

SPRING 2026

the Brook

AN OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL MAGAZINE

Faith in Action:

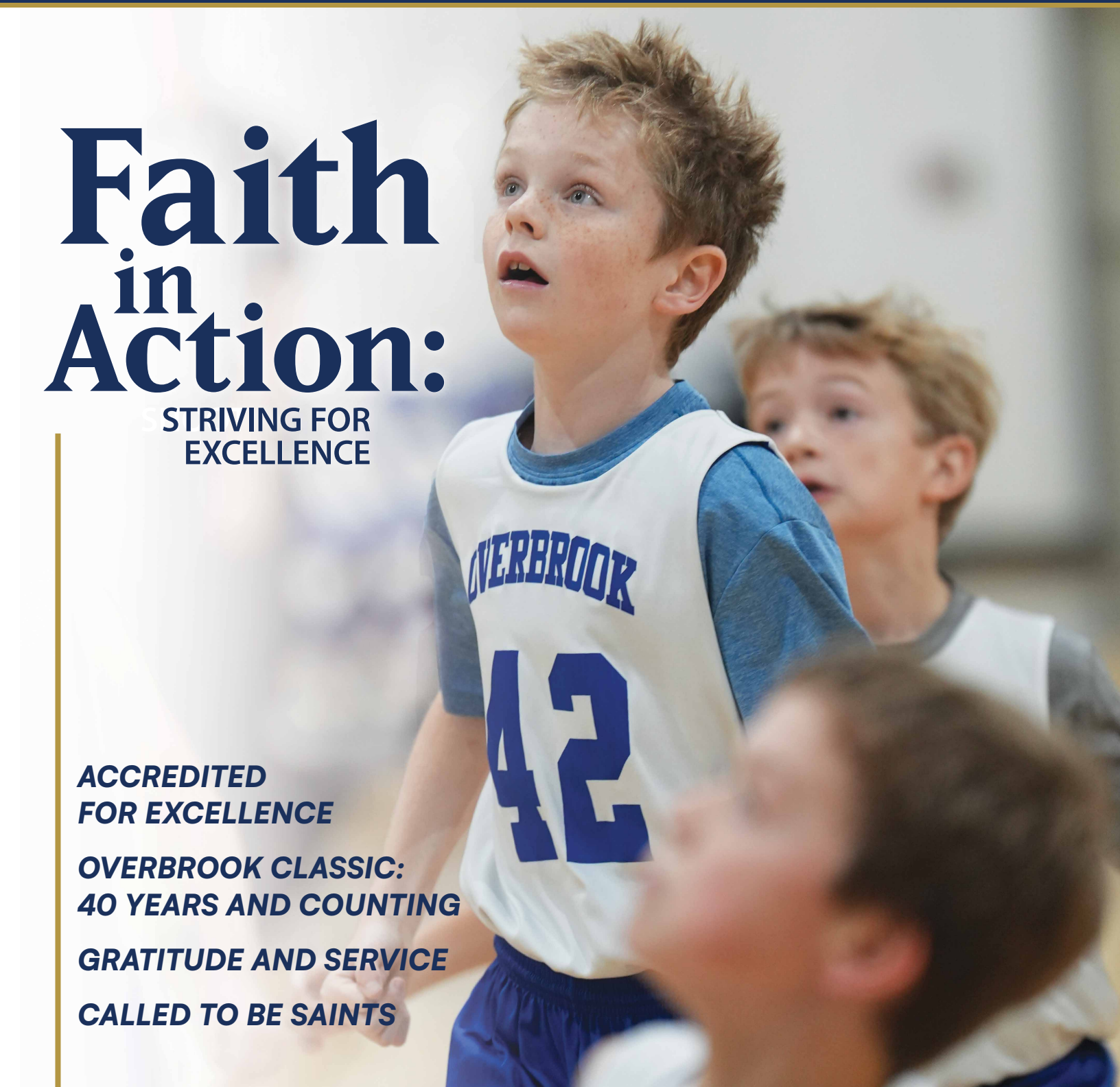
STRIVING FOR
EXCELLENCE

**ACCREDITED
FOR EXCELLENCE**

**OVERBROOK CLASSIC:
40 YEARS AND COUNTING**

GRATITUDE AND SERVICE

CALLED TO BE SAINTS



**WONDER &
WISDOM**



Coach Francis Horn and the 1954 boys' basketball team, Parochial League Champions in 1953-54. Mr. Horn continues his legacy on campus today through the St. Cecilia Academy athletics department.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



“And whatever you do, in word or in deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

—Colossians 3:17

Dear Overbrook Community,

At Overbrook Catholic School, the pursuit of excellence extends beyond academics. We seek to nurture students' intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual growth. The purpose of this pursuit is greater than excellence for its own sake. Our vision is that, knowing the loving presence of God, students and graduates might more deeply discern His call in their lives and use their unique gifts for the good of others as they journey toward heaven.

In this edition of *The Brook*, I see the many ways Overbrook Catholic prepares students to use their God-given gifts and talents beyond these halls. Students are formed as leaders who serve, athletes who compete with integrity and humility, good stewards who care for God's creation, respectful young men and women who show gratitude, and future saints who love God and neighbor.

As faculty and staff, we have the unique opportunity to shape many lives, directly and indirectly. The formation our students receive contributes to how they

will interact with and impact the world as they grow up. It is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly and would not be possible without the support of a community like you. Whether you are a current parent, alumni, past parent, benefactor, or friend of the campus, you help shape the traditions we love and play a vital role in the formation of our students. We are grateful for your partnership.

Our faculty, staff, and students put their hearts into everything they do. It is how we uphold long-standing traditions and create new opportunities to love and serve the Lord. The pursuit of excellence in our endeavors points us ultimately to our pursuit of heaven. Together, through God's grace, we can make heaven crowded.

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 Enrollment
Management

Sharon Huber
Director of Development

Pily Jenkins
Alumni Relations Manager

Amelia Strobel
Director of Strategic
Communication

Kate Cacopardo
Strategic Communication
Associate

Michael Ann Zinser '84
Strategic Communication
Associate

PHOTOS BY:

Kate Cacopardo, Meagan Harkins,
Uchida Photography, and Diocese
of Nashville

COVER PHOTO:

Charles-Henri Ness '28 and John
Grief '28 competing in the 40th
Overbrook Classic.

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF OCS!

Overbrook Catholic School
celebrates 90 years of
forming young hearts and
minds in the 2026-27
school year.

EVENTS:

- Anniversary Mass
- Campus Tours
- Dinner & Auction
- More to be announced



Scan for details.

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Overbrook Catholic School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.



Sister Marie Celine, O.P. speaking with Maristella Bobos '33 and Adrienne Bobos following the Eucharistic Procession.

ACCREDITED FOR EXCELLENCE:

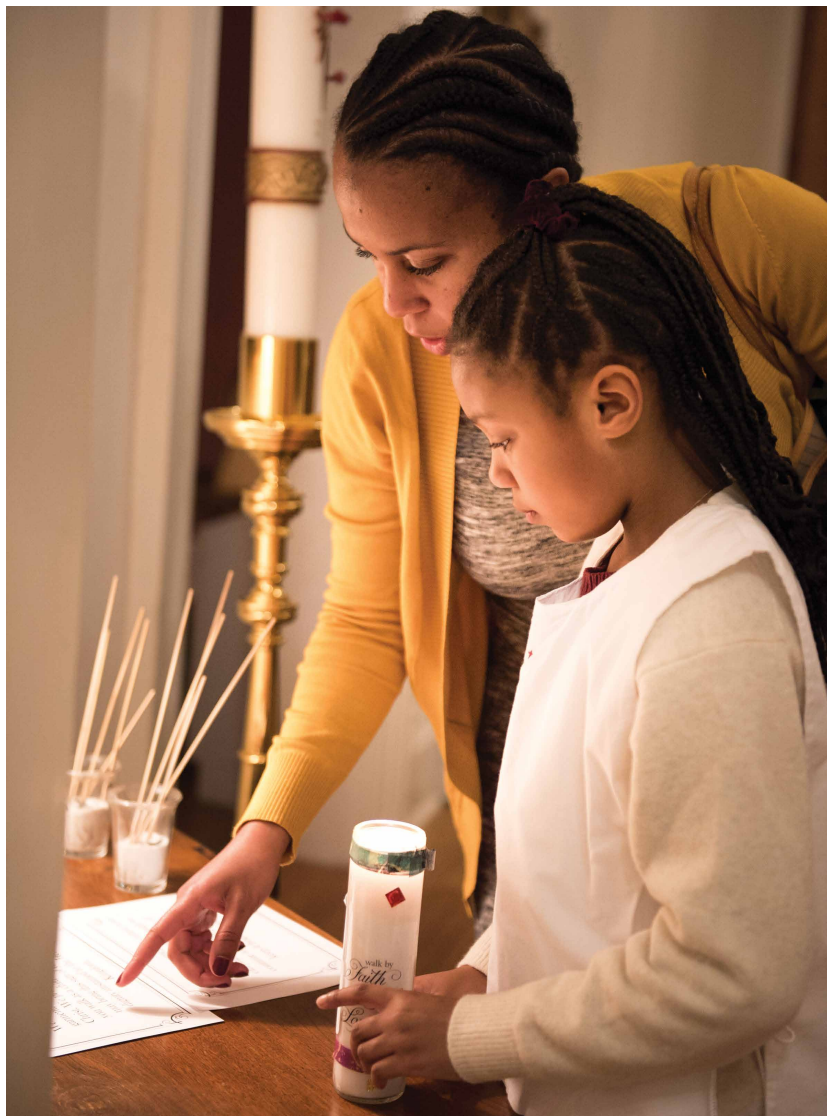
Overbrook Catholic School Earns Lumen Accreditation



Michael Simpson '30 and Patrick Simpson '31 shaking hands with Sister Marie Blanchette, O.P. on the first day of school.

Excellence at Overbrook Catholic School extends beyond the classroom. Rooted in its Catholic and Dominican mission, the school continually evaluates and strengthens its academic and spiritual formation to serve students and families at the highest level.

In 2024–25, Overbrook Catholic completed a comprehensive accreditation process through **Lumen Accreditation**, a national accrediting body associated with The Catholic University of America. Lumen Accreditation recognizes schools that demonstrate strong academic standards while also fully integrating Catholic identity and mission into every aspect of school life.



Students of all ages participate in faith formation and service projects.



STUDY RESULTS

To read more from the **Lumen Accreditation Report**, scan the QR Code.

This rigorous process included a yearlong self-study examining mission and Catholic identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality. Faculty and staff collaborated closely, reflecting on strengths, measuring effectiveness, and documenting best practices across the school community. Parents, employees, and students were also involved through surveys and feedback, reinforcing the school's culture of partnership and shared purpose.

The process concluded with a multi-day campus visit from an external team of Catholic education leaders who met with students, parents, faculty, and administrators and reviewed school programs and planning efforts. The visiting team consistently noted the joy, clarity of mission, and authentic culture of faith present throughout the school.

AMONG THEIR REFLECTIONS:

Overbrook is "unapologetically who you are" in its Catholic identity.

The school demonstrates a deep love of learning and reverence in daily practice.

Faculty and staff show a shared commitment to mission.

One teacher's words captured the culture best: *"It is my privilege to be with the children."*

The visiting team affirmed the school's strong performance across national Catholic school standards and praised progress on its current strategic plan. They also offered forward-looking recommendations to support continued growth, particularly in strengthening instructional practice, investing in faculty development, and enhancing facilities that

support faith formation and the arts.

Lumen Accreditation recognizes Overbrook Catholic School as a community where faith and reason are integrated, academic expectations are high, and students are formed in virtue, truth, and service.

With gratitude for the faculty, staff, families, and students who contributed to the process, Overbrook Catholic looks ahead with confidence, committed to continuous improvement and to forming young people for lives of purpose, leadership, and holiness.

As noted in the self-study report "With a strong desire to make heaven crowded, we cannot relax our efforts. We are in a culture war for souls and must continue our efforts to find new ways to bring the benefit of an Overbrook Catholic education to more people." ■



The Overbrook Classic Basketball tournament, hosted by the OCS Parent Association, celebrated its 40th year December 8-13, 2025.

The 3rd-4th grade girls' basketball team takes on Holy Rosary in the Classic.

40 YEARS OF THE OVERBROOK CLASSIC

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND MEMORIES



Jon Edmondson, OCS '05, stood at the free throw line. It was the final seconds of the 2004 Overbrook Classic first-round game. His little brother Josh, OCS '09, a fourth grader at the time, watched from the bleachers. The gym was silent as Jon propelled the basketball toward the basket. The game-winner sailed through the net and the buzzer blared.

"In an instant, the place exploded," Josh Edmondson remembered. "The Overbrook student section, dubbed the O-Zone back then, rushed the court, swarming the team in pure joy. I can still see it. I can still hear it."

"And I remember thinking, 'That's what I want,'" he continued. "I wanted to be the starting Overbrook point guard ... to feel that pressure, to hear that roar, to look up and see that back corner of the gym packed, loud, and ready to storm the court again."

"It was not just about winning a game. It was about being part of something bigger – a tradition, an atmosphere, a moment you never forget."

Josh got his moment and played in the tournament as a student and now he is a participating coach and athletic director for St. Matthew School, giving him a 360 view of the event.

“I hope you can tell in my voice, the joy I felt in that school. It still affects me at 70 years old.” *Herschel Lovvorn, Co-Founder of the Classic*



OCS students in the O-Zone for the first night of The Classic.

“You see these kids bond in such a short span of time, not because of wins or losses, but because they are proud to wear their school colors and compete for those who came before them,” Josh, now known as Coach Edmondson, said. “That is when you realize it’s bigger than basketball. It’s tradition. It’s community. It’s memories that last a lifetime.”

The feelings expressed by Josh rest at the heart of why Herschel Lovvorn and Steve Barrick started the basketball tournament, then called the Holiday Classic, in the early 1980s when both served as PE teachers at Overbrook.

“We wanted to do something for the school,” Mr. Lovvorn recalled. “There is something about Overbrook. It’s different. It was a joy to go to work.”

Mr. Lovvorn and Mr. Barrick decided to start a basketball tournament to kick off the winter basketball season. Their goal was to bring junior high students from other private, parochial, and public schools to-

gether to play in a fun but competitive atmosphere.

“We started it for the school; we did it for the kids,” Mr. Lovvorn said, getting a bit choked up. “I hope you can tell in my voice, the joy I felt in that school. It still affects me at 70 years old.”

The early days of the Overbrook Classic began with just one gym and eight teams. The idea of the fundraiser/tournament quickly took hold, and the tournament grew to 64 teams and three gyms (Overbrook, St. Cecilia Academy, and Aquinas College gyms) at its largest. While the number of teams and participants has ebbed and flowed throughout its 40 years, what has remained constant is its meaning to the community.

“I think it is a combination of this historic kick-off of the basketball season and a friendly tournament that people really like to be involved in,” said Mrs. Amelia Malone, one of the 2025 Overbrook Classic co-chairs. “People think it is fun, and the holidays make it nuts, but very enjoyable.”



Will Vari '26 takes his shot against Christ the King.



Irene Miles '27 and Evelyn Thallemer '27 prepare for a free throw.



Karsen Tuggle '27 speeds down the court.



The 3rd-4th grade boys' team shows good sportsmanship, shaking hands after their game.



CC Caldwell '29 shows her skills in her first Classic.

OVERBOOK CLASSIC 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

36 - teams who participated in the 40th Anniversary 2025 Overbrook Classic

13 - schools (including 1 local community group) in this year's tournament

49 - games played in 2025 to decide champions in four different divisions

1981 - Year the Holiday Classic tournament became a reality

1984 - Year the Overbrook Classic was formed as we know it today

**The Classic was not held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

“It was not just about winning a game. It was about being part of something bigger — a tradition, an atmosphere, a moment you never forget.” **Josh Edmondson '09**



LUMEN LENS

“Students and adult members of the school presented a community that is tight knit, yet very warm and welcoming to guests and newcomers.”

- From the Overbrook Catholic School Lumen Accreditation Report 2025

Sister Marie Blanchette, John Cooper, and his son Brice '29 watch the boys basketball game in awe.

“I have followed [the Classic] throughout the years, and it is a huge deal in school bonding for parents and students that make it a great event,” said Barrick, now Associate Athletic Director and Director of Facilities at Belmont University. “That campus and that job shaped who I am. It shaped my life. I absolutely love that [the Classic] is still going strong.”

“That tournament will always hold a special place in my heart — not just for the games, but for the people, the moments, and the memories made along the way,” Josh said. “What felt ordinary back then has become something truly special now — a reminder that the best memories aren’t always obvious in the moment. Sometimes, they are as simple as a basketball tournament!” ■



An OCS student shows her school spirit with the special anniversary rally towel.

40TH ANNUAL OVERBROOK CLASSIC

SEMIFINALS & CHAMPIONSHIP GAME RESULTS

3rd & 4th Grade Boys' Division

SEMIFINALS

Overbrook Gold (Group A Winner) 39 vs. 15 St. Matthew (Group B Runner-up)

Mustangs (Group B Winner) 49 vs. 4 Overbrook Blue (Group A Runner-up)

CHAMPIONSHIP

Overbrook Gold 19 vs. 46 Mustangs

3rd & 4th Grade Girls' Division

SEMIFINALS

Overbrook Gold (Group A Winner) 9 vs. 30 St. Matthew (Group B Runner-up)

Christ the King (Group B Winner) 45 vs. 3 Overbrook Blue (Group A Runner-up)

CHAMPIONSHIP

St. Matthew 8 vs. 20 Christ the King

5th & 6th Grade Boys' Division

SEMIFINALS

Overbrook Gold (Group A Winner) 39 vs. 29 St. Henry 1 (Group B Winner)

Brentwood Academy (Group C Winner) 58 vs. 33 Christ the King (Group D Winner)

CHAMPIONSHIP

Overbrook Gold 13 vs. 53 Brentwood Academy

5th & 6th Grade Girls' Division

SEMIFINALS

Overbrook Gold (Group A Winner) 15 vs. 40 St. Matthew

USN (Group B Winner) 9 vs. 29 Brentwood Academy (Group C Winner)

CHAMPIONSHIP

St. Matthew 18 vs. 15 Brentwood Academy



Sixth-grade students reflecting on ecosystems and the cyclical and important relationship between nutrients, new growth, and waste in the garden beds on the Beyond the Brook Farm.

Care for our Common Home

LIVING OUT POPE FRANCIS' LEGACY

“We asked
the students
to think not
just like scientists,
but like leaders.”

Emily Walter,
STEM Teacher

At Overbrook Catholic School, faith and formation intertwine with hands-on learning every day – but in the Fall 2025 semester, the sixth graders took that mission to a new level. As part of their STEM curriculum and their call to be good stewards of God’s creation, students embarked on a STEM capstone project focused on redesigning the school’s composting system. With curiosity, leadership, and a strong sense of mission, the students created a comprehensive proposal to revive composting on campus and make it both sustainable and educational for the entire school community.

The project grew out of a simple but im-

portant question. *How can we become better stewards of what God has given us?* From there, students examined the prior year’s composting efforts and asked what would work for Overbrook Catholic’s unique setting – a bustling cafeteria, an enthusiastic Gardening Club, students who are always eager to learn and help, and a vibrant mini-farm that could benefit directly from healthy compost.

“We asked the students to think not just like scientists,” said STEM teacher Emily Walter, “but like leaders. Who are the stakeholders? What constraints could we face? How do we work together to design something long-lasting and successful?”

“The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, God’s boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is a caress of God.” **Pope Francis**

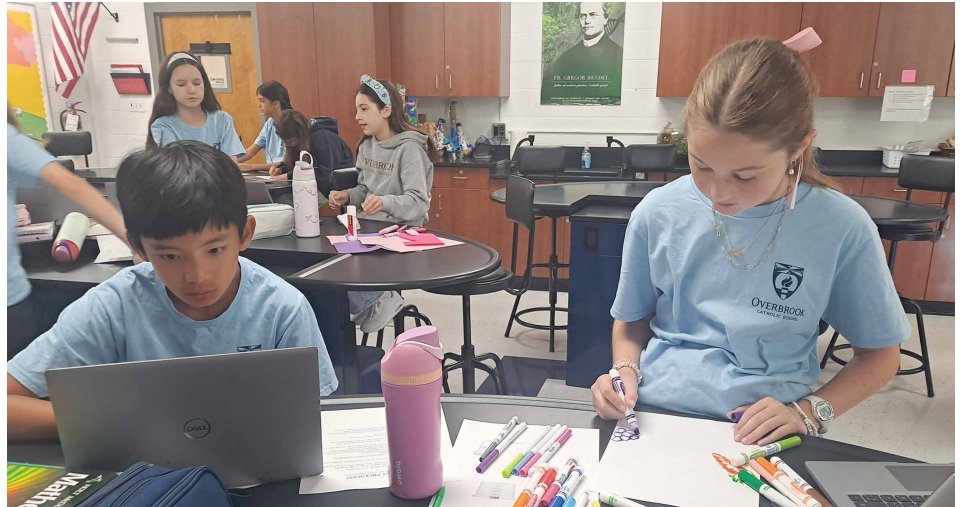
LUMEN LENS

“The faculty at OCS hold their students to high academic standards, and they are proud of the accomplishments of their students. The classrooms are places of learning and growth where students and teachers dialogue regarding the subject matter. Parents with older children were happy to share the knowledge that OCS prepares students very well for high school and beyond.”

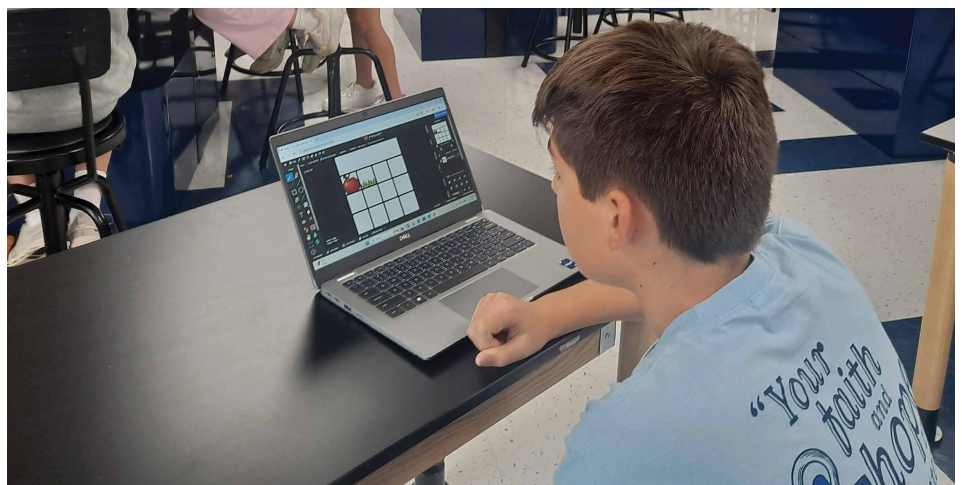
- From the Overbrook Catholic School
Lumen Accreditation Report 2025

Guided by those questions, sixth graders formed working groups to research topics ranging from composting systems and soil biology to scheduling, signage, cost feasibility, and the human behavior behind waste management. They hosted class debates, interviewed staff members, mapped traffic flow in the lunchroom, tracked waste production from the barn, and especially evaluated how the compost could support the Beyond the Brook Farm’s raised garden beds.

Over several weeks, the STEM Lab’s whiteboards transformed into a living document that was rife with diagrams, extensive research, pros and cons charts, cost breakdowns, stakeholder lists, and student-generated proposals. Each small group prepared and presented a formal plan, defending their ideas and refining them after peer feedback. Ultimately, students combined their strongest concepts into a unified class proposal: a practical, student-managed composting



Ethan Huang '26 and Avery Towns '26 collaborating in STEM class.



Parker Finley '26 using his computer skills for his STEM project.

system designed specifically for our unique needs. This system included a purchasing list full of durable, safe, and quality materials, educational materials like signage and PowerPoints that could be displayed to educate younger students on the composting process, and a reflective understanding of the ‘why’ behind it all. Throughout the process, students reflected on Pope Francis’ encyclical **Laudato Si’** and the Catholic call to care for our common home. Many shared that they wanted to guide the younger students to think of one another as members of a family and how joyful it can be to work together

for a healthier world and future.

As the proposal moves toward implementation, these students have already left a mark. They have modeled collaborative problem-solving, rooted their discussions in respect and thorough research, and demonstrated how middle-school students can lead meaningful change. The sixth graders set out to solve a problem but planted something much bigger – a renewed commitment to creation, nurtured by the hands and hearts of Overbrook Catholic School’s young leaders. ■



Students say the Pledge of Allegiance together following all-school Mass.

In Gratitude and Service

A VETERANS DAY REFLECTION AT
OVERBROOK CATHOLIC SCHOOL



On November 14, 2025, Overbrook Catholic School welcomed veterans from the community for a special Veterans Day Mass and reception, hosted by the fifth-grade class. Parents, grandparents, and family friends who have served in the U.S. military were honored for their commitment to protecting the freedoms that shape the lives of OCS students today.

The morning's featured speaker was Major Gabor Vari, father of sixth grader William Vari and a psychiatrist in the United States Army. Major Vari shared his family's remarkable journey from communist-controlled Hungary to the United States when he was just three years old—an experience that ultimately inspired his call to military service.

He explained that in communist Hungary, everyday freedoms and opportunities many Americans take for granted simply didn't exist. "When I turned three years old back in Hungary, my birthday present was a banana because they were very rare and expensive," he told students.

That detail resonated deeply with fifth-grade teacher Kesha Wall, who shared afterward that she had packed a banana in her lunch that very morning "without even thinking twice about it." Hearing Major Vari's story, she said, reframed that simple choice and reminded her of the gratitude and awareness OCS hopes to instill in its students.

Major Vari also spoke about how the United States welcomed his family as refugees, shaping his desire to serve. "The United States took a chance on me and my family," he said. "I have always felt indebted to the country for welcoming us as foreigners and giving us a chance at a better life and at the American Dream."

Speaking to students from preschool through sixth grade, he connected his personal story to a larger message of gratitude, sacrifice, and responsibility—values shared by Overbrook Catholic School.

At left, James David Bayrd '30 tries on his dad's hat.



Major Gabor Vari greets his son Will '26 with a hug before his speech.



Following Major Vari's speech, community veterans were invited to a special reception with family and friends.



"As we sit here today, comfortable and safe, remember that members of our military are deployed all over the world, away from their families, completing missions to protect us," he said. "If you only remember one thing I say today, remember this: Freedom is not free."

Reflecting on the event, Major Vari added, "It was a true honor to speak to the Overbrook Catholic School community this Veterans Day. The entire experience, including having my son William introduce me, is a memory I will cherish forever. Thank you, Overbrook, for supporting veterans."

Following Major Vari's speech, all veterans in the congregation were invited to stand for a special blessing before moving to the dining hall for the reception hosted by the fifth graders. Families, friends, and neighbors in the Overbrook Catholic School community enjoyed a delicious breakfast provided by OCS' dining partner, City Kitchen. Stories and laughs were shared as students had the opportunity to learn more about the different branches and duties of the United States military. Through conversation and connection, students were reminded that love for God and country calls us to gratitude, service, and remembrance, and that freedom should never be taken for granted. ■

“I hope people felt renewed in zeal and love for the gift of the

Sister Dominic, O.P., President of Overbrook



Walking with Christ in the Jubilee Year of Hope

More than 500 faithful attended the Dominican Campus Eucharistic Procession and Mass on Saturday, September 6, 2025. Overbrook Catholic School, St. Cecilia Academy, and Aquinas College hosted the community event on their 83-acre campus to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope.

“On the Dominican Campus, we want to provide meaningful faith opportunities for our families who desire to pass the faith on to their children, and this was one way to support our families in that effort,” said

Sister Dominic, O.P., president of Overbrook Catholic School and St. Cecilia Academy. “Worshiping God at Mass and adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament are not just ways of demonstrating our faith, but of deepening it for us individually and communally.”

Father Luke Wilgenbusch, director of vocations for the Diocese of Nashville, celebrated the Mass with Father Rhodes Bolster ’07 serving as master of ceremonies, and seminarians from the Nashville Diocese attending. During his homily, Father Wilgenbusch

invited all to deepen their faith through participation in the Eucharist.

Following the Mass, those in attendance processed with the Eucharist through the Dominican Campus, ending on the White House lawn. As Father Wilgenbusch processed with Jesus in the monstrance throughout the 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.

Eucharist,”

Catholic School and St. Cecilia Academy



There was time for personal prayer once the monstrance was placed on the temporary altar on the White House front porch, where Father Wilgenbusch delivered benediction. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed live music and a picnic dinner brought from home, or they took advantage of food trucks.

“I hope people felt renewed in zeal and love for the gift of the Eucharist,” said Sister Dominic, O.P. “I hope that our families felt that picnicking together on the lawn and enjoying a ‘concert in the park’ somehow carried with it a deeper joy for having it all rooted in our relationship with Christ.”

This year’s celebration built on the Eucharistic Procession held on the Dominican Campus in 2023, which was a cherished gathering for campus families. Both celebrations fostered a profound sense of spiritual community and devotion among participants. ■





Beth Robinson presents the Relic of St. Thérèse to Sister Marie Celine, O.P.'s Montessori class.

Called to be Saints



Shep Smith '30 dressed as St. Dominic, Overbrook Catholic's patron saint, for the 2nd Grade Gallery of Saints.

In an age where children are inundated with ideas of who the world says they should be, there is clarity to be found in Jesus' words to the Father, *"They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth"* (John 17:16-7). At Overbrook Catholic School, our mission is not only to prepare students for life on earth, but for eternal life. Every aspect of school life is shaped by this conviction: each child is called to be a saint. Through daily encounters with Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, students are guided to seek and embrace Jesus Christ, preparing both mind and heart to joyfully witness to the truth in their own lives.

This call to holiness is lived in an age-appropriate way, beginning with the youngest students. For a young child, the little things shape the rhythm of the day, and St. Thérèse's philosophy, *"Do little things with great love,"* resonate naturally. Young children, keenly aware of their own littleness, are instinctively drawn to a saint who found holiness not

in extraordinary acts, but in simple, loving fidelity.

In the Fall 2025 semester, this love for St. Thérèse came vividly to life when Beth Robinson brought a relic of the saint, belonging to her prayer group, to Sister Marie Celine, O.P.'s Montessori class, where her son Liam is enrolled. She came on St. Thérèse's feast day, October 1, and placed the relic in a beautiful reliquary. Together, Beth and Sister Marie Celine explained that venerating a relic allows us to ask St. Thérèse to pray for us. They demonstrated how to venerate it, by kissing it or making the sign of the cross, and then invited each child to take a turn. True to the spontaneous loving devotion of this age, most children chose to hug the relic. After several children had their turn, the entire class knelt without prompting, and the room was filled with a quiet, holy peace. The children then walked to the statue of St. Thérèse outside the St. Cecilia chapel before returning to their activities.

Moments like this reflect a deeper truth about the human person. Made of body and soul, each person possesses an inherent dignity and worth, a dignity raised even higher by the Incarnation, when God became man. The Church venerates the relics of saints because their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit, united to Christ in His mystical body, and now, in Heaven, they intercede for us. Even at a young age, children intuitively grasp this reverence and are drawn toward holiness through wonder, love, and trust.

As students grow, Overbrook Catholic continues to nurture this love for the saints through enduring traditions that deepen understanding and devotion. Each year, as the Church prepares to celebrate All Saints Day on November 1, second graders create a Gallery of Saints for the school community. Students research a saint, write and memorize a short biographical script, and share the saint's life and witness. This project strengthens awareness of the communion of saints and inspires all who encounter it to pursue holiness.

From their earliest lessons in religion class and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, stu-



William Alexiou '28 poses for his "I am called to be a Saint" photo.

"Do little things
with great love."

**St. Mother Teresa,
influenced by St. Thérèse**

dents are prepared for this experience, and many arrive in second grade already familiar with a variety of saints. Second-grade teacher Sister Laura Immaculata, O.P., explains, "My role is to help deepen this knowledge into love and devotion, sharing personal stories of saints. For example, many of my students heard how St. Cecilia helped me to sing at my sister's wedding when I had laryngitis!"

The Gallery of Saints also extends beyond the classroom and into family life. While research begins at school, much of the preparation happens at home, allowing children to learn about saints alongside their parents and, often, to hear stories of saints their parents love. Beyond the Gallery project, second graders continue studying saints in preparation for First Reconciliation. Saints are no longer distant or idealized figures; students learn that they, too, were sinners who relied on God's grace. From this perspective, sainthood becomes not only possible, but the natural calling of every Christian.

LUMEN LENS

"Overbrook Catholic School forms students for human flourishing in the freedom and joy that flow from knowledge of the Truth, integrating faith and reason, and cultivating virtue through a coherent vision of the human person. Religion is taught daily and with rigor...Across subjects, teachers intentionally teach with a Catholic worldview so that students learn to apply faith and reason to real questions."

- From the Overbrook Catholic School
Lumen Accreditation Report 2025

By fourth grade, this calling is named explicitly through the theme, "*I am called to be a saint!*" a tradition begun by former fourth-grade teacher Sister Mary Judith, O.P., and continued by Sister Abigail Thérèse, O.P. Throughout the year, students study the moral life within the context of God's desire to love, save, and sanctify them. Early in the school year, Sister Abigail Thérèse presents the ultimate goal clearly: Heaven. "I tell them that God wants to make them His friends," she explains, "and that means He wants to make them saints."

Students begin the year by having their photo taken in front of a large bulletin-board halo, surrounded by images of canonized saints. These photos are pasted on the front of their Religion notebooks, so that every time they open them, they are reminded that they are saints in the making.

Throughout the year, fourth graders explore the faculties of the human soul, the intellect and the will, discovering how God made them good, and how sin weakens and darkens the heart. They learn that sin is a turning



Sixth-grade teacher Erin Olbon integrates the lives of the saints into history lessons.

“Students are eager to learn how virtue frees them from sin and guides them to the joyful life of grace with God, beginning here on earth.” **Sister Abigail Thérèse**

away from God, but that He never abandons them, always offering the grace needed to become saints. The Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, and Works of Mercy are not rules, but pathways to a deep and transforming friendship with God. The monthly Virtues in Practice program is integrated into their studies, helping students see how virtue enlightens the mind, strengthens the will, and orders the emotions. As Sister Abigail Thérèse notes, “Students are eager to learn how growing in virtue frees them from sin and guides them to the joyful life of grace with God, beginning here on earth.”

In sixth grade, students step more fully into their role as leaders of the school community and grow increasingly aware that their example influences younger schoolmates. This stage of formation continues through the study of history, literature, and the moral life in their Humanities classes, where discussions of saints, virtue, ethics, and moral decision-making are intentionally woven into the curriculum. Saints are presented not only as holy models, but also as real his-

torical figures who faced complex choices and lived out virtue in challenging circumstances. As students encounter great works of literature and pivotal historical events, they are invited to examine character, courage, sacrifice, and responsibility, and to reflect on how their own daily choices can express Christlike leadership.

Sixth-grade teacher Erin Olbon intentionally connects saints to the historical periods her students study, in history and literature, helping students see how holy leadership shapes both the Church and the world. When learning about the Middle Ages, students discuss St. Catherine of Siena and her courageous advocacy for the end of the Avignon Papacy and the return of the pope to Rome, along with the witness of St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi in responding to widespread heresy and calling others back to the truth of the Church’s teaching. During units on the Counter Reformation, students examine St. Ignatius of Loyola and the founding of the Jesuit order, exploring how missionary zeal and intellectual forma-

tion helped spread Christianity throughout the world. Through these examples, sixth graders are challenged to see leadership not simply as influence or authority, but as service rooted in truth, virtue, and fidelity — a model they are encouraged to practice within the school community each day.

At Overbrook Catholic, education goes far beyond academics. It is about forming children to live as God’s beloved, strengthening them in faith, and preparing them to share His light with the world. The Montessori class’s encounter with St. Thérèse’s relic, the second-grade Gallery of Saints, the fourth-grade saint project, and the sixth-grade integration of saints and virtue into Humanities studies are not isolated moments, but part of a continuous journey toward holiness. Through reverence, wonder, family engagement, virtue, and daily practice, sainthood is made tangible. Overbrook students come to know that holiness is attainable, joyful, and rooted in their dignity as children of God. It is our hope that these seeds of holiness will bear fruit in time, and in eternity. ■

2024-25 Highlights

The 2024–25 school year called us to move with purpose. Rooted in the theme “Run so as to win,” our community learned what it means to persevere with intention—balancing discipline and grace as we encouraged one another to pursue excellence in faith, learning, and character.

CLASS OF 2025

Congratulations to the Class of 2025, who excelled in academics and athletics while exemplifying virtuous leadership.

Faith formation included a leadership retreat at the start of the school year and the opportunity to lead the entire school in praying the rosary.

The sixth-grade math team was the first OCS team to take home 1st place from the MBA Math Invitational. In the MTSU Middle Grades Math Competition, Will Gaston placed 3rd and Evelyn Clark placed 13th overall, against all sixth-grade students competing.

The sixth-grade girls’ basketball team clinched the title of Champions at the Coach Cat Classic. Sophie Schoch and Kinsley Tuggle were honored as All-Tournament team members. The team was also top-5 in the HVAC and Overbrook Classic Championships.



ACADEMICS

MATH

Five of our MathCOUNTS students from the class of 2026 participated in the annual MBA sixth grade Math Invitational. The team members were Ethan Huang, Roan Barbour, Benedict Ancell, Patrick Greenfield, and Shaw Weidman. In the individual competition, Benedict placed third overall. In the team competition, Overbrook Catholic placed 2nd overall. **2025-26**

ATHLETICS

TENNIS

Fifth and sixth grade competed in the HVAC's first tennis season, returning tennis to OCS athletics for the first time since the 2022-23 school year. **2024-25**



CROSS COUNTRY

2024-25 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP:

Elementary Girls: Ruthie Cromwell - All State Runner - 22nd of 309 runners

JV Elementary Boys: Joshua Farris - JV All State Runner - 14th of 90 runners

Elementary Boys: TEAM RESULTS - 4th of 30 qualified teams

Ben Stempel - All State Runner - 16th place of 335 runners - PR of 5:41 Mile

Team Scorers: Grant Enstice (5:58 mile time), Ethan Huang, Cassian Bobos, Andrew Cheffers - all in top 100 and under 6:20 minute miles

Wilson Songy, Brooks Malone, Luke Neu, and Max Kierlin also ran and posted 7-minute miles or under.

FALL 2025 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP:

Ben Stempel and Grant Enstice earned All State Honors.

Elementary Boys' Varsity: 3rd Place

Elementary Girls' Varsity: 14th Place

Elementary Boys' Junior Varsity: 6th Place

Ethan Huang: 18th overall 6th grader

Tristan Simpson: 31st overall 6th grader

FINE ARTS



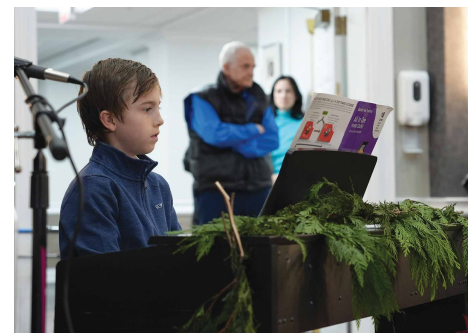
FORENSICS

The Overbrook Catholic Forensic Team comprised 24 members who had a banner year at the nine tournaments in which they competed. Overall, the team won 67 individual awards and two Sweepstakes team awards. **2024-25**



MUSIC RECITAL

Students taking private lessons with OCS music teacher, Mrs. Marcina Hayden, visited Mary, Queen of Angels to share the joy of music for their winter recital. Songs in various styles were performed with both piano and voice. **2025-26**



OCS TALENT

The OCS Parent Association hosted the first Eagle Acts Talent Show in the spring of 2025, and the new tradition continued in the fall. **2024-25**



SUZUKI VIOLIN GROUP

Suzuki violin group played the National Anthem at the Nashville Sounds baseball game sharing their talent with the greater Nashville community. **2024-25**

FAITH



RELICS OF PADRE PIO

Relics of St. Padre Pio visited OCS offering students a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this great saint.



SCHOOL ROSARY

OCS celebrated the month of the Holy Rosary with a school-wide 20-decade paper rosary. OCS families, faculty, and staff were each represented on a bead and prayed for by students in their visits to the chapel. **2025-26**

COMMUNITY

Overbrook Catholic School was voted back-to-back Best Private School, Best Preschool, and Best Elementary School in *The Nashville Scene's* Best of Nashville. **2024-25**

CARNIVAL NIGHT

The OCS Parent Association hosted Carnival Night for 600+ in the community. **2024-25**



TWO NEW SHEEP

Beyond the Brook Farm welcomed two Swiss Valais sheep: Aggie and Maggie. The two new sheep join Cosmas and Damian on the farm. **2024-25**

INFLUENTIAL TEACHER RECOGNITION



Mrs. Herman, Mrs. Lynch, and Mrs. Grytza were each nominated by their former OCS students for MBA's Influential Teacher recognition. **2024-25**



Mrs. Wall was nominated by former OCS students Connot McMillen '25, Will Gaston '25, and George Stempel '25, for MBA's Influential Teacher Recognition. **2025-26**

PARENT ASSOCIATION

The Parent Association began hosting monthly Morning Mingles to foster friendships between families. **2025-26**



Partnering to Advance the Mission

The Overbrook Catholic School community — parents, grandparents, alumni, parents of alumni, foundations, corporate sponsors, and friends — plays a vital role in ensuring that Overbrook Catholic continues to offer exceptional academic preparation grounded in faith formation.

Opportunities to support the school include:

THE ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Fund is the cornerstone of Overbrook's development program and its highest fundraising priority. Together with tuition and endowment earnings, it provides essential revenue for the school's annual operating budget. As the primary source of unrestricted support, The Annual Fund helps bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating each student.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Overbrook hosts a variety of events to generate support while strengthening community engagement. Many of these events seek underwriting support and invite broad participation from the entire school community.

ENDOWMENT GIFTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

A gift to the endowment is an investment in both the present and the future of OCS. Endowed funds are held in perpetuity, with a portion of annual earnings supporting the school each year. Overbrook Catholic's endowment funds benefit general operations, tuition assistance, the library, the forensics program, and learning support. Named endowed funds include:

- General Endowment Fund

- Class of 2007 Endowment Fund
- Carolyn Baker Forensics Endowment
- McDougall Library Endowment
- Darrell K. Posey Endowment for Tuition Assistance
- Amy M. Willett Scholarship Endowment Fund
- Overbrook School Facility Maintenance Endowment
- St. Martin de Porres Scholarship Fund
- Brian Meehan Endowment for Learning Support
- Dale H. Nichols Scholarship Fund

CAPITAL GIFTS AND SPECIAL PROJECT SUPPORT

Gifts designated for capital needs, facility enhancements, renovations, and special projects strengthen Overbrook Catholic's campus and academic programs. These contributions ensure the school continues to meet the needs of its students now and for generations to come.

PLANNED GIVING

Remembering and planning for Overbrook Catholic in estate planning offers donors the opportunity to make a meaningful and lasting impact while realizing potential tax advantages. Common planned

giving vehicles include bequests through a will or trust, life insurance policies, and naming the school as a beneficiary of a retirement account. Such gifts may be designated for the endowment or another purpose and help ensure the long-term financial vitality of Overbrook Catholic School.

HOW TO GIVE:

- Make an outright gift with cash, check, or credit card

- For online giving, please scan the QR code (right) or visit overbrook.edu/giving



- Make a pledge
- Ask your company about their matching gift program to increase your support
- Donate stocks, securities, life insurance, or other assets
- Give through a donor-advised fund
- Give through your IRA
- Include Overbrook Catholic School in your estate plans

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT



We are grateful to the generous benefactors who support our school. Please scan the QR code to read

LEARN MORE

We welcome the opportunity to share funding priorities and connect your generosity to impact. Please contact the development office at **615.383.3230 ext. 397**, visit overbrook.edu/giving or email Sharon Huber at hubers@dominican-campus.org.

“Our children are very prepared academically and socially for upper school and college. But what we appreciate most about Overbrook are the values they learn throughout their school day... Overbrook provides a good foundation of our faith and values that our children take with them throughout life.” **Niche Review**





ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Marc Stengel '70

Decades after calling Overbrook Catholic School home, Marc Stengel '70 remains deeply connected to the community that shaped his earliest years. Over time, he has served on the Development Committee and the Steering Committee for the most recent strategic growth plan, cochairing the Advancement Planning Team. Marc and his wife, Terry, are former OCS parents who generously support many Overbrook Catholic initiatives.

Marc attended Overbrook through fourth grade before following his mother to Ensworth, where she taught French. He attended Montgomery Bell Academy, Harvard College, Vanderbilt University, and the Brooks Institute of Photography.

A successful real estate developer, Marc is president of Kermit C. Stengel Co. and managing general partner of Ridgefield Properties, a real estate development and investment holding company. However, his professional life has extended far beyond real estate. Guided by what he calls a “give it a whirl” philosophy, Marc has pursued a wide range of creative and intellectual endeavors.

Earlier in his career, he helped launch *Road Test Magazine* on TNN: The Nashville Network, serving as producer and on-air reporter for nine seasons. He later became the first producer of *Motor Trend Television*, served as the original television producer for ESPN's *American Shooter*, and was the inaugural editor of *Mississippi Valley Brewing News*.

In 2005, Marc founded Historix Editions®, a publishing company dedicated to translating select Welsh-language works into English for the first time – a project reflecting his deep appreciation for Welsh culture. An accomplished writer, his work has appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The [London] Spectator*, the *Nashville Scene*, and other publications. His nationally syndicated automotive column, “What I’m Driving At,” ran from 1996 to 2011. He has also served as automotive editor for *Executive Traveler* magazine and other periodicals.

In 2024, Marc founded Wasioto Restoration Co. LLC, dedicated to preserving historic structures in Gainesboro, Tennessee, at the heart of the Upper Cumberland region of Western Appalachia.

“...Overbrook encouraged me to try new things and keep an open mind...I still feel that Overbrook encouragement: ‘Go ahead — give it a whirl’.” **Marc Stengel ’70**

Marc also gives generously of his time and leadership beyond Overbrook Catholic. He is a former board member of the Friends of Radnor Lake State Natural Area; current president of the Friends of Cordell Hull Lake in Tennessee’s Upper Cumberland region; and serves on the boards of the Adventure Science Center, the Sudekum Planetarium Memorial Trust, Montgomery Bell Academy, and The Røros Foundation.

Marc and Terry have three daughters who attended Overbrook Catholic – Mary ’99, Morgan ’01, and Sara ’05. Marc’s younger brothers, Christian ’73 and Eric ’75, are also alumni. Their parents, Suzanne and Kermit, made a choice decades ago that began a meaningful, multi-generational Overbrook Catholic legacy – one that continues to flourish through Marc’s dedication and example.

The Brook asked Marc about his years at Overbrook Catholic, the impact they had on him, and his thoughts about OCS today.

Q: How would you describe your time at Overbrook?

A: I have only the fondest of memories of my time at Overbrook, even allowing for the passage of 60 years since I left at the end of fourth grade. It was an especially formative time for me, and certain foundations laid then have endured unshaken to this day.

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

A: Two indelible memories recur often: my weekly piano lessons with Sister Anastasia, and the all-school spring celebrations – either the Visitation or the Annunciation – held outdoors at the shrine of Our Lady.

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

A: From the perspective of later life, my most vivid recollections are the joy of learning to read fluently and of “cracking the code” of algebra. I still remember the delight I felt in second grade when I realized that a letter could represent a number – when I understood that if $A + 7 = 10$, then A must equal 3. My world seemed to crack open like a beautiful golden egg.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher and why?

A: I very much enjoyed being in the third-grade class of Mrs. Dittenhafer, but my favorite teacher was Sister Camille in second grade. She ignited my love of reading and mathematics and gently pushed me to tackle increasingly difficult reading challenges. She also gave me a memorable lesson in diction when she finally corrected me of my habit of calling out, “S’t, S’t...” by reminding me, “I’m not a spoon, and you can’t stir me.” I’ve carefully enunciated “Sister” ever since.

Q: How was Overbrook formative to you as a person?

A: Two concepts come to mind: free will and respect for order. Overbrook instilled in me a strong sense of personal responsibility for my choices – the good and the bad. It also impressed upon me the importance of ritual and structure through the life of the Church. First Communion, Confession, and Confirmation were deeply meaningful to me, as was the rhythm of the liturgical calendar. Even today, I remain fascinated by the Church’s cycles and traditions, first encountered through my well-worn Marian Missal.

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

A: To a first through fourth grader, the future feels far away. But in hindsight, Overbrook encouraged me to try new things and keep an open mind. Over seven decades, I’ve tried many distinct professional lives and embraced even more avocations. I’m not finished yet. I still feel that Overbrook encouragement: “Go ahead – give it a whirl.”

Q: Why did you decide to send your children to Overbrook?

A: Terry and I made the decision without hesitation. In an increasingly secular world, we felt it was important for our daughters to be introduced to the Roman Catholic faith early. Each has since found her own spiritual path, but I believe the foundation they built during their years at Overbrook has been lasting and meaningful. They are happy, thriving young women, and Overbrook is a significant reason why.

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

A: It depends on the question. Academically, Overbrook’s instruction rivals the best in Nashville. Spiritually, the Dominican community and the broader St. Cecilia Congregation campus are among the most caring and encouraging groups I know, devoted to nurturing young people into confident adults and young souls into grace and self-knowledge. And if the question is simply about the campus – well, just look at it. It’s beautiful.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: Only my best wishes for the continued success of the mission and many initiatives of the Dominican Campus. And, of course, my heartfelt thanks: *Thank you, Overbrook, for all you have meant to me and all you have done for me.* ■

ALUMNI NEWS

1/ Sydney Cook Crider '17 married Ayden Crider on July 18, 2025. She and Ayden plan to relocate to California near San Diego. Sydney credits Sister Marie Blanchette for inspiring her love of art, and Overbrook for helping her learn and thrive.

2/ Susannah French Gentry '82 was honored in July 2025 with the Golden Achievement Award from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) in Washington, D.C., for leading the Franklin Special District's district-wide rebranding initiative to modernize its logo and clarify its mission. The award recognized the 18-month campaign, which reached every major touchpoint – campuses, district assets, digital platforms, and employee and student materials – and helped spark the overarching vision for the district's new five-year strategic plan.

3/ Melissa True Firebaugh '85 was recently featured as the Employee Spotlight in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center News. After working as a photojournalist for years, Melissa pivoted her career to nursing. She has been happily working at Monroe Carell Children's Hospital for more than 21 years. To read the full article, please visit <https://bit.ly/melvumc>

4/ Megan Tanner Roland '00 was inducted into the Nashville Catholic Middle School Forensics League Hall of Fame, during the League's 35th year.

5/ Josh Edmonson '09 was named the new athletic director of the Diocesan Athletic Conference. He also serves as the St. Matthew School athletic director. He vividly remembers attending the Overbrook Classic even before he was old enough to play. Now as a coach, he has learned how team sports develop the skills needed by young athletes to be successful both in the classroom and in life. He works to instill a faith-based athletic mindset that prioritizes treating everyone with respect, both on and off the field.

6/ Reed Robinson '14 was ordained to the transitional diaconate in Rome, Italy, Oct. 2, 2025. Several family members and friends



from Overbrook were in attendance for the special event. He continues his studies at the Pontifical North American College.

7/ Bennie Bonadies '22 will continue her cross country and track and field career at Emory University.

Sam Coplan '22 performed internationally with Music City Strings during the group's tour to Alicante, Valencia, and Barcelona. Sam was one of just 15 students selected to travel with the ensemble and performed in four concerts across the three cities. Music City Strings is recognized as one of the top educational string-performance programs in the nation, dedicated to offering classes, workshops, and public performances to promote high-level music education for students in Middle Tennessee. Sam was also selected to perform as part of the All-State Honors Orchestra.

Charlotte Crosslin '22 earned the Eagle Scout Award. Charlotte co-founded the first all-female troop in Middle Tennessee, and she was one of the first female Cub Scouts to earn the Arrow of Light in the state of Tennessee. The Arrow of Light is Cub Scouts' highest rank.



ALUMNI NEWS HAVE AN ALUMNI UPDATE? LET US KNOW AT [OVERBROOK.EDU/ALUMNI](https://overbrook.edu/alumni)



8/ Maggie Crosslin '22 set numerous St. Cecilia Academy school records in cross country and finished first as the TSSAA Division II State Class A Champion. As a multi-sport athlete, she also qualified for the Regional Championship in swimming (100 breaststroke). Maggie signed her letter of intent to continue her cross country and track and field career at the University of Miami.

9/ Alle Epstein '22 was named to the TSSAA All-District III Team for the fall 2025 soccer season. Alle also set the St. Cecilia Academy single season record for goals scored, with 11 goals.

Alle Epstein '22 and Kristen Tumanda '22 were awarded the 2025 Student Visionaries of the Year by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. As leaders of St. Cecilia Academy's Fight for Life team, they were honored at the Nashville LLS Grand Finale for raising more than \$100,000 to support the fight against blood cancers – the largest amount generated by any group in Nashville and across Tennessee.

Amelia Keller '22 was named a National Merit Commended Scholar by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Commended Scholars are recognized for scoring in the top three percent nationwide on the PSAT test.

10/ Caroline Perri '22 has committed to continue her athletic and academic career at the University of Notre Dame. At Father Ryan High School, she set school records in the long jump, high jump and pentathlon. In addition to track, Caroline competed on the varsity cross country, soccer and swim teams, while also being a Hayes Scholar.

Natalie Petroni '22 has been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a National Merit Commended Scholar. She received this recognition for scoring in the top three percent nationwide on the PSAT test

11/ Catherine Norvell Sinks '01 and her husband Adam, welcomed their third baby, Mary William Norvell Sinks. "Mary Will" was born on November 1, 2024. She is joined by brother, Owen, and sister, Parker.



12/ Eliza Nagle Ward '06 and her husband, Brian welcomed Michael James to the family on June 12, 2025. Big sister Madeline Marie is also happy about the new addition.

13/ Allie Saxon Noote '09 and her husband, Daniel, welcomed their third son, John Michael, on June 23, 2025.

14/ Chloe Wall Kent '10 and husband, Matthew, welcomed Daphne Mae Kent to their family on September 28, joining big sister, Francine.

Caroline Eastgate Blaha '12 and her husband Justin are pleased to share that Charles Walburn was born on July 16, 2025.

15/ Lauren Cianiolo Walker '12 and her husband Ben welcomed Etheredge Walker on June 10, 2025.



Memorials

ALUMNI

James Frazer,
Class of 1952

Margaret Brown Anderton,
Class of 1955

Ernest 'Pete' Sutherland,
Class of 1957

Pamela Hobbs Wood,
Class of 1959

Daniel Hannon,
Class of 1975

*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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