

GEIBEL

The Geibel Family Newsletter • Fall 2013



Bishop Lawrence Brandt blesses
the newly renovated Geibel Chapel

GEIBEL ... A School of Excellence • A School of Faith • A School of Tradition •
A School of Service • A School of Joy • A School of Character • A School of Spirit
GEIBELCATHOLIC.ORG

Newly Remodeled Geibel Chapel Is Blessed by Bishop Brandt

At a special Mass at the end of May, Bishop Lawrence Brandt blessed the newly remodeled second-floor chapel, promising to return to dedicate it in the near future. Bishop Brand has chosen to name the chapel after Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who has not yet been canonized a saint.

Born in Italy in 1901, Frassati was a social activist who devoted his life to prayer, charitable works, and social movements to benefit the poor. He died of polio at the young age of 24 and was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1990. The Bishop chose Frassati because he wanted to name the chapel after a young person who was dedicated to serving others – someone whom the Geibel student body could emulate. Bishop Brandt is awaiting Vatican permission to dedicate the chapel in the name of Frassati. The Bishop mentioned that Frassati, a mountain climber and skier, is known for his motto “Toward the Top.” Principal Don Favero has added this motto to the Geibel crest.

Bishop Brandt concelebrated the Mass with Geibel Chaplain Rev. Robert T. Lubic '84. Fr Bob has been working tirelessly for the past four years to obtain the funding necessary to refurbish the chapel. In addition to new flooring, ceiling, and lighting, the chapel features beautiful stained glass windows, mosaic Stations of the Cross plaques, angel statues, altar furnishings, and a pulpit – all items from the former Holy Trinity Parish in Connelssville. The chapel's processional cross is a gift from St. Anne Parish, Rostraver. Seventy plush chairs were also donated.

Bishop Brandt acknowledged the support of the many generous benefactors who contributed to the renovation project and is pleased that the treasures from the former Holy Trinity Parish have found a new home. “This new chapel is a reflection of the exemplary way in which the Geibel community has once again come together to put the finishing touches on the renovations at Geibel with a space for the Lord's eucharistic presence on this campus.”



Photos courtesy of Gerry Solan/gerard photography inc

Canonization Prayer for Pier Giogio Frassati

O merciful God,
Who through the perils of the world
deigned to preserve by Your grace
Your servant Pier Giorgio Frassati
pure of heart and ardent of charity,
listen, we ask You, to our prayers and,
if it is in Your designs that he be
glorified by the Church,
show us Your will,
granting us the graces we ask of You,
through his intercession,
by the merits of Jesus Christ,
Our Lord. Amen."

IMPRIMATUR, 1932

+Maurillo, Archbishop of Turin



A month before his death at the age of 24, Pier Giorgio Frassati and some of his friends had been climbing in the Val di Lanzo, where some difficult points had to be overcome by climbing or by using a double rope. On the photo which shows him holding onto the rock gazing up toward his goal, he later wrote the words, "Verso l'alto"; in English, "toward the top." It is a short phrase which was the synthesis of his way of life: always seeking what enhances, that which carries us beyond ourselves, toward the best we can be as people, toward the best of ourselves. It is to strive toward perfection of life; in other words, toward sainthood. It means to strive toward the source of life: God.

GEIBEL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

~ Class of 1972 ♦ 40th Reunion ~



The Class of '72 celebrated its 40th Reunion on October 20, 2012. Seated, left to right: Debbie (Molinaro) Gephart, Marian (Kaminsky) Klocek, Karen Nakles, Denise (Thomas) Wilcox, Marian (Gasbarro) Cadwallader, Goldie (Malone) Lohr, Debbie (Vecchio) Petrowski; Standing, left to right: Tina (Martinchalk) Martin, Angela (LaCaffinie) Means, Michele (Tulley) Mc Ardle, Cathy Cunningham, Kathy (Davare) Roth, David Bednarowicz, Paula Rendine, Tony Donato, Chuck Cronin and David Mullaney..



In Memoriam

We offer our heartfelt prayers and sympathy to the families of these deceased alumni:

Charles Widmer, I.C. '40
May 12, 2013

Eugene Galiardi, I.C. '41
March 27, 2013

Mary (Dunaway) Zavatchen
I.C. '51. May 25, 2013

Robert L. Childs '64
December 3, 2012

Tom McGinnis '64
May 9, 2013

Michael Wisilosky '69
September 10, 2012

Christine (Cavalier) Wagner '71
March 1, 2013

Clay Shuder '79
August 24, 2012

James Hood II '79
December 27, 2012

Linda Koval '80
October 12, 2012

Timothy Kaczynski '82
October 10, 2012

Seth O'Donnell '04
January 4, 2013

Class Notes

1983 Robert Cellich has been living in the Tampa Bay, FL area for twelve years. For the past 7 years, he has been working for General Dynamics Information Technology, leading a team that staffs positions worldwide. Rob is married and has two children, ages 9 and 7.

1986 Gilbert Perez, M.D., Board Certified in Family Medicine, recently opened an office at the Family Health and Wellness Center at Laurel Mall in Connellsville.

2001 Natalie Monaco, D.D.S., was named to Pittsburgh's 50 Finest and was featured on the website of Whirl Magazine. The 50 Finest are 50 of Pittsburgh's most accomplished men and women selected on the basis of activity in the community and success in their careers. They also raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Natalie often volunteers her services in communities that have poor access to dental care. She is a graduate of the West Virginia University School of Dentistry and completed her residency at UPMC Presbyterian. Dr. Monaco currently is the managing clinical director for Nathan Laughrey's P.C. Aspen Dental in Cranberry. She is a member of the American Dental Association and recently joined the Altar Rosary Society at her parish in Uniontown.

2006 Ben Chambers, a graduate of St. John's College in Annapolis, MD is working at TRACE International, Inc. in Annapolis. TRACE offers anti-corruption solutions for international businesses, and Ben is currently working on a new tool that the company is designing to vet large supply chain networks.

2007 Amy Staffieri received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in May 2013 from Wheeling Jesuit University. She received her BS in Psychology from the same university in 2011. At the time of her email, Amy was planning to return to the Mon-Valley area to practice in an in-patient or skilled nursing setting.

2009 Nina Martinelli has been accepted to the Juris Doctor program at Duquesne University School of Law for the 2013-14 school year. Nina received her undergraduate degree in criminal justice from Duquesne in May.

Wedding Bells

*Congratulations
and many blessings
to these newly-married couples:*

Aaron Franczyk '01
and Claire Marshall,
July 7, 2012

Shannon Barker '02
and David Cuneo,
June 29, 2013

Dana Pawlikowsky '04
and Philip Scabis,
August 18, 2012

Katelyn Hunyady '07
and Michael McLaughlin,
August 25, 2012



2013 graduate Olivia Rakas is the recipient of the prestigious Geibel Alumni Award. This award has been presented to the most outstanding senior student for 33 consecutive years.

National Catholic Magazine Recognizes Geibel's Academic Program

“Our Sunday Visitor”, a national Catholic publication, featured Geibel Catholic in the Spring 2013 issue, highlighting its Formation through Advanced Catholic Education and Scholarship (FACES) program. This is the school’s college-in-high school program, affording students the opportunity to obtain college credit through Seton Hill University, Saint Vincent College, Mt. Aloysius College, or La Roche College. Seventeen three-credit courses are currently offered to Juniors and Seniors, and students receive an official college transcript upon completion of the course. Classes are taught by Geibel Catholic teachers and include advanced work in math, science, foreign languages, English, history, art, and the performing arts. Several recent Geibel graduates earned enough credits to enter Duquesne University and Penn State University as sophomores. 2013 grad Olivia Rakas will enter Seton Hill University in the fall with 36 credits to her name. The courses are offered for a minimal fee, which means a great financial savings of college costs for parents. Principal Don Favero commented “What a family pays out for a Geibel education, they will get back in academic award money or advanced placement in college.” Geibel will expand its offerings for the upcoming school year with evening classes in Accounting and Intro to Helping Professions.



Not Your Average Field Trip!

(Photo at right) Mary (Ruggieri '79) Dreliszak, Director of Program Development for The Challenge Program (TCP), organized a tour of Google Pittsburgh and the TechShop for Geibel students who serve on the program's advisory board. Pictured front row, from left are Gabi Omatick, Kaylee Ermine, Haley Solan, and Dreliszak. Second row, from left are Thomasine (Laskaris '69) Rose, Math teacher and Dean of Planning and Operations at Geibel, Joanna Medofer, Rachel Elias, Julia Alvarez, Charlie Hunter, TCP Special Projects Coordinator, Matthew Emerson, and Mario Ruggieri. Students agreed that this was one of the best field trips ever!



2013 Commencement Address by Janine Mutnansky Fiesta, Esq. '64 Distinguished Geibel Alumni Commencement Speaker



The American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said “Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Many commencement speakers focus upon this message for the future. After all, commencement means ‘to begin’ not ‘to end’---and you are about to begin the next phase of your life

Whether it is in to the job market or further education, there are new adventures, challenges, sorrows, joys and opportunities in your future---opportunities your parents and grandparents could only imagine. I often look at my 13 year old grandson and wonder what his path will be. At least one of you will be a pioneer, as I was.

There are choices you will make that will influence that future, yet there will be circumstances beyond your control that will also influence your future.

I want to talk with you a little about what you can control and how you have been prepared to deal with what you cannot control.

I want to talk with you about your past (you may have heard your parents or grandparents begin a story to you with the words “back in the day”---someday you will use that same phrase when speaking to your children and grandchildren). A practical friend asked me what practical advice I would give you. I said I worked my way through college as a waitress—my advice is always

remember to tip big, you never know whose college education you are helping to pay for!

Today, even at your tender young ages, you do have a past. And a past that is very important. You have a family, you have friends, you have an education, you have a history and you have a set of values and knowledge that have prepared you for both the choices you will make and just as importantly, how you will handle those circumstances that are beyond your control---whether they are personal, marriage, children, job -related, natural disasters or national events.

Each generation has its own unique challenges as a generation—whether it was the Great Depression, World War II, the Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan wars or acts of terrorism in America--each generation is influenced by those unforeseeable and unplanned for events.

I remember vividly sitting in a classroom with my high school classmates the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated---the sense of shock and bewilderment we felt. I remember the classmates who sat next to me in that class, on that day, November, 1963. One of those classmates, my friend Paul Whipkey is here today. There will be moments like those that will be forever etched in your memory.

For your parents it may be the loss of the World Trade Center, for your grandparents the bombing of Pearl Harbor, we are all shaped by world events and sometimes our personal futures are directed as well---some of you may select a military career that is a continuation of a family history or tradition.

I recently read a book published by a young Dutch man in the Netherlands who was describing what his family had done during World War II to save Americans who had been shot down in an American warplane over his family farm. These brave Dutch people had rescued the two young Airmen who survived the crash, hid them in their home from the German soldiers until they recovered from those injuries, and eventually smuggled them out of the country. One of those two young airman was Joseph Sulkowski, my uncle from Everson.

I initially chose a career as a nurse to follow in the footsteps of my three aunts from Everson who were all nurses and important role models in my life. This was a clear path in front of me and one I never regretted. I graduated from Carlow College, married, daughter Melissa was born, worked as a nurse in Pittsburgh hospitals and several years later applied to Duquesne Law School.

Now I began to go where there was no path.

The Dean of the Law School back then, John Sciuillo, was fascinated by the idea of a nurse-lawyer graduating from his law school. He joined a long list of teachers in my life, beginning with Sisters of the Holy Ghost in Everson, the Benedictine nuns here at Geibel, the religious and lay teachers at Carlow who provided unlimited encouragement and support for both following the path and going where there was no path.

After completing law school I accepted a position with a large hospital system in Allentown, PA and began my career as a nurse-lawyer specializing in Health Care Law. In addition to that 30-year career, I published 4 books for nurses on legal issues and over 100 articles. My writings were utilized all over the country in colleges to teach young nurses. As I became known for my publications, I increasingly received speaking invitation and presented over 3000 programs both nationally and internationally that I still continue today.

My roots had guided my future.

Family and Friends remained an important part of my entire life, here in western PA and elsewhere. I do not have brothers and sisters but I visit my special cousin in Pittsburgh often and his daughter who is my godchild in Ohio. I also visit my special cousin, Agnes Rerko who is here with her family tonight to celebrate the graduation of her granddaughter, Shelby Grundy. I see my college roommate who lives in New Jersey often—her daughter is one of my god-daughters. We have a group of 8 college friends who get together annually for several days to vacation and catch-up. I see my high school friends as often as possible.

I have many happy memories of my high school days here---initially at the Immaculate Conception high school building in Connellsville and then the momentous day we ‘paraded’ to our new school-Father Geibel High—albeit for only a few months—that beautiful new state-of-the-art building---and we now had our very own gym! My husband, who played basketball for Mt. Pleasant, still has memories of playing in the old gym which had beams in the center of the gym which had to be avoided as you dribbled to avoid concussion. My classmates and I were so very proud to be the first graduating class from the New School. The year after my graduation my mother, Sophie Mutnansky, became the first cafeteria manager at Geibel and I continued to follow closely all Geibel activities until her retirement many years later.

As you begin this next phase of your life, you will carry many memories with you---as you find your own path, know that you will meet angels in human form who will place their hands on your shoulders to help in your individual journey and in return you are required to remember and hold dear those who are with you here today, parents, family, teachers and friends—they are part of your path—provide the precious gift of your time to those who shaped the roots of who you are today and who you will be tomorrow-live the life of compassion for others and generosity of spirit.

What you will remember 50 years from today in addition to your accomplishments---and perhaps more importantly---are the lives you touched along the way. So today, take your past with you, cherish it and water the roots that are already in place as you find the beaten or unbeaten path that will become your own. Remember to leave a trail for others to follow.

This is a very special speaking invitation for me and I am honored to have been your Commencement speaker.

On behalf of the first graduating class of Geibel, congratulations and best wishes to all of you, the class of 2013 .

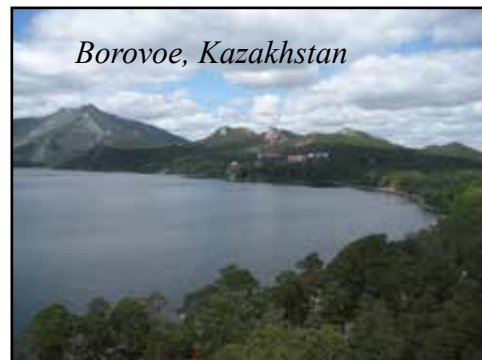
Caroline Gessner '06 Recounts Life as Peace Corps Volunteer in Kazakhstan

Carrie Gessner '06, daughter of Susan (Czajkowski '73) and Rick Gessner graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 2010 with a B.A. in English, an additional major in Social and Cultural History, and a minor in Environmental Studies. Since returning from the Peace Corps, she has been working full time. She started graduate school in January 2013 as a Peace Corps Fellow at Seton Hill University, studying in the Writing Popular Fiction program. In the program, she writes fantasy, but also enjoys writing literary fiction and other genres.

Her graduate school thesis will be a full-length manuscript of a novel, which she hopes to get published in the future. Carrie would like to find a career in a field related to what she has studied in order to support herself as a writer, and she would eventually like to do some additional traveling.

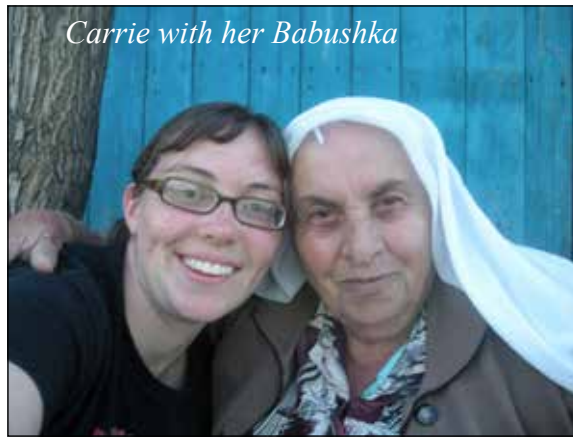
Whenever I mention I spent time in the Peace Corps in Kazakhstan, someone inevitably makes a Borat joke or asks, "Where's Kazakhstan again?" Even though it's sometimes challenging to explain why I made the decision to go or what my time there was like, I love talking about it. I chose to serve in order to help others and learn more about the world, but I also ended up experiencing some strange and amazing things and learning more about myself.

Peace Corps service consists of approximately three months of language and technical training followed by twenty-four months of individual service. My group of volunteers, the 23rd in Kazakhstan and known as the 23s, was placed in the program for teaching English as a second language. For training, I lived with a host family in Ecik, a moderately sized town about an hour away from Almaty, the country's largest city. In addition to cultural classes, teacher training, and language classes, we were treated to a school play by the elementary students, went to the Golden Man museum, and learned how to haggle at the bazaar, which I never quite got the hang of. We also had the opportunity to explore Almaty, including Ascension Cathedral, a Russian Orthodox cathedral in Panfilov Park, and Medeo, the highest-elevated ice-skating rink in the world, which can be reached by climbing over 700 steps (also by car, but that's not too adventurous). Peace Corps service





Carrie and her eighth grade class



Carrie with her Babushka



Sunset in Borovoe

offers countless new and interesting opportunities, and I learned quickly that it's up to volunteers to make the most of them.

We were lucky to arrive in the country only a few weeks before Nauryz, Kazakh New Year, and experience our host town's celebration. Men and women dress in traditional outfits. They play a lot of music, both English and local pop music as well as traditional, which often utilizes the dombra, a two-stringed instrument akin to the lute. There are yurts to dine in and lots and lots of food. The national dish is called beshbarmak: noodles, meat (often horse, but beef, pork, or chicken, too), potatoes, and onions. They also have a mouthwatering dessert called boursaki, which are, simply, fried dough. Delicious fried dough. This past March, I made these, along with plov, which is rice with boiled meat and carrots, and cucumber-and-tomato salad for my family members to introduce them to Kazakh food. The good thing is that it's generally easy to make; the bad thing is that recipes are somewhat difficult to find. However, it's possible to find a few on recipe websites. If you're intrigued and are looking for something new to eat, I would suggest plov, samsas (croissant-like pastries filled with cheese, meat, potatoes, etc.), or piroshky (fried buns filled with meat, potatoes, cabbage, etc.). As you can imagine, the meat-and-potatoes theme can get tiresome, especially as spices are generally not used. My babushka even used to tease me because I always brought salt to the table to give dinner a little more flavor.

Our country director was fond of telling us that our greatest asset in living in Kazakhstan would be flexibility, and we found out how right he was when we began teaching. English language classes are required in all schools, and some schools start English classes as early as second grade. I taught in secondary school, which is fifth grade through eleventh (there is no twelfth). The goal of the Peace Corps is not to take over jobs, but to assist country nationals in the learning and imposition of new tools. We worked with counterpart teachers and practiced a method called team teaching. Language education there heavily relies on memorization and translation, and our main goal was to practice different approaches to teaching within the classroom and to introduce our counterparts to these methods so that they could continue after we left. These included games, total physical response, group activities, the use of music and other activities, and an emphasis on speaking and listening rather than rote memorization.

Working with new coworkers was a challenge in itself, but limited language often contributed to that, and we even occasionally ran into resistance to try new methods. The school schedule was a trial in and of itself, as it would not be set until late fall. Every afternoon, I had to check which classes I'd be teaching the next day. This meant that instead of spending the weekend on lesson plans, I had to complete them the night before. Difficulties that came with living and teaching in a small village added to the confusion. My village was very close to two others, and the three often assisted one another. Much to my surprise, such cooperation involved my students traveling by bus to the next village over to help with the potato harvest. I walked into the classroom one afternoon after lunch and found no students. It happened the next day, and again and again, and my counterpart couldn't tell me when the potato picking would be done. Add in a six-day school week (students go to school on Saturdays), and it becomes exhausting in more ways than one, though also rewarding. The students were always very receptive to new games and activities, although they sometimes would like one so much that they refused to go on to the next. During the summer, I assisted at my school's camp, which was conducted mostly in Russian. I had an afternoon English class with the kids, and once I introduced them to Duck, Duck, Goose, it was impossible for a day to go by without playing it.

In addition to professional growing pains, personal ones came with the territory of living in a new country with new people and conversing in a new language. Every Peace Corps Volunteer experiences and expects trials. At about one million square miles (roughly four times the size of Texas and the ninth largest country in the world), Kazakhstan is a very large country. My first village, which boasted a population of about 1,000 people, was only an hour's bus ride away from the capital city, Astana, but difficult transportation conditions prevented me from visiting or being visited by nearby volunteers. Being present in the community helped with integration, but going months without seeing friends or having a conversation in English that isn't about school or the weather was isolating. On the days when lessons went poorly and one more word of Russian threatened to send your head spinning, chocolate and text-message jokes from fellow volunteers were the only things that kept us going.

Yet there were also rewards. The most satisfying was hearing a student's ambitions to learn better English in order to go to university and even study abroad one day. As we learned as we went along, the Peace Corps is not about changing the lives of your whole village or about altering the entire educational system. It's about changing one life, in our case, by teaching a student the communication tools they'll need in the future. And once we saw the good ripples we created in one life, it was that much easier to keep trying.

As you can tell, Peace Corps service is filled with many challenges. However, one of the best aspects of the Peace Corps is the friendships you form, both with fellow volunteers and host country nationals. It was easy to be charmed by the students, who wel-

came a new face in town and tried their hardest to impress you with their language skills. The more language we learned, the easier it was to converse with people of all ages, which led to some really great experiences. I lived in a boarding house where I met an older woman who would sit outside with me after school and tell me about her life. And once, when three fellow volunteers and I got lost on a short hiking expedition, a Kazakh man gave us directions and showed us the correct path. Above all, being thrown into a new country with fifty other strangers makes befriending them remarkably easy, and friendships made during new, scary experiences are friendships that last.

The Peace Corps often advertises itself as “the toughest job you’ll ever love.” Before I became a volunteer, even while I was planning to, that tagline always struck me as silly. Now, I believe it. Despite the hardships, or perhaps because of them, I carry good memories of my time in Kazakhstan, of the people I met and the unique experiences. I played in a basketball tournament with my village, held an eagle, learned a new language, ate horse meat, learned a few songs on the dombra, and made friends to last for a lifetime. Looking back, I also remember a valuable lesson that our Peace Corps Medical Officer taught us. A week or two into training, he tried to put us at ease by telling us a story about a very old man. He was so old that people often asked him the secret of his longevity. He would reply, “When it rains, I let it.” The lesson was simple—to take life as it comes, one day at a time, and, in the words of the Peace Corps, to be flexible. And when people ask me about my experience, that’s exactly what I tell them—I learned to let it rain.



Town of Kostani



Two Times a Gator

Two 2013 Geibel grads are children of Geibel alumni. Pictured from left following Baccalaureate Liturgy at St. John the Baptist, Scottsdale are Jeff Pindro '88, his son Christopher, Briannah Armstrong, and her parents Elissa (Richnafsky '94) Armstrong and Shawn Armstrong '93.



Mr. Don Favero, Principal

Highlights of the 2013 Commencement

The 50th Graduating Class and our Newest Alumni: The Class of 2013

Quotes from our 2013 student speakers:

Valedictorian Peyton McIntyre, “We are works in progress and have many more memories to make.”

Salutatorian Olivia Rakas, “Geibel Catholic has prepared us for the long journey ahead.”

Salutatorian Katie Catanzarite, “One of the most beautiful experiences I have had during a school Liturgy was to distribute the Eucharist to my teachers and peers.”



Peyton McIntyre



Olivia Rakas



Katie Catanzarite

Janine Mutnansky Fiesta, Esq. '64, Distinguished Alumni Commencement Speaker

A member of the first graduating class, Janine (Mutnansky) Fiesta '64 was welcomed back to Geibel on May 21, 2013 to impart words of wisdom and faith to the fiftieth graduating class of Geibel. Fiesta, currently working as a health care legal consultant, is a graduate of Duquesne University School of Law and received her BSN from Carlow University. She previously served as Director of the Health Care Division of the PA State Education Assn. and Vice President of the Dept. of Legal Services and Risk Management at Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network in Allentown, PA.

In her 30-year career, she has presented over four thousand seminars regarding Risk Management, Nursing Law, Medical Malpractice, Employment Law, Hospital Law, and Corporate Liability. She has presented programs in almost every state and internationally for numerous hospitals and professional associations. Fiesta has held faculty positions at Cedar Crest College, Villanova University, DeSales University, and Carlow University.



Janine Fiesta with Class of '64 classmates Chuck Shandorf and Paul Whipkey following commencement ceremonies.

Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School Celebrates **Fifty Years** of Excellence in Catholic Education

The green and white school colors of Geibel Catholic will include a special touch of gold this year, as January 6, 2014 marks the 50th Anniversary of Geibel Catholic. On this date back in 1964, students packed their books and belongings, marched up Crawford Avenue hill, and settled in to their new school.

We at Geibel are celebrating this milestone throughout this school year. As we reflect on our history, recognizing the breadth and strength of Geibel today, we can't help but wonder how our graduates feel about their time spent on our campus.

We invite you to share your favorite memories of your high school days. Stories from alumni and friends will add a richness and depth to our golden anniversary. Please take a moment and reflect on any experience you have had

at Geibel that made an impact on you. Your story, however short or long, in whatever form-- perhaps even a poem or artwork--will become a valued part of our history. We may even use some of the stories on various occasions during this year in our publications.

In addition to your stories, **we are also seeking copies of photos from 1964**

or newspaper articles regarding the opening of the school. If possible, please identify the people in the photos. Your stories, digital photos, or scans can be emailed to newsletter@geibelcatholic.org or mailed to Marian Cadwallader, Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, 611 E. Crawford Ave., Connellsville, PA 15425 by October 1, 2013. Thank you!



The Class of 2013



Missing from photo: Louis Hamel

Chris Dreliszak '12 Experiences Life in the "Land of the Rising Sun"

Thoughts on Studying Abroad in Japan

Christopher Dreliszak '12, son of Mary Margaret (Ruggieri '79) and Mark Dreliszak, will be a sophomore student at Point Park University this fall. He is majoring in Animation and Visual Effects and will continue to study the Japanese language through cross-registration with the University of Pittsburgh.

One year after graduating from Geibel, I would have never expected to be studying abroad in Japan. This year, I had the opportunity to study in Japan from June 11 to July 20 at Nagoya Gakuin University. For the first two weeks, those of us on the summer program attended Japanese language classes from 9am-5pm every weekday. Even though there were tedious amounts of work, we always found time to explore the city-life after class. The coursework and expectations were incredibly demanding, but the reward would soon follow. Two weeks later, we were fortunate to travel to many different cities, World Heritage Sites, and other historical locations. During my time studying, I stayed with two host-families in Hiroshima and Seto. They were all very kind-hearted people who welcomed me into their homes. Throughout our travels, we stopped and attended several English classes at Hiroshima Jogakuin University and even an international business class at Kobe College. Perhaps the most enlightening visit happened whenever I went to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. It was there that I stood under the hypocenter of the atomic bomb from World War II and listened to a survivor speak to us about her experiences. The museum painted a truly frightening and eye-opening picture of what the effects of the bomb were actually like. Outside of the museum there is a memorial dedicated to Sadako Sasaki and her 1000 paper cranes. It is a very interesting story that I think more people should be aware about.

After leaving Hiroshima, we returned to Nagoya Gakuin University for our final exams and to visit Taiho Primary School. At Taiho Primary, I sat in on a sixth-grade Japanese class and played basketball with the children during recess. Elementary school isn't much different in Japan, but the children are given many responsibilities. One of those responsibilities was to separate into small groups and clean the rooms of the school, without instructor supervision or having to be told what to do. They completed their work and had fun while doing it. I couldn't believe how much of a leadership role the kids wanted to have.

The places and cities I visited while on the summer program include: Nagoya-shi, Seto, Sakae, Shirakawago, Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kobe, Ginkakuji Temple, Eikando Zenrin-ji Temple, Nijō Castle, Kamigamo Jinja, Nagoya Castle, Kiyomizu Temple, Kintaikyo Bridge, any many more!

My adventure in Japan did not stop whenever the summer program ended. For the last nine days, I had stayed in Kasugai with a friend that I had made at Bowling Green State University. With my friend, I visited Tokyo, Shibuya, Harajuku, Shinjuku, Akihabara, Asakusa, and Odaiba. If anyone reading this is a baseball fan, I also had the chance to see Ichiro Suzuki's home in Kasugai. It's so big that I thought it was a historical landmark!

The view from the world's tallest tower, Tokyo Skytree, is breathtaking. When the sun sets and the lights of each building in Tokyo turn on, it's easy to realize how massive of a city it is. Additionally, I went to Tokyo Tower! I tried to convince my friends that I had gone to France whenever I sent them a photo of the tower.

Visiting historical sites, large cities, rotating sushi restaurants, traveling with my friend, and turning 20 in Japan has made this past summer one that I will never forget. I am not sure when I will have the chance to go back, but I hope it is very soon.

Studying abroad, no matter what country, is a truly amazing and life-changing experience. I encourage anyone with an interest in a foreign language to study abroad in college!



Christopher in the city of Nagoya-shi



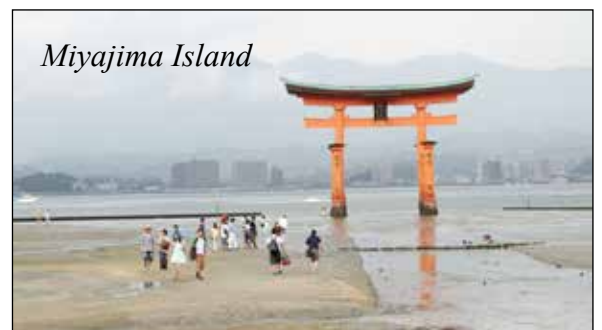
Nagoya Castle



Kyoto



Todai-ji Temple, Buddhist temple in Nara



Miyajima Island

Geibel Presents
Les Miserables as Spring Musical 2013
Mr. Nick Bell, Director





Les Mis
2013

National Honor Society Inducts New Members



(Front row, from left:) Angela Ehrhardt, Joanna Medofer, Rachel Elias, Julia Alvarez, Gabrielle Omatick; (back row, from left): Liz Mimis, Jonah Delmar, Neil Solan, Brandon Kushner, Patrick Teich, Patrick Nahhas. Absent from the picture is Young Rim Lee.

Stay in Touch.

Your Alumni Association wants to know where you are and what you are doing. Please use this form to update us about yourself so we may add your information to the upcoming issue of the Geibel Alumni Newsletter, or just email your updates, births, weddings and news to newsletter@GeibelCatholic.org.

Name (include maiden name) _____

Class Year _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Employer _____ Position _____

Is your Spouse a Geibel Alum? yes no Class Year _____

News for the Class Notes section of the next newsletter (attach separate sheet if needed).

I would like to receive the Geibel Alumni Newsletter electronically. Please send me an e-mail reminder when the latest issue is available on the Geibel Catholic website.

Print and mail to:
 Development Office
 Geibel Catholic High School
 611 East Crawford Avenue
 Connellsville, PA 15425

The Bridge Builder

An old man, going a lone highway,
came at the evening, cold and gray,
to a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
through which was flowing a sullen tide,
the old man crossed in the twilight dim –
that sullen stream had no fears for him;
but he turned, when he reached
the other side,
and built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength in building here,
Your journey will end with the ending day;
you never again must pass this way.
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
why build you the bridge at the eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head.
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today
a youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
to that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
good friend, I am building the bridge for him."

Will Allen Dromgoole



REMEMBER

the place that gave you a start in life?

share the opportunity

MANY GRADUATES SAY THAT GEIBEL – WITH ITS DISTINGUISHED FACULTY, EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS AND TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE – TRANSFORMED THEM INTO WHO THEY ARE TODAY. WHY NOT CONSIDER GIVING SOMETHING BACK TO YOUR LIFE-CHANGING ALMA MATER? PRINT OUT THIS FORM AND SEND IT WITH YOUR GIFT. YOU CAN ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO UPDATE YOUR FILE FOR OUR DATABASE.

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Maiden Name _____

Address _____

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