

## **“Happy to Help Out”**

Unlike a lot of the folks who threw their support behind the St. Rose School project, Tony Homan did not have any sentimental attachment to the old schoolhouse. He grew up in New Bremen.

But he could look into the future and see the bright side. “I’ve got a lot of boys who will get a lot of use out of it,” he said.

Tony and his wife, Steph, own T & S Homan improvements, a residential construction company based out of their home in St. Rose. They are raising six kids with one on the way, so their days are busy from dawn to dusk. Still, Tony took on work at the schoolhouse, which has been rehabbed from its beloved but shabby former self, into Our Fathers House, a snug, well-lit building that can host pick-up basketball games for kids in the community for another 100 years.

“I was happy to help out,” said Tony, who lent his crews to the project, “just like a lot of people did.”

Tony was president of the St. Rose Men’s Sodality when the possibility of the project first came up. It made sense to keep the school in part because he sees the value of inheritance, passing down good things from generation to generation. The oldest of nine, he grew up watching his dad make cabinets. “He started his own business 30 years ago, and I always helped in the shop,” Tony said. “Once I got out of high school, I did remodeling on the side, I’d buy a house and fix it up.”

He worked for Buschur’s Refrigeration for 10 years, learning the electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning trades. In 2017, he married Steph, who grew up in Minster, and soon “we figured it was time to start our own business, and teach our kids to work.”

That dream is working out pretty well. The business, founded in 2019, is growing; Steph is the office manager, handles the books and payroll. Tony fields the calls, which are constant. “Nobody really does what he does,” Steph said.

The kids have their own tools, and they follow Tony around, puttering and learning, which to a kid is the same thing. “There’s always something going on here around the house,” Steph said. “Always something in the works.”

Tony can picture them walking down the road to play basketball at Our Fathers House—he was a CYO coach and he watched his younger brothers play at New Bremen where, he said, “they were really good.” It might be too soon to tell if that basketball DNA is inside them, but the Homans believe that if you give the kids the proper tools, a place to use them and a word or two of encouragement, good things will happen.