

# GOLDEN *mugget*

JUNE 2009

## ALUMNI PROFILE

Jonathan Nikkila, a 1998 Kearney Catholic graduate, attended Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, a little town just north of where Indiana and Ohio meet. He majored in political science, minored in classics and received an 'emphasis in journalism.' While at Hillsdale College, Nikkila was a letter winner on the track and cross country teams, wrote for the college newspaper and later became the co-editor, and was senior class president.



*Nikkilas Lead KCHS – pictured are Jonathan and his brother, Michael, class of 2000 and sister, Jennifer, class of 2001.*

Nikkila and his wife, Miriam, moved back to Kearney with their two children, Elisa, 2, and Samuel, 7 months. "I'm the national political director for All Children Matter, a national education reform political action committee. We support candidates running for state legislature based on their position on education issues, particularly school choice. As political director, I oversee our national field staff and put all of our planning into action."

"I meet with a lot of candidates, evaluating their campaigns and their positions on the issues. I network with education, political, and business leaders in states where we are involved. We are bi-partisan, so I also work closely with members of both parties."

"In politics, especially in advocacy politics where you are promoting issues that come before a legislature, you have to be able to wear many hats and do many different things: lobbying related work, communicating with voters, generating grassroots support for candidates and issues, building our organization by adding members and board members, staying on top of the news in many places, fundraising and development, etc."

"My wife and I had lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where the organization is based, since 2003, but we moved back to Kearney in September 2008. We wanted to be closer to family and I've wanted to get back to Nebraska since I graduated from college. Nebraska is a great place to live and while I've had the privilege to visit and live in a number of different places, nothing has compared to the people and the lifestyle here. Because work travel is already such a big part of my job, it doesn't matter so much where I live as long as I have a computer and telephone."

Living in Kearney and telecommuting has allowed Nikkila the opportunity to work with the Kearney Catholic track team. "While participating in track in college I learned a lot more about 'why' and 'how' as it relates to running - Why we do certain things related to training, and how to prepare and race more effectively. I also learned to love running again after burning out a little when I arrived at college. I hope to pass along that knowledge and passion for running to the KCHS athletes."

Nikkila states, "I enjoy the athletes on a personal level, getting to know each of them and learning what makes them tick. But what I enjoy the most in terms of track is simply seeing them work hard. Seeing improvement is great, but hard work comes first."

"Running is an excellent sport for anyone," encourages Nikkila. "What is unique about it is that no one plays defense. While there is some strategy related to other runners, for the most part you are only competing against yourself. I certainly want our athletes to win as much as possible, but what I'm most concerned about has nothing to do with the competition - it is how our runners improve relative to their ability."

"Whether you are a frontrunner or middle of the pack, taking significant time off of your personal best is an incredible accomplishment. It takes hard work, focus and commitment. You not only achieve a tremendous level of physical fitness and receive confidence from setting and reaching a goal, but I believe running 'burns' in traits related to discipline and confidence that will stay with you the rest of your life."

Thank you, Jonathan, for bringing your skills and your family back to the Kearney area!

## CONGRATULATIONS KCHS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

At the Seniors Honors Night held on May 6th, Kearney Catholic Seniors were named recipients of the following scholarships distributed through the Kearney Catholic High School Foundation.

Sorensen Family Scholarship -  
Jordan Tucker

Anita Nickman Scholarship -  
Alicia Crawford

Jessica Clyne Memorial Scholarship -  
Anthoni Antillon

Jan Gorecki Memorial Scholarship -  
Peter J. Niedbalski

Bede F. and E. Marie Williams Memorial  
Scholarship - Megan Altmaier

Theresa Loschen Memorial Scholarship -  
Alicia Crawford

During the Kearney Catholic Student  
Honors Day ceremony held May 13th, the  
following students were named as the recipi-  
ents of scholarships distributed through the  
Kearney Catholic High School Foundation.

Howard "Bud" Connell Memorial Leadership  
Scholarship - Hannah Husmann, Junior

Sr. Anne Catherine Boone Scholarship -  
Braxton Bellamy, 6th grade

Matt Dakan Memorial Scholarship -  
Chantel Tucker



*Dan Sorensen congratulates Jordan Tucker as the recipient of the 2009 Sorensen Family Scholarship.*

# THE GREENING OF KEARNEY CATHOLIC

Now is the time to "Cultivate Our Sacred Space," and become part of something special. It is a permanent way to honor students, faculty, staff, friends, alumni, graduating classes and relatives, or remember loved ones with a tribute.

The golden threads we will use to weave our sacred space may include: Altar, Arbor, Rainbow Arch, Bells, Benches, Birds, Bridge, Bulbs, Butterflies, Canopy, Circles, Enchanted Garden, Flowers, Fountain, Gate, Grassy Area, Green Man, Grotto, Hedge, Herbs, Labyrinth, Lantern, Light, Maze, Native Plants, Paths, Patterns, Prayer Flags, Statues, Stones, Trees Wild-flowers, Wind Chimes, and Wreaths.



*For Arbor Day, the Kearney Catholic 6th grade students, Kathie Hranac and Father Koperski planted and blessed a Japanese Lilac Tree in front of Kearney Catholic's Cope Coliseum.*

"The GREENING of Kearney Catholic" will be a permanent fund managed by the Kearney Catholic High School Foundation. Funds raised will be used to "Cultivate Our Sacred Space" in a permanent landscape plan. All donations are tax deductible under IRS guidelines.

Please consider a contribution.

Individual - \$25 a year Family - \$40 a year Patron - \$100 a year Founder - \$1,000 or more

## G·O·L·D *Request for Volunteers*

Since 1995 one event has stood out as Kearney's premiere social and fundraising event... the G.O.L.D. Dinner and Auction to benefit the students at KCHS. Over the 14 year history more than \$2 million has been raised by the event and invested in the school for a new art room, computers, textbooks, science equipment, activities vans and much more. Literally thousands of donors, volunteers and dinner guests have impacted the quality of education and lives of KCHS students in dramatic fashion.

Plans are gearing up for the 15th annual G.O.L.D. Dinner and Auction on Saturday, November 21st at the Buffalo County Fairgrounds. As always, G.O.L.D. requires the expertise, talent and commitment from hundreds of people to be successful. Eager volunteers are needed in a variety of ways to insure another spectacular event. Please consider ...

- Helping as a volunteer in organizing and executing the event. At this point in particular, people are needed to help solicit gift auction items for the event. Because of G.O.L.D.'s reputation, donors are very, very receptive to helping with a gift. Plus, we provide training and other information to make the process very easy.
- Volunteers are also needed to help with various components of decorating, invitations, dinner setup, building setup and more. Regardless of your time commitment we can find a job for you.
- Consider donating a gift to this year's event. Each year more than 350 items in every price range are auctioned at the event. We love new, different and creative ideas as well.

Please call Cindi Richter at the foundation office, 236-6903, to help with any of the above items or to visit about other ways you can make G.O.L.D. successful again.

Bruce and Tammy Blankenship  
LaRoy and Angela Williams  
G.O.L.D. Chaircouples

## KEARNEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION

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 308-236-6903

## SPONSORSHIPS AND GOLFERS

The 10th Annual Jerry Liveringhouse Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Sunday, September 20th at Buffalo Ridge Golf Course teeing off at 10 a.m. Since its inception, the Jerry Liveringhouse Memorial Golf Tournament has raised over \$20,000 for tuition assistance to incoming students at Kearney Catholic. Register by calling the Foundation.

## *Kearney Catholic's 50th Anniversary*

Plans are being made for the 50th Anniversary celebration of Kearney Catholic High School. An invitation is being extended for all alumni, teachers and faculty to be a part of continuing Kearney Catholic's strong tradition of excellence with your continued involvement. Contact the Foundation to assist in the 2010-2011 celebration.