



The MESSAGE

Southwestern Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

February 28, 2025

Volume 55, Number 24

www.evdiomessage.org

Hess tabbed to lead Mater Dei football program

Special to The Message

Mater Dei High School recently announced the hire of alumnus Cody Hess as the school's head football coach.

Hess is the fifth head football coach in the Evansville school's 75-year history. He takes the reins from longtime coach Mike Goebel.

"The opportunity to lead this program is both humbling and a dream come true," Hess said in the press release. "I have big plans for this program — both on and off the field. On the field, we will pursue excellence through preparation, effort and execution. Off the field, we want to develop young men who respect themselves and others and consistently strive to make the right choices in all aspects of life. My goal is that every young man who leaves our program is not just a better athlete, but also a better person ready to excel in life beyond football."

A 2017 graduate of the University of Southern Indiana, Hess brings "a unique blend of leadership, teaching and coaching experience," the press release states. After graduating from

USI, Hess served as the athletic director and social studies teacher at Resurrection School. In 2023, he returned to Mater Dei as a social studies and physical education teacher.

The press release says Hess's coaching philosophy is deeply rooted in the key principles of discipline, accountability, dependability, faith and coachability. He credits these values with helping to build a strong and unified team culture at Mater Dei that extends beyond the gridiron.

"Cody is a genuine asset to Mater Dei and very deserving to serve as our next head football coach," former coach Mike Goebel said in the press release. "I have been so fortunate to work with Cody as a student, player and colleague. His dedication to our program and our mission is unmatched."

Over the past 12 years, Hess has served Mater Dei football in several roles, including assistant head coach, head strength training coach, offensive coordinator, assistant defensive coordinator, running backs coach and defensive backs coach. During his time on the coaching staff, Mater Dei



Submitted photo

Coach Cody Hess, right, reaches to high five a member of the Mater Dei football team.

won one state championship, was the state runner-up twice, won four regional championships and won six sectional championships.

"Cody's passion for football, leader-

ship and commitment to our mission make him the perfect choice to lead our football program," Athletic Director Sam Fleming said in the press

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Volunteers pack meals for those in need



Over 200 volunteers helped pack more than 51,000 meals during the Evansville Catholic Community Food Packing Event Feb. 22 at Good Shepherd Parish in Evansville.

Submitted photo

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

A group of over 200 volunteers helped pack more than 51,000 meals during the Evansville Catholic Community Food Packing Event.

The Food Packing Event was held Feb. 22 at Good Shepherd Parish in Evansville. The primary sponsors were the Good Shepherd Knights of Columbus and Columbiettes. To help fight the scourge of hunger in developing countries, they partnered with Cross Catholic Outreach to pack nourishing meals. Other Knights councils helped in meeting the donation goal.

"Long story short, I heard about Cross Catholic Outreach and the work they do on a Dynamic Catholic pilgrimage a couple of years ago . . . Early last spring, in prayer, I asked God what he wanted me to do," Dana Blanke said. "He gave me several signs that we need to have a food packing event."

Blanke said this was the first local Cross Catholic Food packing event she was aware of. She said there was one in Owensboro, Kentucky, last fall but she does not believe Evansville ever hosted one. After seeing the ads for this event, St. Joseph Parish in Jasper is planning to have a food packing event in July of this year, she said.

Prior to the event, they reached their goal of 200 volunteers, with volunteers spanning from 2 years old to 88

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Teens Encounter Christ honor three with Spirit of TEC award

Special to The Message

There are so many beautiful characteristics of the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreat and community! One unique aspect is that TEC is intergenerational and provides an opportunity for youth and adults alike to find incredible support and role models from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Despite the word "Teens" in its name, TEC welcomes youth who are at least 17 years old and/or in their junior year of high school and adults; there is no upper age limit.

In the past two years, Southwestern Indiana TEC has had an opportunity to recognize an awesome married couple and a single person who are incredible examples of living the Catholic life in their particular vocations. These three people received the Spirit of TEC award which recognizes individuals or couples who live out the Paschal Mystery in their lives, contribute to TEC in a significant way, are committed to serving the Church and its youth and young adults, and generously share their love, faith and enthusi-



Submitted photo

The Spirit of TEC 2024 recipient is Mike "Pickle" Kocher.

asm with others.

In 2024, the award was given to Mike "Pickle" Kocher. Pickle has been a vital and active member of the TEC community for a long time. He selflessly works behind the scenes and does not seek recognition or praise. He is the man to call on when you need a dependable person, whether it be to wash dishes, mop or serve on a TEC retreat team. In addition, he leads the rosary for his parish and is a true prayer warrior — always willing to pray for those who ask.

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