

OUR COMMON BOND:

The Campaign for University School of Milwaukee

August 2017

USM Holds Groundbreaking for Our Common Bond Campaign



Under a bright blue sky, more than 1,200 students, parents, alumni, and distinguished guests gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony on May 31, 2017, to kick off construction projects related to University School of Milwaukee's \$27 million Our Common Bond campaign. The contributions to the comprehensive campaign will support capital projects, increase the school's endowment, and expand the USM Fund, the school's annual giving program.

On the future site of the Jack Olson '67 Commons, students from each division were invited to speak on behalf of each of the capital projects. Ellie Leverett '21 spoke about the impact the arts at USM have had on her life and about the planned performing arts center. M'Johnno Foster '25 discussed the addition of the Lubar Center for Innovation and Exploration, which he is excited to utilize this year. Senior Prefects Abigail Cowen '18 and William Kennedy '18 spoke about the Jack Olson '67 Commons, which will provide increased space for USM's student and faculty tradition of dining together while enjoying conversations, connections, and collaboration.

Through these new spaces, as well as the Bruce '81 and Jennifer Lee Community Room and the Darrow Family Welcome Center, USM is investing more

boldly in innovation, experiential learning, global education, the arts, community, and professional-preparedness training to better equip students for a rapidly changing world.

While the campaign has gained significant momentum, there is still work to be done. As noted by campaign Co-chair Karin Werner, "Of course we're not quite there yet,

but we are celebrating that we've raised 75 percent of the building project funds. There is more to raise, so we will continue to reach out to those in the community to help support this endeavor." Campaign Co-chair Rick Stratton '92 said "It is through campaigns like this that our School has evolved and that this amazing campus has grown. The future of USM is in our hands."

"We are very excited about today because this is just the beginning," said Head of School Laura Fuller. "We are all dedicated to making sure that this is the best educational institution for all students who come through the school." The new facilities will give students the ability to explore an abundance of diverse interests throughout their time at USM. "We thank everyone who has donated to this point to Our Common Bond and then in the future, all of those who will." Fuller concluded the ceremony with a promising reminder: "Students, this is for you."

From left Head of Middle School and longest-tenured faculty member Pamela Nosbusch; Campaign Cabinet Co-chairs Rick Stratton '92 and Karin Werner; President of the Board of Trustees Andrew Petzold; Head of School Laura Fuller; Charles Mellowes '87; David Lubar; Charlie Hauske '12; Leadership Gifts Division Co-chair Mike Darrow '86; Immediate Past Board President Dick Seesel; and Campaign Cabinet Member Sarah Olson Zimmerman '92.

Visit www.USMOurCommonBond.org for a full video of the groundbreaking ceremony.

Serving Up Tradition

Alex Palermo '86 speaks five languages, but he may be most fluent in one that requires no words—food. For him, food has defined and informed his life since he was a small child. “Growing up with an Italian father and a German mother, it was not unusual for us to have two- or three-hour dinners,” Palermo recalled. “Whenever my friends came over, they were amazed at how long our dinners lasted.”

As a senior at Pepperdine University, Palermo took inspiration from his mother’s cooking to launch the Divine Pasta Company, which sold homemade pastas to area restaurants. “I borrowed space from a restaurant that let me use its kitchen after closing to make the pasta. In exchange for the use of their space, I gave them fresh pasta.”

The company quickly grew, and Palermo has since acquired a variety of additional food manufacturing companies based in Los Angeles and Italy. All of the products, which include pizza, pasta, sauces, boxed dinners, and more, feature quality ingredients with no preservatives or artificial ingredients.



Alex Palermo '86 (center) joined Patrick Tevlin (back, right), chief advancement officer, and Upper School students for lunch.

“I love that the school has continued the tradition of eating meals together.”

While his life and career have taken him far from Milwaukee, he hasn’t forgotten his University School of Milwaukee experience. When Palermo and his wife were looking for an independent school for their children, he searched for one in Los Angeles that replicated his USM education. “I wanted them to have the same quality education with Midwestern values that I had. It was really important to me.”

Palermo has supported the School’s Our Common Bond campaign with a gift to fund a new servery in which Upper School students will assemble their lunch before proceeding to the new Jack Olson '67

Commons, where they will eat together. The servery will streamline the way in which food is served so that students can more efficiently access their meals, and dining staff members can quickly refill serving dishes. Other features, such as a larger salad bar and dedicated locations for hot entrees and sandwiches, will ensure that students have even more access to healthy and fresh options.

“I love that the school has continued the tradition of eating meals together, which is one of my favorite memories from USM. Being able to take a break from rigorous classes to refuel your mind and body with quality, nutritious food is so important, and I’m really proud to be able to support that.”

Eating family meals together is important to Palermo, and something he makes an effort to do despite his—and his family’s—busy schedules. In fact, he may have discovered the secret to keeping teenagers at home. “My wife is Italian and she cooks a lot, and we have family dinners almost every night, just like I had. We usually have a lot of kids at our house.”



Alex Palermo '86 (center) and (from left) his son Lodovico, daughter Giulia, wife Valentina, and son Matteo during a recent trip to Japan.

Co-chairs for a Cause

Rick Stratton '92 and Karin Werner are co-chairs of the Our Common Bond campaign, and they also serve as Trustees and parents of current students. "With this campaign, we are developing spaces and programs in which students will learn and grow together," said Stratton. Added Werner, "Rick and I are so excited for opportunities that these new spaces will provide for students in the coming years."

Rick Stratton '92



From left: Beckett '25, Cameron '30, Rick '92, and Jocelyn '27 Stratton, and Keri Sarajian.

Rick Stratton '92 is an actively involved alumnus of University School of Milwaukee through his work with the Our Common Bond campaign, the USM Alumni Association, and as a Trustee. But his connection to USM is strongest today thanks to his role as a parent of current students. "Really, my love for the school comes from seeing it through my children's eyes," he said. "They're passionate about being at USM." Stratton and his wife, Keri Sarajian, have three children: Beckett '25, Jocelyn '27, and Cameron '30.

For Stratton, supporting the campaign with his time and financial resources is a way to ensure the future while thanking those who came before him. "I was in 6th grade when the Upper School opened on this campus, and that was influential on my life as a student. There were a lot of people who gave a lot of time and financial resources to make that happen, and now my wife and I are part of making the campus better for students in the future. It is an important thing to pass on."

Karin Werner



(Back) Teddy and Karin Werner and (front) Isabel '24 (left), Andy '26 (center), and Eleanor '28 Werner.

Karin Werner is well aware of the value of a USM education, and she does not hesitate to remind her three children—Isabel '24, Andy '26, and Eleanor '28—of the benefits. "My children are very fortunate to be here and experience the diverse student body, amazing faculty, and beautiful campus. I often ask them, 'Do you realize how lucky you are to go to school at USM?'"

Werner is most excited about seeing the impact that the Our Common Bond campaign will have on future generations of USM students. "I see day in and day out the effects of the prior [Next Generation] capital campaign when the Lower School addition was created, because my children live in the Lower School wing. I see how beautiful the Lower School's Marion and Verne Read Gymnasium is, and that it's such a great place for the students to exercise. I see firsthand the difference that the prior campaign made, and I'm hoping that what we're doing now will improve things for many years to come."

Lasting Connections

In the early 1990s, when Dick and Shelly Seesel decided to enroll their children James '05, Dana '07, and Lauren '09, at University School of Milwaukee, it was primarily for the individualized attention they wanted for them. "Looking back, it was our most important opportunity to build a connection with this community—both USM and Milwaukee," said Shelly. "We had no idea at the time the depth of involvement we would have over the years."



Dick and Shelly Seesel

Shelly became an active volunteer at USM, serving as a room parent, helping to organize and host book fairs, and chairing the Holiday Shops. Dick also volunteered, participating in annual giving phone-a-thons and assisting with strategic planning for the school. In 2006, he joined the Board of Trustees where, over the course of 11 years, he chaired the facilities committee, served as the executive vice president, and held the role of president from 2013 to 2016.

While chairing the facilities committee in 2009, the school was in the midst of construction on the Lower School addition as part of Phase II of the Next Generation capital campaign. "It was interesting because our charge was to start looking ahead at what the school needs to do next," Dick recalled. "So part of the fun of watching the Our Common Bond campaign unfold is that some of these projects are ones we were talking about five, six, even seven years ago, and here we are today making them a reality."

"It was our most important opportunity to build a connection with this community."

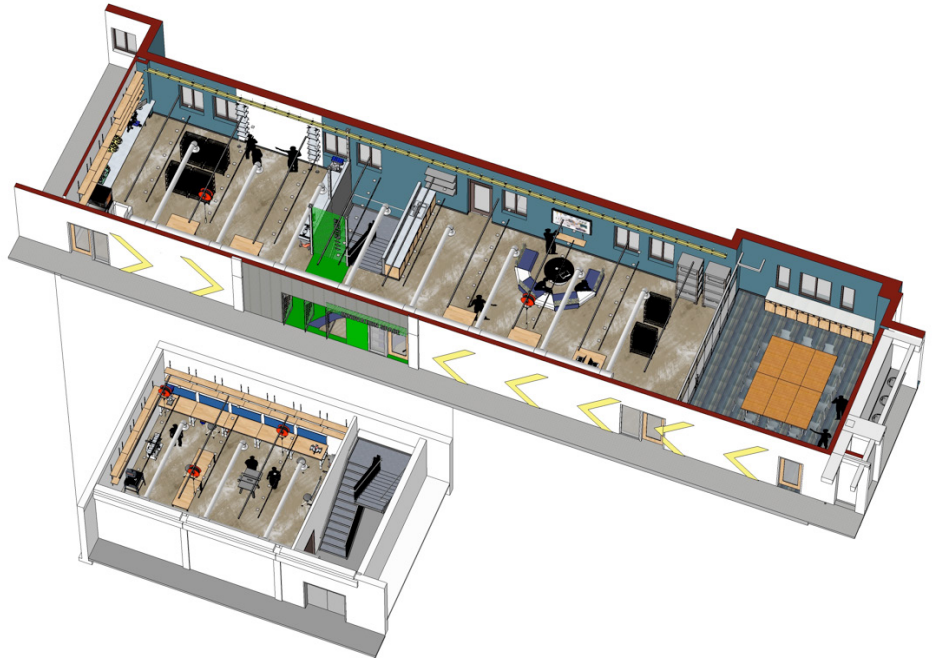
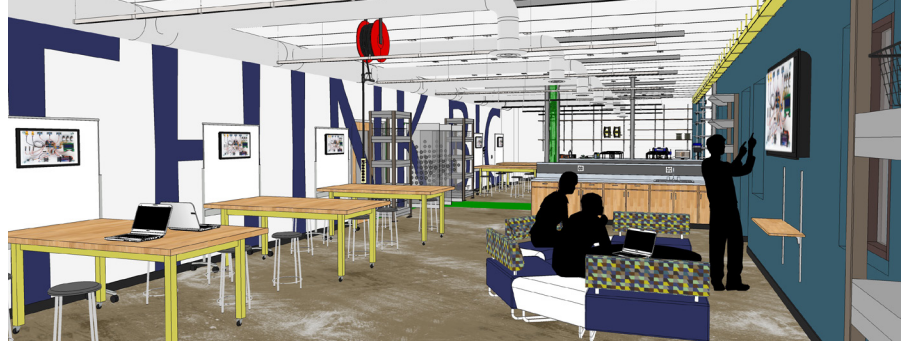
Dick was instrumental in laying the groundwork for Our Common Bond during his tenure as board president, and he and Shelly were the first members of the USM community to make a commitment. "In 2015 I sat down with every Trustee and asked them to make their best gifts. As the board president, I felt that I had to be the first one to set an example."

Dick and Shelly chose to support the campaign in three ways: a five-year pledge to the USM Fund, a gift in support of the capital projects, and a planned gift through their estate plans to strengthen the school priorities now and in the future. "We decided to add the planned gift into the mix because we feel like it's a great opportunity for USM," said Dick. "Our USM experiences were important in our lives and the lives of our children, and we feel if people can do something to ensure the long-term health of the school, they should try to do that."

"USM really is a community, more than just a school," added Shelly. "We're still connected to the people, the teachers, the parents, and the administration, even though our last child graduated almost 10 years ago. We're all connected because of the experiences we've shared—helping in classrooms, volunteering for events, cheering on our kids at athletic events, joining in on student retreats, and more. Our gift isn't going toward today, it's for tomorrow and helping to ensure the legacy of the school."



Join Us for the Dedication of the Lubar Center for Innovation and Exploration



Where: First Floor of Upper School

When: Monday, Aug. 28, 2017

Time: 9:30–9:45 a.m. *Following Opening Ceremony*

Plan to visit the Parents' Association Annual Back-to-School Coffee in Mellowes Hall for refreshments from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m.

rsvp@usmk12.org

Tours of the Lubar Center will be available during open houses throughout the first day of school and during the Back-to-School Nights in September.

Our Common Bond: Current List of Campaign Investors

Asmuth Family
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Lori and Kurt Bechthold
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Werner Family
Werner Family Foundation
Catherine M. '79 and Michael C. Williams '70
Ziegler Family Foundation
Steven and Sarah Olson Zimmerman '92

As of Aug. 15, 2017



Visit www.USMOurCommonBond.org for updated campaign information including videos, news stories, construction updates, event information, and more.