

VANTAGE POINT

St. Adalbert School excels under Lydia Harris direction

By CHARLES BYRNE

Editors note: Charles Byrne is a member of the State Board of Education.

St. Adalbert School, in the heart of inner city of Cleveland, is a very unusual school.

The school was founded by The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for blacks and Indians and, while the order no longer runs the school, this school survives as a lasting testament to their work.

Lydia Harris is the amazing woman who, for the last 12 years, has worked as principal of St. Adalbert and, for the 26 years prior to that, worked as a teacher at the school.

Harris is a black woman, born and raised in New Orleans where she later graduated from Loyola University.

She is determined and devoted to her work. While she tried to retire last summer, she came back to the school when her replacement did not work out.

What makes St. Adalbert so unusual? For one thing, this school of 400 K - 8th grade students operates on a budget of \$65,000 as compared to the \$3,000,000 budget of a comparably sized public funded school.

But the most impressive numbers coming out of St. Adalbert's are zeros: Zero drugs, Zero pregnancies, Zero gangs, Zero violence, Zero guards, and Zero metal detectors.

There is also Zero toleration for truancy.

Harris believes in solid core curriculum, minimal bureaucracy, and a disciplined and structured environment for the children.

For example, the full - time kindergarten (in place since 1922) instructs students in a comprehensive phonics program and they are reading by year's end.

This as our President hopes against hope to have all children reading by the third grade!

Further, all parents or guardians are given a personal "walk - thru" from Harris of the guidelines in the school handbook.

They know, in advance, what is expected of them and their children.

Uniforms are in place, of course.



Harris

It almost goes without saying that most parents attend the monthly PTU meetings. Harris runs a tight ship, and it works!

Detractors of alternative schools allege that schools like St. Adalbert can produce such impressive results because, as a private school, they are already starting out with the "cream of the crop."

This charge rings hollow at St. Adalbert.

Harris takes in the crack babies, kids with D's and F's at other schools, students with known behavioral problems, and other students the public - funded school system has failed.

She accomplishes all of that with a near Zero percent (.04%) expulsion rate!

But there is more. 72% of the students come from families below the poverty line, but 92% go on to post - secondary education. The rest are employed.

This incredible accomplishment is not reached without much struggle.

Tuition at St. Adalbert is \$975 per year, but the actual costs per student are more than double the tuition.

The Diocese and private individuals subsidize the school, but there are also hidden costs.

For example, the 70 students who participate in the city's voucher program often require even more subsidies.

Vouchers will cover 90% per year, but the actual costs per student are more than double the tuition.

The Diocese and private individuals subsidize the school, but there are also hidden costs.

For example, the 70 students who participate in the city's voucher program often require even more subsidies.

Voucher will cover 90% of the costs for tuition up to \$2250, but parents still have to pay 10%.

Many of these parents cannot afford even that amount.

Since schools cannot charge more than the cost of tuition to the voucher program, St. Adalbert gets an average of \$875 from the kids on vouchers.

Still, against all these odds, Harris has managed to produce these remarkable results.

Harris has done what every successful military man or organization does: she has built a community.

She has done this by insisting on the highest standards and never wavering.

It's called Leadership, and Harris has it in abundance.

Charles Webb improves area with his home improvement company

By CLAUDE STARKS

Charles Webb Home Improvement Company, 11502 Woodland Avenue, specializes in home renovation.

Webb has been in the business for eight years and has experience in aluminum siding, roofing, drywall, ceramic tile, and carpet installation.

Webb estimates that the net worth of the company is approximately \$250,000.00, with assets including computers, generators and compressors.

A special feature of the company is the Home Maintenance Club. The feature consists of an initial fee of \$365.00 for the homeowners' property to be assessed. After ninety days, a \$45.00 monthly fee is charged to the homeowner.

All work completed on the house by the company up to \$500.00 is not charged to the homeowner.

Webb, a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, took courses at the Great Lakes Technical Institute and received an associate degree from Cuyahoga Community College in Home Remodeling.

He has been married to his wife, Angie, a native of Cleveland, for nine years, and they have two girls, Brittany three years old, and Briana seven years old.

Webb purchased his home in 1996, for \$6,000.00 and after interior and exterior remodeling which included electrical work, carpeting, carpentry, and tile work. According to Webb, the house is worth \$62,000.00.

Webb's company provides services to residents in the following communities: Shaker Heights, Cleveland Heights,

Valentine's Day
Saturday, February 14, 1998

At St. Adalbert, faculty, students, parents and alumni gather in support of a common goal: Excellence and Devotion.

This Catholic school where the motto is "Christ is the Center," has an enrollment that is 80% non - Catholic.

Still students participate in liturgy services and students study religion.

Clearly, St. Adalbert is a place where a community has devoted significant energies to see it succeed and those energies have been rewarded.

If this school, is the midst of every obstacle, can overcome all and produce these results, how can we — in good conscience — expect or produce less in ours?



Webb

Garfield Heights, Cleveland, and Chagrin Falls.

Book helps adolescents deal with Alzheimer's

When it comes to dealing with Alzheimer's disease, adolescents fall into a special category. They are old enough to be acutely aware of the impact Alzheimer's disease is having on their family, and to understand some of the technical explanations of the disease. But they may also be embarrassed by the patient's unusual behavior, or find it hard to communicate with their parents about their feelings.

Fading Memories; An Adolescent's Guide to Alzheimer's Disease is a book written by adolescents, for adolescents. Students in the 8th grade at Blessed Sacrament School in Alexandria, Virginia helped ensure the book would reach the targeted age

group by writing the first draft of the book, choosing the cover design and title of the book and taking their own photographs for the book.

In addition to the contributions of Blessed Sacrament students, children from all over the country wrote about their personal experiences with Alzheimer's disease so that future readers of the book will benefit from their knowledge.

Fading Memories encourages adolescents to become involved in the care of their loved one with Alzheimer's disease, which can help open lines of communication, make them feel more a part of the family, and teach them valuable lessons about life.

The book was funded through a grant from the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association (ITPA), a volunteer membership organization comprising current and retired employees of the independent telephone industry.

ITPA promotes community service and philanthropic work through its thousands of members and hundreds of clubs and chapters throughout the country.

Fading Memories is available from the American Health Assistance Foundation for \$5.00, which includes shipping and handling.

Call (301) 948-3244 or 1-800-437-2423 to order a copy.

NARI sponsors improvement show at I-X Center for residents

Attend the NARI Home Improvement Show, January 28 through February 1 at the I-X Center, and enter to win grand prizes which include a trip to see Tim Allen's "Home Improvement Show", a state of the art kitchen or win a "Handyman for a day."

One attendee will win a free trip for two to Los Angeles to see the taping of Tim Allen's hit sitcom Home Improvement.

Hotel, airfare and two tickets to the taping of the show will be awarded courtesy of

WQAL, 104FM.

Home Improvement can be seen weeknights at 7:00 p.m. on Channel 43, Cleveland's Home Team.

Entries will be taken at the WQAL booth during the NARI Home Improvement Show and the winner announced on the morning show on Monday, February 2.

Handyman Connection is sponsoring the "Handyman for a Day" contest which will give the lucky winner help around the house for small or medium sized jobs for an entire day.

The show runs from Wednesday, January 28 through Sunday, February 1 at the I-X Center.

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