



For Immediate Release  
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**Sacred Heart-Griffin High School to Break Ground on Phase I Renovation and Construction of East and West Campus Buildings and St. John's AthletiCare**

SPRINGFIELD – Sacred Heart-Griffin High School will host a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, December 8 at 10:30 a.m., at its West Campus facility, 1601 Washington Street, Springfield.

Speaking at the ceremony will be Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, Bishop of Springfield in Illinois; Sr. Katherine O'Connor, O.P., President of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School; Bob Ritz, President and CEO of St. John's Hospital; Jim Hillestad, Chairman of the SHG Board of Directors and Chairman of the GENERATIONS Campaign and Dan Cadigan, GENERATIONS Campaign benefactor and volunteer and a member of the Cathedral Boys High School Class of 1957.

“It is very appropriate that we celebrate our groundbreaking on December 8, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, said Sr. Katherine O'Connor. We are grateful for all of the prayers of support, our generous benefactors and for the vision and support from our friends at St. John's Hospital. Each one has brought us to this new beginning in the history of Catholic secondary education in Springfield.”

The groundbreaking ceremony will mark the beginning of Phase I renovation and construction which includes a St. John's AthletiCare facility. Other improvements include a new multi-purpose room/practice court, girls' locker rooms, renovated boys' locker rooms, improved kitchen facilities, remodeled offices and restrooms and a new HVAC system. Improvements to the Fine Arts area at Dominican Hall, located at the school's East Campus, include a new band/multi-purpose room, a set shop and new auditorium seating.

The new AthletiCare clinic will be open to the public and will serve patients from throughout the region with a separate entrance and dedicated signage. The facility will provide patients and SHG student athletes with licensed physical therapy services, athletic trainer support services and part-time access to on-site orthopedic surgeons from local medical practices.

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The new partnership will also provide SHG students with opportunities to gain exposure to the healthcare industry. On-site educational programming is being developed by St. John's staff and SHG faculty to provide students with hands-on, immersive healthcare experiences.

“This relationship is an innovative approach to aligning the mutually consistent faith-based visions of St. John's and Sacred Heart-Griffin through the development of a comprehensive sports medicine program, educational opportunities, and wellness services on the high school's campus, said Bob Ritz, President and CEO of St. John's Hospital. “With the nationwide shortage of nurses, physical therapists and other clinicians, we must have programs in place to encourage young people to enter careers in the medical field. This collaboration is another example of how we can achieve that goal.”

According to Jim Hillestad, Chairman of the SHG Board of Directors and Chairman of the GENERATIONS Campaign, Phase I and Phase II are being funded by generous contributions from alumni and friends and a \$2.5 million investment from St. John's Hospital. Phase II, which includes a new multi-sport stadium will go out for bid when Phase I construction and renovation is 75% complete.

To date, the GENERATIONS campaign has raised more than \$6.4 million. The goal for Phase I is now \$9,000,000, with bids coming back higher than originally anticipated. A fundraising goal for Phase II will be determined at a later date.

Don Evans, a 1984 graduate of Griffin High School and President of Don Evans Construction has been hired as the general contractor for the project.

The public is invited to attend.

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