

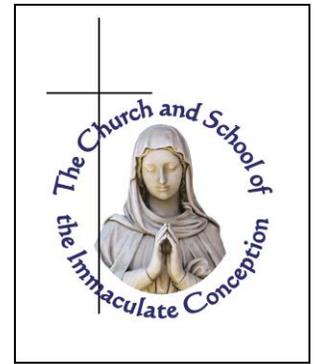
## **A 4G Plan: God, Gifts, Gratitude, Growth**

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### **What I did:**

Immaculate Conception School (ICS) serves a diverse population of students, PreK-Grade 8 in a first-tier suburb of Minneapolis. Established in 1939 by a parish community of faithful Catholics desiring Catholic education for their children, the school has undergone significant change in the last decade as families moved from the area, parish membership decreased in numbers, and there were overall changes in community demographics. After participating in a sustainability review process in 2010-11, ICS needed a plan that would address the decrease in student enrollment and establish strategies to reach out to parishioners, alumni and friends of the school to build relationships and increase fundraising efforts.

I developed a marketing and outreach plan with strategies around our theme for the year: *IC is 4G! God, Gifts, Gratitude, Growth.*

### **What did I learn?**

I learned that many people want the school to be successful and carry on its strong traditions. These people include parishioners, alumni, current school families, and Friends of ICS. When we communicate the gifts that a school like ICS provides to children, people want to see it thrive. Asking many for support through donations and prayer is a strategy that must be ongoing and become a way of life for sustainable change.

Marketing strategies utilized were many in number, yet it was not always clear which one(s) made the difference for a family to decide to enroll. Frequently, it is "word of mouth" from parents of current or former students that makes a lasting impression on people and prompts them to contact the school.

Building and nurturing relationships with donors and members of the school community does take significant time, but the relationships established are sustaining to the school.

Maintaining our foundation of a school committed to Faith, Academics and Service is vital to sustainability. Yet, being open and able to try new approaches in academics, marketing and outreach is important to encourage growth in the school.

### **What Difference Did It Make?**

- Growth in student enrollment and fundraising has increased and with that, there is an atmosphere of possibility and positivity for the future.
- We now have a good selection of and experience in marketing strategies to reference as resources.
- ICS experienced a 44.8% increase from our goals for money raised in our three main fundraisers and a 41.9% increase in these fundraisers from 2011-12 to 2012-13.
- We established and/or continued to nurture relationships with donors including Alumni, Friends of ICS and Parishioners. These relationships foster growth in future alumni activities and donations to the school.