



“Christian Formation is kind of complex,” said Maria Spenner,

Director of Youth Ministry. “One can say it is about educating and teaching the faith, but it’s so much bigger than that.” More than 650 parish members utilize some form of Christian Formation at any given time including sacramental preparation for marriage, baptism, First Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation, mom’s groups, men’s groups, orientation for new Catholics, adult faith formation, bible studies, lectures and bereavement ministries. All will benefit with the addition of the E&AC.

“We have elderly parishioners in bible study, but I think people might not attend because it’s not as accessible as it could be,” said *Ellen Vanden Eykel*, Director of Adult and Family Ministry. “I like the idea that the E&AC is on one level. And I like the idea of being able to serve folks better who are not as mobile.” Vanden Eykel, who also works with the Family Program on Monday nights, has grappled with finding space that accommodates the families once they finish their meal and segregate so the children can attend their classes and the parents can participate in faith formation as well. “The location is challenging because of the way the hall is designed. The classrooms are adjacent to the main hall, so you can hear every peep going on in the classrooms. So if a toddler is having a hard time saying goodbye, the parents have a hard time focusing on their program. To be able to use a building like the E&AC where we could have a large group meeting space and classrooms just a little bit removed would be phenomenal,” she said.

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Chris Crom, Director of Child Ministry, oversees this program which begins on Sunday mornings with 3-K, 4-K and 5-K classes, in addition to Liturgy of the Word for Children ages 4–10, at the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. masses. On Mondays, she works with children in the Family Program and on Wednesdays, she coordinates Christian Formation classes for more than 150 children grades 1 through 5 on the South Campus. Bins full of supplies, computers,

paperwork, teaching materials and art projects are often shuttled from her office on the north

campus to the south campus. If she forgets anything, she makes do without it. “We can’t just run back,” Crom said. “If we were 500 feet away (where the new E&AC will be located) we could come back and easily retrieve it.” Crom is a strong believer in having all of the children learning on one unified campus, making it easier for parents to volunteer to help in the programs rather than spending time shuttling their children back and forth. “People are so committed to passing on our Catholic faith to the children and youth of our parish,” she said. “This includes parents as well as people who don’t even have children in our programs.” Crom also feels that the E&AC could help expand our popular Vacation Bible School and adds, “Wouldn’t it be great to have room for a toddler ministry?”

Catechist **Michelle Wescher-Fortuna**

has taught Christian Formation for six years at St. Francis Borgia, and 13 years at her previous parish. Her wish for a unified campus with the E&AC centers on the desire to see kids of all ages engage in religious education at one location. "Elementary kids are on one campus and the middle school and high school kids are on the other," she said. "There's really a lot the older kids can teach the younger ones by example, and the younger kids need to see that religious education is a continuing process through middle school and into high school." She said having the students in one location would help her expose her middle school students to younger students, and allow her to have joint activities as part of lessons to help put learning into action. It will also help when recruiting the older students to become involved with activities like Vacation Bible School or Children's Liturgy of the Word. She will also welcome having dedicated storage space at the new E&AC. Currently, "I have a bin in the hallway and it is overflowing because I have different lesson and prayer material needs that carry over multiple classes," she said.

Bryan Richardson is a believer in the new E&AC. As a Junior at Whitewater University, Bryan traces his Christian Formation classes at St. Francis Borgia back to when he was five years old. Through grade school, middle school and high school, Bryan said he very much valued his faith education. "I loved the fellowship and just hanging out," he said "I met new friends through it and the teachers were good role models for me and my friends in the class." He remembers meeting in the basement of the church most of the time, and thinks a new space for many of the

programs would be a great enhancement. "Being able to come together in one large place would be a plus," he said. "It was a hassle to have a split campus. I think one location would be cool." Bryan is currently working with the youth ministry to re-start a youth group where teens can meet to be together in a healthy atmosphere on Friday nights. "It would be absolutely cool to have a new place to hang out in," he said.

Parishioner **John Aversa** welcomes the idea of the E&AC providing a single location for Christian Formation. As a parent of two children, one in middle school and one in grade school, he has experienced the difficulty with a split campus. Every Wednesday, he would drop his son off at the South Campus for Christian Formation at 6:15 p.m., and stay to volunteer with the help of his daughter. But

the two would have to leave early to get his daughter to the North Campus for her 7:15 p.m. class. He would then turn around and pick up his son at the South Campus by 7:30 p.m., drive home, and get back in the car 45 minutes later to retrieve his daughter from her class at the North Campus, which ended at 8:30 p.m. "Some parents get a little overwhelmed by the driving," he said. "It can be very inconvenient." Aversa believes the new E&AC will create a one-campus Christian Formation ministry which would greatly reduce transportation issues. "Not having the full opportunity to be there to volunteer during the whole class because I had to shuttle Anna, was hard," he said. "Not only did I miss out on the opportunity to assist in my son's class, but Anna lost out on service hours."

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