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Painted tigers, a wedding, off to college – both undergrad and grad school – and more!

THE UTOPIAN

Fall 2017 | Newsletter of Saint Thomas More A Catholic School in the Jesuit Tradition

“Finding God in All Things”



“

I see God in the root beer brown eyes of a little golden doodle who dances, prances, and barks making kids with little in their lives smile, if only for a moment.

”

–Heather Upton

Mrs. Upton and her therapy dog, Ginger, doing “More” for others

I have an amazing dog who brings SO much joy into the world. I have trained Ginger as a therapy dog. We used to work in hospitals and nursing homes. It was fine. Last summer, we did some work at a summer camp for children with Autism. It was amazing. We now spend our Saturdays at the Department of Juvenile Justice in Dekalb and Rockdale. Here we spend time with young men, ranging from 12–17 who have committed crimes serious enough to warrant incarceration. Their lives have not been pretty or privileged. They spend their days in tiny rooms, in matching jumpsuits, surrounded by steel and cinder block. They have very little joy in their days.

When Ginger and I walk in the room, their faces light up with joy. You can see the KIDS behind the tattoos and despair. I sit and talk about Ginger and how you can interact with dogs. Often I hear stories about their dogs at home and how they can't wait to go home and try some of the training tips (who knows when they will go home). They pet and cuddle and gaze into my sweet doggie's eyes. You can FEEL the weight being lifted off their soul. She KNOWS which boys to flirt with and which ones just need a neck to scratch. At one visit, Ginger curled up around a TEN year old boy who was huddled on the floor in tears. She just enveloped him and nuzzled until he stopped crying. Then she played with him until he was laughing.

As a school in the Jesuit tradition, we teach our students about how we can see God everywhere. I wholly and fully believe this. I see God every time I walk into that heart-wrenching facility. I see God in the path that brought me to where I am. I see God in how fortunate I am that I have the ability to take time to go out and share Ginger with those who really just need a dog to cuddle. I see God in the root beer brown eyes of a little golden doodle who dances, prances, and barks making kids with little in their lives smile, if only for a moment. God is good.

Heather Upton is a kindergarten teacher at STM. She and Ginger trained at Atlanta Pet Partners. www.atlantapetpartners.org

NEWSWORTHY



STM's Health teacher, Ms. O'Shea, on a mission

Our St. Thomas More community supports the Missionaries of the Poor (MOP) and the great work being done throughout the world by these humble and devout Brothers. Their sole purpose in life is to build family and community among the poorest of the poor, disabled and disadvantaged. The MOP mission states — Joyful Service with Christ on the Cross. The Kingston, Jamaica mission provides homes and support for over 500 poor and disabled men, women and children.

STM sends a team of volunteers to Kingston every year to do hands-on mission work. We stay with the Brothers for five to seven days and work side by side with them each day. We serve the residents by helping them bathe, cleaning their living quarters, changing their diapers, feeding them, singing with them, praying with them, and loving them in everything they do.

The residents are loved and they know it!!

The missionary volunteers are energized by the prayers and support we receive from our STM school and parish family. As we made up the cribs at the orphanage, we were so thankful for the new crib mattresses that were donated by our STM parishioners. How rewarding it was knowing that so much of the food that we fed the residents each day, arrived directly from our STM food collections! God is good—and STM is generous!

I am so blessed to be part of STM and our MOP volunteer team. We always return home with a renewed faith and love for the poor. The Brothers always remind us that our MOP work is simple, but powerful. As St. Theresa of Calcutta said, "We cannot do great things in this world, but we can only do small things with great love."

Alumni gatherings and events



In May, we welcomed the **STM Class of 2013** for an Alumni Reception. The alumni enjoyed reuniting with one another and visiting with their former STM teachers and staff one last time before heading off to college.



Members of the **STM Class of 2014** on their last day of the Life Teen summer mission trip to Knoxville, TN.



Bill Rappold, STM 1955, and **Albert Vagi, STM 1955**, visited STM in May and took a tour of the school as well as a trip down memory lane as they shared stories with each other about their years as students here.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Adam Crawford, STM 2009, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Georgia College and State University majoring in Fine Arts. Adam recently ‘spray’ painted a tiger on one of the city’s traffic signal boxes for the Decatur Box Project. He was also hired by the city of Milledgeville to design, build, and curate the city’s Deep Roots Festival Live Art Installation. Adam was selected for two additional painting projects: the river walk bridge for Macon Arts Alliance’s East-West Art Walk Project and an image on a downtown utility box for the City of Atlanta. **A**

The Dunn Brothers: **Robert Dunn, STM 2004**, is a research scientist with Geosyntec in Kennesaw and was married in July 2017. **Erik Dunn, STM 2007**, is working as a nurse at Emory. **Kevin Dunn, STM 2001**, is working as an anesthesiologist PA in Jacksonville, FL. **B**

Annabella Farabaugh, STM 2012, received an early appointment to the United States Coast Guard Academy in November of 2015. Soon afterwards, Annabella tore her ACL during of the State High School playoffs. The injury required surgery, so she was granted a rare deferment. She began rehabilitation and won a 5K just 52 days post-surgery! At Georgia Tech (where she took the classes to insure her deferment), she trained and competed in a triathlon and marathon. In addition, she went on a mission trip with Georgia Tech to Puebla Mexico to build wells. Annabella reported to USCGA in June 2017 where she will be playing basketball. **C**

Meghann Girard, STM 2007, married Edmund Kozak of Montclair, NJ on June 3, 2017 in Bristol, Maine. The wedding party consisted of Meghann’s brother, Patrick (STM 2010) who was the Man of Honor and Ed’s brother who was the Best Man. The couple resides in Washington, D.C. Meghann is currently working at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum doing conservation work and Ed is a political writer. **D**

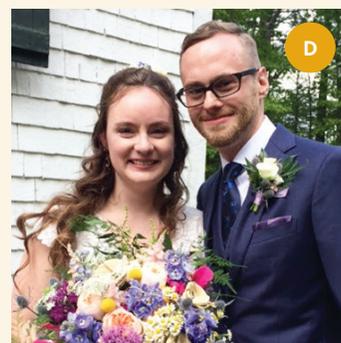
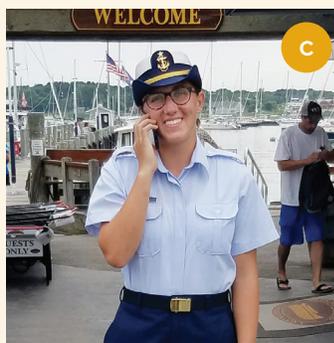
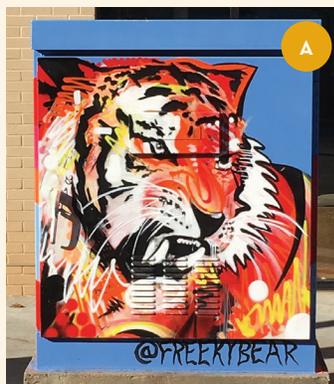
Patrick Girard, STM 2010, is a senior at Haverford College near Philadelphia where he has been playing lacrosse. He will be the team captain for the second year in the upcoming season.

Harper Greer, STM 2013, is attending Reinhardt University on full scholarship – lacrosse and academic – where she plans to study Physical Therapy. While attending Decatur High School, she was in the dual enrollment program and received an Associate’s Degree in Network Systems Administration before graduating. **E**

Faith Heyl, STM 2012 and STM Spanish Teacher, Senora Stierlen, competed in the Callaway Gardens Sprint Triathlon and Duathlon in June. Faith placed second in her age group and is starting her sophomore year at Auburn University where she is a member of the tri team. **F**

Charlie Hickey, STM 2009, was named outstanding sculpture graduate at Winthrop University, earning his BFA in Fine Arts with sculpture concentration. After graduating, he was hired as weekend studio manager at the Carving Studio and Sculpture Center in West Rutland, Vermont. He recently began graduate studies at Syracuse University, having received the highest level of scholarship awarded to SU graduate students. Charlie’s work focuses on the negative effects of hyper-masculinity in modern culture.

Liam Pickard, STM 2008, was commissioned as second lieutenant in the Army this past Spring. Alison Denzer-King, STM 2008, and Liam have been friends since 7th grade at STM. Alison flew in from NYC to perform the honor of pinning on his rank insignia. **G**



Are you an alumni or parent of an alum with news? Please email amurphey@stmga.org so that we can share it in our next newsletter!



Save and give at the same time!

Georgia taxpayers can redirect part of their tax liability to GRACE Scholars and qualify for a generous tax benefit created by the Georgia legislature – a 100 percent tax credit on your Georgia tax return. Since GRACE is a tax exempt charity (501c3

organization), gifts to GRACE may also qualify as a charitable contribution on your federal tax return. Pre-registration (by December 15, 2017) for the 2018 tax credit is required. Pre-register online at www.gracescholars.org.



STM Kindergarteners celebrated the first 100 days of school by dressing as 100 year olds.

SAINT THOMAS MORE SCHOOL FAMILIES, FRIENDS & ALUMNI:

If you know a family who might want to consider enrolling their children at STM, please help us spread the word about our great school by sharing this newsletter!

STM OPEN HOUSE (for all grades)
November 12, 2017
2:00 pm, Mulhern Hall