

MICHAEL SEXAUER BECOMES THE FIRST LAYPERSON TO LEAD HOLY FAMILY INSTITUTE

For 125 years, the top leadership role at Holy Family Institute has been held by a member of a religious order. This year, Michael Sexauer made history as the first layperson to lead the organization, assuming the position of CEO as Sister Linda Yankoski steps into the role of President Emerita and Director of Mission Integration after nearly four decades leading HFI.

Sexauer joined Holy Family in 2015 as Executive Director of Holy Family Foundation and has been in various leadership roles since. In the past decade, he has worked closely with Sister Linda to maximize the agency's impact and adapt to changing needs. Building upon that foundation, Sexauer looks to strengthen our programs and expand community partnerships as Holy Family embarks on the next 125 years of serving our community.

One initiative on the horizon reflects our commitment to workforce development. By removing barriers to success, the likelihood increases that young people will go on to earn a family-sustaining wage and strengthen Pittsburgh's economy. To this end, HFI is planning to expand wrap-around services for young adults with economic need and other challenges who are pursuing careers immediately after high school, ensuring they have access to housing, transportation, and mentorship as they transition into the workforce.

From our beginnings as a retreat for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, to decades as an orphanage, to today's diverse programming that serves 40,000 people per year, Holy Family Institute has always been defined by change. Holy Family has always been willing to evolve to meet the changing needs of the Pittsburgh community. "It's important to realize that we're part of the fabric of Pittsburgh," said Sexauer. "Historically, today, and into the future, families will need help."



Michael Sexauer and Sister Linda at HFI's 125th Anniversary Celebration.

HOLY LIGHT

FALL 2025

A NEWSLETTER OF HOLY FAMILY INSTITUTE

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: CELEBRATING 125 YEARS WITH FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

In 1900, three Polish orphans from Pittsburgh's Strip District came into the loving care of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth at their retreat home outside the city. Today, 125 years later, their commitment to Pittsburgh's children and families inspires Holy Family Institute's work as a multi-faceted social services organization.

On Saturday, September 13, 2025, Holy Family invited friends and supporters from throughout our decades of service to celebrate our rich history, reaffirm our mission, and look toward a bright future for the organization. Duquesne University served as the venue, marking our long relationship and cooperation with the priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.



As HFI celebrates its 125th Anniversary, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth commemorate 150 years since their founding!

The day started with a mass in Duquesne University's Chapel of the Holy Spirit, where Michael Sexauer was officially commissioned as Chief Executive Officer of Holy Family Institute. The commissioning was overseen by Sister Thea Krause, Provincial Superior for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in the United States. Sister Thea was joined by more than 20 other Sisters who attended the event to celebrate Holy Family Institute as an important ministry of the Congregation.

Following the service, guests gathered in the Union Ballroom for the remainder of the evening's program. In addition to marking a milestone anniversary, the event served as an opportunity to recognize some of Holy Family's most staunch supporters with the presentation of the Spirit of Family Award.

This year's awardees included Rosemary Corsetti and Vincent DeChellis, Jim and Gretchen Haggerty, and Fran and Paula Daily. Rosemary, Jim, and Fran have served for decades as Trustees for Holy Family Institute, lending their considerable expertise to the agency. The dedication of these awardees is evident in their commitment as leaders for the organization, and also in their modeling of our mission in their own families, living out the values of faith, hope, and love.

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Former staff members and residents from throughout the years came to celebrate HFI.

IRENE PEARSON'S STORY OF COURAGE, FAITH, AND FAMILY

Irene Glinska Pearson's childhood on a quiet Polish farm was shattered by the onset of World War II. Scan the code to watch a video highlighting Irene's remarkable journey from war-torn Europe to safety and compassionate care at Holy Family Institute.



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A NIGHT TO REMEMBER (CONT'D.)

The evening also included a display of artifacts from Holy Family's past along with remarks by Duquesne University President Dr. Ken Gormley and Art Rooney II, President of the Pittsburgh Steelers and honorary chair (with his wife, Greta) of the event, both of whom are longtime friends of Holy Family Institute.

As the presentation concluded, newly commissioned CEO Michael Sexauer unveiled a surprise for Sister Linda. The new gymnasium currently under construction on HFI's campus will be named the "Yankoski Family Activities Center," in honor of Sister Linda's decades of service and the support of her entire family for the organization.

The evening wrapped up with hugs, well wishes, and dancing. Whether guests have been involved with Holy Family for decades or just learned about our work, the evening was not only a joyful celebration, but a powerful reminder of the many lives that have been touched by Holy Family Institute over the past 125 years.



Sister Linda hits the dance floor at the end of the night!

ARTFUL SPIRITS FORGES COMMUNITY THROUGH THE ARTS

Holy Family Institute is constantly seeking to address the needs of our community in new and innovative ways. This year, we are excited to launch a new initiative to meet this goal: Artful Spirits. Using arts-based worship practices, Artful Spirits seeks to revitalize engagement of children ages 7-12 in worship and build intergenerational relationships, primarily in Pittsburgh's Black church communities.

"I'm so excited for children to be re-engaged with worship and grow closer to God through the arts," says Project Director Nikki Thorpe. "They're not only going to learn about the arts, they'll actually do hands-on artistic activities, led by talented professionals, and regularly collaborate with adults at their churches to share their creativity during worship services!"

Collaboration is at the heart of Artful Spirits, which will launch with an interdenominational cohort of churches in Pittsburgh's Hill District including Bethel AME Church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Benedict the Moor Parish, and Wesley Center AME Zion Church.

Hill Dance Academy Theatre (HDAT) and Point Park University lend their expertise to offer culturally rich and technically skilled programming that ensures the arts are a central, transformative element for all participants.

According to Thorpe, "The children will also learn about the Fruit of the Spirit to build character and faith, as well as delve into the amazing history of Black American music—from spirituals and gospel to hip hop. Although we're just at the beginning stages of this program, there is already great momentum with our partnering organizations. I'm so grateful to be part of this new initiative!"

Artful Spirits will kick off with an event for the partner congregations on December 4th and begin regular programming shortly thereafter! To learn more about Artful Spirits, visit hfi-pgh.org/artful-spirits.



HONORING HOLY FAMILY'S LONGTIME FRIEND, MARK MATERA

The Holy Family community was deeply saddened by the loss of our longtime friend and Trustee Mark Matera three years ago.

Mark joined the organization as a volunteer in 2010, following the arrival of children from Haiti after a catastrophic earthquake. He was an extremely dedicated volunteer who treated the children as his own and truly embodied our mission.



Mark with two children who came to HFI after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Beginning in 2014, Mark served as a Trustee for the organization. During his tenure, he could always be counted on to provide input and guidance on a special project, new program, or difficult decision.

In October, we proudly dedicated the Mark Matera Maker Space in his honor. The lab at Nazareth Prep allows our students to learn and hone skills such as computer-aided design, carpentry, 3-D printing, and many more – increasingly in-demand skills for the 21st century workforce.

The inscription on the lab's new sign reads: "This space is dedicated to Mark Matera, a man of faith, generosity, and purpose whose life reflected the quiet strength and humble service of St. Joseph the Worker.

Like St. Joseph, Mark used his gifts to serve others, build community, and inspire the next generation.

May all who create in this space be guided by faith, fueled by curiosity, and empowered to build a more compassionate world."



INTRODUCING NAZARETH PREP'S NEW PRESIDENT, WILLIAM HILL

Nazareth Prep is excited to welcome William Hill as its new president. Mr. Hill joined the team this summer after a national search for an experienced school leader to guide the school into its next chapter.

"I'm excited to join the Nazareth Prep community," Hill said. "This is a school rooted in purpose and possibility, and I look forward to building on its legacy while inspiring our students to achieve their highest potential."

Mr. Hill brings more than two decades of leadership in education and nonprofit management, with a proven record of driving academic achievement, advancing equity, securing significant philanthropic support, and fostering community partnerships. He holds degrees and certifications from Sojourner Douglass College, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University in Maryland, Morgan State University, and a Master of Divinity from Grand Canyon University. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry at Biola University.

"William embodies the values, vision, and expertise we sought for this role," said CEO Michael Sexauer. "His commitment to spiritual formation, students, families, and community, along with his experience in fundraising and educational leadership, will strengthen Nazareth Prep's ability to prepare students for success in college, career, and life."

Mr. Hill officially welcomed students for the 2025-2026 school year at the end of August. Since then, he has led staff and students in pursuing academic excellence, maximizing internship experiences, and centering spiritual formation. We look forward to watching our students thrive this year!