thoughts. Mr. Faust's wife, an occupational therapist, says "presume competence" and give people with disabilities a little more time to participate. Just because someone's brain or body works differently doesn't make anyone better or worse. When interviewed, Mr. Faust stated that having Lucy is a nice reminder to slow down sometimes. In this world, we're bombarded with constant noise and dopamine. With Lucy, they have to be very intentional with their time. She is a good reminder to slow down and enjoy the little things. Lucy was diagnosed about 6 months before Mr. Faust started at HCA and he feels it's shaped him to be a better, present person because

he's used to taking time with the things his daughter needs, and he can use those skills to help students in need, too. God has helped guide him through the difficulties of raising a child with a disability. There are lots of hard moments that come with being human, and Lucy has helped make him able to take a minute for prayer and ask God for help.

There is currently no cure for Rett Syndrome, however, Lucy takes medication that reduces flare ups of symptoms and complications with Rett Syndrome. Gene therapy is also something that is being studied. Gene therapy introduces a good copy of the gene that causes Rett in the body. And hopefully, the body replicates the unmutated gene and gets rid of the other mutations. It's still in trial, but it might work and become a cure in the future.

Rett Syndrome is one of many genetic disorders. Lucy will likely be the only person any of us know with Rett Syndrome in our lives. Even if you do meet someone with Rett, they will probably be very different and have different complications because Rett has such a wide spectrum. Despite this, there are still many people that are very similar to Lucy, who can fully comprehend what's happening around them, they just need some time to respond. It isn't just about helping people with Rett Syndrome though, it's about helping and including anyone with a disability. So remember the golden rule and treat others as you would want to be treated, and with respect.

Mr. Faust's family and friends form a team, Lu's Crew, each year to participate in an annual Stroll-a-thon. You can check out the Lu's Crew Facebook page to learn more about Rett Syndrome and the Faust family's journey. "Know Rett. See the person. Know the story."

<https://www.facebook.com/share/19WiPWh2h4/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Faculty & Staff Corner

Q & A with Mr. Warren Fajatin

What is your role at HCA?

Middle School Math Teacher

What is the most rewarding part of working in education?

Helping students

What advice would you give to a new student or family at HCA?

Do not be afraid. The students and staff are very friendly and are willing to help.

If you could have dinner with any person, living or deceased, who would it be?

My wife

What is your go-to comfort food?

Filipino food

What was your favorite subject in school?

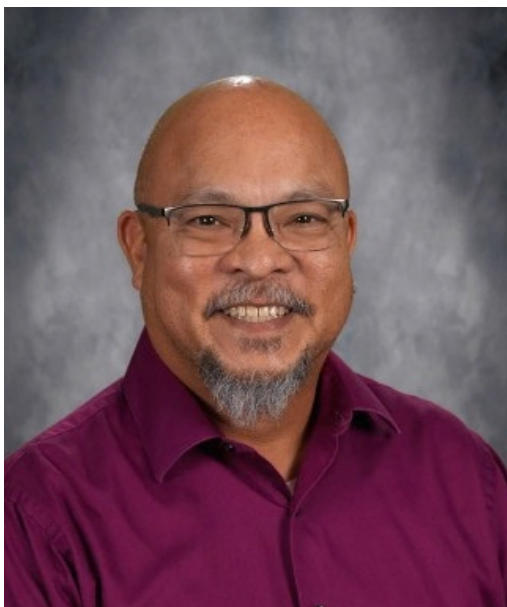
Music

If you could have any celebrity as a co-teacher, who would it be?

Will Ferrell

Summer or winter?

Summer



Q & A with Mrs. Jen Rutherford

What is your role at HCA?

Middle School Science Teacher

What is the most rewarding part of working in education?

The lightbulb moments when students make connections between what we study and their own lives

If you could have dinner with any person, living or deceased, who would it be?

The original cast of Harry Potter

What is a lesson your students have taught you?

To laugh a lot and give others a lot of grace

What is your go-to comfort food?

Warm chocolate chip cookies

What was your favorite subject in school?

Science and choir

What saint would you most like to meet?

St. Maria Goretti



From the Pews



"Sharing the Good News" Program

Thank you for celebrating Commitment Sunday with us this weekend. Your commitment to our parish through our "Sharing the Good News" Program will continue to bring life to our community. If completing your Commitment Card was not possible at Mass, you may visit our parish website at www.annolp.org and complete an electronic Commitment Card or you can mail your card to the church.

Our goal is 100% participation! Thank you for your generosity and support of Annunciation Catholic Church!

You may also scan the QR code to fill out a commitment card.



Sportsball!

Trivia-Night Fundraiser to benefit Our Lady of Providence

SATURDAY, OCT. 17 | OLP GYM

Doors 6:30, Game 7:30

**\$25 seat
\$200 Table of 8**

**Bevs Provided
BYO Welcome**

St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry

"I was hungry and you gave me food."

Faithful Shopper's List/Pantry Needs:

Powder sugar	Canned Tomales
Brown sugar	Canned beef stew
Turkey gravy	Canned fruit cocktail

Please place items in the donation bin, located on the north side of the parish offices, between the school playground and the patio, **by Friday, October 16**

Thank you for your support of our neighbors in need! If you would like to learn more about becoming a Faithful Shopper, please send an email to Joanne Murphy, tasmurph@yahoo.com or to Rita Feeney, at rrjdjd@yahoo.com.

Please, no clothes or shoes!

Holy Cross Parents Association

Hello from HCPA

We're off to a great start to the school year! HCPA kicked off the year with our first meeting, where parents shared wonderful ideas for engaging our school community and raising funds for Holy Cross Academy.

We also hosted Mom's Night Out, bringing moms from across the Academy together for a fun evening of connection and community.

We're helping our Middle School shine by providing funds for refreshments and swag for their upcoming Open House.

We're excited for all that's ahead! A list of volunteer opportunities can be found [here](#). Some upcoming events still needing chairs and/or volunteers are:

Uniform Resale (Volunteers)

- Faculty and Staff Lunch for Parent/Teacher Conferences (Chair and Volunteers)
- Christmas Collection (Volunteers for Primary, Middle School and All Academy)
- Santa's Workshop (Primary Campus Chair and Volunteers).

Email hcpa@hca-stl.org with any questions about events, expectations, and/or new ideas.

Let's work together to make the holiday season amazing for our students and families!

Mark Your Calendars

Trunk or Treat | Saturday, October 17 | 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. for ECEC/6:00 p.m.– 7:00 p.m. for K-8 | ECEC Campus

We look forward to seeing all registered families for some spooky fun. Decorate your trunk and dress up in your best costume. This year both ECEC and K-8 will award prizes for best trunk AND best costume. Parking sign for your windshield has been sent home with one of your children in their Friday folder. Please enter the ECEC parking lot from Pebble Hill Drive. Any last-minute questions about the event, please email hcpa@hca-stl.org.

Uniform Resale | Monday, November 2 | 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. | Primary Campus

The Fall Uniform Resale will take place on Monday, November 2 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Note: We're experimenting with a weekday evening resale to help those families who said Sundays were difficult to make.) Uniform Resale is a great time to gear up for the next season, but also an opportunity to clear the closets of gently worn, outgrown items. Donations can be dropped off at any campus October 26 – 29.

Lunch for Faculty and Staff at Parent/Teacher Conferences | November 12

Volunteers are needed to coordinate and deliver lunch for Faculty/Staff at the various campuses on Parent/Teacher Conference Day. This is an easy way to show appreciation for our HCA educators. [Sign up here](#).

HCPA Quarterly Meeting | Wednesday, November 18 | 7:00 p.m. | ECEC Campus

Join us for our next Holy Cross Parents Association meeting. Learn about upcoming events and the efforts we sponsor throughout the year, find out how you can get involved and get to know others in the HCA community. There will also be refreshments and attendance prizes. See you there!

Christmas Collection for Staff and Administration

Details will be sent in mid-November about the Christmas Collection for Staff and Administration at the ECEC, Primary, and Intermediate Campuses, and Staff, Administration and Faculty at the Middle School Campus. Volunteers are still needed to assist for several roles. [Sign up here.](#)

Santa's Workshop | Thursday, December 10 | Primary and Intermediate Campuses

Primary and Intermediate students will have the opportunity to shop for special gifts for their family and loved ones- right at school! Gifts are affordably priced and volunteers will be on hand to help students choose their treasures. More info will be sent later this month, but we're still recruiting a chair for the Primary Campus and volunteers for both Primary and Intermediate Campuses. This is a special opportunity to see the magic of Christmas through the eyes of our students!

Mom's Night Out

We also hosted Mom's Night Out, bringing moms from across the Academy together for a fun evening of connection and community. Special thanks to Elizabeth Syberg, Julie Seyer and Alison Lubischer for hosting!




**Ladies
NIGHT**