



Jesuit Retreat House
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The Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, fosters spiritual enrichment rooted in the Gospels, the Catholic tradition and the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Our ministry is dedicated to creating a rich variety of retreat experiences and providing an atmosphere of quiet, peace and prayer in which men and women of all faiths are encouraged to discover and respond generously to God's personal invitation to wholeness and holiness.

www.JesuitRetreatHouse.org

Serving & dining rooms face-lift

As a result of your generosity through the Annual Appeal, we were able to secure the dollars needed to blend the interior environment of the new Manresa/La Storta into the historical Loyola building. The renovation project covered the serving line and main dining rooms, and 24/7 snack area.

Chuck Linde, our facilities manager, served as project manager and began the changes on December 12th and completed the renovation by January 5th, when our first 2017 retreat was scheduled to start. According to Chuck the renovation went well, "we work hard at being good stewards of the dollars donated by retreatants for these projects. We were able to paint, install vinyl wall covering, new carpeting, vinyl plank flooring and cornices to dining and serving areas, as well as, new light fixtures and ceiling fans, while bringing the project in on-time and under



budget." We hope you enjoy the bright, new look of your Loyola serving/dining area.

Cabin fever? Stir crazy?

When we stay inside during the winter months to avoid the cold and the snow, and the dangers that come with them, it can lead to what is euphemistically called "cabin fever." Stir crazy is another, but a less genteel description of feeling cooped up for too long.

The phrase "stir crazy" began as a slang term among convicts in the middle of the 19th century to describe "a prisoner who became mentally unbalanced because of prolonged incarceration," according to The Word Detective, a handy website on word and phrase origins. With this in mind, I am not surprised to hear retreatants who come here for several days of silence say that friends, family, and co-workers wonder how they can do it without going . . . stir crazy! From the outside looking in it would seem to be a time of incarceration, because we are separated from the people, entertainment, hobbies, and structures that normally surround us; and, to top it all off we don't talk!

What does keep us from going "stir crazy" or suffering a bout of "cabin fever" while on retreat? I suggest that what appears to be inactivity and a lack of stimulation on retreat is deceiving. Within the silence, the prayer, and the retreat, what goes unnoticed by others is the freedom – given the time and place – to explore and reflect on our life in ways that our daily life may prevent. What appears as inactivity is the opposite. The quiet, the prayer, and the relaxation are tools that help us avoid being "cooped up," and separated from the ways in which God is active in our lives, in others, and in the world around us. The natural surroundings and the spiritual guidance that retreats offer encourage an interior freedom to explore and reflect.

When the Jesuit priest, Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J., wrote about his 23 years in a Soviet labor camp he wrote of the spiritual journey and the *freedom* he experienced during his incarceration:

"[...] The body can be confined, but nothing can destroy the deepest freedom in man, the freedom of the soul, and the freedom of mind and will. These are the highest and noblest faculties in man, they are what make him the sort of man he is, and they cannot be constrained. Even in prison a man retains his free will, his freedom of choice. Even in prison, a man can choose to do good or evil, to fight for survival or to despair, to serve God and others or to turn inward and selfish. Free will remains and so freedom remains, for freedom is simply defined as the state of being free, and not coerced by necessity or fate or circumstances in one's choices or actions."

Ciszek discovered that the many things, the many tasks, the many words, and the many people taken from him during this time did not leave him imprisoned or alone. Sensing God's presence – as one does on retreat – freed him in the midst of it all. I think that is the sense of freedom we as retreatants experience. While on retreat we are active in our attentiveness to God's ways and God's presence in our lives and it fosters within us a faith, hope, and love without bounds.

Fr. Chris Manahan, S.J.

Fr. Chris Manahan, S.J. – Director



Retreat benefit fund available

Catholic Financial Life (CFL) members are eligible for a \$100 annual benefit reimbursement toward the cost of a Catholic retreat.

A set amount of money is available on an annual basis for this benefit.

To find out if you are eligible, contact your Catholic Financial Life agent or visit them online at www.catholicfinanciallife.org

50% challenge match - now is the time

All retreatants should have received some form of our 50% challenge match letter by now, asking you to consider helping us meet the following:

The Challenge

Let's burn the mortgage by Easter (April 17th) or by the end of 2017 and save \$300,000 or more in mortgage interest. Since the final bids for construction / renovation were 50% more than original estimates, we have been left with a \$1.79 million mortgage.

The Match

The Jesuit province has contributed \$300,000, 50% more to its original \$600,000 gift and the Oshkosh Jesuit community (Frs. Chris, Gene & Jack) has also stepped forward and added \$20,000 or 57% more to their original gift of \$35,000. Both value this ministry and both are challenging us to join them in this effort.

The Result

As the 50% letters asked, we are hoping that you will prayerfully consider a major gift or whatever you are able to donate to help us complete this work and burn the mortgage by Easter or the end of 2017 at the latest and save \$300,000 plus in mortgage interest.

The Suggestions

Original capital campaign donors:	50% or more of original gift
No Debt / Burn the Mortgage donors:	50% or more of original gift
Other donors:	\$250 or more
Have never donated before:	\$50 / \$100 / \$250 or more

Once you have decided at what level you are able to help, please use the enclosed **50% Challenge Match** envelope or contact Deacon John in the Development Office at (920) 230-6992 or deaconji@gmail.com to help with pledges or stock transfers.

Thank you and blessings!

Iconic A-frame bridge closed

What sacred bridge has had over 86,000 pairs of retreatant feet pass over it during the last forty-three years? The answer is our iconic A-frame bridge spanning our lagoon. The bridge was constructed in 1973 by S.E. Co. and according to its bronze plaque, it was memorialized as "Casey's Crossing 1918-1976."

Unfortunately, last summer we noticed that the bridge began to lean. While much of the original structural components have been replaced over the last forty-three years, after closer inspection, it was determined that one of the four main pile posts

(manufactured in 1955) had rotted below ground and settled. Due to this safety concern, we were advised to close the bridge in December 2016.

We currently are waiting for bids from two local marine contractors on projected costs to replace our sacred bridge. Any new design will focus on matching the original design as closely as possible while at the same time making the new bridge safer, stronger and ADA compliant.

Depending upon the bids, we hope to secure the necessary funds and have the new bridge operational in 2017. Keep this need in your prayers.



A cool Toolcat

The retreat house has a new "cat" roaming the grounds. Our existing snow blower was originally purchased new in 1988 and at 29 years old it was becoming unreliable and finding parts was becoming more difficult. According to Chuck Linde, our facilities manager, "Since the opening of our new and renovated buildings, we have substantially more blacktop and snow to remove. Our decision to purchase a 2008 used Toolcat manufactured by Bobcat was a good one."

The Toolcat has more than twice the power of the previous snow blower, much more heavy-duty and versatile, and the snow blower attachment is much wider and heavier. It is very versatile with 40 different attachments available such as a material bucket, pallet forks and multiple snow blower attachments. It will be used as a utility vehicle during the summer months.



Mike Weber, (pictured above) our long-time groundskeeper says, "it's one cool cat"! Annual Appeal gifts were used to buy it.

Facilities manager Chuck Linde marries

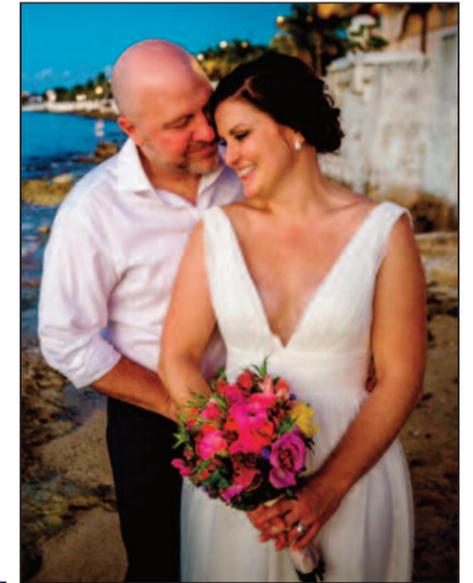
Jessica Lewis and Chuck Linde, JRH's facilities manager, exchanged marriage vows along the crystal-blue waters surrounding Cozumel Mexico in the Mexican Caribbean on Thursday, January 19, 2017.

According to Chuck, "Jessica, who is from lower Michigan, has been vacationing in Cozumel almost every year with her family since she was 12 years old. I have

been vacationing there since 2000 and then, in 2009, while we were staying at the same hotel in Cozumel, we met ... and the rest, as they say is history."

Their wedding and reception was described by all as enchanting. Chuck said, the happy couple will likely return to Cozumel in March for their honeymoon ... "because, while a week entertaining 41 guests of family and friends was a lot of fun, it was not very relaxing."

Congratulations Jessica & Chuck!



Employee spotlight:

Leah Denslow – a beautiful smile

Leah, who grew up and lives in Fond du Lac, has been a retreat house employee since August 2007. She was introduced to

JRH by her mother Sue Denslow who worked as the head housekeeper at the retreat house for seven years. Leah began as a housekeeper but now also serves as a kitchen server where her beautiful smile lights up the dining room during retreats.

When asked, what she enjoyed most about her time at JRH, Leah said, "I love working with both the staff

and the retreatants. The staff is so warm and caring and the retreatants are so kind and appreciative. Over the years, I've gotten to know many of the retreatants well ... they make me smile."

Leah's note of gratitude:

"I want to send out a big thank you for all of the prayers, uplifting messages and generosity that you have shown to me after my cancer diagnosis. I truly appreciate everyone's support and positive words. Going through chemo has been difficult and leaves me feeling exhausted. I really appreciate the weeks between treatments when I feel better and am able to work part-time at JRH. It gives me some of my regular life back ... I'm forever grateful."