

An Amazing Summer Opportunity

By Steve Edwards, Middle School Head

For the past six years, St. Mary's has sent representatives to McCallie School for their leadership camp for rising 8th grade boys. The participants are chosen by McCallie based on their grades and application. This past summer Max Gonzalez, one of our outstanding students, was selected to attend. Here is Max's detailed account of what he encountered.

McCallie CLC

By Max Gonzalez, St. Mary's 8th Grade Student

Over this past summer, I was chosen as the St. Mary's representative, along with 25 other 13 to 14-year-old young men from around the nation, to attend a 12-day McCallie leadership camp in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The camp was called CLC, which stands for character, leadership, and community. McCallie, a boarding school in Tennessee, handpicks this group and teaches about leadership and what it truly means to be a leader. CLC has changed my viewpoint on what it means to lead and reinforced many values that will stay with me forever.

At CLC we assisted those in need through community service. Our first service project was at a local foodbank, where we cleaned dumpsters, threw away rotten produce, and worked with people in need by loading food into their cars. This gave me a greater understanding of people who do not know where their next meal will come from. Although some people might have a nice car and a well-paying job, they still may be going through hardships and need temporary support. Another community service project that we participated in was Widow's Harvest. Widow's Harvest is an organization that helps widows who cannot do their yard work. The work usually consisted of trimming vines, removing poison ivy, clipping trees, and mowing lawns. The two women we worked for were both very kind and appreciative. This project brought the most joy to me, because I was able to see how thankful the two women were when they saw the finished product. These experiences gave me an awareness for others' needs and the positive difference I can contribute to a community through service to others.

There were many fun and challenging activities that drove us to our breaking points and beyond our comfort zones. On the second day of camp my group went caving. We ventured into the cave and explored everything that it had to offer. The greatest challenge was a 100-foot crawl on our bellies through freezing water. We forced ourselves through extremely tight cracks in rocks that were about eight inches wide, and climbed up to a twenty foot hole to get to the second floor of the cave. I was challenged with whitewater rafting and indoor and outdoor rock climbing. We rushed over rapids like madmen surfing miniature whirlpools, as our rafts were half-way submerged and close to flipping. The last time I went rock climbing was years ago, and I was afraid I would be terrible. However, to my surprise, I mustered up all my courage and proceeded to climb to the top of some of the most challenging courses. All of these activities gave me new confidence and curiosity that I can use to tackle any challenges that come my way.

CLC surrounded us with exceptional leaders from McCallie and throughout the surrounding Tennessee communities and beyond. The director of CLC, Dr. Richie, always wanted to make things fun, and made every activity a learning and enriching experience. Mr. Hughes was a very kind man who selected us to be campers at CLC. He also wanted us to learn from our experiences and was a great conversationalist. Mr. Killion was extremely outgoing and cared for everyone who met him. Mr. Wallen was a very manly man who taught us leadership qualities, such as never being too good to serve and finding the balance between concern for task and concern for others.

Every night after dinner, we would have a forum. A leader was chosen by the staff to speak to us about leadership and provide wisdom about what they had learned through their lives. Every person who spoke to us reinforced the importance of making your bed and how it started a day of productivity. They also conveyed the importance of relationships and how they can help you in the future. We learned about how sometimes there can be a fine line between violence and nonviolence, as well as the traits of being a good leader. I learned to stay positive, even when things are wrong. We learned that very small things can lead to very big things and the decisions that you make when you are younger will dictate your life when you are older. The people at McCallie helped me realize many new things, and I hope to use their lessons and traits to better myself.

I learned many things about myself and others at CLC. One of the main things I took away from CLC is that the leader is not always the first one to do everything or the glorified general leading his troops into battle. A leader can be anyone, and anyone can become a leader by doing simple things such as volunteering. Eventually, these simple things will make a huge difference in one or many lives around the world. This experience taught me to never judge anyone before getting to know them, because the person in the BMW next to you might be driving home from the food bank. CLC was an amazing learning experience that I hope to build the rest of my life around.

Student Council

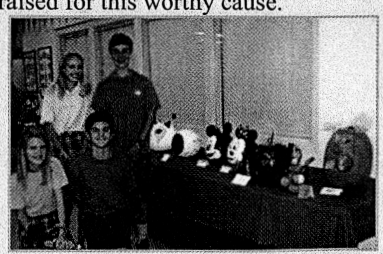
St. Mary's 2016-2017 Student Council has been busy this semester with a number of activities promoting service and fun.

The fun began with a middle school Halloween Dance and continued with a Halloween Jack-O-Lantern decorating contest open to 5th through 8th grades, judged on creativity and Halloween or school spirit. The winner received a $25 dollar gift certificate!

The first service project chosen for the year was Breast Cancer Awareness Day on October 26th. Students and faculty were encouraged to wear pink shirts or accessories and contribute $2 to support the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Over $700 was raised for this worthy cause.

Student Council's next sponsored service project is the annual St. Mary's Holiday Food Drive to help feed the less fortunate in Tampa. This year the donated non-perishable food items go to Feeding Tampa Bay. In the past SMEDS families have responded enthusiastically and been extremely generous, and we are sure this year's food drive will be just as successful. Just before Thanksgiving Student Council sponsored the annual Mike's Pies fundraiser.

Our Student Council meets once a week, under the supervision of Assistant Head of School Kathleen Lopez. This year's officers are President Max Gonzalez, Vice President Kaylie Rustman, Treasurer Brett Fedorovich, and Secretary Hartley Hill. Class representatives are Sarah Henry, Elyse Iller, Lukas Lehman, and Tyler Thiel (8th grade); Britton Byrd, Macy Cassidy, Mary Scott Holman, and Tommy Little (7th grade); and Davis Cool Mary Chase Germain, Wes Mendes, and Kate Petitt (6th grade.) They expect to be very busy all year with events and activities for our students and for the Tampa community.



Student Council officers on Breast Cancer Awareness Day with some of the Jack-O-Lantern contest entries. Front, Hartley Hill and Max Gonzalez; back, Kaylie Rustman and Brett Fedorovich.