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Sharing alumni achievements - read to see if your classmates might be included!

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# THE UTOPIAN

Fall 2022 | Newsletter of Saint Thomas More + A Catholic School in the Jesuit Tradition

"Finding God in All Things"



Students, teachers, staff, parents and other STM community members all contributed!

## First Annual "Day of Giving More"

We are excited to announce that our first annual "Day of Giving More" was a huge success! We offered three opportunities for our faculty, staff and parents to kick off the school year with a spirit of giving!

Our first school-sponsored Blood Drive during our "Day of Giving More" honored the life of a very special STM mom, alumna, amazing school and community volunteer, Katie Trocheck Abel. Katie embodied the commandment "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." We are blessed we could serve others in her honor and memory. STM faculty and staff volunteered time in

the gym to supervise children of parents who were in the cafeteria donating blood. Our American Red Cross representative sent her appreciation and said, "Your blood drive was amazing! We collected 24 units on a goal of 20." Thank you to all those in our STM family who donated blood to save lives!

We also held a St. Vincent de Paul clothing and shoes donation drive. We were delighted to receive so many SVDP donations. The first SVDP truck was stuffed so full that they had to send a second truck! These gifts are the kind that keep on giving as SVDP utilizes volunteers to staff their thrift stores so that they can sell the donated items at discounted

prices. The proceeds from each Thrift Store go directly to the programs and services that deliver hope and help to people in need.

Finally, we encouraged everyone to register as a Georgia organ donor because just one organ and tissue donor has the potential to save 75 lives! It is an easy process and takes just a few minutes to complete the online registration at [donatelifegeorgia.org/register](https://donatelifegeorgia.org/register).

Our first "Day of Giving More" enabled us to live out our school's mission as a joyful learning community reaching out to the world as the hands of Christ.

# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

## Congratulations to STM Alumnus, Reverend Avery Daniel



On May 28, 2022, Deacon Avery Daniel, STM 2007, was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta. Prior to his ordination, he was the Chaplain at Blessed Trinity Catholic High School. Fr. Avery's first assignment as a priest began on July 1st as the Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Athens and St. Catherine Laboure' Catholic Church in Jefferson. He will also offer spiritual support to St. Joseph Catholic School and Monsignor Donovan Catholic High School in Athens. Fr. Avery gives abundant thanks to God for the role that the St. Thomas More Catholic School family played in the development of his vocation.

*Above: Father Avery Daniel on his ordination day at the Cathedral of Christ the King, Atlanta. Photo by Jackie Holcombe/The Georgia Bulletin*

**Imani Johnson, STM 2021**, began her Irish dancing career at St. Thomas More Catholic School. Her parents could not be more proud of her work ethic and determination. On the STM playground, Imani and her friends practiced the steps they learned the night before at Irish dance class. Imani's parents never imagined that as an African American, without an Irish dancing background, that she would rise to compete amongst the best dancers in the world. She is a two-time Southern Regional Champion and also achieved several top five finishes at National Championships. Ten years later, as a sophomore in high school, Imani still loves the challenge of Irish Dance competitions and is determined to do her best no matter the obstacles or barriers in front of her.



*Imani Johnson, STM 2021, at the 2022 North American Irish Dance Championships in Montreal, Canada.*



**Ben Steinberg, STM 2012**, graduated with honors from Georgia State University with a master's degree in sports administration. Ben completed his undergraduate degree at Georgia College and State University where he graduated magna cum laude with a degree in marketing. While in school, Ben worked a variety of events including ESPN's College Game Day and had the opportunity to meet with many sports industry leaders. Currently, Ben works as a project manager for a college sports consulting group in Atlanta.

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

## UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE OPPORTUNITIES

For more information, visit [stmga.org](http://stmga.org)

- November 15** Virtual Information Session
- November 17** Touring Tuesdays/Thursdays begin (by appointment only)
- December 7** Pre-K4 and Kindergarten Q&A
- January 10** Open House (all grades)

## IMPROVEMENTS

### Three cheers (and special thanks) for grandparents!

Kathleen and Richard Baracz, grandparents of Javier and Carmen Fernandez, kindly designated St. Thomas More Catholic School as one of the beneficiaries of their Charitable Remainder Unitrust. We are incredibly grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Baracz for their remarkable spirit of stewardship and for choosing to share their gifts with our school. We were blessed to be able to use their generous gift to help with the cost of our amazing new gym floor.



**DID YOU KNOW?** *The Notre Dame du Namur multi-purpose building was completed in 2002. It expanded STM's capacity for teaching the arts and athletics. The building created the school's first gymnasium.*

*Please share with family & friends!  
Our amazing community is our best advertising. Help us share and grow what makes us MORE special!*

### First STM Pre-K4 class a success! Second Pre-K4 class added in August 2022.

STM School is grateful for the 2021 and 2022 grants that we received from the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia. The grants were used to purchase furniture and materials for each of our Pre-K4 classrooms.



*For more information about our full-day Pre-K4 program, please email [admissions@stmga.org](mailto:admissions@stmga.org).*

**FUN FACT:** *Twenty of our current parents are St. Thomas More School alumni, reflecting a total of 30 second- (and even third-) generation STM School students!*



Ansley Murphey  
630 West Ponce de Leon Avenue  
Decatur, GA 30030

## GIVE a Catholic education and RECEIVE a generous tax credit

You can use your tax dollars to fund a scholarship at STM School. If you pay taxes in the state of Georgia, you will not want to miss this unique opportunity to help fund a scholarship at St. Thomas More School while receiving a generous tax benefit at the same time.



### The process is simple:

- Step 1:** Register your gift/tax credit at [gracescholars.org](http://gracescholars.org)
- Step 2:** Designate St. Thomas More School as the recipient of 100% of your gift.
- Step 3:** Receive a (dollar for dollar) tax credit on your 2023 Georgia state tax return.

The statewide cap was met last May for the 2022 tax year. Registration is now open for the 2023 tax year. Register your gift/tax credit at [gracescholars.org](http://gracescholars.org) by December 31, 2022 to ensure that it will be processed before the cap is met in early 2023.

### 2023 Individual Tax Credit Limit (Increased from 2022):

- Single/head of household – lesser of tax liability or \$2,500
- Married filing jointly – lesser of tax liability or \$5,000
- Married filing separately – lesser of tax liability or \$2,500
- Owners of C corporations and fiduciaries, S corporations, LLCs and partnerships – visit [gracescholars.org](http://gracescholars.org) for details

To learn more, please visit [gracescholars.org](http://gracescholars.org).

## For news large and small in real time, please follow STM on social media!

News and happenings at STM are being shared all the time via social media, so please follow us on your favorite platform/s. Not only is it fun to see what is going on, but when you like or share our posts, you help us build the special community we have here. Thanks – and hope to see you online!



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