

Spring 2017

SMS Alumni  
News—Page 1

### Upcoming Events:

August 14 Ice Cream Social  
August 16 First Day of School  
August 19 Alumni Picnic  
November 10 Veterans Assembly

### Newsletter Contents:

St. Mary's Alumni Board	1
Alumni Board Bios	1
Congrats, Class of 2017!	2
Alumni Scholarship Winners	2
Letter from the Principal	3
Teacher Spotlights	3
Alumni Highlights	4
Looking for Veterans	4
Benefit Auction	5
Current Student Highlights	5
Alumni Giving	6

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### SMS Mission:

"To provide a Catholic education that nurtures students' hearts and minds to become servant leaders in an ever-changing world."

# St. Mary's School Alumni Newsletter



## New St. Mary's Alumni Board is Established!

In January of 2017, the St. Mary's Alumni Board was created. Their mission statement is, "To honor and empower alumni in order to strengthen the community of St. Mary's School and to secure a lifetime of Spartan pride." Members of the board all share a love for St. Mary's and a passion to build on its tradition and legacy as the school continues to educate and shape young lives. Meet the members of our Alumni Board below!

### President: Cindy (Wessling) Donahue '80

Cindy attended St. Mary's from 1972-1980, and followed in the footsteps of her Father (Ken Wessling '53), Aunts and Uncles. Her grandmother, Rose Wessling, was instrumental in founding St. Mary's School. Cindy's siblings attended St. Mary's as well, and her son graduated last year. She still has a niece and nephews at the school. Quite the legacy family! One vivid memory for her was on the day of her First Communion- she was sick, but determined to receive the Holy Eucharist for the first time- and she did! That experience has always remained important to her, and because of that, attending regular Mass is very important to Cindy. Her Catholic education has been an influence throughout her whole life, and she thinks her Grandma Rose would be so proud of what St. Mary's school has become!

### Vice President: Kevin Duffy '63

Kevin's time at St. Mary's began during the pre-Vatican II era, and he fondly remembers having religious Sisters as his teachers, and attending daily Masses, in the original church (now referred to as St. Mark's Hall) and later in the current church. He felt very academically and spiritually prepared for high school, and credits a large part of that to his excellent education at St. Mary's. Now, as an attorney, he can look back on the lessons and values that were instilled in him in elementary school.

### Treasurer: Sarah (Roth) Mlnarik '92

Sarah attended St. Mary's from 1985-1992, and she really enjoyed performing in the twice per year school concerts held in the church. 8th grade trip to Lincoln and Field Days at Bellevue East are among her favorite memories. Sarah's brother Steve ('87) also graduated from St. Mary's, her daughter Anna is currently in 2nd grade, and younger daughter, Lauren will start in 2018. Sarah says, "my education at St. Mary's provided me with an academic foundation that led me to being successful in subsequent schooling. Additionally, the spiritual opportunities and faith-filled educators have shaped me into the adult I am today."

### Secretary: Hannah (Menzel) Clark '02

Hannah attended St. Mary's from 1992-2002, and has two younger siblings (Aaron '05 and Rebekah '07) who are graduates as well. She has three children, the oldest of whom will start in Pre-K in the fall. She is excited for her children to receive the same amazing education that she did. So many wonderful traditions like all-school Masses, May Crowning, sports games and music programs, but most especially being a part of a faith-filled school where every child is valued and loved. Those are the things that made, and continue to make, St. Mary's such a special place.

### Website/ Social Media and Volunteer Coordinator: Suzy (Peters) Godwin '99

Suzy attended St. Mary's from 1990-1996, and her daughter is currently attends the school as a 1st grader. One thing that greatly impacted her life was the relationships she formed with her teachers. Suzy reflects, "just this year, I was able to partner up with Mrs. Feagan, who was my 4th grade teacher, to assist and donate to a family in need during Christmastime. I have also been able to connect with Mrs. Sobilo as a confidant and mentor figure, as we each have a child with special needs. My education from St. Mary's was a great stepping stone, where I learned not only academics, but the importance of being a child of God, and a person that values the gift of helping others!"

Spring 2017

SMS Alumni  
News—Page 2

### Alumni with Current Students at St. Mary's School:

22 alumni with 28 children/grandchildren are at St. Mary's! Alumni choosing St. Mary's for their child/grandchild sends a powerful message. Have someone you'd like to attend St. Mary's? Call the school today for information (402-291-1694)!

-Dane' (**Huck**) Ames '86: 4  
-John "Quint" **Dacey** '05: 1  
-Sean **Giles** '04: 1  
-Suzy (**Peters**) Godwin '99: 1  
-Patrick **Kettleston** '95: 1\*  
(Debbie (**Cook**) Kettleston '69)  
-Breanna **Koch** '04: 1  
-Patrick **Kouba** '77: 2  
-Joanna (**Jungers**) Lee '89: 3\* (Dean **Jungers** '56)  
-Christina (**Hascall**) Legner '91: 3\* (Dean **Hascall** '68)  
-Jackie (Hascall) Lizarraga '97: 1 (Dean **Hascall** '68)  
-Sarah (**Roth**) Mlnarik '92: 1  
-Patti (**Ferrante**) Nastase '61: 1\*  
-Alan **Swiecicki** '89: 2  
-Jerome **Tyner**: 1\* (Mary (**Hascall**) Tyner '66)  
-Willie **Wessling** '87: 3\* (Ken **Wessling** '53)  
-Janet (**Jungers**) Yale '91: 1\* (Dean **Jungers** '56)  
-Kim (**Schreiber**) Zieno '97 & Angelo **Zieno** '95: 1

\* = Grandchild of Alumni  
*Italics* = Graduation year listed, but did not attend through graduation

### Honoring Deceased Alumni

St. Mary's now has an "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows" Memorial Prayer Garden and on St. Mark's east side the names of those remembered/honored by Prayer Garden donors. Interested in having a St. Mary's alum honored or remembered? Contact the parish secretary for more information (402) 291-1350.

## Congratulations to our Newest Alumni, Class of 2017!

Anou Akot, Anna Bennett, Ashley Bishop, Baylin Davis, Fredy Kadjo Gnambi, Charlotte Kimsey, Grace Kolesik, Nicholas Kouba, Akojang Mamer, Lucia Mansidor, Theodosia Mba, Isabella Medrano, Rachel Schaffart, Lauren Scmitz, Joseph Seaman, Gabe Tweedy

*Congrats also to the St. Mary's Class of 2013, who are celebrating their High School Graduation...*

Alfred Balanay, Juan Chavez, Jr., Shayanne Cornett, Jean-Marie Djidjoho, Marcel Dugas, James Goetz, Michael James, Joseph Keenan, Sara Kepford, Nowa Leita, Maya Lewis, Danny McMaster, Mikayla Sage, Nick Schnitzer, Lauren Traggai, Cole Wellman

*And to the Class of 2009 who may be celebrating a Spring College Graduation...*

Gabe Belcastro, Matthew Cervantes, Justine Cruz, Kristin Embury, Daniel Evans, Latjor Gony, Jonathan Henderson, Mark Huebner, Julia Leister, Mickey Martin, Anthony Mason, Yar Mayen, Jill Sobczyk, Craig Steele, Annalissa Stover, Michaela Sullivan, Austin Voigtman

## Alumni Scholarship Winners have been Selected

For the fourth consecutive year, the St. Mary's Home & School Association offered scholarships to alumni: (1) Alumni Attending Catholic High School (freshman year) - \$1,000; (2) Alumni Attending Catholic College/University (freshman year) - \$1,000 and (3) Alumni Working for the Service/Non-Profit Organization/Catholic School (any age) - \$1000. Candidates filled out an application, in which they highlighted the benefits of their St. Mary's education, and shared how they'd like to further their education or life experiences in a Catholic setting. Thank you to scholarship coordinator Janet Yale for her efforts in facilitating this process. Thank you also to our alumni who have so generously supported this alumni scholarship fund. This year, we'd especially like to thank Mr. Jim Vacek ('63), whose donation of \$1000 allowed us to award an extra scholarship to a very deserving 8th grader! Congratulations to all scholarship recipients!

### 8th Graders going to a Catholic High School

*\$1000: Gabe Tweedy, attending Mount Michael*

*\$1000: Isabella M.L. Medrano, attending Roncalli*

*\$500: Rachel Schaffert, attending Mercy*

*\$500: Theodosia Mba, attending Mercy*

### 12th Grader going to a Catholic College

*\$1000: Maya Lewis, attending College of St. Mary*



## Spring 2017

### SMS Alumni News—Page 3

#### Tell Us What's Going on With You!

We want to keep our data current and share achievements, weddings, births, deaths, milestones and whatever else you can think of. Don't be bashful. Go to the Alumni page on the school website ([stmaryschoolbellevue.com](http://stmaryschoolbellevue.com)) to submit the [Alumni Information Form](#) with contact information updates or story leads!

#### School & Current Student Highlights

Read these full stories and many others on the school website and Facebook page.

#### Serra Altar Server

**Awards:** Five 8th grade students received awards of Merit for their dedication to Altar Serving at St. Mary's

#### A Project worth

**waiting for:** Eighth grade students enjoy an art-class tradition...designing and constructing their own creative hats as an assignment!

**Pump it Up:** 4th and 5th grade students participated in Creighton University's "Fit for Life" programs

#### Easter Prayer Cards:

4th-8th graders created prayer cards that they handed out to all St. Mary's parishioners after Masses on Palm Sunday.

**Champions:** the 7th grade Spartan Basketball team were the Boy's CYO Champions!

## Letter from Dr. Trish Wallinger, Principal

It is hard to believe that we are in the home stretch for our 2016-2017 school year at St. Mary's. While May is bustling with activity from our May Crowning to graduation and field days to field trips, I would like to focus this piece on one of my favorite topics: *Catholic Identity*.

I believe there is a direct link between the vitality of St. Mary's Catholic School and our ability to articulate our Catholic Identity. Catholic Identity is who we are as a school and no one epitomizes this better than our teachers. All of our students see first hand that being a teacher at St. Mary's is a vocation, not simply a job.

I know our Alumni fondly remember their teachers, many of whom are still here. Our teachers are faith-filled people who reflect their discipleship in all of their lessons, not just religion class. From social studies lessons on social justice to science lessons on God's creation, our teachers demonstrate for students the ever-present God.

Our goal at St. Mary's is to provide Christ centered educational experiences for our students. Here are just some of the highlights on how we accomplish this goal:

*8th Graders prayed for an end to abortion in front of the clinic across the street.*

*7th graders planned and helped with the 8th grade banquet.*

*6th graders hosted a Baby Shower for EPS.*

*5th graders helped an elderly parishioner clear her yard in the fall.*

*4th graders created a beautiful mural for Easter.*

*3rd graders prayed daily for those in need and the needs of our school.*

*2nd graders and 8th graders presented flowers at the May Crowning.*

*1st graders did their Saint Projects for All Saints Day.*

*Kindergarten wrote to their Dominican Sisters pen-pal.*

*PK performed a lovely Christmas Pageant*

Our staff and students are leading others to Jesus through their faith filled activities. Please come and visit us when you are able. There is a special place in our hearts for our alumni.

God bless you now and always,  
Dr. Trish Wallinger

## Featured Teachers



#### Mrs. Stacey Schutt— Art

Mrs. Schutt has been teaching for 24 years, 22 of them have been spent at St. Mary's, and her first 2 years of teaching were spent in a 2-room schoolhouse! She really enjoys watching the joy and pride of accomplishment and growth in her students. Teaching art to the whole school gives her a chance to really see that growth from when they first started in PK or Kindergarten through to their 8th grade year. She says, "St. Mary's is a special place, because I'm able to teach Christian values. It's always felt like a family here!"



#### Mr. John Kastl— 6th Grade Homeroom, Middle School Math

This is Mr. Kastl's first year of teaching, and he is very excited to be teaching middle school at St. Mary's! He holds a Bachelor of Science in Education degree with an endorsement in Mathematics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is Catholic and puts Christ at the forefront of his life. In college, he was very involved in the Newman Center and looks forward to being a part of our St. Mary's faith community.

**Back on the Courts at St. Mary's**



*(excerpt from Jackie Ortega's article)* Jacob Connealy and Rebekah Menzel, class '07 are back on the court, this time coaching the 6th grade girls team. This is their first-year. Theirs is a long history that started at St. Mary's as told by Rebekah. Jake and I hold each other's award for 'Oldest and Longest Classmate' (we went Pre-K-8th grade together at St. Mary's and then went on to our respective high schools of Mercy and Mt. Michael and then both went down to Benedictine in Atchison, KS for college) so needless to say, we're St. Mary's Bellevue friends, born and raised. Jake and I had been talking about how it'd be fun to coach a team, and with his sister Maria in 6th grade, an opportunity arose. (It was a no brainer, as we both grew up with this huge, positive, St. Mary's family that taught us the importance of using our gifts to serve others, so of course we'd love to coach a team!) St. Mary's Athletic Director, Jennifer Kreps says, "They are doing a great job teaching the girls not only how to play but what good Christian sportsmanship is about on and off the court.

**Julie Targy Named Scholar Athlete** *(story by Jackie Ortega)*

Briar Cliff women's basketball player Julie Targy has been named one of 286 2016-17 Daktronics-NAIA Scholar Athletes in Division II women's basketball. To be nominated by an institution's head coach or sports information director, a student-athlete must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and must have achieved a junior academic status. Targy, a native of Bellevue, Nebraska, and '10 alumna of St. Mary's played in all 31 games for the Chargers this season, making 22 starts as a junior. Targy averaged 2.9 ppg with 90 points on the season and paced the team in steals with 63. She also grabbed 2.8 rebounds per game and dished out 57 assists, ranking second on the squad. Targy scored a season-high 11 points against Pfeiffer on December 18th. Last year Targy appeared in all 33 games for the Cliff, making one start. She was named academic all-conference.



**November 2017 Veterans Assembly— WE WANT YOU!**

Information courtesy of Mrs. Becky Feagan, retired St. Mary's teacher

For next year's Veterans Assembly, we would like to honor those who attended St. Mary's School and are serving, or have served, our country in a branch of the military.

**We'd like to know:**

1. The years they attended St. Mary's, and their graduation year, if applicable .
2. The branch of military in which they served.
3. In what areas of the world they served.
4. Are they willing to provide a photo of themselves in a military uniform which we would display on a "Wall of Honor"?
5. Would you like to attend the event? It's scheduled for Friday, November 10

**Please send information to:**

Mrs. Becky Feagan  
809 Bayberry Dr.  
Bellevue, NE 68005  
bfeagan@cox.net

**A HUGE Success!**

St. Mary's Family,

We wanted to take this opportunity to share our heartfelt appreciation for your help and support of the St. Mary's School Benefit Auction. With over 300 in attendance your support contributed to the \$86,000 raised, with 18,900 going towards this year's need of new school bells. These bells tell our students when class starts and when class ends, but these bells are outdated and not fully functional. Replacing this is one of the many ways the success of this event improves the quality of education for our students. The success of this event reflects the close relationship among our School and Parish families. Without that, we could not have achieved this success. Once again, thank you and God Bless!

St. Mary's Home & School Committee

**Current Student Highlights**

**Geography Buff:** Joe Kouba, 6th grader, won the St. Mary's Geography Bee in January. The Bee was sponsored by *National Geographic*, and local winners then took a test to advance to the next level. Joe did well on the test, and advanced to the state competition! This is only the second time in school history a St. Mary's student has gone to the state level. Congrats, Joe!

**A Way with Words:** Josh Braxton, also in 6th grade, wrote an essay for the local chapter of the DAR. He focused on our National Parks, and took first place in the writing competition! Way to go, Josh!



**Living Stations of the Cross - Walking the Path of Jesus:**

The Living Stations is an annual tradition our 6th graders offer the parish during Holy Week. Students researched and portrayed various Biblical characters who played integral roles in the death and crucifixion of Jesus.

**Wax Museum:** 4th Grade presented a Wax Museum on Monday, April 10th. The exhibits included wax figures (students) who became "activated" once you pressed a button and said "Buzz". Then they gave a short presentation on their exhibit.

**Science Fair:** Middle School students put on a wonderful Science Fair— the projects were interesting, informational, and some were even a little "out of the box"! Students got to tour through the Fair during the day, and friends and family could also come in the evening to view the presentations.



Spring 2017

**SMS Alumni News—Page 6**

**Dominican Prayer:**

(Recited daily at school)  
Dear loving God,

Thank you for Saint Mary's School and all of the opportunities we will have today. Help us all to make wise choices, be kind, and always strive to tell the truth. We ask that you watch over, protect, and guide us through our day. Please bless the Dominican Sisters who started our school in 1948. In the name of Jesus we pray.  
Amen.

**Alumni Giving - Sharing Blessings and Making an Impact**

Thank You to all alumni who have generously given to St. Mary's! Your support ensures a quality, faith-filled education for current students! Various opportunities are available for alumni giving,

Support is available through:

- Education Endowment
- Adopt-A-Student
- Benefit Auction
- Omaha Gives (this event will be held on May 24, 2017)
- Capital Improvements and Special Projects

If you are interested in learning more about stewardship opportunities, please visit the school website and submit the form today! There are some programs that require you to spend nothing more than you are already and still make an impact to St. Mary's: Amazon Smiles, Dillion's [Baker's] Community Rewards, Box Tops for Education, & Coke Rewards. Shop at Spartan Nash stores in 10 states (e.g., Family Fare) and send us your receipts (\$150,000 in receipts = \$1,000 for St. Mary's School). Contact the school for more information (402) 291-1694.

If you haven't already done so, please take a few moments to submit the Alumni Information Form. Follow these quick and easy steps to access this document!

1. [stmarysschoolbellevue.com/alumni](http://stmarysschoolbellevue.com/alumni)
2. Click on "Alumni Information Form"
3. Fill out form and submit...you are now in our system!

If you are reading this digitally, click the link below or use QR Code on your smart phone to be directed straight to the Google Form

**Alumni Form**



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