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Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.

— St. John Paul II

With challenges come opportunities

I would like to thank each of you for the support you have given to our Catholic school community. I would also like to thank you for being so welcoming in my first year as superintendent. I look forward to continuing our work together.

This first year had its fair share of challenges. We witnessed multiple, heart-wrenching storms impacting our neighbors to the east and west, devastating deaths in our



Dr. RaeNell
HOUSTON
SUPERINTENDENT

community, the challenges that came with getting our pilot programs started, and the threatened loss of non-public school funding from the state. However, with great challenge comes great opportunity, and

I am proud of the manner in which our Catholic school community responded.

During the 2018 legislative session, we faced the possibility of losing all state funding for non-public schools. Given the complexities of the situation, I believe we fared as well as we could have hoped for. Required services sustained a cut of approximately 10 percent, but the school lunch program supplement was fully

See **DR. HOUSTON** page 19 ►



Photo | COURTESY HISPANIC APOSTOLATE

Hispanic Apostolate distributes school supplies, backpacks

Healthy Blue and the Hispanic Apostolate collaborated July 18 on "The School Kit Giveaway" campaign, geared to children ages 4-12 years old, to provide free vision and dental screenings, aqua safety, fire safety in a safe house by the Kenner Fire Department and healthy snacks. Daughters of Charity provided 78 eye exams, and 464 backpacks were distributed.



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DR. HOUSTON

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funded. In addition, the TOPS program was fully funded. While TOPS does not affect Catholic schools, it significantly impacts our high school graduates. Lastly, the Louisiana Scholarship Program was fully funded.

During the 2017-18 academic year, we expanded current initiatives and started a number of new initiatives, including special needs programs, blended learning programs and a distinguished alumni ceremony. This year, we supported existing programs for exceptional learners at St. Michael Special School and Holy Rosary Academy and High School. In addition, we piloted an inclusion program at The St. Paul's School, and strengthened the programs at St. Benilde and Our Lady of Divine Providence. I am blessed to be a part of this initiative, one that is so close to my heart, and I am proud that our schools are embracing students with developmental disabilities. During the 2018-19 school year, we will see approximately 10 specialized learning programs throughout the archdiocese.

'Blended Learning' model

Other initiatives such as Blended Learning will continue to expand to more schools. Blended learning is an instructional model that leverages the use of technology to meet the diverse learning needs of young scholars. This model proves to be beneficial for students as it provides a mixture of small-group instruction and personalized, differentiated, learning that helps teachers meet the individual needs of their students. In addition to our Seton Blended Learn-

ing School at St. Rita, New Orleans, I am excited to announce we will have at least 10 schools participating in our Blended Learning Pilot Program during the 2018-19 academic year.

This year, the Office of Catholic Schools successfully launched the first annual Distinguished Alumni Ceremony. We honored a wide array of Catholic school alumni from the greater New Orleans area and other parts of the country.

We are extremely proud to have recognized outstanding Catholic school alumni whose contributions visibly attest to the efficacy of Catholic education in faith formation, character development and civic responsibility. At a beautiful ceremony, Archbishop Aymond and I recognized these outstanding individuals, and we thanked them for their dedication to our faith and to Catholic education. They are truly awesome examples for

our current students.

Lastly, I am grateful for the generosity of the many donors throughout the year who contributed to our tuition assistance fund and helped grant more children the gift of a Catholic education. Your gifts made a profound difference! We awarded tuition assistance to over 300 Catholic school students and their families. I humbly ask that you continue to contribute generously to the Champions of Catholic Educa-

tion tuition assistance fund so that more children may reap the benefits of Catholic education.

As we begin a new school year, our goal is to educate the hearts and minds of our students. Please join me in lifting our entire Catholic school community in prayer, that we may preach and live the Gospel teachings as we form the young church. Thank you for having faith in Catholic schools!

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The Good Shepherd School moves to Gentilly

By Beth Donze

Clarion Herald

The Good Shepherd Nativity Mission School, founded in 2001 by the late Jesuit Father Harry Tompson to provide a Catholic education to New Orleans' most underserved children, will welcome nearly 300 students to its new and expanded Gentilly campus Aug. 21.

The 38,000-square-foot, two-story school building, which rises on a half-block parcel of land bounded by Agriculture Street, New Orleans Street and A.P. Tureaud Avenue, boasts 20 classrooms for STEM-based instruction, a dedicated science/maker space, an art room, a multimedia library and a 200-seat cafeteria-multipurpose center.

Good Shepherd's new home is more than double the size of its former hub in New Orleans' Central Business District – a 15,000-square-foot building at 353 Baronne St., whose sale helped fund construction of the new \$11.5 million campus.

"We wanted to move to a neighborhood where many of our families lived and a neighborhood that needed what Father Tompson started," said Thomas Moran, school president, noting that 41 percent of the student body resides in the three adjacent zip codes.

"This neighborhood was



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

The Good Shepherd Nativity Mission School has relocated from its original CBD campus on Baronne Street to new, 38,000-square-foot quarters at Agriculture Street and A.P. Tureaud Avenue. The entrance at 1839 Agriculture St. is marked by a rooftop cross. Features include 20 spacious classrooms, a science/maker space and a 200-seat cafeteria.

largely abandoned when people didn't come back in droves after the storm," Moran said. "Well, we're now saying, 'It's OK to be here. We're here at the very first part of A.P. Tureaud.' It's an anchor that says, 'Come to this neighborhood; move to this neighborhood; start a business in this neighborhood.'"

Entrance leads to atrium

The bottom floor of the sleek new school building, designed by Blitch Knevel

Architects and built by main contractor Ryan Gootee General Contractors, is clad in bands of brown and beige brick. Insulated metal paneling punctuates the exterior of the second story, and asymmetrically positioned windows of varying sizes give the interior of each classroom a unique look and ample natural light.

The school's main entrance at 1839 Agriculture St., marked by a rooftop cross, leads to a soaring octagonal atrium, waiting area, quiet

prayer space and offices for staff including a full-time social worker and registered nurse.

A circular mosaic on the atrium's terrazzo marble floor depicts Good Shepherd's seal. Other nods to the school's mission and history will include a bust of Father Tompson and walls honoring school founders and patrons of Good Shepherd's ongoing "Shepherding Hope" capital campaign.

Large, flexible eating space

Students in pre-K4, kindergarten and first grade will be based on the first floor. Their spacious classrooms feature brightly painted cubbies and adjoining restrooms.

"It is designed so pre-K4 through first grade never have to leave the bottom floor," Moran said.

A 200-seat cafeteria and adjacent multi-purpose area means that Good Shepherd students no longer will have to eat in three shifts as they did at the CBD location. Flexible seating will allow the space to host various functions, such as school Masses, assemblies, parent-faculty meetings and rainy-day re-

cess, Moran said.

Good Shepherd's new cafeteria space was designed with the potential to add a commercial kitchen, should enrollment reach the 300-student minimum required by archdiocesan School Food Services for on-site food prep. Until then, meals will continue to be delivered to campus by School Food Services, Moran said.

A mosaic of 250 tiles, painted by members of last year's student body, eventually will grace a cafeteria wall, he added.

"We asked our students to paint a tile with either a New Orleans or a Good Shepherd theme," Moran said. "Some (tiles) have something on the saints; some have something on Baronne Street; some have tributes to Father Tompson."

Reminders of former campus

Adjoining wings on the second level will accommodate Good Shepherd's oldest grade divisions: grades 2-3; and a middle-school wing for students in grades 4-7. Classrooms, located off wide, taupe-painted hallways and sporting vinyl composite flooring, have doorway overhangs and accent walls painted in bold hues such as orange, purple and turquoise. White boards, Smart boards and all new furnishings are included in each instructional space.

"All our students will have their own little world in which to learn, based on the age that they are," Moran said. "It's almost three schools in one."

The heart of the second floor will be Good Shepherd's carpeted library/multi-media center, which will also serve as another site for school Masses. The technology hub will have "a very religious feel," Moran said, noting the addition of sacred items from the former campus including a painting of the Blessed Mother, the school seal and a large stained glass window depicting Christ saying, "Let the children come to me"

See **SHEPHERD** page 21 ►

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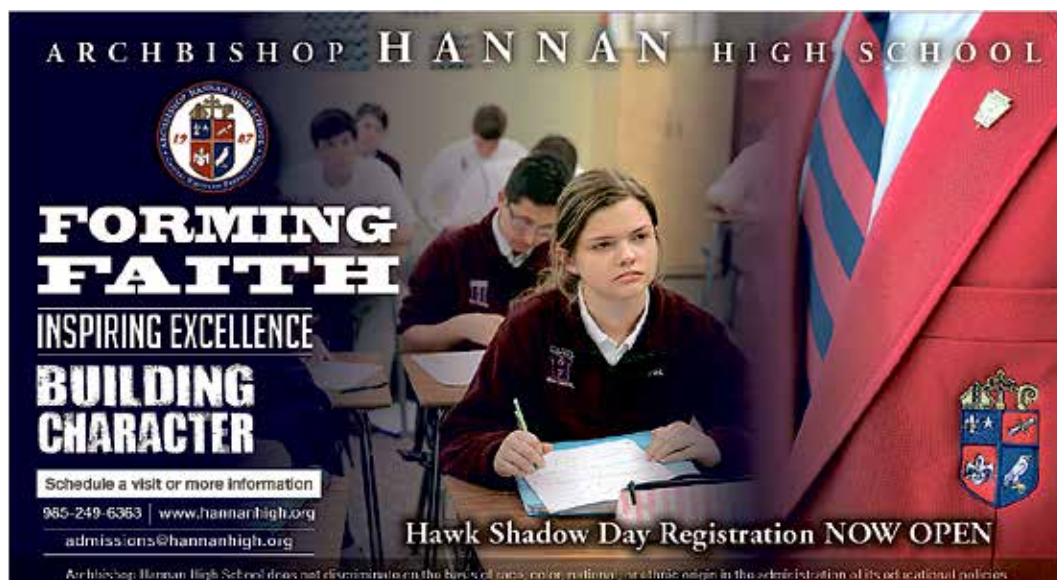
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SHEPHERD

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from St. Matthew's Gospel.

The elementary school, founded as a ministry of Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans, will stay connected to its CBD roots by continuing to celebrate Founders Day, graduation and other special Masses at the Baronne Street church, Moran said.

Expanded outdoor space

Recess and P.E., once confined to a small blacktop at the former campus, will take place on a purchased lot on Agriculture Street, opposite the school's main entrance. This multi-use area will accommodate a paved, full-length basketball court, playground equipment, a dozen faculty parking spaces and separate green spaces for athletics and an urban garden, Moran said. Younger children will play in an enclosed yard just off their first-floor classrooms, he added.

Another outdoor amenity

— a drop-off circle on New Orleans Street — will be another boon for Good Shepherd families who no longer will have to navigate the traffic and parking hurdles of the CBD.

Growing demand spurs move

Although Father Tompson's intention was to locate his school in the CBD to accommodate families working in the Downtown corridor, the original, eight-classroom school building was becoming cramped as enrollment grew. Last school year, Good Shepherd posted the highest enrollment in its 18-year history: 157 students in grades K-7.

The new campus is enabling the addition of pre-K4 and two sections of each grade level, raising Good Shepherd's anticipated 2018-19 enrollment to a record 275 students, Moran said. They will learn in classrooms ranging in size from 750 to 1,000 square feet, rather than the 500-square-foot classrooms they had on Baronne.

Good Shepherd's faculty, now nearly double in size from two years ago, will be able to access kitchen-like storage nooks in their classrooms and a faculty workroom in which they can plan lessons, grade student work and answer emails at assigned laptop stations. A separate teachers' lounge is provided downstairs.

"Our teachers at the old building would do their lesson plans at their classroom desk, at the coffee shop next door or at the cafeteria table," Moran said. "They are in awe of the space!"

Unique model a success

Father Tompson, who passed away four months before his dream school opened, envisioned a place that would educate urban, low-income children in an environment that nurtured and cared for the mind, body and soul of each child, with tuition costs paid for by benefactors and other community supporters. (All Good

See **SHEPHERD** page 22 ►



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

A terrazzo marble mosaic of the school seal, pictured in its grouting phase earlier this summer, will dominate the atrium floor.



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SHEPHERD

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Shepherd students qualify for free/reduced lunch and are recipients of the Louisiana Scholarship Program, or “vouchers”).

Good Shepherd’s successful model includes an extended school day and school year; a low student-teacher ratio; parental commitment and involvement; guided assessment and remediation services for students with academic challenges; and support of graduates through their high school and college years.

As a result of this holistic approach, more than 90 percent of Good Shepherd graduates currently are en-

rolled in college, and several others are in the military or employed in meaningful jobs. In contrast, only 59 percent of low-income children in New Orleans attend college and only 46 percent do nationwide.

“All of our kids have an iPad,” said Moran, noting that the Good Shepherd staff includes math and ELA interventionists who ensure that students’ skills are not only at grade level, but above it.

“Many of our students come to us with achievement gaps, and we have to close those gaps fast,” Moran said. “Our curriculum is designed to do that – it’s very technology-based, very inquiry-based, very STEM-based.”



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

Workers paint one of the new campus’ 20 classrooms. They feature brightly colored accent walls and range in size from 750 to 1,000 square feet.

Building community

School leaders also believe the new campus will become another “anchor” in a New Orleans neighborhood that still bears scars from Hurricane Katrina. Moran has offered use of the facility’s meeting spaces to community groups in the A.P. Tureaud neighborhood that advocate for first-time homebuyers, retailers, street paving and other quality-of-life features such as walking paths, urban gardens and green spaces.

“One of the things we’re hoping to do is utilize our proximity to St. Aug, which is just three blocks away, and

Dillard University is close to us as well. We’ve got some built-in opportunities there, tutoring of our students,” said Moran, noting the warm welcome The Good Shepherd School has received from neighbors watching the building take shape over the 10-month construction period.

One of those neighbors, third-generation blacksmith Darryl Reeves, already has expressed an interest in collaborating with students on projects connected with his craft.

“(Reeves) is a representation of what the A.P. Tureaud

neighborhood has meant to the city over the years as a center of the city’s African-American artisan community,” Moran said. “His family is rooted here. They never left.”

A ribbon-cutting/community celebration featuring student-led tours will be held Sept. 28. The \$11.5 million economic development project is being funded by the \$3 million sale of the Baronne Street location; \$2.4 million in new market tax credits; and more than \$4.2 million raised to date through the “Shepherding Hope” capital campaign. The campaign seeks to raise an additional \$2-2.5 million so the school does not have to touch its reserves. To contribute or to learn more, visit www.thegoodshepherdschool.org, or call Jamie Roy at 598-9399.

The Good Shepherd School participates in the Louisiana Scholarship Program, for which parents must complete the OneApp at enrollnola.org. To learn more about the admission process, email Kaleshe Garrison at kgarrison@thegoodshepherdschool.org.

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Forty ‘Back to School’ tips for kids and parents

By Liz Alton
www.care.com

As summer comes to an end and back-to-school season begins, it can be hard to get back into a regular schedule – both for kids and adults.

We asked Dr. Fran Walfish, a child and family psychotherapist and author of “The Self-Aware

Parent,” and Christina Nichols, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist, to share their thoughts on how parents can get a jump on the school year. They offer 40 tips that parents can use to ease their kids back into school, while also managing their own stress.

The trick here is to plan ahead. Read through this list and identify some strategies that you think

could help you and your family stay organized and on top of things. Then, test these different approaches as a family to figure out which ones work for you.

Finally, make sure that you include your entire child-care crew in your plans, too. No matter whether you have a babysitter, a nanny, a tutor or all of the above, they’ll be able to help you keep your kiddo on track for the first day of school. Plus, they’ll be able to take some tasks off of your plate – which means you can enter the school year with a little more of your sanity intact.

- 1. Set your kids’ sleep schedules back to “school time” two weeks before the first day.
- 2. Get your kids involved in programs that they can do after school to keep them active.
- 3. Visit cultural attractions like museums to shift their brains into “scholar” mode.
- 4. Hire an after-school sitter to help care for your kids while you’re at work.
- 5. Encourage your kids to read at least one book before the school year begins.

See **TIPS** page 33 ►



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Our Lady of Perpetual Help has pilot for learning

By Christine Bordelon
Clarion Herald

“Everyone has someone they know with special learning needs,” said Kirsch J. Wilberg, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Belle Chasse.

Because of this, Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) will begin a pilot program of inclusion in the 2018-19 school year. It’s called the Hornets Exceptional Learning Program (or HELP) and is open to students in second through fifth grades with mild or moderate learning exceptionalities such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, developmental delay and Down syndrome.

“We’re so excited to be part of the pilot program,” said Nikki Giambelluca, the school’s director of admissions, marketing director and middle-school art teacher. “We are getting as close to a well-rounded program as you

can get in Catholic schools.”

With this new way of reaching all students, OLPH has adapted schedules and trained teachers to accommodate the students’ needs; added flexible seating and stand-up desks with high-top chairs to some classrooms; and reconfigured the library for individual teaching space.

Kate O’Brien was hired this year as OLPH’s dedicated special education teacher. Erika Semmes, who is special education-certified and certified as a reading specialist in English as a Second Language and has a master’s in teaching and learning, will be the program director and interventionist. Both will help students reach their potential and work with counselor Brianna Barrios to address social/emotional behavior.

Helping teachers adapt

Teachers participated in professional development



Photo by Christine Bordelon | CLARION HERALD

The faculty and staff of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Belle Chasse participated in training from Maeci France of the School Leadership Center to learn teaching techniques to reach all students in a classroom.

with the School Leadership Center’s Maeci France to design new lesson plans to teach to the margins – the typical students who don’t need help and those who do – not the average child; and to gain insight on the latest research on inclusion.

“(We talked) about being inclusive attitudinally, but also learned how to imple-

ment in our classrooms and the communication process (between all teachers) necessary to meet the students needs,” Giambelluca said.

The ideas of being “equitable” versus being “equal” were explored, and teachers worked in groups on integration in the classroom. They realized that the process of learning looks different for

every student, that a teacher needs awareness of what students need to succeed, that they must be respectful and supportive of all accommodations and also build a family atmosphere that accepts everyone for who they are.

“Being equitable is to give everybody what they need to be successful,” Wilberg said. “It is not equality, where everybody gets the same. Fair is not equal. Fair is everybody gets what they need.”

The school mascot is the “bee,” so Our Lady of Perpetual Help students were already divided into two hives. Hive 1 is for typical students not requiring help. Hive 2 covers students in a typical classroom who require an interventionist in one subject such as English or math.

Now, with the pilot program, OLPH has added Hives 3 and 4. Hive 3 students

See [HELP](#) page 24 ►



Statement of Policy

Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond

The schools of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the schools of the Archdiocese shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity except as permitted under said Title IX.

This policy applies to all schools which are under Catholic Archdiocesan auspices.

Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

Dr. RaeNell Houston
Superintendent of Catholic Schools



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HELP

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might not be in a typical classroom for the STEM courses of science, English or math, but could be integrated in art, physical education and lunch.

Hive 4 is for accelerated students on an advance track.

"It will be a way of pulling in everything they learned, enriching it and applying it differently – in a much more complex way than the regular student," Wilberg said.

Wilberg thinks HELP will let students know that they are supported.

"They will be so pleased they are learning in a manner where they achieve success,"



Photo by Christine Bordelon | CLARION HERALD

Teachers, from left, Courtney Bouquet, Erika Semmes, Kate Balestra and Valerie Webre (kneeling), work on a chart listing what they learned through research about what inclusion looks like in the classroom.

Wilberg said.

Identifying students and

making sure the necessary targeted instruction is in

place are the first steps to success, Semmes said. Including the parent as part of the process is another element that sets a Catholic school education apart.

"Being a smaller school, we can get to know the students and parents and know what they need and want," Semmes said.

The pilot fits right in with the Gospel value that OLPH will concentrate on this year: inclusion.

"We're trying to teach students to be inclusive no matter where you live ... or if you have food allergies," she said.

Some background

When the parish was undergoing a study by the In-

stitute for School and Parish Development to evaluate its strengths and areas that might need improvement, sustaining school enrollment came up. One idea was adding a 1- and 2-year-old program.

The enrollment committee also discovered that families were turned away from their parish school because every student's special needs couldn't be addressed, even though teachers were already "servicing kids who needed the extra help because parents wanted their children in Catholic schools," Giambelluca said.

About the same time, Wilberg was developing a five-year strategic plan that included the best ways to help all students succeed. Wilberg had evaluated special education components at other schools and watched her mother, a science teacher, find methods to promote student success long before inclusion was the norm.

Wilberg's plan for HELP was submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools and was approved for grant money in January.

"The response has been unbelievable," Wilberg said, adding how she made an announcement after parish Masses. "After every single Mass, someone walked up to me crying" with tears of joy that their child could be helped. Eight new students have enrolled.

Dr. RaeNell Houston, Office of Catholic Schools Archdiocese of New Orleans superintendent, said this is the first program of its kind in a Catholic school on the West Bank.

"I was delighted to hear from Ms. Wilberg that the Catholic school community at OLPH in Belle Chasse had a desire to answer the call to serve students with developmental disabilities," Houston said. "I sincerely appreciate Father Kyle Dave and the entire OLPH community's support of this initiative (to offer) personalized learning for individual students."

Wilberg, who is on the Office of Catholic Schools'

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HELP

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Students with Developmental Disabilities Strategic Planning Committee, said it will start small this year with one classroom, then expand to accommodate other grades in coming years. This way, she said, high schools will have time to catch up.

"I think it's going to help teach our current students that everybody has added value, and we are all the same," Wilberg said. "In turn, I think it also will help them learn their gifts."

Because the student/teacher ratio (6:1 or 8:1) will be smaller, affording students more individual attention than in a typical classroom, and there will be special seating, manipulatives "or whatever it takes for them to learn successfully," there is an extra cost associated with the HIVE 3 program. A typical Catholic education costs \$4,800-\$5,900. HIVE 3 tuition will be \$11,900 annually. HIVE 2 students who need a boost in English or math will be an additional \$1,500 per subject per year. HIVE 4 for accelerated students will cost an additional \$500 a semester.

Tuition assistance is available.

"We are a community, a team supporting the student," Wilberg said. "Having a child with special needs – it takes a village."

"I think all students are inquisitive by nature and want to help other students, but they lack the opportunity because we have taken away (kids needing help) and put them in special areas," Melissa Mauduit, a 24-year teacher with experience in in-

clusion. "It's important they learn about each other and see each other's differences ... I think it will let them know they are a welcomed part of the community, even though they are a little different.

"That's what OLPH is all about – welcoming and helping all of the students," teacher Debbie Naquin said.

Christine Bordelon can be reached at cbordelon@clarionherald.org.



Photo by Christine Bordelon | CLARION HERALD

Teachers at Our Lady of Perpetual Help read about inclusion research.

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Sister Savio: Great books inspire, teach life lessons

By Beth Donze
Clarion Herald

On Nov. 22, 1963, a few months into Sister Dominic Savio Estorge's inaugural year of teaching freshman English at St. Mary's Dominican High, a heart-stopping report came over the P.A. from school principal Sister Mary Damian Cazale: President John F. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas.

"We stopped class and started saying the rosary – those were the days when people still had rosaries in their pockets," Sister Savio recalled. "Sister Damian came back on later to say that Presi-



Photo | COURTESY ST. MARY'S DOMINICAN HIGH

Dominican Sister of Peace Dominic Savio Estorge, pictured with St. Mary's Dominican High School's principal Carolyn Favre, has served Dominican – also her alma mater – for 55 years as a teacher, administrator and archivist.

dent Kennedy had died. I was in this classroom. I remember it as if it were yesterday."

Ten U.S. presidents later, the still-spry 79-year-old, known for her infectious love for literature and her sparkling blue eyes, continues to be a beloved presence at Dominican, currently as an archivist and member of the attendance office staff. This year marks Sister Savio's 55th year of service to the Walmsley Avenue campus, a tenure that includes 47 years as an English and religion teacher, the supervision of 28 yearbooks and administrative roles as the high school's assistant principal, president and member of the general council of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary.

"I loved teaching freshmen. I know this sounds corny, but they are 'fresh.' They're not jaded; they still

could have 'aha' moments," Sister Savio said, speaking from the classroom formerly known as "Room 108," her teaching hub from 1963-2010.

"Not everybody enjoys teaching freshmen, but I do," she said. "They are silly, but that's what's fun!"

Vocational calling came early

Born Celeste Estorge, Sister Savio spent her first three years in Milwaukee, the middle child of New Orleans-born parents who had relocated to the Midwest for Mr. Estorge's job as a turbine designer. When the Wisconsin cold proved to be too much for Mrs. Estorge's health, the family returned to New Orleans, moving to various neighborhoods that had Sister Savio and her two brothers attending St. Francis Xavier, Mater Dolorosa and St. Matthias elementary schools, the latter operated by the Dominican Sisters.

As she approached eighth-grade graduation, Sister Savio expressed a desire to attend the Dominican Sisters' Rosaryville high school for girls who were considering the religious life.

"My mother said, 'Absolutely not' because she wanted me to have, as she called it, a normal high school life," Sister Savio chuckled. "Maybe the seed of wanting to be a sister was planted at that time, but it wasn't enough for me to fight for it."

She enrolled in her second choice – Dominican, then located on St. Charles Avenue

and known for its life-preparing and comprehensive curriculum that taught girls the hard sciences, humanities, fine arts, Latin and home economics.

Ultimately, seven members of her Dominican class of 1956 would enter the Rosaryville convent. This time, the teenager had her family's approval, her mother having witnessed her daughter's desire firsthand as Sister Savio nursed her through cancer during a two-year leave from the convent.

"If you see one Dominican, you see one Dominican – you don't see somebody cut out of a mold; I could be myself," Sister Savio said of her attraction to the Dominican charism.

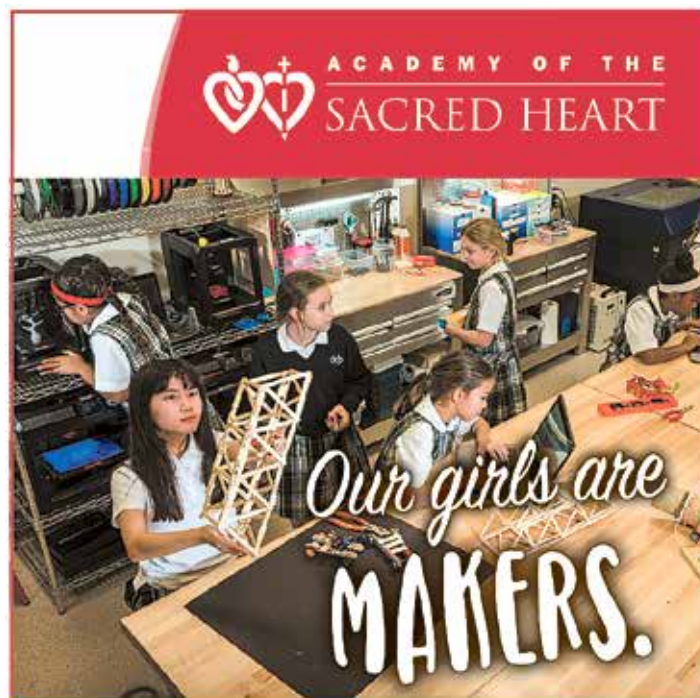
"You fit into a community, but you didn't *fade* into a community. We each bring whatever gifts we have – and whatever idiosyncrasies – then we try to meld them into the community we live in."

Passion for good books

Sister Savio received her first teaching assignment in 1962, instructing eighth-grade girls at St. Leo the Great and witnessing the school's racial integration firsthand, which included the almost overnight departure of 300 white students.

After completing her undergraduate degree in English education at Dominican College, she was sent to Dominican High, newly headquartered at Walmsley Avenue,

See **SR. SAVIO** page 27 ►



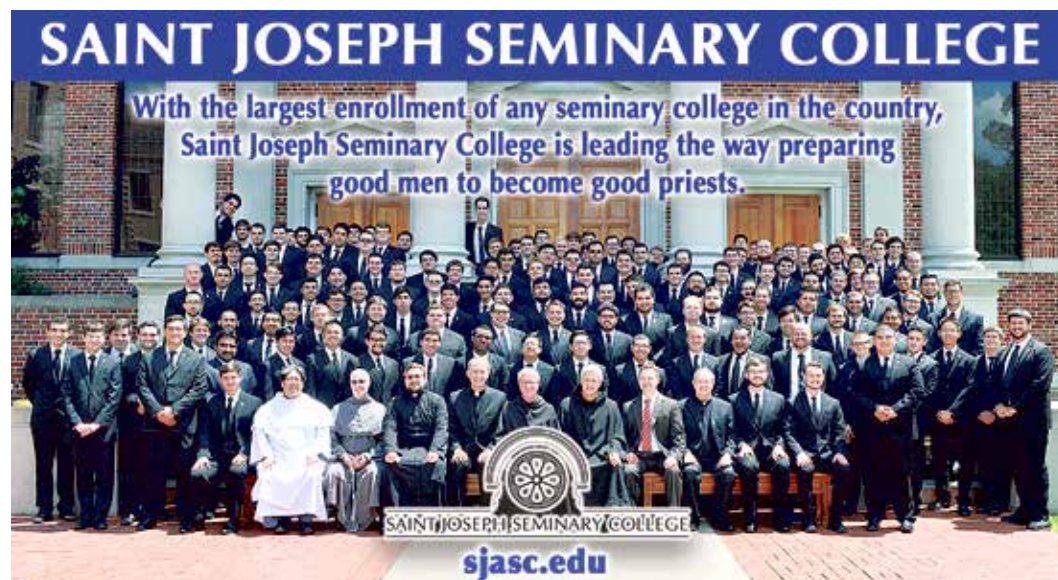
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SR. SAVIO

► From PAGE 26

"because they needed an English teacher."

Sister Savio, who also earned two master's degrees – in English from Indiana University in Bloomington, and in education administration from Loyola – deliberately chose novels that taught idealism and the virtues. So in addition to classics such as "A Separate Peace" – selected for its exploration of a friendship between boys of different backgrounds – she also assigned "The Crystal Cave" and "The Hollow Hills," in which author Mary Stewart traces the journey of the boy who would bring peace to Britain as King Arthur.

"We need some idealism in our lives," Sister Savio said, listing virtues such as loyalty and care for the poor and marginalized. "(In Arthurian legend) it's not 'might makes right'; it's 'might makes responsibility,'" she said. Arthurian legend teaches us that we don't have gifts and skills just for ourselves; they

are to be shared with others."

She taught Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" for the same reason. Over the years, countless students have said it was Sister Savio's passion for this book that led them to keep their yellowed copies to this day.

"Again, ('A Tale of Two Cities') teaches about the importance of 'the other,'" she said. "For Sydney Carton, it was more important to him for Lucie to be happy."

Classroom osmosis

Sister Savio's early love for reading was nourished inside the city's public libraries. She and her older brother would be permitted to check out five books each – which meant they could read 10 at a time.

The Estorje children were encouraged to pick up a book during their compulsory afternoon naptime during the summer months. As a St. Matthias fifth grader, Sister Savio's teacher would cleverly leave out the ending of books read orally to her students on Friday afternoons, making the class hunger for more.

These partnerships in

learning, between teacher and student, is what Sister Savio has enjoyed most about her calling as an educator.

"I used to lose my voice, like the time I was teaching poetry in English and the Trinity in religion (simultaneously)," she said. "I couldn't talk, so I would write answers on the board that the students would call my 'three-board answers.'"

Sister Savio said there was "something to laugh about in the classroom" every day. After a tragic fire at a CBD skyscraper, her students wondered aloud what would happen if Dominican went up in flames. Sister Savio assured them they would survive the two-story jump.

"The girl sitting right in front of me says, 'Sister, that's easy for *you* to say. You've lived your life,'" Sister Savio said. "After I stopped laughing, I told her, 'I think I might have a few good years left.' I must have been in my 30s."

The teaching, she says, has always flowed both ways. For example, when seniors wanted to form a "human American flag" to commem-

orate 9/11 in their 2001-02 yearbook, they carefully measured out the placement of each red, white or blue sweater-wearing student. Right before taking the rooftop photo, Sister Savio realized the students posing for the shot had forgotten to leave a space down the center of their human flag, which was important if it were to be printed on facing pages.

Sister Savio, whose first im-

pulse was to move the whole crowd to the left or right, marveled at her students' more efficient solution: moving just a handful of students from the center of the flag to its outer perimeter. Mission accomplished.

"They've taught me that they are very smart if we let them be. If we don't interfere they can do some brilliant things," she said. "I still get surprised."

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'Legacy' graduates growing at Pope John Paul II

By Christine Bordelon
Clarion Herald

May 8 marked a significant moment in the history of Pope John Paul II High School in Slidell. At the school's 39th annual graduation ceremony, nine of its 62 graduates – a record number – were children of PJP alumni.

"Now that our alumni base is growing and maturing, many have now established their careers and have high school-aged children of their own," said Zack Pohto, class of '09 and advancement coordinator and alumni liaison at Pope John Paul II. "It is encouraging and exciting times here at PJP to have their legacies attend."

Debra Riviere and her husband Ben, both graduates of

Pope John Paul II – Debra in 1985 and Ben in 1989 – wanted their son Shawn to experience what they had experienced, and they sent him to their alma mater.

"We knew from the get-go when we had kids, that that was where our children would go," Debra Riviere said. "My husband and I make many sacrifices so our son can go there, but we had an incredible experience there."

She said the small-school atmosphere allowed individual attention from "amazing" teachers and the opportunities to excel in athletics. Ben played every sport: baseball, football, track and basketball, and advanced to play baseball at Loyola University and Delgado Community Col-



Photo | COURTESY POPE JOHN PAUL II

In 2018, the nine legacies with their parents were, from left: Lexie Babin with mom, Wendy Wiefel; Bruce Black with dad Grant Black; Ashley Calamari with dad Henry Calamari; Madison Cappy with mom and dad Aimee Kenney Cappy and Brian Cappy; Isabella Davila with mom Robin Jones Davila; Dominick Lala with dad Jason; Sydney Rohlinger with mom Lisa Perkins Rohlinger; Joseph Kelly with mom Patricia Calamari Kelley; and Peyton Smith with mom Kristen Bertrand Smith.

lege. Debra played volleyball. She cited her former principal Glenn Gennaro, who died in 2017, as "one of the most incredible leaders you'll ever have."

She also mentioned how the Catholic faith element was important to her family.

"I went to St. Raphael (New Orleans) and Our Lady of Lourdes in Slidell (elementary school); and Ben went to St. Margaret Mary in Slidell. Father Pat Wattigny, PJP chaplain, is a big supporter

of the school and frequent attendee at athletic events."

Their fellow graduates and teachers are still close.

"The lifelong friendships that you establish there are important," Debra Riviere said. "We had friends we are still friends with. We keep in touch with past administrators, too. The staff here will always be a friend to you. You need them, they will be there for you."

Advancement director Sherri Dutreix said Pope

John Paul II highlights legacies beginning in their junior year, when juniors receive a legacy pin with their parents present. The pin can be worn on their uniform.

Legacies honored

They are again honored at graduation with a "Legacy Award."

"This year, PJP extended honors to nine legacies, doubling the amount of legacies we have graduated in past years," said athletic director Richard Dieudonne, class of 2000. "There is something to be said about that kind of increase and interest from our alumni. We have always been a family here. Our family is surely growing in size and heart."

Alumni support is also visible through the Alumni Association's scholarship program that awards six \$500 scholarships and one \$1,000 legacy scholarship (totaling \$4,000) to deserving students in the upcoming school year.

"These scholarships are awarded in the form of tuition credits," assistant



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PJP II

► From **PAGE 28**

principal Lise Bremond '92, said. "Taking place each spring, any student enrolled at PJP may apply to our annual essay competition, but only children of alumni may participate in the Legacy scholarship."

Bremond said the competition is funded through the annual alumni campaign that was initiated by founding class members from 1981-92.

"We are very grateful for the support and participation our alumni graciously offers," Bremond said. "As our alumni base grows (the school is less than 40 years old), we anticipate and expect to be able to offer larger or more scholarship opportunities in the future."

Career day keeps connection

The efforts of Pohto, Dieudeonne and Bremond (Class of 1992) produced a successful Career Day this past spring, where more than 30 alumni shared their professional experience with the current students.

"From engineers to physicians, IT directors to nutritionists and more, the students were given information and insight into numerous career paths to consider, learn and discern for themselves," Pohto said.

PJP boasts having alumni on staff, including Pohto, Dieudonne, Bremond and Christina Mamolo (class of 2007), who is in her third year as a science and physical education instructor and coach of girls' softball and basketball. New to the staff will be Austin Puntilla, class of 2011, who will teach math; and Marissa Nunez, a 2013 grad, who will teach science.

"We are blessed to have so many alumni on our faculty this coming school year," Bremond said. "I think I speak for each of us when I say that we all experienced something very special as students here and we want very much to give back that 'certain something' to today's Jaguars!"

See **PJP II** page 30 ►



Photos | COURTESY POPE JOHN PAUL II

PJP II Coach Zack Pohto, left, presents alumni scholarships to undergraduates Madison Keister, Abigail Harline, Theresa Nguyen, Marshal Thompson and "Alex" Bremond, along with assistant principal Lise Bremond.



Joseph Kelley was this year's Senior (12th grade) PJP Alumni Scholarship recipient, pictured with Bremond.



Assistant principal Lise Bremond presents Dominick Lala with this year's Legacy Scholarship.



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Seminary programs hone laity's faith, ministry skills

By Beth Donze
Clarion Herald

Yvette Fouchi remembers sitting in the chapel at Notre Dame Seminary and feeling "terrified" she had bitten off more than she could chew.

At the encouragement of her daughter and a priest friend, she had enrolled in the seminary's graduate-level program designed to help the laity explore and deepen their faith while developing their practical skills as leaders in ministry.

It had been three decades since Fouchi had graduated from college, and she was



Photo | COURTESY NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

Laity people, especially those who are active in church ministry, often are asked questions about the faith and called upon to design and deliver programming in coordination with priests. Notre Dame Seminary offers formational programs to help the laity develop these skills while deepening their own faith.

the high caliber of both faculty and the other students, I felt that I was never going to measure up," said Fouchi, a medical technologist and active parishioner of St. Edward the Confessor Church in Metairie.

"I hadn't yet realized how very available the faculty was and how much they sincerely wanted to help their students learn," said Fouchi, who would go on to graduate summa cum laude in 2017 with a Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership (MAPL) from the seminary.

Since then, Fouchi says her studies have enriched the many ministries she assists at St. Edward, including respect life, social justice, prayer and elder advocacy efforts, as well as archdiocesan-level endeavors such as being a prison ministry mentor, sidewalk counseling trainer and mission supporter.

"I wanted to inform my ministry work with a stronger foundation in my faith, as well as receive formation in pastoral leadership," Fouchi said "Not only were those hopes realized, but I have fallen deeper in love with my church!"

All coursework is examined through the lens of four pillars of formation: intellectual, spiritual, human and pastoral – the same template used to form seminarians for the priesthood. The program's comprehensive examination of the church's pro-life teachings, for example, animated a "Sanctity of Life" series Fouchi mounted at her parish on six different respect-life issues.

"Because of the formation I received at Notre Dame Seminary, I took special care to provide more than just information. I also attempted

See **SEMINARY** page 31 ►

having a serious case of cold feet.

Faculty calmed her fears

"Looking over the material I was expected to read, the research needed to complete my writing assignments and

PJP II

► From **PAGE 29**

Approximately 100 alumni, current parents and students were welcomed on campus July 26 new principal Doug Triche. He is looking forward to his new leadership role and brings a deep devotion to Catholic education and a desire to help PJP alumni reconnect to their alma mater and new outreach to alumni who have lost touch with their alma mater.

"I see great things ahead for

Pope John Paul II High School because it has great students and great parents," Triche said. "With its deep roots in the Catholic mission of the church, I believe its students are ambassadors for Christ as advocates of his Gospel of love. They are not the church of the future. They are the young church today!"

"As the young church, they will do this as Christian married couples and parents, Christian scientists and engineers, Christian nurses and doctors, Christian lawyers

and judges, Christian CEOs and civic leaders, and as religious brothers, sisters and priests."

Alumni wishing to learn more about PJP's Alumni Association or to become a member should contact Zack Pohto at the school office: (985) 649-0914. Anyone interested in donating to their alumni scholarship efforts can go online at: <http://www.pjp.org/alumni/>

Christine Bordelon can be reached at cbordelon@clarionherald.org.



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SEMINARY

► From **PAGE 30**

to enrich each night's presentation with spiritual, pastoral and human elements," she said.

Fouchi, a member of the archdiocese's Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, said her in-depth study of St. John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" writings helped her retool a retreat for 12- to 17-year-old women who had been sex-trafficked and were now living in a local safe house.

"When I submitted my retreat ideas and experience as my capstone project (a theological reflection and presentation based on one's ministry context) to my professor, Dr. Tom Neal, he evaluated every theological, pastoral, human and spiritual detail and continued to support and encourage me in my ministry as well as challenge me to utilize all that I had learned through the program at the seminary," Fouchi said.



Photo | COURTESY NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

Notre Dame Seminary offers three main graduate-level tracks for lay students, including the 23-credit hour Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry, which can be taken at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

"The result has become a more robust and solid version of the retreat that has been fruitful in helping to remind the young ladies of their God-given dignity and help them reclaim it and celebrate it."

A path for every need

Notre Dame Seminary offers three main graduate-level tracks for the laity, with much of the coursework conveniently offered on Saturdays and weeknights:

► The Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry (ILEM) is a 23-credit-hour program that combines theological studies with human, spiritual and pastoral formation. It culminates in a commissioning by the archbishop as a lay ecclesial minister. ILEM courses can be taken at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

► The Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership (MAPL) is a 42-credit hour master's

degree program designed specifically for those interested in or already working in a ministry setting. It offers theology coursework along with pastoral formation and builds on the ILEM program.

► The free-standing, 45-credit-hour Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) track focuses exclusively on academic theology and is designed for those who are interested in pursuing an advanced degree or teaching theology at the high school, college, university or seminary.

Work as ministry, not a 'job'

Judy Zeringue, a 2018 MAPL graduate, said her studies have enriched her daily interactions as a pre-op nurse and palliative care team member at Children's Hospital as she provides the gifts of presence and understanding to anxious patients and their families.

"My deep faith is an integral part of my life. It enhances my passion for nursing. I can now perform that

role with greater purpose and understanding," Zeringue said. "It is very humbling indeed to reach out to others. It is a joy to see my nursing and ministry work so well together, all in God's plan."

Zeringue, who serves her home parish of St. Benilde in Metairie as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, lector, altar society member, eucharistic adorer and monthly block rosary participant, recently joined St. Benilde's pastoral care team, which will have her working in close collaboration with the pastor, parish staff and ministry coordinators.

"A focus will include pastoral care to the sick and homebound and developing a holistic approach to the ministry of hospitality within the parish family and those who may visit," Zeringue said. "As a woman of great faith, I trust that God will show me the way to best serve in all aspects of my life."

See **SEMINARY** page 32 ►

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SEMINARY

► From **PAGE 31**

I have clearly learned that you cannot give what you do not have within. Thus, staying true to prayer will help maintain the balance which is needed."

Theology, prayer and service came together as Zeringue focused an MAPL project on faith formation. She facilitated a study of "Mary: A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother" at St. Benilde.

"This experience nurtured my love for the Blessed Mother and her intercession for us to the Sacred Heart of Jesus," Zeringue said, noting that sharing her graduate school experiences with her fellow parishioners has nourished her own faith and friendships. As a student at Notre Dame Seminary, Zeringue began a habit of praying before



Photo | COURTESY NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

Students make use of Notre Dame Seminary's beautiful outdoor spaces. Many of the lay formation courses are offered on Saturdays and weeknights.

a statue of the Blessed Mother before class.

"This always helped to keep me focused, especially before a test," Zeringue said. "Studying at Notre Dame Seminary was like being on holy ground. ... The atmosphere is so warm and welcoming. The chapel is absolutely beautiful.

To participate in Mass with the seminary community is a special blessing to cherish."

Growing in faith together

Permanent deacons also can benefit from the lay ministry formation program, which features courses on pastoral studies, Scripture,

the liturgy and the theology of the sacraments, morality and church history – the latter reinforcing the humbling idea that each person has his or her special role to play within the larger picture of salvation history.

Deacon Ronald Drez Jr., a permanent deacon at Our Lady of the Rosary Church in New Orleans and a 2018 graduate of the seminary's MAPL program, said the education he received has helped him answer questions, especially ones posed by those who are facing "times of uncertainty, be it struggles in a relationship or end-of-life decisions."

"In my diaconal ministry it's one thing to hold someone's hand and pray with them while they are nearing death, but quite often they want to be comforted with answers to their spiritual or theological questions," Deacon Drez said. "While we may not always have the answers they seek, being prepared for such an occasion is all part of serving our brothers and sisters in the Lord."

Deacon Drez said the osmosis effect of clergymen studying alongside lay persons in a classroom setting was invaluable – he was able to bring pastoral insight to his fellow students' experiences in their various lay ministries, while lay students felt comfortable sharing real-life, daily issues that may not be readily apparent to the clergy.

"It is an opportunity for each of us to grow," Deacon

Drez said. "The entire classroom experience in the MAPL program is a relationship that witnesses to Christ – the relationship between instructor and student, between scholastic material and real-life issues, between lay person and clergy – all of which is designed to better serve God's people through Jesus Christ."

Deacon Drez, who had already completed the compulsory five years of weekly formation in the lead-up to his 2015 ordination, said he is a firm believer in continuing education and any opportunity to become more theologically grounded in his Catholic faith.

"The studying, the research and the writing were all prayerful experiences that drew me closer to Christ," Deacon Drez said. "As we journey through life and seek to do his will, we are continually being formed by the church and the Lord. For my brother clergy, this is an excellent opportunity to continue one's education, to be further molded in the "potter's hand," to experience in the classroom setting the teachings of the Church coupled with the experiences of ministry and to become greater heralds of the Gospel of Christ, which we were all ordained to be."

Registration for spring 2019 is in early November. An annual open house is held the last week of January. For more information, call 866-7426, ext. 742; email maoffice@nds.edu; or visit <https://nds.edu/laymasterprograms>.

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TIPS

➤ From **PAGE 22**

➤ 6. Reacquaint your kids with the calendar schedule they'll use to manage their activities.

➤ 7. Try apps like iHomeWork or MyHomeWork to help your kids organize assignments.

➤ 8. Let kids choose a planner or scheduling tool that they're excited to use.

➤ 9. Set up weekly meetings to review your kids' schedules for the week(s) ahead.

➤ 10. Create a family calendar that tracks everyone's activities and commitments.

➤ 11. Refresh your rules about screen time for the school year. What's allowed and when?

➤ 12. Establish a set "family time," whether it's during dinner or before bed.

➤ 13. Give kids a specific day when they can choose all the activities you do together.

➤ 14. Determine how long it takes them to do assignments to help with time management.

➤ 15. Use an egg timer to get your kids used to focusing for specific periods of time.

➤ 16. Teach your kids to prioritize their assignments by making to-do lists with deadlines.

➤ 17. Give your kids a short break after each assignment they finish, such as a short walk.

➤ 18. Set a regular alarm each day that signals the start of homework time.

➤ 19. Discuss what your kids can expect on the first day so they feel more prepared.

➤ 20. Visit the school with your kids so they can get familiar with their new environments.

➤ 21. Arrange play dates with two or three of your kids' friends to rebuild existing social ties.

➤ 22. Ask teachers for class rosters so you can arrange play dates with new classmates, too.

➤ 23. Get the lists of school supplies, books and technology your kids will need.

➤ 24. Inventory last year's school supplies before going out to buy more.

➤ 25. Include your kids in back-to-school shopping by letting them pick out their items.

➤ 26. Make a plan for organizing those supplies – and keeping them that way.

➤ 27. Create a dedicated space for your kids to store their school supplies and technology.

➤ 28. Establish a specific space like the family office as the official "homework area."

➤ 29. Remove distractions like TVs and video game consoles from homework areas.

➤ 30. Repurpose and relabel plastic tubs to organize all school supplies.

➤ 31. Help your kids develop a filing system for organizing their documents for each class.

➤ 32. Set – and enforce – regular weekday and weekend bedtimes.

➤ 33. Set – and enforce – regular weekday and weekend wake-

up calls.

➤ 34. Keep track of existing extracurricular activities to prevent over-scheduling.

➤ 35. Have your kids set realistic goals for the new year, such as reading 30 books.

➤ 36. Help your kids prioritize their activities by tying them to their year's goals.

➤ 37. Create a list of fun after-school activities and games to keep your kids entertained.

➤ 38. Touch base with teach-

ers early on to troubleshoot any issues your kids may be having.

➤ 39. Create an after-school schedule that allows time for snack, relaxation, play and study.

➤ 40. Establish regular bedtime routines for elementary school kids and preschoolers.

With all this preparation, your kids will be in great shape.

Liz Alton is a freelance writer specializing in digital marketing, business and technology. Check out her website (<https://lizalton.com>).

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Xavier students go to summit as CRS ambassadors

By Dennis Sadowski

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Denise Ssetimba just began her brief presentation to an aide to Sen. John Kennedy, R-Louisiana, on the need to maintain U.S. funding for global anti-hunger efforts when two congressional dining staffers with food carts in tow asked to squeeze by in a busy hallway in the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The 18-year-old Xavier University of Louisiana student stepped a little closer into the tight circle around the aide, Kaitlyn Dwyer, stay-

ing on message.

"We want to share that there are a lot of ways that this aid helps people avoid migration," Ssetimba said.

Fellow Xavier University students Ja'Che Malone and Sarah Bertrand accompanied by chaplain Father Etido Jerome, and Madeleine Woolverton, a student at Tulane University with Dominican Father Thomas Schaeffgen, chaplain and director of Tulane University's Fr. Val Ambrose McInnes, O.P. Center for Catholic Life, picked up the call as Ssetimba finished.

"The issues of global hunger and migration are inti-



Photo by Dennis Sadowski | CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Senator Bill Cassidy, R-La., meets with students from Tulane University and Xavier University of Louisiana, during the Student Ambassador Leadership Summit of Catholic Relief Services July 18 on Capitol Hill in Washington.

mately linked because hunger is one of the causes of migration," Woolverton said. "When we can provide funding for programs that can provide sustainable solutions ... not creating dependency but creating systemic change in farming communities, we can prevent some of these problems."

The four students asked Dwyer to share with Kennedy their concern that no funding be cut from international poverty-reducing programs.

Preserving current spending levels for disaster relief, health care, nutrition, anti-human trafficking efforts, migration and refugee assistance is a major priority of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services

(CRS), an international humanitarian organization of the U.S. Catholic Church.

The students from New Orleans, part of the CRS Student Ambassador Leaders Together initiative, were helping carry that message to Congress on the last day of the Student Ambassador Leadership Summit (SALT) July 15-18 organized by CRS.

They joined more than 150 students from 58 Catholic and non-Catholic colleges and universities who participated in the summit visiting members of Congress, sharing the same message that Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Anchorage, Alaska, and Cardinal Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato, Philippines, brought to Capitol Hill a day earlier.

The programs they addressed were targeted for an overall 36 percent cut in federal spending in the White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) proposed fiscal year 2019 spending outline. The OMB plan seeks to reduce funding to \$15.1 billion from nearly \$23.8 billion authorized for the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. Such spending comprises about 0.5 percent of the federal budget.

"Our time at the CRS SALT Summit was full of educational and motivating lectures, inspirational stories from different CRS campus, great testimonies from CRS overseas and moving examples of faith in action," said Bertrand, a Xavier pre-med student. Bertrand made presentations on inter-campus collaboration and leadership development during pre-panel sessions at the summit.

Having so many young people bringing a consistent message to Congress was sure to have an impact, Kathleen Kahlau, senior adviser at CRS, told the students before they fanned out across Capitol Hill.

"You're bringing some good news. Not the Gospel in the religious sense, but good news in the sense that you're sharing with these staffers the fact that what America does through its aid is effective, is efficient, does really save lives," Kahlau said.

See **AMBASSADORS** page 35 ►

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AMBASSADORS

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Bertrand said Xavier students worked on action plans to bring new ideas back to campus.

"CRS focuses on international social justice topics such as climate change, migration, human trafficking, and world hunger," Bertrand said. "Realizing that these topics are all interconnected, the Louisiana delegates participated in advocacy training at CRS headquarters on July 18" where they heard stories from CRS partners nationwide and facts about the U.S. government's positions on food insecurity relief programs as well as migration and refugee assistance."

Were well-schooled

Three days of advanced preparation for congressional visits served to create broader awareness of the work of CRS and deeper understanding of the importance of U.S. aid for that work, students said. Several students who are CRS campus ambassadors told Catholic News Service they were willing to step away from jobs, summer internships and research projects to advocate for people without a voice.

The Louisiana delegation along with FOCUS missionaries met with Kaitlyn Dwyer from Senator John Kennedy's office and discussed funding for international aid in the upcoming budget bill. The Louisiana delegation



Photo | COURTESY SARAH BERTRAND

The Louisiana delegation of Catholic Relief Services' student ambassadors from Tulane University and Xavier University. Those in the photo include, from left: Catholic Relief Services' Martha Hall, Madeleine Woolverton from Tulane, Jeff Runyan from FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), Dominican Father Thomas Schaefer of Tulane University, Josephite Father Elido Jerome of Xavier University of Louisiana, Denise Ssetimba, Ja'Che Malone and Sarah C. Bertrand of Xavier University.

then visited with Senator Bill Cassidy to discuss implementing sustainable community development programs in Central America and how the federal international aid budget contributes to this life saving work.

"Cassidy's office expressed interest in discovering the root causes of migration in Central America," said Bertrand, who relayed the summer service trip she planned with Xavier students to La Pena, Honduras, and how human dignity can empower impoverished communities to continue developing, knowing that someone does indeed care for them and their wellbeing.

Xavier students met Con-

gressman Cedric Richmond, and Tulane students met with Congressman Steve Scalise. The day concluded with a ceremony on the west lawn of the Capitol where students from 61 universities pledged themselves to instituting social justice and advocacy efforts on their campuses. This was not the first rodeo for many of the Louisiana delegates advocating on the hill. Many of the students participated in the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in February of 2018, discussing similar issues with Congress.

Will pass on knowledge

Students also said they planned to return to their campuses this fall ready to

share what they learned about the global work of CRS and encourage others to join them in promoting the agency.

"I will take back to Tulane so many new ideas about how to run our club more effectively, such as how to engage more students, how to collaborate with other campus organizations and ideas for different events we can host," Madeleine Woolverton said. "I'll take back a deeper understanding of how CRS is creating systemic, lasting change around the world. I now have the ability to truly explain the significance of CRS's work to my fellow ambassadors (on campus) and share the confidence that we are living out our faith and

truly making a difference by advocating for them.

"Our Catholic faith calls us to protect the poor and vulnerable and sometimes that means investing more than \$10 in the collection pot each week at Sunday Mass," said Bertrand from Xavier University. "While monetary donations are important, I feel called to invest my time and efforts into working with poor communities to create sustainable change. ... Overall, the SALT summit has reconfirmed my mission to improve the healthcare and quality of life of the poor and vulnerable."

Dennis Sasdowski writes for CNS. Christine Bordelon, associate editor at the Clarion Herald, contributed to this story.



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