

Getting to Know..The Grdina Family

By: Vic Gideon

East meets west for Megan and John Grdina and the meeting place: Communion of Saints Parish.

"Honestly, if it wasn't for Communion of Saints, or St. Ann, we probably would have been long gone from the area," says John, who met Megan while both were students at John Carroll University.

"We love the community, the faith base for everything, our kids' school," continues Megan.

Megan grew up in Vermilion, graduating from Vermilion High School while a parishioner at St. Mary's Parish. John spent his early years in Concord, attending St. Gabriel for elementary school, before moving to Perry and graduating from Perry High School.

John got to know Megan senior year when they were paired for student teaching. They started dating and, just two weeks into the relationship, John says he knew Megan was the one he would marry. Both did their student teaching at John F. Kennedy High School on Harvard.

"I started going to church (at St. Ann) and we got engaged and thought, 'I want to get married here!'" Megan says about choosing the parish. "So, we kinda started going here together and then set everything up for our wedding."

"We chose COS because of the welcoming environment, the priests, the pastors, all the friends that we've met, the school, and all the activities that we are a part of each and every day and week," continues John. "We love to just thrive and flourish in a wonderful environment for ourselves, our children, and the whole community."

The couple graduated from John Carroll in 2004 and stayed in Cleveland Heights, getting married in 2007, buying a house, and starting a family, sending four kids to COS: 15-year-old Guiliana (Gigi), now a freshman at Beaumont, runs cross country and plays lacrosse, is an honors student who assists with Children's Liturgy of the Word, and volunteers Saturdays during the winter as a referee or at the snack bar for Puppy Basketball.

Thirteen-year-old Benjamin is in 7th grade at COS and is a member of the National Junior Honor Society,

runs cross country, plays basketball, and competes in travel baseball in the summer. Fourth grader Calvin, 10, enjoys playing soccer, basketball, and baseball, while six-year-old Elijah is in first grade, sharing the same love for sports as his siblings, playing soccer, basketball, and baseball.

"Faith is really important in our family," says Megan. "We base pretty much every decision we do on a daily basis around our Catholic faith."

"It's the foundation," John continues. "It holds us together as a unit, as a married unit and then as a whole entire family and allows us to have a True North of how to raise our children in society and, God willing, that they'll do the same as well. We're very blessed."

Megan and John have both been dedicated educators for the past twenty years on opposite sides of town, Megan teaching Biology and Anatomy at Bay Village High School and John teaching Career Exploration and Digital Literacy at Perry Middle School. But COS remains at the center of their lives.

"I love every aspect of it," Megan says. "Knowing that my kids even want to go back and help and be involved with things and there's always things going on that are centered in the faith."

They remain committed to the community and the parish. Megan serves on the parish council and John as the COS Athletic Director as well as being a Eucharistic Minister, a leader in Children's Liturgy of the Word, and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

"I love the diversity," said John. "I love the strong value system at Communion of Saints, and then when we started having our children go there, we fell in love with a smaller community but a good education and so, as the years went by, moving was off the table and we said we're in for the long-haul and we're happy, very happy with being part of the church."

