SPRING 2024

the Brook

AN OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL MAGAZINE



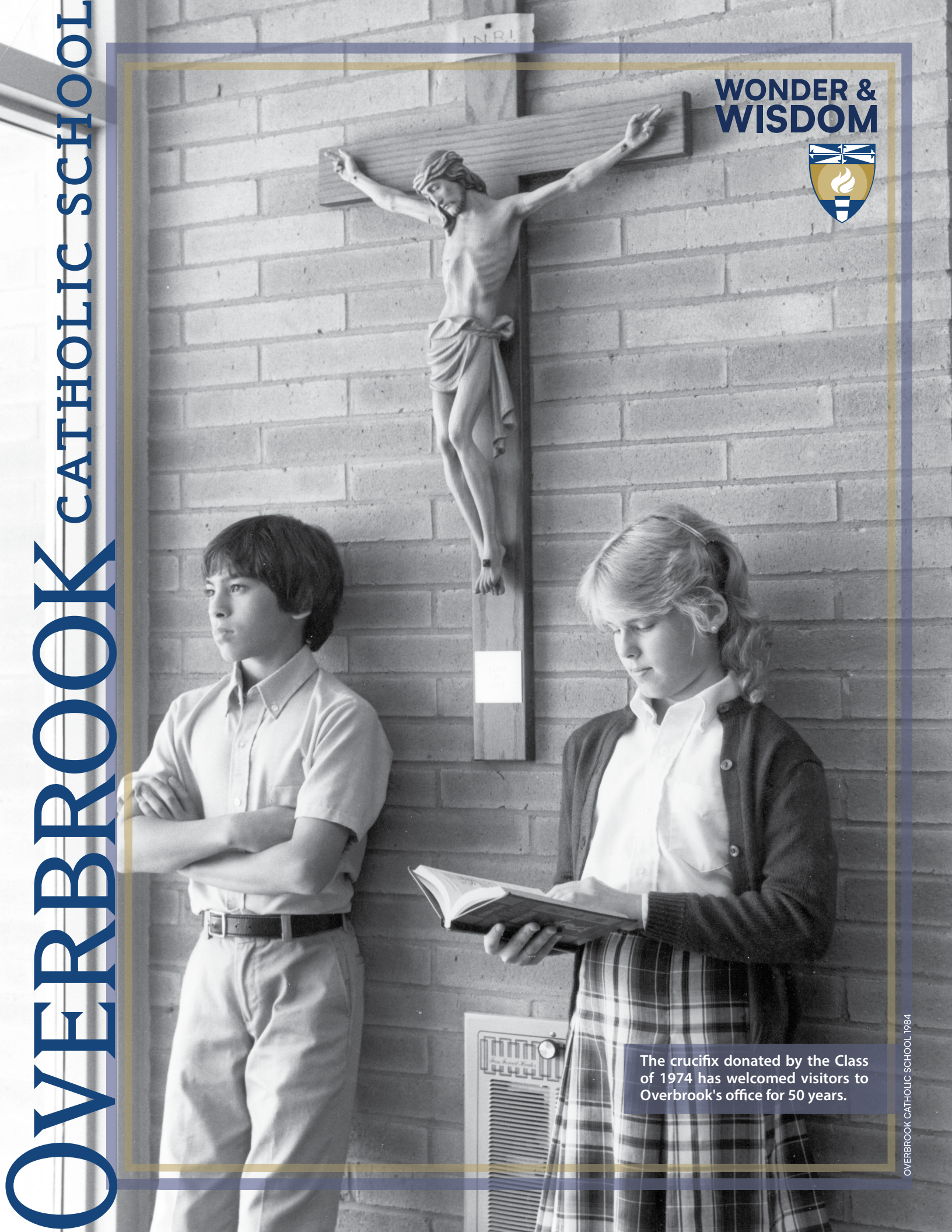
- THE EAGLE IS LANDING
- EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES
- ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: SARAH GRUBBS '07

Living the Mission

CELEBRATING ONE BREAD AS ONE BODY

OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WONDER & WISDOM



The crucifix donated by the Class of 1974 has welcomed visitors to Overbrook's office for 50 years.

OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL 1984

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



"His mercies are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness." -Lamentations 3:23

Dear Overbrook Community,

As I review the articles in this edition of *The Brook*, I can't help thinking of God's goodness to Overbrook Catholic School! God has been faithful to Overbrook in countless ways for 88 years. As Lamentations reminds us, God never leaves us alone. He is with us, guiding every step of our journey, whether that is a person, family, or institution.

It was a delight to welcome students back in August. They jumped right in and found their stride in no time. October found us gathered at Mass joining the Catholic Church in our country celebrating the Eucharistic Revival. What a powerful witness to see so many families following behind Jesus in the Eucharist and asking His blessings on our families and our campus, followed by sharing a meal together.

November found us gathered near the soccer field to watch three Army helicopters land as part of our Veterans Day celebration. I will never forget hearing the choppers and then seeing them fly over the gym. It literally took my breath away. It made me grateful for my country and those who serve it on behalf of freedom.

January found us celebrating the rebranding of Overbrook Catholic School. It was great fun to share the new logo and the pillars of OCS with the students and the wider OCS community during Catholic Schools Week.

I love all the celebrations we have throughout the year, whether academic, athletic, extracurriculars, the annual fund goal, or any number of occasions to rejoice - the OCS students know how to celebrate! We are always ready to thank God for His blessings.

As you read through this edition of *The Brook*, you will see how the mission of OCS is like a stream running through everything we do. We are grateful to God for showering His mercies on Overbrook every day as we, inspired by the example of St. Dominic, educate children to seek and embrace the truth.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Marie Blanchette, OP

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
Director of Development

Pily Jenkins
Alumni Relations Manager

Amelia Strobel
Director of Marketing and Communications

Meagan Harkins
Marketing and Communications Associate

Michael Ann Zinser '84
Marketing and Communications Associate

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

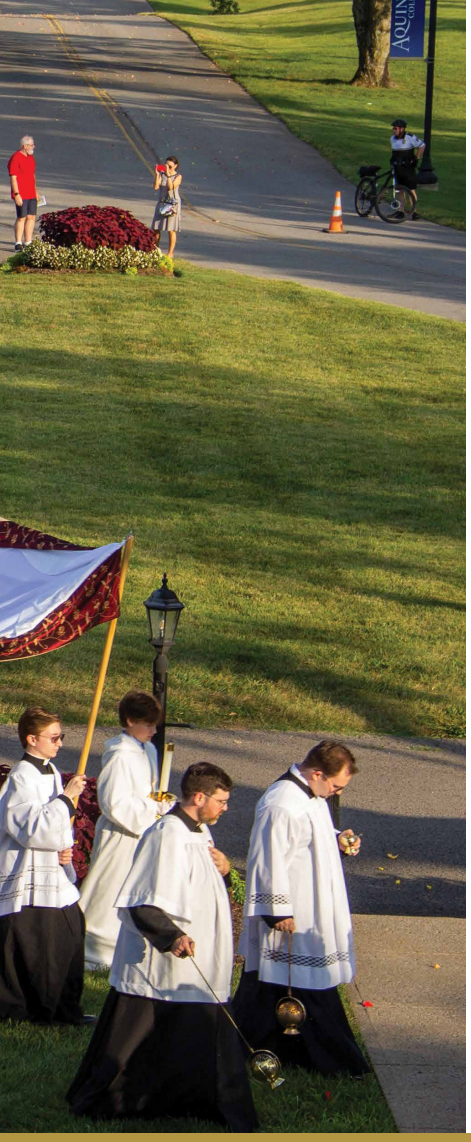
COVER PHOTO:
Altar servers Max Reddien, Peter Augustine, and Lawrence Lehrman with Nashville seminarians preparing for the Eucharistic Procession.

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CELEBRATING ONE BREAD AS ONE BODY









"It begins with our own deepening of the faith, our own participation in the Eucharist, our own love, devotion, and reverence, but it also overflows into those opportunities that we have to share Jesus with all of those we encounter."

Father Luke Wilgenbusch, *Presider*

Scan the QR code to the right to watch the event recap video.

EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION AND PICNIC

"The impact of this moment carries us throughout the whole year, and it's a reminder of what this is really all about," Father Luke Wilgenbusch said at Mass leading up to the campus' Eucharistic Procession.

The OCS gym was filled with nearly 500 guests for the occasion on Saturday, September 9, 2023, as Fr. Wilgenbusch invited all to fall in love with Jesus in the Eucharist. The congregation included students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members from OCS, St. Cecilia Academy, and Aquinas College.

Following Mass, the crowd participated in a Eucharistic procession through the Dominican Campus, ending on the White House lawn. As Fr. Wilgenbusch processed with Jesus in the monstrance throughout campus, a group of altar servers held candles lighting the way. Flower girls covered the ground in flower petals, paving the way for Jesus the Bridegroom.

"I got to throw a lot of flowers, and it was really fun," second grader Wilder Jane Smith says. "Because they were holding Jesus, we wanted to make sure we did really nice things for Him."

Sixth grader Catherine Rose Martinez attended the procession with her family. "It was cool to walk around campus with the Eucharist, knowing it was Jesus walking with us the whole way," she says. "I hadn't thought of it like that until that day. It was a really beautiful day to be outside in God's creation, Him walking us through His creation and our school."

There was time for personal prayer once the monstrance was placed on the altar on the White House front porch. Fr. Wilgenbusch then gave the benediction, followed by remarks from President Sister Dominic, O.P. Afterwards, everyone was invited to a picnic catered by Whitt's Barbecue and Katie's Ice Cream.

"I feel so blessed to be a part of a community that makes something like this an important and integral part of the faith and culture," parent Beth Robinson says. "It was very powerful to walk with my children alongside the sisters, staff, and other families around the schools being led by Jesus, Fr. Wilgenbush, and the seminarians. Following that up with ice cream and a time for families to socialize was an added bonus."

OCS parent Minette Gallmann was one of many who worked with Sr. Dominic in event planning. "The theme and timing really set the tone for the new school year," Gallmann says. "Our expectations were blown away. Seeing so many families processing through campus gave me an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this faith community. I think everyone that attended can attest to the feeling of God's mercy and grace pouring out."

A procession was chosen in the spirit of Pope St. John Paul II's movement of "faith becoming culture." Processions are an ancient tradition that bring communities together to visibly celebrate their shared belief. One of Sr. Dominic's hopes in planning the event was to remind the community that we are pilgrims passing through this

"It was important for our family, especially our little boys, to take part in the procession and to do something bold for our faith. Teaching them to live out their faith life and be a witness for Christ is not something we do one day of the week, but the way we live our lives and in all the things we do, both big and small."

Beth Robinson, *Parent*



Sixth grader Catherine Rose Martinez and her father, Charles Martinez III, praying before the Monstrance.

life and this is the flock with which we are journeying.

"Our campus manifests its mission outwardly by supporting families who want to make passing on the faith and living a liturgical life central to their parenting and family life," Sr. Dominic says.

THE EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced the Eucharistic Revival in 2022, as a response to many Catholics not understanding the central belief of Christ's true presence in the Eucharist proclaimed in John 6 and at the Last Supper. A Pew Research Center study reported that only one-third of Mass-attending Catholics know and believe the Church's teaching on the Eucharist.

The revival began on Corpus Christi Sunday, a Solemnity which celebrates the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, and will span three years for a time of discernment, encounter, and response on the parish, diocesan, and national level.

"The priority of the Eucharistic Revival is to unite all members of the Church around the table of the Eucharist, to respond with the convicted belief that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life," religion teacher Miss Emily Shore says.

In the second year of the Eucharistic Revival, the USCCB called for Eucharistic devotion on the parish level through the celebration of liturgical living, such as Eucharistic Adoration, missions, or preaching. As a lively community rooted in the Church, The Dominican Campus responded to the call for revival by planning its own procession.

"It's beautiful that we're celebrating this Mass in the midst of the Eucharistic Revival, in the midst of this effort across our country to deepen and awaken faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist," Fr. Wilgenbusch said. "None of the rest of it makes sense if this isn't true and if this isn't the heart of our faith."

Martinez especially appreciated the homily. "He explained it and made it clear what was happening, that God was coming down to earth through the Eucharist," she says. "The Eucharist is important to me because if I'm having a bad day or don't want to go to Mass, just hearing the words of the priest praying over the Eucharist is powerful and makes my day better."

The procession was themed after the school year's verse, Luke 24:31: "Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." In Scripture, the verse follows the story of the road to Emmaus, as the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread after His resurrection.

The campus' procession was scheduled in advance of the national procession organized by the National Eucharistic Congress, when pilgrims will process from four corners of the U.S. to converge in Indianapolis, Ind. in July 2024. This will be the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years.

"It is powerful to come together as a community in faith and be encouraged and emboldened in our witness for Christ," Robinson says. "We are all called to something more in this life and that is also part of the Dominican Difference, which I believe is displayed in events like these.

"The turnout was huge, which I was pleasantly surprised by. As parents we are the primary educators of our children's faith formation, so to see so many parents leading their children at this event was beautiful. This school is about forming the souls of our children to be saints." §

Visit **eucharisticpilgrimage.org** to stay updated on when the National Eucharistic Congress passes through a town near you.







THE EAGLE IS LANDING

OVERBROOK'S TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

"What's the difference between Veterans Day and that day in May?" This is a question students ask fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Kesha Wall every November 11, as they learn about Veterans Day during American History class. For years, Wall explained the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day, wrapping up before the bell would ring to end class. Wall has taught history at OCS since 2005.

In 2014, Director of Student Activities Joe Farris collaborated with the principal, Sister Mary Gertrude, O.P., to have each grade take on a service project, such as collecting food or caroling at nursing homes. Wall quickly claimed the idea of serving veterans. Her patriotism is owed, in part, to her grandfather's service in France during World War II.

"As a little girl, one of my favorite activities was looking at the photos that my grandpa, also known as Pops, kept in his wallet from France," Wall says. "He seldom talked about the war, but the stories he did share mesmerized me."

As part of the service project, Wall's students suggested inviting veterans to Mass. Now a 10-year OCS tradition, invitations are sent to current families, alumni, and friends of the campus and Wall selects a guest speaker to share with students after Mass. The first year's speaker was Dr. Rachel Kaiser, who was an OCS mom, doctor at Vanderbilt, and in the reserves. Since then, parents, alumni, staff, and community members have spoken to the students about their experiences and the lessons they learned in the military which have carried into their private life.

Following the Mass and guest speaker, the fifth graders host a breakfast in the Dining Hall most years. Wall's dad, also a veteran, volunteers to cook, students and room

"I admire that my parents do something important for our country. I'm very proud of them." **Juliette Conklin,** ***Sixth Grader***



Parents Courtney Conklin and Mark Conklin smiling with their daughters, sixth grader Juliette Conklin and third grader Bernadette Conklin, on the OCS field.

parents decorate, and sometimes the class presents a short program, recites poetry, or sings a song. Children eat breakfast with the veterans, asking questions and listening to their stories. Many students now start fifth grade saying the thing they are most excited for is hosting Veterans Day. "The veterans who attend are always so appreciative of what our students do to make them feel special," Wall says.

"Veterans Day is important because we honor the people who risked their lives for us and our country," fifth grader Kinsley Tuggle says. "It takes a lot of courage and bravery to risk dying to protect us, and we need to be able to thank them and appreciate them for the sacrifice that they've made."

In planning for Veterans Day, fifth graders learn about military branches, watch a video of the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and hear about each war memorial in Washington, D.C. Students love to share stories of their visits to D.C. memorials, talk about their family members who are veterans, and watch videos of military members surprising loved ones when they return home.

THE CONKLINS

OCS parents Mark and Courtney Conklin spoke at a modified Veterans Day celebration in 2020, with pandemic regulations not halting this time-honored tradition. Veteran Courtney Conklin spoke about being a second-generation military enlistee, her schooling and lessons learned, flying Iraqi prisoners in a Chinook, and the responsibility she felt for her country. Mark Conklin, active duty, spoke of finding a career in the military, rather than viewing it as a short-term commitment.

"The military is a huge part of our lives as a family," Courtney Conklin says. "It has allowed us to live in Nashville and send our daughters to OCS. I find it important to share our experiences and knowledge of military life with the girls' classmates so they can see it as an option for their future. The military has been so good to our family and provides a great opportunity for so many."

In June 2023, Mark Conklin was named Lieutenant Colonel, taking command of a 2-17 Squadron, including 500 soldiers and 36 Apache helicopters, at Fort Campbell. Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. was among

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Conklin speaking to students and guests, honoring his wife, veteran Courtney Conklin, after flying in the helicopter from Ft. Campbell.

the attendees when LTC Conklin made a joke about bringing helicopters to OCS.

"At first I thought it was crazy to do it at my school," third grader Bernadette Conklin says of her dad's proposition. "It was surprising, thinking about where they were going to do it and how they were going to do it."

In just one month, Ft. Campbell was making arrangements with OCS for a Veterans Day like no other. Campus administration, security, and Wall worked together to coordinate logistics and schedules. "I was first told we'd have one helicopter, then two, and then three," Wall says.

When the day arrived, Friday, November 10, 2023, Nashville was coming out of a week of unceasing rain. Wall uneasily waited all night for a "go/no go" text from one of the pilots depending on the weather. At 7:10 a.m., she received the text: "We're good to go!"



In addition to the 300 seats for students, faculty, and staff for Mass, 100 chairs were set out for guests and overflow ran onto the bleachers. "Apparently, we are all children when it comes to helicopters," Wall says of the crowd. The day's agenda included tim-

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Fifth graders practicing for their debate on the Belle Meade Plaza redevelopment.

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES:

Engaging Students in Civic Responsibility

"It was exciting to see students so interested in the topic and navigating the questions adults ask themselves when voting or engaging in civic responsibility," English teacher Mrs. Grace Lynch says. "Questions like: What is best for the city? How will this affect day-to-day lives of those who live in Davidson County? What are the pros and cons of a development of this size?"

For the past two years, Lynch's fifth and sixth graders have completed an essay and debate project in English class highlighting timely and local conversations within Nashville communities. The 2023 debate explored the redevelopment of the Belle Meade Plaza and the 2024 debate investigated the East Bank development.

"The project was important so that we know what's going on in our community, and so we can learn how to express our thoughts clearly," sixth grader Benno Rolli says.

Students were placed on affirmative and negative teams relating to the potential developments, then assigned to research and share potential impacts, benefits, and consequences of their position. Lynch and other teachers act as the jury.

In addition to researching city planning, development projects, and population growth, many students attended community meetings to strengthen their understanding of the matters at hand. Mac Hoover '23 and Rita Mae Krog '23 even spoke at a formally organized community meeting last year regarding the redevelopment of the Belle Meade Plaza.

Krog says she gathered the courage to ask questions about the creek in the area being considered for redevelopment and effects on traffic flow. "I attended the meeting as a chance to learn more about our community and the activity that was happening on the inside with respect to the Belle Meade reconstruction plan," Krog says.

For this year's project on the East Bank development, Erin Asa and Anna Yoder from HASTINGS Architecture visited each fifth- and sixth-grade class to speak about city planning and project development.

"It's important to me that students actively engage in their com-

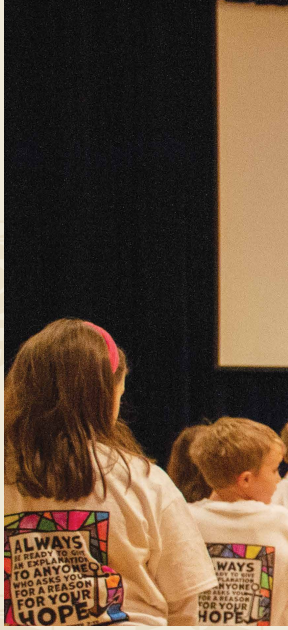
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"This is one of my favorite projects because it encourages the next generation of leaders. It's important to me that students don't just look at something for face value, but take the time to engage in research to understand a topic." **Mrs. Grace Lynch, *English Teacher***



ST. DOMINIC

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, every OCS student in grades third through sixth is paired with a little buddy from grades preschool-4 through second. From reading to shared recess to outdoor activities, elder buddies live in reflections of St. Dominic's teaching and preaching.



Emerging from the Strategic Plan, Overbrook Catholic School adopted a new missi

Inspired by the example of St. Dominic, Ov
to seek and embrace the truth, fostering in th
Children are thus prepared in mind and heart to g

SEEK & EMBRACE THE TRUTH

Celebrating each individual's dignity as made in the image and likeness of God, students learn respect for all of God's creation. The tenderness of their care is visible in the way they hold baby chicks as they await their home at Beyond the Brook Farm.



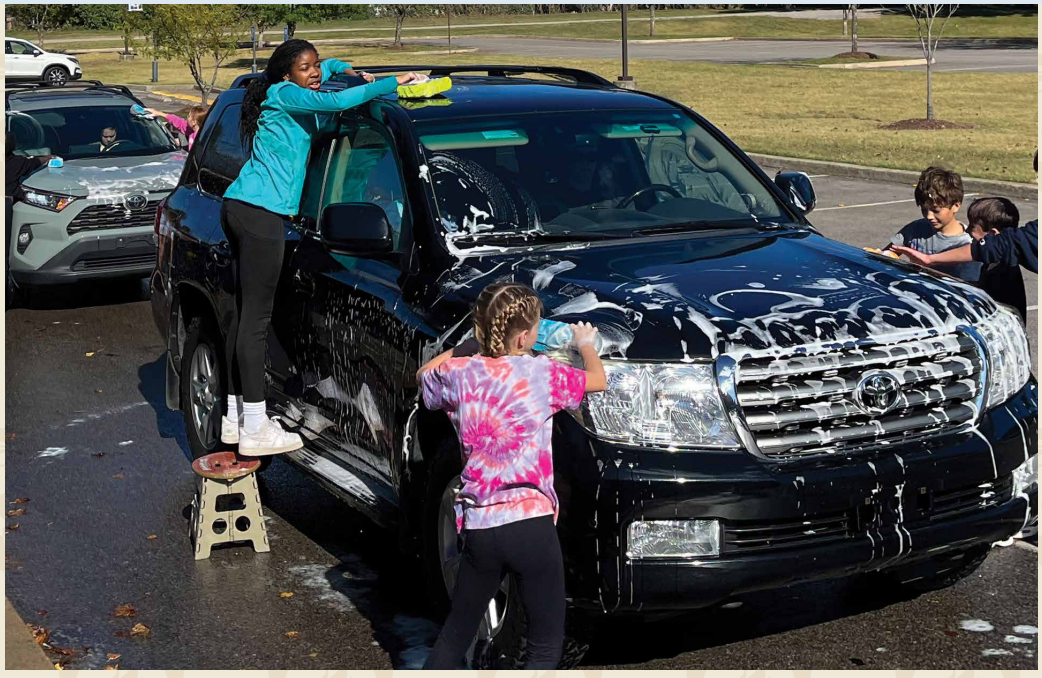


PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST

Sixth grader Simon Ancell's favorite moment of Catholic Schools Week was the personal benedictions that concluded Adoration. "It was important because it gave everyone a moment with Jesus," Ancell says.

ion statement in 2022. Here are some of the ways it comes to life on campus daily:

verbrook Catholic School educates children
hem a **personal encounter with Jesus Christ.**
give **joyful witness** to the truth in their own lives.



JOYFUL WITNESS

In the wake of the August 2023 Maui wildfires, OCS sixth graders worked with their science teacher, Dr. Gigi Diffenback, to host a carwash for wildfire relief. In two and a half hours, students raised $1,275 for the Hawaii Catholic Community Foundation's Disaster Relief Fund.



Fourth graders and Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. holding the banner that Overbrook alumni teachers rolled-out at the name-change announcement following Mass.

Claiming Our Catholic Identity

For more than 88 years, Overbrook has been boldly Catholic. From its opening with nine students in 1936 and every day since, Christ's presence, the Church's teachings, and the Dominican Sisters' leadership have guided the school. The certainty of biblical truth and the beauty of enduring Catholic tradition have always combined with academic excellence at Overbrook. It increasingly seemed natural to add "Catholic" to the school's name, giving the broader community a clear message of identity and mission.

Overbrook School became Overbrook Catholic School in early 2023, a decision made by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation, who own and operate OCS, and announced by President Sister Dominic, O.P. and Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. The name change makes visible what has been true all along, and proudly celebrates a rich foundation of faith and Catholic identity.

"We have consistently been proud to claim and live our Catholic foundation, seen in the Christian worldview of our classroom lessons, the way students interact with peers at lunch, and the heart behind Beyond the Brook Farm, teaching children to care for God's creation," Sr. Dominic and Sr. Marie Blanchette wrote in a letter to the community.



Sister Mary Judith, O.P.'s fourth-grade class wearing their new OCS shirts during Catholic Schools Week.

"For native Nashville families, Overbrook was well known as a Catholic, Dominican-run school since it opened its doors," Sr. Dominic says. "These Nashville natives will tell you that times have changed."

As Nashville has seen a remarkable influx of families, Sr. Dominic is hopeful that adding the word "Catholic" to the school's title will help attract families looking for an outstanding private, independent, Catholic education.

In recent years, the Nashville metropolitan area grows by roughly 100 new residents per day, according to the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce's Research Center. Considering this growth trajectory, OCS found the name to be a fitting decision, enabling new families, both local and out-of-state, to find the independent Catholic education they seek. "It's easier to market a brand whose name signals who they are," Marketing and Communications Associate Meagan Harkins says. "It acts as a point of clarity as we seek to uphold our mission and faith in every way."

Sr. Marie Blanchette first proposed the name change in 2022, in response to decades-long conversations regarding more clearly sharing the school's mission. The name

"We are letting families know that we are here, and we have a unique Dominican offering in the heart of a rapidly-growing city."

Sister Dominic, O.P., *President*





change was first approved by the Dominican Sisters' General Council, who acts as the school's governing board. Following that, the request went to Bishop J. Mark Spalding, who granted the name-change request. As the ecclesiastical authority for the Diocese of Nashville, he alone can authorize the use of the word "Catholic" to be included in an organization's title within the Diocesan boundaries.

"It was my joy to respond favorably to the request made to add 'Catholic' to the name of Overbrook School, in affirmation and celebration of the school's outstanding academic program and consistent fidelity to living and proclaiming the Catholic Faith," Bishop Spalding says.

Following the announcement, the school partnered with 5by5, a marketing agency in Brentwood, Tenn. that specializes in servicing nonprofits. The six-month process included brand research, brand identity, internal narrative, external messaging, and visual branding.

"I have been very encouraged by the process of rebranding and designing a new logo," Sr. Marie Blanchette says. "When you are in a certain environment, it is easy to take it for granted, but the exercises we've undergone have reinforced for me how unique OCS really is. Hearing the 5by5 team verbalize who we are makes me proud of the many people who have shaped OCS into what it is today."



First graders cheering on their Faith Families competing in relay races during the re-brand pep rally.

The messaging and visual branding were rolled-out during Catholic Schools Week 2024, the school's first Catholic Schools Week as Overbrook Catholic School. Marked

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SMALL BEADS FOR A MIGHTY CAUSE:

TWO SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS RAISE $30,000+ FOR THE COVENANT SCHOOL



"Our parents and teachers always say to treat others the way you would want to be treated," third grader Evelyn Thallemer says of her response to the March 27, 2023 mass shooting at The Covenant School. "If that type of thing happened to us and one of our best friends got hurt, we would want support. It would be so hard to be out of your school and scary for teachers. It would have just been a very hard moment."

"Yeah, we'd want love," student Matilda Crosswy adds. "I don't know what I'd do if I lost Evelyn."

Two OCS second graders were moved from compassion to action following the shooting, deciding to make bracelets to support the school. Their goal was to raise $17,000, enough to fund a therapy dog, trusting that a furry friend could make an impact in the days and years ahead.

They designed their bracelets with six hearts to represent the six victims of the shooting and either a larger heart or cross to represent the love of God. "We thought we would make 20 or 40 dollars," Thallemer says. "We thought it would be sad when we didn't get a therapy dog but knew every dollar would help."

Students from their second-grade class, family members, and other friends helped bead away, as the girls gained momentum on an Instagram reel explaining their business, titled Nashville Busy Beads. Soon after, they were featured on WKRN News 2.

Their second-grade teacher, Mrs. Jennifer Rafoth spoke of how making bracelets changed the uneasiness and anxiety of her students following the shooting. "When they started to do something for Covenant it completely changed their demeanor," Rafoth says. "They weren't focused anymore so much on their anxieties but turned outward to helping the kids at Covenant."



OCS administration with students after members from Covenant's staff painted the OCS entryway as part of the #1000ThankYous campaign.

Selling $12 adult bracelets and $10 youth bracelets, the best friends sold more than 2,500 bracelets in about six weeks, raising $33,600 for The Covenant School. "They got really, really, really popular," Crosswy says.

"Seeing two little girls with huge hearts, working to bring healing to Covenant was so moving," The Covenant School Director of Communications, Christy Foster, says. "Their bracelets became a symbol of hope in such a dark time. They were a light in the darkness. It was such a simple thing, but became such a big thing."

"Evelyn's and Matilda's faith and compassion encouraged our faith and trust in the Lord and His provision."

Christy Foster, *The Covenant School Director of Communications*

BUSY THE THERAPY DOG

Upon surpassing their goal, Nashville Busy Beads purchased a golden retriever for Covenant through Comfort Connections, a 501(c)3 nonprofit founded to "teach and provide comfort through an evidenced-based curriculum" in response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The Covenant community voted to name the dog Busy.

Therapy dogs are known to create a safe space, allowing students to process and cope with their feelings in a healthy way. "A therapy dog will offer unconditional love and non-judgmental support to the students," OCS counselor Mrs. Anh Kohls says.

Covenant gathered together in May 2023 to meet Busy for the first time and to celebrate the girls' work. Crosswy and Thallemer describe the day as having "so many emotions," particularly overjoyed to see the smiles a cute dog could create.

While Busy is still in training and not yet on Covenant's campus daily, students smile with excitement each time she visits. "Our students were so excited to get a first look at Busy and pet her afterwards," Foster says. "We can't wait until she can come every day. She will be a source of joy, comfort, and support for our students, and our staff, too."

GREAT IMPACT

"I learned that one small act can make a big impact, and you don't have to be big to do big things," Thallemer says. "We can change the world one step at a time."

"Just do something, not to make money, but to show you care," Crosswy says. "One step can be something huge."

These lessons echo that of the OCS social-emotional learning curriculum, Friendzy. Through the program, students engage in conversations about compassion, empathy, and perspective. "At this age, children have a natural desire to help others," Kohls says. "The girls were eager to do something kind and give back to their community. This initiative is such a powerful example of how even just one act of kindness, no matter how big or small, can create a ripple effect."

The Tennessee Association of Independent Schools, as well as the whole Nashville community, wrapped their arms around Covenant in the months following. "It was a beautiful picture of the body of Christ, everyone working together to show love and support," Foster says of each school reaching out and sending support.

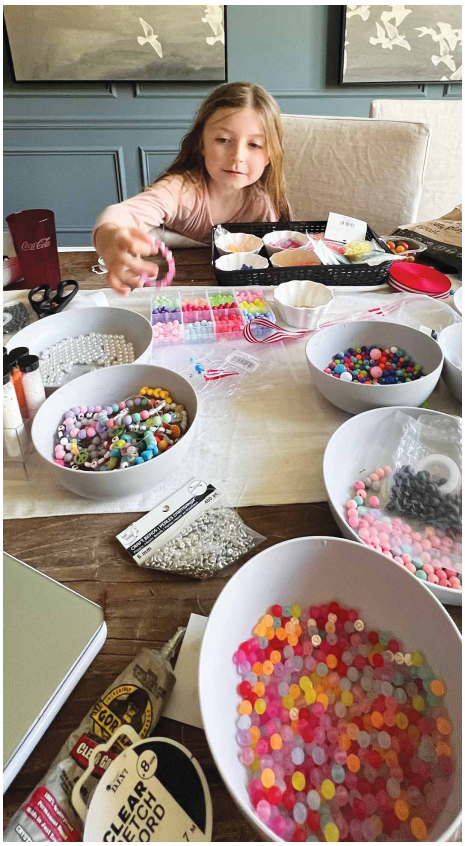


Sisters at the Nashville Fire Department delivering thank you cards and gift packages from OCS students, in gratitude of their work at Covenant.

In an effort to show their gratitude, they launched the #1000ThankYous campaign in the fall, visting local schools, businesses, and community partners to show their appreciation in a tangible way. "We were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity," Foster says. "The kindness and love we received were a beacon of hope for us, and we were profoundly moved."

The #1000ThankYous campaign included a visit to OCS, with special tribute to entrepreneurs Crosswy and Thallemer.

When asked if Nashville Busy Beads was closed, Thallemer replied, "No, no, no. That was just one of our projects." "Honestly, we don't know what's going to happen next," Crosswy quickly adds. "All we know is that when Evelyn and I first started to be best friends in kindergarten, we just loved making bracelets together, so we'll keep doing that." §



Second grader Evelyn Thallemer making bracelets for Nashville Busy Beads.



Catechist Mrs. Traci Gallivan leading first grader Rosemary Strobel through setting up the altar.

LET THE CHILDREN COME:
Celebrating 15 Years of the Atrium

This year marks 15 years of the OCS Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Atrium, a space in which students deepen their personal relationships with the Lord through Montessori-based learning rooted in Scripture and the liturgy of the Catholic Church.

"I kind of feel like God is near," first grader Mark Augustine says of his time in the Atrium. "I just get a feeling. There's holy stuff around me. There are crosses, a holy table, and pictures of Jesus."

Sister Mary Charles, O.P. has helped lead the Atrium since exploration of the program began in 2008. "It has been a privilege to sit at the feet of the children who have taught me so much by their simplicity, their true and childlike love for all that is good and holy, and their continuing hunger to know more and more about Jesus," she says. The children daily remind Sr. Mary Charles of Jesus' call in Matthew 18:2-5 to become like children.

A hands-on approach to religious education, the CGS program invites children to work with articles and gestures of the Mass, biblical stories, and prayer activities. Emphases include deepening prayer life, developing reasoning and moral sense, and knowing the character of God, all learned primarily through the parables. "It is a catechesis where the catechist and the child gently and lovingly walk to Jesus together," Sr. Mary Charles describes it.

Third grader Maggie Head's favorite thing in the Atrium is the Wonder Table. "It's where you can learn about things that if you were on a hike, you wouldn't think about, but you stop, wonder, and think," Head says.



"The life of Christ didn't have to only exist in a book that I didn't have the attention to read. It existed around me, and every time I walked into the Atrium, I could feel it swell around me and pull me in." **Austin Murphy '18**

She recalls feeling a bumpy shell, which she wrote about as reminding her of the ups and downs of life.

Third grader Georgie Tramontin's favorite thing to do in the Atrium is make prayer cards with Bible verses or saints, keeping some for herself and giving some to Sisters at the Motherhouse. "It's a very fun and creative way to devote yourself to God," she says.

Students appreciate the interactive elements, serene environment, and being able to pray without distractions in the Atrium. "It's important to be quiet there so people who are trying to pray can listen," Head says.

Currently housed in a portable building, OCS hopes to have a permanent structure connected to the rest of the classrooms built in the coming years.



THE HISTORY

In 1954, Sofia Cavalletti was asked to give religious instruction to her friend's young sons in Rome. Coming from a background of higher education, Cavalletti was intimidated by the request to educate children. She relied on her study of Semitic Languages and Scripture while trying to cater to the natural learning styles of a child.

The more she worked with these inquisitive boys, she saw that they were already in a relationship with Jesus and only needed a companion to accompany them. "She saw what every adult sees in the Atrium: Children are very much aware of the presence of God in their lives and of being in His loving presence," Sr. Mary Charles says. "They are eager for more of Him."

Cavalletti partnered with Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori-trained teacher with more than 15 years of classroom experience, to further design materials to help children better understand the Catholic liturgy.

The women continued sharing their methods, and the CGS program has expanded to more than 65 countries, as reported by The United States Association of The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

In 2007, Mother Ann Marie Karlovic, O.P., Prioress General of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, invited Sr. Mary Charles to research this style of catechesis, as it was relatively new to the U.S. and not yet a part of any local Catholic school. After researching the theory, methodology, and theological formation, three Dominican Sisters began training for CGS Level I, offering formation for ages three through six.

"It was after this extensive training that we realized that this was indeed a beautiful way to lead the children to Jesus," Sr. Mary Charles says. "It was a Dominican fit, and the Prioress General encouraged Overbrook to move forward with beginning the program."

Additional sisters completed training, materials were purchased, and a portable classroom was rented to house the space. "It is a religious environment surrounding the children with beauty and quiet as they pray, sing, and listen to God's voice within their own heart," Sr. Mary Charles says of the space. "It is here that God meets with the child."

Catechists of CGS consistently speak to how incredible it is to realize a child's capacity to know God and hear the Holy Spirit in a prepared environment.

"CGS is a loving approach which respects the human dignity of each person, even tiny little people, accepting where they are in their lives, and helping to lead them where they want to be," Sr. Mary Charles says. "I can look into their faces turned up to listen and see Jesus. What a gift."



Preschool-4 student Isabela Catalogne preparing the cruets in the Atrium.

LASTING FRUIT

Austin Murphy '18 participated in the inaugural year of the Atrium. He is now a sophomore at Notre Dame University studying

THE PERFECT GIFT

by Sister Mary Charles, O.P.

It was the last week for the preschool children to visit the atrium before Christmas break. The little and well-loved Overbrook Atrium of the Good Shepherd felt warm and inviting to the four-year-olds. They had quieted themselves quickly to listen to the reading of the Scripture passage of the birth of Christ. It was a familiar passage to them, but one that never grows old and is always new with overflowing love.

We followed the reading from the Bible with a procession around the room carrying the Baby Jesus and placing Him carefully in the manger on the prayer table. As we looked at this tiny Baby lying in a bed of straw, I asked in an Atrium whisper, "What gift would you like to give the Christ Child for His birthday present?" There was a thoughtful silence among them, some looking at the Baby and others with their eyes closed in peaceful reflection.

It had to be the "very best present" for a Baby King. I'm sure some dreamed of magnificent Lego sets, little puppies, and maybe even a drum set or a guitar. Kings like drums and parades, you know. Remember, these are four-year-olds. They would consider these things "great gifts," and perhaps they are! We ended our lesson by singing together "Away in the Manger."

The children moved on around the room to find what would help them to pray and think even more about this great mystery they had just heard, of a Baby who is God. Young children do not need to wrap their minds around such a big mystery. They believe, pure and simple. They wrap instead, their hearts around the mystery, who is God. They embrace Him and find joy in this relationship. This is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

It is amazing to watch the children pray in their own way, simple, sincere, straight to the point, and right from the heart. The children moved around the room quietly, and with purpose, praying in their own way. They instinctively chose work that would quiet their souls and bodies so they could think some more about their "best present for Jesus."

Children, especially very young children, are already in a relationship with Jesus. In the Atrium, adults assist the children to grow deeper in their friendship with their very best, forever Friend. Sometimes the adults lead the children, but most often the children lead the adults in our relationship with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the main catechist, and everyone follows His lead.



Sister Mary Charles, O.P. teaching second graders how to find Bible verses while in the Atrium.

I had put on some quiet instrumental Christmas music in the background during this Atrium Christmas session, and there was a quiet humming as the children worked. I was attentive to the children as some prayed by drawing prayer cards, others chose the materials off the shelves, and a small group set up the miniature altar with the articles for the Mass. I watched but did not interrupt. This was their special time to talk with Jesus with their hands and their hearts. Everyone was happily engaged.

As I surveyed the Atrium, I became aware of a gentle movement behind me. I turned ever so slightly to see a tiny, little girl on her toes, twirling a most graceful pirouette around Baby Jesus' crib. I let her dance. She was totally absorbed and unaware that anyone else was watching. The soft chime rang to indicate that Atrium time had come to an end, but our little ballerina danced on. I whispered to her that our time together with Jesus was over now and she looked up at me with clear and sparkling eyes as if she had just come from somewhere beautiful and whispered to me, "I danced my very best for Jesus on His birthday!"

It was her "best present for Jesus." I turned my head away for a moment to check my tears. Little people don't always understand adult tears. The other children hearing about the beautiful present that Jesus had just been given by this little ballerina wanted to dance for Jesus, too. So, we did, 15 four-year-olds and one rather tall and awkward adult. It was the "perfect present" from all of us. It was a perfect morning in the Atrium.

The entire Atrium experience is meant to be prayer. It is the one and only goal of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. A habit of prayer is nurtured in the children through the reading of God's Word in Scrip-



ture, a cultivation of silence, and an environment of beauty and order. What can better prepare our children for their future than to strengthen their faith life by strengthening their prayer life?

Many former students have come back to say how much they loved their time in our little Atrium. As for the program's long-term vision, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd does not seek success or even to be important in the eyes of man. It is God's work and His relationship with all of us runs deep within, even as small children.

It is the Atrium's primary aim to help children discover and enjoy the presence of Someone who has been with them since the very first moment of their lives. It is Someone who bonds with them with a strong and steadfast love. It is Someone that will give them His own "life and light," His whole self, so that they might enjoy "life to the full" and a "joy that is complete." Is this not the most "Perfect Gift" of Love that Jesus can give us? §

"Children are a gift and I sincerely believe that God has placed a very special 'pearl of great price' within each one of them. I have been blessed to be able to have the opportunity to gently open and peek inside this gift and see Jesus working in and with them." **Sister Mary Charles, O.P., *Catechist***



Austin Murphy '18 at May Crowning when he was a student.

Mechanical Engineering and Theology, in part due to his formation in the Atrium. "I think it had such a pull on me because it was so tangible," he says. Murphy chose engineering due to a desire to physically touch what he creates and designs. He views the Atrium as an experiential learning center in this same way, as he saw parables illustrated in models.

Murphy testifies that his memories from the Atrium continue to be foundational for his New Testament Theology and Foundation of Theology courses. "It created a biblical memory based in physical movement," he says. "I can still see the parables illustrated through our own use of yeast, or lack thereof, in rising bread or moving nativity pieces around to imagine what it would have looked like to be a shepherd or king coming to visit the newborn Christ."

As an OCS student, Murphy describes himself as having too much energy to sit still in a classroom. "In the Atrium, this wasn't the case, though," he said. "It was the place on campus that served to calm me. Looking back, it was the place where I could most feel at peace sitting in the presence of the Lord."

Stephen Strickland '18 was a classmate of Murphy. "When the Atrium is mentioned, my mind is immediately drawn to memories of the peaceful stillness and quiet, with the room softly lit by the light of day," Strickland says. He remembers Sr. Mary Charles recounting Scripture stories in a soft voice, beginning each prayer by slowly and intentionally invoking the Holy Spirit. "That is a practice that still resonates with me and has become more prevalent in my life as I have gotten older," he adds.

Many alumni relate their strong memories of the Atrium, first encounters with Scripture, and lessons in prayerfulness to Sr. Mary Charles. Murphy, specifically, says Sr. Mary Charles has had the greatest impact on his formation as a theologian. "I remember her care, kindness, and the smile she had on her face every time we walked into class," he says. "She radiates a spirit of compassion that is a direct reflection of the Holy Spirit, and I am blessed to have been formed under her."

When Murphy was a student, the Atrium program ended after fourth grade. He was selected to participate in a panel of students sharing their experiences and, when asked if there was anything he would change, his first comment was that it should extend through eighth grade. "I had a strong desire to remain in the place that served as a tangible connection to Christ," he says. §



WKRN News 2 reporter interviewing third grader Dudley McMurray after his flag football victory.

TAKE A TITAN 2 SCHOOL



Tennessee Titans tight-end Thomas Odukoya being welcomed to OCS.

"It's just so cool to bring in a Titan to school," third grader Dudley McMurray says. "That's a kid's once-in-a-lifetime dream come true." OCS hosted tight-end Thomas Odukoya as part of the Take a Titan 2 School program in March 2024. Odukoya was the guest of McMurray, who won Take a Titan 2 School sponsored by Hattie B's, Middle Tennessee State University, the Tennessee Titans, and WKRN.

Principal Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. echos McMurray's sentiments of love for the Titans. "We're so proud of our home team," she says. "We are grateful to Thomas for coming to our school, allowing him, the Titans, and Nashville to see what Overbrook has to offer."

Odukoya's visit was filled with an all-school pep rally, time on the Beyond the Brook Farm, and a flag football game. During the pep rally, McMurray asked Odukoya what he would do if he did not play football. "I got my degree in sports management," he replied. "As soon as I am done playing football, I want to start becoming a football coach." Odukoya asked McMurray about his own plans. While he had contemplated a potential foot-









Bottom Right: Students kicking off the day with a Titans-themed pep rally, prior to Dudley McMurray interviewing Thomas Odukoya.

ball career, he has decided to become a scientist instead.

Multiple times Odukoya touched on the importance of education. "Education and going to school are really important to develop as a person," he says. "A lot of the stuff I do, I learned in school." He mentioned that having learned to pay attention and take good notes helps him advance as a football player. Odukoya encouraged students to listen to teachers and work hard.

While visiting Beyond the Brook Farm, Odukoya, McMurray, and fellow third graders fed the animals and gathered chicken eggs. "I grew up in the city and never thought I would do this," Odukoya says. The eggs looked so good that they later scrambled them in the kitchen. Odukoya says they were the best scrambled eggs he had tasted.

The visit ended with a flag football competition between the two third grade classes. After an exciting back-and-forth of scoring which led to overtime, the McMurray-Odukoya team was victorious with McMurray making the winning catch for a two-point conversion. "It's always great to have a win, but it is even greater having a Titan on your team," McMurray says. §



Dudley McMurray and Thomas Odukoya impromptu scrambling eggs in the Dining Hall.



BEST OF NASHVILLE

Overbrook Catholic School was proud to take home three awards - Best Private School, Best Elementary School, and Best Preschool - in Nashville Scene's "Best of Nashville 2023" competition.

Determined by public vote, the announcement brought great celebration to students, alumni, and friends of the campus. The student body celebrated with a dance party and sweet treats.

"It always feels good to be recognized as being the 'best of' in such an important category," President Sister Dominic, O.P. says. "We are grateful for our strong community here at Overbrook Catholic and the support that our families give to our shared goals in education. We are proud to share that with the wider Nashville community."

WINNER
READER'S CHOICE
OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL
BEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BEST PRIVATE SCHOOL
BEST PRESCHOOL

OCS has had a strong presence in the Nashville community since its founding in 1936, opening one of the first preschools in Nashville in 1943. Firmly rooted in Catholic tradition and teaching, OCS continues to provide new opportunities to equip students to be life-long learners and virtuous leaders. Recent developments of this mission have included the "Called to Greatness" sixth-grade leadership program, Beyond the Brook Farm upgrades, and plans for a new STEM lab.

"Everything we do requires fidelity to our mission of educating and forming these precious children made in the image and likeness of God," Sr. Dominic says. "The Catholic vision of who the human person is, and the reality that he or she is called to contribute meaningfully to our world and to live in friendship with God, demands that education, even early education, be designed in accord with their dignity and their calling. We aim to be an intentional school that preserves childhood while preparing for adulthood."

Sr. Dominic's position as OCS and St. Ceci-

"At OCS, we have high standards and expectations in our curriculum, which I can easily incorporate into my style of teaching. I feel lucky to teach here." **Ms. Katy Erwin, *Preschool-3 Teacher***



WKRN News 2 presenting Ms. Katy Erwin with the Educator of the Week award.



Ms. Katy Erwin making homemade apple sauce with her preschool-3 students.

lia Academy President was created in 2022, in-part to better position the campus within the community. Recent marketing efforts have also sought to gain public awareness of OCS, as it is often referred to as the "hidden gem" of Nashville.

While OCS has its own standards of excellence to measure success and mission growth year-after-year, three Best of Nashville awards were certainly encouraging recognition to those who work diligently daily to execute the school's mission.

Mrs. Ellen Herman '68, preschool-4 teacher, is one of those wonderful witnesses on campus whose life has faithfully carried forward the mission. After graduating, she sent her four children to OCS and has worked on campus since 1986.

"Overbrook has always been the best," Herman says. "It has always been a place where one feels loved and safe. Friendships formed as a student, parent, or teacher last long after one leaves Overbrook Catholic.

"While many things have changed since the 60s, the presence of the Dominican Sisters and their love for God has never changed. No child leaves without knowing they were made for heaven, and that makes us great."

MS. KATY ERWIN

In fall 2023, Ms. Katy Erwin tied for second place Best Teacher in Nashville Scene's "Best of Nashville 2023" awards. The same semester, Erwin was named WKRN News 2's Educator of the Week.

An anonymous parent nominated Erwin for the Educator of the Week program, noting that Erwin easily connected with her daughter, making her child feel "wonderful and happy" and putting the parents' minds at ease.

"Ms. Erwin makes a difference," the parent wrote. "She cares for and loves each and every child with a special ease about her. I am so appreciative of all the care and attention she gives to every child and especially to mine!"

Erwin began working at OCS as a classroom aide in 2017, becoming a preschool-3 teacher in 2020 to joyfully and intentionally welcome the youngest Eagles to campus. Erwin also directs Camp Overbrook, a co-ed summer camp offering programming for three-year-olds to rising first graders.

"We will always be thankful for Ms. Erwin's hard work and efforts to make our preschool program what it is today," Vice Principal Mrs. Teresa Leon says. "She has thorough knowledge and an in-depth understanding of the preschool-3 curriculum. She engages her students with their teaching styles and holds their attention using a variety of techniques."

A graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, she studied Elementary Education with a specialization in Early Education and received Montessori training. Erwin is a St. Henry parishioner.

"Ms. Erwin is kind, gentle, and has a wonderful personality," Leon says. "She creates an atmosphere where her students feel loved. Ms. Erwin's love for God is very evident in each of her lessons and is felt when you observe her interaction with her students." §

2022-23 Highlights

From academics to athletics to fine arts to faith life, the 2022-23 school year was one of great celebration. Our Eagles displayed excellence in numerous capacities, and we are mighty proud of them.

ACADEMICS

CLASS OF 2023

Congratulations to the graduates of 2023, who paved the way as the inaugural sixth-grade leadership class and first graduates of officially named Overbrook Catholic School. Students participated in Called to Greatness, a course emphasizing Christ-like leadership through service and virtue. They took it upon themselves to host a toy drive for local immigrant families, modeled service as morning ambassadors and big buddies, and led the student body through multiple prayer services.

Congratulations to Ellie Schoch, who had the highest GPA, to Rita Mae Krog and Brandt Chretien who were voted Most Christ-Like, and to Vivian Mixon and George Salloum for earning the Eagle Excellence Leadership Award. Thank you to students Mac Hoover and Rebecca Terry for speaking at graduation.

The school year began with a three-day Leadership Retreat at Camp Skyline Ranch, led by Father Ambrose Little, O.P. and ended with a class trip to Chattanooga and Knoxville, led by Father Frassati Davis, O.P. The group visited notable Tennessee attractions, including Ruby Falls and the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.









SPELLING BEE

The annual Spelling Bee lasted a record 24 rounds between six students in grades fourth through sixth. Congratulations to all participants for their display of grit, studiousness, and sportsmanship.

1st Place: Liza Fowler (4th)
2nd Place: Vita Wayman (4th)
3rd Place: Mmesoma Umeukeje (5th)

MATH

The OCS fifth- and sixth-grade MathCOUNTS Team and the third- and fourth-grade level math teams compete in competitions throughout the school year. Students from our MathCOUNTS team participated in MBA's sixth-grade invitational, the Middle Grades Math Competition, AMC-8, and MathCOUNTS school and regional level competitions. This team, along with the third- and fourth-grade teams, also competed nationally and regionally in Perennial Math and Catholic Math League contests. In addition to 17 regional awards, these teams brought home 12 national awards last season.



Special congratulations to:
Third-Grade Team: 2nd Place at Catholic Math League National Championship
Fourth-Grade Team: 2nd Place at Perennial Math National Tournament; 1st Place at Catholic Math League National Championship
Fifth-Grade Team: 3rd Place at Perennial Math Division Tournament

FAITH



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Twenty-three second graders received their First Holy Communion in April at Holy Family Catholic Church in Brentwood. In preparation for the sacrament, students attended a retreat with their parents at the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia's Motherhouse. Students received their First Reconciliation following the retreat.

In addition to learning about the sacraments all year, students also made clay Mass kits to better understand the prayers and rituals of the consecration. Prior to Holy Thursday, they hosted their own Last Supper in the Library, learning about the four cups of Seder, washing of the hands, eating karpas, and the responses from Scripture.



MAY CROWNING

May Crowning returned to celebrate 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 Rita Mae Krog and Brandt Chretien crowned Mary. Following a prayer service with readings, families filed forward for personal benedictions.



ATHLETICS

From volleyball to flag football and more, Eagle athletes gave their all in the 2022-23 season. Congratulations to sixth grader Peter Perri for winning the Athletic Eagle Award.



TRACK

- 6th Grade Boys and Girls: 1st Place at Nashville Youth Athletics Regional 6th-8th Grade Meet
- 66 Top-3 individual finishes at Nashville Youth Athletics meets



CROSS COUNTRY

- 3rd – 4th Grade Boys and Girls: 4th Place at Nashville Youth Athletics Regional Meet
- Five Top-15 individual finishes at the Nashville Youth Athletics Regional Meet
- OCS hosted over 700 runners and 5,000 guests for two Diocesan Athletic Conference meets



BASKETBALL

- 6th Grader, Hugh Connolly: Named to Coach Cat All-Tournament Team

FINE ARTS



SPRING MUSICAL

The much-loved Spring Musical returned in April, with the theme "A Song is Born." Featuring classics like Gene Kelly's "Singin' in the Rain" and new anthems like "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten, the production had the audience of parents, grandparents, friends, and teachers captivated.

Teacher of the Year was announced following the Thursday night production, going to Musical Director, Ms. Marcina Clark. Clark has taught music, choir, and handbells at OCS since 2017.

FORENSICS

The Forensics team was proud to take home 87 individual and four team awards from 10 season tournaments. Twelve students placed in the top-six at the Diocesan Forensics Championship and one team placed third.

OCS was the first Catholic school in Nashville to launch a Forensics program, and sponsor Mrs. Diane Meier continues to uphold the program's standard of excellence. Categories for the speech and debate program include Oral Interpretation, Declamation, Storytelling, and Drama.





Grandparents viewing the Art Show prior to watching the Spring Musical.



A member of LTC Conklin's squadron after loading first grader William Tucker into a helicopter.

THE EAGLE IS LANDING OVERBROOK'S TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

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ing down to the minute, and Wall felt her phone vibrate during Mass at 8:36 a.m. for the "take off" text. As Mass concluded, everyone scurried to the field.

As soon as everyone was a safe distance from the field, every head turned toward the sound of one Black Hawk and two Apache helicopters flying over OCS. Once they landed on the field and their propellers started winding down, the crowd instinctively began the Pledge of Allegiance. As LTC Conklin exited his chopper, the crowd sang the national anthem.

LTC Conklin spoke about the importance of the military and about the crew who flew in with him. Then, to the delight of the 400 individuals in attendance, everyone had a chance to climb into an aircraft. Pilots lifted the toddlers, while other students asked flight crews for autographs. Preschoolers also gave hand-drawn pictures of the American flag, which pilots promptly and proudly displayed in the aircraft.

"I am so grateful to Mark Conklin for choosing Overbrook for this very special gift," Sr. Marie Blanchette says. "To have three helicopters land in your backyard and everyone who wanted to climb into the cockpit being able to do so was beyond my wildest imagination. This was a huge gift to the students, faculty, staff, and parents. I will never forget it."



Students waving to the one Black Hawk and two Apache helicopters flying towards the field.

Wheels were up by 11:30 a.m., with several classes staying behind to bid the Ft. Campbell crew adieu. As they took off, the last chopper turned toward the students and "waved" in grand helicopter style.

"I hope my classmates learned that veterans are awesome, that they help the world be safe, and that it's cool to be in the army," Bernadette Conklin says. "I'm proud of my parents. I'm happy that they serve because we get a military discount, and we get to watch all the "Top Gun" movies."

Sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Grace Lynch's husband is an active member of the Tennessee National Guard. "I am so grateful to be a member of a school community that shows such appreciation for our military," Lynch

"It deepened my gratitude for the military. We saw about a dozen soldiers who have committed years to serve our country so that America can be free. Those soldiers are living away from their families, train hard and often, and are willing to give all to protect our freedom. My hope is that the students will remember that when they look back on this day." **Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P., *Principal***

says. "It is not every day kids get to interact with our nation's military in such an up close and personal way."

Veterans Day 2023 will not soon be forgotten by any attendees, yet neither will any of the other celebrations or the lessons that have come with them. This school year, Wall taught students how Vietnam veterans were not often welcomed home, showing news clips with ceremonies created 40 years after the war in efforts to right wrongs. A fifth grader later saw a man in public wearing a Vietnam Vet ballcap. She walked up to him, held out her hand, and said, "Thank you for your service." The gentleman was taken aback and asked where she learned that. "At school," she replied. "To me, that is why we do this, to show individuals who have sacrificed so much that they are still being appreciated," Wall says.

Veterans Day is only the beginning of OCS appreciation, as this year the school hosted a Mass and breakfast to celebrate first responders for the Feast of the Archangels. Neighbors from Fire Station 17, Metro Nashville Police Department West Precinct, Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital West, and Dominican Campus Security attended Mass, receiving a special blessing and gift baskets filled with cards from students. Afterwards, fourth graders hosted a breakfast in the library, including a presentation about archangels St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, patrons of first responders.

"The love and devotion the students and faculty have for our community and nation is a blessing," Lynch says. "As a Tennessee National Guard wife, service of the greater good is always at the forefront. I know this to be an instilled value at Overbrook Catholic as well." §



EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES: Engaging Students in Civic Responsibility

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munity and are aware of major decisions happening within the city, so I look for a cause that I know will affect the lives of my students," Lynch says. "During this project, students are actively utilizing local media sources and gathering information about the topic. It becomes quite the conversation piece in the hallway between students, and they get very excited whenever they see the topic mentioned in the newspaper or local television."

The month-long project includes research, verbal class debates, handwritten drafts, an annotated bibliography, and a typed final essay. Academic goals include reading and annotating non-fiction text, developing a clear and focused evidence-supported claim, and building counterarguments and rebuttals. Teachers observing debates are struck by the professionalism and maturity of students, as they attentively listen and make eye contact while speaking.

Fifth grader Stella Pike researched the East Bank development, and her favorite part was preparing to present. "It was fun to see what information others gathered and what sources they read from," she says.

"In teaching students to skillfully debate, Mrs. Lynch is teaching her students a valuable life skill," Vice Principal Mrs. Teresa Leon says. "Her students and fellow faculty were moved by the respectful responses and skill in which the students delivered the information."

Students spend multiple days collaborating to plan their dialogue and counterarguments. "The debate days are filled with excitement and energy as students prepare," Lynch says. "It's exciting to watch students advocate for something that they have thoroughly researched." §



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Sarah Grubbs '07

As one might predict, Sarah Grubbs '07 has had an exciting and successful career in rapid order. She was a standout student during her Overbrook days. Glancing through yearbooks, her photos are throughout, including the co-ed soccer team, National Junior Honor Society, Math Counts, and Ambassadors.

She excelled at St. Cecilia Academy and then graduated summa cum laude from the University of San Diego with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing and a minor in communications studies. Her career began in journalism with NBC San Diego, first as a member of the Investigative Reporting Team and then as a news writer, covering national and local stories.

From there, Grubbs worked on the Public Affairs and Crisis team at a global communications firm, BCW (formerly Burson-Marsteller). Grubbs developed and executed award-winning communications strategies for Fortune 500 companies and non-governmental organizations facing issues and crises, including financial investigations, litigation, regulatory action, misconduct allegations, data breaches, and activist campaigns.

In 2018, Grubbs joined TrailRunner International, a global strategic communications firm, as an associate and was promoted to director that same year. She helped to build the firm's New York office and returned to Nashville in 2021 to establish the firm's Heartland presence.

Today, Grubbs is Managing Director for TrailRunner International and head of the firm's Nashville office. She advises clients on corporate positioning, crisis preparedness and response, reputation and change management, high-stakes situations such as IPOs, M&A transactions, regulatory issues, and executive leadership changes. Sarah works with clients including large international conglomerates, Fortune 500 companies, professional sports teams, newly public companies, and high-growth start-ups.

The Brook asked Grubbs about her time at Overbrook and its impact:

How would you describe your time at Overbrook?

My time at Overbrook was foundational and formative. It instilled discipline in work and academics, involvement in sports, and service in community – all things that are still important to me today!

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

My fondest memories are with the friends I made along the way. Many of the people I met at Overbrook became lifelong friends who I still keep in touch with today. No mat-

ter where I've lived (Nashville, California, and NYC), I've continued to run into Overbrook alumni and share a special connection with them.

When I look back, I also remember how welcoming the environment at Overbrook was. I joined in fifth grade and was nervous about joining a new program where people already knew one another, but everyone was kind and gracious immediately.

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

Overbrook fostered a culture of involvement, where you wanted to participate in clubs, sports, and activities. Being encouraged to explore your interests and passions at a young age was incredible and left our class well prepared for high school and the next chapters of our lives.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Mrs. Alley! She made math approachable and fun for everyone, and truly cared about the subject and her students. She taught my older sister and brother, too, and is a family favorite. We still celebrate Pi Day!

How was Overbrook formative to you as a person?

Overbrook gave me confidence in my voice, conviction in my beliefs, and showed the power of a strong community.

How did Overbrook prepare you for your future career?

One of the most valuable lessons from Overbrook that I've taken with me in my career is how balance makes you stronger in all aspects of your career and life. Managing a schedule full of homework, classes, sports, clubs, faith and friends at Overbrook prepared me well for the variety of each day in the professional world.

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

Overbrook was a wonderful place. The teachers were passionate, the students were kind, and the culture instilled work ethic, balance, and a strong moral compass at a young age. The small class format allowed for participation and collaboration. To this day, I cherish the friendships made and lessons learned at Overbrook! §

ALUMNI NEWS

Amy Seigenthaler Pierce '80 was named Honorary Consul to Ireland. Pierce is a managing partner at FINN Partners.

Pat Dortch '81 opened Dortch Acting Studio, a theater company, in Charlotte, N.C. He has also performed in films including "Stranger Things" and "Kemba."

Jennie Karrels Menzie '85 was promoted to President and CEO of Cumberland Trust.

Andrew Mazzoni '93 was named to Forbes Magazine's 2024 Best-In-State Wealth Advisors. He is a member of the Zager Group at Morgan Stanley.

Allie Saxon Noote '05 welcomed Henry Noble on October 13, 2023.

Chloe Wall Kent '10 welcomed Francine (Frankie) Etta on December 8, 2023.

Micah Matthews '10 graduated with her JD and MBA from Cumberland School of Law, Samford University in April 2023. She then passed the Bar Exam and was sworn in on November 7, 2023. Matthews is an Associate Attorney with Martin Heller Potempa & Sheppard, PLLC, and on the Estate Planning and Wealth Preservation Team.

Morgan Price '19 is the first HBCU gymnast to hold the title of USA Gymnastics All-Around National Champion. She competed at the USA Gymnastics Women's Collegiate National Championship with Fisk University in April 2024.

Jack Farringer '21 and **William Le '20** were inducted into the Cum Laude Society at Montgomery Bell Academy in April 2024.

Katrina Le '21 was inducted into the National Honor Society at St. Cecilia Academy in March 2024.

Julia Betbeze '22 and **Brazier Pierce '20** spent three days in Louisville, KY as part of the audition-only American Choral Directors Association Southern Region Conference.

Maggie Crosslin '22 broke the St. Cecilia Academy record in track and field for the 800M with 2:23.17.

Sophie Crosslin '22, Ann Curley '22, Margaret Lee '22, Mariam Smith '22, Amy Weber'22, and **Rita Mae Krog '23** earned the 4-Sport Athletic Award at St. Cecilia Academy in the 2023-24 school year, participating in a sport every season.



Seigenthaler Pierce '80



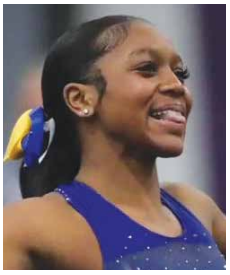
Menzie '85



Mazzoni '93



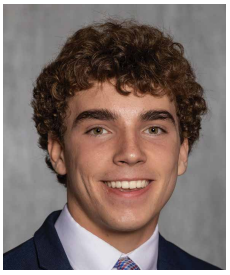
Matthews '10



Price '19



Le '20



Farringer '21



Le '21



Betbeze '22, Pierce '20



Crosslin '22

ALUMNI NEWS HAVE AN ALUMNI UPDATE?
LET US KNOW AT **OVERBROOK.EDU/ALUMNI**

Memorials

ALUMNI

Mary Ann Woods Baer '56, sister of **Kathi Woods '59, Patricia Woods '62, Lisa Woods Donohue '66,** and **John J. Woods '67,** aunt of **Dillon Woods '01** and **Cecily Woods '04**

Geoffrey Brugh Braden, Sr. *(attended OCS)*, brother of **Mary Ann Braden Chaffin '53, Lisa Braden Moody '59,** and **Maggie Braden Russell '63** *(deceased)*

Matthew Barrett Brewer '05, son of **Mary Barrett Brewer '74,** brother of **Sarah Brewer Hirst '06** and **Betsy Lane Brewer '08,** nephew of **Katie Barrett Cain '83**

Anne Wall Christeson '63, sister of **Peggy Wall Ross '60, Thomas P. Wall III '65, John G. Wall '67** *(staff)*, **Michael A. Wall '67,** and **Brigid Wall '71,** aunt of **Kathleen Wall Marks '93, Patrick J. Wall '95, Matthew H. Wall '99,** and **Stephen Wall** *(attended OCS)*, great aunt of **Caitlin Wall '22** and **Jacob Wall** *(attended OCS)*

Betty Wrenne Harris '46, sister of **David Wrenne '44 (***deceased***),** aunt of **Carol Davidson Turner '44** and **Julie Davidson Brooks '59**

James Vaughn Hunt *(attended OCS)*, brother of **Sam Hunt Jr. '51**

Julia "Judy" Hicks Ison '65, sister of **Cathy Hicks Obolensky '66,** aunt of **Natalya Obolensky Davis '99, Octavia Obolensky Melly '03, John Thetford '05,** and **Sallie Thetford '07**

Key Englert Kaufman '79, sister of **Rob Englert '77** and **Dawn Englert Keith '79**

James Patrick "Jimmy" Kelly, Jr. *(attended OCS)*, brother of **Linda Kelly Myatt '53** *(deceased)*, **Peggy Kelly Hiller '57,** and **Shirley Kelly Johnson '60** *(deceased)*

James "Jay" M. Morel III *(attended OCS)*, brother of **Edie Morel Barksdale '86** and **Felix J. Morel** and **Byron Morel** *(both attended OCS)*, **uncle of Mamie Morel** *(3rd Grade)*

Patricia Lauren Newsome '95

Kathryn Lynn Tupper '59, sister of **Nancy Tupper Morrison '50**

ALUMNI FAMILY MEMBERS

Robert W. Abernathy, father of **Grace Abernathy '13**

Mary Hibbett "Tommie" Andrews, mother of **Susan Andrews Thompson '70**

Harold Ray Apple, grandfather of **Abby Smith '19**

Kevin Michael Bishop, father of **Colin Bishop '09** and **Daniel Bishop** *(attended OCS, deceased)*

John Vernon Brogden, brother of **Meg Brogden Petre '75** and **Mary Brogden Oxley '79**

John Eddie Cain III, father of **Mary Cain Helfrich '82** and **Kate Cain '84,** brother of **Emma Cain Roy '41** *(deceased)*

Mary Calhoun, mother of **Allison Calhoun '01**

Thomas Ivo Carlton, Jr., father of **Katie Carlton Long '84** and **Ivo Carlton '87**

William "Bill" J. Carter, Jr., husband of **Tracie Steltemeier Carter '71,** father of **Emma Carter '05** and **Addie Carter '08,** brother-in-law of **Butler Steltemeier '73, Lisa Steltemeier '74,** and **Cindy Steltemeier Lovell '76**

Maclin "Mac" Paschall Davis III, father of **Laura Davis '04** and **Elaine Davis Trueba '06**

Maclin Paschall Davis, Jr., grandfather of **Laura Davis '04** and **Elaine Davis Trueba '06**

Cora N. Duff, grandmother of **Anna Duff '16**

Thomas W. Edmondson, Jr., grandfather of **Jon Edmondson '05** and **Joshua Edmondson '09,** father-in-law of **Jada Nave Edmondson '81** *(former faculty)*

James Everett III, father of **James "Jake" M. Everett** *(attended OCS)*

Paul Joseph Fenelon, grandfather of **Patrick Sohr, Liam Sohr,** and **Donovan Sohr** *(all attended OCS)*

Joseph Greg Follansbee, father of **Lucy Follansbee '05**

Hayes Morgan Graf, brother of **Sara Graf Remke '79**

Linda Sipe Hardaway, grandmother of **Natalie Goodrum Kelly '07** and **Cate Goodrum '16**

Ellen Lewis Hill, grandmother of **Mary Elizabeth Stengel Bentley, Morgan Stengel,** and **Sara Stengel** *(all attended OCS)*

Gary Paul Hobbs, Jr., son of **Evalyn "Eba" Catignani Hobbs '60,** nephew of **Dr. George Catignani '57, Nancy Catignani Smith '61,** and **Kathy Catignani Ramsey '63**

Mary Claire Rayburn Holzapfel, grandmother of **Olivia McClure '15,** aunt of **Amelia Strobel** *(staff)*

Donald Austin Hunt, Sr., grandfather of **Miller Hunt '02, Britt A. Hunt '09, Bailey Hunt '12, Tessa Hunt '22, Ava Hunt '22, Stella Hunt '23,** and **Robinson Hunt** *(attended OCS)*

Sara C. Hurt, mother of **Celeste Hurt '67** and **Denise Hurt Hawkins '68,** grandmother of **Jessica Hawkins Anderson '97**

Anthony Wilson Jarrell, husband of **Cheryl Mrzena Jarrell '66**

LeRoy E. Jirikovec, grandfather of **Brian Swenson, George Swenson,** and **Anthony Swenson** *(all attended OCS)*

Lorraine T. Johnson, mother of **Cathy Johnson Breland '71, Nancy Johnson Worley '73,** and **Jim Johnson** and **Stephen Johnson** *(both attended OCS)*, grandmother of **Cacky Breland '99, Liz Worley Wicks '03, Caroline Worley '05,** and **Chase Breland** and **Coleman Breland** *(both attended OCS)*

Mary Frances Mannion Johnson, aunt of **Sue Ann Simpson Enneis '65, Michael Simpson '66, Mark Simpson '67** *(deceased)*, **Margaret Simpson Dunning '69, Pat Simpson '70, Jim Simpson '74,** and **Frank Simpson** and **Kathleen Simpson Pearson** *(both attended OCS)*, great aunt of **Anthony Simpson** *(former staff)*

Bonnie Wilson Jozsi, aunt of **Nicholas Rose '91** and **Alex Rose '92**

Thomas Edward Jurka, father of **Julia Jurka Cashion '84** *(former staff)*, uncle of **Sara Hancock Baldwin '83** and **Amy Hancock Biggs '85**

Suzanne Charlotte Lafond, mother of **Marc Stengel, Chris Stengel,** and **Eric Stengel** *(all attended OCS)*, grandmother of **Mary Elizabeth Stengel Bentley, Morgan Stengel,** and **Sara Stengel** *(all attended OCS)*

Dolores Kay Rochelle Brown Lindsey, mother of **Beth Wieck** *(former OCS faculty)*, grandmother of **Kayla Wieck Berklacich '04** and **Hayden Wieck** *(attended OCS)*

Cecelia M. Majeres, grandmother of **Annika Slinger '20** and **Brady Slinger** and **Camden Slinger** *(both attended OCS)*

Ann C. McRedmond, great aunt of **Anna Duff '16**

Michael "Mike" Russell Page, uncle of **Maggie Page '08**

Fred Pancoast, grandfather of **Alexandra Burns '06, Nicholas Ray '13, Stephen Ray '11, Anna Watkins '16,** and **Lilly Watkins** *(attended OCS)*

DiAnne G. Phillips, grandmother of **Flanigen Phillips '18** and **Cece Phillips '21,** mother-in-law of **Elizabeth Carden Phillips '82**

Joan "Joanie" Hager Carr Pietramale, mother of **Katie Carr '85** *(deceased)* and **Adam Carr** *(attended OCS, deceased)*

Terrence "Terry" Anthony Quill, grandfather of **Ava Thienel '18** and **Vivian Thienel '18**

Harrietta Ramsey, grandmother of **Velvet Vaughan '09** and **Talia Vaughan '11**

Dr. John "Jack" A. Roth, Sr., grandfather of **Sylvia Roth '18** and **Anna Burns Roth '20** **Paula G. Scott,** mother of **Adam Scott '90**

Margaret Ryan Sharp, aunt of **Fran Coode Walsh '73, Joe Coode '75** *(deceased)*, **Phillip Coode '79, Judy Coode '81, Michael Luster '77, Goerge Schneider '67** *(deceased)*, and **John Schneider '74,** sister-in-law of **Julius Schneider '44** *(deceased)*

Imogene "Jean" C. Shea, mother of **Mary Jane Shea Baldwin '66, Lucy Shea Corenswet '67, Michael E. Shea '70, Ellen Shea Donlon '73, Elizabeth Shea Campbell '75,** and **Sarah Shea '77,** grandmother of **David Donlon** *(former faculty)*

Joan M. Smith, mother of **Kathleen Smith Barry '72** and **Kevin Smith** *(attended OCS)*

Rita McNamee Smith, mother of **Roger Smith '71, Lisa Smith Frith '72, Melanie Smith '74,** and **Paul Smith '78**

Catherine Cheatham Snell and **James D. Snell, Jr. M.D.,** grandparents of **Katie Alexander '13** and **Helen Alexander '18**

James Cornelius Summers, father of **Lee Ann Summers Ingram '77**

Wanda Alessio Templeton, grandmother of **Emily Richardson '00** and **Neal Richardson '03**

Kathleen Pace Webb, sister of **Sally Pace Nelson '67**

Richard Paul White, great grandfather of **Abby Herndon '20** and **Jacob Herndon** *(attended OCS)*

FRIENDS OF OVERBROOK

Kathryn Gross "Kitty" Hobbs *(former staff)*, mother of **Darren Hobbs '96**

Sister Luke Hollerbach, O.P. *(former faculty)*

Marshall Tate Polk III, brother of **Mary Prue Polk Alley** *(former faculty)*

FAMILIES, FACULTY & STAFF

Kenneth Dale Pike, father of **Thomas Pike** *(staff)*, grandfather of **Brooklyn Pike '22** and **Stella Pike** *(5th Grade)*

Margaret "Maggie" Elizabeth Pardue Pirtle, grandmother of **Mamie Morel** *(3rd Grade)*

Mark Pyburn, father of **Amelia Pyburn '19, Helen Pyburn '22,** and **Mimi Pyburn '22,** uncle of **Ann Gailor Strobel** *(attended OCS)*, **Andrew Strobel** *(2nd Grade)*, **Rosemary Strobel** *(1st Grade),* and **Charlotte Strobel, Sullivan Strobel,** and **Gavin Strobel** *(all attended OCS),* brother-in-law of **Amelia Strobel** *(staff)* and **Sara Brunette Strobel '97**

Rev. Charles F. Strobel, brother of **Veronica Strobel-Seigenthaler** *(former faculty, deceased)*, uncle of **Katharine Seigenthaler Hayes '76, Beth Seigenthaler Courtney '77, Amy Seigenthaler Pierce '80, Maria Seigenthaler Roses '82,** and **Amelia Strobel** *(staff)*, great uncle of **Amelia Pyburn '19, Helen Pyburn '22, Mimi Pyburn '22, Ann Gailor Strobel** *(attended OCS)*, **Andrew Strobel** *(2nd Grade)*, **Rosemary Strobel** *(1st Grade),* and **Veronica Pierce, Charlotte Strobel, Mary Alice Pierce, Gavin Strobel, Frank Pierce,** and **Sullivan Strobel** *(all attended OCS)*

Betty O. Williamson, great grandmother of **William Tucker** *(1st Grade)*

As of 3/14/24

Claiming Our Catholic Identity

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by new banners across campus, gifts to every student, family, and faculty member, daily email recaps, and a pep rally including parents and grandparents, Catholic Schools Week was a joyful celebration for OCS students as they took part in the school's new chapter.

"The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia have been indispensable partners in proclaiming and teaching the Catholic faith since the earliest days of the Diocese of Nashville," Bishop Spalding says. "The Dominican charism of teaching has brought knowledge, learning, and piety to generations of students, not only in the Dominicans' own schools, but also in our diocesan schools and in other educational institutions across the globe."

The most recent Strategic Growth Plan, published in 2021, emphasizes the school's distinct identity in its name: The Dominican Difference. Diving into the strategic plan and its mission to share the distinct Dominican identity of the campus schools, the name change seemed fitting.

"Mission and identity are essential parts of the strategic plan for any school, and exponentially so for a faith-based school, as secularization dominates the social and educational landscapes," Sr. Dominic says. "The Dominican Difference offers a unique opportunity in strong personal human formation, discipleship of Jesus Christ, and rigorous academics, all in the supportive setting of a strong community ripe for the development of student and family friendships." §



Sixth graders celebrating the first Catholic Schools Week as Overbrook Catholic School.

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