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A GIFT FROM YOUR PARISH AND  
THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

# Parable



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By Paul McAvoy | Photography by Charlene Graham

# Second career teachers bring *real-world skills* to Catholic classrooms

**A**mong the many strengths of Catholic schools in the Manchester diocese, one that may sometimes be overlooked is the great breadth and diversity of teaching experience that students encounter. The truth is that our Catholic schools are staffed with many dedicated faculty members who find themselves in the classroom, having made a very deliberate choice after success in another career. Their love of their subjects, their students and their faith has led them to teaching, and their experiences in their previous professions helps them bring new perspectives and approaches to their new vocation.

## Andy Cardine



Coming to education was like coming home for Andy Cardine. “It’s probably worth noting that I come from teachers,” he says. “My mom was a teacher. My dad was a teacher, and then a principal and a superintendent of schools in New

Hampshire. So, I kind of have it in my blood.”

Though education was clearly a centerpiece of the Cardine household, when it was Andy’s turn to go to college, he chose engineering as his path. The work was challenging and tactile

– he focused on solving real-world problems and was able to apply the math and sciences he learned to complex issues. After graduating, he got a job as a systems engineer in a nuclear power plant. Here, his skills were put to the test as he became proficient in the systems and high level of precision expected for safe operations at a nuclear power plant.

In 2013, the plant that Andy was working on was slated to begin the years-long process of decommissioning. He and the other engineers knew that their work there would sunset. He began to think about what he might want to do next. He considered moving to another part of the country for a similar job but felt drawn to the area where he grew up.

Andy’s three boys were going to St. Joseph Regional School in Keene and he was involved with the Knights of Columbus. So when he heard about the launch of a new Catholic high school – Our Lady



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of Mercy Academy in Keene – it seemed like the perfect place to integrate his faith with his work and try his hand at teaching.

His lessons are aimed at teaching students to think through problems and apply math and science to develop concrete solutions. “I’m interested in how they tackle the challenge. I had a class build cardboard chairs that they have to sit in while they give their presentation. The

lessons connect to the real world, as opposed to thinking, ‘Why am I doing this math I’m never going to use again?’”

At Our Lady of Mercy, Andy has the flexibility to bring his own approaches and his insights as a professional engineer into the classroom. His enthusiasm for his field infuses the classroom, inspiring students who might be intimidated by math and science. “I like that



moment when somebody says they’re not good at something,” Andy says, “and then catching that time where they’re getting it right. You can see that something’s unlocked.”

## Jessica Goodman

Jessica Goodman became a science teacher at St. Catherine of Siena School in Manchester after a successful 25-year career as laboratory researcher and manager. She graduated college with a biology degree and joined a Boston company where she worked on the cutting edge of medical laboratory research and science. While her career progressed, Jessica volunteered at the Acting Loft in Manchester and discovered she had an interest in teaching. She began to substitute teach at a public school.

Things fell into place for Jessica when she heard about an opening at St. Catherine’s. Here, she saw she could use her skills in a way to inspire the next generation of leaders and scientists. “I try to set up a lab atmosphere and incorporate more labs into the curriculum,” Jessica says. “I believe the more hands-on experience that they get the better. There are a lot of things



**“I started working at St Catherine’s, and it’s very strange being close to 50 and realizing that I’ve now found my calling in my life. I LOVE GOING TO WORK EACH DAY... it’s one of those things where I’m like, why didn’t I do this years earlier?”**