

Walking In The Footsteps of Legends

This week I began my new position as CYO Executive Director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The Catholic Youth Organization for the Archdiocese is one of the largest in the country, serving over 24,000 young people through athletic competition, year-round camps, and other enrichment programs. The organization also implements over 7,000 adult volunteers to help run these various activities. To say it is an outstanding and highly impactful endeavor is a tremendous understatement! The CYO began in 1939, and was originally run by Priests from the Archdiocese. Bill Sahm became the first lay Executive Director in the late 1950's, followed by Bill Kuntz in 1973 and Ed Tinder from 1984 until June 16, 2017. As my first official day in this position began June 19 (earlier this week) I have been looking through files trying to gain a better understanding of the early days of CYO, so that I might have a better appreciation for where we are today. Looking at pictures from the past and reading through the history of the CYO has been both educational and inspirational!

Perhaps what has struck me most is the impact the CYO has had on literally hundreds of thousands of lives over the past 78 years. Because it has provided a faith-based environment for youth activities across the Archdiocese for so many families over the years, it is impossible to measure the true impact it has had on Central and Southern Indiana...both short and long term! Through time, that influence has become immeasurable. Certainly, a big part of that legacy originated with the three men who have led the CYO for over fifty years. Unfortunately, I was never blessed with the opportunity to know Bill Sahm Sr., as he had passed before my first association with the CYO. However, people still talk about the fact that he was a really good man with a huge heart, and how he was committed to youth and instrumental in the growth and development of CYO facilities and programs through the 1950's and '60's, laying the groundwork for even bigger things to come in the future. I was blessed to teach and coach with his son Bill Jr. and his wife Debbie at Roncalli in the early 1980's. They are both wonderful people!

Upon Bill Sahm Sr.'s passing in 1973, Bill Kuntz Sr. became the new CYO Executive Director. As his son, Bill Jr., became the new Head Football Coach at Roncalli in 1980, he brought me with him from Butler University to Roncalli as a history teacher and assistant football coach as I started my teaching and coaching career. I recently had the opportunity to share with Bill Jr. that he, more than any coach I have ever known, helped me understand what it means to "COACH" at a Catholic school, and the powerful influence one can have on others if things are done the right way! His example certainly helped guide me through my years as Roncalli's Head Football Coach! Still today, he is a wonderful reflection of his father, and someone I admire a great deal.

From the moment I first met Bill Kuntz Sr., I was really pretty much in awe of him! He was a

big, physically powerful man with a huge handshake, a quick smile, and a wonderful sense of humor. He had the ability to immediately make you feel comfortable in his presence, and his propensity to have fun, laugh, and be a prankster are still talked about at the CYO office. In spite of his large, intimidating presence, his efforts toward being kind-hearted and going out of his way to help other people are legendary. Perhaps what I remember best about Bill Sr. was how he was regarded by his nine children... they all adored him! Occasionally after Friday night games, he and his lovely wife Florence (who he lovingly called "Hank") would have the coaching staff over for pizza, and I was mesmerized by the way his daughters would jostle for a position to sit next to their father. Whether he was sitting on a couch, or next to the fireplace, his daughters would immediately snuggle in to be as close to their father as they could. To this day, I still remember this display of deep love, respect and affection, and admire him for it! Bill was a living legend during his time on this earth, and that status only magnified with his passing in 1984. There are still members on staff at CYO who worked with Bill in the 1980's, and they only have wonderful things to say about him still today! He was certainly a good man, and loved by all who knew him!

Ed Tinder became the CYO Executive Director in 1984 after Bill Sr.'s passing. Ed had played football at Butler, and went on to become the Head Football Coach at Roncalli for the 1977, '78 & '79 seasons before he went to work for the CYO in 1980. He met his lovely wife Kathy while they were both teaching at Roncalli in the late 1970's, and I have been blessed to be a colleague of hers for many years. As the Executive Director for 33 years, Ed has certainly entered the realm of a "Legendary" leader! The CYO has grown and modernized in almost every regard during Ed's time. He has done a masterful job of leading the organization into the 21st Century with computer technology and expansion of facilities and programs to accommodate 24,000 youth each year. Ed has been a master organizer and manager of staff and thousands of adult volunteers. I have spent a lot of time with Ed over the past three months as he was helping me learn more about his position. He has been wonderfully supportive, informative and welcoming, and has been a tremendous help as I have made the transition. What has become obvious over the past several weeks as I have spent time with him is his love and devotion to youth, and his loyalty and commitment to CYO! Because of this, he has always done what he thought was best for the entire organization, and has had to make tough decisions over the years. Those who know him best will tell you he is highly ethical, and has always done what he thought was right. I'm not sure that one could ask for anything more during a 33-year professional career as Ed has earned the respect of countless people across the state of Indiana!

Perhaps Ed's greatest accomplishment is the amazing full-time staff he has assembled at CYO, most who have spent well over a decade working for him and the organization. If a Director is judged by the quality of the people who are working for him, Ed is truly a master of his craft! Leading the pack in experience at the CYO is Bernie Price, who has been with

the organization for **44 years**, and is the Girl's Athletic Director. Without question, Bernie is a living legend in her own right! She is a tireless worker, is one of the funniest ladies you will ever meet, and has gone way beyond the call of duty over the years to make a difference in the lives of young people in the Indianapolis area with the multitude of activities and groups of which she is a part. She has the heart of an Angel, and no doubt God has a very special place reserved for her in Heaven!! She is a real blessing to CYO, and all those she encounters each day. Likewise, Jerry Ross has been with CYO for **34 years**, and possesses many of the same qualities as Bernie. As the Assistant Executive Director, he has also committed his adult life to working for the youth of the Archdiocese, and beyond question possesses a servant's heart! Jerry has a very quick wit, and is a real joy to be around as he brings a great sense of humor to work each day. His organizational skills have been priceless as he has faithfully served the CYO over the years. Matching these organizational skills is Patty Armbruster, who serves as the Administrative Coordinator, and is the "glue" that keeps the whole machine running! Patty is a master of balancing phone calls, questions, paperwork, registration forms, team entries, schedules, etc. for the organization, and in spite of what at times can be a whirlwind around her, she always maintains a pleasant demeanor and sweet disposition towards all. She has been a real blessing to CYO during her 17 years of committed service. Jane Elliott has been the Development Director for CYO for the past 11 years, and has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge in fundraising and event planning. She is highly intelligent, and is very detail-oriented when planning events, preparing publications, or working with government agencies. Likewise, she loves the CYO whole-heartedly! Complimenting her perfectly is Christine Metzger, who is our Development Projects Manager. Having been with the CYO for 3 years, Christine brings a new perspective and ideas in the area of development. Her background in technology and ways to use social media to get the message of CYO out to the public has been invaluable! Jane and Christine have been the "Dynamic Duo" of Development, they do a great job and their hard work has helped immensely in the continued growth of the organization in all areas. Last, but certainly not least in the CYO office is Kris Becher, who has been the Finance Director for the past 13 years. As I am not a "numbers guy", her job would be the one I would struggle with most if I had to do her work. Kris has done an awesome job of juggling numerous tasks each day, from paying bills, collecting payments, payroll, insurance issues, internet issues, facilities issues, camp payments, financial decisions, etc. In short, she is the financial "Guru" of the organization, and has done an amazing job of juggling all of these things to help keep the doors open for the past decade. Somehow, she is able to maintain a pleasant disposition through it all, and I admire her for it!

Two more people Ed has put in place who do an unbelievable job are Kevin and Angi Sullivan, who are Co-Directors of CYO Camp Rancho Framasa in Brown County in southern Indiana. CYO Camp hosts over 6,000 young people each year, and Kevin and Angi are

amazing in the way they lead their staff and train camp counselors each summer to work with large numbers of campers each week. For more than 20 years, their faith-based approach has not only created a fun, activity-filled adventure for Archdiocesan youth, but has proven to be a life changing experience for countless young people over the years. As Ed and I took a few days to travel down to camp to watch the counselors work their magic with the campers in various activities, Ed got a little emotional a couple different times as he spoke of the improvements and growth that have occurred at camp over the years, and the wonderful job Kevin and Angi and their staff have done at making a difference in the lives of thousands of young people across the Archdiocese. As Ed is typically a very strong-minded individual, his show of emotion was a clear sign of his love for the mission of CYO Camp, and his deep respect and admiration for the awesome work Kevin and Angi Sullivan and their staff have done over the years. This adulation is certainly very well deserved! Without question, CYO Camp is one of the best parts of youth ministry in the Archdiocese. I am excited to be able to assist them both as they do God's work, and I am so grateful Ed took the time to give me the history and background of CYO Camp Rancho Framasa!

As I am beginning my own journey with CYO, I am first and foremost so thankful that Ed has done such a wonderful job of creating an amazing team of staff members, and an office culture of shared trust, respect, loyalty, work ethic and teamwork! I really am grateful to be a part of this amazing CYO family, and I am honored that I will get to do God's work alongside all of them each day. I fully comprehend and appreciate that I am walking in the footsteps of three legendary gentlemen... Bill Sahm, Bill Kuntz, and Ed Tinder. All three of these men have left a powerful legacy behind, and I am honor-bound to work hard and give my best each day to lead the CYO in a way that will make each of them proud. With a lot of prayer, hard work, God's help, and the continued teamwork of the CYO staff.... we will get it done..... Lord, please let it be so!!