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Padua Franciscan High School

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Press Release

Padua Celebrates Grand Opening of New Athletic Center

PARMA, Ohio – (August 17, 2026) **Padua (Pad-oo-uh) Franciscan High School** officially opened a new \$11 million Athletic Center on Sunday, August 16, 2026. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members, and community leaders toured the 29,000-square-foot facility, which is connected to the school near Padua Stadium.

The dedication began inside the 14,000-square-foot gymnasium. Attendees gathered on the two full-size courts, which will be used for practices and games. The space holds 1,300 spectators. The additional space includes a Grand Concourse, which houses a ticket booth, restrooms, and a concession stand for both stadium and gym events. Four locker rooms, a cutting-edge sports medicine room and the Athletic Department offices are now located in this space.

President Dave Stec '86 was beaming with pride throughout the event. "As we dedicate this Athletic Center, my prayer is simple May every student who walks through these doors discover the gifts that God has placed within them. May every coach teach more than a sport. May every team become a family. May victories be celebrated with humility...and defeat accepted with grace, character, strength and perseverance...and faith deepened through community."

The building is named after alumnus Dave Zavagno '72, his wife Denise and their family. They were visionary donors, along with 300 additional supporters of Padua's \$16 million *Achieving Excellence* Capital Campaign.

The momentum for Padua's future continues. Throughout the next six months, Padua's former gym will be renovated into a Performing Arts Center for both vocal and instrumental instruction, performances and theatrical productions. The facility will house new tiered 300-seat auditorium, vocal and band rooms, individual practice rooms, a scene shop, costume design room, and more.

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School Background: Padua Franciscan High School is located at 6740 State Road in Parma, Ohio. Padua is a Catholic, college-prep, co-educational school with 840 students. Padua was founded by Franciscans in 1961 and bases its educational philosophy on the life and spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi. The school's mission is to develop the unique talents of each student, while giving them the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond.