

THE FORTIS CAMPAIGN

Welcome to FORTIS!

Latin for strength, FORTIS is a $40 million investment to strengthen every aspect of the future: for you, your family members and friends who will one day be here, and for your own philanthropic legacy. Guided by an intentional strategic direction more than two years in the making, your support is already creating impact that is difference-making and sustainable by design.

In this monthly newsletter, you will find regular FORTIS updates and stories about donors, families, and students like you and yours who are helping move the needle in support of the young men of Rockhurst and their families.

Rockhurst Launches The FORTIS Campaign

Largest Capital Undertaking in the School's 116-year History



On September 9, with more than 350 Rockhurst High School supporters on-hand, **President David Laughlin** announced the public launch of Rockhurst's **FORTIS Campaign**. With a $40 million goal, it is the boldest, most comprehensive capital campaign in the school's 116-year history.

A special thanks to our Campaign Honorary Co-Chairs: **Bonnie & Jerry Kelly '73**, **Barbara & David Dehaemers '78**, and **Veronica & Peter Mallouk '88** (pictured above with President Laughlin on the far left and **Amy Holewinski**, Chair of the Board of Trustees, in the middle).

Click here to watch a short recap video of the event.

FORTIS – A Student Perspective: Experience **The FORTIS Campaign** through the eyes of our students in **this video** created by **Jack McGovern '28**.

Campaign Priorities & Impact To Date

Accessibility & Affordability



Opening The Door. Making the Journey Possible.

For **John Kafka ’68**, giving back to Rockhurst is personal. Growing up, John watched his parents make deep sacrifices to ensure he and his brothers received a Rockhurst education. That gift changed his life – instilling core values of discipline, hard work, and goal-setting. He appreciated the mentorship of his basketball coach, **Coach Marion Nickel** to be positive, work hard, and don’t give up. Now, John is paying that gift forward. **Through the generous support of John and his wife, Carol, the couple created a student scholarship** ensuring that financial barriers don't stand in the way of future Hawklets receiving that same life-changing education and lifelong friends. Their gift creates opportunities for deserving young men to join the Rockhurst brotherhood, carry forward those foundational life skills, and build bright futures of their own.



I grew up in the Shawnee area where it was unusual for students to go to Rockhurst – it just wasn't close. My parents believed in the Jesuit education I would get and allowed me to attend here, even though logistics were tough. My wife, Katie, and I want to make Rockhurst an option for students who don't live close by. Family schedules are even busier and challenging today so this need is even more prevalent. By removing the hurdle of transportation to school, this opens up the Rockhurst education to numerous students across the metro area. Maybe, it will even "seal the deal" for families trying to manage the logistics of busy lives while being able to prioritize their son's education.
–Eric Vossman '02

Every day, **49 students** rely on our donor-funded van program to get to school from across the metro area – including Midtown, Northland, Lee's Summit, Grandview, and Olathe. With even more students on the waitlist, your support is actively removing transportation barriers and opening doors to education.

Click here to learn more about Accessibility & Affordability

Academic & Professional Success



Purpose in Practice.

Because of you, Rockhurst students don't have to wait for graduation to start building their futures. **Your generosity bridges the gap** between classroom learning and real-world career success through the Experiential Learning Database, opening doors to life-changing opportunities like:

- **The ACE Program: You give interested and ambitious high schoolers** a direct line to professional mentors in Architecture, Construction, and Engineering. Thanks to your support, these students are gaining real-world guidance, industry connections, and hands-on experience before they even step foot on a college campus.
- **Rockhurst High School Internal Internships: Your gifts fuel the dreams of 22 student interns** taking on real responsibilities across campus. From supporting Admissions and Library Science to launching student-led ventures – like three interns managing vending machine inventory, sales analytics, and revenue – you empower young men to lead, analyze, and innovate.





Thank you for investing in our young men and giving them the confidence and skills to thrive in the professional world.

Click here to learn more about Academic & Professional Success

Athletics, Co-Curriculars, & Community Engagement



Building Places. Strengthening Community.

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV wrote about the Value of Sport in a letter this spring. In the letter the Pope writes, “Sport can and must be a welcoming space, capable of involving people from different social, cultural and physical backgrounds. **The joy of being together, which comes from shared play, common training and mutual support, is one of the simplest and most profound expressions of a reconciled humanity."**

The new baseball stadium is intended to be just that: a physical space with multiple uses to create the “joy of being together” and building community for you and your family – whether you’re an alumnus, parent, grandparent, student, or friend.

- Through the generosity of **The Dunn Family** and **JE Dunn Construction**, the new stadium will be anchored by the **William H. Dunn, Sr. Memorial Baseball Field**, honoring a 1940 alumnus whose legacy will inspire generations to come. You can **click here** to see a promotional video about the new stadium.

- **Sharon and Jed Ervin '66** have also built a family legacy of scholarship, athleticism, leadership, and support. The couple's brothers (**Patrick Ervin**, **'64, Daniel Ervin '68**, **Robert (Bobby) Ervin '71**, **Paul O'Brien '72**, **Freddy O'Brien '82**, **and Dennis O'Brien '83**), Sharon's cousin (**Vincent (Tony) O'Brien '74**), her great-nephews (**Neil** and **Kevin O'Brien**, both Class of **2008**), and three of the couple's grandsons – **Landon Bradshaw '22**, **Keegan Bradshaw '24**, and **Quinn Condon '26** – are all alumni.

  To put himself through Rockhurst, Jed (pictured below with Sharon, and also his Rockhurst Football line) worked at Ford Motor Company and even hitchhiked to class. That grit, combined with a strong Jesuit education, earned him a scholarship to the University of Notre Dame – and sparked a lifelong passion to support Jesuit education. The couple created a scholarship fund in June 2022. Recognizing the impact a new stadium will have on co-curriculars and community building at Rockhurst, Jed and Sharon proudly stepped forward as early-in supporters of the project.

- You can be on the lookout for heavy equipment on the current field shortly, collecting geotechnical boring samples to evaluate the soil structure, bearing capacity, and water table locations below the ground in anticipation of presenting plans to the City of Kansas City, MO to seek approval and permitting for the project.

If you'd like to talk about your own gift in support of the new stadium, reach out to any staff member listed below.



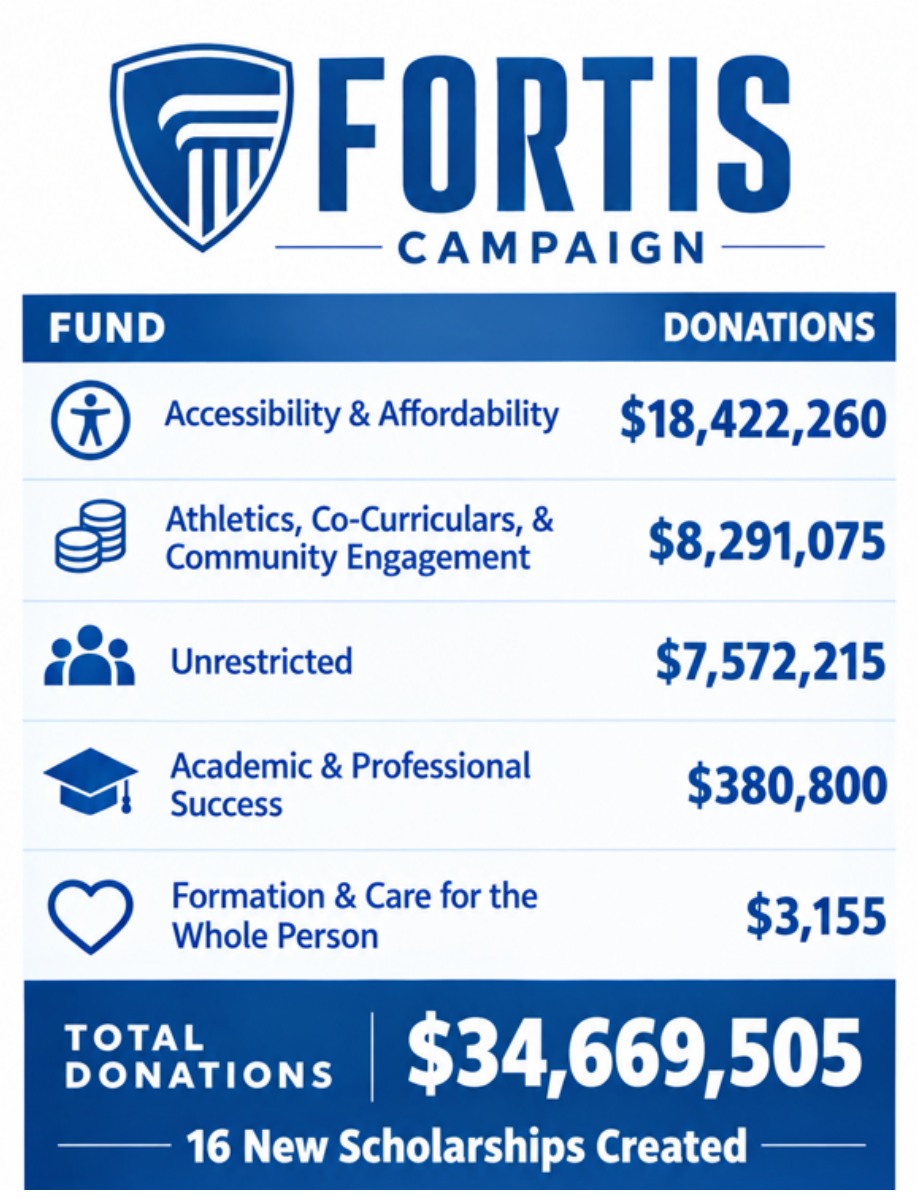




Dunn Field *isn't the only thing being built through* FORTIS*: we are also building community engagement through servant leadership. Recently two members of the Golf team,* ***Henry Mayor '27*** *and* ***Hank Homsey '27*** *(above), led a fundraising effort to support a local food repurposing organization. Their efforts raised $11,000 to purchase a triple reach-in freezer that will allow the organization to accept larger food* donations.

Click here to learn more about Athletics, Co-Curriculars, & Community Engagement

Progress To Date



View The Donor Roster*

**As of 10.20.26*

Campaign Staff



Diane Marty, EdD

Executive Vice President of Strategic Planning & Vice President of Philanthropic Investments

dmarty@rockhursths.edu
816.363.2036 x538



Sarah Murray

FORTIS Campaign Coordinator

smurray@rockhursths.edu
816.363.2036 x536



Shannon Ortbals

FORTIS Campaign Coordinator

sortbals@rockhursths.edu
816.363.2036 x536

Click here to see a list of volunteer leaders for The FORTIS Campaign

Learn more about FORTIS at www.rockhurstfortis.com

Click Here to make your FORTIS gift today!

Unsubscribe

Rockhurst High School

9301 State Line Road Kansas City, Missouri 64114