

PARENTS PERSPECTIVE—CARROLL THEN & NOW: Andrea Dinsmore Meals '87 Mother of Mary Kate '16, Leeanne '18 and Sean '20

In 1987 when I was a senior at the newly combined, co-ed Carroll, it was in many ways similar to the school it is today. It's still academically challenging for students who are gifted and work hard. It's still a fun, social place where teenagers can build life-long friendships. It's still a showcase for successful athletes. It's still a popular outlet for those who are talented and interested in the performing arts. It still has a first class art program and numerous activities and clubs. The extra-curricular activities have expanded to reflect current student interests and Carroll really has something for everyone. Today, the halls are still filled with laughter and upbeat chatter and it even still smells the same!



If I were to compare my Carroll experience with my daughter's, who is a recent graduate of the Class of 2016, the one overwhelming difference I have seen is the introduction of the Kairos Retreat. Participation in Kairos is for the seniors, but along with the Ministry team, those that experience the retreats generate an atmosphere of love and acceptance in the school that never goes away. And it even follows them out the door and remains a part of them.

Kairos sets a tone for an openness to Christ in high school. My faith was developed at Carroll in an adult driven environment. These days it is more student driven, and I think that is the key to its success. Students at Carroll today are not at all shy about their faith and they want to share their love for God with you and with each other. The Seniors that have attended the retreats definitely lead the way but their enthusiasm for their faith trickles down to the other students. The connection that the students have with God is reinforced by the teachers and staff. Current Carroll students are really encouraged to live their faith, not just learn about it.



After recently experiencing the outpouring of love and support during a tragedy when the students had to deal with the sudden death of a beloved rising Senior, I could see the impact that the Kairos Retreats really had on Carroll students. The current Kairos leaders and the leaders from years past rose to the challenge and used the foundation built during their Kairos experience to support each other and the entire Carroll Community during a time of overwhelming sadness.

I have to say that my years at Carroll include some of my most-treasured memories. It was a time I can look back on with no regrets and I left there well-prepared for college and for life. Now looking back as parent, I honestly believe that Carroll is the best place for today's teenagers in this ever changing world that seems to get more complicated by the minute. A strong foundation of faith is the best thing you can give your child and Carroll has found a way to continue to provide it.