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### **Oak Grove Lutheran School announces ambitious campaign for new buildings**

FARGO, N.D. — Oak Grove Lutheran School leaders today announced plans for new construction on both its Fargo campuses, describing a fundraising campaign designed to raise at least \$26 million for capital improvements.

The Acorns to Oaks campaign, announced at a special event, will address the needs around a growing student body. The institutional master plan for the school's historic North Campus features a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) center and new commons on the original Oak Grove campus that serves students in grades 6-12. The campaign concepts also depict a new gymnasium and new music room at the South Campus, serving students from age 3 through grade 5.

“Today is a major milestone in the history of Oak Grove — nearly 117 years of faith-based education and counting,” said Bob Otterson, the school's president. “The facilities from this campaign will impact today's students and subsequent generations of Grovers, promising the right environments for effective teaching, learning and student development.”

Campaign leaders report that the school has secured more than \$22.4 million in early gifts and pledges toward the primary goal of \$26 million in building funds. Further, Otterson announced a \$5 million pledge from anonymous donors that matches all gifts of \$500,000 or more after May 1, 2023, driving the campaign toward an aspirational goal of \$30 million or more.

“Donors who care deeply about Oak Grove, its students and its mission have offered us an inspiring opportunity to complete the facilities the school needs now,” Otterson said. “These generous supporters have enabled the real possibility for us to create additional spaces that will enhance the well-rounded experiences families expect from this school.”

Matt Hanson and Danielle Paulus were introduced as co-chairs of the Acorns to Oaks campaign. Hanson is a vice president at Scheels. He and his wife, Dawn, have two daughters at Oak Grove. Paulus is director of community engagement at Dakota Medical Foundation. She and her husband, Ken, have three children at the school. Jon Rustvang, a leader in Oak Grove's last campaign, serves as honorary chair of the school's campaign committee.

The 35,000 new square feet on the North Campus will include modern science labs, rooms designed for teaching mathematics, additional classrooms and collaborative spaces for small-group teaching and learning. The STEM center and commons will be constructed on the footprint of the Eid Center, a one-story facility used since 1985 for foodservice and group events.

The key component of 15,000 new square feet on the South Campus will be an activities center that reduces scheduling stress on the existing gymnasium which also is used for lunch, chapel, large assemblies and indoor recess on inclement weather days. A new music room will be added between existing structures.

The matching challenge creates scenarios for school leaders to raise additional funds to enlarge the new gymnasium at the South Campus, to construct additions to the Scheels Center for the Performing Arts and to complete renovations in Arvid Benson Hall. Those extra spaces bring the overall construction estimate to \$30 million.

Campaign volunteers and Oak Grove leaders will be actively raising funds to reach the \$26 million primary goal for building funds and also soliciting gifts and pledges toward the aspirational \$30 million goal. School leaders expect construction to start on both campuses in spring 2024.

Oak Grove Lutheran School serves 720 students from preschool through grade 12 on two campuses in Fargo. The school started in 1906 as the Oak Grove Lutheran Ladies Seminary, a high school for girls. Boys joined the student body in 1926. The school added its South Campus elementary and the Kjos Early Learning Center in 2005. Oak Grove's mission calls for expressing God's love by nurturing students for academic achievement, lifelong Christian commitment, and loving service throughout the world. The school has been accredited continuously since 1926 by Cognia and its predecessor organizations.

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