

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS TACKLE TOUGH PROBLEMS WITH CREATIVITY AND COMPASSION

On April 2, Nazareth Prep hosted the annual St. Joseph the Worker Awards, a special evening that brought together students, families, mentors, and corporate partners to celebrate student innovation and community impact.

In addition to celebrating student achievements, the event honored outstanding internship partners and mentors whose support is vital to our students' success – **MSA Safety, Primanti Bros., EQT Corporation, and Morgan Berman of Highmark Health**, this year's mentor of the year.

The evening reflected the spirit of Nazareth Prep: empowering students to lead with purpose, serve with compassion, and put faith into action. After the presentation, students, families, and corporate partners enjoyed a catered reception and spent time getting to know one another.

This year's scholarship theme, "Action and Courageous Care," challenged students to follow the example of St. Joseph by addressing real-world issues with compassion and resourcefulness. Five students were awarded the scholarship for their outstanding projects, which they will continue to develop and implement over the summer:

- Saharah Calhoun created "Mind Matters," a campaign to destigmatize mental health and improve access to care in the African-American community. In the next steps, she will develop a social media campaign for the project.
- Baylynn Marsh launched "United for Justice" to raise awareness for missing children and support families impacted by unsolved crimes. Moving forward, she will seek to collaborate on this project with the Pennsylvania Bar Association.



Junior Tavon Jackson celebrating with family at the event.

- Tavon Jackson is helping youth explore IT careers through "Game On for Equity," a hands-on project involving gaming PC builds and tech skill development. Next, he will seek out business and community partners.
- Mark Stuckey developed "Equity in Sight" to teach investment and wealth-building through accessible, engaging online tools. This summer, he will begin to develop the website content for the project.
- Micah Caldwell introduced "Created to Thrive," a program equipping children's ministries to better support neurodivergent youth through training and inclusive events. Partnering with Macedonia Church, he will continue the project by planning community events.



2025 St. Joseph the Worker Scholarship Winners (L to R): Baylynn Marsh, Saharah Calhoun, Micah Caldwell, Tavon Jackson, and Mark Stuckey

HOLY LIGHT

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

A NEWSLETTER OF HOLY FAMILY INSTITUTE

SISTER LINDA REFLECTS ON FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE

By Theresa Doerfler

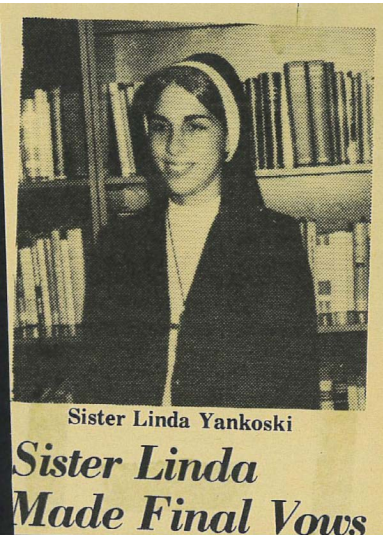
As she prepares to step down as CEO this summer, Sister Linda Yankoski reflects gratefully on more than forty years at Holy Family Institute. "I would do this all over again," she says. "I've been blessed. It's been a great life, and I would not have changed my choice for anything in the world."

Born in 1952 in Detroit, Yankoski attended the University of Michigan on scholarship, engaged to be married to her boyfriend from home. While planning her wedding, she told her mother, "I often think about what it would be like to become a Sister." Wisely, her mother insisted that she should explore the possibility before making a final decision. Yankoski had been taught at St. Christopher parish school in Detroit by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, whom she describes as "cool nuns"—so she went to their motherhouse in Bellevue to find out more. After spending a month with the Sisters, she broke off her engagement and entered the congregation in 1972.

Sister Mary Edward, the Provincial Superior at that time, thought all the young women should work for a year before continuing their education. After professing her first vows, Sister Linda was sent to Holy Family Institute for on-the-job training as a case aide in the social services department. Yankoski never left. "I fell in love with it," she says.

In those years, Holy Family Institute provided children in need with a therapeutic living experience supported by a multi-disciplinary team. "I just learned what I could," Yankoski says. And during subsequent years, she kept on learning. Yankoski eventually went on to earn a Bachelor's in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh, a Master's in Administration from the University of Notre Dame, and a Doctorate in Education from Duquesne University. Right away though, she helped to begin new programs at Holy Family, including transitional group homes for teenagers, to help them learn how to live independently.

In addition to her formal education, Yankoski credits her novitiate studies with Fr. Demetrius Dumm, OSB, who "opened the scriptures" to her, shaping her intellectually and spiritually. Yankoski learned from Dumm about the Old Testament King David. Despite sins and mistakes, "David picks himself up and gets on with life," she says. When she made her final vows, she chose the mystery "Jesus, Son of David," to define her life as a religious. Sr. Linda loves to recount the story about when David was told that he would never slay Goliath. To these biblical naysayers, David responded, "He's so big, how can I miss him?" Yankoski says, "We all have a Goliath in our life—something that is big and insurmountable. The question is, how do we overcome it?"



Sister Linda Yankoski

Sister Linda Made Final Vows



Sister Linda with Sister Therese – one of the "cool nuns" who inspired her vocation.

125th Anniversary Celebration and Spirit of Family Awards

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2025 AT 6:00 PM
Duquesne University Union Ballroom

Please join Holy Family Institute in honoring our legacy, celebrating our impact, and continuing our mission to serve children and families in need.

Visit hfi-pgh.org/celebrate-125 or scan the code to learn more!

If you would like to make a donation in honor of our 125th Anniversary, please visit hfi-pgh.org/donate.



Presenting Sponsor

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FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE (CONT'D.)

Yankoski’s career has been all about overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles—and helping others to do the same. Certainly, there have been challenges over the years. In the 1980s, a tragic fire destroyed the main building, the stock market crashed, and the federal government under Ronald Reagan made budget cuts that hurt programs for children. “We had to recreate ourselves and move on,” says Yankoski, who became Holy Family Institute’s executive director in 1988 and has continued to respond to the changing needs of the times, always focused on how to support children and families according to the ideals of the Holy Family of Nazareth. During her almost forty years at the helm, Holy Family has transformed from an orphanage into one of the largest social service agencies in Western Pennsylvania, with a staff of more than four hundred and eleven different programs that serve 40,000 people in Western Pennsylvania each year.

In 2024, Yankoski received the Pittsburgh Business Times’ Women of Influence Career Achievement Award for exceptional leadership and performance over the course of her career—but she still remembers the challenges of leading a major nonprofit when she was a young Sister in her mid-thirties: “The mantle of being a Sister was sometimes helpful,” she says. “But I had a lot to learn in terms of leadership. I learned from mistakes. I’ve learned to slow down, listen, and let others lead too.” For Yankoski, spirituality has always been a source of strength. She recalls fishing with her father as a child. “Fishing is a quiet activity. We had to be quiet and attentive, and wait for the bobber to pop up and go down.” Learning to be quiet and meditative has helped her as a leader.

When Michael Sexauer, who joined Holy Family Institute in 2015, assumes the role of CEO, he will become the first layperson to lead the organization. Sister Linda will remain at Holy Family Institute as President Emeritus/Director of Mission Integration. When she reflects on turning over the leadership role to a layperson, Yankoski says, “I think it’s a good thing. This is everyone’s church. It’s not just for priests and nuns. Our lay leaders recognize that it is not just a job, but a vocation.”



Sister Linda celebrating Christmas in the Holy Family Chapel with the first class of Nazareth Prep students.



Sister Linda with children who came to Holy Family after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

That hopeful outlook is part of Sr. Linda’s character and her spirituality. She points out that the biblical David is credited with authoring the Psalms. “I love the psalms,” she says. “There is always hope. You could sin and be redeemed.” Yankoski says that optimism defines the work of Holy Family Institute because over the years she has seen how, “when given the opportunity, kids can blossom.” Thinking back on her long career at HFI, Sister Linda says simply, “I’ve learned to never give up.”

MT. NAZARETH LEARNING CENTER TO BECOME PART OF HOLY FAMILY INSTITUTE

Over the years, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth have operated numerous ministries in the greater Pittsburgh area, including Holy Family Institute (HFI). This summer, HFI will assume the operation of another of these ministries – Mt. Nazareth Learning Center, a childcare center located in Bellevue serving children from infants to Pre-K.

Holy Family's connection to the Learning Center is long-established. Our own Sister Linda worked at Mt. Nazareth during the summer of 1972, before moving to Holy Family Institute where the rest, as they say, is history!

Mt. Nazareth was previously operated by the Community at Holy Family Manor, another ministry of the Sisters. In April, the Boards of both organizations approved a plan to entrust the continued operation of the Learning Center to HFI.

"This step was taken with mutual respect, careful discernment, and with the well-being of children, families, and staff at the forefront," said Holy Family Chief Program Officer Hailey Juliano. "The transition reflects a natural and thoughtful alignment of ministry and ensures that Mt. Nazareth Learning Center will remain a vibrant, faith-filled place of learning and care for years to come."



Mt. Nazareth adds to the broad spectrum of programming at Holy Family Institute, fitting seamlessly with the mission to empower families to live healthy, responsible lives.

The Learning Center's director, Michelle Harrison, will continue to lead the day-to-day operations as she has done for more than two decades. Mt. Nazareth will officially become part of Holy Family on July 1 with plans for a smooth transition for staff and families alike. We look forward to adding this program to our ministry!



Nazareth Prep intern A'Rondae Morris working on Perimeter Surveillance Units at Intertech Ci.



INTERNSHIP PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Nazareth Prep junior A'Rondae Morris is diving into the dynamic world of tech through his internship at Intertech Ci, a local leader in security and systems integration. With their supportive, practical approach, A'Rondae is building real skills and working alongside professionals in the industry.

One of his standout experiences has been in the Perimeter Surveillance Unit (PSU) division. After helping build and services PSUs, A'Rondae is now leading a key project: creating a comprehensive PSU database. This new system is designed to improve efficiency and customer support – and it’s giving A'Rondae the opportunity to make a tangible contribution at his internship.

A'Rondae has taken on a variety of other tasks this year – from reconfiguring laptops in IT, to managing inventory, processing invoices in accounting, and supporting warehouse operations. He has brought his dynamic nature, mechanical skills, and aptitude for engineering to each department, becoming a valued member of the team at Intertech Ci.

In their internships, Nazareth Prep students experience the workplace in all four years of the high school curriculum. With the support of partners like Intertech Ci and the mentors who work directly with our students, the Internship Program creates opportunities and develops skills that prepare them for success in college, careers, and life.

Intertech Ci also helps make this opportunity possible by contributing tuition support through the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC). Want to learn how your business can support scholarships or become an internship partner? Reach out to Nicole Richardson, Director of Admissions, Interns, and College & Career Readiness, at 412-206-1516 or richardson.nicole@nazarethprep.org.

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