
MOTHER SETON ACADEMY

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

GRADUATES AND BENEFACTORS: IN OUR HEARTS BEYOND OUR DOORS

SPRING 2003

Many of us are led to Mother Seton Academy by a series of happy accidents; we know someone who worked or volunteered here, we heard about the school and its mission at church, we read about it in *The Catholic Review* or in another newspaper or magazine, or, we simply walked in off the street to be greeted warmly by Sr. Jacqueline. However it is we come, our presence is welcomed and our gifts are celebrated. People who believe in the mission of our school are drawn to us, and their gifts are many more than we could ever anticipate.

In fulfilling an integral part of our mission at MSA, we seek to place our graduates in the finest area Catholic, private, and magnet schools. Most of our students take long trips on city buses to reach us, and face even longer journeys to their high schools. Some of them rise at 5:00 a.m., and are at the bus stops by 5:45 so that they can make the trip to school and have enough time to visit a teacher for help before the first bell rings. Often these bus rides, sometimes over 10-15 miles, take one and a half to two hours door to door.

In some ways, the long bus rides are analogous to a journey of a different sort. MSA graduates often confront much larger classes, campuses, and more choices in curricular and extra-curricular activities when they enter high school. The huge buildings with long corridors can be intimidating; certainly the hundreds of new faces are. Just registering for classes and buying books can be a real challenge for a family who doesn't own a car. How do you clean out your locker at Christmas and the end of the year and take all your books and sports equipment home on a city bus? How do you get to dances and games? How do you e-mail assignments or type papers if you don't have a computer at home? How do you call in sick if you don't have a phone?

These are some of the challenges faced by MSA graduates and their families as they transition to high school. Fortunately, some kind members of our community have stepped into the breach to help our students make the move to high school more comfortable and less stressful.

Michael and Maria Salvatore raised two beautiful children in Baltimore. Not long ago, their youngest graduated from college and set off to New York City to begin her career. Their oldest child recently married and moved out of state. Though their children and their large, extended families visit often, their home was missing something it had not in 25 years; the presence of a child.

Both Michael and Maria had volunteered at MSA in years past. Sometimes they tutored, sometimes they ran the parking lot at events, sometimes they chopped vegetables for party trays. The great good humor and enthusiasm that characterize their commitment to MSA's mission made them come to mind when one of our recent graduates was accepted with a full scholarship to a prestigious boys' Catholic high school in Baltimore County. They live quite close to the school, which their son attended, and had expressed an interest in helping any of our graduates who might enroll.

Lance, our student, and his mom, Molly, met Michael and Maria over the summer and visited the high school. The Salvatores agreed to provide transportation and accompany them to parent/teacher conferences, to communicate with school administrators, counselors and teachers on a regular basis in order to monitor Lance's academics, to help him with his homework at their house after school, to work with him on his computer skills, and to provide school supplies and books, as well as occasional transportation to and from school events like dances. Mr. and Mrs. Salvatore have formed a friendship with Lance and his family, and he knows he has a backup nearby when he needs it. He knows that he is supported, still, by the MSA community. Both mother and son take great comfort from this. He comes back to MSA regularly for tutoring, and continues to improve his grades.

The Salvatores enjoy the strides they see Lance making, and their grown daughter recently thanked them for finally giving her a baby brother for Christmas! Baltimore is a city with great challenges and an even greater heart. The MSA community holds our graduates and our benefactors in our hearts beyond our doors!

MICHAEL AND MARIA SALVATORE

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Mary Lin Yoshimura had just moved to Baltimore seven years ago when she happened by Mother Seton Academy on a walk around her new Fells Point neighborhood. Curious about the school, and wondering about volunteer opportunities in her new city, she rang the doorbell.

Mary Lin, an artist by profession, discovered that the school had a need for a part-time art teacher, and she offered to volunteer to fill this role. She stepped in as MSA's art teacher for a year. For those of you in the MSA family who have visited with Sr. Mary Bader in her office, the wing chair upholstered in Mary Lin's hand-painted fabric is a familiar sight.

As is often the case with volunteers and teachers, even after she left her art position, Mary Lin stayed connected to MSA. She and her husband Jim have sponsored a student's scholarship for the past several years, and Mary Lin designed and printed the invitations to MSA's 10th anniversary in the fall of 2002. She painted the beautiful banner displayed in the St. Stanislaus Church Hall for our gathering in September, and provided flowers, lamps, and decorative vases for the event. Eager to help however she could, she came the morning of our celebration and helped chop vegetables for our snack trays.

At Mary Lin's suggestion, she and MSA organized a show and sale of her art work with 100% of the proceeds going to benefit MSA.

One Saturday in February, approximately 75 members of the MSA family gathered at Henderson's Wharf in Fell's Point to support our school through the purchase of Mary Lin's beautiful paintings, lithographs, screens, hand-painted furniture, tote bags, purses, umbrellas and note cards.

Refreshments were provided by Patrick Russell of Kooper's Tavern, and he and his staff volunteered their time to the event. In a lovely banquet hall, surrounded by Mary Lin's vibrant artwork, our community came out to support our school. Through their purchases, our friends and benefactors made a very generous donation to Mother Seton Academy's arts programs. Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to Mary Lin who works so lovingly and with such passion on behalf of our students. Her gentleness, enthusiasm, and creativity have brought us many gifts through the years. Thank you, Mary Lin!

MARY LIN YOSHIMURA

"SUPPORTING MSA IS A TANGIBLE INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE. PUNDITS HAVE SAID THE FUTURE IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE. WELL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE.... IT IS YOUR STUDENTS."

MSA Benefactor Thomas J. Wilson, III, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

SR. MARY BADER, DC

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

In 17th century France, St. Vincent De Paul addressed sisters, the clergy and others who cared for those in need by urging them to "be creative to infinity" in their service to others. An extensive list of contributions made by Mother Seton Academy's supporters would affirm St. Vincent's words. Our benefactors exude creativity in their service to our children. Whether working directly with students, repairing a leaky roof, mentoring a graduate, giving of material and financial resources, supplying paper towels, providing eye glasses, or teaching a workshop on health, our supporters are living St. Vincent's words.

With heartfelt gratitude, I thank each of our benefactors, volunteers, sponsors, and staff members for building a little piece of God's Kingdom on Ann Street in

GRADUATE SUPPORT PROGRAM REACHES OUT

Thanks to generous grants from the *Annie E. Casey* and *Cassin Educational Initiative Foundations*, MSA's new office of Graduate Support is moving full steam ahead to help our graduates prepare for and apply to high schools, colleges, and job training programs.

In November, Nicole Yeftich, MSA's Graduate Support Coordinator, hosted the "Getting to Know the SAT" workshop. Over 15 graduates attended. Bryan MacAvoy, a Notre Dame AmeriCorps volunteer with previous experience leading standardized test preparation classes for high school students, presented a valuable workshop. This event also marked MSA's first collaboration with St. Ignatius Loyola Academy, a tuition-free, Baltimore boys' middle school also founded on the Nativity School Model.

Eleven of our graduates who are now high school seniors have had meetings with Ms. Yeftich in the Office of Graduate Support to take advantage of assistance with college applications, standardized tests, and financial aid. Two graduates from earlier MSA graduating classes have returned to get help applying to community colleges. Three of our current seniors have already been accepted to college, and more letters are expected daily.

In January, St. Ignatius Loyola Academy and MSA hosted a FAFSA Financial Aid Workshop. Seven MSA

informative meeting. Tracey Durant, of the Community College of Baltimore County, walked families through this intimidating form, and helped them apply for federal and state financial assistance for post-secondary education. Currently, 11 of our 17 high school seniors have completed their FAFSA forms.

February marked the beginning of a free 10 week SAT preparation course for our graduates. Also taught by Bryan MacEvoy, this workshop was offered to St. Ignatius Loyola Academy graduates and members of the Baltimore Urban Debate League. Given that SAT classes are a luxury for many families, our ability to offer these classes represents quite a benefit to our graduates.

Other special events for our graduates included a social, visits to Salisbury University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and a monthly movie night. A graduate committee will be formed to assist in the planning of future alumni events.

If you are an employer, or know of one in the Baltimore area, who might be able to help the Office of Graduate Support find jobs or job-skilled volunteer experiences for our alumni, please contact Nicole Yeftich or Sr. Mary at (410) 563-2833. We would love to collaborate with you to help our graduates gain job skills and employment experience.

MSA GRADUATE UPDATES

Ryan Gatson, '02, Loyola Blakefield High School
Ryan is enjoying a great freshman year at Loyola. He is his homeroom's alternate for student government, a member of the stock market and forensics clubs, and manager of the varsity football team. Recently, he spoke at a Catholic Charities breakfast on the subject of how attending Catholic schools has helped make him the fine young man he is today.

Ignacio Campos, '01, Mount St. Joseph High School
Ignacio, a sophomore, has earned all A's B's and C's in his year and a half at Mt. St. Joe. Currently, he is teaching Tae Kwon Do, to blue and green belts (students ages 10-13). He is participating in Tae Kwon Do tournaments locally, and hoping to earn a spot in national competitions. Ignacio reports he is considering a career as an FBI agent or a doctor because, "I have a need for action in my life."

Natalie Serovy, '00 Seton Keough High School
Now a junior, Natalie has earned a spot on the bronze honor roll. She is a member of the Serving and Leading

Teams Group, which, in collaboration with Cardinal Gibbons High School and St. Frances Academy, seeks to deal with issues facing those living in poverty in Baltimore who want to serve and lead their communities. Natalie is seeking a part-time job, and hopes to attend Loyola College in Maryland with the goal of pursuing a degree in Business.

Darrell Carter, '97
Darrell earned his GED degree in 2002 and is headed to Baltimore City Community College. He intends to transfer after two years to the University of Baltimore, and wants, eventually, to open his own business. Currently, Darrell is working at The Sylvan Beach Cafe making "the best ice cream in Baltimore" and wants MSA students and graduates to know, "If I can do it, you can do it, too!"

Wendy Lewis Kisner, '96 Catholic High, '00
Wendy is employed as a dental assistant and is working towards obtaining a certificate in radiography at the Community College of Baltimore in Essex. Her husband of three years, Shawn, a former Marine, is a security guard in Washington, D.C. Their daughter, Mykaela, will be two years old in April.

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SCHOOL FACTS

Principal: Sr. Mary Bader, DC
Enrollment: 69 students in 6th, 7th, and
8th grades
Staff: 20 (15 full-time, 5 part-time)
7 religious
Founded in 1993

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 15 Academic
Challenge
6:00 p.m.

MAY 3 Cardinal Cup Run
9:00 a.m. at
The Cathedral of
Mary Our Queen

MAY 30 Graduation
6:00 p.m.

MSA WISH LIST

packaged snacks and juices
postage stamps
Office Depot gift certificates
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IN YOUR WILL
TAX I.D. NUMBER:**

52-1811012

*Edited and Published by
Angie Patterson-Handy*

*Printed by
Danny Paszkiewicz*
