

Life After Alpha

At all times from 1964 thru 1979, one of the Gallaghers was attending Alpha (aka Divine Providence, aka Providence Heights). That's right. Either myself (Class of 1973), Brian (Class of 1972), Mary "Patty" (Class of 1974) or Meg (Class of 1979) were donning the clip-on tie or plaid jumper to attend this wonderful school. I will let my dear brother and sisters tell their own stories in subsequent issues and today I will share mine.

Looking back, there was no other experience which shaped my life as those eight (8) years at Alpha did. I was incredibly fortunate to be at Alpha during a magical time when we started the very first boys' basketball team. I was in the 4th grade and sister Marsha was our first organizer, and Mr. John Fabac was our first coach. Because Coach Fabac was a floor manager at KDKA he had "access" and was somehow able to secure an official red, white, and blue ABA basketball from the Pittsburgh Condors (anyone remember John Brisker?) It was awesome. We played our very first game at the Marycrest gym across the street and we wore white tee shirts with black felt numbers stitched on the back. In the subsequent years, the program developed to the point where we had red satin uniforms, played at Kettler Hall, won a few games, and were regular participants in local tournaments like the Holiday Tournament at Holy Family. It began my love of sports and especially basketball.

The other great experience I had at Alpha was as an "altar boy". My brother Brian and our friends served Sundays, Jubilees, Anniversaries, Vigils, Midnight and funerals. I heard some very moving homilies which I can still remember from Fathers Reith, Geyer, Reitan and visiting priests. Our graduating class had 14 members (my 9th grade class at NA had 715). Great kids like Jeff Boylan, Paul Seubert, and Harold Buffin with whom I spent (8) great years. Wonderful teachers like Sisters Beth, Carolyn, Mary Grace, Roberta, Martha Thomas, Marsha, Jean Lorette, Margaret Ann and so many more.

Life moved on and from Alpha I attended North Allegheny and from NA I attended University of Notre Dame. After 16 years working in Sales/Marketing for LEGO Toys, I am now the President/CEO of Faber-Castell USA in Cleveland. We produce and distribute Faber-Castell and Creativity for Kids branded products of the highest quality for children and adults. My wife Mindy and three boys (Jamie, Brendan, and Ryan) enjoy hearing my Alpha stories and find it amazing that the unique building is a school! Most of all they can't believe that "Handyman" Joe Negri played our Alpha Graduation Party (hey, he was very cool at the time).

Through the years I have tried to follow a basic guideline of being "buttoned up and personable". "Buttoned up" speaks to the importance of preparation. Not everyone can possess natural ability, but everyone can work hard and be prepared for school or in my case, for an important meeting. "Personable" because the foundation of a happy life is being a good person. Be friendly, smile, ask good questions and listen more than you talk- you will learn more.

Above all, I am so thankful to my parents for sending us to Alpha. Those eight years serve me everyday and in every facet of my life through my faith, my decision-making, my values, my parenting. I will always be grateful to the Alpha family and the lessons and memories that we all carry with us all these years later.

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