

The Legacy



A newsletter for the **ALUMNI & FRIENDS** of
Infant Jesus of Prague School, Flossmoor, IL

Volume 3

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Mar. 2025



Welcome IJP Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the third edition of our **ALUMNI & FRIENDS** Newsletter! This is a place to reconnect, share memories, and stay updated on what's happening at our beloved school. Whether it's been a few years or many, we're thrilled to have you as part of our community.

Stay tuned for exciting news, alumni spotlights, and ways to get involved!



[Get Involved](#)

School News & Updates:

Direct from the pastor's office:

Dear Friends of IJP School,

The arrival of Spring is a time of renewal and growth, and as we witness the world around us preparing to blossom into new life, I am reminded of the beautiful impact your support has had on our school. Just as the seasons change, we are continuously growing and evolving, thanks to your steadfast commitment to our mission. Your dedication, prayers, and generosity have been an invaluable source of strength to us all.

With Easter fast approaching, we are reminded of the ultimate gift of hope and renewal that Christ offers us all. May this season bring you and your loved ones a renewed sense of peace, joy, and warmth, both physically and spiritually. As the days stretch longer and the earth wakes up from its winter rest, I hope you're filled with warmth, positivity, and a fresh outlook for the season ahead.

Thank you, once again, for your unwavering support.

Fr. Kris Paluch, Pastor

Catching up with our principal:

Hello IJP Community-

As always, I would like to begin by thanking you for the continued support you show to the IJP community. Our school is what it is today because of the generations of students and families who walked these halls before our current students. Your connection to IJP continues to help shape the spirit of our school, and it is always a joy when alumni stop by to visit and reconnect.

As we move through March, our school community has entered the season of Lent. This time in the Church invites us to slow down, reflect, and renew our faith as we prepare for Easter. Throughout the coming weeks, our students will take part in prayer, reflection, and opportunities to grow spiritually as a community. These moments are a meaningful reminder that while our school continues to grow and change, our Catholic identity remains at the heart of everything we do.

March is also an important time for planning the future of IJP. Re-enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is now open, and we are excited to continue building on the momentum our school has experienced this year. As alumni and friends of our school, you are some of our greatest ambassadors. If you know families in the area who may be looking for a school rooted in faith, academic excellence, and community, we encourage you to help spread the word about IJP. Many of our families first learned about the school through alumni connections, and we are always grateful when you share your experiences with others.

As we look ahead to spring, there is plenty of excitement building in our community. We are thrilled to be launching a new soccer program for our students this season, expanding our opportunities for athletics and school spirit. We are also excited to bring back our drama program, a tradition that many alumni may remember fondly. This April, our students will take the stage to perform *The Addams Family*, and we cannot wait to see their hard work come to life.

Spring is always a special time at IJP, filled with new energy, activities, and traditions. We hope you will continue to stay connected with the school, and as always, know that you are welcome to stop by and visit anytime.

Thank you again for being such an important part of the IJP story.

With gratitude,

Joseph Francis

Principal, IJP



School News & Updates:

Staff Spotlight: Peggy (Walsh) Dull '77

Baptized at Infant Jesus of Prague in 1963, Peggy is a proud member of the IJP Class of 1977. After graduating from IJP, she attended Marian Catholic High School and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from St. Norbert College in 1985.

Peggy spent 17 years working on the trading floor at the Chicago Board of Trade before returning to Infant Jesus of Prague School in 2005, beginning a new chapter serving the community that played such an important role in her early life. Over the past two decades, she has served in several roles at IJP and currently works as the Operations Director for St. Veronica Parish and Infant Jesus of Prague School.

Peggy's twin daughters, Mary Catherine and Christina (Kunesh), are proud IJP alumni from the Class of 2013 and both now live in the Green Bay, Wisconsin area. In 2016, Peggy was honored to receive the NCEA Distinguished Alumni Award. In her free time, she enjoys cheering on her favorite team as a devoted Green Bay Packers fan.



Student Spotlight: Michael '31

Michael Olurin, a dedicated third-grader and the son of Akinsola Olurin and Lori (Veeneman) Olurin '94, has been a vibrant part of the IJP community since kindergarten. As a parishioner and student, Michael is deeply involved in school life; this year, he joined the school choir, discovering a true passion for singing and performing. In the classroom, Michael's favorite subject is science, and his curiosity often follows him home, where he loves conducting his own experiments.

Outside the classroom, he is a seasoned martial artist at Woori Taekwondo and Hapkido Academy, where he has been practicing Taekwondo for going on five years. Currently a 2nd Degree Black Belt, Michael serves as an Assistant Instructor, teaching the basics to younger students. He is also a proud member of the Woori Taekwondo Demo Team—which has performed for audiences of upwards of 1,000 people—and has participated in multiple tournaments, showing extreme talent in both Breaking and Power Breaking competitions. While he has recently begun his journey in Hapkido as a white belt, his focus remains sharp across all his disciplines. When he isn't on the mat, Michael is an aspiring designer who enjoys drafting roller coaster layouts after a summer at Six Flags, creating custom levels in Geometry Dash, and playing Roblox with his classmates.

Need prayers?

Let us know your prayer needs
by filling out this form!



Alumni Alerts:

Alumni Spotlight: Robert Bramlette '63

EXCELLENCE, INNOVATION, PARENT INVOLVEMENT –
A CORNERSTONE OF FLOSSMOOR... CONSISTENT PRINCIPLES
OVER THE DECADES

On the Tuesday after Labor Day in 1958, I rode my bike to Infant Jesus of Prague School on its very first day. As a fourth grader – one of the oldest students – I experienced a school committed to strong academics and forward-thinking ideas. Spanish was taught during lunch, biology lessons were delivered by high school teachers through classroom television, and parent-teacher conferences stressed that education required DAILY PARENT INVOLVEMENT.

By 1960, the school had grown to include all eight grades and expanded learning beyond the classroom. After-school sports and activities flourished, supported by talented community members – including a former player from the Washington Redskins. A boys' choir and theatrical productions brought families together, including performances at Parker Junior High.

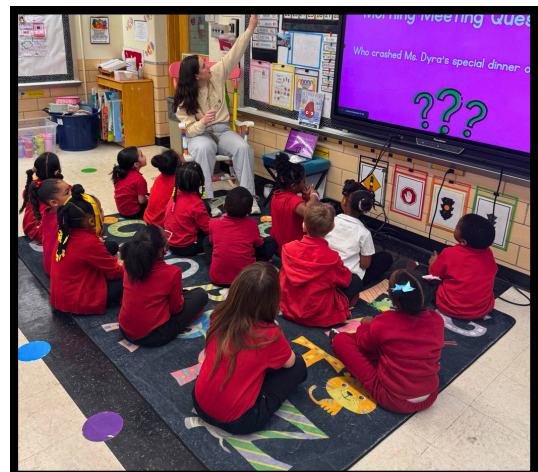
As Flossmoor grew, so did enrollment – eventually reaching 700 students. Classrooms expanded, mobile units were added, and a gym was built. Structured school days, supportive parents, and high expectations created a foundation that carried me through Marian High School, University of Notre Dame, and Northwestern Law School. When our own children attended in the 1980s and 90s, parish life remained vibrant. Religious education expanded, athletics thrived, and families from across the community came together. Non-Catholic families also joined programs that emphasized values like kindness and respect. Community partnerships – including shared practice space from a local synagogue – reflected the spirit of cooperation that defined the school.

Fundraising efforts grew just as strong. Creative events brought together families from Flossmoor, Homewood, and Olympia Fields, raising significant support while strengthening community bonds. Later, through parish leadership, we worked to ensure tuition remained accessible so every family could benefit from this education. Today, the school and parish continue to shape our family life – from baptisms to festivals and shared traditions.

As neighboring parishes – St. Lawrence O'Toole and St. Irenaeus – united to form St. Veronica, the community grew even stronger, continuing to welcome students from many surrounding areas.

The same principles that guided the school in 1958 – excellence, innovation, and parent partnership – continue to prepare students for the future. We remain deeply grateful to the teachers, staff, parents, and community members who have made and continue to make IJP School GREAT!

Bob is one of our St. Nicholas Circle Silver Star donors! Thank you, Bob!



Alumni Alerts:

Class News:

Class of 2007: Madeline (Tolish) Spear

Madeline Tolish, IJP class of 2007, cannot believe it's been nearly twenty years since she graduated from IJP! But life marches on and so has she. Madeline graduated from Marian Catholic in 2011 (where she met her husband, Mike Spear) and went on to study biomedical engineering at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. While there, she spent a semester abroad in Ireland and served as an unofficial travel agent to her friends, planning trips all over Europe. For the past eight years, Madeline has worked as a project manager at Stryker where she manages the installation of surgical equipment in operating rooms across northern Illinois. In 2023, she was named Stryker's Project Manager of the Year at their annual meeting in Phoenix, AZ.

Madeline and Mike got married in 2018 in Madison, WI and now live in home they spend time renovating in La Grange Park. Additional space in their renovated home was necessary to accommodate Margaret Kay Spear, whom they welcomed to the family on October 25, 2025. She's an energetic, inquisitive little person whose sometimes poor sleep habits are instantly forgotten with a smile. Margaret, or Midge, recently received the sacrament of baptism at St. Louise de Marillac Church in La Grange Park where she wore a christening gown made especially for her from her grandmother's wedding dress. Madeline and Mike look forward to instilling in Margaret the values they both learned through their Catholic education.

Although time for hobbies with a new baby is rare, when Madeline does get a moment to herself she loves to cook and bake (sourdough bread is a specialty), grow vegetables in her garden (another renovation project since moving into the house), read, travel, and spend time with family and friends.



Class of 2008: Grace (Van Beest) Cifelli

Grace (Van Beest) Cifelli has spent the last eight years working with and teaching IJP students. Starting as a teacher at IJP School, Grace eventually moved to Marian Catholic High School in 2022. One of the most enjoyable parts of her job is interacting with, and sometimes teaching, former IJP School students.

At Marian, Grace teaches AP English 4 Literature and Composition to seniors and is the faculty advisor of the student literary magazine, Crossroads. Outside of school, Grace is pursuing her master's degree in English Literature at DePaul University.

This past December, she married another IJP School alum, Johnny Cifelli '04. All of Grace and Johnny's siblings also attended both IJP and Marian Catholic, and even both sets of their parents were married at the IJP church. They have recently relocated back to the area and look forward to getting involved with the community.

Alumni: Submit your SCOOP here!

Alumni Alerts:

Class News:

Class of 2010: Ryan Kelly

Ryan graduated from IJP in 2010 and from Marian Catholic in 2014. After graduating from Miami University in Ohio in 2018 with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Sports Management, he joined Blueprint Healthcare Real Estate Advisors. As a Managing Director, he is responsible for the origination and execution of skilled nursing and seniors housing divestiture assignments across the Midwest and Northeast. He has been responsible for overseeing over \$2.5 billion in successful IL/AL/MC/SNF asset divestitures, lease structures, distressed sales, and structured debt solutions.

Ryan is an active member of the Junior Council benefiting Lurie Children's, and past football coach at Miami and basketball coach at St. Andrew Catholic School in the city. Ryan currently resides in Chicago and is recently engaged to Harriet. Wedding details are forthcoming.



Ryan is also one of our St. Nicholas Circle donors!
Thank you, Ryan!



Class of 2017: Alexandria Porter

Hello! My name is Alexandria Porter, and I am a member of Infant Jesus of Prague's Class of 2017. After graduation, I went to Homewood-Flossmoor High School (Class of 2021) and recently graduated from the University of Chicago (Class of 2025). Since October, I have been working with Chicago Public Schools as a Board Relations Coordinator.

I work on a team that serves as a liaison between the City Board of Education and the District's top leadership. This aligns perfectly with my interests in public service, policy, and government, as I get to see how things work and how decisions are made in the heart of the 4th largest public school district in the country. One of my favorite parts of the role is attending the monthly board meetings, where I get to watch governance in action. Every day is something new!

I always look back fondly on my time at IJP, remembering things such as touring the Robie House while reading Chasing Vermeer, doing projects such as the Wax Museum and 7th grade science fair, and visiting Washington DC with my 8th grade class. IJP taught me what it means to be a good person and fostered a sense of curiosity, both of which have carried me far. I'm excited to see what the future has in store for me, and I wish nothing but the best for my fellow Kingsmen!



Alumni: Submit your SCOOP here!



Alumni Alerts:

Class News:

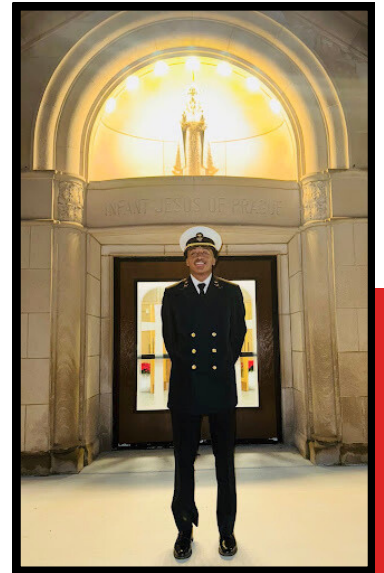
Class of 2021: Hiroshio Haddon

After graduating from IJP, I attended Homewood-Flossmoor High School from 9th-12th grade. It was kind of sad because most of my friends from IJP went to Marian Catholic, but I was able to make a lot of new friends and reunited with some that I met in religious education.

At HF, I was a three sport athlete and played golf, basketball, and lacrosse. I feel like those took up most of my time in high school but were definitely worth it. I was also part of the National Honor Society and the Architecture Construction Engineering (ACE) Mentorship Program. I actually did really well at HF, and I give credit to how well the students were taught and the good habits the teachers helped us build at IJP. Once I graduated from HF, I enrolled in the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. It's been a real grind for sure due to the high academic, physical, and military standards that are set for us here.

Outside of class, I am part of the club basketball team, involved in the Officer Christian Fellowship (OCF) church group on campus, and golf over the weekends with my friends when the weather is nice.

Even though I've been through some of the toughest challenges that I've ever experienced, I know that it will pay off in the end because not only will I be graduating from one of the most prestigious institutions of this country, but I will also be leading sailors in the most dominant military force on the globe. I show love and give thanks to IJP for giving me the foundational morals and values that led to me becoming the person that I am today.



Sponsor Spotlight:

Beyond the Book: A Literary Experience

New Independent Bookstore Combines Traditional Book Retail with Professional Recording Studio, Event Space, and Leadership Development Programming

HOMEWOOD, IL – Bestselling author and renowned Human Resources thought leader Tenia Davis, PhD, announces the grand opening of Beyond the Book: A Literary Experience, a groundbreaking literary destination that redefines the modern bookstore concept in Homewood, Illinois. This innovative venture combines curated book collections with professional recording facilities, corporate training services, and dynamic community programming. Dr. Davis is an IJP alumni mom to graduates Gianina Glass '08 and Athena '18.

Beyond the Book represents a transformative approach to literary retail, offering book enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, and organizations a multifaceted space where literature meets leadership development. The store features carefully curated bestsellers, exclusive merchandise, and an extensive online collection, while providing unique amenities including a professional podcast recording studio and versatile event spaces for book clubs, business meetings, and educational workshops.

Please stop by Beyond the Book at 18063 Dixie Highway, Homewood. You'll be glad you did!

Thank you to Dr. Davis who donated a gift card to our Annual Fund campaign!



Check out our Community Partners:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Flossmoor & IJP: A Perfect Partnership!

An Afternoon of History, Film, and Community
Featuring historian, author, and
IJP alum Tom Dobrez

Saturday, April 18, 2026

Movie showings available from 12:30-4:15pm

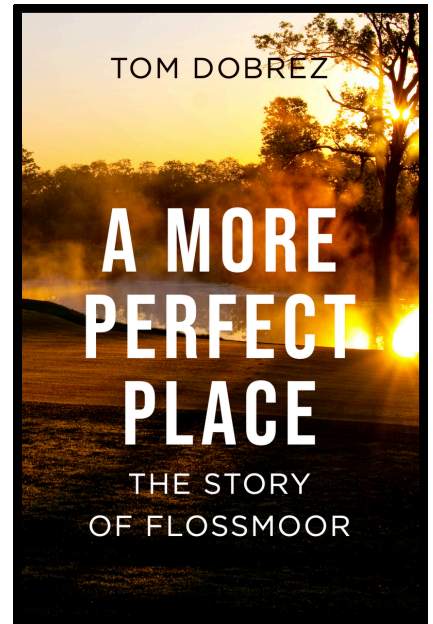
Join us for Flossmoor & IJP: A Perfect Partnership, a special afternoon celebrating the shared story of our village and Infant Jesus of Prague School.

Enjoy:

- 🎬 Screening of "Flossmoor – A More Perfect Place"
A Film by alum Joey McGrath, assisted by alum Timon Lyander
- 🚌 Guided Flossmoor bus tours with author Tom Dobrez
- 🍷 Food by Day One Provisions

Hosted by IJP Alumni & Friends, all proceeds benefit the IJP School Annual Fund.

*Reconnect with neighbors, alumni, celebrate local history,
and support the school's future!*



Infant Jesus of Prague School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



Scan the QR or
click here for
tickets:
Buy Tickets Now:
Limited Availability!



Young Alumni Reunion! Classes of 2015-2025

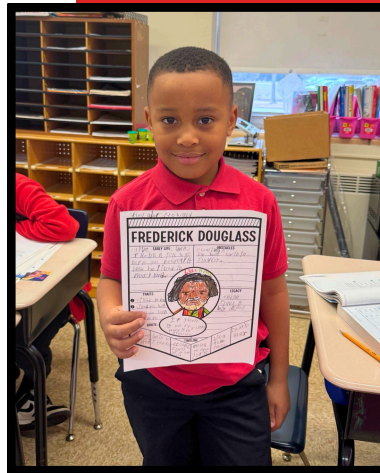


Tuesday, Dec 23, 2025
in our school cafeteria and gym!
A great time was had by all!

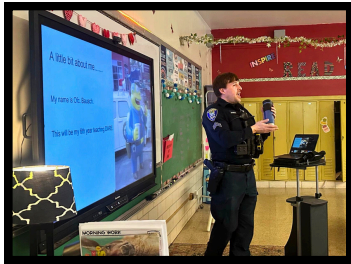


DONATE ❤️

Picture Gallery:



IJP School students participated in the Black History Month assembly on Feb. 27. Second graders Alexander, Gabe, and classmates researched important African Americans.



Flossmoor PD Officer Bausch works with our fifth graders in the DARE Program!



First graders participate in our Monday school Mass!



Our House system was created to build community among different grade level students and encourage students to create, communicate, and collaborate on a variety of projects. (Pictured: blue house working on Women in History projects and purple house finishing up February projects.)



Check us out!



Picture Gallery:

Ana Palmer '18 and Athena Davis '18 happily reading together in 1st grade!



The Palmer family: Jon & Joanna with alumni daughters Julia '12, Ana '18, and Olivia '13!



Madeline (Tolish) Spears '07 at her wedding and touring Europe!

Michael '31 singing with the Kingsmen Choir!



Tom Dobrez '75 enjoys time with Kingsmen classmates and friends!



Tom '75 taking in a word from coach. IJP football '72-73!



To subscribe, follow this link!