



ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
SCHOOL

KNIGHT LIFE



GSL
GLOBAL SALESIAN
LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

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mission statement

We are a Catholic, college preparatory school community for young men. We promote the academic, spiritual, social and physical development of our students. We do this in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, who challenges us to "Be who we are and be that well."

Knight Life Magazine is published two times yearly for alumni, families, and friends of St. Francis de Sales. Direct all comments or inquiries to jschlachter@sfsknights.org.

We would love to hear from alumni with any news you would like to share in our Class Notes. Please send information to alumni@sfsknights.org.

Follow St. Francis de Sales on Facebook & Twitter
Website: www.sfsknights.org

Errors and Omissions

While we take great measures to ensure the accuracy of the donor information listed in the Annual Report, errors do occur. Please accept our sincere apologies.

- Mr. & Mrs. Paul C. Betz should have been included as members in the 20 Years or More of Annual Giving Enduring Beneficence category.
- The balance of the Fr. James Sottek Scholarship Fund was incorrectly reported. The correct balance as of 6/30/2019 was \$43,474.11.

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letter from the president



Fr. Geoff Rose, O.S.F.S.
2323 West Bancroft St.
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Dear Friends of St. Francis de Sales,

Another school year is completed and St. Francis continues to provide the Knights with life-changing opportunities and experiences that begin in the classroom, but go beyond that, too. The Spring/Summer issue of Knight Life presents this picture for you, but allow me to highlight one area that is particularly powerful to the ways in which St. Francis de Sales impacts the larger community. The C... is more than a mere renovation of how we deliver education. Our model puts SFS at the forefront of the classroom and the classroom need dictates. In all areas of action (Often communication). Many students use this?!?). The addition of these elements. The tool to remove these elements. The are students able to perform more efficiently/efficiently. Performance Labor... instruction to come alive. Summer always... its transformation we will... Knights return in August. Such transformation... because so many make the mission and vision... priority. As warmer months are ahead (at least we hope they are), be assured of our warm regards and prayers for all in the St. Francis de Sales family.

The goal of education at St. Francis is not knowledge, it is action. Quite simply, it is not how much you know but what you do with that knowledge that really matters. You don't need a long letter from me to explain this, just turn the pages of this Knight Life to see how those in the St. Francis community live it!
-Frose, OSFS

Sincerely in St. Francis de Sales,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. N. Rose, OSFS".

Rev. Geoffrey N. Rose, O.S.F.S.

the goal of education at st. francis is ACTION

It is not how much you know that matters, it is what you do with that knowledge that really matters. In other words, knowing is not enough. We need to make a change, first in ourselves, then in the world, based on that knowledge.

We know that people in many parts of the world are suffering from poverty, disease, mental illness, and illiteracy. We see it every day in the newspaper, on television, on social media and, depending on where we live, we may even see evidence of it in our own communities. That is knowledge.

But if we fail to act based on our knowledge, we are perpetuating the problem. Read ahead to see what this means to our Knights and how they have chosen to take action.

caleb walker '20

St. Francis has prepared me to think of others as well as myself in everyday situations. During my sophomore and junior years, I was able to participate in a mission trip to Jamaica. The people



from the village we visited live in complete poverty; they often do not know where their next meal is coming from. Even though they have so little, they are still happy. Seeing this changed me and how I look at life. In Jamaica, I learned about the importance of community and family, and it reminded me that this is what brings true happiness.

Through our work building houses in Jamaica, we were able to provide stability and a home to some of the villagers. However, the ability to care for others helped me realize that building a relationship is just as important as building houses.

parker victorian '20

Since my junior year, I have been a part of the St. Francis Teen PEP (Peers Educating Peers) team. In my work with Teen PEP, I have been formally trained on issues like bullying, proper use of social media, and teen dating violence. As a team, we have gained knowledge about the consequences of bullying, sexting, and disrespect, but we cannot stop with knowledge. Instead, our team takes action by educating our peers and changing social culture through skits, pre-



sentations, and conversations. Our presentations initiate discussions and help change the way we look at cultural norms. Change does not occur simply from knowledge, it occurs when we take action.

jalen ballard '20

The purpose of education is not merely to gain knowledge and discover talents; rather, it aims to apply such blessings to serve



others and, ultimately, God. I have personally found myself to be uniquely talented and interested in math, science, and computer science. I hope to harness those talents for the good of others.

succeeding together

By: Karen L. Zickes

At St. Francis, it's not enough to "Be who you are, and be that well." There is a mindset and culture throughout the school and overflowing beyond the walls that fosters the idea that it's also about helping others around you to be the best version of themselves. It's simply not enough to succeed on your own unless you can take others with you on the journey.

Academic Dean, Deb Rathbun, recalls a student who was struggling to pass a section of the Ohio graduation test. Through his perseverance and the help and dedication shown to him by his teachers, faculty, and his coach, Mr. Gerken, this student eventually passed the test. Ms. Rathbun recalls that momentous day and how ecstatic they were along with the tears that were shared. 'That means I can graduate from St. Francis and I will have a diploma,' remarked the young Knight. Beaming, he went on to further say, 'This means I can get out of my situation.' Puzzled by his remark, Ms. Rathbun asked him to explain.

According to Ms. Rathbun, he felt assured that having the St. Francis diploma meant other doors could be opened for him. It wasn't just about him making it on his own. Both of his parents work many hours in order for him to attend SFS and it is a struggle to make ends meet at home. It is his hope that he can continue to move forward [starting by earning his St. Francis diploma] and in doing so, help his family.

Sometime after Ms. Rathbun observed this same student back in the Student Achievement Center (SAC). "The one thing I noticed with him were the kind words he said to the other students who were struggling. This is a good place," he told them. "They will help you reach your goals and take you further. Don't bailout." Like many students, he calls St. Francis his safe place. He knows how fortunate he is that SFS was made possible for him and he greatly appreciates what the alumni have done financially to help make this diploma a reality.

Something greater than ourselves

The practice of taking others with you is seen by students throughout the school. Maybe it's the student who tutored an incoming Knight twice a week for ten weeks during his summer vacation to prepare him for math class. Ms. Rathbun also recalls the National Honors Society student who gave 25 hours of tutoring beyond the required 15 to help fellow classmates. It wasn't enough for that student to be in the NHS and easily succeeding. He was determined to help his fellow Knights who were struggling so they, too, could succeed.

Graduates take the Salesian values with them well after leaving St. Francis and continue bringing others with them. One particular graduate is involved in campus ministry where he works with underprivileged kids and helps them not only learn about God but also stay on track to succeed in school and in life. Building authentic relationships through servant

leadership and doing so with humble confidence isn't just what a few students and graduates from St. Francis are doing; it's the norm for most. This

idea of leadership defined by how you treat others and bringing others along with you so they too can achieve their goals is instilled in the students and

carried with them when they move beyond the walls of St. Francis.



Knights use the Student Achievement Center for group work, studying, to give help and to get help.

discovering your passions

ALUM ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TRY MANY THINGS

By: Karen L. Zickes

Recently, Dave Tighe '04 addressed the current and new members of the St. Francis National Honor Society. His message was simple. "...I would encourage you all to develop your interests and to do more than what's asked of you," Tighe told his fellow Knights. When he looks back at his time at St. Francis he can honestly say, "I can't think of an opportunity that I turned down."

Having varied interests is a good thing

For Tighe, his interests were wide-ranging and by trying many different classes while at St. Francis he was able to grow his love for learning and slowly realized what he "loved", and what he "liked." He took AP classes in many subjects and when he arrived freshman year at The University of Notre Dame, he had 33 credit hours to his name. But in the mix of his classes at St. Francis he took advantage of the variety of classes available to him including Ancient Greek which at the time was taught two mornings a week before school started.

He remembers Leo Schulte teaching European history. "He [Leo Schulte] essentially fostered a love of learning," said Tighe. Though he did well in biology and chemistry he realized he had little interest in becoming a doctor. You can be good at something but not necessarily like it,

he learned. He would have loved to have taken additional languages but sometimes there just weren't enough hours in the day.

Passions are developed

Dave continued feeding his passion for history while at St. Francis and when he got to college he was enthralled with Medieval Studies. He actually graduated with a double major and a minor. His majors were Medieval Studies and Math with a minor in Latin. Most people would probably look at that and wonder what was he thinking?

Well, he was thinking that he loved learning what interested him and there was no reason why he couldn't graduate and become an actuary as well as learn as much as he could in his Medieval Studies. When he went to interview for actuary jobs, he was rarely asked questions regarding math. "Everyone saw my resume and wanted to talk about my other interests," Tighe said. When he encourages others to try a wide array of things it's because he doesn't feel passions are things you are born with. Rather, they are developed over time, and you don't know until you try. He acknowledged that St. Francis does an incredible job at offering opportunities in a wide breadth of topics; giving students the opportunity to try many things.

Solid foundation

Though Dave Tighe embraced the wide variety of classes available to him during his four years and they helped lead the way to discover his true passions as he moved forward in his academic career, it was the foundation that was laid at SFS that made an even greater impact. Not only was it the foundation of understanding hard work, but it was his faith formation. Tighe specifically speaks of his seminar course in Theology with Fr. Ron Olszewski. "It was the hardest and most interesting Theology course ever," he said while acknowledging that by the time he graduated from Notre Dame he had taken many more Theology classes.

What he learned in Fr. Olszewski's course made the most impact in his faith. He said his faith has been tested many times, and that he always used those skills he learned in that class. When Dave graduated SFS, he not only took with him the wealth of information he learned in his classes from an array of subjects, as well as a foundation of understanding hard work, but he left with formation in his faith that has had a lasting impact on how he chooses to live his life.



A large, thick red circular arc frames the entire page, starting from the top left and curving around to the bottom right.

RESPONDING WITH COURAGE
TO OUR GREATEST CHALLENGES:

3RD ANNUAL GSLS

GSLS

**GLOBAL SALESIAN
LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM**

10

knight life

Responding with Courage to our Greatest Challenges was our overarching theme for our 3rd Annual Global Salesian Leadership Symposium (GSLS) which was built on the great impact of the first two, inspired by the Gospel and St. Francis de Sales, rooted in a culture of humble confidence, authentic relationships, and servant leadership. The GSLS is a program steeped in Salesian values for future leaders of self and others. The GSLS provides access & proximity to world-class thought leaders in diverse areas of innovation & industry. Our vision is to ensure that Salesian leadership development programs and initiatives are embraced across our network schools and beyond, to maximize our impact, and to inspire future leaders. Through the GSLS, we seek to present speakers and programming that will inspire far beyond the single day of the event, developing tomorrow's leaders today!

“Do not be discouraged by your own imperfections, but Rise Up with fresh courage.”

-St. Francis de Sales



Jerome
Morgan

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
SCHOOL

Registration

JAMES STARK, SFS '04

News Anchor WZZM 13 in Grand Rapids, MI

“Leadership is uncomfortable. Become comfortable with being uncomfortable.”



CLINTON LONGENECKER

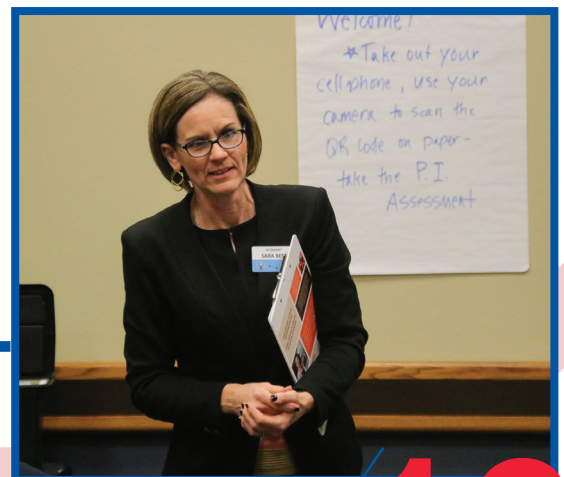
Distinguished Professor & Director of the Center for Leadership & Organizational Excellence at the University of Toledo

“Hang out with people who elevate.”

SARA BEST

Champion of People & Performance, In2Great

“People will behave in a way that makes perfect sense to them.”







JIM MERTES

Positive Management Leadership

“Wisdom is
knowing the right
path to take...
integrity is taking it.”



NANCY FRIEDMAN

Telephone Doctor

“Don’t be
too busy to
be nice.”



KEVAN TONEY SFS '04

Public Information Officer, Toledo Police Department

“You don’t have to be a
police officer or a member
of the armed services to
serve. Think of all the hats
you wear (sons,
daughters, students). How
can you serve in those
roles?”







ANNA TONEY

Executive Director of Leadership Toledo

"It is crucial for us to help students on their leadership journey so that they understand that their voice matters at any age and they feel empowered to step up and make a difference."



DANIELLE CISTERINO-HAJDU

Project Director for Teen PEP
(Peers Educating Peers), ProMedica

"There is always someone looking up to you. Think of simple actions and how they affect others. Something may seem small at the time, but it can have a ripple effect."



CALEB WHITE

Founder Caleb White Project

"You are always representing your group, whether it's your school, your business or your board. Make sure what you do brings honor to the organization."





Benjamin
Boerst

Andrew



GOALS
Parker
Scheuerm

FR. JEREMY MILLER

Pastor Corpus Christi University Parish, Toledo, Oh

"Oftentimes you have to deny yourself many pleasures to achieve long term happiness."



ANTHONY BRANNAN

Producer unPLANNED

"Listen to your own voice ... allow your voice to be louder than the other voices around you."



DAVE SCHLAUDECKER SFS '65

Past Executive Director, Leadership Toledo

"The energy of our current young leaders is infectious and will only lead to a better world."





MATT BELL SFS '05

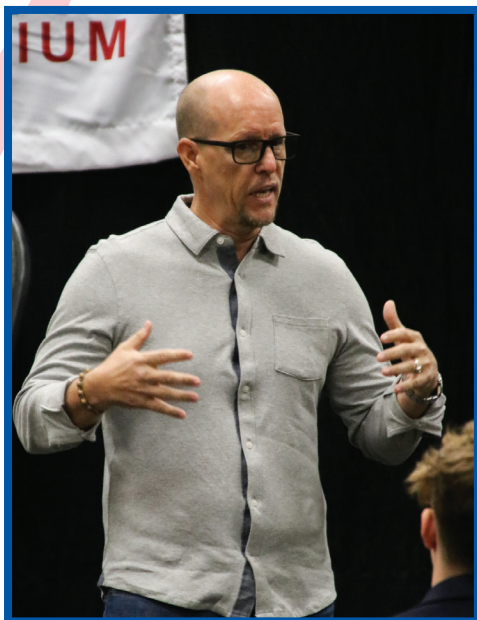
President, Co-Founder & CEO of Team Recovery &
Midwest Recovery Center

“Grow through
what you go
through.”

PAT MCNAMARA SFS '84

President of Archbold Furniture Company

“In all of my travels, I
haven't used anything
I learned in a textbook.
Salesian Spirituality,
however, is something
everyone can
understand.”



JIM WAHLBERG

Executive Director of the Mark Wahlberg
Youth Foundation

“There is
something about
each and every one
of us that we can
use to serve others
and have an
impact.”

salesian reflections:

TEDDY WALKER



G

ood morning my name is Teddy Walker and I am the senior class president. I wanted to speak a bit about this year's campus ministry theme. It comes from a quote from St. Francis

de Sales which goes like this:

"Do not be discouraged by your own imperfections but RISE UP with fresh courage."

We are going to shorten it just a bit and say "RISE UP".

I thought a lot about what that means to me, and how I will live this out this year.

I see the first part of the quote as guidance. I think that St. Francis is telling us to give ourselves a break (lots of ways to look at it, including anxiety, good): I know that many of us have crazy schedules with sports, clubs, jobs, school, and work. We want to do well at everything. We want to be successful, and honor the sacrifices our families make for us to be here at St. Francis. It is ok to not be perfect at everything you do. I am certain that I fail daily in some way.

Everyone always talks about how you learn from failure. But you can't learn from it if you don't reflect on it. One of the hardest elements of our Salesian Leadership Initiative is the FAILURE REFLECTION component. You might not even be aware that we have that, but I challenge each and every one of you to try it. Maybe by touching base with Mr. Cicco who is the director of SLI, or ask a teacher or coach, or one of our Oblates. It can be scary, it's always uncomfortable to look at our failures, but that is why I think St. Francis de Sales is encouraging us to do just that - RISE UP.

Now, I have issued a strong challenge to you, and it would be hypocritical of me to do that if I didn't lead by example. I want to share with you one of my failures. In my freshman year I found myself not treating a kid in my class the correct way everyone is supposed to be treated. As a result of my behavior, I was suspended from school. Another consequence of the suspension was that I had to miss my last football game of the year and what was going to be my first homecoming. I disappointed not only my family, teammates, coaches, and friends but I disappointed myself. And obviously, my behavior toward a brother Knight hurt him, and his family. I learned I needed to treat people better and stand up Rise Up! if I see others being mistreated.

Each one of us is a work in progress. I think that we can look to the theme as we live our daily lives.

I challenge you to have the courage to RISE UP and :

- Be a friend to your fellow Knights.
- Do all your homework.
- If you fail a test, study harder for the next one or have the courage to seek help.
- If you fall short in a game, match, or band competition find the courage to improve by learning from your mistakes.
- Have the courage to show people your faith.
- If you're nervous about throwing yourself into the mix, find the courage to get involved.

We are going to have a great year, Knights, as we all RISE UP with courage.

salesian reflections:

MIKYA HUDSON

My name is Mikyah Hudson. I am a senior at St. Francis de Sales School and it is my great honor to give this Salesian Reflection.

Late last year something occurred to me, that might not seem very impressive at first, but it was a real moment of joy for me. The thought was: I'm going to graduate!

I never thought I would say those words. I never thought I would be where I am today. And I certainly never thought I would be standing up

here giving a speech like this.

Life has not come easy for my family. For as long as I can remember, it was just my Mom, my Auntie and my two little brothers. Maybe knowing you have a home and enough to eat is a given for many people, but I have many memories in my life of wondering where we were going to live, or what we were going to eat. These kinds of uncertainties have a way of shaping how you view your future, or even if you bother to think about the

future. Throughout my schooling, I struggled academically. It was hard for me to focus on school due to all the problems that I was going through in my personal life. Honestly, I never thought that I would graduate.

When I started high school at Waite, there was no thought for how it was going to help me, shape me, or lead to my future. It's just what you do. And for me, it was football that was going to be my ticket out.



I didn't come to St. Francis until the 2nd semester of my 10th-grade year. It was my mom who wanted me to attend St. Francis because she wanted me to surround myself with role models that would make my life better. She wanted me to get a great education that would help me become a better man.

And that is what I have experienced here. You all have helped change me for the better. I've become a more positive person. I have surrounded myself with positive influences. I started to care about school more and I put more effort into my studies. I realized that I wanted to make my life better.

And St. Francis has given me something I didn't even know I needed. A community of faith. I've grown in my knowledge of Jesus. I've learned about our patron saint, Francis de Sales, and I try to live a gentle witness of my faith in Jesus, just as St. Francis asks us to do.

I come from a broken family, and while we had faith—we prayed, a LOT in our need—getting to Church on Sunday was difficult. I'm grateful for all the ways SFS brings Church into my life; daily prayer, our religion classes, all-school Mass, team Mass, and the presence of the Oblates who walk right beside us each and every day. Maybe you have a great church experience, but I thank you for being Church for me.

Now, as great as St Francis has been for me, when I first got here, I struggled...bad.

It was my first time being in a school that cared about education, not just passing me along. I had to really work and focus. That was new to me and I didn't step into the experience, I actually kind of stepped back from it. Maybe you had a similar start. Maybe you feel this way now.

What I felt, at first, was that I didn't

belong, that it wasn't where I was supposed to be. I'm a poor kid and I'm not that smart. I was really down on myself, a little depressed. We can all have those voices in our head that whisper to us, "You're not good enough." Or "Who are you kidding, you don't belong." But we all have to find the courage to ignore those voices and listen to the people God has put into our lives when they say, "You ARE good enough, you ARE worth it, and you DO belong." It's hard to do the right thing, especially when you're struggling to believe in your own worth. I'm so grateful for those who kept with me.

For a lot of life, I wasn't seeing positive role models, but my mom has always been a positive influence on me. I want to thank my Mom and Auntie who always stayed WITH me, and they stayed ON me. They are both here tonight. Before coming to St. Francis, I was certain that I wouldn't even finish high school. But here, so many people have given me support and pep talks when I was down. They always pushed me to be better and never gave up on me. I need to thank three people in particular:

Mrs. Achenbach, she helped me be disciplined, to get my work done. Ms. Rathbun, in addition to academic help, she could tell when confidence was wavering and she has always been there to support me. And Coach Chipka, who has been a great leader for me as a player sure, but just as much as a student, and a young man. They all believed in me, even when I doubted myself.

While I only have one more semester at St Francis, I look back on this past semester and see that I've learned some painful lessons. My season-ending injury is teaching me that life is more than football. I was putting off college decisions, to see where football might take me. Now I'm kicking college apps in high gear! (Pray for me!)

And as I look forward to my last semester, like Shamar mentioned in our last Salesian Reflection, I want to try new things, for example, the spring musical. I'm going to try out! I've never done anything like that before. My mom has always told me to be involved, try new things, it's never too late. So how about a football lineman in the musical??

As I can truly think about my future, I plan on attending college and majoring in business management. I'd like to open my own barbershop and be a part of the community, who helps others.

This Church is filled with my brother Knights and the faculty & staff, who make up our community. You have all helped me to go from a kid who only wanted to play football, to a young man who has come through adversity, and got a great education, and has been formed as a Christian gentleman, and can see a future. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, may we all be thankful for the St Francis community who helps us be our best.

Before I go I want to remind you of what Jesus said, "What you did for the least of your brothers and sisters, you do for me." Thank you, brothers, for doing it "for me," I hope I have been able to do it for you.

I know there are more young men just like me who are facing difficult challenges in life, who struggle with confidence, and who have trouble seeing a future. Ask yourself every day, what can I do to help brothers who are challenged, struggling, need confidence?

Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you!



READ MORNING, NOON & KNIGHT!

Take a minute to think about how often you read during the course of a day. You might read books, magazines, tweets, Facebook updates, billboards, directional signs or emails. What if you could not read? Your quality of life would be impacted and you would be limited in all aspects of life.

Reading skills are foundational to learning and are critical for a student's academic success. Despite the importance of strong literacy skills, many of our nation's students are unable to read at grade level.



Literacy affects access to and interest in all content areas. We know that literacy skills relate directly to employability, crime, socio-economic status and overall success. Without literacy, what kind of world are we creating for our children? What happens nationally, state wide and in our own community will directly impact all of us. As an educational community, we feel strongly that St. Francis can and more importantly, should help. It is not enough for our students to be successful; we must stand beside others and bring them along so they too can be successful.

It is out of this desire to "bring others along" that we have created partnerships in a literacy initiative. These partnerships include The Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (Diá Children's Day and Reading Buddies), as well as local elementary schools and Mom's House with reading activities and celebrating Read Across America.

WHAT FACTORS IMPACT LITERACY?

There are a variety of explanations about why so many children are at risk with literacy. Any one of these factors, or a combination of these factors, has a direct impact on a child's early literacy skills and later reading ability.*:

- **LEARNING DISABILITIES**
- **LIVING IN POVERTY**
(43% of Americans with the lowest literacy skills also live in poverty)
- **NOT READ TO AS CHILDREN**
- **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**
- **PREMATURE AS BABIES OR HAVE MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS**
(poor vision, hearing problems, emotional problems & attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD))

*According to a 2015 study (Bursuck and Damer)

FACTS ABOUT LITERACY

RECENTLY, RESULTS FROM THE NATION'S REPORT CARD WERE RELEASED, RAISING CONCERN NATIONWIDE ABOUT LITERACY.

% of 4th graders who are NOT proficient for their grade level in reading



% of 8th graders who are NOT proficient for their grade level in reading



Source: nationsreportcard.gov

Children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are 4 times more likely to leave school without a diploma.*

Every student who does not complete high school costs our society an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes and productivity.*

More than 1 million students drop out of high school every year in the US. This is equivalent to 7,000 students leaving school each day of a typical school year.*

*Source: Literacy Matters 2020

21%

of US adults read below the 5th grade level.**

85%

of juveniles who interact with the juvenile court system are considered functionally illiterate.**

70%

of inmates read below the 4th grade level.**

2/3

of students that are unable to read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or welfare and have a 78% chance of not catching up.**

**Source: BeginToRead™

HOW TO MAKE A LASTING CHANGE

Starting in kindergarten, if a student reads **20 minutes** a day at home, they will hear **1.8 million** words per year. They will have read for **851 hours** by 6th grade and on standardized tests, **they will likely score better than 90% of their peers.**



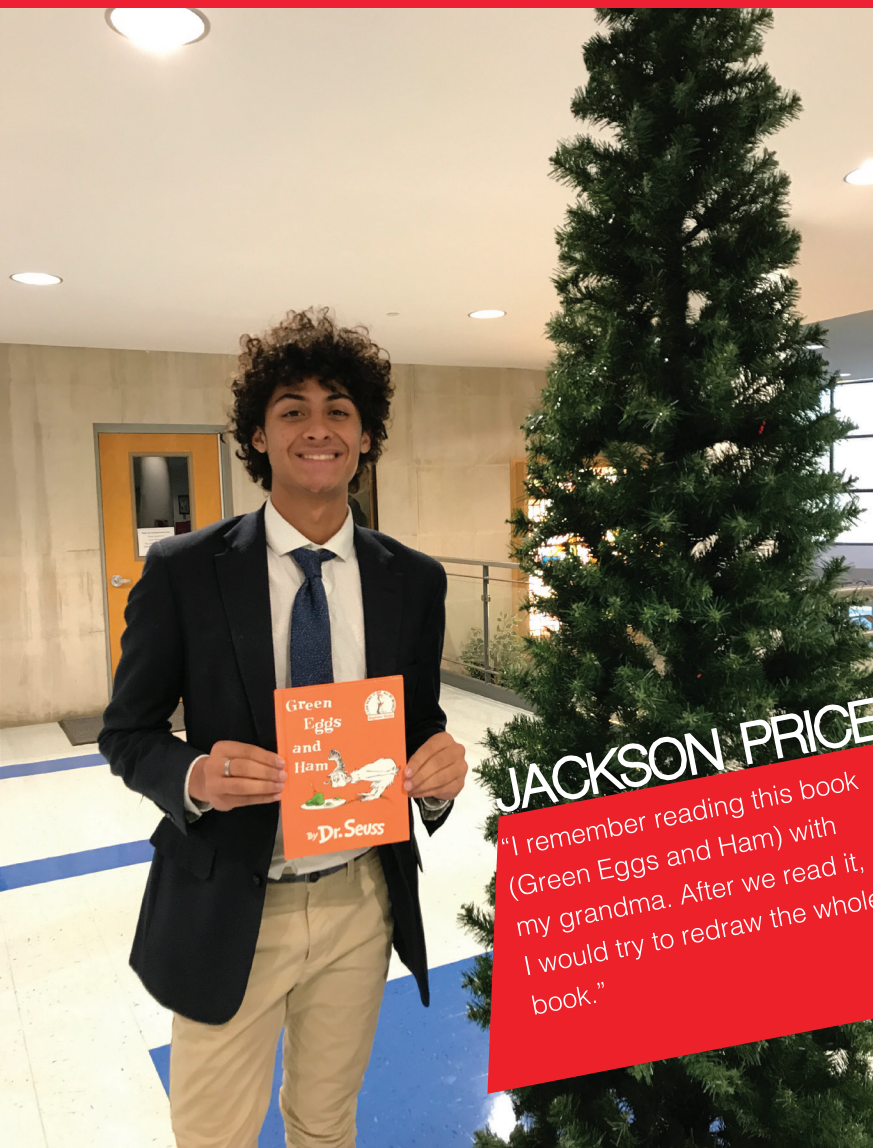
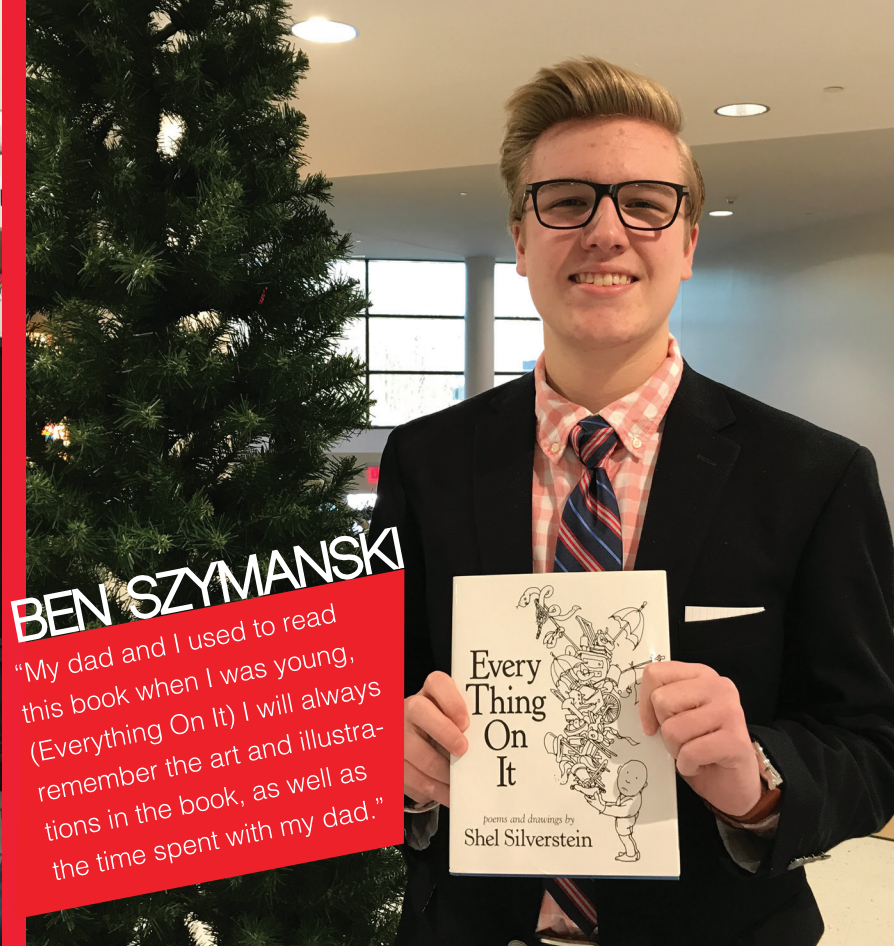
We encourage everyone from the St. Francis community to make literacy a goal in your own community. Check your local library for service opportunities with reading programs or simply read a book to someone. You will see more in the months ahead as we expand our efforts in the community to encourage literacy and a love of reading, one student at a time!

ADVENT GIVING TREE

gesu book drive

For the second year in a row, Cathy Trimble, Director of Student Life, coordinated an Advent Giving Tree. St. Francis students took a tag from the tree and purchased a new book that appropriately matched the age of the recipient. The purpose of this book drive was to celebrate Advent with our neighbors at Gesu, instill a spirit of giving in our Knights, and to foster a love of reading with Gesu students. This year, we delivered over 700 books to the students at Gesu!







READ
LITERACY
LITERATURE
LETTERS
VOCABULARY
PHONICS
KNIGHTS
FR NEWMAN
JAGIELSKI
FINN
BOOKS
LEARN
TEXT
RESEARCH
FLUENCY

PHONEMIC
ST FRANCIS
DR SUESS
LENKEY
ROSTASH
MAGAZINE
LIBRARY
PARAGRAPH
WORDS
COMPREHENSION
AWARENESS
FR ROSE
NOBLE
HOHL

E	Y	D	F	A	Z	C	W	P	Z	L	G	T	G	R	S	L	C	Z	A
J	T	F	T	S	W	H	A	S	S	I	C	N	A	R	F	T	S	V	X
P	N	T	A	P	N	A	J	H	U	T	K	S	K	M	L	M	L	V	R
S	R	E	T	T	E	L	X	G	U	E	S	B	W	A	Z	Y	K	O	N
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J	E	N	Z	G	O	S	I	V	A	Y	G	U	M	T	B	R	H	U	O
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L	R	G	W	E	R	X	V	F	E	D	C	C	R	L	H	O	H	I	H
E	D	Y	T	P	N	R	C	W	B	H	P	A	R	G	A	R	A	P	E
I	S	E	S	N	L	O	O	T	O	K	E	H	N	T	E	U	E	E	R
G	T	A	T	E	W	D	H	S	Z	S	Q	F	O	M	A	T	K	Y	P
A	K	U	N	D	R	J	X	P	E	D	F	I	G	N	O	B	L	E	M
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M	E	E	A	W	S	S	E	U	S	R	D	N	W	H	T	C	I	Q	C
Y	N	B	Z	T	R	G	M	X	R	O	S	T	A	S	H	M	S	V	S

Take a picture of the completed word search and email it to alumni@sfsknights.org to enter a drawing for a gift from the spirit store by March 6, 2020. The winner will be announced on Facebook by March 12, 2020 along with the answer key.

creating a legacy of PHILANTHROPY

Mrs. Geraldine Smith often says that one of the best days of her life every year is when she and her husband Mike come to the St. Francis Soccer Banquet to present the Joseph Smith Memorial Scholarship to one of our soccer players. Joseph Smith died in an automobile accident just days before he would have begun his senior year at St. Francis. It was August of 1994. Almost immediately Mike and Gerri established a scholarship fund in Joe's memory that would award a scholarship annually to a St. Francis soccer player. While Joe has been dead for twenty-five years, he lives on at St. Francis and in the lives of the twenty-five young Knights who have received the scholarship in his name.

Many people do good works during their lifetimes; Mike and Gerri have seen to it that Joseph Smith continues to do good work even after his life on this earth.

There are currently one hundred and forty-four named funds in the St. Francis de Sales High School Foundation; forty-five percent of them are memorial funds. Most are to provide scholarships and tuition assistance to current Knights, sometimes with specified criteria. Some memorial funds benefit students in the music program, Scouts, outstanding leaders, those giving exemplary service, minorities, and scholar-athletes. There are other memorial funds to benefit particular programs: the fund to promote the study of engineering, the fund to benefit the St. Francis musical, the fund to help the St. Francis baseball program, and the fund to support foreign travel. Through these endowed funds, the good that people did in their lifetimes on earth continues even as they now live in the place we call heaven.

Throughout the ages, people have oftentimes built monuments and buildings so that their memories would live on after they died. Great philanthropists establish endowments so that great works of charity may be carried on during their lifetimes and continue in their memories.

St. Francis de Sales School and the St. Francis de Sales High School Foundation are charitable causes existing solely for the purpose of helping mankind and we are dependent on philanthropic support to carry on our mission: the education of Christian Gentlemen. The word philanthropist comes from two Greek words, *philos* and *anthropos*; it means literally, a friend of mankind.

While fifty-five percent of the named funds in the St. Francis de Sales High School Foundation are established by donors still living, their good work will continue even after death. Their gifts are held as a corpus which is preserved, invested, and provides annual distributions from the investments. These annual distributions will continue, as the phrase is used, in perpetuity. How wonderful it is when a philanthropist supports charities in the service of humankind while living and also provides for a continuance of that after his or her death!

A named, endowed fund establishes the legacy of a philanthropist in life and even after his or her death. It is a gift that continues to give for generations to come.

To consider establishing such a legacy, a named, endowed fund, please contact the St. Francis de Sales School Development Office or Fr. Ronald Olszewski, OSFS, Chairman of the Foundation at rolszewski@sfsknights.org or 419-214-5439.



all school read:

TATTOOS ON THE HEART

Last year, a group of faculty members gathered to discuss how they could help to emphasize the arts and literature in the school. Chris Dyer '08 who teaches AP Human Geography and World Geography suggested reading the book *Tattoos on the Heart*, by Gregory Boyle. The discussion within the group prompted action. The group was so moved by the message of the book, they decided to implement an all-school read for the 2019-2020 school year. Students spanning grades 7-12, along with faculty and staff, were asked to read the book over the summer. Plans were made for back to school discussions on the book across all curriculums.

Fr. Gregory Boyle wrote *Tattoos on the Heart*, a book about his experience running Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, the gang capital of the world. In *Tattoos on the Heart*, he details his experience working in the ghetto with a series of parables inspired by faith. This book had an impact on many of us in the school and the discussions were deep. Faculty and administration felt the need to continue these discussions, so Boyle was invited to spend the day at school. An entire day was designed to allow students to further discuss and experience the lessons learned from Boyle's stories and allow our young Knights to reflect on how we look at and treat others. Ultimately, the messages in *Tattoos on the Heart* were reinforced when students participated in Mass, Salesian

Leadership modules, and whole school discussions on the same day that Boyle visited. (photos of the day)

Jeniene Hohl was one of the faculty members who was integral in implementing the all-school read. From an academic standpoint, Mrs. Hohl hoped the students would be able to relate the text to their own lives. She was not disappointed with the discussion that ensued. One of her favorite conversations that emerged was about the homie, Willy. Boyle asked Willy how he thought God saw him. "Willy doesn't answer at first. So I turn and watch as he rests his head on the recliner, staring at the ceiling of my car. A tear falls down his cheek. Heart full, eyes overflowing, 'God... thinks...I'm...firme.' To the homies, firme means 'could not be one bit better.' Not only does God think we're firme, it is God's joy to have us marinate in that." Mrs. Hohl asked her students what they believed God thought of them. After hearing their answers, she was able to reinforce Boyle's message that "you are enough, God created you to be happy, and God loves you."

This book impacted not only the students but the teacher as well. Mrs. Hohl says she looks at her students differently now. A quote from the book that profoundly touched her, especially as she looks at some of the struggles her students endure, was from page 24, "Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it."





Lynne Rostash, English teacher, thought that teaching a book like *Tattoos on the Heart* helped her to approach a class discussion with topics that were grounded in raw reality. Her students definitely had a positive response to those discussions. Because the students knew that these were real men and not “characters”; and because their lives and their struggles were real and not invented by an author, they were more open to reading the book and were more vocal in class discussions.

In one of the last chapters, we learn about the sad destiny of Scrappy, a Homie introduced at the beginning of the book. After a discussion in one of her classes, there was a silent stillness in the room when the boys learned that Scrappy was killed. Ms. Rostash noticed the unusual response and wondered if it was because they knew this was a young man who was trying to change his life. It was a moment that a teacher hopes for - the students had a reaction to the text. But at that moment they were reacting to real-life - not a book.

Not only was the real-life aspect of the book valuable, but the conversation about compassion, success, and second-chances was a powerful way to begin our school year. After all, those are essential components we face every day. Ms. Rostash hopes that by carrying those lessons in their hearts, the students and teachers will create a more accepting and compassionate environment at SFS. Rostash believes that what we teach students means very little unless they can apply it in their own lives. From this book, our students learned about the difficult road to success and the value of compassion and friendship. Most of all, our students learned about Father Gregory Boyle, a man whose life purpose was driven by his faith. What could be more important than teaching our students to take care of one another and to be faithful to the Gospel?



donor upholds TRADITIONS at st. francis de sales

In a school like St. Francis, who are the guardians of the traditions held most sacred? Seniors are often responsible for ensuring that underclassmen respect various time treasured rights of passage such as the tradition of the Senior Stairs. Coats and ties have been worn since 1955 as required by the

dress code adopted by the Oblates. Long-time teachers with rich institutional history unite generations of students on the importance of rituals and traditions. Donors, too, have the ability to uphold the traditions that carry the school forward and help students on their journey through the most formative years of their life and beyond. That is



exactly what has inspired Patty Degnan, widow of Terry Degnan '69, with her support of two different initiatives that will keep SFS traditions incredibly relevant well into the future.

Keeping the tradition of brotherhood, friendships, and academic excellence forever strong are at the heart of how Patty's philanthropy will continue to make a difference in the life of every student at St. Francis. Her most recent support has been directed towards the Center for Advanced Scientific Exploration (CASE). Patty appreciates the idea of how forward-looking and innovative CASE is. By engaging alumni in the learning process St. Francis continues to offer the tradition of academic excellence, including a new focus on deeper engagement in the learning process with alumni serving as adjunct professors and research mentors. Directing her philanthropic support to CASE also allows Patty to look into the future and encourage students to pursue careers similar to those alumni whom she has respected for many years. "To give the young men early exposure to highly successful alumni who are also respected gentlemen in the community is a great way to uphold the tradition of excellence at St. Francis. Your graduates are working to improve the quality of life for so many people today and CASE just happens to fulfill the ambitions and possibilities to serve the common good," Patty states.

While CASE may have been her most recent area for support, she actually has been connected to SFS for many years. Patty attended Start High School but began dating Terry and hanging around his large circle of friends who were also Knights. The Class of 1969 (see picture) recently celebrated their 50th Reunion and Patty, of course, attended. Patty adds, "St. Francis has been such a big part

of my life and I have remained close with many of Terry's friends over the years."

When Terry passed in 2004, Cormac DeLaney '67 and a group of his closest friends established a scholarship fund in Terry's memory. If you think of the expanded impact of this scholarship over time, it really has touched many lives. While the student is the direct beneficiary, the scholarship ultimately helps the parents and extended family members. Parents burst with pride knowing their son is the recipient of this scholarship. The scholarship awarded is not necessarily tied to need, but rather the student selected best exemplifies the spirit of Terry Degnan. Terry loved St. Francis. Today his spirit is alive through this fund. "Cormac and the gang saw something that I did not know was possible. It has been such a comfort knowing it keeps the memory of Terry alive and hearing others talk about him only recalls loving memories," said Patty.

Both CASE and the scholarship efforts have inspired Patty's generosity. Her reasons to give were based upon completely different philanthropic objectives, but regardless of the motivation, her investments continue to change lives and provide countless opportunities for our students. The SFS Advancement Office seeks to work with donors to understand your interests, desires, and needs in alignment with the priorities of the school. Philanthropic partnerships are necessary to keep moving the school forward and immersing more young men into this incredible experience that goes well beyond the four (or six) years. It lasts a lifetime! Call the Advancement Office at 419-214-5442.



This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the St. Francis de Sales High School musical. The first show was *Guys and Dolls* in 1970. We are celebrating this milestone with a Gala Celebration at Lourdes University on April 18th, 2020, before the Saturday night performance of the 2020 production, *Catch Me If You Can*. Look for information on Gala tickets in the coming weeks. We look forward to celebrating the history of the St. Francis musical with you!

Before the lights dim and the curtain rises on *Catch Me If You Can* in April, it is a St. Francis tradition to recognize

the musical alumni at the shows by asking them to stand up. Take a moment, when that happens, to look around the room and take in one of the things that makes the St. Francis musical so great. You will see 50 years of tradition and community, a torch that has been passed on, year after year, to new generations. Every year, the number of people who stand grows, becoming a part of a tradition that stretches over the course of half a century of St. Francis musicals.

IN THE BEGINNING...

After 50 years of productions, it is taken for granted that the curtain will rise each spring. But in 1970, when the musical first began, there was no such guarantee of success. That year, the Beatles disbanded, Apollo 13 contacted Earth from orbit with "Houston, we have a problem," and the Vietnam War was only half over. It was a tough time. It was the time of the Vietnam War, people were being drafted, brothers and sisters, people we knew. You would sit by the radio and wait to hear which numbers were drawn. It was typical to listen to live TV and radio broadcasts of



St. Francis de Sales
High School presents

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S

OKLAHOMA!

April 21—22—23—24
Start High School Auditor

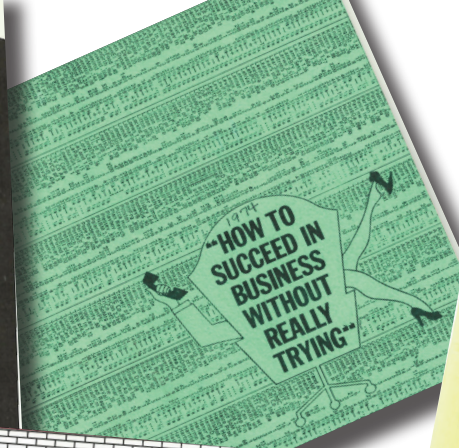
Music by
Richard Rodgers

Book and lyrics
Oscar Hammerste

Based on Lynn Riggs
"Green Grow The L

Produced by special arrangement with
WILLIAMSON MUSIC, INC.
810 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019

All the typesetting in this program was done by the
students of St. Francis on a Comp/Set® phototype-
setting system bought by the school with state funds.



BACK: Greg Frettl, Tom Jennerwein, Drew Fisher,
Mary McGowan, Dave Keven, Mary Wasserman,
Mary McGowan, Greg Patterson. FRONT: Frank Groll,
Pat Koenig, Greg Patterson, Steve Cain, Mary Ann Paballa,
Pete Gansel, Pat McVicker, Maria Kruon, Sarah McGowan,
Marie Chelish, Maria Kruon, Sarah McGowan.

In order
appear

Krupke
Schunk
Riff
Arab
Action
Bernardo
Chino
Anybody
Baby John
Snowboy
Of
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A
Glad E

the U.S. Selective Service System drawing lottery numbers to determine who would and would not be drafted. Things were a bit brighter on Bancroft Street. The wrestling team was primed to win the state championship, the Irish Knight had been taken from Central

Mr. Gene Antoszewski was tapped by then-president Fr. Robert Healy, OSFS, to start a musical program. Today, many students will take dance lessons, singing lessons, or perform in community theater. In 1970, "we did not have one ounce of experience," notes Barb Murtagh Blanchard (SUA '70). "Nobody had any experience and nobody knew what to expect. We were novices at the whole thing. It was uncharted water." Sam Botek (SFS '71) recalls that first night of rehearsal. "We started rehearsals in the gym, and Fr. Healy came in the first night of rehearsal and made a little speech. He told us all that this was possibly going to become a tradition, that he hoped that we made it a success and that it would be something to become a St. Francis tradition in the years to come. And we were on the ground floor. We took it to heart."

Together, "Mr. A", his wife and professional dance instructor, Conni Antoszewski, and the music director Mr. Zapatal, or "Mr. Zap", endeavored to do something brand new at St.

Catholic, and a St. Francis student had three Catholic girls' schools to find a date to the dance. The Knights had done a number of musicals, but St. Francis did not have a musical. However, they did have an English and Speech teacher with a background in song and dance.

Francis. Their premiere production, *Guys and Dolls*, was perfect for an all-guys' high school. They took young men from the football team and sought out young women from the Catholic all-girls' schools. Until that point, Botek was a football player who had sung in his church choir. Barb Murtagh didn't even know he could sing. She believes she was recruited because "I was a cheerleader and I had personality. It wasn't until later that I found out that I could sing." The production staff did their best, bringing enthusiasm and passion for the performance, but the cast was untrained and untested. Reportedly, most of the leads had understudies because so few people knew how to sing and were at risk of hurting their voices.

Right up until the opening night of that first production back in 1970, there was still a big question hanging over the heads of the students. "We had no idea if it was going to be any good," shares Barb Blanchard Murtagh. "There was a fear of the unknown." But from the moment the curtain opened on the 1970 production of *Guys and Dolls*, the students and the audience knew that they had something special. When Botek and company sang "Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat" in the second act, the audience leaped to their feet for a standing ovation. To the incredulity of

cast, crew, and staff, they proceeded to do three encores of that song. Botek recalls it vividly. "That was unbelievable, it just ripped through me like lightning. It was just amazing."

That first musical was more than just a show - it was a beginning.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56



ST. FRANCIS DE SALES SCHOOL PRESENTS...

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

THE MUSICAL
BASED ON THE DREAMWORKS MOTION PICTURE

APRIL 16 - 18 AT 7:30
APRIL 19 AT 2:00

AT THE FRANCISCAN CENTER OF LOURDES UNIVERSITY
MUSIC BY - MARC SHAIMAN
LYRICS BY - SCOTT WITTMAN AND MARC SHAIMAN

A black silhouette of a person in a running pose, positioned on the right side of the poster, overlapping the text.



CLASS NOTES

A group of **Cross Country alumni, spanning 45 years**, participated in an alumni run at Ottawa Park this past summer.



Many alumni in the Toledo area joined Knight students on the first day of classes for the Alumni First Day Welcome!



A range of Knights spanning 60 years gathered at Croswell Opera House in Adrian to watch Will DuPuis and Ward Ensign (not pictured) perform in Music Man. Left to Right **Fr. Alan Zobler '97, Will DuPuis '18, Colin Flanagan '18, Josh Knepp '18** and **Mike Wilde '58**



Richard Walinski '61, a lawyer who practices in the areas of contract, corporate and commercial litigation, was named by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine to a full nine-year term on The University of Toledo Board of Trustees. He replaces Sharon Speyer, who concluded her term in June.



A number of guys from the **Class of 1962** have been meeting every month at Rick's Diner on Monroe.



Len Hudzinski '64 was a wonderful host to Fr. "O" and Joe Sweeney on their annual trip to beautiful San Diego. Thanks, Len!



Members of the **Barrows** family attended the Fr. Healy Golf Outing this past summer. Left to Right **Matt '92, Matthew '18, Bernie '65, Gabe '18, Beau '89, Thomas '20**



Dr. Steve Fox '70 on a medical mission trip to Guatemala helping people and representing SFS.

Michael Kenney '76 and **Joe Sweeney '83** visit with Tom Monaghan during a reception at Ave Maria University.



David Kujawa '76 earned a Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania in May 2019. He is a faculty member of the University of Toledo Doctor of Physical Therapy program and serves as the Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs in the College of Health and Human Services.

Vince DiPofi '78 will be named CEO of SSOE starting in 2020. Congrats, Vince!

Frank Graff '78 is the science producer/ reporter for UNC-TV, the PBS Station in North Carolina. He has been with the station for seven years. He has won three Emmy awards and has been recognized by the Associated Press and the Society of Professional Journalists.



Rick Morsches '79, CEO of TranSystems, was featured in CEO Magazine for his success and leadership within his company. (PIC 15)

The **1983 State Championship basketball team** gathered this summer for golf and a gathering at the Stubborn Brother restaurant. Pictured are **Pat Delaney '83**, **Coach Val Glinka '67**, **Kevin Casper '83**, **Matt Lackney '85**, **Mark Beauch '84**, **Todd Mitchell '84**, **Scott Bittinger '84**, **Shawn Reid '83**, **Mike Czerniakowski '84**, and **Tim Best '84**





Jay Updegraff '86, Ryan Buczkowski '86, Ryan Marshall '86, and Tom Wojciechowski '86 met in upstate New York for a mini-reunion hosted by Ryan Marshall. Golf, air show, and a watching of the 1984 State Championship Football Game were all events for the weekend! A great time was had by all and a tradition of brotherhood was very evident among these four!



Steve Christie '89 and his wife Lucia celebrated five years of marriage on July 26, 2019, in Virginia Beach by parasailing, kayaking, and relaxing on the beach. Steve also published his second Christian book, "Why Protestant Bibles Are Smaller" which is available on Amazon.com. Steve is a registered nurse and has earned a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree.

Scott Secrest '95 and William Delo '19 connect with Dr. John Horack and Dean David Williams from the OSU College of Engineering at an event at Imagination Station. Dr. Horack wants his students to be known, to be cared about, and to be challenged. SFS is committed to making these life connections for our students.



Billy Bingle '00 and his wife, Stacey, had a baby girl on July 26, 2019. Her name is Quinn Annabelle.

Stephen Bates '00, a Toledo Police Officer, received a 2019 20 Under 40 Leadership Recognition Award on Tuesday, October 29 at the 24th Annual 20 Under 40 ceremony. He was among the 200 nominated candidates. As the Field Training Officer, he trains and certifies new recruits in professional and functional jobs following Toledo Police Academy schooling. He also serves as a Crisis Intervention team member and is a member of the Chief of Police's Ignite Team.



Fr. "O" and Joe Sweeney visit with **David Edgell '01** in San Diego.

After 12 years in Chicago, **Jeff Kurt '01** moved to Louisville, KY in August of 2018 to be the Director of Business Development at Miranda Construction. Less than a year later he was promoted to Vice President of Marketing, Talent Acquisition, Safety and Risk Management, while also accepting work with several nonprofits.

John Smythe '01, President of Habitec Security, celebrated 47 years in business in 2019. Congratulations to a great Toledo company!

Phillip Sanford '01 is involved nationally in the fight against colon cancer. He started running in races for the cause and now heads the effort in Charlotte and annually goes to Washington DC to lobby for more funding. Great work, Phil!

Steve Fender '03 had a baby girl named Dorothy. They call her Dottie. Congrats, Steve!

Phil Hack '06 currently instructs middle school and high school students in Science and Math at a Rehabilitation Center in Boomer, NC.



John Treece '07 and his wife, Nicole, had a baby boy this summer. His name is Henry William Treece.

Will Crown '10, President and Chief Operator, formed 41K9 a one of a kind and truly a top-tier option for dog owners offering dog daycare and boarding services 365 days a year. In August 2018 Will partnered with Ron Deleeuw (owner/founder Pup's Paradise Dog Daycare Boarding in Sylvania and Perrysburg). Will has been renovating and beautifying a 15,000 square foot space on Monroe St in downtown Toledo and will be open and accepting dogs in February. Visit 41K9.com for more information.

The Danger Company 2-87 Infantry Battalion proudly transferred command to Cpt. **William Dillon '10** on the 29th of August. Congratulations, Bill and thank you for your service!



Miles Walker '11 graduated from SFS and has since been serving in the United States Air Force. His current assignment has him at Hickam AFB, Hawaii; working as CSS Personnel Support NCOIC for the next four years! He is married to his high school sweetheart, Reighvn. Miles would love to get in touch with any alumni in the area!





Joe Sweeney and Fr. "O" catch up with **Michael Irvine '14** in Santa Monica, CA.

Curtis Smith '14 is attending Xavier University in Cincinnati for his Master's in Sports Administration hoping to become an Athletic Director!

In September **Andy Schuster '19** was selected as the Atlantic 10 Conference Rookie of the Week for his contribution to the Dayton Flyers Cross Country Team!



EMBRACING THE CULTURE OF egolessness

“When I look back at my time at SFS, it is clear to me that a big part of the culture is what I refer to as ‘egolessness’. Things were done for better reasons well beyond gratifying one’s ego.” Those statements by SFS alum Mark Bevington ’77 still ring true throughout the halls of St. Francis de Sales. “I think this type of attitude leads naturally to wanting to work to improve the society in which you live and help the people within it,” he added.

The Salesian values of humble confidence, authentic relationships, and servant leadership have been the guideposts for Bevington throughout his life. As owner and CEO of the third-generation family business, NSS Enterprises, he credits the Oblates for always leading by example. Not only did they provide him with “information”, but more often with “formation.” “I saw the Oblates living the motto “Suaviter et Fortiter” every day. I think this had a deep and lasting impact on me and how I try to conduct myself. It was definitely a lesson for a lifetime,” said Bevington.

CLEANING FOR A REASON

Though running the family business, a leading manufacturer of cleaning equipment, could easily be all consuming, Bevington has found time to continue giving back to those around him. For years he has been a financial supporter of the charity Cleaning For A Reason, which was founded in 2006 by Debbie Sardone in Texas. Cleaning For A Reason

offers free housecleaning to women undergoing treatment for cancer. Since its inception, Cleaning For A Reason has cleaned for over 30,000 women; an estimated value of over \$10,000.

Cleaning For A Reason has now come under the umbrella of ISSA Charities. ISSA is the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association. The ISSA Charities also include ISSA Hygieia Network; which is a mentoring program for women in the cleaning industry, and ISSA Scholars; a program support-

ing youth with scholarship aid and internships. Mark Bevington is the current Board Chairman for ISSA Charities. Mark enjoys giving of his time on the Board. He credits the foundation that was laid during his time at St. Francis that helped him gain confidence in his abilities and to realize he could have a positive impact on his surroundings.



Mark recently had two sons graduate from St. Francis; Ethan '15 and Max '19. He is proud of the “good guys” they’ve become. Like their father, they too embraced the Salesian values and strong foundation they received while at St. Francis. As they make their way on their own journeys, they take with them the same values that will also help them to make a difference in the lives around them.

By: Karen L. Zickes

“1970 Dodge Challenger!”

-Bob Jurski '79

“My dad had a Ford I could have used, but friends got tired of having to use their Chevys to tow me”

-Steve Collins '75

“1968 Oldsmobile and a 1976 Oldsmobile Cutlass Brougham

-Bob Hellrung '77



“Buses then 1981 Cutlass Calais. Wish I still had it!”

- Steve Gray '92

“another one ride the bus”

-Tom Puszczewicz '76

“Whichever car stopped to pick me up hitchhiking to and from school for four straight years at SFS. Thanks mostly to Coach Jim Kubacki!”

- Terry Moore '69

“Bus, hitch-hike, walk, parents, friends, bike (still have the blue Schwinn continental in the barn).”

-Bruce Kowalski '78

Tarta for the first two years and then a '75 Impala with stereo speakers in the back seat!

-Paul Geha '79



“Stylin 78' Ford Crowne Vic. Class of '91 style”

-Tommy Meagher '91

1988 Toyota Corolla

- Zein Moussa '00

“Voted worst car senior year class of 08, drove my brother's Grand Am that was a hand me down. What a ride.”

- Kyle Zaborowski '08





Brought a slice of 1978 to the class of 1990. '78 Chevrolet LeBaron. Jealous much!?

— Kent Sackman '90



“Road TARTA for 2-3 years till I had my Toyota Tercel I believe. It was a beaut.”

—Kevin Tennant '90

Drove my dad's old '85 Buick Skylark (w/ a non-working dashboard)

— Rob Hay '98

What car did you drive in high school?

Answer our next question:
In keeping with our literacy initiative, we would like to ask you,
what is your all-time favorite book?

Email your answers to
alumni@sfsknights.org
by May 22, 2020.



Tarta bus until I got my license and then it was my dad's '84 Cutlass supreme!

—Adam Gomoll '00

service

RAY OF HOPE

On Wednesday, October 16, Nick Chryst, SFS '20 was presented with the Ray of Hope Award. Nick is being recognized as a youth leader for his volunteer work at Sylvania Area Family Services (SAFS). Over the summer, Chelsea Bray, Nick's supervisor at SAFS, nominated him for his hard work and dedication as a volunteer.

Nick started volunteering at SAFS because of the connection his sister made there as a volunteer. Nick has been working there for the past two summers and he loves the people he works with. Nick stated, "This experience has opened me up to members in my community and has caused me to look at how I treat people." Nick is a senior at St. Francis de Sales School and plans on attending the University of Toledo next year to major in business.



gently but firmly

It all started with such a simple conversation between Matt Taylor and his parents. This singular act of his parents desiring to send their son to St. Francis de Sales School to afford him greater opportunities in life has reaped great rewards. Matt Taylor, now nearly 38 years old, is all things expected of a St. Francis graduate. He is a leader in all aspects of his life, has touched the lives of countless individuals, and it all started at St. Francis.

Matt's older brother attended another school. But his parents, Joyce and Rufus, wanted more in terms of his overall development so they told him he was going to St. Francis rather than the high school in the district where he resided. There was a level of anxiousness. He knew no one entering freshman year at St. Francis. "I was not Catholic, but I always felt very welcomed into the SFS family which helped me make the transition, but it was definitely a learning curve."

Matt quickly embraced the social and physical pillars of the St. Francis mission playing football and track. He

would eventually become the captain of a very good St. Francis football team his senior year. He always felt that his learning in the classroom and on the football field were intertwined. He was now excelling in three pillars: academically, socially, and physically. It was his senior year, however, when he decided to convert to Catholicism after taking Fr. Olszewski's Senior Religion Seminar class. While he did not actually convert until a few years later, this class was a defining moment in his life. "It was the most impactful class I ever took in my academic career," said Matt. Things were going well for Matt, but going into the summer of his senior year tragedy struck. His father passed away suddenly. In an instant, there were numerous emotional and financial barriers in his life. No person or any community can ever replace the love and strength of a father's love, but the St. Francis community rallied around Matt and his family. "Coach Cromwell was the first person to reach out to me. I will never forget that," he recalled. Matt was awarded the Scott Davison Scholarship which is awarded to a student who has overcome great adversity in his life removing one immediate financial challenge.

Now with a family of his own, Matt has called upon his own upbringing during his formative teenage years to guide him in his personal and professional lives. Matt married his wife, Stephanie, a graduate of Notre Dame Academy. They have three children. He is a coach for his kids' teams often calling upon the lessons he learned at St. Francis to help him lead his life. Professionally, Matt has built a successful career in financial services. He is in management, developing professional sales talent with Mutual of Omaha Advisors. He has extended his impact on countless individuals and done so with great humility.

Matt also recognizes the importance of financially supporting the SFS Annual Fund, the second-largest source of funds next to tuition, to provide incredible experiences for young men. While it all started with one simple conversation with his parents, Matt Taylor's development as a leader has positively inspired everyone he encounters. Today, he desires to help provide that same experience through acts of generosity. He knows that *Suaviter et Fortiter* is a powerful way to live life and to model for others what he was exposed to at St. Francis. Gently but firmly is not just a motto.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Mr. A only stayed at St. Francis for four years, leaving after auditions in 1974 to answer a casting call for a little film called *The Blues Brothers*. He was cast as the comedic villain “Gruppenführer”, a member of the Illinois Nazi Party. Mr. A’s technical director, Robert Stucker, stepped in to take over the musical. Bob Stucker was joined by choreographer Craig Barrow, music director Sister Jeanne Marie Rowan, OSU, and an acting coach named Gloria Mouloupoulos. Years later, students who participated in the shows and professionals that worked with Bob Stucker recall his technical prowess. Judge Gene Zmuda (SFS ‘77) recalls how, in a production of *Oklahoma!*, Mr. Stucker literally had the cast build a barn, on stage, during a song. Each night, as the barn was completed, the audience would respond with a standing ovation. Mr. Stucker was known for his elaborate sets, but also his eye for detail. “Bob was such a technical stickler,” recalls Karen Niewiadomski, current choreographer of the musicals. “He was phenomenal that way, detail. His eye for detail was terrific.” In fact, when Lourdes College was building its Franciscan Center, they consulted with Mr. Stucker on the design of the theater, the same stage that the St. Francis musical has been performing on for decades.

Some members of the current team at St. Francis have been in place since the mid-80s. Mrs. Karen Niewiadomski was a dance teacher at D&D Dance Studios with Doug Beehler, and Carl Collier was a new teacher. While Doug has since retired, Karen and Mr. Collier have remained integral parts of the St. Francis musical over the past 30+ years. They have worked with multiple directors in that time - Gloria Mouloupoulos, Barbara Kondalski, Michael Kastner, and Kevin Hayes. Each director brought something different to the table, writing different chapters in the St. Francis musical story. Karen’s work ethic and high standards, with a perpetual motto of “One more time!” has always pushed the production to levels not often seen in a typical high school show. One student noted that they admire how Karen “gives everyone a chance, which is often a lengthier process but gives students more opportunities” while also

“taking into account those who work harder” as a litmus for success. While Mr. Collier has taken on various leadership roles in the school, he has consistently passed on a passion for music to young Knights and leads the live orchestra to provide the moving music each show requires. Greg Skibinski (SFS ‘92) has been Technical Director for the St. Francis musicals since he graduated, and his brother Geoff (SFS ‘94) often shares the load of creating technically impressive sets. Together, the Skibinskis lead the crew of students who learn and grow in their appreciation of building, painting, and ultimately creating a new world on stage.

EVOLUTION OVER THE YEARS

I spoke with Allison (SUA ‘20) and Duncan (SFS ‘22) Borland, siblings who performed together in *42nd Street*, to get a sense of what the musical was like today. Like so many before them, they were drawn to the musical by the environment created by the staff and students. “The environment is the draw,” they both confirmed. “The audience sees [the show] and they say ‘I want to be a part of that.’” One part of that environment is the importance of inclusion. “Such a big effort is made to include everybody,” notes Allison. Duncan has recognized a growing interest trying harder this year. While last year was mostly a social endeavor, he brings higher expectations for himself as a sophomore than he did as a freshman, with a desire to “take pride” in his performance. This is the result of hard work and sacrifice - Duncan had to give up track to do the musical - but believes it is worth it. While many things have changed, some have remained the same. Those high expectations - both for oneself and for the production as a whole - have been a consistent part of the musicals over the years.

LUNCH WITH GLORIA

As a part of writing this article, I sought out Mrs. Gloria Mouloupoulos, who started working with the musical in 1975 and shared the role of Co-Director with Mr. Bob Stucker in 1987 before taking over as Director. As I entered *Scrambler Marie*, I realized that I had never actually met “Mrs. M” before, despite hearing about her all through high school. Her last year was my 8th grade year, and so we never



worked together. But she recognized me from the table and waved me over. I asked her, "How did you know it was me?" And she said, "oh, you look like a Kenney." It was like I had discovered a long-lost member of my family, as she recalled visits to my grandparents' home and working with my uncles who had done the musicals in the '70s and '80s. Throughout my conversation with Gloria, I realized that there were many Toledo families that she would recognize and would recognize her, even claim her as a member. As if to drive home the point, as we sat there, we were approached by Jenn Huffstetler (NDA '94) and her mother, Mrs. Anna Huffstetler. Gloria recognized them, and began chatting like she had seen them last week, asking how Scott Huffstetler (SFS '97) was doing. She spoke in a loving manner of all her former musical students - "they became family."

FAMILY AND TRADITION

The theme of family and tradition is a common thread through the history of St. Francis de Sales High School - the bonds of brotherhood, the tradition of the gentleman Knight. One St. Francis Knight who is currently in the musicals and plays sports noted, "there's a bond in both. It's just a different kind of bond." Perhaps part of that difference comes from the presence of young women from

Notre Dame Academy, St. Ursula Academy, and, until it closed in 1988, McAuley High School. Brittanie Kuhr (NDA '09) knew something about that tradition, as St. Francis was the alma mater of her father; Jeff Kuhr ('70); her older brother; and now her nephews. "I knew what it meant to be a part of the St. Francis family, which is what made me want to be partake in this special tradition." Brittanie is excited to continue this legacy someday - her son, Emmett, is SFS class of 2038.

For some, the theme of Family hits much closer to home. Many siblings have done the musical because an older brother or sister spoke so highly of their experience, while others were dragged along to auditions with the promise of "trust me, you'll enjoy it." Throughout the course of 50 years of productions, former students have grown up, started families, and seen their children join the St. Francis Musical tradition. It is hard to mention the St. Francis musicals without acknowledging the Dillon Dynasty, as so many members of the Dillon family have participated in the shows over the years. Bill, Tom, Hohn, Ellen, Mary Maureen, Tom's daughter Rose, Bill's children John, Clare and Ginny are just a few who performed, while matriarch Dee Dillon organized countless musical dinners and Ellen Dillon Gill (NDA '94) did makeup for many Knights in the

years following. The Murtaghs, Korhumels, Kenneys, and Stengles are all cousins, and they have done St. Francis musicals since the first production in 1970. Tim Korhumel (SFS '75) performed in musicals such as No, No, Nanette, and later cheered for his daughter, Catherine (SUA '17), on the musical stage. Most recently, John Stengle (SFS '82) and Joyce Murtagh Stengle (SUA '82) saw their daughters Janet (SUA '14), Julia (SUA '16) and Jenna (SUA '17) follow in their footsteps.

Many musical alumni owe a bit of gratitude to the St. Francis musical for introducing them to their significant other. Ben Hoffmann (SFS '98) met Kelli Heer Hoffmann (NDA '97) in the musicals and dated in college before eventually getting married. Kristy Wisniewski Hayes (NDA '99) met her husband, James Hayes (SFS '99), when she performed on stage and he played in the orchestra. Matt Knaggs ('02) started dancing for Doug and Karen at D&D Dance Studios because of the musicals. There he met Doug's granddaughter, Amber, and today they are married, living in Toledo, with three beautiful children. Kevin Lada (SFS '03) did stage crew all four years, but it wasn't until his senior year that a budding artist, Emily Hoschak Lada (NDA '03), decided that helping with the musical would be fun her senior year. Another crew member let slip that they had both had a crush on the other, they had their first date shortly after musical ended that year, and this summer they'll be celebrating their 10 year wedding anniversary.

PROFESSIONAL MUSICAL THEATER

For the majority of graduates from the St. Francis Musical program, that is the first and last time that they ever perform on stage. For a select few, they turn that passion into profession and work to make that their career. Ian Knauer (SFS '86) has been working professionally in theater for 30 years. At St. Francis, he was cast as the lead as a sophomore and as a junior took on the role of Nicely-Nicely Johnson in Guys and Dolls, 15 years after that first St. Francis musical. He recalled "what a great team Gloria and Bob Stucker were, that she had such a great emphasis on the acting, and he had that background and the techni-



cal elements...they played to their strengths and it played brilliantly." After St. Francis, Knauer went to the University of Michigan for Musical Theater. Today, he is married, living in New York, and considers himself fortunate to have always made his living doing what he loves. Marc Kessler (SFS '90) also joined the U of M Musical Theater program after graduating, "following in Ian Knauer's path" he says. His experiences tapping as Billy Lawlor in the legendary 1989 SFS production of 42nd Street gave him an edge. He kept tapping all the way to the Manhattan Rhythm Kings, where he danced with one of musical theater's biggest names, Tommy Tune. He used his "Catholic training at SFS" to develop the musical Altar Boyz, and has performed on motion picture soundtracks such as The Aviator

and Joker. Michael Dauer (SFS '02) effectively grew up at D&D Dance Studio before joining the St. Francis musical. Eventually he took that training to New York, where he is a professional choreographer and dancer. Mark Blowers (SFS '08) grew up running around the St. Francis musicals, as his mother, Teresa Blowers, played the piano for several of the musicals, in addition as working as vocal director from many productions. Whether by nature or nurture, Mark's experiences with St. Francis growing up seem to have had a lasting impact. During *Bye, Bye Birdie*, Mr. Kastner gave Mark a Sinatra CD to help direct his performance. Today, he lives and performs in New York City, where he recently released his debut album, "Come Croon With Me," and has won multiple 2019 BroadwayWorld Awards including Best Debut Show and Best Independent Recording.

Others did not go quite as far as Broadway, but they are still actively involved in musical theater and the creative arts. Angie Katafiasz Perez de Tagle (NDA '98) has choreographed Whitmer's spring musical for the past 11 years. "I got the job, in part, by showing the director my musical VHS's," she recalls. "She was highly impressed by the caliber of our productions. I'll never be Karen Niewiadomski, but I sure am having fun trying!" David Hemmert (SFS '00) transitioned from performing on stage to working off-stage. "Ever since the ol' SFS Musical days," Dave says, "I've always wanted to have my finger on a button or to have some say about any show or entertainment piece I've ever attended." He has brought that interest to life, employed today as a professional light designer for major music concerts and corporate events. Sarah Horschak Tognozzi (NDA '04) went from 13 years working as a pharmacist to being a performing arts teacher and director at a Catholic elementary school. Michael Neary (SFS '98) is a speech therapist in Chicago schools who also works with the drama teacher and acts as the music director for their drama club. Susie Hillard (NDA '01) is a professional actor and comedian in Los Angeles, doing voice over work for cartoons and various other projects. Kirstin Kedzierski Hinshaw (SUA '04) moved back to Toledo and took over directing responsibilities at St. Ursula Academy.

One of the stories that Mrs. M told me about in our conversation was about a young freshman cut from the baseball team who hung around musical rehearsals, watching and listening to the upperclassmen perform. That freshman,

Zach Lahey (SFS '96), discovered a love of musical theater. So much so that he studied Musical Theater at Ohio Northern University and pursued a career in New York City. Today, he lives and works in Toledo where he owns Manhattan's Pub 'n Cheer. Years later, when Mrs. M was putting on *Guys and Dolls* at the Toledo Rep, she reunited with Zach when he starred as Sky Masterson. Incredibly, Sam Botek was also a part of that production, reprising the role of Nicely-Nicely Johnson he played in 1970, and even doing the original Mr. A choreography.

Some aren't paid for their gifts, but they are still actively involved in theater and music. Those who are in the greater Toledo area may have seen many SFS musical alumni in any one of The Crosswell's recent productions, including Joe Dennehy (SFS '91), myself ('01), Brittanie Kuhr (NDA '09), Derek Kastner (SFS '14), Will Dupuis (SFS '17) and even current director, D. Ward Ensign. When John Kern (SFS '95) joined stage crew his senior year, it was his first experience as a part of a production. But it gave him the confidence to audition for shows for the Toledo Rep the following summer. A decade later, in 2006, new to the Indianapolis area, lonely and looking to make friends, he joined a local theater production. He credits the 25+ productions since to his experiences on stage crew at SFS and the friendships forged in high school. Katie Hamilton Munger (NDA '98) directs the community theater summer musical in her town. Leigh Sorge Beining (NDA '99) performed with the Toledo Opera Chorus for 13 years, while in college and until pregnant with her second child, and called it "an awesome experience and opportunity to stay involved with theater as a hobby after high school."

For Kevin Tennant (SFS '00), working on a St. Francis show would be the first and last time that he would work on a musical. "I was never involved in any other musicals other than SFS, but for me, it was magical in every way possible. I looked forward to the musical every year, like it was Christmas." But Kevin keeps the lessons he learned from the musical alive in his heart on a daily basis. "The majority of the stuff I learned working the musicals have transferred over to what I am doing now in my career...I can literally look back and be so grateful for the experience I was so fortunate to have and realize how important that was in the big picture to now."

Whether alumni of the St. Francis musicals ever took to the

stage again, many of them look back fondly and acknowledge the profound impact that the St. Francis musical has had on their life. A familiar face around the St. Francis hallways, Fr. Joe Newman, OSFS (SFS '03) once performed as a part of the musical. "I cannot separate my experience in the musical from my experience at SFS. My musical experience taught me to empathize with the audience. I use that lesson as a priest." For anyone who has ever seen a homily by Fr. Newman, he uses a variety of tools, including the scientific and theatrical, to elevate his message and connect with his congregation.

Dr. Michael DeBacker (SFS '87) credits his involvement in musical theater and dance with helping him get into medical school. "A member of the selection committee [for medical school] was asking me numerous questions in a thick Russian accent about my involvement in the arts, and what value I thought it would have in the career path I was choosing," Dr. DeBacker recalls. "I answered something to the effect that, although I was never a very talented performer, when I see a piece of theater, dance, music, or any piece of art, I can appreciate the hard work and sacrifice it has taken to create this beauty." It turns out this professor was a former dancer with the Bolshoi. Dr. DeBacker did musicals with multiple siblings, Gretchen (NDA '88), Jen-

of Wade Kapszukiewicz (SFS '90). Later, when he decided to run for office, he reached out to his friend from the St. Francis musicals, Gretchen, to run his campaign.

Today, Mayor Kapszukiewicz is the first St. Francis graduate to serve as the Mayor of Toledo, and Ms. DeBacker transitioned from running a mayoral campaign to working with the mayor as legislative director. I met with Mayor Kapszukiewicz and Ms. DeBacker, and we enjoyed poring over old programs and sharing stories from their musical days together. Like how Mayor Kapszukiewicz's musical dance partner, Emily Weglian Zoeller, would someday introduce him to her sister, Sarah, and that they would be married someday in a very "It's A Wonderful Life" meeting. Ms. DeBacker pointed out that it was Mayor Kapszukiewicz's experiences in musicals that has helped shape who he is, personally and professionally. "That experience is a really profound thing that has contributed to his willingness to do things as mayor that I don't think a lot of other people are willing to do, to dress up and do goofy things and be an adamant supporter of the arts."

Fun fact: In 2018, Mayor Kapszukiewicz became the first Toledo Mayor to play the honorific role as Mother Ginger in Toledo Ballet's Nutcracker. (A role that was also performed



nifer (NDA '89) and Liz (NDA '91). It was while in musicals that his sister Gretchen met a young Knight by the name

in 2016 by Rev. Ronald Olszewski, '62, OSFS) When Mayor Kapszukiewicz graduated from St. Francis, he traveled with D&D Dance Studios to perform at Walt Disney World, even dressing up like one of the three little pigs in a performance. His experiences with big character costumes soon proved to come in handy. One of his first experiences with public speaking and confidence came from his work as Muddy, the mascot for the Mud Hens, shortly after graduating from St. Francis. In an interesting coincidence, another St. Francis musical alumni, Tyler Clark (SFS '10), also served as Muddy the Mud Hen as part of a summer internship. Perhaps in a

few years St. Francis will have another alumni follow the path from the musicals to Muddy to the Mayor's office.

Judge Gene Zmuda graduated from St. Francis in 1977 and was in three musicals, including Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* and Curly in *Oklahoma!* He was encouraged by a friend to try out, struck by the talents of fellow Knights such as Tom Dreese (SFS '75) Tim Korhumel (SFS '75) and Jim Murtagh (SFS '76), who were "boffo every time they performed." He credits the musical with starting a path of self-discovery. "More than anything," Judge Zmuda recalls, "it helped me find who I was and the gift that God gave me to express myself."

Judge Zmuda used the lessons of confidence and self-expression to perform to the best of his ability as a lawyer and ultimately as a judge. While he doesn't perform as much anymore, he still loves to see musicals as opportunities to move and to elevate his spirit. "Theater helps us to find part of ourselves that becomes expression, and grow as a consequence of that." As his schedule permits, Judge Zmuda has continued to use his theatrical talents over the years. He has directed and performed in the Gridiron Show, a performance event hosted each year by the Toledo Jr. Bar association at the Valentine Theatre.



torch that kept it lit. "I think the fire started with those who came to see it," shares Barb Murtagh. While that first cast had the spark of something special on that stage, it was the next generation in the audience that caught fire with the excitement of someday having their chance, as long as there are young men and women in the audience that fall in love with the theater. Joe Dennehy (SFS '91) saw his sister, Audra (NDA '86), perform with Ian Knauer, and he knew that St. Francis was where he wanted go. "I saw

it with my parents and told my Dad, 'whatever school did that is where I want to go.' Funny, most choose SFS for sports or education. But me? The musical."

Kessler noted that being on stage as a professional is quite the same as at St. Francis. "As a professional, that magic is not there in the same way. The magic was finding the right people and learning the right words and hoping that it all comes together in the end. Gloria instilled that idea in us: it's got to be magical. But it's on me to keep that magic alive." Gloria continues to advocate for the magic of musical theater today. When I asked her what was the most important lesson to take away from the shows, she didn't hesitate. "I really believe in the magic of theater. Teaching students to go out there and make magic."

The Value of A Musical Theater Program

There are 588 students enrolled at St. Francis de Sales High School this year. About 10% participate each year in

Everyone that I spoke to had their own reasons for doing the musicals; to make friends and socialize, to get an art credit, or a friend dragged them along and they ended up loving it. More often than not, however, it was because they saw a family member or family friend or neighbor performing when they were young and they wanted to follow suit. I was struck by how many people were inspired to join the musical because of a production they saw. It was funny and poignant, because it was clear there was no way for those in the production to truly recognize the impact they were having on their audience. They are too busy making sure the set doesn't fall down or they get the right dance steps or playing the right notes. They often have no idea who is watching, what member of the next generation is watching from the audience and falling in love with theater. It may have been a spark started by Mr. A in 1970 that got it started, but it was the passing of the

the musical, whether on stage, behind the scenes on crew, or in the pit. This year, 36 Knights auditioned to be a part of the cast, and the crew meeting hosted more than 25 interested students. I asked leaders of the school, Fr. Rose, Fr. Olszewski, and Fr. Newman, what they thought the

aspect of the production. It is really special."

THE NEXT CHAPTER

This year not only marks the end of 50 years of musical tradition, but the beginning of a new chapter of leadership. While Karen, Mr. Collier, and the Skibinskis continue to lend their talents to our production, they are joined by a new-ish face with Mr. Ward Ensign as director. I say "new-ish" because Ensign has a long history with St. Francis, having worked as director of Campus Ministry in the mid-90s. Today, he works at St. Francis as a counselor. But his experiences with the St. Francis musicals go back even farther. "I remember my first St. Francis musical," Ensign recalls. "I came to support a friend of mine from NDA who was in 42nd Street in 1989. No offense to my previous directors at Clay High School and ToDAY Productions, but I was stunned at how amazing the show was. My jaw must have been on the floor the whole time! I've seen sev-

eral shows since then and I believe it has always been one of the top high school productions in the region." Ensign is excited to take on this challenge, but recognizes it won't be like a typical theatrical production. "Directing theatre at a high school is not just being a creative director. It's being a producer, scheduler, manager, etc." More than the logistical challenges, it will be on Ensign to carry on the traditions of the St. Francis musical and pass those on to the new crop of students this year. "Traditions are great. When, for example, current students know and sing songs from shows that were perhaps done 20 years ago but have been passed down from cast to cast, there is something magical about that. They are connecting with their brothers and sisters from the past who began the tradition all those years ago. There's something very special about that."

Everyone has advice for the new director on what it means to be a part of a St. Francis musical. One current student pointed toward the traditions as a big part of the show, that "continuing traditions keeps bringing people back." This



value of participating in a musical production was. "The arts in general make us more human," noted Father Olszewski. Fr. Newman noted the power of music and theater to change hearts and minds. "I think it's hard for students in the arts to believe that their work participates in the salvation of the world," shares Father Joe. "That's a big idea, but think of the countless members of the cast, crew, and audience who were just a little bit transformed because of the musical. A little more forgiving, a little more merciful, a little more courageous, joyful, gentle, or strong." Through the musical, students are able to learn a powerful lesson. "You can accomplish so much together than you cannot accomplish alone," points out Father O. Father Rose sees this team effort in play, not just with students. "What has surprised me, is the unbelievable quality of each production. The students are so very talented, and work so hard all year round to hone their craft, it really shows. But beyond the student talent, the absolute dedication of parents and alumni, who work on sets and costumes, and every

was echoed by alumni like Kevin Tennant, who noted that “the traditions were high level and super important to the shows successes each and every year.” Mrs. M encouraged Mr. Ensign to “listen” and to “share the magic with all the students involved.” More than anything, Mr. Ensign recognizes the value and potential of the program and the importance of the traditions. As Father Olszewski notes, “Traditions give us our roots, our foundations. Good traditions elevate us to reach, and go beyond.” It may only be his first year, but already Mr. Ensign is bringing a balance of fresh perspective and deep respect for the history of the musicals. It is exciting to imagine what the next chapter will hold.

The shows are no longer performed at Start High School. Room 100, the site of countless dance rehearsals, was transformed into a new resource center, and students today practice in the wrestling room. The girls from McAuley High school no longer compete for leads. Members of the religious are not as common as they were on the production staff, when Sr. Marie Roman was the Music Director ('74-'84), Brother Richard Eberle was the Technical Director ('74-'78), or Brother Dorazio was the vocal director ('72). But the traditions continue, though the form changes. Mrs. Moulopolous is back in Toledo and would love to get a cup of coffee with you. Elementary students continue to see the show, and dream of a time that they will take the stage. Just as Jim McGowan (SFS '74) watched Tim Brophy, how Joe Dennehy watched Ian Knauer, or how Jeff Kerscher (SFS '04) watched Dave Hemmert (SFS '00). I was flattered to learn that Pete Blank (SFS '05) came to the shows to see me, and I'm certain that subsequent generations were inspired by Blank's Beast to follow in his footsteps.

The St. Francis musical continues to find great success, onstage and off, for the past half century. It begins with a staff of talented and dedicated people. Whether the bonding is through the hard work and shared sweat that is left on the dance floor, as Karen believes, or whether it is the “magic” of everything coming together, as it did in that first musical in 1970, the bonding is intangible and undeniable. The bonds of friendship are formed, as a group of students with diverse talents and backgrounds are united by a common goal. Over the course of many months, they learn to work together, trust each other, and create something magical on stage. It brings together students from all

backgrounds, whether athletes or academics, extroverts or wall flowers. Sam Botek, Jeff Wawrzyniak (SFS '85), and Thomas Joseph (SFS '05) were all stars on the football field as well as leads in the musical. Whether on the field or on the stage, students strive for excellence in their performance. If nothing else, that tradition of excellence and passing that spark of passion on to the next generation will inevitably lead to 50 more years of unforgettable St. Francis musical productions.

Under the direction of this talented staff, a St. Francis musical is first and foremost a theatrical production, a learning experience for students who wish to tap into their creativity. Before the curtain rises, however, it has transformed into something greater. These are not just a group of people - cast, crew, orchestra - coming together to put on a show. The students are friends, with unforgettable memories and undeniable bonds that will last for decades. The staff are not merely professionals; they are mentors, role models. They are teachers. They share with their students the love and passion for theater and art. In turn, the students share that love and passion with their audience, inspiring the next generation that will carry the St. Francis musical tradition into the next 50 years.

A sincere thank-you to all those who contributed their memories, reflections, and photos in the course of preparing this article. The phone calls, meetings, and social media postings created a joyful journey for me through 50 years of experiences of musical magic. Understandably, not all 50 years of experiences could possibly be done justice in a few short pages. I appreciate your time and efforts, and I hope that this walk down memory lane can continue as we gather together and celebrate at the 50th Anniversary Gala in April.



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2. Do you want to direct the use of your gift? If so, contact Renee Winkler at **419.214.5429** to discuss options and ensure that your wishes can be met.
3. Inform SFS of your commitment. This will allow us to notify you of any changes that may impact your future commitment, enroll you in our Knight Legacy Guild and properly recognize you for your future commitment to SFS.

Commitments are kept confidential and are not binding; you control your assets during your lifetime. As a member of the Knight Legacy Guild, you are recognized in our Annual Impact Report (unless you prefer to be a member to do not wish public recognition) as a way to demonstrate your support for SFS and its values.