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Ribbon-cutting Day at the new Holy Family Parish Grade School Playground. Project by Pica + Sullivan Architects, Ltd. Photograph by Randall Michelson.

Heavenly Upgrades Holy Family Parish Grade School

By ANDREW J. CAMPA
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Still vital at 94 years old, the Holy Family Grade School in Glendale celebrated a much-desired face-lift and new campus playground. Holy Family students and staff, parishioners, donors and dignitaries joined with the parish clergy for a jubilant October 29, 2019 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"The Grade School is where aspiration begins early, where children have hope and where they thrive," said Holy Family principal Dr. Fidela Suelto, who recently traveled to Finland to study and implement best educational practices from the high-performing Scandinavian nation.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to better serve our students," Suelto added.

Southern California-based Pica + Sullivan Architects designed the project in conjunction with Agoura Hills-based Carter Romanek Landscape Architects and Westlake Village-based RecWest, a noted playground equipment consultant and supplier.

Additional team members included Los Angeles-based KPFF Civil Engineers, El Segundo-based KGM Lighting Consultants, Glendale-based Planning Consultant Rodney Kahn, and Pasadena-based Project Manager AK3 Consulting. Van Nuys-based Paul W. Speer General Contractors led the building effort. On-site construction began in June 2019.

The transitional-kindergarten-through-eighth-grade institution, which has 250 students, unveiled an artificial turf play and picnic area and a physical education zone, complete with agility ladders, pull-up bars, sit-up benches, large ropes and exercise equipment.

The new play yard also includes an age-appropriate play area with slides, bridges and a soft-foam floor. "This is all nice, and I like it a lot," said Daniel Gonzalez,

an eighth-grader and Glendale resident. "The playground and turf are the big changes, but I'm going to use the workout area most."

Perhaps some of the more impressive upgrades weren't at eye level as the school removed its old stained and cracked asphalt and replaced it with a concrete surface that included colorful painted shapes throughout the campus as well as new hopscotch and four-square game settings.

In keeping with the theme of educational renewal, the hopscotch game does not feature the traditional numerical count per block but rather consists of fractions, where students can bounce from one-half to one-tenth.

Another major change was the removal of the school's chain-link fence in favor of new decorative iron fencing, which encircles the entire school. "Replacing the fencing and transforming the Grade School playground has been a passion project of mine since arriving at Holy Family 11½ years ago," noted Holy Family Pastor Jim Bevacqua.

Deacon Ron Baker, a Glendale resident "for all 60 of my years," represented the parish and school during the course of construction. The 1973 alumnus of Holy Family Grade School and current Parish Director of Operations and Ministries said he was delighted with the transformation. "We want a safe environment for our students to learn, play and be physically fit – but one that is also magical and inspiring,"

"For the greater Glendale community, this is also a place where we can gather for events and celebrate and enjoy the environment," he added.

The improvements completed a portion of the first phase of the **Building Our Future** master plan

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**Pica + Sullivan
Architects, Ltd.**

Los Angeles, CA
(323) 653-7124

San Diego, CA
(619) 450-6200

PicaSullivan.com

Safe Environment to Learn, Play and Be Fit



(Above) Ribbon-cutting Day at the new Holy Family Parish Grade School Playground. Project by Pica + Sullivan Architects, Ltd. Photograph by Randall Michelson.

Learning Happens

for Holy Family Parish — its Grade School, High School and Church. The first phase also includes significant interior renovations and changes in both the Grade School and High School Buildings.

Holy Family is on target to raise approximately \$13 million to build a new Parish Center and additional parking, along with constructing a High School facilities building, a Life Teen/Music Center and a High School quad area.

All Grade School aspects of the master plan are now complete. The Holy Family Grade School was named the “Best Private School” and “Best Music School” in the Glendale News-Press’ Readers’ Choice Awards last year.

As noted by Father Bevacqua, “It started with a dream and with a vision and guidance by Pica + Sullivan, and the generosity of donors along with much collaboration and input from stakeholders and our project manager. The end result is a beautiful, state-of-the-art Grade School yard that truly stands out among schools.”

Pica + Sullivan Architects Firm Profile

Pica + Sullivan Architects, Ltd. specialize in architectural design and planning for non-profit independent institutions, religious-based organizations, nonprofit social service organizations and charitable foundations in Southern California.

We have been involved in the design of well over 500 projects since the start of our firm in 1990. The projects by Pica + Sullivan range in size from master planning of entire campuses to architectural design for remodels, additions, and new buildings.

To meet the special design needs of non-profit institutions, Pica + Sullivan have established management systems and technical resources for large new construction projects as well as small remodeling jobs.

Pica + Sullivan School projects have included every conceivable program found in educational facilities — from humanities classrooms, science labs, STEM labs, performing arts (theaters, dance studios, music studios, etc.), visual arts (painting, drawing), applied arts (ceramics, woodshops), libraries and learning centers, broadcast studios, technology centers, and cafeterias to gymnasiums, athletic fields

(multi-use, football, baseball, softball, track, and tennis), aquatics centers, dormitories, offices, chapels, multipurpose spaces, and parking structures.

We have found that the practice of architecture is a collective endeavor — particularly when the client has multiple constituencies with a myriad of priorities and goals. A design that serves a client appropriately is the result of collaboration, involving many people over an extended period of time, to establish and refine the program and image to fit the needs and budget.

In order to deliver the services of architecture and planning to our clients, Pica + Sullivan has an approach that includes **hands-on principals, a flexible and responsive staff, a value-engineering sensibility, a belief in contextual architecture and a deep understanding of the non-profit client.**

If you are contemplating alterations or expansions to your existing facilities or, are contemplating constructing new facilities, we would appreciate having an opportunity to meet and discuss how Pica + Sullivan Architects can provide assistance. We look forward to talking with you in the near future.