

The Final School Tea—Steeped in Tradition

From the very beginning

of St. Nicholas School, the Sisters were required to fundraise to keep our school operating. Thus, month after month, year after year, out of a deep desire for the Christian education of Ukrainian Youth, no sacrifice was avoided, no effort spared to work towards providing sufficient funding for the well-being of our school.

In the 1942 Chronicles, we read: “Our school committee held a fundraising tea at the hall of St. John the Benevolent. The Sisters prepared a concert for the guests and Sister Cornelia Mantyka organized an oratorical presentation in English and Ukrainian, in which seven gifted students participated.”

In 1952, we read in the minutes of the annual meeting of the St. Nicholas School committee, Mr. Rebchuk reported that the committee met 23 times. Fundraising activities were organized: two bazaars, ten teas and the school’s 41st-anniversary celebration. (Looks like a tea was held every month of the school year).

Education of our youth was a priority in developing well rounded, faith-filled young people, who would become contributing members within our community and society.

The Sisters want to thank all those who over the years, have been the Tea Convenors — not an easy mandate. We want to thank all the parents who have helped with the preparation and all those who have generously attended and shared their generosity with our school.

From the 82 Sisters who have taught at St. Nicholas, Immaculate Heart and Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy, and all the Sisters, we thank you for being part of this mission in the education of young children.



On the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord, with the lighting of candles, Sister Anne Pidskalny SSMI officially opened the final IHMS Tea.

Grateful for all those who have contributed, remain faithful and committed to the future well-being of the school.



As Sisters, we continue to value what this school provides and stands for. We walk beside all of you, as we move forward nurturing our young people.

To shift and change is never easy. Our Lord calls us to be open to shifting times and the leading of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been with us, is with us and will continue to inspire us to provide a well-grounded education for young people.

The Lord’s invitation for all of us is to move forward in life and to keep listening to the Holy Spirit. IHMS has profited immensely from the generosity of all those who have faithfully attended the Tea year after year. IHMS has benefited from all who have given of themselves so freely and willingly in working hard to plan, prepare and host this Tea. Gratitude is the Heart of Life. From the Sisters, gratefulness is what lies in the depths of our hearts . . .

-From Sister Anne Pidskalny’s Opening Speech

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From the Heart



St. Nicholas School,
Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy,
and Immaculate Heart of Mary School Alumni Newsletter

A Novel School Experience



Ilyana Sim, Grade 4

At first, the novelty of having “NUT day” every day instead of uniforms and eating snacks from the cupboard seemed like something the girls could get used to! However, we quickly realized that creating a routine (of some kind) needed to be put in place and that the learning responsibility would need to be shared, since both my husband and I were working remotely too.

Distance learning, social distancing, Zoom and Google Classrooms have become our norm and part of our new vocabulary. Checklists for assignments and navigating all the available resources (websites, digital platforms, etc.) has been overwhelming and is a balancing act to keep each child on-task and engaged.

The efforts of the staff at IHMS have not gone unnoticed by our two daughters, Ilyana and Bianca:

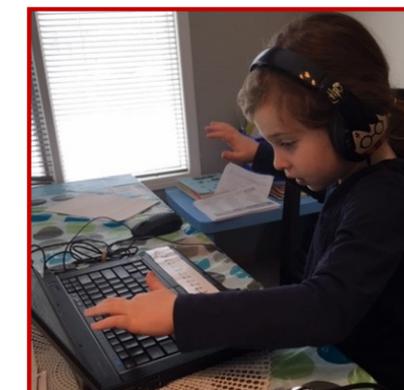
Ilyana: *The thing I miss most about school are my teachers and my friends. I am staying in contact with my friends on my tablet. It’s important to stay home and stay healthy. You should always wash your hands. The Corona virus makes people sick and doctors are trying to make a medicine that can cure the virus. The essential workers that have to work - we hope that they are healthy too. Keep smiling!!!*

Bianca: *I wish we could be back at school. I miss my teacher and my friends. I really like seeing my friends on Zoom. Continue doing homeschool so you don’t get sick.*

Seeing and hearing their teachers’ voices brings smiles to their faces and has added some normalcy to the current situation.

As parents, our first priority is attending to the social-emotional and academic needs of our children. This looks different in each home, and we are doing what works for us. On some days, baking banana bread provided the break we needed (learning other valuable skills that integrate math, reading and science)! In this time of “isolation”, we have had a chance to reflect on our busy ‘normal’ lifestyle – constantly rushing to after school activities. This has allowed us to take a deep breath and slow down. We have further connected as a family and are having honest child-friendly conversations about the state of the world. We have done so with an optimistic and hopeful perspective that when things resume, it will happen with a sense of renewed energy.

“And even with the things that look impossible, they are not impossible with God” (Luke 18:27).



Bianca Sim, Grade 1

Monica (nee Saray '92)& Mike Sim, Ilyana, Bianca

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History Repeats Itself

Spanish Flu in Winnipeg:

Excerpt from the
SSMI Chronicle of St. Nicholas Home
Dated November 03, 1918



St. Nicholas School photo from 1918—the year of the Spanish Flu

“Throughout Canada we are afflicted with a contagious sickness named “Spanish Flu.” Many Canadians became fatally ill and some died daily. The schools and churches were locked because the flu was extremely contagious. The hospitals were over-crowded and the orphanages were full of sick children.

Therefore the SSMI teachers at St. Nicholas School, as well as lay women including teachers, rushed to the hospitals and other refuges for the sick to assist in their care. In the Sisters of St. Joseph Orphanage, all the children and some of the Sisters were victims of the flu. The Superior at this Orphanage asked us to help them care for the sick children. Sisters Theodosia and Nicholas volunteered to help care for these children. They stayed there three weeks, returning to our convent after the dangerous period was over. They were both in good health.

Some of our Sisters also got the flu and those of us who were well cared for them. The two Basilian Fathers became seriously ill. The Sisters cared for them, following the instructions of the Doctor. The Sisters also went to care for our laity, applying cupping glasses (банки) and some of them recovered.

At this time we all became nurses, caring one for another. During this time the doctors and the priests were heavily burdened. In a word, great fear and sadness prevailed. In some of our Homes, Sisters Servants in Canada became very ill, but thanks be to God no one died.”

Immaculate Heart of Mary Living Room School



Adam Senchuk, Grade 1

Homeschooling was an adventure

on which our family never planned to go. The current public health situation has made our son’s first year of school very different from what we expected at the start of the academic year. This experience has been illuminating. We set up a home classroom so our son could have a dedicated learning space. A homemade banner hangs on our wall - “Immaculate Heart of Mary Living Room School.” Adam has been working on the lessons assigned by his teacher and we in turn, have dutifully e-submitted homework on a weekly basis. For many reasons, some “school days” are shorter than others. He has had daily video chats with his teacher, periodic video chats with the school principal, and even a couple of group video sessions with his classmates, for which we are grateful. The extended homestay has also allowed us to incorporate

lessons that lend themselves to a non-classroom environment. There have been a fair few unusual science experiments in the kitchen! As with many full-time professionals, balancing work and family obligations is not easy, and that’s without the added concerns and frustration brought on by a global health pandemic. We are lucky that we can work remotely, when so many people cannot do so. We are lucky that we are healthy, when so many people are sick. We have found that it is important to hang onto and reflect upon moments of unexpected grace and kindness, because they will sustain us. To paraphrase former American president Theodore Roosevelt – nothing worth doing is easy.

Kathrine (Katrusia) Basarab ('96) and Andrew Senchuk

Lights! Camera! Corona!



Oksana Stanowych

The month of March

at I.H.M.S. had staff and students preparing for a Ukrainian concert about wedding traditions. A proposal had been accepted! The hall (gym) was booked! The bride was busy embroidering a shirt for the groom. Ritual wedding breads were baked and invitations sent out. We were ready to celebrate a wedding!! Lights! Camera! Action! Then COVID-19 took centre-stage. Classes were suspended. We would have to pick-up a completely different script.

With no rehearsal time, Google Classrooms were set up for Grades 5-8 students. Teachers began to create, distribute and grade assignments in a paperless way. Kindergarten to Grade 4 teachers set up Google Websites. Distance learning, teleconferencing and birthdays took place with the help of everyone’s new best friend - Zoom. We searched and found a world of materials at our fingertips. This was an opportunity to

discover and consider something innovative.

Assessment took on a different look and along with written work, students submitted on-line quizzes, interactive activities, projects, performances, videos, their Youtube sites and more.

As we began to step out of our comfort zone, instructional videos were created in home classrooms. Kitchen tables became permanent offices and pets became special guest stars in instructional videos or Zoom calls. Family members became part of the crew as camera operators, IT specialists and set designers.

Anyone standing in the wings would notice the challenges. Personal struggles with technology were many, but most of all, time did not co-operate. There was simply not enough hours in the day to complete what was intended. It was difficult to be without the students.

When the curtain finally comes down on this unprecedented situation, many impressions will remain about teaching during the pandemic. In gratitude, I’ll recall staff collaboration, and support of co-workers, administration, parents and family. I will marvel at the technological savvy, talents and creativity of teachers and students alike. I’ll contemplate the remarkable insights of so many students. I’ll remember the pictures of students smiling and holding up their work and the precious submissions of student performances that often moved me to tears and brought so much joy.

Oksana Stanowych (Music and Ukrainian Teacher)

The best thing

about remote education is watching the kids become more confident and independent in their learning. In only a few short weeks, they have mastered how to navigate Google Classroom. I see my students becoming more effective communicators. They are asking better questions at better times. Zoom has offered a platform for me to give live instruction with interactive whiteboards and sharing slideshow lessons, with the added bonus of all the kids getting to see each other and interact as a class again. I think the biggest challenge is not being able to monitor and correct students as they are practicing. I definitely look forward to getting back in the classroom!

Melissa DePierro (Grade 6 Teacher)

We know this is a difficult time

with the ever evolving global pandemic of COVID-19. While the global community is adjusting to new realities on many fronts, grade-school education has undergone unprecedented changes. At Immaculate Heart of Mary School we have transitioned to an entirely remote learning environment, and are now in the third month of this type of delivery of teaching and learning. Please keep our students, families and teachers in your prayers as they continue to experience this new reality.

The full extent of the economic impact of COVID-19 on our school, and our community, is evolving. Although we are in a time of uncertainty, the teachers are continuing to teach, students continue to learn and there are ongoing operational expenses. The school depends on fundraising to operate. We know these are difficult times for everyone, but if you are able, please consider supporting the school.

Visit IHMS.mb.ca to donate online, return the enclosed envelope, or call Lubov SSMI Foundation at 204-942-0443.