HOLY LIGHT

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DEDICATION

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

From Father Retka's Gymnasium to the Yankoski Family Activities Center

SEPTEMBER 24, 2026



Bishop Mark A. Eckman joins Sister Linda Yankoski, left, and siblings Anthony Yankoski and Sharon Yankoski Jones to cut the ribbon at the new Yankoski Family Activities Center.

History has a way of repeating itself. In 1938, Holy Family Institute celebrated the completion of a new gymnasium, the result of nearly a decade of determination by Father Retka, executive director from 1915 to 1938. A visionary leader, he expanded the campus, built the chapel, and championed the importance of physical activity for the children in HFI's care. Despite the Great Depression and fundraising obstacles, he never abandoned his goal. The gym was completed in 1938, shortly before his death.

Father Retka's legacy endured long after his passing. His commitment to creating opportunities for children shaped HFI for generations.

More than 75 years later, Sister Linda Yankoski showed that same perseverance. After founding **Nazareth Prep** in 2014, she recognized the need for a modern athletic facility to support students and strengthen the school's future. Following years of planning, fundraising, COVID-related delays, and municipal approvals, that vision became reality.

On September 24, Holy Family Institute dedicated the Yankoski Family Activities Center, a state-of-the-art facility, made possible through the generosity of FNB Bank, numerous donors, and a $4,250,000 Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The festivities began with Mass in HFI's Chapel, celebrated by the Most Reverend Mark A. Eckman, Bishop of Pittsburgh, who also dedicated the school to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Following Mass, staff, students, donors, Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, family, and friends gathered in the Activities Center for a blessing, sprinkling of holy water, ribbon cutting, and reception.

Like Father Retka before her, Sister Linda believed young people deserve a place to learn, gather, compete, and thrive. During her 50 years of service to HFI, including 37 years as president and CEO, she helped build a comprehensive network of services for children and families. Supported by her parents and siblings throughout her journey, the Yankoski family has long embodied the charism of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the belief that families united in love can transform lives for generations.



Bishop Mark A. Eckman with Nazareth Prep students at the dedication Mass.

"Nearly a century apart, Father Retka and Sister Linda shared the same vision," said Michael A. Sexauer, CEO of HFI. "Their perseverance has given generations of children and young adults the space and opportunities they need to succeed. The Yankoski Family Activities Center stands as the latest chapter in that enduring legacy."

COURAGE HOUSE AWARDS

THE POWER OF INVESTING IN A CHILD: ZACHARY CHAPMAN'S STORY



Zachary Chapman (center) and his family. Photo by J. Altdorfer Photography.

Watch a video of Zachary's story through the QR code.

Special thanks to our presenting sponsor, Jim Shorkey Family Auto Group!

On Tuesday, November 10, Holy Family Institute (HFI) gathered with the Pittsburgh Steelers at Acrisure Stadium for a celebration of resilience: the 34th Annual Arthur J. Rooney, Sr. Courage House and Ed Block Courage Awards. Nearly 400 guests—including Greta and Art Rooney II, Head Coach Mike McCarthy, and current and former Steelers—came together to honor two inspiring individuals.

The **Courage House Award** went to Zachary Chapman, whose remarkable life reflects resilience, perseverance, and hope. "Zachary's story is a powerful reminder that a child's future is not defined by where they begin, but by the hope, support, and opportunities they receive along the way. His journey demonstrates why HFI's mission matters and how investing in one child can create positive change for generations," said Michael A. Sexauer, CEO of HFI.

Steelers cornerback Asante Samuel Jr. was honored by his teammates with the **Ed Block Courage Award**. After undergoing spinal-fusion surgery in April 2025, Asante's incredible determination brought him back to the field for the 2026 season, serving as a powerful inspiration to fans and teammates alike.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

SHINING A LIGHT ON COMMUNITY IMPACT



HFI's Customer Assistance Program team at the Be Utility Wise Conference.

Holy Family Institute's **Customer Assistance Program (CAP)** received special recognition at the Be Utility Wise Conference, held October 7 at the Hilton Garden Inn at Southpointe.

During the conference, HFI's Gretchen Hartman was honored by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) for her outstanding work, and the entire CAP team was recognized for its dedication to helping customers and strengthening our community.

Be Utility Wise is a signature PUC consumer education program that equips frontline Health and Human Services professionals with knowledge about utility affordability, customer assistance programs, family support services, conservation, and other resources that help PA families thrive.

Through HFI's partnership with Duquesne Light, the team works year-round to connect eligible residents with energy assistance programs that can lower utility bills and provide debt relief.

Congratulations to Gretchen and the entire CAP team on this well-deserved honor. Their commitment, compassion, and expertise make a meaningful difference in the lives of local families every day.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING FUTURES THROUGH TOOLS FOR LIFE

In 2026, HFI launched **Tools for Life**, a workforce development program designed to address barriers that contribute to Pennsylvania's low apprenticeship completion rates. Funded by a $200,000 Allegheny Foundation grant, the program provides affordable housing, life-skills training, and supportive services for young adults ages 18-25 pursuing careers in the skilled trades.

"Most participants come with limited opportunities and resources," said Ami Steinmetz, Tools for Life program director. "At HFI, they find the support they need to succeed in training and prepare for family-sustaining careers."

Since welcoming its first resident in July, Tools for Life has grown to serve four young men. The program provides apprentices with a safe, supportive living environment on HFI's Emsworth campus, with affordable housing, meals, Wi-Fi, and transportation, as well as access to practical life-skills classes in financial literacy, cooking, and driver training.

"Being part of Tools for Life has helped me stay focused on my training and my future," shared Joel M., apprentice. "I've gained confidence, learned responsibility, and picked up skills that will help me both in my career and in life."

By helping young adults complete apprenticeship training, develop in-demand skills, and achieve greater independence, Tools for Life creates pathways to lasting career success while helping meet the workforce needs of local employers.

"I am a huge fan of the Holy Family Institute Tools for Life program," said Steve Macri, Director of Educational Outreach, Rosedale Technical College.



Tools for Life participants (from left) Joel M., Tanner M., and Justin B. at St. Joseph Residence Hall on HFI's Emsworth campus.

"Having been connected to the program from early on, it was clear to see the tremendous benefit this program was going to provide to those in need. The opportunity for safe, affordable, and comfortable housing, while also acquiring necessary life skills, is the type of support system that can change lives. Kudos to our friends at HFI for bringing this valuable opportunity to the Pittsburgh region and thank you for making Rosedale a part of the journey!"

To learn more or refer a student, contact ToolsforLife@hfi-pgh.org or visit Tools for Life at HFI-PGH.org.

IN MEMORIAM

IN LOVING MEMORY OF COACH ED DAWSON

On Friday, October 23, we lost a member of our extended family, Ed Dawson. Mr. Dawson was the head coach of the Cornell/Nazareth Prep football team and a former Holy Family Institute employee. A husband, father, and mentor, Coach Dawson meant a great deal to our students and families and was a beloved colleague. On Monday, October 26, a memorial service was held in the HFI chapel to honor his memory and offer comfort to those mourning.

To the Dawson family and our student athletes, on behalf of the Nazareth Prep and HFI community, please accept our heartfelt condolences for the loss of Coach Dawson. We hold his family, friends and every student whose life he touched close in our hearts. Please know we grieve alongside you and will keep you in our prayers.



"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen."





Left: The Sisters cheer on the Pirates at PNC Park. Right: Sisters Lidia Waszkowski, left, Anita Papiez and Maureen Stempko pose with the Pierogies before the Great Pittsburgh Pierogy Race. Photos by J. Altdorfer Photography.

A PILGRIMAGE TO PITTSBURGH

WHEN 22 SISTERS CAME TO PITTSBURGH, WE TOOK THEM OUT TO THE BALL GAME

Holy Family Institute recently hosted 22 Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth from Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Ghana, Italy, Israel, Australia, and the Philippines. The visit was part of a pilgrimage honoring their foundress, Blessed Frances Siedliska, who brought the congregation to the United States in the 1880s to serve immigrant Catholic families. Sister Linda Yankoski, HFI president emerita, organized the pilgrimage, which also included stops in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York.

From Aug. 12-16, the Sisters visited parishes, cemeteries, and ministries that served generations of Polish immigrant families in Western PA. They toured HFI, St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, Mt. Nazareth Learning Center, Duquesne University, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church on Polish Hill. They also enjoyed Pittsburgh traditions like Primanti Bros., the Gateway Clipper, and the Duquesne Incline.

The trip's highlight was a memorable night at a Pittsburgh Pirates game at PNC Park. The Pirates provided tickets, ballpark food, and a chance to meet two of the Pierogies. The Sisters cheered as the Pirates defeated the Red Sox, rooted for Jalapeño Hannah in the Pierogy Race, and sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in English after learning it the night before.

"It was a pleasure hosting the Sisters during their pilgrimage," said Michael Sexauer, HFI Chief Executive Officer. "Connecting with Sisters from around the world strengthens relationships, encourages the sharing of best practices, and ultimately improves the lives of children and families. It's a meaningful reminder that we are part of a mission that spans the globe."

WITH GRATITUDE

DRIVING SUCCESS, INVESTING IN FUTURES

A huge thank you to Jim Shorkey Family Auto Group for their incredible, long-standing support of Nazareth Prep and Holy Family Institute! For years, they've sponsored our Golf Classic and our Arthur J. Rooney, Sr. Courage House Luncheon, helping us to raise money to keep serving students, children and families.

Recently, Beth Robosky, Human Resource Director for Jim Shorkey Family Auto Group, presented Nazareth Prep Head of School Mrs. Nikki Richardson with the company's generous donation.

Thank you for believing in our students and investing in the next generation. Your support makes a difference!



Jim Shorkey Family Auto Group presents its gift to Nazareth Prep.

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