

# THE TORCH



January, 2025

Aquinas Families,

I hope you all had a Blessed Christmas with the kiddos healthy and lots of time to be with family and friends.

- **Safe Environment** – One of the first tasks as a school is to keep our students safe. Each year teachers, staff, and even volunteers are required to do the Safe Environment training through Catholic Mutual. The Diocese has changed its policy on renewing and completing that training. Effective January 1, 2025, all clergy, religious, lay employees, and volunteers (whose duties include contact with minors) will be required to complete the CMG Connect safe environment training renewal in January of 2025. **Even if your certificate has been renewed in 2024, the entire diocese will be going to a January renewal each year.** Those that are current on background checks are NOT required to complete a new background check in January of 2025. We are grateful to our many volunteers and the time that they give to our schools. Please take time in the month of January to renew your certificate.
- **Jubilee Year** – Every 25 years, the Church sets aside a sacred time for grace and mercy for the faithful to be spiritually renewed through prayer, pilgrimage, and the Sacraments. The very first Jubilee was in the year 1300. The theme for the Jubilee Year of 2025 is, *Pilgrims of Hope*. The Diocese will be sending out more information through the parishes. Please make this year a place of Hope for your families.
- **(Update) Security** – On December 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> the final pieces for our new front doors were completed. This was a BlueSky project from Gold Rush 2023. After new concrete and having to redesign the entry due to immovable structures, this project is now complete! Thank you again for your generosity in keeping our school safe.
- **One Act** – Congratulations to our One Act cast and crew who placed 2nd/Runner up at State on Thursday December 4<sup>th</sup>. The following students received an Honorable Mention as Outstanding Performers: Lizzie Roh, Flora Dalton, Sydney Hartman, Bella Fontenot, Lilly Collins, Lauren Meister, Rose Wessling, Violet Schmid, Kaleb Andel, and Max Oliver. Congratulations to our Crew who received a runner-up award for their work!
- **Elementary Principal** – A selection committee of parents, staff, admin, and priests has been assembled as we begin the process for a new Elementary Principal. Eva Fujan, with her HR experience, will head the committee and advise me during this process. Job postings have been placed in the Diocesan Newspaper, School Website, NDE website and bulletin backs for all parishes.
- **Holy Family ELC Openings** - We continue to need both full-time and part-time workers at Holy Family. Again, even if your availability is only a couple of days a week, please consider putting in an application. Online applications can be submitted on the Aquinas website: <https://aquinas-catholic.com/careers/>

Happy New Year! Wishing you all the graces in the Jubilee Year of 2025!

Fr. Michael Ventre

Fr. Michael Ventre  
CAO Aquinas Catholic Schools

[WWW.AQUINAS-CATHOLIC.COM](http://WWW.AQUINAS-CATHOLIC.COM)



## Middle/High School Principal update- January 2025

### Current news

- **School improvement report and goals-** The next page has the 2024-2029 school improvement cycle goals and 2024-2025 school year improvement goals for Aquinas MS/HS. The external team exit report from our visit in February 2024 is also included in the Torch.
- **MAP Growth testing-** MS/HS students did the first round of MAP testing in early December. Teachers will receive training on how to implement the data gathered from MAP Growth testing in their classrooms, as well as how this data can be used to identify trends and achievement levels of our students. This data will be extremely helpful in determining areas of need in our instructional program.
- **Front door project-** The front door project is nearing completion. The final step is for Kidwell to come and install the door access and intercom systems, which will hopefully be completed over Christmas Break.
  - **Student and visitor entrance-** Students and visitors will always come through the farthest right/south door, closest to the office. There are signs on the front doors that hopefully everyone will see and quickly realize which door to use. After Kidwell gets everything installed, there will be an intercom by that door as well to buzz in.
- **Credit loss due to absence (HS only)-** This is a reminder that HS students who miss any individual class 10 or more times in one semester are at risk of losing credit for that class. There is an appeal process if a student is informed they are losing credit. Please refer to the handbook to read more on this policy.
- **Community service hours-** Reminder that community service hours need to be submitted to your student's Society teacher within 30 days of any service hours being completed!

### Upcoming events

- **Christmas Day-** Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>
- **New Year's Day-** Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>
- **Catholic Schools Week-** Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>-Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>

### Schedule changes/reminders

- **Christmas Break-** Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>- Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>
- **NSAA moratorium-** Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> - Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>
- **No school-** Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> (Faculty/staff retreat, workday)
- **No school-** Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> (Teacher professional development)



God Bless!

*Spencer Zysset*

Spencer Zysset, Principal





.....from everyone at

## *Aquinas Catholic Schools!*

The Sophomores would like to thank everyone who helped support their fundraising endeavors!!

Thank you to everyone who brought in snacks and treats for the teachers and staff to share in the holiday spirit!

From FFA:

Thank you to Cliff Goff and B-Gee Angus for supplying the breeding heifers for our district FFA Live-stock judging contest.

And to Galen & Lisa Lyons and Bonnie Andrews for your generous financial donations to build our FFA official dress lending closet.

Thank you to Christina Podolak for her continuing to share her musical gifts with us for mass accompaniment. And a shout out to our student vocalists and pianists Sylvia Piitz, Lauren Meister, and Emily Schmid who learned new songs to accompany us with advent music.

Thank you to Northside, Inc., for bringing the school surprise hot chocolates!





Thank you to Presentation Parish for donating their missalettes, so the school can have more music during mass!

Thank you to everyone that helped with the Alumni Phone-a-thon, and to those who have donated to get our Annual Appeal off to a great start!

# ANNOUNCEMENT: SAFE ENVIRONMENT RENEWAL TRAINING

The annual recertification process for safe environment compliance is changing in January of 2025  
Beginning January 1, 2025, all clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers who work with minors will be required to renew their training during the month of January.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO  
CONTINUE PROTECTING ALL OF GOD'S  
PRECIOUS CHILDREN!**







**Season's Greetings from  
Holy Family Early Learning Center!**

Our staff and children want to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and Blessings in the New Year! We thank you for your ongoing support.

We currently have **openings for children 18 months and older!** Contact Kristy at 402-367-3062 or [kristy-andel@cdolinc.net](mailto:kristy-andel@cdolinc.net) for more information.







It has been a hectic time of year for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. They have been busy making Christmas gifts for their parents, doing a few art projects, bringing in food for the food pantry, practicing for their Advent program and preparing their hearts for the coming of Jesus. All the while they continue to learn new concepts in their subjects in the classroom. Not to mention, they did their mid-year MAPS testing to see how much they've learned so far this year. We are so proud of how hard they have been working and how much progress they've made so far. We hope everyone has a very restful and Merry Christmas!

*Mrs. Janak and Mrs. Naiberk*



*5<sup>th</sup> Graders were enjoying a morning of reading at the Villa.*



*Wishing all a very Merry Christmas from 5<sup>th</sup> Grade!*

*Mrs. Comte, & Mrs. Nienhueser*

**Aquinas Catholic Elementary Schools**  
**January 2025**  
**USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider**

<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>
Menu is Subject to Change and will be posted for students knowledge	Milk & water offered Daily Fruit/Veggie/ Salad Bar Offered Daily	1 NO SCHOOL	2 NO SCHOOL	3 NO SCHOOL
6 NO SCHOOL	7 Chicken Fried Steak Fingers Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Garlic Bread Ruby Pears	8 Corn Dog Tater Tots Baked Beans Pineapple	9 Sausage, Egg, and Cheese Croissant Oven Potatoes Apples	10 Bosco Sticks Yogurt Celery and PB Peaches
13 Hamburger on a Bun Cheese Slice Pickles Potato Wedges Side Kick	14 Chicken Nuggets Mac and Cheese Green Beans Pears	15 Turkey Sub Lettuce & Tomato Chips Cucumbers and Ranch Tropical Fruit	16 Loaded Nachos Chips, Cheese, Meat, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Olives Potato Rounds Peaches	17 NO SCHOOL
20 Chicken Bacon Ranch Wraps Sun Chips Carrots Mandarin Oranges	21 Spaghetti and Meatballs Roasted Broccoli Garlic Bread Tropical Fruit	22 Chicken Patty Sandwich Tater Tots Baked Beans Grapes	23 Cheesy Bacon Potato Soup Cucumbers and Ranch Cheese Stick Breadstick Peaches	24 Cheese Pizza Garlic Bread Corn Strawberries
27 Hot Dog Baked Beans Potato Chips Applesauce Cup	28 Orange Chicken Rice Roasted Broccoli Egg Roll Pineapple	29 Chili Cinnamon Roll Cucumbers and Ranch Warm Cinnamon Apples	30 Hot Ham and Cheese Green Beans Cheese Stick Side Kick	31 Fish Sticks Mac and Cheese Peas and Carrots Emerald Pears



**Student lunch currently costs \$3.50 daily, NOT including 2nds.**

The lunch program is a not-for-profit program therefore there are no funds available to cover lunch accounts that are negative.

The lunch system will **NOT** allow additional charges when an account is excessively negative.

All families are welcome to quickly & easily apply for Free - Reduced lunch at any time.

If you have a change of income or household size, you may re-apply anytime.

Eligibility requirements can be found by clicking [here](#)

Applications can be found [here](#), then click on "Application C" (Spanish available)

Completed forms can be returned to the school office

You have 3 payment options: Check, Cash or MySchoolBucks.com\*.

Send check with your student's **Name** and **Customer ID** on your check

Send cash addressed to Hot Lunch with student's **Name** and **Customer ID**

MySchoolBucks.com, easily pay for meals (fees apply) or get FREE notifications

\*If you need assistance with MySchoolBucks.com, please call the

**Parent Support** line at (855) 832-5226.



**Aquinas MS/HS Catholic Schools**  
**January 2025**  
**USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider**



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Milk & water offered Daily Fruit/Veggie/ Salad Bar Offered Daily		1  NO SCHOOL	2  NO SCHOOL	3  NO SCHOOL
6  NO SCHOOL	7  Spaghetti Garlic Bread Side Salad Tropical Fruit	8  Hamburger Pizza Fries Roasted Broccoli Oranges	9  Breaded Chicken Sandwich Chips Baked Beans Apples	10  Pancakes Egg Patty Hashbrown Yogurt Strawberries
13  Porkette Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Mandarin Oranges	14  BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich Coleslaw Curly Fries Peaches	15  Creamed Chicken & Noodles Cooked Carrots Appleslush	16  Fiestadas Tri-Tater Corn Pears	17  NO SCHOOL
20  Sloppy Joe's Chips Baked Beans Fruit	21  Goulash Breadstick Corn Fruit	22  Cheddar & Bacon Potato Soup Chicken Salad Sandwich Baby Carrots	23  Mr.Rib Sandwich Jo Jo's Broccoli Grapes	24  Bosco Sticks Marinara Sauce Green Beans Fruit
27  Popcorn Chicken Tater Tots Fruit	28  Breakfast Sandwich Hashbrown Strawberries	29  Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Green Beans	30  Chili Cinnamon Roll Carrots Pears	31  Shrimp Poppers Mac & Cheese Peas Fruit

● DCCHS and AQHS School Counselors Present:

# Senior Parent FAFSA Meeting

*Get valuable information on how and why to fill out the FAFSA - Federal Application for Student Aid*

## Date/Time

● January 8th

● 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

## Location

● DCCHS Commons - Use the Activity Entrance

**Pizza will be provided!!!**



This year, we do have an additional option to offer students. We've been invited to join St. Patrick's Parish, in Fremont to attend Damascus Catholic Youth Camp, near Columbus, Ohio. This is a camp experience with high-adventure activities and high-adventure faith.

You can review the video (via QR code below) to get a glimpse into the amazing experience. Additional information will be included in a parent email, as well as using the QR code from St Patrick's church, offered below!



The poster for the "Awaken Nebraska" event features a central image of a monstrance being held up, with a bright light emanating from its center. The background is dark and atmospheric. At the top left is the St. Patrick Catholic Church logo, and at the top right is the Damascus logo. A green banner at the top contains the title "AWAKEN NEBRASKA" in white, all-caps, sans-serif font. To the right of the monstrance, the text "Witness the movement that is leading thousands of youth to Christ" is written in a white, serif font. At the bottom, a dark green box contains the event details in white text: "Come discover and learn more about the life-changing impact of Catholic Youth Summer Camp at Damascus.", "THURSDAY, JAN. 30 6:00 - 8:30pm", "The Relevant Center", "Elkhorn, NE", and "Tickets Free at Door".



**PROMO  
VIDEO**



**ST PATS  
CYSC INFO**

**IF YOU ARE  
INTRIGUED ABOUT  
DAMASCUS  
CONSIDER  
ATTENDING  
AWAKEN NEBRASKA,**



**HELD IN ELKHORN  
IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH DAMASCUS,  
WILL OFFER A  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
EVENING WITH  
ADORATION,  
PRAYER AND  
INSIGHTS INTO  
THE CSYC**





STEUBENVILLE YOUTH CONFERENCE

**JULY 11-13, 2025**

**What:** Steubenville Catholic Youth Conference

**When:** July 11-13, 2025

**Where:** Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

**Who:** Open to all high school students

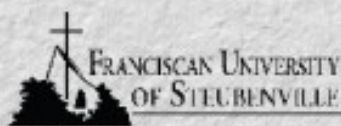
**Cost:** \$430 (registration, transportation, accommodations with breakfast, 3 additional meals, t-shirt)

**Extras:** Incidental expenses

[steubenvilleconferences.com/youth](http://steubenvilleconferences.com/youth)

**TO SECURE YOUR SPOT**  
**COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM**  
**\$125 DEPOSIT BEFORE JANUARY 15**

The Steubenville Conference offers dynamic speakers, adoration and powerful prayer encounters, plus uplifting music to inspire and empower young people in their faith journey. It's a chance for students to step away from their routines, encounter Christ in a deeper way, and build lasting friendships--first and foremost with Jesus.





# GIVING HOPE TO THE HOMELESS

## COMPETITION FOR A CAUSE

All donations  
for

**HOPE**   
OF THE POOR



*In need of wet wipes,  
hand sanitizer, gloves,  
handwarmers, tents,  
stocking caps,  
sleeping bags,  
or cash donations*

Donations accepted Wednesday, January 8,  
through Friday, January 17, 2025.



*More Information About The Point System Will Be  
Announced The First Week After Christmas Break*



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## EASY FUNDRAISING

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### RaiseRight Fundraising

Fundraising made easy. Simply earn money for your organization by purchasing gift cards from more than 750 top brands you shop for everyday things. More information on back.



### Box Tops for Education General Mills Inc.

No clipping. Buy participating items. Scan your receipt or upload a digital receipt. Earn money for our school.



### Best Choice Labels

Shop your local grocers and clip the Best Choice labels off with the UPC and turn into the school office. We send in the labels and they send us CASH for our school!



### Super Saver Receipts

Turn in your Super Saver receipts from Sept. through March and turn them into the Aquinas Offices.

## APPS TO CONSIDER

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### SCHOOL

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### PowerSchool Mobile PowerSchool Group LLC

Access to your student's data including grades and attendance. Our District code is: RCSD. More info. about this app can be found on our website.



### Activity Scheduler rSchool Today

School Calendar. Sign up for Notify Me, to get a text and email when activities are updated or changed. Download the [User Guide here](#)





### My School Bucks MSB Parent, USA | Heartland Payment Systems

**FREE ACCOUNT:** see all balances, set up low-balance alerts, view lunch purchases (entre, seconds, milk, etc.)  
**Extra Fee:** put funds into accounts (Aquinas accepts cash/check at Office)

# January 2025

## Aquinas Catholic Schools

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Denotes change in schedule 			1 SOLEMNITY OF MARY CHRISTMAS VACATION	2 Christmas Vacation	3 Christmas Vacation 5:45PM G/BBB vs GACC	4 10:00AM WR. @ Wood River Duals Invite
5	6 Teacher Retreat & In-Service	7 Classes Resume 5:45PM G/BBB vs Clarkson-Leigh	8  Penance Service	9 4:30PM G/BBB @ Pierce 7:00PM WR Dual vs Boone Central (Senior Night)	10	11 10:00AM WR @ Aquinas TBA Speech @ Twin River
12	13 6:00PM Res. G/BBB vs North Bend	14 5:45PM G/BBB vs Twin River	15	16 6:00PM WR. BC Tri @ DC	17 NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service 12:30PM JV WR @ Schuyler 1:30PM G/BBB vs GICC	18 9:30AM WR @ Schuyler 1:00PM G/BBB @ Lakewood TBA Speech @ Raymond Central
19	20 4:30PM MS BBB vs Twin River 6:00PM Res. G/BBB @ Scotus	21	22 Penance Service	23 4:30PM MS BBB vs Shelby-Rising City	24 1:30PM G/BBB vs Hastings St. Cecilia	25 10:00AM WR Conf @ AHS 1:30PM G/BBB @ Kearney Catholic TBA Speech @ Scotus
26 Dwight Assumption God Bless America Dinner	27 TBA G/BBB Conference This Week	28	29	30 4:30PM MS BBB vs Milford	31 Spirit Day: 10:00 AM WR @ Central Valley Invite TBA G/BBB Conference	



*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

John 1:29

**AQUINAS CATHOLIC  
ELEMENTARY**

1026 5TH ST  
DAVID CITY, NE 68632  
402-367-3669

**AQUINAS CATHOLIC  
MS/HS**

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DAVID CITY, NE 68632  
402-367-3175

**[www.aquinas-catholic.com](http://www.aquinas-catholic.com)**

**HOLY FAMILY EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

622 J STREET  
DAVID CITY, NE 68632  
402-367-3062