

A Cool Idea by Alumni Siblings Takes Wings

For Maximillian Chillura – and his siblings Patton, Hadley and Nash – attending St. John’s helped establish a goal-oriented work ethic that has helped them professionally, as co-owners of one of Tampa’s fastest-growing and tastiest ice cream shops, Chill Bros Scoop Shop.



Max with two happy customers

The ice cream company opened in 2019 and has grown to five locations around Tampa, with about 70 employees. The successful venture is co-owned by the four siblings, whose dad is a prominent Tampa area banker, Joseph Chillura, and whose grandfather Joe Chillura Jr. was an architect and former Hillsborough County commissioner.

Max and his siblings take pride in serving an all-natural, American style ice cream made from scratch, with passion, care and the best ingredients. The idea began to take shape with his siblings years ago, adding velocity when Max traveled to Bologna, Italy, to master the art of ice cream making.

Today, Chill Bros Scoop Shops are a strong draw for customers around the bay – including more

than a few current St. John’s students and families – seeking the shops’ delicious, locally-crafted flavors, ranging from Rocket Pop Sorbetto to Mint Stracciatella to Summer Peach Sorbetto, and many more.

A STRONG FOUNDATION

Max (Class of 2009) and his two siblings Patton (2007) and Hadley (2012) were “Eagles For A Decade” (attending St. John’s from K4 through Grade 8), with youngest brother Nash attending from K4 through Grade 6. In addition, their grandmother, Mary Helen Chillura, taught at the school until her retirement.

Max credits the school for giving them all a strong start in their academic path.

“St. John’s helped us establish a work ethic to accomplish our goals and taught us how to organize ourselves, which have been integral in my development as a person,” Chillura says. “It made high school, and then college, much more productive for me.”

Max’s parents chose the school for their kids for a mixture of reasons, he says, including the Christian component, small class sizes, and a wide-ranging curriculum where students are exposed to a lot of different courses.

A STRONG COMMUNITY

“I also have a fondness for the tight-knit community there, and the level of attention I got from the teachers,” Max explains, adding that Cindy Fenlon was a favorite teacher at the time (and is still here!). (See her feature, page 30.)

“The study of the humanities – Greek mythology, Latin, and the history associated with those classes – inspired me to want to see the world,” he says. “That led to later travel in Italy, which was the inception for me pursuing a career in food and beverage.”

With one of the Chill Bros shops located less than a mile from the Primary and Lower Schools, Max smiles when discussing the “small world” aspect of his early schooling and later career. “It’s this full

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It’s this full circle moment when I see a parent bringing St. John’s kids in to get ice cream – a reflection of how I grew up.

Nash, Patsy, Max, Joe, Mary Helen, Hadley, Patton and Joseph



circle moment every time I see a parent bringing their kids in wearing St. John’s uniforms and going to get ice cream – it’s a reflection of how I grew up,” he says. “The whole point of Chill Bros is to fill that role in the community and be that place I would have wanted to go after school.”

EYES ON THE FUTURE

That warm sense of community that so many St. John’s alumni speak of when referencing the school will keep Max and his family close to the school, he adds.

“I will continue to stay involved with the school,” Max says. “The impact it’s had

on me and my life is substantial. I’ve hired individuals who have previously attended St. John’s. It’s interesting to see the quality of people that come out of it. There’s a common thread – they tend to be hard-working, honest, diligent, very loyal. It’s cool to see an institution having that impact on people.”



The siblings (clockwise from top: Patton, Max, Nash and Hadley) as St. John’s students, surrounding Joseph