



## **Highland Catholic School 2057: Viable Christian School or a Faded Memory?**

Applied School Project  
Van Lunen Fellows Program  
July 2008

By Jane Schmidt, Principal

## Highland Catholic School 2057: Viable Christian School or a Faded Memory?

Highland Catholic School is a K-8 Catholic School, of 460 students, located in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota. It is the parish school of Lumen Christi Catholic Community. In addition to the strong core curriculum, programming includes specialist classes in Art, Technology, Music (K-5), Performing Arts (6-8), Library Skills, Spanish and Physical Education.

Highland Catholic School is a Christ-centered community that welcomes and challenges everyone to learn and grow. Our size is small enough for each child to be known yet large enough to offer a depth of programming.

**Project Goal:** To develop new revenue streams, create marketing strategies and study the long-range needs of the facility. These challenges were put before the HCS School Committee in fall 2007.

- Subcommittees were formed around facilities, marketing, and development
- Talented and generous parents were identified and recruited to offer expertise

### **Goals of subcommittees:**

- **Marketing:** Develop new logo, print materials, establish a relationship with feeder programs
- **Development:** Establish annual giving campaign, explore possible off-site pre-school, re-vitalize endowment giving, create opportunity for on-line giving
- **Facilities:** Evaluate the facility, create long-range plan for updating, explore funding (possible capital campaign)

**Project Results:** Great things happened!

### ❖ **Facilities:**

- sniff tests revealed four areas of concern: outer envelope, HVAC, electrical upgrades and safety upgrades
- presentation to Parish Finance Committee secured \$20,000 for necessary analysis and planning
- secured a commitment for a capital campaign for full-funding of projects
- signed a contract with BWBR architects to prepare full report with attention to codes, autoCADdrawings, and environmental review-Summer 08

### ❖ **Development:**

- annual marathon fundraiser was re-designed as an annual campaign
- creation of an alumni association
- opened co-card account to allow online giving
- developed text and categories for on-line giving
- Parish Finance Committee agreed to include endowment giving as a piece of the upcoming capital campaign

### ❖ **Marketing:**

- a new logo was created and launched
- a full-color ten page booklet was created for interested families and new parishioners
- a five-fold pamphlet was created for mailing
- principal and kindergarten teachers visited all 19 feeder preschool programs with materials and a picture book gift

## **What We Have Learned**

### **Successes:**

- Transforming the School Committee from a policy-making group to project-based subcommittees was a good paradigm shift. The marketing pieces and updated logo were much needed.
- The comprehensive review of facilities will allow the creation of a long-term plan *and ensure that HCS will be viable for the next generation.*

### **Challenges:**

- Though all of the pieces are assembled, our current website provider has been unable to launch our online giving program. It appears that will happen in August 2008.
- HCS has set aside plans for an off-site preschool. An adjacent house was on the market this year, but a review by an architect revealed major difficulties with building codes. The renovations were simply cost prohibitive.
- A parent offered to provide guidance in the use of on-line social networking available for new marketing strategies. I will pursue that opportunity during the next school year.