

Commitment to Immaculate Heart of Mary School transcends generations

BAYNESVILLE - Nearly seven decades after her great-grandfather, William Hutchins, began showing parishioners their seats at the then-newly built Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Baynesville, first-grader Reagan Archibald is taking a seat in the classroom of the parish school.

"It has always felt like a community and a family here - always," said Terri Archibald, Reagan's grandmother, Hutchins' daughter and an Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner and teacher.

Archibald "came home" in 1993, when her father died.

When she visited his beloved church to arrange his funeral - "We put his usher pin on him," she said - Archibald noticed that Immaculate Heart of Mary School was advertising an opening.

"I came here to plan his funeral and get a job at the same time," she said.

She had previously taught at Madonna Middle School and Catholic Community School, both in Baltimore and since closed.

Returning to teach at IHM School, from where she and six of her seven siblings graduated, was "a divine intervention," she said. She brought one of her sons, then in second grade, with her.

"He went wherever I went," she said.

"I used to sing in the choir," recalled Chris Archibald, 30, who graduated from IHM School in 2000, went on to Calvert Hall College High School in Towson and the University of Maryland, and is now an engineer for the Baltimore Gas and Electric

Company. "It was nice – my last year, instead of music class, I could do choir practice."

Terri Archibald, who now teaches seventh- and eighth-grade social studies and serves as middle school leader as well as coordinator for student discipline, said that teaching her son could sometimes be funny.

"I remember once his hand shot up, and he said, 'Mom,'" she said. "His hand went down – he didn't mean to call me 'Mom.'"

Her younger son, Andrew, 26, Reagan's father, was at IHM for two years, until he was diagnosed with dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, known as ADHD.

"Back then, we didn't have programs to meet the needs of students (with learning differences) – now, we do," Terri Archibald said, alluding to the growth of programs such as the Archdiocese of Baltimore's PRIDE (Pupils Receiving Inclusive Diversified Education) program.

Andrew Archibald said he was thrilled to send his daughter to IHM.

"She seems happier about school than I was as a kid," he said, adding that he was referring to his experience outside of IHM.

"I'm a little bit religious," he added, "and the school can guide her."

Terri Archibald said her granddaughter's attendance at the pre-K-to-grade-8 school is a source of pride.

"When I took her picture in her uniform that first day, I just welled up," she said.

Archibald, 61, will celebrate 40 years of teaching with the archdiocese in two years, and is looking forward to being recognized at the annual Catholic Schools Convocation.

"God willing, I will be there," she said.

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