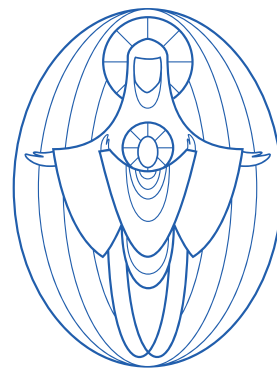


From the Heart

ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL, IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY ACADEMY,
AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



ALUMNI LIGHT THE WAY FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

“Supporting this challenge is about paying it forward – giving other kids the chance to have the same life-shaping experience we had.”

For nearly 120 years, Immaculate Heart of Mary School – and St. Nicholas School before it – has stood on Flora Avenue as a beacon of hope for children escaping war, poverty, and hardship. As the only independent Ukrainian Catholic K-8 school in Manitoba, it has nurtured children academically, spiritually, and emotionally since the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate founded it in 1905.

But IHMS has always been more than a school. It's a special place where children from all backgrounds, especially those newly arrived in Canada (like the 100+ newcomers from Ukraine who have joined the IHMS family), receive not only an education, but a sense of belonging and community.

The need has never been greater. More than a third of families depend on financial aid to give their children the opportunity to attend IHMS.

To help, IHMS has launched the Alumni Bursary Challenge, a special initiative to raise \$10,000 for the school's Bursary Program. And thanks to a generous **matching gift from BCU Wealth Management and BCU Foundation, every dollar raised will be doubled**, meaning \$20,000 of vital support will be available to families in need.

“We're proud of our legacy and the diverse community of children we continue to welcome,” says Rod Picklyk, IHMS Principal. “This school has always

been rooted in faith, culture, and compassion. Thanks to generous donors and our Alumni Bursary Challenge, we can continue to make IHMS accessible to all who value the type of educational experience our school offers.”

The campaign invites alumni marking milestone anniversaries – 10, 25, 35, 50 and 60+ – to make a special gift and lead the charge in giving back. But the invitation is open to all who hold IHMS close to their hearts.

Among the alumni supporting the campaign is Katrusia Chabluk (IHMS '00) and BCU's Manitoba lead.

“IHMS shaped who I am. The sense of community, culture, and faith is unforgettable,” says Chabluk. “That's why I'm proud to lead the Alumni Bursary Challenge, and thrilled that BCU is matching every gift up to \$10,000. Together, we can open doors for more children today, just like for generations before them.”

Fellow alum and champion Chris Lukie (IHMS '90) agrees. (*Meet Chris on p 6!*)

“I can still name every classmate from my time at IHMS. That's how strong the bonds are,” says Lukie. “Supporting this challenge is about paying it forward – giving other kids the chance to have the same life-shaping experience we had.”

Donations to the Bursary Program help cover tuition, after-school care, EAL resources, school supplies, and more.



Alumni Bursary Challenge champions Chris (l) and Katrusia (r) with principal Rod Picklyk

“This isn't just about education, it's about giving children opportunity, resilience, and strong futures,” says Picklyk. “With the support of our alumni and partners like BCU, we're not just raising funds – we're raising hope.”

Please consider making your gift go twice as far for families who need help sending their children to IHMS in September. Visit lubovfoundation.ca/abc or call 204-942-0443.

See how this special math works!

Your \$55 + \$55 BCU = School supplies

Your \$100 + \$100 BCU = Uniform

Your \$300 + \$300 BCU = After-school program

Your \$1,425 + \$1,425 BCU = Tuition

Your Any amount = Twice brighter tomorrows!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Making music and celebrating culture. We had a chance to catch up with Mikhas Chabluk (IHMS '02) and Andrijko Semaniuk (IHMS '02) to learn what they have been up to in the years since IHMS.

Q: Tell us a bit about the path you've taken since IHMS.

Mikhas: I went to St. Paul's High School, then completed University 1 and graduated from the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Manitoba. I worked at Shoppers Drug Mart for nine years, and now I'm an Operations Pharmacist with Medisystem Pharmacy, which supports care homes across Manitoba, including Holy Family Home. I married Johanna Washchyshyn (IHMS '01) in 2013, and we have two amazing kids: William (almost 5) and Lilyana (2).

Andrijko: I also went to St. Paul's, then studied at U of M where I earned my B.Comm (Hons) in Finance and International Business. I moved to Calgary in 2013 and worked for WestJet for eight years, mostly in Revenue Management. My wife, Ulyana Beley, and I currently live in Toronto, where I work in Category Management at Molson Coors.

Q: How would you say your time at IHMS influenced your values and your artistic passions?

Mikhas: IHMS strengthened my love of faith, culture, and work ethic – things that had been rooted in me by my family. Participating in events like the Christmas and Ukrainian concerts made me comfortable on stage and gave me a



Above: 2001 Oratorical contest winners Mikhas (l) and Andrijko (r). Below, performing Chervona Ruta in the IHMS gym.

love of performing which I carry with me today in Hoosli and Zrada. I actually remember singing *Chervona Ruta* with Andrijko in Grade 3 or 4, in sunglasses, suits – the whole deal!

Andrijko: For me, IHMS was where culture and faith came alive, where it wasn't just taught, but also lived. That's a huge reason my parents enrolled me. Those values were reinforced through

concerts, liturgies, and daily life at school. That early pride in our Ukrainian identity stuck with me and naturally led to joining Hoosli and later Zrada. The school also gave me a chance to develop confidence performing in front of an audience, something that still helps me in my professional life, whether it's making presentations or public speaking.

Q: Zrada has always written original music in Ukrainian, even before the recent cultural resurgence. Why was that important to you?

Mikhas: The decision to only write music in Ukrainian was never really in question. The progression of the band over the years has been really interesting. Our original idea when we started in 2006 was to create a new style of music that young Ukrainians could enjoy and identify with. Whereas now, with a majority of our listeners actually being non-Ukrainian, I feel like our mission has been to expose the broader music community to Ukrainian language and folk music through our own unique style and sound. It's very rewarding to see people who may not actually understand the lyrics we are singing, still dancing and connecting to our music on some deeper level.

Andrijko: Writing in Ukrainian felt natural. It's the language of our faith, our families, and our stories. There's a certain emotional weight that connects to something deeper. From an artistic point of view, it also just gives you different tools, rhythms and metaphors to work with.

Q: Zrada was invited to perform at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. Can you describe how you felt performing?

Mikhas: Folk Fest was an amazing experience! Great crowds all three days. The highlight for me was getting to share music and the stage with other bands and musicians from around the world. Jamming on their songs and hearing them interpret our songs was something I'll never forget.



Especially memorable was getting to play with Maryna Krut, a bandurist and singer from Ukraine. The last song she chose to play was *Chervona Ruta*, and as Andrijo and I sang along, we had a full circle moment to that early-days Ukrainian concert at IHMS where we sang the same song together!

Andrijo: Absolutely, it was one of the most unique performing experiences I've ever had – an all-time highlight with the band. I'm really grateful we got the opportunity to share our music at the festival (our second time there) to show that modern Ukrainian music and language has a place. I'll echo Mikhas' thoughts on the performances, specifically with Maryna Krut and Black Sea Station. It was really moving to be on that stage with the other musicians, where we all seemed to blend so seamlessly. The common refrain among the band was "good thing we were wearing sunglasses", because all of us were crying at one point or another! Just a beautiful culmination of the music, language, and culture of not only Zrada but everyone on stage. Also, as Mikhas said, what a cool full-circle moment, performing *Chervona Ruta* at a big festival with a renowned Ukrainian artist, a song we learned and sang together as kids at IHMS.

Q: You were also involved with Saint Javelin (a Canadian company raising money for Ukraine via apparel and accessories) and a Ukrainian Army anthem collaboration. Can you tell us more about that?

Andrijo: The idea came in the early days of the full-scale invasion. Like so many others, we were asking ourselves what we could do. We approached Saint Javelin with the concept of writing a track, *Javelin Jump*, and creating merchandise to raise funds. Our drummer, Nick Luchak, designed the artwork. People who bought the shirt got early access to the song, and the money went to the Ukrainian World Congress' Unite with Ukraine initiative.

Mikhas: Around the same time Hoosli was looking to collaborate with other artists to show our unity in support of Ukraine. The idea was brought up to work together with Zrada to create an arrangement of *Zrodylys My – Anthem of the Ukrainian Army*. Both groups were very excited to work with each other and create a powerful and patriotic version of the song.

Q: Do you have any favourite memories from your time at IHMS?

Mikhas: I loved the Christmas and Ukrainian concerts, intramural sports at lunchtime (shout-out to the Flora

Flyers!), and the camaraderie of after-school programs with kids from all different grades. Most importantly, making lasting friendships, strengthening my faith, and laying the educational foundation that would shape my future learning in high school and university.

Andrijo: Ukrainian Week in March always stood out to me. I loved having a whole week focused on culture, and I really enjoyed sharing that with classmates who didn't have the same background. Everyone was always open and curious.

Q: If you could give advice to your Grade 8 selves, or to current students, what would you say?

Andrijo: Be open. Try new things. Explore your interests even if they're outside the norm. Education isn't just about grades; it's about growing, and that happens in all kinds of spaces, not just the classroom. And remember, your journey is your own. Don't compare it to others.

Mikhas: Stay true to yourself and true to the values in your heart. Don't try to change yourself to fit in. Be kind to others and find the good in each person you encounter. Start each day with a positive attitude and you'll invite positivity into your life.

Q: Any final reflections?

Andrijo: I'm truly grateful I had the chance to attend IHMS. The education was solid, but it's the experiences, the values and the friendships that really stayed with me.

Mikhas: I couldn't agree more. And I just want to say thank you to the teachers, coaches, and volunteers at IHMS. You may not hear it enough but we are so grateful for what you do. You leave a lasting imprint on each one of the students you encounter.



Mikhas (violin) and Andrijo (accordion) perform with Zrada at the 2025 Winnipeg Folk Festival.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Please save the dates and join us at 650 Flora Ave for the following:

Sep 24 Welcome Back to School picnic
Dec 5 St Nicholas Program
Dec 17 Grades K-3 Christmas Concert
Dec 18 Grades 4-8 Christmas Concert

CONTINUING CONNECTIONS

IHMS is fortunate to have dedicated alumni who continue to support the school. Here are just a few examples.



Scott, Anna (IHMS '25), and Lesia

As an alumni, parent, and employee of IHMS, I wear multiple hats in this family! As an alumni, it feels like home every time I enter the school, which I continue to support in any way I can. As a parent, I would like to provide the same wholesome upbringing for my children, filled with faith and family. As President of the Parents' Guild, I hope the little things we contribute make a difference, such as volunteering and organizing the silent auction and 50/50 at the Fundraising Dinner. Finally, as the school's Administrative Assistant, I understand the importance of the Fundraising Dinner; the funding we receive from the province is simply not enough to provide our school with everything it needs. From providing extra learning tools to students whose first language is not English, to everyday essentials like technology to help the school run more efficiently, events such as the Fundraising Dinner help!

Lesia Wozny (IHMS '01)

I attended IHMS for K-9, and still recall all my classmates and teachers. I even remember the first computers! At IHMS, I learned, played, and earned friends, although I liked sports more than classes (and was very competitive, at recess too). From there I went to St. Vladimir's College – five of us from IHMS called ourselves The Immaculate Collection. After SVC, I was excited for university, which was so different from an entire education in Catholic schools. It showed me how much more of the world there is, and began my unstoppable journey into humility. I earned both a BSc and MSc in Agricultural and Food Sciences at UofM, which laid the foundation for a 29-year career in food production and research. I've been around the world (Australia, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, Alberta and BC), working as a baking engineer, barley specialist, test bakery manager, Brewmaster, production manager, and even a deckhand and parks worker. I have two grown sons who live and work in Victoria; Callym (22) is an aspiring game designer, and Oscar (20) is a finishing carpenter and treeplanter. Being back home has given me the chance to reconnect with friends, places, and family, and to return to the community that provided me with so much. I rejoined Hoosli and I am happy to help support IHMS through the Alumni Bursary Challenge. After all those years in the gym, running the halls, playing at recess, skidding on the ice, and even sitting in the same desks learning a thing or two about math and writing, I still see it as "my school", which helped shape who I am today.

Chris Lukie (IHMS '90)

I continue to support IHMS because of my deep personal and family connection to the school. My Baba and Dido attended the original St. Nicholas School, and my Dido served on the building committee for the current IHMS facility – the very school I had the privilege of attending. As a Ukrainian Catholic priest, I recognize the vital importance of providing children with a strong Catholic environment in which to learn and grow. By supporting IHMS, we help ensure that this legacy continues for generations to come.

Fr. Jay Korban (IHMS '06)



In March 2025, Fr. Jay emceed the Fundraising Dinner, themed "Under the Big Top."

Thank you, Access Credit Union, for sponsoring Ukrainian Week 2025!



Thank you to all alumni who contributed to this issue. If you have news or stories to share, please contact Katherine Fox (IHMS '87) at 204-942-0443 or kfox@lubovfoundation.ca.

NEWS FROM YOUR SCHOOL!

Principal Rod Picklyk reflects on the 2024-2025 school year.

As we conclude another successful school year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the numerous highlights and accomplishments that made the 2024-2025 school year a memorable and enriching experience for our students, staff, and families.

One of the year's most heartwarming moments came in December when our school hosted not just one, but two magical Christmas concerts. Each performance showcased our students' talents and hard work as they told the story of baby Jesus' birth. The energy, joy, and community spirit that filled the auditorium reminded us all of the importance of celebration and connection during this special season.



Students celebrate the Nativity in the K-3 Christmas concert

Our commitment to cultural learning was brought to life this year through an incredibly entertaining and educational Ukrainian Week and concert. The students explored the beauty and traditions of the Carpathian Mountains region, learning about its rich history, diverse music, and vibrant folklore. Their performances reflected both their enthusiasm and the richness of Ukrainian heritage.

To complement the concert, each student participated in a Carpathian-themed art activity. Through traditional motifs and vibrant colours, students expressed their understanding and appreciation for the unique culture of the Carpathian region. These works of art now brighten each family's home, serving as a proud reminder of their learning journey.



Beautiful Carpathian-inspired art projects

This year also brought achievements on the athletic front. Several school teams brought home championship banners, a testament to the dedication, sportsmanship, and teamwork of our student-athletes. Congratulations to all the players and coaches for your hard work and success!

Innovation was equally alive in our Technology Club, where a group of dedicated students designed and built a functional solar panel system. This green initiative now helps power our iPad carts, combining sustainability with

technology in a project that reflects both ingenuity and environmental stewardship.

A year-end prayer and award service in June concluded the school year, highlighting students' God-given giftedness and reflecting on gratitude for the year's achievements. Students were recognized for individual academic success, Christian ethics and citizenship, and for participation in school events. There was even an impromptu musical performance where Grade 8 students on guitar joined Grades 5 and 6 students on recorders to play *Despisto!* Click on the QR code for a short video clip! *(message continues, turn over...)*



The boys' soccer team went undefeated all season, and won the Manitoba Catholic Schools Soccer Championship. Congrats to the team and Coach Dedio!

...MORE NEWS FROM YOUR SCHOOL!



Student council members, with Vicky Wilton (Access), principal Rod Picklyk, and Miroslava Paches, music teacher

We extend heartfelt thanks to Access Credit Union for their generous sponsorship of Ukrainian Week, which made it possible to offer students enriching cultural experiences. We also gratefully acknowledge the Wasyl Topolnicky Memorial Foundation. Their support of our Ukrainian Program enabled us to acquire valuable new teaching and learning materials, which have significantly enhanced student learning. We are also so thankful for all those who contributed to our Back to School Campaign, which resulted in brand-new student and teacher desks for Grades 4-8, and for vital funds for the Bursary Program.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our volunteers. Whether helping with classroom activities, organizing events, or supporting extracurricular programs, our volunteers are the heart of our



Sister Ruth Aney, SSML shares a moment with students as they learn about Blessed Josaphata, co-foundress of the SSML.

school community. Your time, energy, and care make a lasting impact on the lives of our students, and we thank you sincerely.

In 2025-2026, our school will celebrate its 120th anniversary! As we look ahead to the next school year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for what our school community, supporters like you, and the Sisters of the Servants of Mary Immaculate have achieved together, not only this past year, but also over the past century. I wish all our families, staff and alumni a safe, restful, and joyful summer.

Warm regards,

R. Picklyk



Welcome to our newest IHMS alumni, the 2025 graduates! We can't wait to see and hear about what you do next! God's blessings on you as you begin this new chapter.

Jonathan Alibin
Martin Avaricio
Lucjan Bogdan
Ranveer Brar
Andrew Bybel
Emily Chernecki
Jenna Dela Cruz
Nazariy Drogalchuk
Anna Hamkalo

Stas Harasymiuk
Luka Hawaleshka
Taras Hrynda
Sviat Lehtar
Elise Luczak
Hrytsko MacMillan
Dima Mudryi
Eric Nowosad
Roman Oliferchuk

Kurt Roque
Nomi Saran
Matthew Szun
Summer Valmonte
Kyle Villordon
Anna Wozny
Jackson Yablonski
Sasha Zeleniuk



Alumni volunteers Zenia Shpurko (l), Ariadna Dlugosh (c) and Hannah Picklyk (r) helped coordinate the IHMS Fundraising Dinner.