



FALL 2015

Enabling Student Success

By Julia Blanchard

It's hard for a student at Saint Martin to go unnoticed. When your work supervisors offer to help with homework, when teachers stay until 7:00 to listen to your story and help you understand the themes of *The Secret Life of Bees*, when the staff knows you by name and asks how your grandmother is doing, it's hard to fall through the cracks. Now it's even harder.

This year, Saint Martin launched a new program called the Academic Resource Center (dubbed the "ARC"). In the ARC, students gather throughout the day to work with faculty in groups of 2-4. In these small groups, students work on classwork as their faculty mentor guides them in goal-setting, self-advocacy, persistence, study skills, literacy development, and many other academic needs.



Ms. Blanchard and Lindsey practicing power poses learned from a TED talk.

This is my second year at Saint Martin, and last year, I was part of a team of faculty and staff members who researched this program and brought the ARC into existence. We were inspired by another Cristo Rey school in Waukegan, Illinois, that started an Academic Support Center to work individually with students in need of academic and literacy support throughout the school day. In just one semester, they saw improvement in overall GPA and retention. Although Saint Martin has had support programs in the past, most of these programs were held after school, when students often have extracurriculars, family commitments, and long bus rides home, and we believed that this in-school model was worth trying.

Sophomore Lindsey Estrada, for example, is the kind of student who could easily fall

through the cracks. She is quiet and polite, and her grades last year weren't low enough to raise any alarms. But a few teachers noticed that she wasn't performing to her potential, and they nominated her to be a part of the ARC.

During the first few weeks of school, Lindsey struggled in her Heritage Spanish class. When I suggested that she talk to her teacher for help, she became visibly nervous and made various excuses about why she couldn't.

I placed Lindsey with two other girls in a group that focused on self-advocacy. We watched a TED talk that explained how power poses can change our brain chemistry

Continued on page 4

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Mission

Saint Martin de Porres High School is Christ's enterprise dedicated to transforming urban Cleveland one student at a time.

Vision

We are committed to the values:
Work, Study, Serve, Lead, Pray.

Means

An innovative college preparatory curriculum rooted in the development of habits of mind and spirit.

A unique partnership with the business community reflected in our Corporate Work Study Program.

A caring, Catholic community.

Please send questions or comments regarding the newsletter to Caitlin H. McDermott at cmcdermott@stmdphs.org

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Our School Leaders

We challenge our students to use their God-given talents and gifts for the purpose of serving and leading others.

Student Senate



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Class of 2016



Meisha White

Class of 2017



Chase Perez



Cecilia Arteaga



Mersadies
Hunter



Jay Leslie

Class of 2018



Breanay
Clemons



Therese
McElrath



Genesis
Gonzalez

Class of 2019



Francisca
Bastidas



Wayne Speed



Joshua Rose

WELCOME TO THE SAINT MARTIN COMMUNITY!



Left to right:

Top row: Kerry Capka,
Caitlin Flikkema, Isaac Lorton

2nd Row: Megan McGowan, Brandi
McCormick, Ryan Hurley, Dan Thele

3rd Row: Brianna Lazarchik, Kathleen
Mearns, Nancy Lynch, Erin Conway

4th Row: Lindsay Alexander,
Marina Bach, Maria Tabbaa,
Ann Davis, Nathan Rayle

Bottom Row: Becca Armbruster,
Rebecca Nieves, Sam Musser,
Bill Worms

(Not pictured: Rick Fatur)

Closing the Opportunity and Skills Gap

The Education to Employment (e2e) Issue

By Rich Clark

“Educators oftentimes tout college as the golden ticket to the middle class. However, with tuition prices rocketing and the underemployment rate for recent college graduates creeping up, many have criticized the ‘college or bust’ mantra. Consequently, students are pursuing alternative pathways to prosperity.

If the ultimate goal is for young people to find a fulfilling, living-wage job/career, how are colleges making this connection between K-12 education and career? They are not.

Interesting enough, 72 percent of educators believe that curriculum adequately prepares students for work. Meanwhile, only 42 percent of employers agree that recent college grads are competent for entry-level positions. Students are equally disappointed, with less than half reporting that post-secondary studies prepared them for their job.

As a result, half of young adults with college degrees are either unemployed or underemployed. For black young adults, this statistic reaches as high as 68 percent.” (*This is taken from Schools That Can writings on this subject.*)

Over the years at Saint Martin we have had many success stories of students going directly to college, graduating, and finding employment, including three of our own employees: Tyler Hughley, Keyoni Rates, and Sam Musser! There are also stories that have some our graduates without degrees, or even with degrees, and saddled with high tuition debt and no good job.



Through our collaboration with Schools That Can (www.schoolthatcan.org) we are exploring other pathways to college and employment. We have been chosen as a test site for a unique way of “skinning the cat.” We are meeting with the founder of

180Skills(www.180skills.com), Joe Kitterman, and his staff along with a few of our Corporate Work Study Program partners including ABB, Parker Hannifin, and Lincoln Electric. This session is designed for us to listen to our partners and find out what skills they need from future employees. 180Skills has over 6,000 modules of online training (presently being used by Boeing, Parker Hannifin and other well known international companies). They are also equipped to design specific modules for each company as needed.

The pathway to college that we have been solely committed to is: do well in high school, immediately enroll in college, get job. This new pathway would be: do well in high school, receive some online certifications for skills in demand by our work study partners, get employed and then in two years begin to explore post-secondary education. In effect this is what many of us did. We worked and went to school at night either for bachelors or graduate degrees. The advantages are many, especially having a good idea of what you want to pursue academically and what skills you need, to say nothing of more maturity. In many cases, the employer will pay part or all of the education!

Our college counselors urge our students to go to colleges they can afford and study in a field where there are jobs. Some of our students are not ready for that and have been going to Tri-C. This new “e2e” program will provide an option to take another pathway to college. This is an exciting idea that seems to fit the needs of some of our students. We are going to offer this option to begin in the second semester to those members of the Class of 2016 who are going to Tri-C. The downside of the traditional college pathway as mentioned above leaves students with



high debt, no degree and few skills for the workplace. The downside to the e2e option would be a decision down the road not to attend college, however there would be little or no debt and the student would have employment and skills for a medium to high skill job which generally begin at the \$40,000 level. Stay tuned as we learn more about this exciting opportunity.



Rich is the founding President of Saint Martin de Porres High School. Rich earned his Bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and has a Master's degree in Religious Education from

Loyola University, Chicago. Rich taught theology from 1973-1991 at his alma mater, Loyola Academy. In 1991, he became the first lay principal of Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland. Rich and his wife Moira, Dean of Student Life and Formation at Magnificat High School in Rocky River, reside in Lakewood and have three children: Will, Kevin, and Bridey.

Impactful Data

By Caitlin McDermott

On any given day, you could stop almost any “staffulty” member in our halls and ask them to share a fact or data point about the impact that Saint Martin is making in the lives of our 403 students, their families and greater Cleveland community.

Ann Davis, or any team member from the Corporate Work Study Program office, might share that our students are working at over 100 companies in the greater Cleveland area, 79 full-time equivalent positions, generating \$2.3 million for our school’s operating expenses, while learning valuable skills and habits.

Chris Tudico, our Director of College Counseling, could share that 88% of the Class of 2015 directly enrolled in college this Fall. This is the highest percentage in our school’s history!

Our Director of Admissions, Nancy Lynch, could share how we are connecting with families in Cleveland who need support. The families of our freshman class have an average household income of \$21,000 to support a family of four. We are grateful that the 123 students of the Class of 2019 found the path to our community and can participate in

programs that will guide them to postsecondary and life success.



Our Principal, Gary Sardon, Jr., could share that fewer of our students are in “academic trouble” this year, compared with last year. Only 13 of 403 students (3%) are

receiving failing grades in one or more subjects, compared with over 27 students at this time last year. Every teacher at Saint Martin deserves recognition for this improvement and our Academic Resource Center (which you’ve read about on page 1) also deserves credit for our results.

I would share with you how our fundraising progress is 8% ahead of last year. We are proud and grateful that 151 donors see hope in our school and students and have demonstrated their belief in our mission by

supporting our Annual Fund. Our students’ families rely upon the generosity of others. I hope that you will consider supporting our community and the impact that Saint Martin is making in urban Cleveland by making a gift to our Annual Fund.

If you haven’t been to our school recently, we’d welcome the opportunity for you to visit. We could take you on a tour to meet our students and staffulty, hear other impactful data, including the upcoming season of college acceptances for the Class of 2016! Please contact the Advancement Office at (216) 881-1689 ext. 320 to make arrangements.



Caitlin joined the Saint Martin community in January 2011 as an Advancement Coordinator. In June 2013 she was named Director of Annual Fund & Special Events. Caitlin

earned her Bachelor’s degree from Loyola University Maryland, a Master’s in Nonprofit Administration from John Carroll University, and was a member of the 2013 class of Cleveland Bridge Builders.

ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS

continued from page 1

and make us feel more confident, so we practiced these poses at the ARC. In the following weeks, I took the girls on a Self-Advocacy Scavenger Hunt, where they had to walk around the school and ask questions of teachers and staff members. As we practiced, the girls slowly grew more comfortable and confident introducing themselves and asking questions. At one point, Lindsey asked me if we were going to keep talking to teachers. When I said yes, she ran ahead of the group, saying, “I want to go talk to my Spanish teacher! Let’s talk to her first!”

This quarter, Lindsey’s GPA is over 1.5 points higher than her GPA average last year.

In her end-of-quarter reflection, she wrote that because of the ARC, “I’m slowly starting to improve on speaking in front of people and turning in late work and keeping my grades up.”

Lindsey is only one success story of many. Every day, there are small victories, and many faculty members who help create them. Marina Bach, a literacy specialist, joined our community this year to co-create and co-direct the ARC, and we are accompanied every day by seven incredible faculty members across four disciplines and every grade level. But the people who are truly the heart of the ARC are the students – the students who are bright and interested and eager, and who,

because of the small, guided environment of the ARC, are able to flourish and grow.



Julia joined the Saint Martin community in August 2014 as a Saint Martin Volunteer Corps member. For the 2014-2015 year, she worked as an Assistant College Counselor and helped

with the Saint Martin Drama Club. This school year, she works in the Academic Resource Center and teaches a senior theatre class. She earned her Bachelor’s degree from John Carroll University in 2014.

A Fortuitous Return

By Sam Musser

When people find out that I graduated from Saint Martin de Porres High School and am now an employee here, there are some interesting questions that arise, but most often, “What made you return?”

The simple answer is the community. Since I graduated in 2008, I went off to college, worked for a couple years, and moved back to Cleveland. Saint Martin has transformed quite a bit. Most of my teachers and mentors have moved on to seek different adventures, but that only makes room for other influential people to affect each new student. I can't recall the days I didn't want to write a paper or go to work, but I can remember the people that surrounded me with encouragement and motivation. That is how I knew that coming back to Saint Martin as an employee was the right move. By surrounding myself with inspiring people again, I wanted to be able to be that person for others.

Working at Saint Martin wasn't my motivation for moving back to Cleveland in July. The move was sudden and unexpected and I wasn't sure where I was going to end up living or working. I applied for jobs all over the country, but nothing felt right. I didn't have a direction or reason to go anywhere in particular and I assumed that staying in Cleveland was only temporary. When the Operations Coordinator position became available, it felt fortuitous, a blessing, coincidental. Whatever word one might use to describe the perfect timing of a job opening at Saint Martin. You know that feeling you get in your heart when something feels just right? This was it. I knew I had to come back to Saint Martin because it gave me

time. A time to be challenged and to grow, to be mentored and to mentor, to give and to receive. Being a part of the Saint Martin community does that to anyone blessed enough to walk through its doors.

Fortunately for me, and hopefully for many others, I never felt separated from this community. Despite the years and miles I have put between graduation and now, I was welcomed back with open arms. I recognized a few faces, yet most I didn't. After a couple months, I feel just as much at home as I did as a student. It's in a different context and I have a comfier chair, but the same sense of belonging is there. I was proud to be a student and I'm proud to be an employee, and most of all, I'm proud to be Saint Martin.



Sam joined the Saint Martin community as the CWSP Operations Coordinator in Fall 2015. Sam was the Valedictorian of the first graduating class of Saint Martin de Porres High School in 2008.

Sam earned her Bachelor's degree from Miami University. Prior to returning to Saint Martin, she spent two years living in Malawi working for a Cleveland nonprofit, H.E.L.P. Malawi, as the International Volunteer Coordinator for a local primary school.

Join the Movement!

The Corporate Work Study Program is seeking new corporate partners for the 2016-2017 academic year. Are you interested in providing professional opportunities to a high school student that will contribute to your organization? Are you ready to witness the transformation of a student as he or she learns about the career fields open to them, gaining self-confidence, professionalism, and personal insight? If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the program, contact Ann Davis at (216) 881-1689, ext. 311 or adavis@stmdphs.org.

A Step Along the Way

Groundbreaking Ceremony,

Join us Saturday, February 6th, 10 a.m.

As we break ground on our new school building. Your support will enable us to build the school our students and teachers deserve. If you are interested in learning more, we'd welcome the opportunity to meet with you. Please contact Sarah Lautenbach at (216) 881-1689 ext. 342 to accompany us on the path to transformation.



A Step Along the Way

BRICK AND MORTAR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Guiding Students to High School

By Ryan Gillespie



At the beginning of Shavel Smith's eighth grade year at Saint Francis Elementary School, Shavel admitted being nervous for high school. She describes having had a rough transition two years ago from Willson Elementary to Saint Francis due to different expectations. She was worried high school would be another challenge to overcome. However, participating in the Early High School Program at Saint Martin has turned her fear into anticipation and excitement for next year.

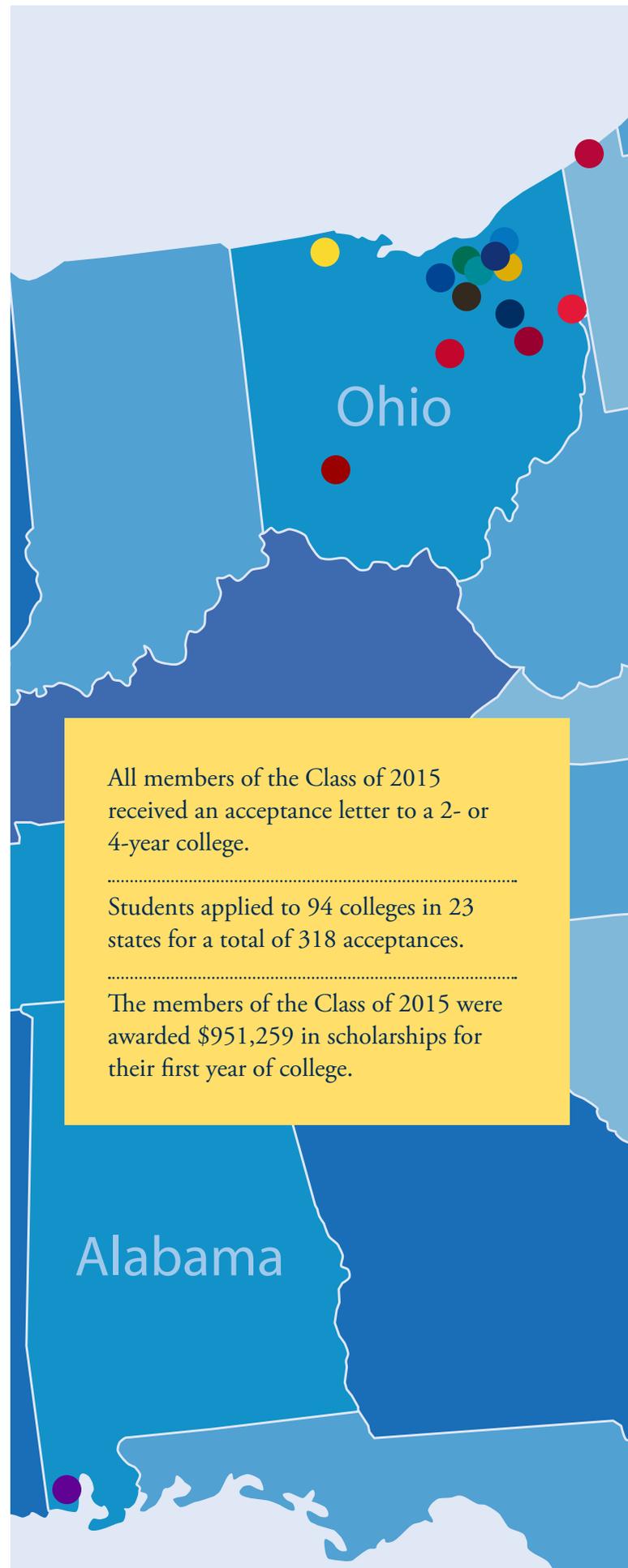
The Early High School Program launched in Fall 2015 to the eighth grade students of Saint Francis, including Shavel. The students attend Saint Martin once a week for approximately two hours. Following a new and

innovative curriculum, they have studied the unique qualities of water while using the resources of a high school science lab to learn about the practical application of math and data to their studies. Shavel's face lit up as she described the class, "This has been so different from anything that I've done before. I especially liked getting water samples from the lake. We tested it for safety, and then did presentations."

Currently, Shavel is at ease about high school, primarily because of the Early High School teacher, Mrs. Kirby. Shavel describes her as being so nice and the students can tell that she really cares about them. She says that she has always liked science, but Mrs. Kirby has made her even more excited about it because of the way she interacts with students and all of the labs they do. Shavel feels ready for high school and is hoping to attend Saint Martin next school year.



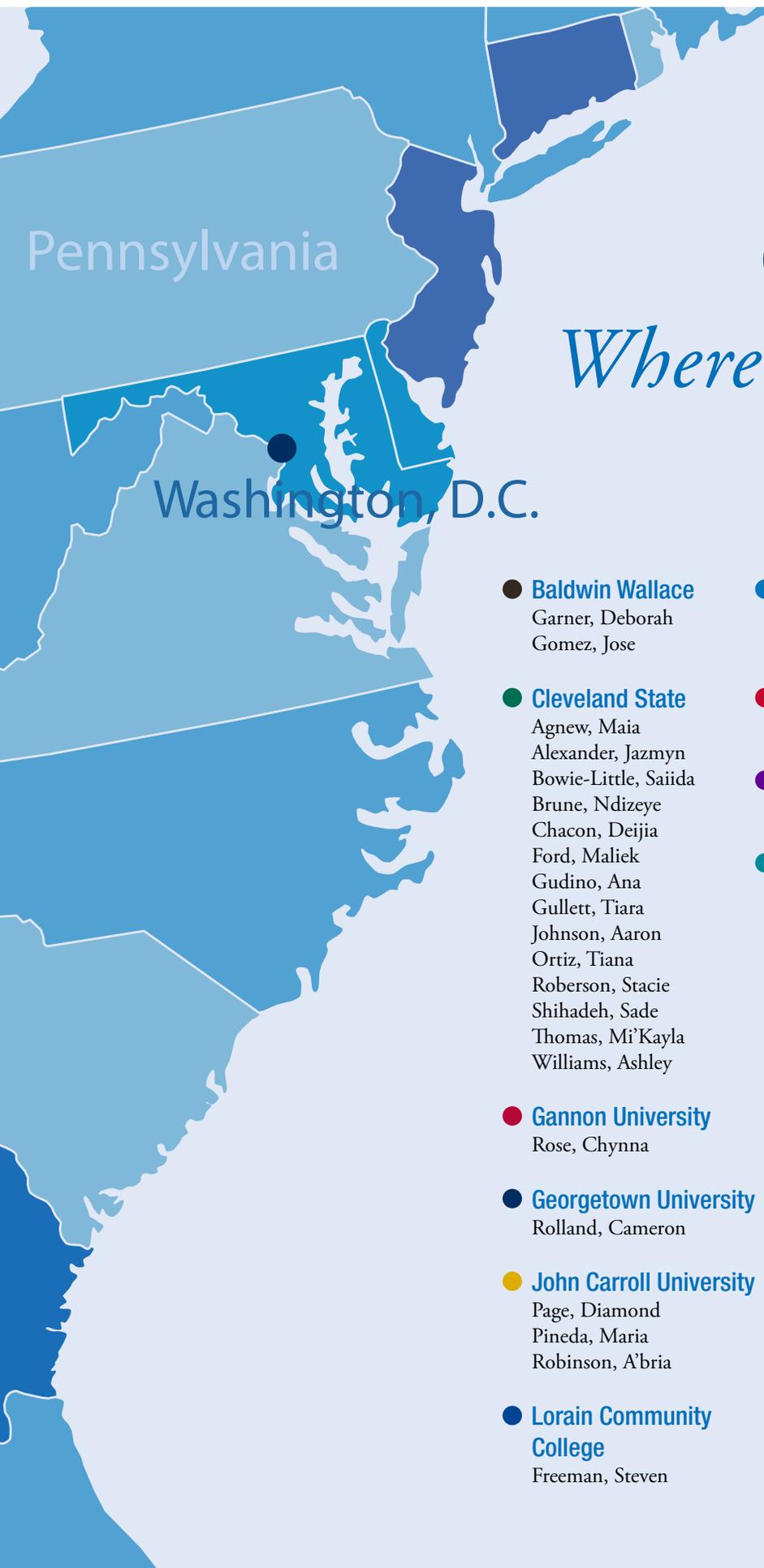
Ryan joined the Saint Martin community in August of 2014 working in the Office of Admissions, and has since been named the Director of the Early High School Program. Prior to working at Saint Martin, Ryan earned his Master's in Education from the University of Notre Dame as a part of the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program. As a part of this program, he taught middle school social studies for two years in Atlanta, GA.



All members of the Class of 2015 received an acceptance letter to a 2- or 4-year college.

Students applied to 94 colleges in 23 states for a total of 318 acceptances.

The members of the Class of 2015 were awarded \$951,259 in scholarships for their first year of college.



Pennsylvania

Washington, D.C.

Class of 2015 *Where Are They Now?*

- **Baldwin Wallace**
Garner, Deborah
Gomez, Jose
- **Notre Dame College**
Hines, Quintasia
McCrary, Aleceia
- **University of Akron**
Anderson, Malik
Arnold, Brittany
Cabell, Shaleya
Evans, Joseph
Hare, Mica
Huffman, Storm
Robinson, Cameron
Strong, Imani
Wheat, Deon
- **Cleveland State**
Agnew, Maia
Alexander, Jazmyn
Bowie-Little, Saiida
Brune, Ndizeye
Chacon, Deijia
Ford, Maliek
Gudino, Ana
Gullett, Tiara
Johnson, Aaron
Ortiz, Tiana
Roberson, Stacie
Shihadeh, Sade
Thomas, Mi'Kayla
Williams, Ashley
- **Ohio State - Mansfield**
Kokal, Emily
- **Spring Hill College**
Greene, Amberniek
- **University of Toledo**
Hall, Kierra
Jackson-Miller, Jahnyce
James, Kenya
Johnson, Daylan
Wagner, Katricia
Williams, Cameron
Young, Sharia
- **Gannon University**
Rose, Chynna
- **Georgetown University**
Rolland, Cameron
- **John Carroll University**
Page, Diamond
Pineda, Maria
Robinson, A'bria
- **Ursuline College**
Reddick, Kahtrina
- **Walsh University**
Herring, Brandi
Johnson, Niesha
Terry, Asia
- **Lorain Community College**
Freeman, Steven
- **Tri-C**
Allen, Erin
Bastidas, Carmen
Blackman, Corey
Brooks, DeJuan
Ford, Sydni
Gonzalez, Guillermina
Gordon, Ciarra
Griffin, LeShawn
Hankins, Shalae
Hunt, Fredrick
Johnson, Alexis-Deonna
Kelbacher, Anthony
Kimbrow, Jasmine
Marbley, Ravon
Mitchell, Danielle
Morrison, Tamara
Murphy, Mahogany
Peterson, Frankie
Pride, Dion
Simmons, Briyonna
Smith, Sharonda
Soltis, Cassandra
Wagner, Elexis
Ward, Johnny
Wright, John
- **Wittenberg University**
Jones-Walker, Andrew
- **Youngstown State University**
Ward, Rhameik

Building Skills & Finding Family in Saint Martin Sports

By Mary Carney

The life of a family has its great joys and also brings challenges. Families bring together all sorts of different perspectives, attitudes, and ways of communicating. Families witness and are present for many of the same experiences in life. They see the good, the bad, the ugly...and as each day comes to an end, even in all the differences they are united because of the experience they have shared together.

On November 12th, we celebrated our Fall Sports Awards night, celebrating the 68 student-athletes participating in co-ed varsity soccer, men's and women's cross country, and junior varsity and varsity volleyball. The best moments of the event came when leaders from each of the three fall sports introduced their team and provided an overview of their seasons. Each leader began mentioning the athletic accomplishments of their seasons.

We heard about junior, Justus Harris, breaking the Saint Martin school record for cross country as he ran under twenty minutes at the Andrews Osborne Cross Country meet; while junior, Nautica Jefferson, became the first female runner in school history to run in the OHSAA district race.



We listened as we heard about a tough loss to Horizon by the soccer team, where the Saint Martin Lions scored four goals in the final five minutes and were close to tying it with two shots on goal but came up short. They did not win the game, but they see it as a great victory for their team in their season.

We celebrated as we heard about the victory of our volleyball athletes at the First Annual Ohio Cristo Rey Volleyball Match in Columbus when our junior varsity and varsity teams came home with trophies and stories of a long bus ride and meeting students at their sister-schools in southern Ohio.

What was focused on and expressed with greater enthusiasm throughout the reflection of their seasons was the way their teams became their families, and their teammates



were their brothers and sisters. Senior volleyball players, Kerri Stewart and Sha’Nautica Gardner, focused on how the team was able to persevere in their season after losing the first several games, to come back and play hard against their toughest opponents because they found humility in asking and receiving help from their teammates and learned to trust one another as sisters. They communicated in the bus rides home, encouraging one another, celebrating what they did well and talking about what could be improved.

Soccer senior, Demetrius Darmond, shared a reflection he and teammate, Corryn Freeman, wrote, stating, “When we started playing soccer three years ago, I didn’t know anything about soccer, I barely knew how to properly kick the ball. As the seasons went on I learned many new things about soccer, but I will remember most what I learned about teamwork. I learned about the way I work with others, the way we can help each other out, the way that our energies feed off of one another.” They learned they were this unit, who may have their conflicts at times, but through it all they had to stay together for the goals and betterment of the team.

Senior, Tavaris White, a four-year varsity runner, knows the commitment it takes to be a member of the cross country team. He has seen the team evolve from just seven runners as a freshman to twenty-one runners as a senior. He has had to work through academic

and organizational struggles, the loss of family members, and the change of teammates and coaches. Each year, he has played a major role in forming this cross country team, a sport not always seen as a team sport, into a family. He reflected on how his involvement in cross country, with his teammates, has left him with marks on his mind, body and heart. He went on to name each of his teammates and identify them as his brother and his sister. Sharing how their runs together, whether talking or just being alongside one another, linked them to one another.

Competition, skill development, health and fitness are all important pieces of the athletic seasons, but what continues to be the most essential piece of their involvement in sports has been their ability to form relationships with others. To know one another’s stories and work towards a common goal that is greater than just themselves.



Mary joined the Saint Martin community in August of 2011 as the Tenth Grade Theology teacher. In August of 2013 she continued to teach but also became the Director of Student Activities, and in June of 2015 she was named Director of Student Life, overseeing both Athletics and Activities. Mary earned her Bachelor’s degree from Loyola University Maryland in 2010.

“Why I Participate...”

This past season, I took the opportunity to talk with students and understand why they choose to participate and become involved in school teams, activities, and events. I was moved by their responses.



Senior soccer and softball player, Reallity Doss, wrote, “I choose to participate because it brings me closer to people. I play because I gain friendships closer than my family...I feel loved and wanted. My team is my motivation to be better.”



Junior volleyball player, Delcina Robertson, explained, “I choose to participate because throughout the season we go from being just a team to a family.”



Involved senior, Keiara Farrar, wrote, “I participate because I like to see the changes I can make in people’s lives and the changes I can make in my own life. I get to step out of my comfort zone, overcome challenges, and make everlasting friendships.”



Senior actress in the fall play, “The Outsiders,” Keilah Yisrael, stated, “I participate because I want to try something new and step out of my comfort zone. It pushes me to learn more and become more experienced in things, like theater. I have stage fright and I can get shy in front of a crowd, but I’m hoping that actually being in the play this year instead of being a stage manager, it will help me show people that I have great character and I have pride in sharing my voice with others.”

We Pause to Remember and Pray

By Virginia Malloy



Saint Martin lost a deeply cherished member of our community this fall.

On October 22, 2015, just a few days after receiving a very difficult lung cancer diagnosis, Marie King, our long-time cook and friend passed away at Fairview Hospital. Marie was a member of our community for close to 10 years and was deeply loved and appreciated by students and staff alike for her warmth and care and for her wonderful cooking.

She was the loving wife of Jim King and the mother of three grown children. She was a doting grandmother of two grandsons and was eagerly anticipating the birth of her first granddaughter in December.

The students and staff had just delivered cards and posters and guardian angels to her hospital room. The news of her passing came as a very sad and very sudden shock to our Community.

Our Community gathered on November 2nd, the Feast of All Souls, for our annual Remembrance Chapel. As always it was a very meaningful and poignant Chapel Service made all the more beautiful by the lovely remembrances shared by the kitchen staff who remembered Marie in these words:

We didn't get to say good-bye to Marie, and we miss her very much. We just want to thank her for some things... maybe you will get to know a little of what she was like to us:

Thanks for being our friend for ten years. It wasn't long enough.

Thanks for all the encouragement and support.

Thanks for being tough. We think you had to be.

Thanks for being there for us during hard times. We hope we were there for you.

Thanks for sharing stories of your family and always wanting to hear about ours.

Thanks for knowing how to bait a hook.

Thanks for telling us we looked beautiful in our dumb hats every morning.

Thanks for being caring, kind and strong. We miss you every day.

Your Friends,

The SMDP Kitchen Staff

Marie, go with God and rest in eternal peace.

Virginia joined the Saint Martin community in 2008 as a Campus Minister. After teaching 11th grade Theology for three years, Virginia was named the VP Mission. Her new role includes caring for the spirituality and sense of community for the adults of Saint Martin. Virginia earned her Bachelor's degree in Theology and German at the University of Notre Dame. Virginia and her husband, Jim, have four children.

Activities Update

In the world of activities and performance groups, we saw the start of some new partnerships, offering more exciting experiences for our students to participate in.



- On our first trip to Hyland Software to learn computer programming and robotics with Hyland professionals, 19 freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors, were eager to learn Java and C++ coding on a DOUBLE MONITOR (their eyes lit up when they realized both monitors were for them!).

- A group of a dozen freshmen and sophomore girls took on the challenge of participating in an eight week program with Liz Ferro and her organization, Girls With Sole, a



non-profit that provides fitness and wellness programs to empower the minds, bodies and souls of girls at risk or who have

experienced abuse of any kind. At the end of the program, the girls had the opportunity to run a race. Crossing the finish line, the girls realized that they are capable of setting goals, achieving them and understanding the power and resilience they have within themselves.

- Without a high school football team, freshman science teacher, Chip Martin, began Saint Martin's first flag football league with over 40 of our gentlemen (nearly one-third of our male population!) participating in weekly practices and games. This activity will continue to grow and become a stronger presence on campus.



Value Our Lives

By Ryan Hurley

“Stop the Violence!” was the cry that hung in the air on a warm fall evening in late September. The voices carrying this banner belonged to a collection of Saint Martin students, parents, staff, and community members who had responded to the call of Saint Martin senior Naudia Loftis. Frustrated with Cleveland’s rising violence Naudia worked with Saint Martin teachers to organize the “Value Our Lives” rally in honor of her cousin who was struck down by gun violence in 2012. Via posters, social media and local news outlets, Loftis implored our community to join her in a positive message of hope, change, and peace. As a result of witnessing Naudia’s leadership on the evening news, individuals and organizations began calling Saint Martin to find out how they could support Naudia in her efforts to bring peace and justice.



One unique opportunity came in the form of an invitation to attend a forum with Cleveland Chief of Police Calvin Williams, Cuyahoga County Sheriff Clifford Pinckney and FBI Director James Comey, who was in Cleveland to discuss community and police relations. In a room filled with some of Cleveland’s most powerful community members, six Saint Martin students and I were recognized as one

of only three high schools invited to attend the important meeting. Special recognition was given to Naudia and Saint Martin junior Sean Hairston who were both invited to present a question to the three law enforcement leaders. At the conclusion of the event, students had the opportunity to meet Chief Williams and Sheriff Pickney. When asked what they had gained from the experience, students commented on a new sense of relatability. “They seem distant on the news, but they’re regular people who need our help, and who want to work with us” was a shared sentiment. Still, Naudia is interested in probing further for solutions and action steps. With her newfound voice she continues to gather and inspire other students to develop voices as powerful as her own.



Ryan joined the Saint Martin community in August 2015 as a Humanities teacher and instructional coach. Previously he served as a teacher and administrator for nine years in North

Carolina. Ryan earned his Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Theology from Malone University and a Master’s in School Administration from North Carolina State University. He and his wife, Lauren, reside with their two sons, Darwin and Truman, in Lakewood, OH.



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