

One Momma's Passion for Her Son's School

Written By: Angela Levine

If you've ever come across a momma bear, you know they are fiercely passionate about their babies. Pamela Runnels is no different. As the "momma bear" to her son, Hasting, she has strong feelings about his education – and why it must continue at St. John's Lutheran School. But Pamela's story doesn't begin with her passion – it actually starts with her husband.

When Hasting was a toddler, his father Calvin, expressed dissatisfaction with the childcare facility the family had been using. "Many times, maybe even daily, Calvin urged me to contact St. John's to learn about the preschool program and what it had to offer their students," says Pamela. "Well, apparently I wasn't moving fast enough, hoping things would get better at the childcare facility," explained Pamela. "Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever thought Calvin would take it upon himself to go to St. John's to talk with the principal and take a tour without me!"

What makes this even more surprising was the fact that this was all done while Calvin was out of work on a medical leave of absence. He was battling stage 4 colon cancer but managed to have enough determination and energy to focus on getting his son into a loving, caring Christian environment for preschool.

St. John's impressed Calvin... enough to schedule a second tour with Pamela. She was equally impressed. To this day, she remembers exactly what the principal shared with them during the tour. ***"He said he and his wife sat down and talked about what it meant to send their kids to St. John's. They made a conscious decision to sacrifice and invest in their kids' future. I realized, then, that was the kind of sacrifice I wanted to make as well."***

Fortunately, Calvin was able to enjoy Hasting's first year at St. John's as a preschooler. Calvin passed from colon cancer in 2011. At that point, Pamela had to decide on where she would send Hasting for kindergarten – and it was a decision she would have to make without the help of her late husband, who had been so passionate about what he wanted for his son's future. She decided that her husband's dream was worth pursuing, and she kept Hasting at St. John's.



What I love most about St. John's...

... is the love we feel from the entire school staff as well as the church members. They genuinely care about the children AND the parents. The teachers are so supportive to everyone; not just the students in their class. St. John's is an extension of my family. The kind of love that we have found at St. John's cannot and will not be found in every school.

- Pamela Runnels (Hasting's "momma bear")



Four years after starting at St. John's in pre-K, Hasting is now completing first grade. At no point has Pamela ever regretted the decision to invest in her son's future – and sacrifice – to keep him there. "If I don't invest in Hasting, who will?" she said. "I am asked often "will you keep Hasting at St. John's?" to which I respond "if it's not broken, don't fix it". I firmly believe every school is not for everybody, but I know this is where God wants us to be."



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