



MORNING STAR SCHOOL PINELLAS PARK

SUMMER 2019

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

September 18
50th Anniversary Mass
and Reception with
Bishop Parkes

October 24
50th Day of School

November 9
2019
Auction
Fundraiser

January 26 - February 1
Catholic Schools Week

Spring 2020 - Date TBD
Anniversary Picnic

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Morning Star Celebrates 50 Years

By Principal Susan M. Conza, pictured at left, circa 1969



The 2019-2020 school year marks the 50th Anniversary of Morning Star Catholic School. Please join me in praising the Morning Star teachers and staff for the 50 years of outstanding special education that they have provided students in the St. Petersburg - Tampa Bay community.

Little did my 12 year-old-self (pictured here) know that I would one day become a teacher for children with special learning needs or that I would have the wonderful, good grace of working at Morning Star, first as a teacher then as the principal, for the past 20 years.

I am so proud of this school that has been an integral part of the lives of thousands of children over the last 50 years. We have grown from 6 students in the fall of 1969 to 90+ students in 2019 and from an elementary school to a K-12th grade school. Along the way, our teaching approaches have evolved as our understanding of our students and their needs has broadened. Adaptive technology, music therapy, behavior-based occupational therapy and whole child education are just some of these advances. But our nurturing, loving environment has not and will never change. We celebrate each student as a gift from God.

We say good-bye to Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Reffett and Mrs. Steele as they leave for new opportunities. I thank them for all they have done for their students and the school. In 2019-2020, we are pleased to add a new high school classroom and to welcome some new faces to Morning Star: speech therapist, Maureen Cristal, and teachers, Adrian Mittermayr, Rose Smoot and Mona Tomlin.

As we look to the future and the *next* 50 years, I have come to understand that Morning Star is not as much a part of our lives as we are a part of its. Thank you to everyone who has made this incredible journey possible. Please celebrate with us!

*Many Blessings,
Susan M. Conza, Principal*

Morning Star School, a mission of the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg, recognizes the unique educational needs of students. The administration, faculty, staff and parents work together to provide an ungraded academic curriculum in which students can achieve their potential academically, socially and spiritually.

Celebrating Our Past

Morning Star School Begins

In the late 1950's, Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley envisioned providing an excellent Catholic education for students of varying abilities in the state of Florida. The idea of the "Morning Star Schools" was born. In May of 1969, under the direction of Bishop Charles B. McLaughlin, ground was broken for the first phase of Morning Star School of Pinellas Park. In August of 1969, the school year began with the first six students in a temporary facility. The completed Morning Star Catholic School was dedicated on February 1, 1970, and the doors opened to receive 20 students. So began the ministry to meet the special educational needs of children of all faiths and backgrounds in the St. Petersburg-Tampa Bay area.

Watch Us Grow



Celebrating Our Past



Photo of school circa 1970 complete with VW van in car circle!



Sister Dolorita, Principal 1971-1983



Mrs. Rose Kennedy visits with Morning Star students in March 1971.



Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver visits Morning Star in Fall 1976.

OUR faith CAN MOVE mountains

MATTHEW 17:20



Andy Boisvert and Rose Tomassi present plans for OTHERS Hall.



Principal Giacobbe and teachers, Ms. Gillespie, Mrs. Conza, Mrs. Castaneda and Mrs. Aurswald in 2007.



Newly built OTHERS Hall circa 1979



Mary Lou Giacobbe, Principal 1984-2010



Susan M. Conza, Principal 2011 - Present

Creating Our Future

Morning Star Catholic School is growing. In 2009, we had 30 students in 4 classrooms. Fast forward 10 years—and there are more than 90 Morning Star students in 10 classrooms. We began a high school program in 2012 that has grown to 31 students. We are booming. However, this blessing has brought us a new challenge. We are running out of space for our students.

We are grateful to the Morning Star Catholic School Board of Trustees for giving us the approval to begin exploring building options. We will be working with the architect firm of ARC3 to create a master plan that will be a learning facility for 120 students for K-12 and students up to age 22. The need is great for a nurturing, faith-based program that helps students with varying abilities successfully navigate young adulthood. The curriculum will focus on skills with practical applications such as effective communication, money and time management, problem solving, resiliency and wellness. We are excited about the prospect of meeting this need.

The Master Plan will need final approval from Bishop Parkes. We hope to present it to you at the 2019 Annual Auction Fundraiser on November 9th. More information regarding the auction is on page 10. We hope to see you there.

What Morning Star Means to Me

By Morning Star Students

Morning Star would be nothing without its wonderful students. We cannot look to the future without listening to their honest voices. When asked “What does Morning Star mean to you?” here are a few of their heartfelt replies:

“It is where our friends are like family.”

Lewis

“It is where I feel accepted.”

Garrett

“Morning Star is the best place to go. I love morning meeting, snack, science & music with Mr. James. I love typing on the computer & playing silly games. Morning Star is the best.”

Maci

“I have been at Morning Star for 4 years. It has helped me go to a (new) high school but I will miss my friends.”

Kolt

“Morning Star is a good place to come learn if you need help.”

“...It’s a big family tree.”

E.J.

“It is a calm & quiet place to learn.”

Sebastian

Daniel M.

“It means family.”

Elena

“Morning Star is the best because I learn more things. What I love about it is making new friends.”

Jesse

Creating Our Future

50th Anniversary Mass & Reception

You are cordially invited to Morning Star's 50th Anniversary Mass officiated by Bishop Gregory Parkes at 8:15am on September 18, 2019. Mass will be held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pinellas Park.

A reception will immediately follow in the OTHERS Hall on the Morning Star campus. Breakfast will be served. Please RSVP to (727) 544-6036 or elizabeth.walley@morningstarschool.org.

We hope you join us as we celebrate this joyous occasion in the life of our school, reminisce about the past and share ideas for the future.

Date: September 18, 2019

Time: 8:15 am

Location: Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pinellas Park

Reception immediately following in OTHERS Hall
on Morning Star Campus. Please RSVP as seating is limited.



Calling All Alumni

Y o u A r e V e r y I m p o r t a n t t o U s !
We want to hear from you and invite you to the 50th Anniversary festivities. Share a favorite memory with us! Please fill out the form below to update us on what you are doing now. For more information, contact info@morningstarschool.org.

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

YEARS ATTENDED MORNING STAR: _____

SHARE A FAVORITE MORNING STAR MEMORY: _____

SHARE YOUR NEWS: _____

Bishop Parkes Blesses Sensory Room

November 28, 2018, was an especially meaningful day in Morning Star's history. Bishop Gregory Parkes conducted a special Mass for our students at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, blessed our newly built sensory room and attended a reception in honor of the occasion. Morning Star faculty, staff, families and community supporters were also in attendance. A favorite moment was when the Bishop patiently sat with some of our students while they explained how they use the sensory space and the special equipment. Thank you to Bishop Parkes and all who made this day possible.

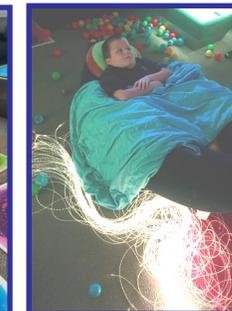


What's a Sensory Room?

Glad you asked! The sensory room is a space specifically designed to assist our students with sensory processing difficulties. From light dimmers, to sound machines, to bubble towers and weighted blankets, everything in the sensory room is intended to help our students achieve a calm and focused body which is integral for optimal learning. Construction was completed in August 2018 on the building that is also home to the Occupational Therapy program.

In addition, Morning Star staff members, Christine Bruzek, Occupational Therapist, and Matthew DeNote, Technology Coordinator, designed and built a sensory path to complete the OT experience. The sensory path is an obstacle course that encourages students to exercise and grow in their fine and gross motor functioning.

The addition of this program to our campus has been more of a blessing than we could have ever imagined. It has quickly become a highlight of the school.



Students enjoy a gross and fine motor work-out on the sensory path.

Students learn self-regulation in the sensory room.

School Year in Photos: New Experiences



Our parents and students went all out for our 1st Halloween Trunk or Treat.



Reps from the Tampa Bay Lightning came to school to teach the kids some mad hockey skills. It was a great time!



Volunteers for Florida Skunk Rescue visited school and taught the students all about skunks. The kids got to meet and love on a few domesticated skunks whose stink glands had been removed. They were so sweet, soft and cuddly!



Students raised money for Bess the Book Bus during Catholic Schools Week.

Milestones @ Morning Star

High School Class of 2019

On May 23, 2019, William Ernest Arend and Ashunti Fantavia Teasley-Dorsey graduated from the high school program at Morning Star Catholic High School. The certificates of completion were presented to each student by Principal Conza and Dr. Davis, Associate Superintendent, at a ceremony at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Family, friends and faculty were on hand to witness the joyous event.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11



Congratulations, William and Ashunti!

Congratulations 8th Graders

Family, friends, faculty and staff gathered at Banquet Masters on May 28, 2019, to celebrate the Morning Star Catholic School 8th Grade graduates. The ceremony included prayers, remembrances, speeches and songs honoring this special occasion in the life of these students. We are very proud of each child and his/her hard work.

Daniel will be moving on to Plant High School and we wish him the very best. *We will miss you, Daniel!* We look forward to seeing the rest of the graduates in the fall at Morning Star High School.



Connor



Daniel



Deanna



Elena



Ellora



Jake



Jeremiah



Kile



Michael



Mariah



Justin



Milestones @ Morning Star

Students Receive Sacraments

In Spring 2019, Morning Star provided Sacrament preparation courses for 11 students. On May 15, 2019, they received their Sacraments during Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church witnessed by friends, family and classmates. We are humbled by the work God is doing in this school and in the hearts of our students.



Connor and Matthew (pictured above) received the Sacrament of Confirmation.



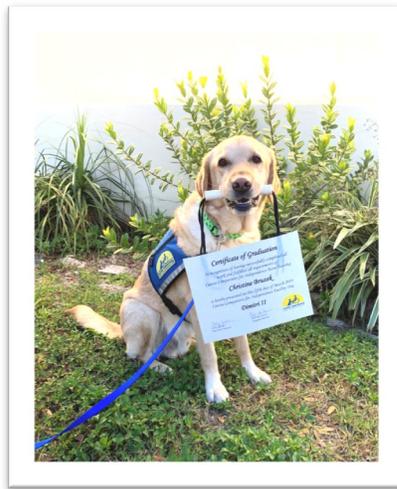
DJ, Alisa, Bella F., Emily and Daytona (pictured above) were Baptized, Confirmed and received First Eucharist.

“And with the grace of Baptism and of Eucharistic Communion I can become an instrument of God’s mercy, of that beautiful mercy of God.” -Pope Francis



Ellie, Bella S., Luis and Isabella (left to right) received First Eucharist.

Dimitri Graduates



It is not just the teachers at Morning Star who are motivated to keep up-to-date on the latest teaching techniques and methods. Our beloved Dimitri went back to “college” in Spring 2019 to be re-certified as a facility dog in order to return to Morning Star. Dimitri is seen here (on left) with his person and Morning Star Occupational Therapist, Christine Bruzek, and with some of the students that missed him so much (on right). Welcome home, Dimitri!



Morning Star School of Pinellas Park

2019 ANNUAL AUCTION SPONSORSHIP

Saturday, November 9, 2019

6:30 – 10:30 PM

St. Jude Parish Center

5815 5th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida

Please join us in supporting Morning Star School at our Annual Auction Fundraiser as we mark the 50th Anniversary of Morning Star School— Celebrating Our Past and Creating Our Future!

Our Auction is an exciting evening that includes a delicious catered dinner, beer and wine, a silent auction and a live auction. All proceeds from this evening directly benefit the students of Morning Star School and help to defray the costs of providing an individualized education for students with learning related challenges. Purchase a table and attend this fun event with your family, friends and clients!

\$5,000 50th Anniversary Sponsorship—Reserved seating and dinner for up to 8 guests; Appetizers and 3 bottles of wine at your table; 8 Morning Star School engraved keepsake wine glasses; Recognition in the event program, visual display at auction and on the school website; 3 announcements during auction night acknowledging your donation; 2 boosted Facebook posts on Morning Star’s page acknowledging your contribution, reaching 500+ recipients; 48 tickets for the “Lucky Number” auction; 8 tickets for the 50/50 drawing; small keepsake gift for each guest

\$2,500 Super Star Sponsorship—Reserved seating and dinner for up to 8 guests; Recognition in the event program, visual display at auction and on the school website; 3 announcements during auction night acknowledging your donation; 1 boosted Facebook post on Morning Star’s page acknowledging your contribution reaching 500+ recipients; 24 tickets for the “Lucky Number” auction; 8 tickets for the 50/50 drawing; small keepsake gift for each guest

\$1,000 Diamond Star Sponsorship—Reserved seating and dinner for up to 8 guests; Recognition in the event program and visual display at auction; 1 announcement during auction night acknowledging your donation; 16 tickets for the “Lucky Number” auction and 8 tickets for the 50/50 drawing.

\$500 Gold Star Sponsorship—Reserved seating and dinner for up to 8 guests; Recognition in the event program and visual display at auction

\$275 Silver Star Sponsorship —Reserved seating and dinner for up to 6 guests; Recognition in the event program

\$125 Bronze Star Sponsorship —Reserved seating and dinner for 2 guests; Recognition in the event program

\$40 Individual Ticket —Entrance to the auction (no reserved seating) and dinner

SPONSOR _____

Please print your name as you wish for it to appear in program if purchasing a sponsorship.

_____ I am able to attend and wish to enclose my tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

_____ I am unable to attend and wish to enclose my tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

OR

Please charge my gift on my: VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

Name as it appears on card: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Account #: _____ Exp: _____ 3/4 Digit Security Code: _____

You will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of your donation for tax purposes.
For more information, please contact Sue Conza @ (727) 544-6036 or sue.conza@morningstarschool.org.
Morning Star School is a 501c3 non-profit. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

FOR OFFICE USE-DATE RECEIVED: _____

With Gratitude

As we reflect on Morning Star's 50 years of education and service, we understand that we did not get here alone. It is through the grace of God and with the prayers, work and donations of our community that Morning Star thrives. We highlight the 50 years of dedication of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court of St. John Vianney #1944, the local chapters of the Knights of Columbus and the Krauss/Baschab Family Foundation. Please know that we are humbled by and deeply grateful for every bit of care Morning Star receives from YOU, our wonderful supporters:

- Morning Star Families
- OTHERS members and all individual donors
- All sponsors of and donors to our *Annual Auction Fundraiser*
- Bishop Gregory Parkes
- Mr. Chris Pastura, Superintendent, and Dr. Ann Davis, Associate Superintendent
- The Knights of Columbus Council 7109, Council 4892, Council 5635, Council 11295, Council 2105, Council 5131, Council 5737, Council 7621, Council 10157 and Council 11226
- Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court of St. John Vianney #1944
- Holy Cross Catholic Church Women's Club
- Women of Espiritu Santo Catholic Church
- DeSesto Italiano Ristorante e Vino
- Guardian Trust
- Traffic Control Products of Florida
- Policy Analysis Center
- The Jack Moore Group, LLC
- Clearwater Central Catholic High School, St. Petersburg Catholic High School, Espiritu Santo Catholic School, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School
- Catholic Foundation, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle
- Verizon
- Pinellas Park Rotary Club
- Sons of Italy of St. Petersburg & St. Petersburg Social Club c/o Wayne Sokalski
- Morning Star Advisory Board members: Linda Champion, Chris Meyer, John Mulry, Yvonne Orr, Marianne Pasha, Denise Reilly, Julie Reyes, Rick Ryder, Andy Shannon, Mary Ann Smith & Karen Vogel
- Krauss/Baschab Family Foundation, Seminole Lanes and Sunrise Lanes

In Memoriam

We remember those who have recently passed away:

Lillian Eden
Joseph Ezzo
Patricia A. Fox
Robert Mochrie
Mary Jean Pastura

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Morning Star School

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www.morningstarschool.org

LIKE us on FACEBOOK @MSSPP

O.T.H.E.R.S. Membership

The annual membership dues of O.T.H.E.R.S. is \$25 per year. Annual membership is from January 1 to December 31.

Please use the enclosed envelope for new membership and renewals. Thank you!