

SPRING 2025

the Brook

AN OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL MAGAZINE



Art with Heart

COMING TOGETHER TO
BRING HOPE TO OTHERS

WONDER &
WISDOM



Connie Hayes '49, Herbert Cheek '48, Jean Calton, and Colleen McNicholas '49, on the White House stairs following the 1945 National Music Awards.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



“For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things.” -Romans 11:36

Dear Overbrook Community,

Something that consistently strikes visitors to Overbrook Catholic is that our children are happy. They are safe to wonder, try new things, and play. They are free to discover their gifts and talents. They know that they are deeply loved, by both the Lord and those around them. They are joyful in striving for excellence and peaceful in knowing that this world is not our forever home.

As I perused this edition of *The Brook*, I saw the endless possibilities of childhood at OCS as if through a kaleidoscope. With each slight adjustment of positioning, an infinite number of patterns emerge. Each child was created in the image and likeness of God with such intention. Each of our 296 students has different personalities, interests, desires, skillsets, and gifts. As they set out to find the fullness of who God made them to be, the possibilities of what we can do together are truly endless.

Overbrook Catholic has a long-standing tradition of preparing the whole child. It is evident in community involvement, whether in pushing

through cross-country records or increasing empathy and creativity while painting wig stands for childhood cancer patients. It is present in the classroom, from engineering in a newly-renovated STEM lab to peer-learning in math competitions which result in numerous national titles. It is visible, of course, in the eagerness surrounding First Holy Communion and two sisters singing at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy.

It is increasingly apparent that Overbrook Eagles are well-rounded. All things are from Him and for Him, therefore there is delight in every component of each child. Our hallways are full of joy-filled hearts and hungry minds, treasuring the gifts of today while waiting in hopeful anticipation of who they will become. Enjoy reading about the accomplishments of our OCS eagles.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P.
Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P.
Principal

Sister Dominic, O.P.
President

Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P.
Principal

Teresa Leon
Vice Principal

Anabel Strianse '11
Director of Admissions

Sharon Huber
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*Director of Marketing
and Communications*

Meagan Harkins
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*Marketing and
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PHOTOS BY:
Meagan Harkins, Uchida Photography,
and Diocese of Nashville

COVER PHOTO:
Dhlian Carlson '25, Lawrence Lehrman
'25, and Drew Greulich '25 painting a
wig stand for a cancer patient.

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RUNNING SO AS TO WIN: THREE DECADES OF OCS CROSS COUNTRY

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Hebrews 12:1

There is no Nashville Catholic school athletic tradition quite like Diocesan cross country. During the past 30 years, three generations of families have run the Overbrook Catholic School course with the latest season welcoming more than 1,200 runners and 3,000 visitors to campus.

“It’s because of what this sport means to the community that makes it energetic and joyful,” Athletic Director Bryan Miller says. “There’s teamwork and spirit in cheering on the first-place winners and the kids that walk through the finish line at the end. I like seeing the encouragement that comes from each child’s perseverance and doing his/her personal best supported by teammates.

“What makes me tear up is the kids celebrating a runner who shaved five minutes off his personal best on week three, or watching the first and second graders smiling so big and speeding up each time someone claps for them.”

In addition to the camaraderie of meets, it is running through the tunnel of parents and teammates as they exit the track onto the course that Bryan most

wants athletes to remember, as it is a tangible reminder of the great cloud of witnesses described in Hebrews 12:1.

Participating student-athletes run weekly in August and September, at distances of 0.75, 1, 1.5, or 2 miles depending on their grade level. Bryan was eager to add two new routes in the 2024 cross country season, increasing visibility for spectators and better utilizing the 83 acres of campus. Athletes now route closer to the brook, as well as past statues of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary. “Coach Miller works hard to design the course to maximize the ability to see the kids running, which is fun for family and friends,” coach and parent Lara Kierlin says.

Teams compete from 13 diocesan schools, four independent Catholic schools, and up to 10 other private and public elementary schools, making OCS the hub for elementary cross country in Middle Tennessee. Recently, OCS began co-hosting Harpeth Valley Athletic Conference (HVAC) middle school events with St. Cecilia Academy.

Bryan estimates 40 to 60 hours are spent



each week prepping the course and coordinating the teams. Volunteers make an operation of this scale possible, whether marking the course, stocking concessions, monitoring the start and finish lines, time-keeping, or tracking data.

"There is nothing like the magic of a cross country meet day," Lara says, referencing the impact of weather on competition. "You can have a crisp, cool day where your time trialers will have an advantage. You might have a wet day with driving rain and your gritty grinders, the real mudders, will have the upper hand. Either way, we train the kids to race in any condition.

"Being the home team brings everyone together on the campus in a circus-like atmosphere that is electric for the kids. Even the littlest athletes, chugging through their half miles, feel like Olympic champions when they cross the line to the cheering crowd."

BUILDING LEGACIES

"My favorite thing about being part of this tradition has been the opportunity to speak with parents, coaches, and administrators who talk about the history and community," Bryan says. "I like having cross country on this campus as a legacy and a real part of



Jim '74 and Ellen Simpson at a cross country meet with some of their 40+ family members who have run at OCS.

what people love about Overbrook and the Diocesan Athletic Conference."

Volunteer Ellen Simpson has watched more than 40 family members run at OCS cross country meets during the last three decades. The family celebrates the last meet each year with a picnic and playground time for the children. "For our family, it's a way to get together because everybody is there. It's so fun to be with them, but also it's when we connect with many friends," Ellen says. "Everybody goes to cross country. I can't say enough positive things about it and what it has meant to our family."

Ellen and her husband, Jim '74, have three sons, each of whom began running while

attending Saint Henry School. Their oldest son, Anthony, competed for Father Ryan High School, was an All-American at Bryan College, and ran D1 at the University of Tennessee. "He learned to love running through the Diocesan meets on the Overbrook campus," she says.

Anthony returned to campus to coach OCS cross country for seven years, serve as athletic director for five years, and spend two years as assistant principal. "It was cool for our family that he would later manage the Diocesan meets," she says. "It was a full-circle kind of thing."

Having hardly missed any meets in OCS cross country history, the Simpsons have

“I think our cross country athletes learn they can do hard things, that striving to do their best together makes everything more fun, and that the beauty of sports is often found in a community other than the scoreboard or rank. The memories are just as much about the 20 minutes before and after a race than the five to 20 minutes of a race.”

Bryan Miller, Athletic Director



Elementary cross country teams from across Middle Tennessee with tents along the finish line, joined by some of the 3,000 spectators who attend each season.



Isabela Catalogne '31 running in the 0.75-mile race.



Caleb Velasquez Kho '28 participating in the one-mile race.



The OCS elementary cross country team (grades third through fifth) celebrating their first-place victory at the Nashville Regional Championship.



A heap of female runners gathered at the start line on the field, some of the 1,200 who participate each season.



Fifth and sixth grade girls after winning first place in the HVAC Junior Championship.



Rosemary Strobel '29 nearing the finish line at an OCS cross country meet.

become loyal volunteers, whether helping with registration, golf carting, or clean up.

"When I think of cross country, I think of the multiple families who pitch their own tent and have their own family Sundays, with three generations or more of family and friends running, watching, and being a part of the community," Bryan says.

NEW HORIZONS

The OCS team is comprised of 120 athletes and 10 coaches. At the beginning of the season, the runners are divided into groups based on pace, and each coach works with their respective cohort to optimize their training by level. Many of the older OCS runners are multi-sport athletes with a baseline of fitness from soccer, swimming, basketball, and football, so few start from scratch aerobically.

"In training, our students learned some physiology to explain why, for example, lactate threshold training allowed them to complete specific workouts for a desired outcome," Lara says. "They learned how neuromuscular activation contributed to proper warmup and speed sessions. It became tougher and tougher as the season transpired for the coaches to challenge them during intervals as they became faster than us."

In the 2024-25 season, the team soared to new heights, with the elementary boys



Brendan Murphy '28 rounding the corner to the finish line at an OCS cross country meet.

winning the regional championship and a group of 11 athletes advancing to the state competition. Lara credits their success to talent and psychological toughness. "That is a very dangerous combination in cross country, as negative thoughts are self-defeating when you are trying to push through intense physical discomfort," she says. "The boys and girls learned to be patient and precise in training."

Likewise, the third- through fifth-grade boys placed fourth at state in a highly competitive year, as their times and ranks would have won the prior year. The team finished the season with an average 6:04 mile. Both Ben Stempel '27 and Ruthie Cromwell '26 made All-State, competing against public and private schools from all of Tennessee. Their coaches are hopeful that this experi-

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SINGING SISTERS

BLESSED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME



Sisters Sophie '25 and Ellie Schoch '23 in Chiesa di San Gioacchino (Church of St. Joachim) in Rome, Italy.

In the fall of 2024, sisters Ellie '23 and Sophie Schoch '25 spent one week traveling with the St. Bernard Academy (SBA) Choir performing at three different Masses: St. Peter's Basilica, Basilica dei Santi Silvestro e Martino ai Monti, and Chiesa di San Gioacchino. The purpose of the trip was to accompany Deacon Christian Hamrick for his ordination at St. Peter's, followed by his first homily preached at Chiesa di San Gioacchino.

"At first when Ellie mentioned singing in Rome, I told her there's a Rome in Tennessee," sixth grader Sophie says. "I can't believe we went to Italy. It meant a lot to represent my state, city, and school from far away."

"On the flight to Italy, I had mixed feelings of nervousness and excitement," Ellie says. "I had never traveled abroad before and didn't know what to expect, but singing

has always made me feel more confident." Other highlights of the trip included visiting the Colosseum, attending a Papal Mass, walking the Appian Way, eating plenty of gelato, and observing Pope Francis drive by the group twice during the Papal Audience.

MINISTERING WITH MUSIC

The quote attributed to St. Augustine, "To sing is to pray twice," resonates deeply with the Schoch sisters. Sophie finds that singing helps keep her mind from wandering as it often does in traditional prayer. "Singing is focusing on notes and words and making the noise coming out of your mouth sound beautiful as you sing to God," she says.

Her favorite song of the trip was "Surely the Presence," as she had both a solo and harmony. The group sang it at every stop,

“Singing with my sister was a special experience. We set our small rivalries aside and supported each other throughout this journey. Sophie supported me like no one else could the day that I cantered, and I felt safer and more confident that she had my back.” **Ellie Schoch '23**



The choir singing at the first Mass of Deacon Christian Hamrick.

even at churches they visited which were not on their official schedule. “It was cool to make people happy just by singing,” she says. “People you don’t even know come up and film you like you’re their child. It was hard to keep singing because I was smiling so much.”

“Music has always strengthened my relationship with God because singing is the way I share God’s love with others,” Ellie says. “Singing in Rome not only helped me bring joy to others, but it was the most joyful I had felt in a long time.” Her favorite song from the trip was the responsorial Psalm she cantered, “You Are My Inheritance, O Lord.”

Both sisters credit Overbrook for their faith formation. “Getting to learn about God as part of my every day is amazing,” Sophie says. “I would not be who or where I am today without this school,” Ellie adds.

Both sisters have been members of the OCS choir under the direction of Marcina Hayden. “Mrs. Hayden gave me a great foundation for singing as she allowed me to cantor and participate in choir,” Ellie says. “I will always be grateful to her.”

Since graduating, Ellie has been in the SBA choir, describing it as a joyful experience where director Renee Thompson makes everything sound beautiful, and friends make every day brighter. “I have always been passionate about music and will be involved in it at every opportunity,” she says.

Sophie’s involvement in choir launched her participation with Act Too Players School of Music and Theatre in Franklin, Tenn. She loves singing so much that she practices harmonies during recess with her classmates.

Music has long been an integral part of the Schoch family. Parents Will and Heather

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Sophie '25 and Ellie Schoch '23 with their parents, Will and Heather, at the Colosseum.



Ellie Schoch '23 cantering Psalm 16, “You Are My Inheritance, O Lord.”



Matt Curley speaking to the Dominican Dads in the Dining Hall, following their Friday morning prayer time in the Chapel.

Engaging the *Whole Family*

Being part of the Overbrook Catholic School community is a family affair. A tenet of the Dominican Difference is to form the whole person and engage the family while on campus and beyond. Bonds created at OCS remain after children graduate, and several alumni parents are still active on campus years removed from their time in the school's hallways.

"At the heart of Catholic education is an understanding that the school's role is to be in supportive partnership with the parents who are the primary educators of their children," President Sister Dominic, O.P. says. "While the school is skilled in imparting the faith and teaching important lessons, the greatest impact on the child happens in the home. For Catholic education to fulfill its mission, parents and the school are to be aligned, true partners, in what it means and in what it takes to form a child in the way of grace."

Families are attracted to this learning philosophy and the Dominican Difference. School enrollment increased by 7%



“As men, we can help address many of the challenges faced by families in our society simply by being present. St. Joseph provides us a great role model in being present and Dominican Dads allows us to contemplate what that means for each of us.”

Matt Curley, Alumni Parent

during the past two years, and families cite The Dominican Campus as part of their decision-making to relocate from states such as California, Wisconsin, and New York.

“It’s because of the Dominican Sisters that we are here,” first-year OCS parent Jessica McGibbon says. “In New York, we were finding it increasingly challenging from a cultural perspective to raise our kids. Nashville is a wonderful town. There are so many things to recommend it, and the Dominican Sisters kind of sealed the deal.”

In moving to Nashville, Jessica and her husband, Jim, enrolled one daughter, Maria ‘29, at OCS and two daughters at St. Cecilia Academy.

“Overbrook Catholic School desires to invite parents into deeper conversion and deeper relationship with Jesus and the Church,” Sister Dominic says. “Book studies, Dominican Dads, and retreats all provide intellectual and spiritual formation within a community setting, which can be a great help to the work of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives.”

“It’s edifying and it speaks to the importance of being in a community of people who are trying to be better,” Jessica says of these opportunities. “In many communities, the spirit isn’t necessarily one of transformation, whereas here they are very intentional about trying to help you live a life of virtue. I see that in everything I’ve been involved with so far.”

Led by Sister Dominic, the Women’s Book Club meets weekly in the fall and spring. They have read titles such as *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis and *Interior Freedom* by Father Jacques Philippe. Meetings include time for fellowship, prayer, Lectio Divina, and conversation.



Parents gathered in the White House for a Parent Coffee with administration, previewing their child’s upcoming grade level highlights.

In the fall, OCS mothers helped launch a chapter of Well-Read Mom, a national book club that “accompanies women in the reading of great books and spiritual classics to encourage personal growth, friendship, and meaningful conversations in order to explore the human condition and reorient ourselves to what is good, beautiful, and true.”

Jessica especially loves the community that includes grandmothers and mothers of graduates. “There’s a real sort of charity being together,” she says.

Dominican Dads is a staple of the Dominican Campus, serving fathers and father-figures of current and former students since 2013. The goal is to strengthen men in their formation as disciples, with a particular focus on their vocations as husbands and fathers. They meet every Friday



Dr. Michelle Stanford of Denver, Colo., presenting to parents on “Faith, Medicine and the Anxiety of Children.”

during the school year in St. Cecilia Academy's chapel from 6:15 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. The gathering includes time for Adoration, fellowship, and group discussion. In addition to Friday gatherings, they support various campus events, including the Lenten Fish Fry and SCA Powder Puff Game.

Matt Curley is a founding member of Dominican Dads and remains active. All three of his children attended OCS: William '18, Edward '21, and Ann '22.

"For as long as this group of men has met, Eucharistic Adoration has always been a central component of our time together," Matt says. "With that as the anchor, we also have had many priests, religious, and lay speakers to lead us in discussions of important aspects of our Catholic faith relevant to our roles as husbands and fathers. It is fair to say that Dominican Dads challenges us and serves as an encouragement to us."

Each spring, the Dominican Sisters host a Men's Retreat and a Women's Retreat at Bethany Retreat House in Dickson, Tenn. Topics have included "Suffering and Redemption," "Living in Christian Hope," and "Under the Guidance of St. Joseph," with presenters traveling from Cincinnati, Ohio and Washington, D.C.

Between Aquinas College, SCA, and OCS, informative and inspirational speakers are consistently on campus to educate families on topics ranging from forgiveness to online safety. In addition, every OCS family receives an annual subscription to Formed, the premiere Catholic streaming service.

OCS supports parents as the primary educators in forming their children and helps them feel empowered. Whether volunteering with their children on the farm, coaching sports, hosting class parties, mentoring new families, participating in retreats, or attending liturgical events, parents are invited to be involved in the Overbrook Catholic experience today and to continue their presence on campus once their children graduate. §



"We're not meant to live alone. We grow through community. We are social creatures. We can't just experience community through our children, but we have to be in community ourselves." **Jesica McGibbon, Parent**



"There is something very powerful about our children knowing that their dads are in the chapel praying for them before the Blessed Sacrament early on Friday mornings, even before they may be awake or the sun has risen." **Matt Curley, Alumni Parent**

MATH TEAM SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS



Ms. Jamey Schmidt teaching math to Ben Stempel '28.

Students at Overbrook Catholic School soar beyond expectations in many ways during their school day, athletic endeavors, and extracurricular activities. A shining example of this drive for excellence is the multi-year success of OCS math teams. Guests are amazed at the sheer number of trophies and plaques lining the hallways and classrooms recognizing the math awards won.

Overbrook Catholic's history of winning math competitions is long. However, the number of awards, including numerous National Championships, increased significantly with the adoption of Primary Mathematics and the Dimensions Math curriculum. Both approaches are based on the pedagogy and methodology of math education in Singapore. Beginning in the primary grades, the math curriculum teaches high-level concepts through concrete and pictorial lessons to gain number sense. The program emphasizes number bonds, bar modeling, and critical-thinking skills. Stu-



dents collaborate, share ideas, and find there is more than one way to solve a problem.

"The concepts taught use a variety of learning experiences and are sequenced to ensure mastery," math specialist and SOAR enrichment teacher Marion Cianciolo says. "Students gradually learn to think abstractly,

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AWARDS FROM THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR INCLUDE:

1st in Southeast Division & Nation, Catholic Math League – 3rd Grade Team

1st in Southeast Division, Catholic Math League – 4th Grade Team

1st in Southeast Division & Nation, Catholic Math League – 5th Grade Team

1st in Southeast Division, Catholic Math League – 6th Grade Team

1st in Southeast Division & Nation, Catholic Math League – Grant Enstice, 3rd Grade

1st in Southeast Division, Catholic Math League – Benedict Ancell, 4th Grade

1st in Southeast Division & Nation, Catholic Math League – Will Gaston, 5th Grade

1st in Southeast Division, Catholic Math League – Thomas Longmuir, 6th Grade

Certificate of Merit from the Mathematical Association of America, AMC-8 – Drew Greulich, 5th Grade

Top 10% in the Nation Individual Winners, Perennial Math –
Emery Greulich, Wilson Songy, 3rd Grade; Benedict Ancell, Roan Barbour, Ruthie Cromwell, 4th Grade; Drew Greulich, 5th Grade

6 teams in 3rd - 6th grades competed in the Perennial Math Regionals and placed top-3, advancing to Nationals.

13 individuals competed in the Perennial Math Regionals and placed top-3, advancing to Nationals.



Sixth graders with their wig stands painted for cancer patients at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

Art with Heart

STUDENTS BRING HOPE TO CANCER PATIENTS

When OCS alumna Michael Ann Zinser '84 heard about the Tennessee Association of Woodturners' (TAW) wig stand project, she knew Overbrook Catholic students would joyfully share their time and talents.

TAW is dedicated to advancing the craft of woodturning through education, information, and turning opportunities. One of these philanthropic endeavors is creating wig stands for cancer patients. The group began setting a standard for wig stand design, recruiting chapters to undertake the project, and working with Hood Distributing for discounted wood. A subset of TAW, Women in Turning focuses on wig stands

with personality to best honor the cancer patients receiving them. The stand design includes a place at the bottom for bobby pins, a watch, or earrings. Of these stands, 160 were produced in the Nashville area, with 56 on loan to OCS and St. Cecilia Academy students for the decorating process.

Chris Price is a former board member of the Middle Tennessee chapter and local liaison for Women in Turning. "We want to provide a little encouragement and support," she says. "How wonderful it is when somebody does something for someone out of the blue."

TAW had been coordinating the project

to donate to Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. To best honor these young spirits, TAW unanimously decided that the wig stands needed to be adorned by children themselves, which is where OCS stepped in to help.

Art teacher DeAnn McDowell had her fifth- and sixth-grade students paint original designs on the stands. After several classes, DeAnn and Michael Ann returned the finished stands to TAW for a final coat of sealant.

"They loved working on it," DeAnn says. "They were excited to think about what messages they could write on them. They

were very in tune with how it would feel not to have hair and to have a wig.”

Designs included a big sunflower, a water fountain, and a flower-covered meadow with flowers and butterflies climbing up. Lily Targun '25 and Kinsley Tuggle '25 painted their wig stand as an umbrella on the beach. “We thought it would be different and unique, and happy like the sunshine,” Lily says. The wig stand project is one of her favorites in art class.

“It’s important for our students to understand that they can meaningfully honor their community no matter their age,” Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. says. “You can see a light bulb turn on in their heads when they realize that service to the community is meant to align with their gifts and talents. That’s why this project was especially powerful for our creatively-inclined students to participate.”

“I get to express how I feel through art,” Lily says. “God gave me a talent, like a gift, that I can share with other people through art. It’s important to use our talents because everyone has a different one, so we use them all together to make something beautiful.”

DeAnn talked at length with students about making their designs beautiful and positive for someone going through a hard time. “The students were very receptive to that,” she says, mentioning how they desired to personally give them to the patients and repeatedly asked when they would be delivered.

“You can’t imagine all the smiles,” Chris says of delivering wig stands to hospitals. Due to HIPAA, she cannot give them directly to patients, but nurses receive the stands with tears, knowing what the creations will soon mean to patients. People ask whom to thank, so she ensures the school and woodworker’s names are inscribed on each stand’s base. §



“It’s important to know people are supporting you through a hard time. Helping others is a corporal work of mercy. The way you treat other people is the way you treat God.” **Lily Targun '25**



SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING
THE
MATHMATICS
M
& MORE



Preschool students seated at the new adjustable table and chairs in the recently renovated STEM lab.

NEW STEM LAB ELEVATES LEARNING

Overbrook Catholic is dedicated to cultivating a love for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) by creating spaces that reflect the school's deep respect for these subjects, granting children the gifts of wonder and encountering God in creation.

While science and math classes have been offered at OCS since its founding, the school enhanced its programming through STEM & More with the piloted mini-farm in 2017. Students have opportunities to engage in real-life learning situations with special emphasis on critical-thinking tasks. Each grade has a signature project, including growing basil for homemade pizzas in preschool, hatching chicks in first grade, tapping maple trees for sap in fourth grade, and hydroponics in fifth grade.

In 2023, through the generosity of alumni and alumni parent benefactors, Overbrook constructed a permanent Beyond the Brook Farm to further expand academic offerings, with garden beds, a barn, and a learning pavilion. The farm currently houses sheep, chickens, and bunnies, cared for by students and volunteers. "I really like STEM because I can use my hands to learn," Merilee Metzger '27 said.

The next phase of investment in STEM was redesigning the science lab. "As a school improvement project a couple of years ago, the Parents Association had the idea to replace the tables and storage cabinets," Director of Development Sharon Huber says. "As our principal, Sister Marie Blanchette, looked at the space, she dreamed a bit bigger, want-

ing an overall fresh look and ensuring the space worked well for students of all ages."

While the original science lab was designed for students in sixth through eighth grades, the STEM & More program now services all OCS students, preschool-3 to sixth grade. The new lab reflects the varied demographics, with height-adjustable tables and chairs creating a workstation for every student. The renovation included a new teacher demo station with a working sink, built-in cabinetry, stand-alone storage cabinets, reworked electrical and plumbing, flooring, and paint. Support for the project came from the Parents Association and the 2024 Dinner and Auction's Fund-A-Need.

"It helps you think creatively and not just by

the book,” Benedict Ancell ‘26 says, referring to how STEM expands upon his regular science lessons. He feels his brain reset and grow in curiosity each time he enters the renovated space, as a result of the classroom’s layout and style being different than any other classroom.

Benedict’s favorite part of STEM is building, whether with Legos or large-scale Rigamajigs. He took his love for construction and entered the 14th Annual Nashville Lego Contest hosted by the Nashville Public Library. His Lego Microscale BNA earned first place, and he delivered it to the Nashville International Airport for display.

STEM is one way OCS has taken a hands-on approach to learning across all grade levels, enriching the educational experience for every student. “Through hands-on activities such as tapping maple trees for syrup, designing hydroponic farms, and learning sustainable farming practices, students explore the relationship of God’s creation and science,” STEM instructor Dr. Gigi Diffenback says. “This fosters environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the natural world, as well as cultivates students’ unique gifts through engineering challenges.”

Beyond strengthening construction skills, Benedict finds STEM reinforces his relationship with God. “The ‘M’ in STEM is for mathematics and in math there’s the golden ratio which is everywhere in nature,” he says. “We know that God arranged everything so perfectly that we would discover it this way.” §



(Above) Fifth graders celebrating Thanksgiving in STEM, combining their knowledge of Newton’s Laws of Motion with turkey rockets.

(Right) Daggert Brister ‘26, Roan Barbour ‘26, and Benedict Ancell ‘26 building with magnetic tiles.



Lily Targun ‘25 and Ruth Michael ‘25 examining microscope slides.

MATH TEAM SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS



Finley Rand '24, Thomas Longmuir '24, and Simon Ancell '24 after placing third overall as a team at the MBA Math Invitational. Thomas placed fifth overall.

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relying on applying their knowledge from previous lessons, rather than on memorization. The problems in the lessons are not simply a replication of the same type of problem, so students are pushed to use critical thinking skills and a variety of strategies."

Will Gaston '25 has seen this come to life as he observes classmates using different strategies for each math problem. "If you have a problem, there's always going to be multi-

ple ways to solve it because everybody has a different perspective," he says. "You can match what you like with the way you solve it. There is always more to learn. It keeps on going and going and going."

Ruthie Cromwell '26 has friends at other schools who do not use Singapore math. "Their math looks like it is easier than the way we do math, but I think I will be more prepared for math in the future," she says.

In addition to the math curriculum and the SOAR gifted-enrichment program, OCS be-

gan identifying students in first through fourth grades who showed an aptitude for math and would benefit from an additional challenge. Coached by Marion, the students on the first- through fourth-grade math teams are invited to participate based on teacher referral and standardized test measures such as the CTP or STAR math tests.

The first- and second-grade math team students work on challenging problems that go beyond what they are learning in their grade-level math classes. This prepares the students for contests that begin in third grade. Third- and fourth-grade math teams attend practice sessions to learn strategies for the Catholic Math League and Perennial Math contests. They collaborate with partners or in small groups to answer questions from previous years' contests as preparation.

Fifth and sixth graders may participate in MathCOUNTS, a team that meets for lunch and strategy practice sessions several times each month. Coached by Marion and Diane Meier, OCS Math Department Chair, this team competes in local on-site competitions, national contests, AMC-8, MathCOUNTS, and Perennial Math.

"I'm with my friends during MathCOUNTS and they're geniuses," Ruthie says. "They teach me and help me if I'm stuck, so I understand it better."

Will credits both these extra math programs and teachers for his success. "They always challenge you," he says. "They always push you to do your best. They always try to help you. You can ask questions. They even take suggestions in ways we students think to solve problems."

"Our math team students worked hard last year on their problem-solving strategies, and Overbrook has continued the tradition of being a top national math contender," Marion says. §

First-grade teacher Mrs. Jennifer McCormick working with Mariam Hare '29 during classroom stations.





Nine of the thirteen current OCS legacy parents with their children. Families from left to right: Strobel, Thallemer, Tucker, Clark, Curtiss, Roudi, Enstice, Wiedman, Augustine

PASSING THE TORCH:

OVERBROOK CATHOLIC LEGACY FAMILIES



McColl Adelman Curtiss '99, Sara Brunette Strobel '97, and Helen Adelman Roudi '97 at the 2025 OCS Dinner & Auction at Hillwood Country Club.

Since its founding in 1936, generations of family members have attended Overbrook Catholic School. This school year, 13 families at the school are considered legacy families, with at least one parent from each student's family being an OCS alum. Together, these families bring strength, heart, and a unique sense of continuity to the school community. They revere time-honored traditions while embracing the exciting opportunities of each new school year.

We spoke with Sarah Battan Enstice '98, Sara Brunette Strobel '97, and Emily Coakley Tucker '00 to hear their reflections about OCS.

Q: Why did your parents choose Overbrook?



Helen Adelman Roudi '97 and Sara Brunette Strobel '97 in "The Littlest Angel" play in December 1988 in Sister Matthew Marie's kindergarten class.

A: "Even though I was raised Presbyterian, my parents had strong ties to the Dominican Campus. My paternal grandmother and aunts all attended St. Cecilia Academy. My mother chose to transfer to SCA during her junior year of high school and began teaching visual art at SCA in 1980. I began Overbrook in kindergarten in 1988. My parents chose Overbrook because they believed in what we now refer to as the Dominican Difference." -Strobel '97

"My parents chose Overbrook in the late '80s for many of the same reasons my husband and I chose Overbrook for our children a few years ago. We like the approachable size, the warmth that greets you upon entering the building, the foundation for a love of Jesus, and the history of academic excellence." -Tucker '00

Q: Why did you choose Overbrook for your children?

A: "We chose Overbrook for our children because we wanted them to be challenged academically in an environment that integrates Catholic values into daily life. It was important for us to find a school that feels like a close-knit community. At Overbrook, we've found a strong sense of belonging, and our children are greeted with warm smiles from teachers, administrators, and fellow parents wherever they go on campus." -Enstice '98

"My husband and I chose Overbrook Catholic School for our children for many of the same reasons as my parents. We wanted our children to learn in a supportive, loving environment where they would be educated in truth through a Catholic lens. The small

class sizes and teacher-student ratio were also important to us. It was a bonus that Overbrook has a reputation for rigorous academics and preparing students for success." -Strobel '97

Q: What's it like being at your alma mater as a parent?

A: "I love being a parent at Overbrook. It reminds me that, despite many changes, some things always remain the same. I enjoy watching my children experience traditions like weekly Mass, the Christmas Tableau, and the Overbrook Classic. I know these events leave lasting impressions on them, just as they did for me when I was a student." -Enstice '98

"Having my children attend my alma mater has been special. Andrew and Rosemary get to experience many of the traditions that I did, like the Kindergarten Christmas play, Advent and May Crowning celebrations, the Spring Musical, and Field Day. Some of the faculty and staff are even the same, like Mrs. Herman and Sister Mary Charles." -Strobel '97

Q: Do you have a favorite memory to share?

A: "One is when the middle school wing was added. Because we were the graduating class, before the final tiles were laid, we were able to sign our names and write our favorite quotes. I like to tell my children when we walk through those halls that my signature is somewhere underneath from all those years ago." -Enstice '98

"One of my first memories of Overbrook was

LEGACY FAMILIES

Michael '95 & Rachel Battan

Augustine '96

Peter '25, Mark '29, Thomas '27,
Andrew '32

Jean-Marie Bibb Clark '00

Marjorie '22, Evelyn '25

McColl Adelman Curtiss '99

Noble '26, Thomas '29

Sarah Battan Enstice '98

Helen '24, Grant '27, Maggie '32

Sara Habibian '87

Keyan '24, Ava '26, Shaw Wiedman '26

Felix Morel '83

Mamie '27

Emily Fredericksen Neely '04

Robert '30

Helen Adelman Roudi '97

Elizabeth '31

Kimberly Baker Songy '96

Paige '25, Wilson '27, George '29,
Lucy '34

Sara Brunette Strobel '97

Andrew '28, Rosemary '29

Leslie Coakley Thallemer '99

Evelyn '27, George '30, Thomas '31

John Thetford '05

Sofia '31, Robert '32

Emily Coakley Tucker '00

William '29, Elizabeth '31

meeting my life-long friend, Helen Adelman Roudi '97. We met in Sister Matthew Marie's kindergarten class, became fast friends, and remain close to this day. She is my daughter Rosemary's godmother, and I am her son Reed's godmother. Now, our children are at Overbrook together. The lasting bond created at Overbrook has enriched my life, and I am deeply grateful for her friendship." -Strobel '97

Q: What's the value of an Overbrook education?

A: "The strong academic rigor at Overbrook ensures that students are well-prepared for the next steps in their education. Additionally, the school's emphasis on building character and fostering a spirit of service sets it apart. Overbrook guides the whole child, both scholastically and spiritually." -Enstice '98

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Harnessing Talent

AN OCS FIRST GRADER'S
EQUESTRIAN JOURNEY

In addition to being a big sister, child on the playground, and student in SOAR, the OCS gifted-enrichment program, Lena Hellmann '30 is a rising Junior equestrian with numerous division champion titles from United States Equestrian Federation A-Rated shows around the country and year-end awards and titles from the Middle Tennessee Hunter Jumper Association.

Starting at birth, her aunt began gifting her something horse-related for every celebration, whether Baptism, birthday, or Christmas. Not surprisingly, she started asking for riding lessons at a young age. Lena's parents, Todd and Dana Hellmann, searched for months for a place willing to give lessons to a four-year-old. "I was four when I started riding," Lena says. "My dad scheduled the lesson on a cold and rainy day, so he thought I wouldn't like it, but I ended up loving it."

She started riding once a month, then every other week, then once a week, then every day. She first showed before her fifth birthday and came home with a clean sweep, winning all classes and her division. Now having competed in Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Ohio, she averages one show per month. Her goal for the 2025 season is to qualify for and compete at the USEF Pony Finals for both the USEF Pony Hunter and Pony Jumper Championships held in August in Lexington, Ky.

"You have to make it good when there's a strict judge," Lena says. "I've wanted to compete from the beginning. I wanted to do jumpers because I like going fast, and I like jumping high."

Lena has been recognized for her unique blend of natural ability, feel, and athletic talent. Both of her paternal grandparents were professional riders. Allyson Hellmann was a Grand Prix jumper in the U.S. and Heinrich Hellmann, who immigrated from Germany, did eventing and advanced to the Grand Prix level in dressage, the highest level



Lena Hellmann '30 with Pumpkin and Adeline at Campwood Farm in Franklin, Tenn.

one can achieve. "I wish my parents were here to see her, but I know they're watching from above and couldn't be any happier that Lena is picking up where they left off," Todd says of his daughter.

She trains six days per week, riding multiple ponies daily over the span of three hours. Her ponies board at Campwood Farm in Franklin, Tenn., and she is under the instruction of three trainers, including Music City Grand Prix champion, Louise "Weezie" Graves. Homework is completed in the car or in between ponies, knowing schoolwork comes first or she will not be riding.

With growing accolades, brands contact the Hellmanns for partnerships. She has

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"You go fast,
go high, go fast,
go high."

Lena Hellmann '30





Mackenzie Roti '31 and Cruz Reising '31 meeting Aggie and Maggie with Farm Manager, Miss Emily Kendall (left).

Welcome, Aggie & Maggie

OCS WELCOMES TWO SWISS VALAIS SHEEP



Students were thrilled, and surprised, when an April Fool's Day assembly turned into meeting Aggie and Maggie, two new sheep who call Beyond the Brook Farm home. Coming from a farm in Paris, Ky., these black and white Swiss Valais sheep were affectionately named after Dominican Saints: Aggie from St. Agnes of Montepulciano and Maggie from St. Margaret of Hungary.

As the farm's current sheep, Cosmas and Damian, age, anonymous donors wanted to ensure that the next generation of Overbrook Eagles had sheep to look after. "Students learn that life is a gift that needs to be tended to," Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. says. She references the daily care and specific needs of each farm animal, another example of how OCS teaches life lessons through hands-on learning.

"We are so blessed to welcome Aggie and Maggie to our OCS family," farm manager Emily Kendall says. "I already know their sweet, gentle, and curious spirits will fit right in among our children. Students were over the moon to meet their new friends." §



2023-24 Highlights

The 2023-24 school year was full of milestone celebrations where we felt time slow just a bit, as we were able to take in the gift of the present moment alongside our community that is like no other.

CLASS OF 2024

Congratulations to the graduating Class of 2024, who acted as the sophomore class to participate in Called to Greatness, a course emphasizing Christ-like leadership through service and virtue. This class demonstrated this service by taking initiative in the wake of natural disasters, hosting a car wash to raise \$1,275 for the Hawaii Catholic Community Foundation's Disaster Relief Fund, as well as leading a fundraiser for Mulier Care, a women's health clinic.

Congratulations to Finley Rand who had the highest GPA, to Emily Mzumara and Zaiden Tumanda who were voted Most Christ-Like, and to Juliette Conklin and Chisom Joe-Nwankwo for earning the Eagle Excellence Leadership Award. Thank you to students Benno Rolli and Helen Enstice for speaking at graduation.

The school year began with a two-day Leadership Retreat at Camp Widjiwagan and ended with a class trip to Chattanooga and Knoxville, led by the sixth-grade teachers and Father Frassati Davis, O.P. The group visited notable Tennessee attractions, including Ruby Falls, Knoxville Zoo, and the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.



FAITH



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Twenty-seven second graders received their First Holy Communion in April at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville. In preparation for the Sacrament, students and their parents participated in a retreat at the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia's Motherhouse. The following day, they received their First Reconciliation, celebrated with a reception to follow.



MAY CROWNING

May Crowning celebrated the Month of Our Lady. Students brought flowers for Mary, processing through an honor guard of second graders. Voted upon by their classmates, sixth graders Kate Rockhill and Simon Ancell crowned Mary. Following a prayer service, families filed forward for moments of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL

OCS and SCA hosted a Eucharistic Procession, as part of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' three-year Eucharistic Revival, with over 450 in attendance. In continued celebration, as the St. Juan Diego Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage passed through town, the Motherhouse hosted Mass on the front lawn.



ATHLETICS

BASKETBALL

- A group of OCS 2nd graders won "For the Love of the Game" in the West Nashville Sports League
- 4th grade boys earned Overbrook Classic Tournament Runner-Up
- Three 5th and 6th grade players named to the All-Tournament Team for the Coach Cat Classic

CROSS COUNTRY

- Five runners went to the state cross country championship and two ranked top-25



TRACK

Nashville Track Series:

- 32 total top-five finishes
- 1st place, 1st – 3rd grade boys
- 1st place, 1st – 3rd grade girls
- 2nd place, 4th – 5th grade girls



VOLLEYBALL

- Girls Gold team earned runner-up playing in the Division A Championship in the fall HVAC season.
- Girls Gold team finished the spring DAC season undefeated.

FINE ARTS

SPRING MUSICAL

The annual Spring Musical returned in April, with the theme, "Hakuna Matata." Featuring Disney favorites like "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" and "Circle of Life," the community left reminded to "don't worry, be happy."

Teacher of the Year was announced following the Thursday night production, going to Band and Computer Teacher, Mr. Alan Suska. With over 40 years of teaching experience, the community was thrilled to celebrate his excellence, joy, and generosity in his final school year before retirement.

Friday's Grandparents Day celebration included the first annual brunch following the Musical. This provided an extra opportunity for fellowship.



FORENSICS

The Forensics team took first place sweepstakes at the Coaches' Choice Forensics Tournament, as well as five individual awards and third place sweestakes for the Catholic Center's Hall of Fame Forensics Tournament. Categories for the speech and debate program include Oral Interpretation, Declamation, Storytelling, and Drama.

The Nashville Catholic Forensics League welcomed 12 inductees to its Hall of Fame in 2024, including many friends of OCS. Congratulations to alumni Ellen Donbeck '98, Andrew Snow '04, and Mark Yopp '93.

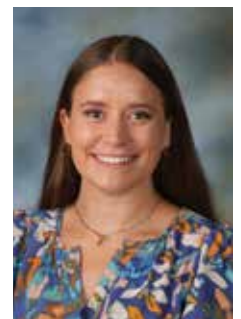
COMMUNITY



- The fourth grade hosted the first annual Feast of the Archangels Mass and breakfast. First responders came from Fire Station 17, Metro Nashville Police Department West Precinct, Saint Thomas West, Dominican Campus Security, and more.
- The West Nashville Fraternus chapter launched on campus with over 100 in attendance at the Fraternus Flag Football Bowl.
- OCS was voted Best Preschool, Best Elementary School, and Best Private School for Nashville Scene's Best of Nashville.
- Preschool-3 teacher Ms. Katy Lynch tied for 2nd place Best Teacher in Best of Nashville and was awarded WKRN News 2's Educator of the Week.
- Fourth grade teacher Miss Naomi Westbrook was awarded seventh place in Ponce Law's Outstanding Teacher Contest.



Lynch



Westbrook

Connecting Generosity to Impact

There is a long-standing and beautiful culture of philanthropy on The Dominican Campus. Benefactors give for many reasons, including gratitude for the impact, a desire to see Overbrook Catholic thrive, and a commitment to ensuring a fulfilled mission. Every gift of every size makes a difference for our students, teachers, and in the daily life of our school.

THE ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Fund is Overbrook's top fundraising priority. It is a yearly campaign that directly impacts our work and each student. The Annual Fund makes up approximately 6% of the school's operating budget and supports academic, extracurricular, and faith formation programming. Think of all that you love about Overbrook — rigorous academic preparation, Catholic faith formation, vibrant student life programming, robust athletic offerings, outstanding and dedicated lay teachers and Dominican Sisters, time-honored traditions, a tight-knit community — the Annual Fund supports all the components that make up the full experience. The Annual Fund helps to cover the full cost of educating each student and in particular, the amount not covered by tuition.

CAPITAL GIVING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Giving to special initiatives and campus improvements enhances the student experience. Overbrook

maintains a list of prioritized desired enhancements, and the strategic plan guides our building improvements and special projects.

ENDOWMENT GIVING AND TUITION ASSISTANCE

Endowment funds provide long-term financial vitality. The school uses a percentage of the interest earned each year much like the Annual Fund — to offset operations and provide tuition assistance for families with financial need. Approximately 18% of Overbrook's students receive some level of tuition assistance. Donors make outright gifts for tuition assistance, give to an established endowment fund, or create a newly named endowment to honor family, friends, or graduation years.

PLANNED GIVING

Including Overbrook in your estate plans is a gift for the future, leaving a lasting legacy and continuing your commitment in perpetuity. Making a future or planned gift ensures long-term stability for the

school by strengthening the endowment, funding programmatic needs, and providing scholarships. Often, there may be significant tax benefits for the donor, increasing the size of an estate and reducing the tax burden on heirs. The Heritage Club recognizes donors who have made bequests or other planned gifts.

HOW TO GIVE:

- Make an outright gift with cash or check
- For online giving, please scan the QR code below



- Make a pledge
- Ask your company about their matching gift program
- Donate stocks, securities, life insurance, or other assets
- Give through a donor-advised fund
- Take advantage of an IRA charitable rollover
- Include Overbrook Catholic School in your estate plans

LEARN MORE

We welcome the opportunity to share funding priorities and connect your generosity with impact. Please call the development office at 615.383.3230 ext. 397, visit overbrook.edu/donate or email Sharon Huber at hubers@dominicancampus.org.

“The balance of academics, faith, and personal growth at Overbrook is invaluable. Our children are not only excelling in their studies but also developing strong values and a sense of community.” **Niche Review**



SINGING SISTERS BLESSED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME



Sophie Schoch '25 singing at a Mass in Rome, Italy.



St. Bernard Academy Choir with Deacon Christian Hamrick and Bishop J. Mark Spalding.

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Schoch met through choir during their undergraduate years at Vanderbilt University. "My family makes music a natural part of our lives," Ellie says. "My parents have always encouraged my love for music while giving me space to choose my interests. However, even if they hadn't encouraged me, I would have found singing to be my passion because it has always made me feel things that nothing else can make me feel."

The Schochs' grandmother has been a catalyst in their musical endeavors. "She has always encouraged me to use my talents to bring others closer to God," Ellie says. "My grandmother has shaped my faith the most because she is the one who taught me that

God wants us to be happy and spread happiness to others. She finds God in everyone she meets and everything she does."

"It has been a joy to teach Ellie and Sophie because of their passion for all kinds of music, both secular and sacred," Marcina says. "I am so happy that they were able to share their gifts on such a meaningful occasion and in such a memorable and historic place."

Sophie admits Ellie is the easiest person to share harmonies. "Being with each other in Italy was special because we had two or three songs we sang together," she says. "Several people came up to us and talked about how our voices go together so nicely and of the bond that sisters have." §

Sophie '25 and Ellie '23 in front of a statue of St. Cecilia.



"I am thankful that I was able to go on this trip and sing with my sister, and for my parents, teachers, friends, and everyone who loved and cared about me to make it possible."

Sophie Schoch '25

PASSING THE TORCH: OVERBROOK CATHOLIC LEGACY FAMILIES

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A: “The value of an Overbrook education is priceless. Not only are my children learning challenging academic concepts and skills, but most importantly, they are being formed in their faith through everyday witness by the faculty and staff, religion classes, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This foundation has helped them form their own prayer lives, friendships with the saints, and knowledge of the sacraments.” -Strobel '97

Q: How has Overbrook formed you and your family?

A: “Overbrook’s emphasis on faith, community, and service has reinforced our family’s values and brought us closer together. Through participation in religious activities, school events, and community service projects, we have strengthened our bonds and deepened our faith. We’ve formed long-lasting friendships and always have felt welcomed in the Overbrook community.” -Enstice '98

“Attending Overbrook led to my conversion in eighth grade. As I had been in Catholic school since I was five, I was able to ‘fast-track’ RCIA and work with my eighth-grade religion teacher, Sister Maria Christi, after school. I had my First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in December of 1996. Many of my friends attended my First Communion and supported me in prayer. In the spring of 1997, I was confirmed with my classmates, which was incredibly special as it was the first sacrament I received with my peers.” -Strobel '97

Q: What does Overbrook mean to you and your family?

A: “Overbrook is a big part of our family. The school aligns with our family values. As parents, we are confident we are giving our children the opportunity to learn in an environment that challenges them to reach the height of their potential while reinforcing the moral principles we teach at home. We feel there is no school like it, and

we remind ourselves frequently how lucky we are to be part of the Overbrook community.” -Enstice '98

“Our family has spent many years, in one way or another, on the Dominican Campus with countless trips over the bridge that bears my late father’s name. It’s such a special reminder of all the memories I have from my days at Overbrook and we look forward to continuing to make many more with our own children.” -Tucker '00

Q: Is there anything else you’d like to share?

A: “There are many great elementary schools in Nashville and a lot has changed over the years, but it is comforting to know that Overbrook has stayed true to its purpose and continues to be both a warm and welcoming place where children can be challenged and learn in a loving environment while growing in their faith.” -Tucker '00. S

RUNNING SO AS TO WIN: THREE DECADES OF OCS CROSS COUNTRY



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ence will boost the athletes’ confidence for all future endeavors.

Other highlights of the season included Ruthie Cromwell '26 coming out of a five-year cross country retirement to finish as Overbrook’s second place runner. Paige Songy '25 finished as a top-five sixth grader in the region. With the contributions of Perpetua Bobos '25, Audrey Grief '26, Mary Margaret Krog '25, and Ava Wiedman '26, the middle school girls’ team took home the

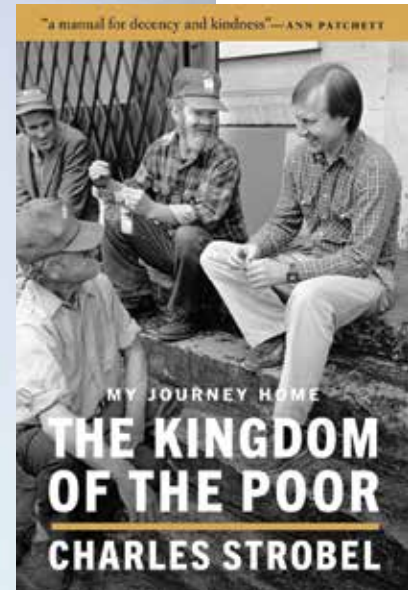


HVAC title by three points.

Paige has been running cross country since kindergarten and credits her coaches, and the tradition of Friday popsicles, for her continued commitment to the sport. “I enjoy going to practice every day because my coaches are so supportive and dedicated,” she says. “They create workouts to make us better, and they sup-

port us on race day. I have learned to set and achieve goals and to work hard.”

“The athletes’ performances at the end of the season demonstrated how specific, individualized training brought results,” Lara says. “And, given how cross country is scored, the team aspect contributed to a sense of personal responsibility that translated into success for the group.” S



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Katie Seigenthaler '76

Communication expert Katie Seigenthaler '76 has had a storied career since her days at Overbrook Catholic School where she was involved in extracurriculars, fine arts, and athletics.

She excelled at St. Cecilia Academy in leadership roles while honing her editing and writing skills as editor of the yearbook and as a winner of numerous poetry and essay contests.

Katie graduated from Georgetown University in 1984 with a B.A. in American Studies. While in college, she was hired as a copy clerk for the Style Section of the Washington Post and became a full-time editorial assistant after graduation. In 1986, Katie relocated to Chicago, Ill. to join the Chicago Tribune as a reporter. During her seven years with the Tribune, she also was a po-

litical columnist and editor. Katie stepped away from her journalism career in 1993 to raise her four children with her husband, Matthew Hayes.

In 2004, she joined Seigenthaler Public Relations, the firm founded by her father Tom Seigenthaler. In 2015, the company was acquired by FINN Partners, a global communications firm whose Nashville office has since grown to become the largest in Tennessee. As a Managing Partner, Katie specializes in creating messaging platforms and developing content for clients that grabs attention and generates action.

In addition to her executive position at FINN Partners, she co-authored *Hot Spot: A Doctor's Diary from the Pandemic* with Dr. Alex Jahan-gir, published by Vanderbilt University Press (VUP) in 2022, and co-edited Father Charles

Strobel's posthumous memoir *The Kingdom of the Poor: My Journey Home*, published by VUP in September 2024. Katie was Fr. Charles' niece. During the last year of his life, he dictated the book to her and to his colleague, Amy Frogge, who worked with him at Room In The Inn, the continuum of care for the unhoused that Fr. Charles founded in Nashville in 1986. Katie has said her uncle wrote his memoir in hopes that his stories of community and compassion could help heal a broken world.

Book groups, religious organizations, students, and many more have studied and discussed *The Kingdom of the Poor*. The personal examples included of Beatitude moments led author Ann Patchett to call the book "a manual for decency and kindness."

The Brook asked Katie about her time at Overbrook and its impact.

Q: How would you describe your time at Overbrook?

A: Some of my best childhood memories are of Overbrook School. I remember sunlight pouring through the huge picture windows in the classrooms, bright colors everywhere, new worlds opening every day, and making some of the best friends I've ever had.

Q: What are some of your fondest memories and traditions that come to mind?

A: Saddle shoes, plaid skirts, grey vests, field day, Christmas concerts, and the "hook-up" line, where my sisters and I always seemed to be the last ones standing!

Q: What stands out to you most about your time at Overbrook?

A: I come from a family of storytellers, but my Overbrook education gave me the literary, linguistic, and grammatical framework to bring stories to the page. And, for me at least, the process was always fun. My teachers loved language and nurtured my love of it.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher and why?

A: I had so many great ones. I remain close to my first-grade teacher and eighth-grade principal, Sister Mary Angela, to this day. But one teacher changed my life: Sister Ramona taught my class sixth-grade English and immersed us in similes and metaphors. I realized bringing together two completely different ideas made both more interesting, even exciting. This not only changed the way I express myself, it changed the way I think.

Q: How did Overbrook prepare you for your future career?

A: Overbrook made me curious. Certainly, this helped me be a better journalist and a better communications professional. But curiosity would have served me well no matter what I chose to do.

Q: If someone were to ask you about Overbrook, what would you say?

A: Go Eagles! §

Harnessing Talent

AN OCS FIRST GRADER'S EQUESTRIAN JOURNEY

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14 active sponsorships, everything from saddles and stirrups to bags and horse supplements. Also, as an ambassador for JustWorld International, she advocates for providing life-changing education, healthcare, and nutrition programs for children in developing countries.

Her first pony, named The Good Dinosaur, was just six years old when Lena started riding him. This is her favorite pony, as she believes he is the only horse in the world with a thunderbolt on his forehead, and she likes that he does not bite.

"It shouldn't have worked as well as it did," Todd says. "It was a balancing act between her development and his development. Lena trying to teach him was like sending a kindergartener to teach a first grader. She is trying to work in partnership with something you cannot control. A horse has a brain of its own. It's a team sport as much as doubles tennis."

"The hardest parts are getting a horse to move when they're slow and getting them not to rear," Lena says. "They do that when they're scared."

Lena's parents have seen increased ownership and responsibility in their daughter as she cares for the ponies. Through riding, they have witnessed her grow in resilience and independence.

Lena loves riding more by the day, evidenced by choosing 'professional equestrian' for preschool career day and inviting classmates to play horse with her at recess. "I used to play soccer, but I feel like it makes me have a bigger smile on my face when I ride horses," she says.

Her favorite part is having ponies at her side. "Horses are good animals," she says. "They are helpful. They can carry stuff. You can ride them for transportation, and they are good pets. I didn't trust many animals when I wasn't riding horses. Riding has taught me to trust more what God has made." §

Follow Lena's journey on Instagram:
@LenaHellmann17



ALUMNI NEWS



1/ Mrs. Ellen Cain Herman '68, Mrs. Grace Lynch, and former teacher Mrs. Jacquie Grytza were each nominated by their former OCS students (**John Crosslin '24**, **Thomas Longmuir '24**, and **Jacob Tumanda '24**) for MBA's Influential Teacher recognition.

2/ Congratulations to the following Dominican Campus faculty and staff members celebrating milestone anniversaries on campus: 15 years - **Meg Hailey Neeley '79** and **Michael Ann Zinser '84**; 10 years - **Sara Brunette Strobel '97**.

3/ Betsy McNamara Wills '81, co-founder of YouScience, recently released her groundbreaking book, *Your Hidden Genius*, published by HarperCollins. This innovative work redefines career guidance, empowering individuals to discover their innate talents and align them with fulfilling work and life paths.

4/ Ellen Donbeck '98, **Andrew Snow '04**, and **Mark Yopp '93** were inducted into The Nashville Catholic Middle School Forensics Hall of Fame in November at the Catholic Pastoral Center.

5/ Carla Valenzuela '02 attended University of Maryland Baltimore County in Baltimore, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in biology. Then, she received her MD from Vanderbilt University

School of Medicine. She completed her residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at Barnes-Jewish Hospital at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and obtained a Master of Science in Clinical Investigation during that time. She continued her training with a fellowship in Otolaryngology, Neurotology, and Skull Base Surgery at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She practices at Otolaryngology Associates in Fairfax, VA.

6/ Alexandra Koettters Freundlich '03 and her husband, Scott, alongside big sister Isabel Marie, welcomed James Reid to the family on September 12, 2024.

Dr. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Lund Cilla '07 married Joe Cilla at Saint Henry Catholic Church on April 13, 2024. OCS classmate **Lin Marziano '07** served as her maid of honor and **Natalie Goodrum Kelly '07** was a bridesmaid.

After finishing her residency this spring at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, New York, Lizzie will begin her fellowship in gynecological oncology with Advent Health in Orlando, Fla.

7/ Alexandra Acevedo '16 and **Amelia Pyburn '19** served as summer Strategic Communication interns for Overbrook Catholic and St. Cecilia Academy. Alexandra is a senior at the Olin Business School of Washington Univer-

sity. Amelia is a sophomore at the University of Alabama.

8/ Abigail Smith '19 and her family entered the Catholic Church at the St. Cecilia Motherhouse on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in August 2024. Abby is presently a sophomore at the University of Notre Dame.

Congratulations to **Mitchell Chaffin '20** as he continues his athletic career at Centre College in Kentucky, running for the cross country and track and field teams.

Annika Slinger '20 was named St. Cecilia Academy's Salutatorian and earned SCA's 2024 Scholar Athlete Award.

At MBA's 2024 Awards Ceremony, **David Bellet '20** received the H. Laird Smith, Jr. award for Loyalty and **Frank Pierce '20** was honored with the James A. Poston Award for Excellence in Theater and was named the second-place winner of the Tom Schulman Dramatic Writing Award. For his work on Archives, **Henry Bohman '20** received the Henry A. Fitts Award for Journalism, and **Braden Murphy '21** was given The University of Virginia Book Award.

David Bellet '20, **Frank Pierce '20**, **John Paul Claverie '22**, and **Henry Bohman '20** won placements in the Mid-State Choir Ensemble with David, John Paul, and Henry also earning positions in the prestigious All-State Choir.



Edward Curley '21, Will Kiessling '20, and Will Schneider '21 were among 12 students inducted into the King Society at MBA. The King Society honors the work of Dr. Martin Luther King's work toward equality, justice, freedom, and peace.

Julia Betbeze '22, Natalie Petroni '22, and Brazier Pierce '20 traveled to Italy in June with the Vanderbilt Youth Choir where they performed and sang at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

9/ Thomas Arender '21 was named a 2025 National Merit Scholarship Finalist. A senior at Pope John Paul II, he has committed to run cross country and track at Princeton University next year.

Aiden Becker '21 and Jack Farringer '21 were recognized as National Merit Commended Scholars in 2024.

Julia Betbeze '22 was selected for the 2025 American Choral Directors Association National Honor Choir. She will attend the ACDA conference and will receive training from and perform with internationally known choral directors.

Sam Coplan '22, Julia Petroni '22, and Mar-iam Smith '22 auditioned and were selected for Mid-State Honors Orchestra. Sam was also chosen for the prestigious All-State Honors Orchestra.

Maggie Crosslin '22 placed in the top 10 at the 2024 TSSAA Division II Class AA State Track and Field Championships in the 800-meter (5th place) and 3200-meter (8th place). She then placed 28th at the Nike Indoor Nationals in the 800-meter.



Alle Epstein '22 and Kirsten Tumanda '22 raised more than \$100,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and were named 2025 Student Visionaries of the Year. Fellow Eagles **Kieran Elder '22 and Tessa Hunt '22** teamed up to help the girls exceed their \$50,000 goal.

Luca Germano '22, Roe Greenfield '22, Grace Nelley '22, Natalie Petroni '24, and Brooklyn Pike '22 were invited to showcase their art-work at the 17th Annual Middle Tennessee Regional Student Art Exhibit in January 2024 at the Parthenon.

Mia Keller '22 earned the 2024 CLT10 Regional Scholar Award and was named a Distinguished Scholar. The CLT10 is an alternative to the PSAT.

Georgia Kraemer '22 was named a Belle Meade Stroll student journalist. "Rowing in Nashville" was her first story and described her experiences in the sport.

Several Overbrook alumnae participated in Model UN and were acknowledged for their performances: Outstanding Resolution – **Claire Claverie '22, Natalie Petroni '22, Margaret Lee '22, and Julie Petroni '22**; Outstanding Delegates – **Claire Claverie '22 and Maggie Crosslin '22**.

Brooklyn Pike '22 was recognized by the Scholastic Art Awards sponsored by the Alliance for Young Writers and Artists. Her photograph was chosen as a Gold Key submission which advances to the national competition.

10/ Overbrook alumni (L to R: Daphne Harrell '24, Rebecca Terry '23, Juliette Conklin '24, Mia Prickett '23, Buddy Betbeze '23, Brandt Chretien



'23, Geroge Salloum '23, Hayden Sava '23, and Benno Rolli '24) were cast and crew of the MBA-SCA junior high play, "Will You be My Nemesis" directed by their former teacher, Mrs. Diane Meier, who noted how proud she was of her former forensics students.

Hunter Sava '22 was a top 10 finisher in the Middle Region State Math Contest for Geometry.

Memorials

ALUMNI

Robert Bond Miller, Class of 1948
Meredith Caldwell, Class of 1958
Mary Ann Roberts Claxton, Class of 1959
Mary Elizabeth "Liza" Reynolds Buttrey, Class of 1966
Barbra Haltom Young, Class of 1967

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May their souls and the souls of all the
faithful departed, through the mercy of God,
rest in peace.
~ Amen*

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