



ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

LIFETIME LIONS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

October 2016

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear St. Mark Alumni and Parents of Alumni:

With each alumni newsletter, it seems there are more and more great things to share about our program, which is growing by leaps and bounds! I'm thrilled to be able to provide some very exciting updates to you this month.

First, in case you haven't heard, St. Mark Catholic School is thrilled to announce that we are building a complete SmartLab on our campus, putting the school at the cutting edge of education in North Texas. This is an incredible development. Learn more below. We welcome involvement from our alumni!

Second, the auction dollars that many of you were a part of raising are still being put to good use. Most notably, our gym updates are taking shape, and our playground facility was recently made safer and even more fun for our students.

North Texas Giving Day was also very successful this year, raising record dollars for our Gap Fund, which serves to bridge the gap between tuition paid and the actual cost to educate each student. Many thanks to all of our alumni families who donated!

In addition, we recently held our first Grandparents' Day which was a huge success, AND we hosted three elected government officials on our campus earlier this month who kicked-off the school's 35th anniversary celebration year, and spoke with students about important topics surrounding the upcoming elections and their roles as future leaders. We got some great press coverage for this event.

Read on for the details plus, of course, interesting updates on your fellow St. Mark alumni. All of this and more can be



A NATIONAL SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

St. Mark Catholic School is a two time recipient of the U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award.

This means that St. Mark students consistently score in the top 15% in the nation on standardized tests.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

Follow us and stay connected!



found on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages where we're always sharing the latest news with our community.

And finally, one more thing ... keep visiting us on campus! More and more of you are making appearances in our halls. We love seeing your smiling faces and learning what's new with our former LIONS! It's so nice to share the amazing things going on around here *in person* with our former students who continue to call St. Mark home.

Happy fall from the most exciting and dynamic school campus around!

Patricia Opon

Patricia Opon, Principal
patricia.opon@stmcs.net

AROUND CAMPUS

Introducing the St. Mark SmartLab: What is it? A SmartLab is a fully integrated, customized facility where students explore many disciplines through applied technology and project-based learning. It is carefully designed and provisioned for each grade level, meeting the targeted needs of our campus. Technology applications in the lab serve to reinforce academics and to build next generation skills. Watch the video below to see a SmartLab in action. This lab will not only serve to provide our students with the most cutting edge, engaging and educational tools available, but it will also put St. Mark "on the map" as a true leader in academic excellence, and as the only school in the area to boast this type of facility. Our goal is for the lab to be up and running for the 2017-18 school year. Want to get involved yourself, or have a resource to refer to us? Please contact [Patricia Opon](#).



St. Mark alumni are invited to join Lifetime Lions, our official alumni network. Keep up with former classmates, become a mentor to current students, and learn about opportunities to earn service hours. Click [here](#) to register.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL!

Do you know anyone interested in a Catholic education for their child? St.



Mark has limited openings for the 2016-17 school year. In addition, we're holding the first Open House for the 2017-18 school year next Sunday, November 6 from 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM in the St. Mark Library. [Click here](#) for more details.

LIONS DEN

Get the gear! Brand new St. Mark logo merchandise and spirit wear are available in our Lion's Den Spirit Store. Order your St. Mark gear [online](#) anytime!

GET INVOLVED!

We love it when our alumni and alumni families come back to volunteer, mentor our students, or just take part in our events! Here are some upcoming opportunities for you to get involved on campus (and if

2016 Auction Dollars at Work: Check out our updated playground facilities complete with new walkways, updated safety features, musical instruments, interactive walls, and sun shades. Also, the Bacot Gymnasium with its refurbished ceiling, paint, and scoreboard. A new mural, scorekeeper table, and logo chairs will be part of the updates, too!



35th Anniversary Kick-Off: St. Mark Catholic School turns 35 next August, and we're beginning our yearlong celebration now! U.S. Congressman [Sam Johnson](#)'s office, Texas State Senator [Van Taylor](#), and Texas State Representative [Jeff Leach](#) officially kicked-off our anniversary year at a special school assembly on October 7. Flags were flown over the U.S. Capitol and Texas State Capitol buildings in commemoration, and a State Proclamation was issued in our honor, which were presented to Principal, Patricia Opon. Our esteemed guests spoke with our students about the upcoming election season, civic duty, the importance of service to community, and how they represent America's future leaders. Father Cliff gave a special 35th anniversary blessing, Boy Scout Troop 285 presented the colors, students presented the national anthem, patriotic and spiritual songs, and our Student Council officers presented the dignitaries with plaques recognizing them as "Honorary Lions." [Click here](#) to read the press coverage we received for this once-in-a-lifetime event.



you're a high school student, you can even earn service hours):



All Souls 1K/5K Run: This weekend -- run in memory of a loved one for All Souls Day. Receive a commemorative race t-shirt. Register to run by [clicking here](#), or contact [Marlene Ehring](#) to volunteer.



Parish Fall Festival: You're invited to the annual St. Mark Fall Festival this Saturday! Enjoy great food, games, a craft fair, basketball tournament, Trunk or Treat, and more. [Click here](#) to learn more or to volunteer.



Gala & Auction: Join us for the 30th annual St. Mark Gala & Auction! We're raising a glass to 30 years of auctions, and raising money for our St. Mark SmartLab. Join us at the event, volunteer, donate, become a sponsor...it all adds up in a big way! [Click here](#) for details.

North Texas Giving Day: The St. Mark community donated a record \$15,000+ during this one day online giving event. It's important to note that our participation in NTGD is not tied to a larger, more formal fundraising effort. It simply encourages giving out of the goodness of one's heart, so this is an impressive figure within our community.

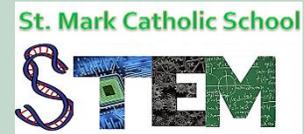
Grandparents' Day: The very first Grandparents' Day was held at St. Mark earlier this school year. We had hundreds of grandparents join us for All School Mass, followed by a lively and interactive classroom Open House. It was a morning filled with the love and traditions of grandparents, and was an overwhelming success!



Academics: We are proud to announce that 51% of our 4th-6th grade students and 41% of our 7th grade students qualified for Duke University's 2016 Talent Search based on last year's standardized test scores. The [Duke TIP](#) (Duke University Talent Identification Program) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to identifying and serving academically gifted and talented youth.

The St. Mark Quiz Bowl team continues to impress! They recently participated in the first tournament of the season, the "Hornet Hullabaloo" at Greenhill School. Our Lions placed 3rd out of 15 middle school teams. They won all 6 games in the preliminary rounds, earning the coveted top seeding, then went on to an epic semi-final battle. Because of their outstanding performance, they will advance to Nationals in May. Team members are Aenghus D. (Captain), Emilio R., Anish K., Jimmy E., and Luis R. Also of note, Aenghus D. achieved an individual ranking of 6th out of 177 middle school AND high school participants.

Students recently took honors at the Diocese of Dallas Diocesan Speech Tournament: Biya C. - Blue Ribbon, Humorous Interpretation; Elena V. - Red Ribbon, Humorous Interpretation; London C. and Mary Kate M. - Red Ribbon, Two Man Improv.



S.T.E.M. Fair: Do you participate in an organization or club, or work for a company that utilizes science, technology, engineering or math? We want you to participate in our upcoming S.T.E.M. Fair on Friday, May 5, 2017! If you're interested, simply contact [Pam Steinkirchner](#).



Monsignor Smyth Golf Classic: This annual event is tentatively scheduled for May 19, 2017. We are looking for volunteers to head various committees. Please email [Marlene Ehring](#) if you are interested in volunteering.

LIONS MENTOR LIONS

Thank you to the following alumni who have recently spent time mentoring our students:

Faith In Action Assembly
Alumni participated in an assembly that educated our students about the organizations that will benefit from this year's All School Service Projects:

Mariel B. '01 and **Alison P. '00** with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, as well as **Gena-Marie M. '14** and **Caroline V. '13** with the John Paul II High School PALs Peanut Butter Drive.

Math Counts

Fine Arts: Our 4th graders recently presented their own fall play entitled, "America: My Home," a salute to America in words and music. What a great way to remember what our country is all about during this election season!



In addition, Father Cliff and Mrs. Corsi are working with the Middle School Theater Production I elective on the November 17 performances of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. It's another St. Mark original, and we invite you to join us on November 17! [Click here](#) for details.

The Orchestra program has been expanded to include a Middle School elective and more advanced classes. The Arts are alive and well on the St. Mark campus!

Athletics: The St. Mark Football, Volleyball and Cross Country seasons are beginning to wrap up, but it's not too late to catch an event -- check the [DPL schedules](#) and join us to cheer on our LIONS!

ALUMNI UPDATES

Will N. '13, senior at Jesuit College Preparatory School, has been recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar.

Kolbe B. '14 is serving as the Class of 2018 President at John Paul II High School.

Alina G. '05, who went on to graduate from Ursuline Academy of Dallas and Stanford University, is a member of the Mexico Women's National Soccer team that competed in the qualifying tournament for the Rio games.

Elizabeth R. '14, a junior at Ursuline Academy of Dallas, and **Emily W. '14**, a junior at Plano Academy High School, were chosen from hundreds of applicants to serve on United States Congressman Sam Johnson's Congressional Youth Advisory Council.

Last year, **Nick M. '05**, a graduate of Jesuit College Preparatory School, and Kansas State University where he earned his Master of Landscape Architecture, created an outdoor public art installation for a pocket park in Wichita, KS. Among other projects, he was recently commissioned

Chris B. '13, a senior at Cistercian Preparatory School, and **Ivanka P. '14**, a junior at Ursuline Academy, continue to sponsor the Math Counts program at St. Mark. It provides an opportunity for middle school students to delve into unique, interesting and complex extra-curricular mathematics, and also provides students the opportunity to compete in three nationally-ranked competitions throughout the school year.

Boy Scout Eagle Project

8th grader, Harrison K., recently completed his Eagle Scout project by landscaping and beautifying a section of the St. Mark Catholic School grounds. He was assisted by **Nathan M. '15**, **Peter N. '13**, and former student **Ben R.**

LIONS MENTOR OTHERS

Are you a high school student interested in applying for the 2017 Diocese of Dallas mission trip to Nicaragua? Several St. Mark alumni have been chosen to participate over the years. The Diocese has produced a video with highlights from the 2016 trip. [Click here](#) to view it and see what our Catholic high school students do to help these communities. Can you spot our alumni who were on this year's trip?

FAVORITE ST. MARK MEMORY

When registering for "Lifetime Lions," you are asked to share your favorite St. Mark memories.

Emily P. '11 recalls fond memories of her days on the St.

by an airport in Syracuse, NY to create a similar installation for them, but instead of sunflowers, it will depict airplanes!

Kelly C. '07 is currently an intern at Southwest Airlines. Kelly graduated from Bishop Lynch High School, received a B.S. in Marketing at The University of Texas at Dallas, and is currently pursuing her M.S. degree in Marketing with a concentration in Customer Insights and Analytics at UTD.

St. Mark Boy Scout Troop 285 had a busy summer. They sent two crews, including several St. Mark alumni, to Philmont Scout Ranch, the Boy Scouts of America premiere high adventure base located in New Mexico. There, the boys had the opportunity to participate on treks, earn their ATV drivers licenses, and learn about fly fishing, 3D archery, tomahawk throwing, and rifle shooting. They also backpacked to Mount Philips which is 11,740 feet above sea level. Former students **Nathan M. '16**, **Brandon O.** and **Jerome B.** were among the participants.

Taylor O. '09 will be performing in a production of Disney's "The Little Mermaid" at the Firehouse Theater throughout the month of November. [Click here](#) for details and showtimes.

Congratulations to former student and 2016 graduate of Cistercian Preparatory School, **Jake B.**, who recently published his first book entitled "The Adventures of Frederigo Benetesta: The Libretto Omnium." The novella represents Jake's senior honors school project at Cistercian. The Christian fantasy story tells of a mysterious, hooded traveler who claims to be able to unlock the timeless secrets of an ancient manuscript stowed deep within the hidden crypts of a troubled kingdom. The book is intended for young teens to adults and is available through Amazon by [clicking here](#). While at Cistercian, Jake was awarded the Dr. and Mrs. Claudia Mayer Memorial Award for Excellence in Humanities, in addition to other awards in religious studies, English, creative writing and Latin. Jake is now attending Rhodes College in Memphis where he is studying Economics, Philosophy and English with an emphasis on creative writing.



Mark Student Council. After graduating from St. Mark, Emily went on to be the Student Council President, as well as the Valedictorian, at Ursuline Academy of Dallas, and now attends The University of Notre Dame. We are so proud that serving on the St. Mark Student Council proved to be an early part of Emily's success.

Our Student Council is still going strong, and this year's officers had quite an honor meeting our elected officials at the special 35th anniversary assembly earlier this month.

STAY CONNECTED

Keep us posted! As we receive alumni updates, we incorporate them into our social media posts, weekly school bulletins, and alumni communications. Tell us about your recent activities and accomplishments -- we'd love to hear from you! Need to update your contact information? Simply contact [Debbie Reed](#) with all of your updates.

WAYS TO GIVE TO ST. MARK

St. Mark Catholic School appreciates your support. If you would like to make a donation of time, expertise, or financial support, please follow the links below.

*Donate your time or expertise - Simply email [Debbie Reed](#) and let us know what you are interested in contributing to our school.

*[Gap Fund](#) - This fund helps St. Mark bridge the gap between the

Congratulations to **Paul M. '05** who earned 9th place at the PGA Canada Mackenzie Tour - National Capital Open to Support Our Troops golf tournament in Ottawa, Canada!



CANADA

At the recent American Dance/Drill Team Line Camp, **Jordan P. '14** received an All-American Dancer award and **Jordan V. '15** received an All-American Honorable Mention award. Both are students at Ursuline Academy of Dallas and are members of the Jesuit Rangerettes drill team.

Congratulations to **Alex R. '12**, graduate of Jesuit College Preparatory School and current student at the University of Dayton, who was named student manager for the Dayton Flyers!

St. Mark alumni and current students were the only students asked to volunteer at the 2016 Holy Trinity Seminary Spes Gregis Dinner. They helped set up the ballroom and circulated among the 1,200+ guests taking preorders for commemorative Spes Gregis silver medals as a fundraiser for the seminary. Participants were **Sneha K. '14** (Ursuline Academy of Dallas), **Julia R. '16** (Bishop Lynch High School), **Daniel A. '14**, **Julianna S. '16** (John Paul II High School), and **Jace B. '15** (Cistercian Preparatory School).

Kristen L. '13, senior at Bishop Lynch High School, was recently named to the Spanish Honor Society.

Geno C. '13 and **Michael M. '13** celebrated John Paul II High School's Homecoming Week "Twin Day" by wearing their St. Mark 8th grade graduation t-shirts.



Once A Lion, Always A Lion!

2014 alums **Molly S.** and **Jordan P.** were recently inducted as Student Ambassadors at Ursuline Academy of Dallas.

Ethan J. '15 is a member of the Jesuit College Preparatory School Debate Team. He and his teammate recently placed 5th at the Newman Smith Invitational.

tuition amount our families pay, and the actual cost to educate each student. For 2016-17, that cost is \$1,140 per student.

*[Technology Fund](#) - This fund assists St. Mark with keeping current on the technology made available to our students.

*[Other Monetary Donations](#) - Make a general donation, or designate funds towards a specific program such as Fine Arts, Athletics, or Robotics.

*[Legacy Brick](#) - For \$100, purchase a personalized brick that will become part of the entryway to St. Mark Catholic School.

*[Merchant Programs](#) - Raise funds for our school simply by linking your Tom Thumb, Kroger and Target shopper cards to St. Mark.

"ONCE A LION,
ALWAYS A
LION!"



Chandler P. '11, graduate of Jesuit College Preparatory School, is currently attending the University of Missouri, is a member of Cyber Security Computing Association, and plays for the Mizzou Rugby team.

Katie F. '15, a sophomore at Bishop Lynch High School, was recently inducted into the Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, as well as the National English Honor Society.

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