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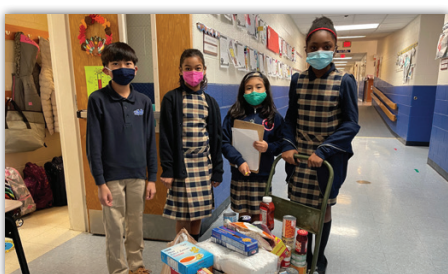
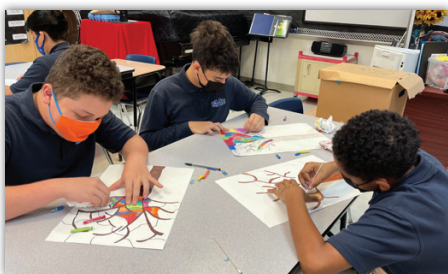
THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF ST. MARTIN OF TOURS SCHOOL

WWW.SMSMD.ORG

FALL 2021

Crusader Happenings





Dear Friends of St. Martin's,

As our community prepares to celebrate Christmas, we are reminded that our Catholic faith is central to our curriculum and permeates the life of the school. This is what makes us so special.

We are blessed and thankful that we have been able to continue our mission of teaching about our faith and traditions, providing academic excellence, and serving others. As one parent recently said, "I am so impressed with the instruction, engagement, and creativity that I've seen from the teachers! This school year is off to a great start, despite the hurdles COVID-19 has put in our way." This has been made possible thanks to your continued support of St. Martin's School.

In this school year, we are providing an education to more than 200 boys and girls, many of whom would not be able to attend without your generosity. As a friend, parishioner, or alumnus/alumna, we ask you to consider giving again this year. By doing so, you can make it possible for future generations of students to share in the opportunities afforded to over ninety-five years of children who have passed through these halls.

Please review the enclosed donor envelope and consider making an investment to support the vision we all share – our aspiration to be the premier school of choice and a leader in the community.

We wish you and your family a blessed Christmas season!

Gratefully,

Anne Gemunder
Director of Development

CBN Volunteer of the Year

The gift of time is precious, and volunteers are truly generous when it comes to investing this valuable resource in our schools and in our students. Our annual Volunteer of the Year Award acknowledges the crucial role that school volunteers play in students' lives and how they enrich our schools with their selfless dedication. This year, we recognize Nekiera Woodland who was honored at the Catholic Business Network of Montgomery County Annual Gala in November. St. Martin's has been blessed with many remarkable parents who have volunteered their time, but Nekiera Woodland is perhaps one of the most talented. We have benefitted from Nekiera's professional experiences in organizational management; she is a driving force for positive change; she listens with purpose, is open to new answers, and demonstrates uncompromising respect to all, while leading our community to greater heights.

Nekiera skillfully chaired our Gala for three years, expertly contributed to our COVID -19 Re-Opening Team, adroitly serves on our School Advisory Board, and masterfully guides our Strategic Planning Committee. In addition, she has served as Breakfast with Santa Chair, Dinner-Night-Out Coordinator, Hospitality Coordinator, and Homeroom Parent.

Nekiera knew from her own Catholic school experience that she wanted her children's individual spirituality to be grounded in Catholic faith. While she grew up in New York attending Catholic schools, her family's connection and service to St. Martin's goes back decades. Her husband Brian went to Mass regularly at St. Martin's as a child



and participated in CYO sports. He is now Director of CYO and a coach for several basketball teams. His father John is a long-time parishioner and both parents, Wendy and John, are frequently volunteers. Wendy has been the Home and School Association Vice President and Bingo volunteer, and is currently the school's liaison to the Gaithersburg Book Fair and the City of Gaithersburg. John led a school STEM Club called Zero Gravity, was a STEM Night presenter, and has been a CYO basketball coach.



Both of Nekiera's children attend St. Martin's. "It truly does take a village to raise a child and my hope is that my volunteering can benefit both my children and others," explains Nekiera. She adds, "Being present in their lives and engaged in the community is just the right thing to do." It is not unusual to see Nekiera dropping off materials for an event in the morning, stopping back later in the day to meet about a project, and returning again in the evening for yet another meeting or for a CYO practice. "We are giving back because St. Martin's teachers create an environment where our children feel safe and accepted. Their concern is genuine, personal, and heartfelt. They teach empathy, stressing the importance of being sensitive and compassionate for others. Our children are known and loved for who they are," shares Nekiera.

Principal Stephen Lamont asserts, "We would like to thank Nekiera for her incredible dedication and service to our students and school. She is a real hero. Our school needs role models like her to build our future leaders." We are grateful to honor Nekiera Woodland as our Volunteer of the Year at St. Martin's School.



New Faces at St. Martin's Doing What They Do Best

The first days of school are always exciting – equal parts busy and wondrous. We all can appreciate the sight of a parent bringing their kindergartener to school for the first time or the crowd of middle schoolers running toward each other at the first sight of a friend's smiling face. Teachers, of course, have spent long hours decorating their classrooms with the alphabet, the periodic table, or a Shel Silverstein poem. This year, we are grateful that everyone, whether new to St. Martin's or returning, experienced this exhilarating back-to-school energy in-person.



Every new year brings new faces and experiences to St. Martin's. We are excited to introduce and welcome Nebhet Annan, our new middle school Language Arts teacher. She is certain to enrich her students and her classroom teaching with her broad-ranging experiences. Ms. Annan was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, and

later worked for Amdahl, an information technology company in Silicon Valley and for Capital Records in Los Angeles. She taught in schools as nearby as Baltimore City and Durham, North Carolina, and as far away as Ghana and Dubai. Her students have spanned the spectrum from elementary, to high school, to college-aged. Ms. Annan received her BA from San Francisco State University, her MA in English from North Carolina Central University, and her MEd from Central State University in Ohio. "I am looking forward to helping to develop our students' writing skills, which will prepare them for advanced courses in high school," says Ms. Annan. She adds, "St. Martin's is a nurturing environment that promotes all stages of the learning process. Additionally, Principal Lamont fosters an open, supportive, and collaborative school culture." Of course, outside of school, Ms. Annan loves to read.

We are also excited to welcome Kristen Girch as our fifth grade teacher. Our students will benefit from Ms. Girch's many years of teaching experience. She has taught first, second, third, fourth, and seventh grades. Most recently, she was teaching Math and Science at the Chesapeake Math & IT Charter School in Prince George's County. Ms. Girch was born in Valencia, California but was raised in nearby Howard County, Maryland. She attended Frostburg State University for her BA and UMBC for her MA in Elementary Education. "I am excited to be at St. Martin's where I can set high expectations and dive into developing our scholars.... My students are well prepared for the work ahead and are motivated to learn." This foundation, Ms. Girch explains, will enable her to create challenging co-curricular projects. "I am looking forward to inspiring my students to be actively engaged learners," Ms. Girch says with enthusiasm.



This past year, Andrea Villars, St. Martin's Class of 2010, was a long-term substitute Spanish teacher. When the permanent position became available for this fall, she was excited to accept the offer. As an alumna, she easily identifies with her students, and they in turn have responded to her enthusiasm for sharing the impactful lessons

she learned at St. Martin's. "Ms. Villars has been an inspirational role model for our students. I look forward to the positive influence she will continue to have," explains Principal Stephen Lamont. Ms. Villars' goals for this year include adapting the Spanish program to accommodate the needs of both Spanish and non-Spanish speaking students. She adds, "My guidance for students is to listen to their teachers, take their advice, and always be prepared for class." She believes these recommendations will serve her students well, as it has for her and for 95 years of alumni. While attending Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Ms. Villars played lacrosse and majored in Psychology with a minor in Spanish. Since graduating, she has worked with students at Bar-T and has coached girls' lacrosse at Watkins Mill High School and various other sports leagues. Those experiences reinforced her desire to share the work ethic and skills that she learned at St. Martin's.



Adairis de la Portilla has quickly become an integral part of our school community. She joins us this year as our Kindergarten aide and also as a school parent. Her son Diego is in Mrs. Maldonado's third grade class. Mrs. De La Portilla grew up in Pinar del Río City, Cuba, which is a small town in the west of the country. She received a degree in Industrial Pharmacy and worked as a pharmacist in a hospital. Mrs. De La Portilla later moved with her husband to Venezuela,

then to Brazil, where she taught children's dance classes. The family moved to the US in 2019, where they soon joined the St. Martin's parish community. She enthusiastically explains, "The St. Martin's community has been a great blessing for our family to start a new life in the US. I am excited to work in an incredible place full of good people who, with the hand of God, are giving love and help to the community."

Christian Stokes, who taught fifth grade last year, takes on a new role as the middle school Science and Math teacher. Mr. Stokes came to St. Martin's with four years' experience teaching science to middle and high school students. He earned his degree in Biology from Stillman College in Alabama.

Every day our staff members contribute to the St. Martin's community above and beyond what is expected of them. Claudia Mercado, in her short time as our school receptionist, has already distinguished herself for her dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work. Mrs. Mercado was born and raised in La Paz, Bolivia. After her studies, she worked as a bilingual administrative assistant. Mrs. Mercado is excited to share her love of the Catholic faith and her passion for working with children. When not at school, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two young adult children. "I appreciate helping people, so the more I can learn about St. Martin's, the better I can provide that help," she explains with a warm smile.



Patricia Quiros, our new lunchroom supervisor, looks for ways she can make a positive impact on those around her. Her work ethic stems from her upbringing in a large Catholic family in Costa Rica.

Mrs. Quiros has a B.A. in English and a Master's Degree in English-Spanish Translation Studies. She has taught both subjects for many years at universities in Costa Rica. She has two adult sons, who continue to live and work there. "Everyone has been so welcoming. I am grateful for these opportunities and I want give back where I can," remarks Mrs. Quiros. She enjoys reading, writing poetry, and drawing in her spare time, along with family activities with her husband.

All of our faculty and staff, both seasoned and novice, bring unique experiences and gifts that support our students and ensure their success in the classroom. One thing that never changes is our commitment to provide a high quality learning experience for all students. Please join us in welcoming these new members to our school community!

Crusader Raffle Goal Exceeded!

We are excited to announce that we raised \$26,600 for our 3rd Annual Crusader Raffle. Surpassing our goal of raising \$25,000 is a testament to the strength of our supportive families. 89% of our school families sold at least one book of tickets. Each book contained ten \$10 tickets. We also had five grades with over 92% participation, including two classes that had 100% of families sell at least one book of tickets. We had three winners: \$2,500 was awarded to the Grand Prize winner, \$1,000 was awarded to the Second Place winner, and \$500 was awarded to the Third Place winner. Each seller of a winning ticket received \$50. As an all-school reward for reaching our goal, our Christmas vacation begins three days early on Friday, December 17. It was an exciting few weeks of friendly class competition, weekly drawings, class treats, and a well-earned week of tag days for students whose families sold ticket books. A huge thank you to our top selling families!

We would like to express our appreciation to our Fundraising Committee members for their energy, enthusiasm, and hard work in coordinating our 3rd Annual Crusader Raffle. These funds will enable us to bolster our STEM, Music, Art, and sports programs, allowing our students even greater opportunities in these areas. Thank you again for your extraordinary support of our students and our school community. Our families are what make St. Martin's so special!



Scouting for Food

Cub Scout Pack 926 participated in a service project – Scouting for Food. They collected over 400 food items, which were donated to the St. Martin's Food Pantry. Thank you to the community, friends and families who made the Scouting for Food project a success.



Girl Scouts - Bronze Award Project

The Girl Scouts earned their Bronze Award for finding a problem and implementing a solution. The girls didn't like all the trash and cigarette butts they found around the school at recess so they made a presentation to Principal Lamont and Fr. Dave to add two new trash cans and "No Littering" and "No Smoking" signs around the school grounds. The leadership approved, and so the girls added the trash cans and signs around the school. Thank you for your service!



una noche de estrellas

RESERVE LA FECHA PARA
LA GALA ANUAL Y
SUBASTA DE
LA ESCUELA DE ST. MARTIN

sábado 2 de abril, 2022

a starry night

SAVE THE DATE FOR
ST. MARTIN SCHOOL'S
ANNUAL GALA & AUCTION

saturday april 2, 2021

New STEM Labs: Creating Bold Thinkers and Passionate Leaders

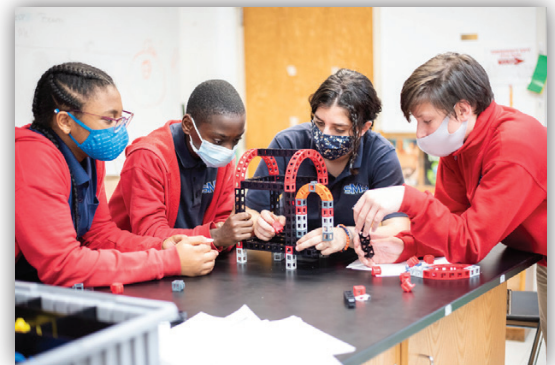
Each year, during our Catholic Schools Week Day of Giving, our school community contributes to a special project that directly benefits our students. Donations go toward general education programs such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), music, and art which help our students continue to grow and learn every day.

This year, through generous contributions, we were able to purchase engineering-based Kids Spark STEM labs for use by Pre-K through 8th grade. Our teachers have been able to integrate these hands-on labs into their science curriculum. These labs are equipped with a variety of reusable engineering materials that range from basic building blocks to programmable robotics. Materials are robust, easy to use, and are ideal for collaborative learning and invention.

Our middle school science teacher, Christian Stokes, is excited to offer his students an opportunity to work together to create new solutions, problem solve, and increase their confidence in STEM. His 8th grade students reflected on these new approaches to learning:

- We brainstorm ideas on how we are going to do a project.
- We learn how to build different things and think outside the box.
- Having a challenge when building makes doing the building more fun.
- By using critical thinking skills, we plan to build a robot or a car that moves on its own.

Our next Day of Giving is February 1, 2022. We hope we can count on you to give generously and make a positive impact in the lives of our students.



Ways to Support St. Martin's

If your workplace participates in the United Way or the Combined Federal Campaign and you would like your contribution to be directed to SMS, **please designate us by entering our number on your donor form. United Way (Member #8362) and Combined Federal Campaign (Member 85449)**

United Way #8362



CFC #85449



Other ways to support St. Martin's are through Amazon Smile, Good Search, Harris Teeter, Office Depot, or Weis4Schools. For more information, go to www.smsmd.org and click on "Support SMS."

Endowment Funds: Honor Roll of Donors

Every Gift Matters. Every Giver Makes an Impact

We thank our alumni, parents, parishioners, and friends for their generous support of our School Operating and Financial Aid Endowment Funds this past year. It is the collective impact of our entire community – including you – that enables us to continue to deliver on our mission. The principal of each Fund is invested responsibly in line with our Catholic values. The interest generated from the Operating Fund helps defray the cost of a Catholic education that tuition revenue alone does not cover. The interest generated from the Financial Aid Fund provides financial assistance to students who could not otherwise afford a St. Martin's education. These investments allow your generosity to make a difference year after year.

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to our School Operating Fund or to our Financial Aid Endowment Fund. On the envelope enclosed, please check the box to designate which Fund should receive your generous donation.

The Honor Roll of Donors, which will be included in our Summer DeTours, includes gifts donated to the Funds from June 16, 2021 – June 15, 2022. If you have questions regarding how you can support St. Martin's School and invest in our children's future, please contact Anne Gemunder, Director of Development, at agemunder@smsmd.org.



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