

Marian Catholic ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



APRIL 2023

CLASS OF 1975 ALUMNI THANKFUL FOR LIVER TRANSPLANT

The generosity of a U.S. Marine from Florida helped save the life of a Marian Catholic graduate a few months ago when he donated part of his liver to her in an October 17 transplant at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC).

Jean Paslawsky, Class of 1975, was diagnosed with Stage 4 liver disease (NASH) a year prior to the operation. Her illness was terminal if a generous donor could not be found. Eternally grateful, Jean posted on social media, "Share your wealth of good health! Please be an organ donor."

In reality, donor **Jeff Mathena** of Citrus Springs helped save two lives when his donation was coupled with another one as part of a paired exchange through UPMC's Living Donor Liver Transplant Program.

Using the paired exchange, doctors can offer to "exchange" transplants for donors and recipients who are blood type or cross match incompatible.

Mathena said he initially wanted to be a liver donor for the stepmother, Barbara, of a life-long friend since middle school. But when doctors learned of a blood type issue at the Presbyterian Hospital of New York, it was determined he "was not the right match."



Jean Paslawsky with Jeff Mathena, the Florida resident who donated part of his liver to her, saving her life.

What followed was a miraculous story of how the prospective donor went on to save Paslawsky's life as well as his friend's mother.

Mathena said Barbara contacted UPMC, where doctors told her she could receive plasma treatments to be "conditioned to receive part of Jeff's liver." Then they learned about the option for paired exchange, where it was determined part of Jeff's liver would go to Jean while another donor would match with Barbara.

"I didn't know who I was donating to, and didn't find out until my three-month follow-up after surgery," Mathena said, "but I wanted to help, and I knew Barbara needed a liver. After learning about paired exchange, I learned I could not only help her, but through exchanging my donation, I could help someone else. too. I was in good health, so it was something I wanted to do."

Meanwhile, Jean's friend, a retired liver transplant surgeon, had explained to

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her earlier that waiting for a liver to be donated from a deceased person was likely to not be an option to her. She said for some reason, Jean's MELD (Mayo End-Stage Liver Disease) score, a metric used to gauge how sick a patient is, was not high enough to put her in a position to receive a liver any time soon.

So, she began telling her story to everyone, and while she got immediate responses from willing donors, "age and other factors made them ineligible to be help," she said, adding, "so, basically, I was told I still needed a living donor."

Dr. Abhi Humar, one of the surgeons of the multiple-member team at UPMC, noted, "She was not at the top of the list in the waiting queue (for deceased donation), and she would not have received a liver through that option any time soon. Living donation became a more viable and realistic option if she could find a match."

Dr. Humar, clinical director of the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute and chief of UPMC Transplant Services, explained how liver transplants

work. Liver transplants replace a non-functioning liver with a new liver, similar to kidney transplants, and are done in two ways – transplant of a full liver from a deceased person, which he said is the most common transplant, or the recipient getting part of a liver of a living donor, typically a family member or friend, but even a stranger.

As for the latter procedure, he said, "It's possible because you don't need your entire liver. The liver is one of the few organs of the human body that actually regenerates. As the liver regenerates, it grows to full size in both the patient and donor."

In Paslawsky's situation, Dr. Humar said, "We had two operating rooms in use at the same time. In one operating room, a team of surgeons removed part of the Mathena's liver, which takes about five hours. While in the other operating room, other surgeons and their team remove the non-functioning liver of the patient. Then the transplant takes place. The whole process takes 8-9 hours."

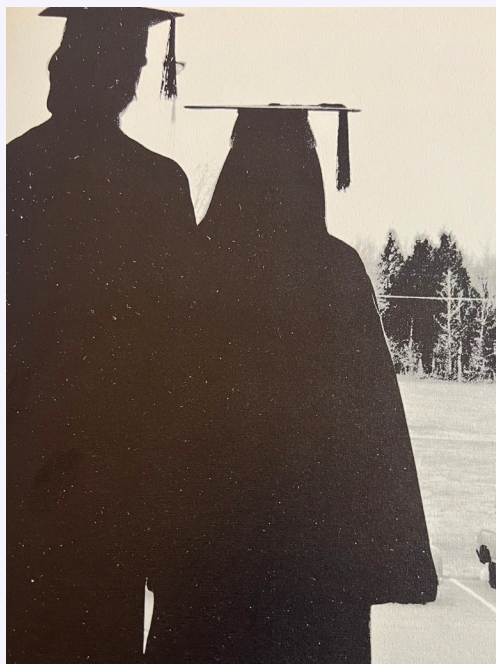
Dr. Humar said the transplanted part of the liver starts to regenerate

immediately, as it does in the donor, and in 6-8 weeks grows to its full size in the donor, in time leaving both the living donor and the recipient with a fully-functioning healthy liver. Regarding Paslawsky and Mathena, he said, Both are doing very well." He said Mathena's donation was "definitely life saving."

In her recent post-operation visit, Paslawsky said doctors told her the liver is "growing back at the expected rate; its size is what it is anticipated to be." She said, "It takes about a year for the body to recover, but I feel about 10-million percent better."

Forever grateful for his generosity, Paslawsky will always have an appreciation and admiration for the Marine. Noting he did not get to help save lives in the war because he missed his unit's deployment.

She asked him, "Have you thought God kept you healthy and safe to do this for me? Look at me. You may have not gone through a jungle or a desert, but you saved my life Marine, and I am here thanking you. Never forget that. Jeff, you saved my life!"

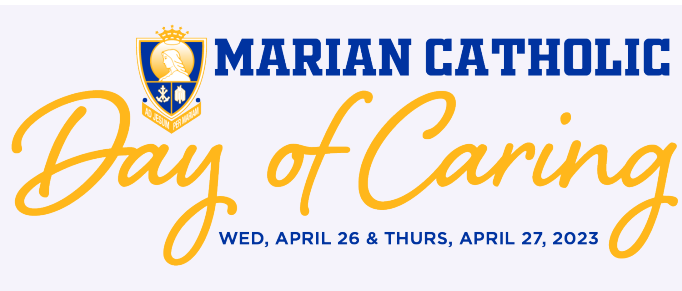


CLASS OF '73 PLANS REUNION, INVITED TO GRADUATION

A 50-year reunion and an invitation to participate in the 2023 Commencement exercises of Marian Catholic High School's will make for busy days ahead for members of the Marian Catholic Class of 1973.

The reunion is planned for Saturday, May 6, at La Dolce Casa DiMaggio's, Tamaqua. The event begins with a cocktail hour from 6-7pm, followed by a buffet dinner at 7pm, and a "reconnecting of classmates" until 10pm. Class members who plan to attend may contact Sandy Taptich Pearson, spearsonmom12@yahoo.com, Patty Cerimele Vito at alv6066@hotmail.com or Gina Stianchie Kanick at ginak@ptd.net by April 24.

On Friday, June 2, our 1973 alumni are invited to attend the Class of 2023 graduation ceremony. A reception will be held in the school's Business Center prior to the ceremony. To RSVP, class members should contact the school at advancement@mariancatholichs.org or call 570-467-3335, extension 115.



CAN WE COUNT ON YOU?

Our annual Day of Caring is Wednesday, April 26 through Thursday, April 27

This day is very important to our school! Join us as we join together as a community and school family to live out loud the impact of working together to make a significant influence on the lives of our current Colts and Fillies.

The 24-hour-long Day of Caring is such a meaningful movement for our students because 100% of the funds raised through your generous gifts go immediately to provide tuition assistance to our young men and women striving to grow in the areas of their faith, morals and academics. You may make your gift at <https://boostmyschool.com/mariancatholichs-2023-day-of-caring> or **scan the QR code**.



YOUR \$19.54 GIFT CAN IMPACT OUR FUTURE!

Together we are capable of such great things! Imagine if everyone that saw this newsletter would consider **donating just \$19.54** in honor of the year 1954 – the year Marian Catholic High School welcomed its first students! So many lives have been impacted and changed since then – maybe your child, yourself, or a friend. Consider a donation in their honor or memory. **You are part of our legacy of the past, and your gift makes you part of our legacy of the future!**

FROM OUR ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR:



As we move into the final quarter of our school year, I want to pass along some important updates and reminders for the remainder of the year.

Our **Marian Catholic Academic Team** recently won the Schuylkill League Academic Championship by defeating 11 other Schuylkill County schools! They will compete in the State Championship on April 28 in Harrisburg. Please keep the team in your prayers as they prepare and compete!

The **Marian Catholic Evangelization Team** held a Lenten Stations of the Cross Retreat. Students participated in Lectio Divina, talks, Adoration, Stations of the Cross and small groups. The retreat was fully prepared and led by our own Marian Catholic students. We are very proud of them!

Save these important dates: College Signing Day, May 3; Spring Musical “The Wizard of Oz,” May 5-6. Baccalaureate, June 1; Graduation, June 2; and Homecoming and Alumni Day, September 30.

Thank you for “Being Marian” and for all you do to support and share the good news of Marian Catholic!

Dr. Erin Marek, Director of Advancement



Connor Rehnert, Marian Catholic sophomore and a new Eagle Scout is with Head Football Coach Stan Dakosty and assistant coach Billy O’Gurek at the Court of Honor ceremony.

MARIAN SOPHOMORE ATTAINS SCOUTING’S HIGHEST HONOR

Marian Catholic High School sophomore **Connor Rehnert**, a highly-decorated member of Clamtown Troop 755, Boy Scouts of America, advanced to scouting’s highest honor recently during an Eagle Scout Court of Honor.

A son of Chris and Jennifer (Boyle) Rehnert (MCHS Class of 1993) of Summit Hill, Connor is the president of his class, a student ambassador and member of the Colts’ football and track and field teams. He is a member of St. Joseph Catholic Parish of the Panther Valley, Summit Hill, where he is an alter server.

For his Eagle project, Connor constructed a “Buddy Bench” at St. Jerome’s Regional School, Hometown, which will be used for prospective and new students there to bond with current students and create friendships. The new Eagle Scout’s road through scouting is nothing short of commendable considering he earned 68 merit badges, a lot them though the pandemic.

At the ceremony, Head Football Coach Stan Dakosty spoke about Connor’s dedication to the school, his classes and the football program.



COLT GRIDIRON ALUMNI PLAN FALL EVENT

“Get Back in the Huddle” is the theme of an upcoming get-together/fundraiser sponsored by the Colts Football Alumni and Gridiron Club.

It will be on Saturday, August 26, from 4-8pm at the Mountain Valley Golf Course, near Barnesville. The event is being held in conjunction with the 2023 Colts’ home opener against Schuylkill Haven the night before the event.

The cost is \$49 per person, which includes dinner. Proceeds of the event will benefit the Colt football program.

For more information, go to www.MarianColts.com and/or the Colts Football Alumni & Gridiron Club Facebook group.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US

Our alumni are important to us – we want to know how you are doing! Share any important news or updates from our Marian Catholic alumni that occurred throughout the year by emailing us at alumni@mariancatholicchs.org.



The Marian Catholic football team members, their coaches and accompanying parents enjoyed a trip to West Point on April 1. The Colt players observed the Army Black Knights go through one of their spring practices. The Colt players toured the facilities, including the weightroom, football headquarters, etc., and Army Head Coach Jeff Monken addressed them after his team's workouts. The trip was sponsored by the Marian Quarterback Club.

IN MEMORIAM...

Marian Catholic alumni and friends are asked to keep in their thoughts and prayers the families of the following:

John J. Bielen, 94, of Weatherly, formerly of McAdoo, passed away on March 19, 2023. He was the husband of Gertrude (Giner) Bielen, and the father of David Bielen, who currently serves as vice president of our school's advisory board, and his wife, Mary Ann, and Gregg Bielen, and his wife, Cheryl.

Joseph A. Coleman Jr., 81, of Tamaqua, passed away on April 14, 2023. He was the husband of Janet (Tuckett) Coleman and attended Marian Catholic High School.

John D. Hager, 72, of Coaldale, passed away on April 15, 2023. He was the husband of Janice (Oslak) Hager and was a 1968 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

Charles D. Heisler, passed away on October 8, 2022. The husband of Gloria B. (Knoerlein) Heisler, he was a 1952 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

Charles S. Keer, 75, of Coaldale, passed away on April 13, 2023. He was the husband of Cecelia (Miller) Keer. He was a 1965 graduate of Marian Catholic High School, where he earned letters in football, basketball, and baseball.

David Ochenis, 72, of Hummelstown, passed away on Feb. 5, 2023. The husband of Brenda (Long) Ochenis, he was a graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

Randi Alexandria Solt, 34, of Harrisburg, passed away on March 17, 2023. She was the fiancé of Johnnie Barone, and was a 2006 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

Francis J. "Buddy" Trackim, 89, of Barnesville, passed away on Nov. 27, 2022, at his home. He was the husband of Joan (Sheehan) Trackim, our longtime business office leader before her retirement. They are the parents of Dave, married to Christine (Orsulak), both the Class of '73, Steve, Class of '74 married to Helen (Bickowski), Class of '76, and Donna, Class of '84, married to Greg Decker.



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