

Bergan Forever

"Let's Do It Together"

Volume 1 • Issue 3

December 2009

Enrollment numbers are up at Bergan

BY FR. OWEN KORTE
Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish

I have a couple numbers to share with you, 198 and 406. Now the difference is 208. 406 is double 198 plus 10...

Four years ago we had 198 children in our Catholic school, today we have 406 ... that is simply amazing ... in four years we have doubled our population and added 10.

Even without the preschool we have witnessed an increase of 140 students, mostly in the grade school but also in the middle school/high school. That's a 71% increase. Who cannot be excited about the possibilities for added life in our parish and added strength in our school? If the purpose of our school is to make the Gospel known to future generations, certainly more people are being touched by the Message.

This newsletter is sent to all our parishioners, all our alumni and all our benefactors. Therefore, as I write this article, I have this entire community in mind. And what a fantastic community you have been. For years and years St. Patrick's Parish has been the prime funding source for our school system. The parish subsidy, along with tuition, made up the largest portion of the funding source for our school. The remainder came from fund raising and endowment interest. We are now in another era and it will be necessary for us to find a reliable source for income to sustain our school.

You, the Alumni of Archbishop Bergan, received an education at Bergan. That education was made possible when your family paid for your tuition. You might also have contributed with your after school job. Then there were all those other "old" folks you saw at Mass on the weekend who helped with the remainder. Now is the time for you to step up to the plate and take your

turn at helping your old school. It is time to give something back.

Enclosed in this newsletter and every Bergan Forever is an envelope for you to give something back. Soon we will have our annual Phon-a-thon. Many of you have been so generous with your contributions. However, this year Bergan needs your help more than ever. The expenses at Bergan have increased substantially and our endowments have been weakened by the economic downturn. We need to raise \$100,000 from the Alumni this year for our general fund to help keep the ship afloat. Normally we raise about \$40,000 from the

Alumni—this year the challenge and the need is even greater. So, in short:

1) If you have never given to Bergan I am asking you to give \$5 for each year you have been out of high school.

2) If you have given to Bergan before, I am asking that you double your gift. You can do this by making a pledge and spreading your gift over a period of time.

The need is great and real, and I believe, you, the Alumni, and benefactors, are willing to step up to the plate and make the sacrifice to keep Bergan going strong for generations to come.



Dodge Challenger Winner

Archbishop Bergan Catholic School held a raffle drawing for a 2009 Dodge Challenger in conjunction with its annual Knight Event Dinner and Auction Saturday, November 21. Nicole Fiedler of Fremont was the winner of the Dodge Challenger. She bought her ticket from her cousin, Austin Smutz, a first grader at Bergan. Also pictured above is Tim Hoshor of Gene Steffy Chrysler Center. Fiedler is a 1990 graduate of Bergan. Lonnie Mahrt of Fremont won the second prize of \$5,000 cash. Approximately 860 raffle tickets were sold. The Knight Event began with a silent auction and social hour. A few mini auctions were also held, as well as a live auction. A four-course dinner was served and entertainment was held. The event, which raises funds for Bergan, was attended by approximately 415 people.

Alumni News

Remembering our alumni

We extend our sincere sympathy to the families of the deceased alumni and friends of St. Patrick's/Bergan Catholic School.

Tony Brabec died February 9, 2009. Grandfather of Anna (Brabec) Church, 1987; Julie Brabec, 1989; Margie (Brabec) Utesch, 1993; Kelly (Brabec) Zwiefel, 1994; and Matt Mueller, 1999.

Victoria Molle died September 26, 2009. Grandmother of Amy Molle, 2003; and Jenna Molle, 2005.

Max Woods died September 28, 2009. Grandfather of Ron Martin, 1987; Amy Martin Wiegert, 1990; Christopher Woods, 1992; and Patrick Woods, 1996.

Orville Roach died October 1, 2009. He was a janitor at St. Patrick's.

Mary Ellen Knoell died October 3, 2009. Mother of Andrew (Larry) Knoell, 1959; Gerald Knoell, 1962 (deceased); and Maryann (Knoell) Wagner, 1967.

Lorella Tlamka died October 3, 2009. Mother of Mary Ann (Tlamka) Minton, 1970; John Tlamka, 1973; Joseph Tlamka, 1973; Janet (Tlamka) Nielsen, 1973; and Judy (Tlamka) Hesperen, 1977.

Howard Parkert Jr. died October 9, 2009. Grandfather of Aaron Beard, 1995.

Carl Johnson died October 12, 2009. Grandfather of Hillary Hunke, 2001; and Leslie Hunke, 2002.

Betty Venneman died October 21, 2009. Mother of Mark Venneman, 1971; Timothy Venneman, 1973; Jean (Venneman) Bogenreif, 1974; Peter Venneman, 1976 (deceased); Steve Venneman, 1977; Brian Venneman, 1978; Vicky (Venneman) Connick, 1981; Andrew Venneman, 1985; and grandmother of Jason Venneman, 1991.

James Costello died October 29, 2009. Brother of Mary Jo (Costello) Olmstead,

1952; Martin Costello, 1953 (deceased); Margaret (Costello) Rivas, 1955; Patricia (Costello) Fleet, 1960; Judith (Costello) Kay, 1962 (deceased); and Catherine (Costello) Unger, 1971.

Betty Beran died November 1, 2009. Mother of Scott Beran, 1990; and Sandy (Beran) Speckman, 1989.

Robert Green died November 4, 2009. Great grandfather of Jon Brown, 2005; and Beckie Brown, 2006.

Dorothy Hall Giran (1952) died November 4, 2009. Sister of Arlene (Hall) Keener, 1953; Marilyn (Hall) Vonderlage, 1944.

Development office requests pledge gifts for school

Gary Schmidt, St. Patrick's/Bergan Development Officer, sent Alumni Challenge letters out several weeks ago in reference to the Living the Faith campaign for Bergan Elementary. "Your parents made the school possible for you to get a Catholic education, please return your Living the Faith pledge forms and make it possible for our current and future students as well," Schmidt said.

An update on the alumni "Living the Faith" pledges by class will be published in a future newsletter.

*We Are All Called
To Stewardship*

**Alumni Reunion
Weekend**

July 9-10, 2010
More details to come.

United in Marriage

Aaron Beard and Angela Ries were married September 5, 2009.

Aaron is a 1995 graduate of Archbishop Bergan.

Chris Menn and **Heather Devine** were married September 19, 2009 in South Sioux City.

Heather graduated from Archbishop Bergan in 2005.

Rob Erickson and **Jenni Clayton** were married September 26, 2009 at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church in Fremont.

Jenni is a 1999 graduate of Archbishop Bergan.

Births

Parents of a son

Kurt and Melissa Dunker of North Bend are the parents of a daughter, Betsy Lynn, born July 31, 2009. She weighed seven pounds, 12 ounces. Betsy has two sisters, Paige, 5, and Anna, 2.

Kurt is a 1993 graduate of Archbishop Bergan Catholic School.

Let your classmates know where and how you are

Have you recently got married, had a child, moved, received a promotion at work or been recognized with a special honor? We want to know about it and so do your fellow classmates. Be sure to include photos whenever possible.

Email to Bergan Forever newsletter editor Maureen Zavadil - mozav1@gmail.com or berganalumni@yahoo.com

**May God bless you
and your family!**

Bergan - a Mendlik family tradition

The five children of Dr. Garrett (Gary) and Grace Mendlik of Fremont are all graduates of Archbishop Bergan Catholic School and have children who currently attend Bergan.

Dr. David and Jill Mendlik of Fremont are the parents of Trey, a seventh grader at Bergan; Sean, a sixth grader; and Adisyn is in kindergarten. They also have a daughter, Alyssa. David is a 1980 Bergan graduate. Maternal grandparents are Charlotte Tawney and the late Jack Tawney.

Dr. Mark and Lisa (Hunke) Mendlik of Fremont are the parents of Dominic and Lauren (twins), who are in the first grade. Mark graduated from Bergan in 1981, and Lisa is a 1986 graduate of Bergan. Maternal grandparents of the twins are Harvey and Florence Hunke.

David and Mark were members of the last two classes to attend St. Patrick's grade school - before efforts began to reestablish the elementary school.

Dr. Mark and Nannette (Mendlik) Witte of Fremont are the parents of Emma and Georgia, 8-year-old twins who are in the second grade at Bergan, and Adelaide, who is in kindergarten. Nannette is a 1983 graduate of Bergan. Paternal grandparents are Dr. Don and Shirley Witte.

Thomas and Suzanne Mendlik of Fremont are the parents of Garrison, a third grader; and Christian, a freshman. Thom is a 1986 graduate of Bergan. Maternal grandparents are Paul and Lora Strehle.

Patrice (Mendlik) Vakiner of Fremont, and Russ Vakiner of Arizona, are the parents of Marissa Vakiner, sophomore at Bergan. Patrice is a 1986 graduate of Bergan.

Garrison Mendlik, Georgia and Emma Witte, all started in the inaugural year of the elementary school - August 2007 - Garrison was in first grade and Georgia and Emma were in kindergarten.

Family members said maintaining their faith as part of their children's education has been a big reason for their commitment to Bergan.



Mendlik Bergan Students

Front row, l-r, Adisyn, Adelaide, Lauren, Dominic, Georgia, Emma, and Garrison. Back row, Sean, Trey, Christian and Marissa.

"The faith-based instruction at Bergan is very important to us as a continuation of what they see, hear and experience in church, at home and with extended family," David and Jill Mendlik said. "The foundation built on the Catholic faith is what ties it all together. Jill and I were both raised Catholic, so for us a Christ-centered education helps support how we want to raise our children."

"We knew we wanted a Catholic education for our children," Mark and Lisa Mendlik said. "We see the difference that a good Catholic school makes in other children's lives and we want that for ours."

Thom and Suzanne Mendlik said they were drawn by the family atmosphere, Christ-centered education, small class sizes, individualized attention, and service learning.

"Bergan students aren't afraid to show and share their love of God daily in school and in public places. They can express their feelings and thoughts about God without fear," they said.

"There is a continuum between what they learn at home and what they learn at school," Mark and Nannette Witte said. "Attending a Catholic school is more than just learning, it is learning as a Christian."

"I was attracted to Bergan for several reasons, most importantly I want my children to continue their faith-based education. Bergan is small and the teachers know the children on a name by name basis," Patrice Mendlik Vakiner added.

"We like the faith-based education and we love the commitment of the staff to this teaching," Mark and Lisa Mendlik said. "We love that our children are so excited about their school day and so comfortable with their surroundings at Bergan Elementary."

Nannette Witte pointed to the emphasis on giving and serving. "I believe they are being taught that 'much is expected from which much is given'," she said. "All the staff at the elementary school and many parents are setting a great example of what

(Continued on page 8.)

In the News

U.S. Cellular launches \$1 million campaign to help schools 10 Schools will win \$100,000 through 'Calling All Communities'

As the economy's slow recovery continues to take a heavy toll on our schools, the need for additional funding has never been greater. That is why U.S. Cellular is continuing its commitment to education with a \$1 million donation to schools.

Once again, the Calling All Communities campaign will award \$100,000 to 10 schools across the nation. Public and private schools, kindergarten through high school, big or small, all are eligible to win. From November 13, 2009, through January 15, 2010, people age 19 or older can vote.

Stop by the U.S. Cellular store to get a code to vote online for Bergan. The store in Fremont is located at 3220 E. Elk Lane, Suite 100 (between Sonic and Applebee's). If you don't live in Fremont, stop by your local U.S. Cellular store and pick up a code to vote.

Show your Bergan School spirit by casting your vote. Here is how to vote:

1. Go to: uscellular.com/callingallcommunities.
2. Click on the Vote For Your School button.
3. Enter the voting code you received from U.S. Cellular.
4. Vote for Archbishop Bergan Catholic

School.

There is no purchase necessary and you don't have to be a U.S. Cellular customer to vote. The 10 schools with the most votes will receive \$100,000 to use however they choose.

Last year Humphrey St. Francis Catholic School was one of the nationwide winners. Darron Arlt, principal of St. Francis School, a school in Humphrey, population 790, said it was powerful to see the community come together to support education.

"If a town the size of Humphrey can produce a winning school, any community, large or small, has a chance," Arlt said. "We were able to win last year by simply asking for support from families, alumni, friends and neighbors."

"Many school districts are literally in crisis mode," said Jeff Childs, senior vice president and chief human resources officer for U.S. Cellular. "As a company, we care about kids and the quality of the education they receive. The passion and energy of our 9,000 associates will help spread the word as we get behind this common purpose."

The drastic budget reductions are forcing many school districts to eliminate academic programs, extra-curricular activities,

staff and basic school supplies. More than three in five parents (61 percent) believe the quality of education will suffer because of school cutbacks.

Last year's Calling All Communities campaign was driven by U.S. Cellular associates' grassroots efforts and communities rallying behind their schools. More than 120,000 votes were cast for 6,500 schools across the country. Winners represented public and private schools in Wisconsin, Illinois, Oklahoma, North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, Nebraska and Iowa. Funds were used for everything from scholarships and computer labs to playgrounds and gymnasium renovations.

Visit our Calling All Communities Facebook page and www.uscellular.com/callingallcommunities for pictures and videos from the 2009 campaign.

"We believe educating our kids has never been more of a priority. That's why we're out to support the cause by giving schools money to use toward what they feel is important," Childs said.

Address Corrections

If you have recently moved, or need to update your contact information (address, phone numbers, and emails), please send to:

Bergan Catholic School
Alumni Office
422 E. 4th Street
Fremont, NE 68748

Newsletter deadline

Deadline for the February issue will be January 11. The Bergan Forever newsletter is published every other month. To submit news or photos send to: Maureen Zavadil, editor, mozav1@gmail.com

Show your Bergan school spirit by casting your vote!

Here is how to vote...

1. Pick up your voting code at US Cellular.
2. Go to: uscellular.com/callingallcommunities
3. Click on the Vote For Your School button.
4. Enter the your voting code. (Pick up at US Cellular.)
5. Vote for Archbishop Bergan Catholic School!

Little ones busy exploring and learning at preschool

BY SUE KASSMEIER
St. Patrick's Preschool Director

St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool recently began its fourth year with full classrooms. We have 80 students enrolled in five options of classes. Each class has a total of 20 students attending at one time.

It is always exciting to see the expectation in the eyes of these 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds! They are filled with wide-eyed wonder and apprehension as they explore this new part of their world. Some children are eager to begin this phase of their young life and rush right into the activities. Other children are still hesitant about this stage of independence without Mom or Dad around to guide and reassure.

Then to look into the eyes of the parents as they give their child the freedom to gain the experience and knowledge of life with God's grace, how blessed we are to be able to celebrate God in our everyday school life.

During the first week of school, we began teaching the children several prayers, including the Sign of the Cross, Blessing before Meals and the Circle of Grace Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

We talked about how God is always with us, no matter where we are or what we are doing. Every place is a holy spot because God is there and God loves us. We begin each school day with a prayer, a song to acknowledge and bless our friends, and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

On the second day of school, one child told me he remembered the prayer about "the Holy Spirit of the United States". What a reminder to me about how the Holy Spirit will guide the United States if we just believe and ask for His help.

The Holy Spirit is here, surrounding us with His Grace, even in Fremont, Nebraska. You can see Him in their eyes.



Grandparents Day held at Preschool

Several grandparents gathered recently for St. Patrick's Preschool's "Grandparents Day." Three generations are pictured above with preschoolers Payton Hesman, and Shelby Hesman. The grandparents are, l-r, Cheryl and Denny Hesman, Teri Pawley, Maureen and Lowell Rabe (great-grandparents). The youngest girl (front/right) is Addison Hesman.

Elementary computer, library challenge update

Bergan Elementary has been challenged to raise money towards its new computer lab and library.

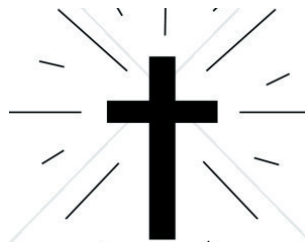
The challenge presented was to raise \$20,000 by November 1 (As of November 17, 2009 - \$5,685.23 has been raised).

With this challenge comes a matching contribution of 50 cents on the dollar up to \$10,000.

Grandparents, neighbors, friends, and family are welcome to help meet the goal. Please make checks payable to Bergan Elementary, put the check in an envelope and

write "challenge" on the envelope.

When the elementary moves to the new building, the current computer lab will be dispersed into the classrooms. This will allow each classroom to have two high-speed computers. Putting the current computer lab computers into the classrooms means there will need to be new computers for the new lab.



Bergan Forever

"Let's Do It Together"

School News



Kids 4 Christ gives presentation

Bergan Elementary Kids 4 Christ gave a presentation on October 30 to fellow classmates. Members of the group pictured above holding their "Be the Light of Christ" banner are, l-r, Nick Orr, Adam Orr, Ayden Weier and Zoey Hurst.

Kids 4 Christ hosts presentation

A presentation given by the members of Kids 4 Christ youth group was held October 30.

Mikayla Paulson began by reading a pumpkin poem, which related the carving of the pumpkin to being like a Christian. The group presented the analogy to the students - when you begin to carve a pumpkin, it's like God opening you up and scooping out all the yucky stuff - including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside you to shine for the world to see.

The members wanted the students to remember October 31 is the day our Lord Jesus Christ has made. So on Halloween night, as kids went out trick-or-treating, each light they would see in a jack-o-lantern should remind them of God's light and to always "be the light of Christ."

The members carved two pumpkins and added a light inside, as well as making a poster with harvest corn as a symbol of how when we sin we feel dark inside, which is the black part, then we ask for forgiveness, which is the orange part of the corn, and the white is when we feel God's light. The members gave each class harvest corn to share and celebrate God's light.

Kids 4 Christ youth group members are Ali Dykman, Ayden Weier, Nick Orr, Adam Orr, Hannah Masters, Ali Buesing,

Garrison Mendlik, Zoey Hurst, Mikayla Paulson, Allison Dieckmann, and Haley Kempf. Kids 4 Christ is led by Mrs. Kris Janke.

Youth pray the Rosary

Bergan Elementary students pray the Rosary every day during the months of October and May.

On Monday, October 26, all students K-4, prayed the Rosary in honor of October being the month of the Rosary. The Rosary was led by the Kids 4 Christ youth group, which includes third through fourth grade students. Approximately 130 children recited the Rosary in unison.

Elementary children pledge to be drug free

The Bergan Elementary Student Council helped their student peers learn about being drug free. One of the activities included the students tying red ribbons to the recess fence.

Twenty-one Bergan elementary students participated in the poetry and song contest. First State Bank gave certificates and prizes to all who participated.

Bergan now enrolling

Registration forms and information about Bergan Catholic School are available at berganknights.org - or from the school offices, (elementary, preschool through fifth grade) berganelementary@yahoo.com - or

call 721-9766; (middle/high school, sixth-12th grade), berganrecruitment@yahoo.com - or call 727-7676.

Elementary Cantor Choir sings, students visit Nye Legacy

Bergan Elementary students in the Cantor Choir recently walked in downtown Fremont singing pumpkin songs in observance of Halloween.

The first through fourth graders visited Nye Legacy to trick-or-treat, and the kindergartners went to the parish office and the high school. Parent Knights hosted a Halloween party with food, fun and games for the students and their families.

Thank You

Too often we hear - please donate or please volunteer. We thank you - whether it be car raffle, computer fund, general fund raisers, Friends of Bergan, church donations, help with the carnival, cleaning the school, baking cookies, Knight Event - the list goes on and on. There is and always will be someone or something in need.

Undoubtedly, sometimes this wears us out, then we remember that at the center of all we do and give is a child's education.

Thank you for helping your child with his or her homework every night, practicing prayers, and taking them to church. Thank you for sacrificing your finances to build us a beautiful school filled with the resources needed to give our young people the best education. Thank you for the hours you give to making sure our students can have fun after school activities, for the Parent Knight meetings you attend, setting up events, reading with kids at school, etc.

Above all, thank you for giving us the gift of educating your child. You are an important part of our school family.

Katherine Griffen
Bergan Catholic School
Elementary Principal

Donors, Parent Knights help Bergan gym floor come back to life

Archbishop Bergan Catholic School recently unveiled its resurfaced gym floor. Scott Painter, athletic director, said thanks to the donors and Booster Club, the huge project was a success.

The project, titled Partner Knights, was paid for by funds raised from the Booster Club golf outing and youth wrestling tournament, as well as donors

Painter sought out donors to help defray some of the \$25,000 cost of the project.

There are seven businesses that have their company logos on the gym floor, and they are: Community Rehab, Diers Ford, Don Peterson & Associates, Fremont National Bank, Godfather's, McDonald's and Wal-Mart.

The eighth spot has been sold to Heartland Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine and will be painted on the floor next summer.

Fremont Area Medical Center and the Outpost each purchased banners that will be hung by the scoreboards in the gym.

The program provides the opportunity for businesses to make the most out of their advertising dollars and, at the same time, helps the school raise funds for educational and athletic projects.

If a business would like to take part in the Partner Knights they can contact Scott Painter, athletic director at Bergan. A business can be added next summer.

The gym was closed through the first week of August. The floor was sanded and the lines, logos, and business advertising were painted.

It had been around 25 years since the gym floor was last refinished and the wax was starting to come up.

The floor is now lighter and looks more oak-colored versus being a yellow color.

**Give thanks
to the Lord!**



Vocation Rally held

Sixth graders from Archbishop Bergan Catholic School attended a Vocation Rally October 23 at Skutt Catholic High School in Omaha. Pictured above, l-r, Anna Wiese, Leah Vobejda, Whitney Beacom, Maggie Bottorff, Erin Doernemann. Makenna Ritchart and Emily Colgan (are hidden on the right side.)

Bergan Elementary Dedication

Dedication Mass

*Archbishop George Lucas,
Celebrant*

January 3, 2010 at 9 a.m.
St. Patrick's Church
3400 E. 16th Street - Fremont

Dedication Ceremony

January 3, 2010 at 11 a.m.
Archbishop Bergan
Elementary School
1515 Johnson Road - Fremont

– Tours of New School –

January 3, 2010 from 10-11 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.-3 p.m.
January 24, 2010 from 1-3 p.m.

– First Day of School – January 11, 2010 –

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Mendliks...

(Continued from page 3.)

it means to give of ones time and talent.”

“I am most happy that my child is attending because I can see every day that she is growing spiritually, physically, and is being challenged academically,” Patrice Mendlik Vakiner said.

“Trey and Sean agreed that they like the teachers at Bergan and have enjoyed learning more about their faith since being there,” David and Jill Mendlik said. “They have also enjoyed being involved in many different activities. Adisyn likes the shields they receive when they have done a good deed or service for others. The kids love their school and are always happy to go - that tells us something.”

“Our children love the teachers and staff. They love their classmates,” Mark and Lisa Mendlik said.

For Mark and Nannette Witte’s children, the best parts of the school are, “the teachers, friends they have made, color tabs and Father Korte - that is from my kindergarten!”

Over the years the Mendlik family has seen and been a part of the school’s growth

and changes.

“The biggest change we have seen is the excitement of the growth in the elementary school and the involvement of more parents and families in making it all work,” Mark and Lisa Mendlik said.

“It was special to be involved in the campaign to re-open the elementary school and have a chance for our son to be a part of that,” Thom and Suzanne said.

“The opening of the elementary school and the Make a Difference campaign for the middle school/high school really brought the Bergan community together for a lot of great causes. It’s been an awesome couple of years to be a part of it all,” they added.

“I have seen teaching leadership by example and the introduction of the arts and music,” Mark and Nannette Witte said.

Patrice Mendlik Vakiner said she has seen many changes in the building appearance, painting, renovation, computer updates, etc., but added, “The one thing that hasn’t changed is the family atmosphere you feel when you walk through the door.”

“My memories of Bergan that my girls are experiencing are the Bergan spirit - can’t tell you how many times all three

break out in the Bergan fight song!” Nannette Witte said. “I love it and throw in the cheerleading moves, of course no more hand springs.”

“I especially love this year for the twins, preparing for their First Communion,” she added. “I loved that time in my elementary years. I still have my First Communion book and dress.”

“It’s definitely been fun to have the Mendlik cousins together at school,” Thom and Suzanne Mendlik said. “We think it’s been awesome, because we’re a close family and we think all of them feel that extra bond that they share in attending the same school.”

The Mendlik family appreciates the Christian education their parents and St. Patrick’s Parish provided for them and now their children to attend Bergan.

Patrice Mendlik Vakiner said her family’s Bergan ties will last forever. “The memories from Bergan are ongoing as an adult as I watch my children grow and become young adults. I know that what they take away from their high school education at Bergan will last them a lifetime,” she said.