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## Flipping pancakes to raise funds and connect a community

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### Dads

The core crew of St. Thomas dads who make Sunday breakfast have worked together for the past 10 years.

Photo by Janine Campo

Posted: Sunday, November 1, 2015 12:00 am

Jessica Morrison

For the last 20 years, the Dads' Club at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church has hosted a monthly breakfast during the school year, as a way to bring the community together.

Janine Campo, liaison between the school, parish and the "outside world," said that over the years the Dads' Club has served about 72,000 pancakes.

St. Thomas parish includes a private grammar school. Any father of a child in the school is automatically a member of the Dads' Club.

"It's an opportunity for the dads to come together once a month and cook a big breakfast for everyone who comes to Mass in the morning," said John Campo a parishioner of the church and an STA dad.

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Anyone is welcome to attend the breakfast after Mass. There are two Catholic Mass services every Sunday: 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 9-10 a.m. The next breakfasts are scheduled for November 15, 2015 and January 31, March 12, and April 10, 2016.

John said the Dads' Club expects to serve 300 meals per breakfast. The cost is \$5 for an adult, \$3 for a child or \$12 total for a family of any size.

Money raised from each breakfast is used to sponsor items the teachers and kids need at school.

"We've done this 20 years," said Ken Houck, head cook. "I've been cooking the last 10. This crew of dads have been here since our kids were in kindergarten. They are always regular, so it makes it easy."

Houck said the breakfasts raise about \$25,000 annually for the school.

"The amazing thing is that we get guys out of bed at 6 a.m. to cook breakfast," Houck said.

Houck frequently changes the menu to include blueberry pancakes, pumpkin pancakes or waffles. He said a typical breakfast consists of two pancakes, French toast, sausage bacon, eggs and fruit.

"It's a nice thing that they give back to the church," said George, who is 11 years old and a student at STA. "We come after Mass."

George said the eggs are his favorite. "I get to see my friends, and then we get to play outside [afterwards]."

"The joy that comes out of the kitchen – it's a great vibe," Janine said. "The kids love seeing their dad back there and it's a great lesson to the kids, to give back," she said.

Parishioner Alcy Rubelsky said the breakfast is more than just getting a great meal after Mass.

"To be able to bring our families together and participate in each others' lives, it just warms my heart. You get to see the kids and catch up after the summer, and see everyone grow over time," Rubelsky said.

The Dads' Club offers a yearly membership for families to attend every breakfast for a flat rate. The rate includes a raffle, where donated items such as iPads or sporting event tickets are given away at each breakfast.

Anyone is welcome to attend the monthly breakfasts, as well as the Catholic Mass service before the meal.

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