

Fall 2023



# DuxEsto

FAITHFUL. COMPASSIONATE. DRIVEN.

## Meet Principal Eubanks

*I feel the love. The Cougar Family has welcomed me with open arms and hearts.*

## What Students Really Think

*My school's values are deeply rooted in faith and community and that helps me grow in relationship with both God and the Cougar community.*

## Find Out Who's Back!

*I took it as God's plan that I was able to be on staff here.*



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Tim Meyers



Terri Campbell



Robb Huck



Chris Reed



Jane Carnazzo, MD



Christina Legner



Tobi Mathouser



Brother Jesse O'Neill



Dan Povondra



Judy Sauley



Blake Schneiderwind



Jennifer Tselentis

## Welcome to a new school year,

and what is a new beginning for all of us. We are educators, students, families, alumni united in faith, bound by hope and renewed by the love we share for our children.

We are incredibly proud to work alongside the talented team of Gross Catholic educators as well as the students and families they serve. It is our promise to you that we will work in the Marianist tradition by standing united in our commitment to an integral, quality education that:

- Fosters learning in the formation of faith
- Cultivates a family spirit
- Develops a commitment to service, justice and peace
- Prepares students to adapt to a changing world

In the Marianist tradition, stability and faithfulness to the community - are fundamental to our work in the world. It is why we believe so strongly in community partnerships and collaboration. It guides us as we evaluate the role of President. That person will help lead Gross Catholic into the future. The Board will continue to support and assist our new Principal, Steve Eubanks and Vice President of Advancement, Brandi Holys, and their teams, while we continue to oversee the business of running the school.

It takes all of us, supported by generous donors and an engaged community, to prepare our teenagers for the life that God has designed for them. Let us move forward together with the joy, excitement and hope that new beginnings bring.

**Go Cougars!**

Gross Catholic Board of Directors



# It's a Great Year To be a Cougar!

The 2023-2024 school year is off to a great start. Goals are lofty, energy is high and the spirit is definitely moving. Students are working hard and looking forward to everything the year will bring.

## Grants & Scholarships

We work with committed families and students, one-on-one, to arrive at a fair, feasible Individual Tuition Plan. Individual Tuition Plans are confidential, based on your family's revenue and expenses, and respectful of your families needs. To learn more about how Individual Tuition Plans work, visit [GrossCatholic.org](https://GrossCatholic.org) or contact:

**Ryan Larson**  
Admissions Director  
402.734.2000 x126



Louise W.  
Class of 2026

*I am looking forward to supporting my classmates at different sports games and events but also getting to enjoy fun house games!*



Josh J.  
Class of 2025

*I am looking forward to being an upperclassman this year and taking on the responsibility that comes with it.*



Abby L.  
Class of 2026

*This year I'm just looking forward to stepping farther into my role here at Gross Catholic and becoming more of the person I want to be with the help of everyone around me.*



Grace F.  
Class of 2024

*Something that I am looking forward to this year is all of the football games and other sports that I get to cheer at.*

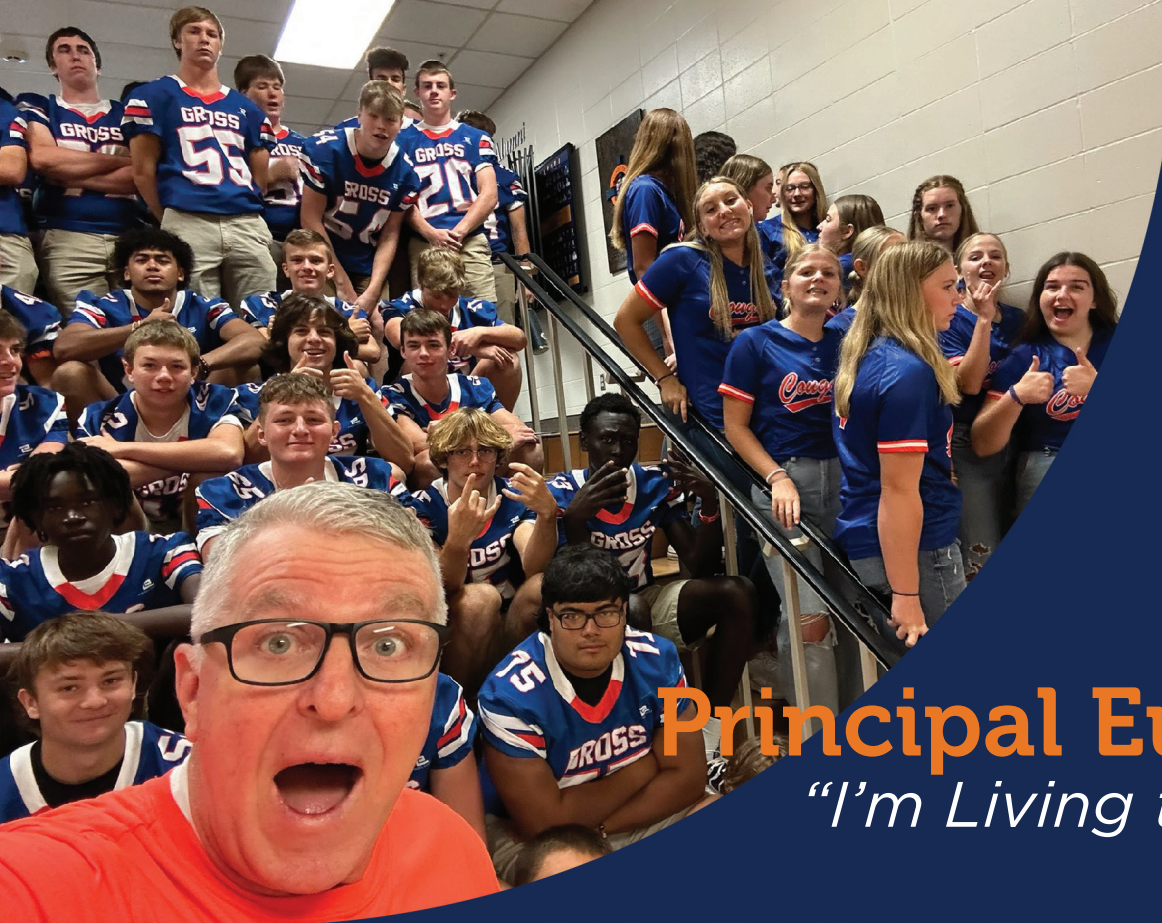


Vincent L.  
Class of 2025

*Our [Gross Catholic] family is small but full of respect and great spirit. So, this year I'm excited for a successful football season and to grub on some catered lunch food.*



Gross Catholic takes "cheering you on" to a whole new level. The first-day tunnel walk welcomed students as they arrived to begin the 2023-2024 school year.



## Principal Eubanks, *"I'm Living the Dream!"*

Walking the halls of Gross Catholic High School brings a sense of excitement and pride to principal Steve Eubanks. Nearly 40 years ago, he walked the halls as a student - proud to be a Cougar. He was unaware at the time that his experiences at Gross would profoundly shape his future.

"I was fortunate to be led by remarkable teachers and coaches who pushed me to maximize my potential as a student, as an athlete, and as a faith-filled young man," Mr. Eubanks recalled. "I firmly believe that I became an educator because I had such great role models and teachers at Gross."

Fast forward to August 16, 2023. Mr. Eubanks is back at Gross - this time as principal, and he says it was like coming home. His goals for the year include listening, observing, supporting and learning as much as possible about what makes Gross Catholic so special, in order to identify growth areas. He also hopes to build authentic, trusting relationships with all stakeholders.

That work began when he arrived. He is already known for sharing his excitement and energy. You only have to go as far as his Twitter page to feel the love.

It is the moments surrounded by students that bring out the unabashed joy of his job. This principal understands firsthand how high school shapes a person's future.

It was at Gross that he met his wife of 33 years. They graduated together in 1984, got married, had two children and have a young grandson.

Having been a student and now the principal, Mr. Eubanks says he can't say which role is best. But here is what he does know,

"I am blessed to wear the **Orange** and **Blue** again. Serving as the principal at Gross Catholic is surreal," he explained. "To have the special opportunity to lead and be of service to the institution that significantly changed the trajectory of my life...it is a dream come true."







**Mr. Eubanks** has posted to his Twitter (now called X) account every day since coming back to Gross.

Follow him at  
**Twitter.com/  
GCPrinEubanks**

OR

Scan this QR  
code with your  
phone camera



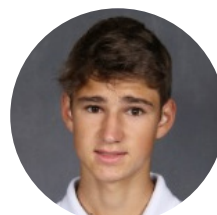
# Home Away from Home

Dorothy (Wizard of Oz) was right - There's no place like home! If you are lucky, home can be found in more places than where you sleep at night. It can be anywhere you feel safe, comfortable and surrounded by family. Ask the students at Gross and they will tell you their school is also their home and that is a big reason they chose the Cougar life.



**Anna S.**  
Class of 2024

*I love Gross because it's truly like a second home. Everyone here is a part of the Cougar family and we love to show our family spirit with one another and the community.*



**Josh J.**  
Class of 2025

*I chose to go to Gross Catholic because there is a community that really makes you feel welcome and special.*



**Jane H.**  
Class of 2025

*Every time I walk in the door I feel right at home, welcomed by other students and teachers who genuinely care about me and my future.*



**Christian S.**  
Class of 2024

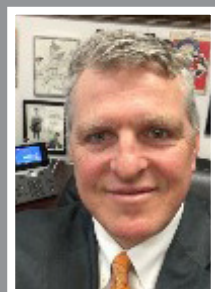
*When I shadowed I felt welcomed by the students and teachers alike and they made me feel as though I'd always been a part of the class.*



**Abby L.**  
Class of 2026

*I chose to go to Gross because when I shadowed in middle school I didn't feel like I needed to be someone I'm not. I felt at home and like I already belonged there.*

I believe the words of George Bernard Shaw best convey my feelings of pride, jubilation, and exuberance to be the principal at Gross Catholic.



Principal Eubanks

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

- George Bernard Shaw



## Faces to Know



**Hana Abbott**  
*Assistant Principal  
Academics and Student Life*



**Terry O'Donnell**  
*Athletic Director and  
Head Boys Basketball Coach*



**Nancy Williams**  
*Senior Accountant*



**Brandi Holys**  
*VP, Advancement*

## Play It Again, **Mr. Dempsey**

Not all rock stars play music - some teach, some coach football and some come out of retirement to help students plan their futures. Gross Catholic has just such a Rock Star in its midst - Mike Dempsey.

Like many of our teachers, administrators and board members, Mike is a graduate of Gross Catholic. He went to college, got his teaching and mathematics degrees, and returned to Gross as "Mr. Dempsey" while pursuing a Master's degree in guidance counseling.



**"I took it as God's plan that I was able to be on staff here."**

Dempsey says. "I was already a part of the Cougar family, this time I was just on the payroll."

The year was 1980. Dempsey started out teaching Freshman and Sophomore math and coaching basketball. He had developed a love for coaching in high school. It came naturally. His dad was an athletic director for St. Mary's Parish in South Omaha. Mike would often help his dad coach budding grade schooler athletes at St. Mary's Catholic School. That love for coaching served him, and Gross Catholic well.

"Some of my favorite years while coaching were often those times when we didn't place or earn a title. The reward was being able to know that you had made a difference in the lives of students through teaching or coaching," Dempsey explained.



After 42 years at Gross, Dempsey decided to step down, but a funny thing happened on the way to retirement. That Master's degree in counseling that Mike earned was nagging him to add another verse to his career. Gross needed a counselor. Mike had the know-how.

So this year, Mike Dempsey returned to Gross Catholic part-time to give some 1:1 counseling to students - helping them discover what the next chapter of their lives would look like. It's music to our ears.





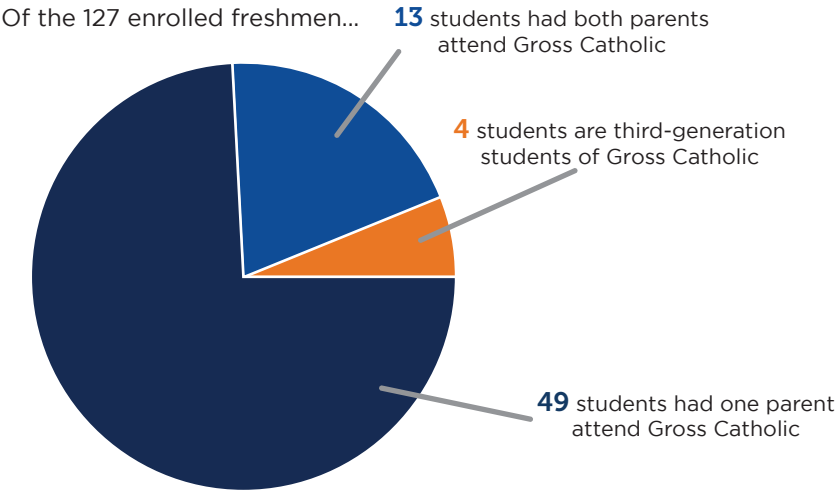
Gross Catholic students gather on the football field to watch the sunrise on their senior year.

# Enrollment Is Up!

More families in our community are choosing Gross Catholic for their high school education. Freshman enrollment is up 18 percent over last year as Gross welcomed 127 freshmen. Senior Grace F. says it won't take new students long to see the passion their classmates have "about their activities, their faith, and the goodness of the school!"

That "goodness" isn't new. As the numbers show, it's permeated Gross for generations.

## By the Numbers



Hanah Marie P.  
Class of 2026

"Back-to-school season is one of my favorite times of the year, I get to see friends and teachers that I haven't seen since the Spring. I have seen first-hand the amount of effort the Student Council has put into planning Homecoming. I am really excited to see everyone's reactions and to see them have fun on the dance floor."



# Raising an Umbrella of Hope

There but for the grace of God...it's humbling to realize how quickly any of us could experience a financial or personal crisis. The good news is that - together - we can make a real difference for our Gross Catholic family.

More than 80% of our students rely on tuition assistance to attend Gross Catholic and experience premier education. Our school could not support these families without our generous donors. During the 2023-24 school year, our goal is to raise \$1.2 million to support our students and their families.

When they face an unexpected crisis — such as a sick parent, or a lost job - we, as a community, need to be ready to help. It is during difficult times that school becomes a stabilizing force for students and those who love them.

Last spring, we established our first Student Opportunity Fund. Together, the Gross Catholic community raised \$85,000 for students and families who desperately need it.

Every dollar does real work, because an education at Gross Catholic is an investment in our children and in our future. We provide students with experiences in the Catholic and Marianist traditions along with outstanding extracurricular programs while preparing them for college, career, and life. We are grateful for your generous support.

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**Please consider giving the  
gift of support today.**

You can designate your donation to go to any of the following:

**Student Opportunity Fund**  
**Annual Fund**  
**Endowed Scholarship Funds**



Gross Catholic students believe in giving back. They spent hours over the summer working in Food Bank to make sure families in need across our community had nourishment.

It is just one way that our students, many of whom receive financial aid to attend Gross Catholic, show gratitude and reverence to our communities and to donors who so graciously support them.

Contact Brandi Holys,  
Vice President of  
Advancement,  
at [holys@gmail.com](mailto:holys@gmail.com) for  
more information.

Make a donation online at  
**GrossCatholic.org/Give**

**OR**

Scan this QR code with  
your phone camera





# Alumni Spotlight: Class of 2003

## Dani Mancuso-Helu

The love for women's volleyball runs deep at Gross Catholic, as it does across Nebraska. We have coached our share of champions. Among them Dani Mancuso-Helu. She joined the Gross Catholic team her freshman year. Older sister, Sarah, a senior, was one of her teammates. They went to state that year and won! Two years later, Dani's younger sister, Amanda, made the team, giving them the opportunity to compete together.

"Although I can recall many silly conversations and interactions with my teammates throughout those four years, getting the opportunity to compete with two of my sisters is what stands out the most," Dani said. Her advice for Gross students is to be grateful. "God has placed you in this moment of time and in this specific high school for a reason. Be grateful for that," she said. "He has given you a smaller community within Gross Catholic where you are known and you can know others. It is a gift. I understand you are young and some situations may seem like it's 'the end of the world' for you, but that's not true. You are loved and cared for. And if for nothing else, be thankful for that."

Dani's story led her to play for the Nebraska Cornhuskers volleyball team. She then went on to play professionally for five seasons overseas in places like Indonesia, Germany and Croatia. She married former Husker football standout Roy Helu, Jr., who also went pro - playing in the NFL for the Washington Redskins and Oakland Raiders. Now, the couple has six children with number seven on the way.

But it is volleyball that can still take her breath away. She was there on August 30, 2023, when Nebraskans filled Memorial Stadium to watch the women play.

"I think what stands out most was the gratitude that filled my heart that night. To see so many former players, coaches and the 'team behind the team' as I like to call them. The people who laid the foundation ahead of me, and the players who have followed," Dani said. "I know it's been said hundreds of times before, but don't take it for granted, there really is no place like Nebraska.

And that night, to have over 92,000 people intentionally show up, proves it!"

But, it was sharing the moment with her daughter that made the experience so incredibly special. "She is our only girl. So to have her there with me, wearing my old jersey was simply incredible. I loved watching her big brown eyes light up as she experienced each moment of that night," Dani recalled.

All of the special experiences, hard work and opportunities tie back to what she learned at Gross Catholic about teamwork, perseverance and faith.

Dani and her family live in the Bennington, Nebraska area. Her husband, Roy, is one of the lead pastors at Citylight Church. She says she is blessed to spend a lot of time with her family, including dinner at her parents' house every Sunday with all 32 of them at the table.

"I'm grateful the Lord has led me to this season of life," she said.



"I'm extremely grateful for the story God has written for my life and all those moments of success were memorable and so fun getting to experience, but the foundational joy and peace I have, has come from my relationship with Jesus."

- Dani Mancuso-Helu







In the midst  
of royalty -  
the 2023-2024  
Homecoming Court

# Our Story in Pictures

Thanking God for our  
grandparents. It's what we do!



Before the game, some reverence. First things first!



What better way to start math  
class than with prayer.



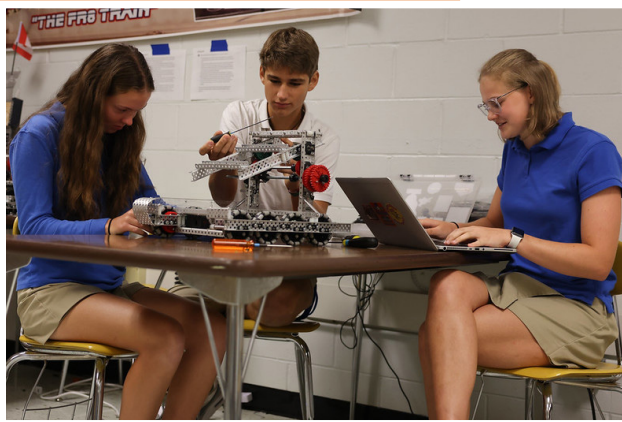
Students line up  
for fast-food Friday  
courtesy of Raising  
Cane's Chicken Fingers.  
Best day of the week!



The game, Settlers on Catan,  
helps these Economics  
students learn about capital  
improvements, logistics,  
and resource depreciation.  
Games increase participation,  
motivation, and learning.



Students on the wildly talented robotics team do what they love the high-tech way.



Teamwork makes the dream work whether you're on the field or in the stands.



There's no shortage of enthusiasm on the girls' volleyball court.

Working it out!



Senior cheerleaders show spirit with a smile.



# Silent Auction Bid Now!

Do you want a once in a lifetime golf experience? Need a gift for the handyman in your life? Do you bleed orange and blue for Gross Catholic along with blue and white for Creighton University? Bid in the silent auction - you could win and help Gross Catholic at the same time.

Check out the silent auction using the QR code below. Scan it with your camera and tap the prompt.

Bidding will remain open until September 28.  
Enjoy!



## Attention Alumni

The Alumni Awards that are typically part of Homecoming, are being moved to coincide with our Celebration Dinner on April 27. This move will allow us to expand the recognition of all nominees. The deadlines for nominations are noted on the calendar to the right. If you have questions call the **Development Office at 402-734-2000.**

## Mark Your Calendars

<b>Sept. 18</b>	Cougar Classic Golf Tournament
<b>Oct. 13</b>	End of First Quarter for students
<b>Oct. 18</b>	Parent/Teacher Conferences
<b>Oct. 20</b>	Music Bingo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doors open for sipping at 7 p.m.</li><li>• Bingo starts at 7:30 p.m.</li></ul>
<b>Oct. 27</b>	Alumni Awards Criteria released
<b>Nov. 20</b>	Alumni Awards Nominations are due
<b>Nov. 22-28</b>	Alumni Giving Challenge
<b>Nov. 22-24</b>	Thanksgiving Vacation
<b>Nov. 28</b>	Giving Tuesday and Campus Christmas Wreath Lighting
<b>Dec. 1</b>	Alumni Awards Nominees announced
<b>Dec. 15</b>	End of Second Quarter for students
<b>Dec. 22, 2023- Jan. 4, 2024</b>	Students' Christmas Vacation
<b>Jan. 8, 2024</b>	School resumes
<b>April 27, 2024</b>	Awards presented at Celebration

For all class reunion event information please check out our website: [GrossCatholic.org/Reunion](https://GrossCatholic.org/Reunion)



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