

GET TO KNOW **DIANA ERLANDSON**

Touching off keys to students' success

St. Boniface principal aids in organizing dueling pianos fundraiser

By Jill Badzinski
Special to Conley Media

GERMANTOWN – Educators are not likely to be encouraging fights, but the principal of St. Boniface Catholic School in Germantown hopes a dueling piano party will spur school supporters into action.

The school's biennial fundraiser will be held from 5 p.m. to midnight Saturday at the Schauer Arts Center in Hartford. This year's theme is Rock On for St. Boniface; the event will feature live entertainment by Felix & Fingers Dueling Pianos.

"The entire event is exciting, but what always makes me most excited is how our community comes together in support of our students," said Diana Erlandson, the school's principal for the past five years. "It is truly a community-building event."

Fundraisers have become an important part of the education process, Erlandson said. Rock On will feature music and an auction. The event raised \$97,000 in 2014, \$76,000 in 2016, and \$112,000 in 2018. This year's goal is \$100,000.

"St. Boniface is a small school," Erlandson said. "Small class sizes, individualized instruction and a family atmosphere is at the heart of what makes our school unique. We make great efforts to keep the cost of tuition affordable so that our school is accessible to all. But, the cost of educating a child at St. Boniface far exceeds the



Submitted photo

St. Boniface students posed in a shape of a heart recently. A school fundraiser featuring dueling pianos is slated for Saturday night at the Schauer Arts Center in Hartford.



Diana Erlandson of St. Boniface Catholic School in Germantown said many parents are involved in Saturday's fundraiser.

principal.

While Erlandson has been highly involved in preparations for the fundraiser, she is far from the only one involved. In fact, a committee of 15 school parents plan the event, which requires thousands of volunteer hours, starting in March 2019. Even the students get involved, creating handwritten thank-you cards for each attendant and contributing handmade items for raffle baskets.

The event is a wonderful celebration of the support given to the school, Erlandson said.

"The generosity of our community always touches me," she said. "Local businesses, residents with no ties to St. Boniface, and many others give freely to make this event possible. Too often, we only hear about the negative things that happen in our communities and schools. This event highlights the positive."

Tickets for Saturday's event cost \$65 per person. For more information or to buy a ticket, visit www.stbonifacewi.org/auction.

amount charged for tuition. The funds raised at this event help fill this gap."

Proceeds pay for basics as well as school improvement initiatives. Past projects include new textbooks, building improvements and the purchase of Chromebook computers required for the implementation of a plan to have a 1:1 ratio of students to com-

puters.

Providing students with quality education has been an important part of Erlandson's life. The Kentucky native moved to Wisconsin in 1998, earned a

master's degree in educational policy and leadership from Marquette University in 2006, and is in her 24th year of education, consisting of nine as a teacher and 15 as a

261-439013

Blue Lotus welcomes new executive director

Former volunteer, speaker takes on dream job

By Lisa Curtis
Special to the Daily News

TOWN OF TRENTON — Jacqueline Janz can now say she has found the perfect job.

Janz was named the new executive director of the Blue Lotus Farm and Retreat Center on High-

way M.

A one-time volunteer at the center and a speaker on the topics of mindfulness, relaxation and emotional balance, Janz said the job is a dream come true.

"Blue Lotus is like no other organization," she said. "The natural surround-

ings provide a beautiful and empowering setting for individuals, especially those with challenges. Here, people feel safe and accepted allowing them to just enjoy the outdoors. It is a privilege to work at Blue Lotus and assist Fred and Susan (Bliffert)."

Blue Lotus is a nonprofit

that provides an accessible, natural setting for non-profit groups, individuals and businesses.

Its main goal is serve those with profound challenges, enabling them to benefit from the outdoors and its many inspiring activities such as fishing, swimming and canoeing.

Janz brings with her 20 years of experience in public relations, marketing, strategic planning and community relations. She worked at the Milwaukee County Transit System for 16 years, including serving as its chief marketing and communications officer. Most recently she was the communications director for MKR, a marketing and communications firm.

Janz is the daughter of former longtime Milwaukee Journal Sentinel columnist Bill Janz, whom she said guided her along her career in media relations. Just as influential, however, is her mother, Bernie. Jacqueline Janz described her mother as a dynamic, strong and creative woman who is a talented marketing professional and mentor.

"My parents have always been a sounding board for me and I can't thank them enough," she said.

Janz is married to musician Mike Kashou, who even played for a while in a band with Blue Lotus co-founder and board President Fred Bliffert. Janz tried to contain her emotions as she expressed her gratitude to her husband, who took a job in facility maintenance in order for her to take the job at Blue Lotus.

The couple live in Cedarburg with their son, Jasper, who is studying to be a music professor and jazz performer at Lawrence University in Appleton.

Janz will be responsible for overall operations of the center along with promotion and fund development.

"At my first interview with Jacqueline, it was apparent to me that she has an engaging light personality with the confidence to take Blue Lotus to the next level and sustainability," Fred Bliffert said. "We wholeheartedly believe Jacqueline is a perfect fit to lead Blue Lotus and continue to provide much-needed services to those with life challenges."



Janz

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