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Ribbon cutting at St. Perpetua's new community center - building 'community and connection'

By Pippa Fisher



Oakland Diocese Superintendent of Schools Kathleen Radecke (back left) poses with School Principal Karen Goodshaw, helped by a class representative from each grade before the March 7 ribbon cutting. Photo Pippa Fisher

construction project, especially one that extends through the winter months. I appreciate the patience and perseverance of our parish and school members and their overwhelming financial support."

St. Perpetua School Principal Karen Goodshaw spoke, reminding the eighth-grade students that they were just in third grade when meetings first started to put the wheels in motion.

"A small group of parents and parishioners met who wanted to see the next phase of the parish master plan completed," said Goodshaw. "We met every few weeks until we were ready to begin the first phase of the capital campaign in April 2015. Through the incredible generosity, we raised enough to break ground on this project in October 2017."

Aided by class representatives from all grades providing visuals in the form of posters, Goodshaw explained some of the many ways the school will use the community center, from rainy day PE classes to the science fair and literacy night.

In fact the first major event, the school's annual fundraiser auction/dinner dance, is to be held in the Grand Hall on April 6 with the theme of "A Night in Havana." "I believe that people everywhere and especially in our area are looking for a sense of community and connection. This new community center will help to provide that in significant ways for all ages."

Kasper explains that over the years they have been limited in the ministries and services they could offer because they've lacked an adequate gathering space. "The new community center will bring people together for social, spiritual and service opportunities. In particular, the children of our parish school and our faith formation programs, which serve hundreds of local families, will be among the greatest beneficiaries of our campaign: Continuing our Growth ... Building our Future."

Kasper says that St. Perpetua has always supported outreach efforts in the Lamorinda area including scouting, CYO sports, Winter Nights Shelter, CCIH, Shelter Inc., and National Charity League.

"We hope that our new community center will help us to carry out our parish mission in even greater ways," says Kasper, explaining, "That mission was articulated in our Parish Strategic Plan several years ago: Celebrating our Faith; Enriching our Community; Sharing our Gifts."

Kasper says that when the project is completed they will have a reception after each of that weekend's masses. A gala opening celebration will be held on Saturday, May 18.

Diocese of Oakland Superintendent of Schools Kathleen Radecke and members of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce were also on hand to say a few words.

The 10,500 square foot center, roughly three times the size of the old one, is the first major change to the church hall facility since it was built in 1952.

The culmination of 18 months of construction is in sight for the brand new, state-of-the-art, multimillion dollar community center tucked away on Hamlin Road at St. Perpetua Church. Although the center is still a month away from completion, a well-attended ribbon cutting ceremony, watched by the entire school body from transitional kindergarten to eighth grade, took place March 7, appropriately enough on the feast day of their patroness, St. Perpetua.

"We're chomping at the bit to get in here," said Rev. John Kasper, smiling as he thanked the many donors for their financial support, the school teachers, staff and students as well as parishioners who have dealt with the frustrations of the past 18 months of construction.

"The extremely wet winter has caused a number of delays. The parking lot repaving is the last piece to be done and that won't happen for a couple more weeks at least," said Kasper. "The interior is almost completely finished. So, yes, there have been weather delays, although that is never unusual for any major

Kasper is most excited about what this means for the future. "We are passing on to the next generations a heritage of faith, family and community," he says.

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