

# Alumni Spotlight



## Bryn E. Pesek, Class of 2000

**“I definitely believe in Catholic education, now as an adult, more than ever. When I was attending Immaculate Conception School, I never really thought of it as “Catholic school” vs. “public school.” I.C. Was just *my school*. It was my home away from home, a place to gather with friends to share in education, sports, field trips, religion, community, and family. All aspects of my life could be expressed at I.C. and I had a community to share it with. I liked my experience at I.C. so much that I decided to continue my Catholic education at Venango Catholic High School in Oil City, PA. I graduated 4th in my class. I went on to earn my Bachelor’s degree in 3 1/2 years from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, OH and I earned my M.A. in Labor Relations from Indiana University of Pennsylvania at the age of 22. I now work in Pittsburgh as an HR Analyst.**

**Looking back now at my experience at I.C. combined with some recent research on Catholic education, I realize that I was very lucky. Statistically, students in religious schools score higher on their S.A.T.’s than those in public schools (<http://www.capenet.org/facts.html#SATscores>) allowing them to have better and brighter opportunities. I am a firm believer in that most education can only be gained if one puts effort into it. At I.C. I had a strong support system of peers, teachers, and my parents, that gave me the tools to be a hard worker and very disciplined in my studies. This is the foundation that I have had that allows me to put effort into everything I do and I contribute my success thus far to these principles that I gained at I.C. I am very grateful for my parents’ belief in Catholic education.”**

## Anne Traynor, Class of 1995



**“A community of parents, teachers, and administrators support the learning of every Immaculate Conception School student, fostering growth in academic knowledge, faith, and moral consciousness. As a graduate of I.C. School, I found that the curriculum has prepared me well to pursue advanced high school coursework in mathematics, literature and science. In addition to providing rigorous instruction in the core subjects, I.C. teachers encouraged me to develop my personal interests related to art, both in class and through extracurricular activities. Having the opportunity to participate in interscholastic basketball at I.C. from 4th through 8th grades strengthened my teamwork skills and my relationships with peers. Among my experiences at I.C., perhaps most influential were the opportunities to volunteer in the local community, which helped me to practice awareness of others in decision-making, and develop commitment to continued participation in service activities during high school.”**

**After graduating from Venango Catholic High School, Miss Traynor continued her academics at the University of Notre Dame where she majored in Science Education. Shortly after graduating Miss Traynor travelled to Micronesia where she taught Science at Xavier High School for 2 years; Anne eventually became the Principal of Xavier, where she remained until 2008. Presently, Anne Traynor is a student at Michigan State University where she is a Teaching Assistant while working toward her Doctorate in Education.**



## Katherine (Traynor) Windsor, Class of 1997

**“There is a sign in the entrance of Venango Catholic High School in Oil City, PA that states: “Be it known to all that Christ is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in the classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students.” This posting declares a truth that students of Catholic education can grasp at an early age through the integration of faith and values into daily life. When Christ is incorporated in one’s regular life, through participation in the liturgy and sacraments, it can be easier to recognize Christ in the people around us and our environment. This awareness of God’s presence in our community can make clearer the call to respect and serve others. Because service is often a regular part of Catholic education, students learn what types of service opportunities are often available in communities,**

**allowing them to continue to live their faith and values through service to others well beyond grade school. Also, students may identify some of their unique gifts through service and are encouraged to continue to use those gifts to help others.**

**At Immaculate Conception, students are given a first-rate education rooted in the principles of Catholic teaching. The teachers of I.C. excel at imparting the basics of reading, writing, math, and science, which are essential components for the knowledge and freedom that are created by education. As we continue to learn more about our faith, this knowledge enables us to question aspects of Catholic teaching and struggle with our faith to ultimately unite us more firmly with Christ. I believe that a quality Catholic education challenges students to become independent, complex thinkers and lifelong learners of both academic and spiritual matters, preparing students to become faithful practitioners of the Gospel and responsible members of society.”**

**Katherine graduated as Valedictorian from Venango Catholic H.S. in 2001. Post graduation she attended Notre Dame University where she majored in Chemistry with a minor in Anthropology; in 2005 Katherine graduated with a B.S. in Chemistry from Notre Dame University. Currently she is pursuing a Ph. D. in Organic Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, W.I. In June of 2009 Katherine married Matthew Windsor, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin.**

# Seth W. Pesek, Class of 1997

I greatly value my years at Immaculate Conception School in Clarion, Pennsylvania, and I.C. still holds a very near and dear place in my heart. The building blocks of my life began at five years old entering the kindergarten classroom at Immaculate Conception. Being able to grow each year in an intimate learning environment helped to foster many of the characteristics that I value within myself today. By active involvement in sports and academic competitions, I developed a great passion for competition (through programs like basketball, MathCounts, and Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science). Developing leadership skills early on bolstered my confidence because of the diverse leadership opportunities made available in my Catholic education.

My years at I.C. have given me the ability to learn new concepts and adapt to any team/work environment. I still remember riding on buses to I.C. basketball games, when we all sat in silence and were encouraged to think and focus on what we covered the week before in practice. This skill of focusing with silent intensity is one I still use to this day to execute tasks and accomplish weekly goals. I have used the lessons of my Catholic education to keep me disciplined and carry me to leadership positions at Virginia Tech and in my five years at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. I now live in Manhattan and work in Asset Management for PwC, and time has only made me realize all the more how much I value the skills and morals that I learned at Immaculate Conception School.

