



News > Local

Heartland Lutheran celebrates 10 years

[Print Page](#)

By Tracy Overstreet
tracy.overstreet@theindependent.com

Published: Sunday, November 22, 2009 9:58 PM CST

Heartland Lutheran High School celebrated its tenth anniversary Sunday night with a huge Thanksgiving meal -- and set out its goals for the coming ten years.

"How we secure the future -- it's four things," said Lloyd Wagnitz, the school's development director.

Those four things are prayer, more students, more volunteers, and more funds.

Wagnitz officially launched the school's new fundraising campaign "Ten Years and Beyond." It seeks to raise \$1 million -- or as Wagnitz said Sunday night "100,000 ten dollar bills."

Ten percent of that money will go directly toward tuition assistance and the school's feeding the hungry program. The rest will help secure a Christian-based education for more students like the 71 who have graduated from Heartland Lutheran and the 75 who attend there now.

"Heartland Lutheran is not only a school, it's a big family," said senior Kayla Chandler.

Luke Watt, who graduated in 2005, said it was those personal relationships and the foundation of religion that got him through the past four years in the Army -- including two overseas deployments.

"I received a lot of training for life," Watt said of Heartland's education.

Meghann Uden said Heartland is what kept her faith after losing numerous friends in car accidents and suffering a low that caused her to question having faith at all.

Ben Rauert said Heartland developed his faith to the point it helped him through the death of his father, a devastating car accident that damaged his leg and now helps him help others by answering the questions, doubts and worries of college classmates.

Senior Dylan Drener said he loves Heartland because he's not overlooked and lost in the crowd.

"You get so much attention," he said.

That kind of personal attention and religious backing for students is why Randy Kemp served on Heartland's founding board so many years ago.

"I started in 1994," Kemp said. "It's a call to me. The Lord touched me."



The Heartland Lutheran choir sings Sunday at Ten Years of Thanks Celebration. The event celebrated Heartland Lutheran's 10 years in service.

[Click here for our photo reprints](#)

He moved from handling publicity for the fledgling school, to chairing the board, mowing the lot and then the lawn as building development began in 2000 and 2006. His own son missed attending Heartland by just a year, but Kemp was passionate about serving children through the school.

Now he serves as the treasurer of the school board and he cooked Sunday's "Ten Years of Thanks" meal of 15 turkeys, six hams, corn, green beans, sweet potatoes and 22 pounds of instant potatoes.

"It's just amazing," Kemp said as he recalled the transition from an idea tossed around a living room to a school with 14 staff and a gymnasium full of 250 students and supporters.

"It is exciting to think that our school is in it's tenth year," Principal Rev. Kurt Busskohl said in the school newsletter. "The Lord has truly blessed us with all that is needed to continue our ministry of providing a strong Christian education for students within the community and area."

Wagnitz said there are so many signs that the school's work is valuable.

There's the praise and thanks from the students -- including the 24 students who spearheaded the Basketball Extravaganza that raised more than \$77,000 for the school last summer in a marathon game that lasted 77 hours, 7 minutes and 7 seconds and put the school in the world record book.

There's also financial gifts that come from a wide variety of supporters and at varying times of the day and night --including one from a man who stopped at the school one night and handed Wagnitz a \$10,000 check.

A Power Point of the school's past ten years showed pictures of athletes, drama productions, building construction, studying in classes, students on busses, a fundraising dunk tank, school dinners and dances, cheerleaders and football players, students performing community service and students giving the thumbs up about being a Heartland Lutheran hornet.

"This is God's school," Wagnitz said.

Copyright © 2009 - The Independent

[x] Close Window