

The Catholic Voice

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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**CATHOLIC
SCHOOL FOR
HIS KIDS
AND ALL KIDS**

FACE chairman
Keith Cosbey is all in
for Catholic education

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**LEADERSHIP
IN CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS**


Principal
Joe Silveira
shares findings
of his study



The Cosbeys choose Catholic education...

and help other families make the same choice





Ten years ago, Keith Cosbey came face-to-face with FACE. As a partner in ChoiceLunch, the Danville-based company that provides lunches to schools throughout California, he had visited many Catholic schools in the Diocese of Oakland.

“I signed up St. Paschal, St. Joseph the Worker and St. Barnabas for ChoiceLunch,” he recalled. “I kept signing them up and they closed right after I signed them up.”

School closures didn’t sit well with Keith for more than business reasons.

“It wasn’t just here in Oakland. I’m from Buffalo, New York, a parish on every corner, and the same thing was happening there,” Keith said. “There had to be something out there addressing how to keep schools open.”

It turned out his across-the-street neighbor was connected to the Diocese of Oakland’s Family Aid-Catholic Education, known as FACE.

“I was expressing, ‘There’s got to be something out there.’”

He encountered that “something” when he attended his first FACE Gala, which was held at the then-newly opened Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland.

“It felt incredible to be there,” he recalled. “It’s rare to find this cross-diocesan celebration of Catholic education.”

He had a name for it.

“I almost called it Catholic prom,” he said.

The enthusiastic young man – Keith was in his early 30s at the time – drew the attention of the FACE leadership. “Steve Burke asked me to join them after the auction.”

There he met some of the other members of the board. He was asked if he’d be interested in joining them.

“I’m not your \$50,000 donor,” he recalled telling them. “I’ll come in and I’ll learn. Let’s keep this going. Over time, we will need to keep bringing in younger members.”

Keith considered himself the first of many new board members to come. “Folks have been doing this for 10 to 20 years,” he said. “There will have to be people to hand it to.”

“I think it’s healthy to have a cross-section, in all demographics, from both sides of tunnel,” he said. “We’re pulling funds from many parishes and reallocating them to others. It’s very much like the capital campaign, a more holistic diocesan fundraising project.”

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BY MICHELE
JURICH

PHOTOS
BY DOMINIQUE
GHEKIERE-MINTZ

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This year, Keith Cosbey is serving as chairman of the board of FACE.

He describes himself as a “Catholic school kid.”

It’s all in the family.

“My mother went to Catholic school in a suburb of Buffalo, at St. Christopher,” he said. “My father worked for General Motors. I’m the son of a factory worker.”

After the family mortgage, Catholic education was the family’s next-largest monthly expense. “Catholic school for four was a tall order for my family,” Keith said.

“In the automotive world, there are layoffs,” he said. “Good years and bad years. Somehow, my parents always found a way to make it work.”

For Keith, that education-included elementary school at The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and high school at St. Joseph Collegiate Institute in Buffalo, followed by the University of Notre Dame.

It was at Notre Dame that Keith met Justin and Ryan.

After working at Accenture in Chicago for three years, after graduation, Keith joined Justin Gagnon and Ryan Mariotti at ChoiceLunch in California.

“Catholic school,” Keith said, “is very much a part of who I am.”

“I felt like I was coming home, working with the school that’s down the street. I know people who send their kids here.”

Keith and Christine Cosbey met in 2008, when they were members of the choir created for the dedication of the Cathedral of Christ the Light.

“Christine was considering going into opera, then when we started dating, she decided to get her teaching credential,” Keith said.

A graduate of Saint Mary’s College of California, Christine grew up as a parishioner at St. Monica Parish in Moraga.

“I did attend public school throughout my childhood then I

went to a Catholic college,” Christine said. “I didn’t realize what a big difference Catholic school vs. public school is until I was a student in education at Saint Mary’s College.

“The first time I set foot in a Catholic school, that was it. I just felt so much at home. I didn’t know this was missing in my life.”

To earn her teaching credential, she was a student teacher in both public and Catholic schools.

“The day after we got married, she actually had an interview with at St. Jerome with Alison Wilkie,” Keith recalled. “She got the job on the spot and we went on our honeymoon the next day.”

In addition to teaching third and fourth grades – and music -- at St. Jerome School in El Cerrito, Christine has been a kindergarten assistant at St. Theresa School in Oakland.

The Cosbey Family, parishioners at St. Isidore Parish in Danville, has grown to include Christopher, a third-grader at St. Isidore School and Olivia, a kindergartner at St. Isidore; and Nicholas, a preschooler at St. Raymond School in Danville.

He will join his siblings at St. Isidore this fall.

“I love Catholic school, it’s been part of my life and will be part of my children’s life as long as I can afford it,” he said. “I have many things I love about Catholic school.

“The whole child is educated in basic things like kindness, compassion, empathy, saying you’re sorry.

“When you teach through those moments with Catholic doctrine, it’s a different teaching moment. When you can reference what would Jesus have done in this situation. What’s the right thing to do. Is what you just did is that a sin and why. When you can’t do that, I don’t think you can educate the whole child the same way.”

Christine agrees. “Not only does a Catholic education nurture the mind and body but also the spirit. Bring able to be steeped in a faith-filled environment on a daily basis, children learn to be disciples of Christ every day through interactions with their teachers, their peers and also the priests.”

Catholic education is aligned with the family values.



“Catholic faith is priority in our family,” she said. “That’s why I wanted to send our kids to Catholic school: to be aligned with what’s important to us. Catholic education fosters a deep sense of community through the faith families. I love seeing the eighth-graders take care of the younger children and participate in faith-filled activities. That’s a very special bond.”

The school and parish functions foster a sense of community for the Cosbeys, she said, including developing good stewards of creation and tending to the poor or to the needy.

Keith is living out his gratitude for the Catholic education that has enabled him to provide for his family and extend that generosity to others, such as through FACE.

“I know what I’m putting my kids through because I went through it.



To be the son of a factory worker, and to be able to have the life I have today, my education is the way I got there. No question: this is how I got there. From kindergarten through college, it was Catholic education that moved my life forward and put me in the position where I can put my kids in Catholic school and survive in California.” †

FACE FACTS

Number of elementary school students receiving FACE grants: **288 FACE direct and with our partnership The BASIC Fund total is 619 They funded 331 of our students.**

Number of high school students receiving FACE grants: **265**

Amount of a FACE grant for elementary school student: **\$2,500**

Amount of a FACE grant for a high school student: **\$3,500**

Number of qualified FACE recipients who are on the waiting list: **379 elementary school students and 963 high school students, Total: 1342**

Source: FACE, Family Aid Catholic Education, Diocese of Oakland www.oakdiocese.org/face



Save the Date



FAMILY AID - CATHOLIC EDUCATION

FACE GALA | APRIL 23, 2022
For more information visit: oakdiocese.org/face