



INSTITUTE *of* NOTRE DAME

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May 29, 2020

Dear Members of the IND Community,

Several of you have written to us, hoping to find a way to “save IND.” On behalf of all of us who have searched for ways to do just that, we wish it were possible. We appreciate your passion and your desire to mount a massive fundraising effort, and we admire the tenacity you have demonstrated in not wanting to give up.

We hope that the facts we presented in our letter and the various meetings have made it clear how dire the situation is.

In the hope of helping you to better understand why we recently and very reluctantly reached the decision to close our beloved IND, we are providing some additional information. But first, we would like to reiterate some of the key facts we have already presented:

- Enrollment is down 43% from five years ago, this despite gaining 75 students from Seton-Keough High school, which closed in June 2017.
- We currently discount our tuition 30%; 90% of our students receive some assistance.
- Our building requires \$5,000,000 in repairs, just to continue to occupy it.
- We would need \$34,000,000 to make our building a state-of-the-art facility, one which would allow us to compete with area high schools.
- Identifying and moving to another campus would take time and significant resources, neither of which we have.
- Covid-19 has caused significant, added financial hardship, both in terms of projected further decline in enrollment and annual giving.

Following are some additional facts which further illustrate the gravity of IND’s position:

- In 2018-19, 769 out of over 6,000 alumnae contributed to our Annual Fund.
- Each year we ask our community members multiple times to financially support our school.
- At this point, our 2019-20 Annual Fund receipts are down approximately 36% from a year ago.
- We have heard time and again from prospective families that our location is not desirable and is an important factor in their decision to choose a different school.
- As of mid-April, we had only 25 students registered for grade 9 for the 2020-21 school year. That number makes it impossible to offer the quality academic and social experience IND is known for.
- The number of applicants in recent years has been below what is required to ensure healthy enrollment, and sustainability.
- In addition to the \$5,000,000 there is a projected budget shortfall of approximately \$1,700,000 for next year, and that does not take into account the potential added negative impact of Covid-19 both to enrollment and the Annual Fund.
- Many schools facing financial challenges can look to their current families to support a campaign with significant contributions; at IND that is not the case.

We cannot operate IND on the basis of hopeful fundraising goals. Nor can we operate on pledges. Based on the amounts raised in recent years, and knowing the amount of cash we need immediately, it would be irresponsible of us to commit to opening in the fall. It would be a great disservice to our students and our faculty and staff. And we cannot ask faculty and staff and students to put their plans and their lives on hold, recognizing that success is very unlikely.

We have a responsibility and a desire to take care of our students and that means offering them the greatest opportunity to continue their education at another Catholic high school. Likewise, we want to do as much as we can for our faculty and staff.

Thus, sadly, the right decision is to close our doors at the end of June. For all the reasons we have listed, our decision is final.

Please know that saying goodbye to IND is especially painful for the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Our history at IND is long and rich; our connections are deep. It is one of the few places in North America where our foundress, Mother Theresa, lived and IND served as the first Motherhouse of the Baltimore Province. Many of our sisters are alumnae of IND, lived at IND, took their vows there, and taught there.

We respectfully suggest that you channel your efforts and enthusiasm in the ways some of you mentioned in our recent information meetings – to support our girls and Sister Hildie’s work in the neighborhood. These are the very best ways to keep the IND spirit alive.

With grateful hearts, we thank you for being a valued part of our community and we pray that in time, you will believe that we made the right decision. One mind, one heart. May the spirit of Sister Hildie strengthen us in the days and weeks ahead. Mother Theresa, pray for us.

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Provincial Leader
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province

Patricia Murphy '62
IND Chair of the Board of Trustees
School Sisters of Notre Dame