

FALL 2018



The Guardian
Catholic Schools

Protecting potential.

The Messenger

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As we open the second year in our new building, Guardian Catholic School is no longer a dream on a blueprint, but an active, growing community. Opening day of 2018-2019 brought over 420 students and their families together. Our 98 new students blended right in as families arrived and smiling students headed into classrooms loaded with supplies. In this issue of The Messenger, you'll learn more about our mission in action and its impact on students' lives.

Guardian Catholic School: By the Numbers

59,000

the number of square feet in new construction

6,500

the number of square feet in renovations

422

the number of students enrolled in 2018-2019 school year

100

the percentage of students receiving scholarship assistance at some level

98

the number of new students enrolled at GCS this school year

96

the percentage of 2014 GCS grads who graduated from high school in 2018

1

the number of gifts you can make today to protect our students' potential



The mission of the Guardian Catholic Schools is to participate in God's work by providing advocacy, resources and governance to Guardian Catholic School. These resources enable the school to provide educational and spiritual opportunities to children and families regardless of financial situation or religious preference.



Join Us in Protecting Potential

Mervin G. Denny, Executive Director of Advancement

Dear Friends,

The start of the school year is such an exciting time for the families of students attending GCS. For most of our Pre-K students, it means stepping into a classroom for the very first time. For older students, it may mean becoming acquainted with a new teacher and classmates, or the challenge of learning new subjects. For parents, the start of the school year usually means getting into the swing of a new daily routine. However, for many families, a new school year also means beginning the financial challenge of making tuition payments.

In August we welcomed back lots of familiar faces as well as 98 new students. This year we have a total of 422 students enrolled, and scholarship assistance is needed at some level for all students. Thanks to our loyal donors, we are able to provide much-needed financial assistance to all of our students. We are extremely grateful for our dedicated supporters who make this funding available to families who would not otherwise have the financial resources to provide their children with a quality Catholic education. Thank you!

Please take a few minutes to read about the recent happenings at our school, Guardian by Numbers, and community partnerships featured in this newsletter and on our website. As we recognize the successes of our students and the great work of our faculty and staff, we know that none of this would be possible without our donors' invaluable support and commitment to the Guardian.

The start of the school year can be a time when you can make an impact on a young person's life by providing him or her the opportunity to have a quality value-based education. I encourage you to consider giving the gift of a quality education to the many students the Guardian serves. I also invite you for a tour to learn the impact of your donation and how it continues to make a difference in our students' lives and in our community. Please join us in "Protecting Potential."

Many Blessings,

Mervin G. Denny



The Shircliff Society of young professionals touring our school while the St. Vincent's mobile unit was on campus providing healthcare and immunizations to the families and children we serve.



Tim Sutherland and his team from Merrill Lynch/Bank of America donated school supplies and backpacks for more than 60 students as they returned for the new school year.



TIAA makes a commitment to the Jacksonville Community. Joseph Hernandez toured the Guardian Catholic School and got to know some of our students.

Protecting Potential: Alumni Spotlight

There is no doubt that St. Pius V graduates Daniel and Morgan Fisher exemplify the vision and mission of Guardian Catholic. Daniel and Morgan are the son and daughter of Rob and Teresa Fisher both of whom have been incredibly grateful, supportive and involved in their children's academic journey.



Daniel and Teresa Fisher

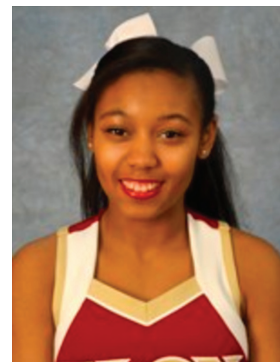
After graduating from St. Pius, Daniel attended the Episcopal School of Jacksonville. As an Honor Roll student, he excelled in numerous sports including football, basketball and track. Currently Daniel is a senior at Methodist University and is majoring in athletic training. Daniel plans to pursue a graduate degree in physical therapy.

With a twinkle in her eye and with her ever-ready smile, Morgan is quick to remind us that she did not follow in her brother's footsteps; she "made her own footprints" as she went on to complete her secondary education at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville after graduating from St. Pius. Morgan is a hard-working, determined and responsible student who has learned

to manage her time well. Outside the classroom she has been involved in cheerleading, softball and served on the Bolles/Episcopal event planning committee which was formed to promote a "friendly rivalry" between the two schools. Currently Morgan attends Elon University where she is majoring in human service studies and minoring in psychology.

Both Daniel and Morgan acknowledge that the close, warm, friendly community of St. Pius was instrumental in shaping them to become successful individuals. Shy until you get to know him, Daniel attributes the personal atmosphere of St. Pius to the development of his communication skills.

In addition, these two graduates are enormously grateful for the multiple teachers who have had a positive impact throughout their education and to the numerous stakeholders who have helped make Guardian Catholic School a reality. Commenting on the merger Morgan says, "The facility is wonderful! We are bigger and better and it's so heartwarming to see how far we've come."



Morgan Fisher



Building On Our Strong Foundation

Sr. Dianne Rumschlag, SND, Head of School

Our successful campaign has ended with the amazing construction of the new Guardian Catholic School building. Beyond the bricks and mortar, however, our need to lay a solid academic foundation for our students to build upon continues. Our dedicated administrators, faculty and staff are diligent, day after day, in providing the framework for critical thinking, problem-solving and executive functioning skills. At the center of it all, and integrated throughout, is the faith formation that distinguishes us as a Catholic school.

New academic initiatives this year build on our previous programs. While students in all grades are enjoying new social studies books with online resources, Middle school is piloting a digital social studies Techbook. Our two Middle school robotics teams are deeply engaged in this year's Survival in Space projects as they prepare for upcoming competitions. Robotics

will be replaced by an after-school science research team in the second semester to keep those critical thinking skills sharp. Our PK students continue to benefit from a grant from the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida that focused on engaging parents, students and teachers in STEM education.

Students make new discoveries every day. Whether it's a young child cracking the reading codes and unlocking the wonders of printed text for the first time, or an older student finally making sense of that algebraic formula, there's pride in learning something new. As confidence grows, so does the sense of accomplishment and the hope for a promising future. Your gifts make this possible.

Together we change students' lives — so they can change the future! And we do it in a way that is distinctly characteristic of Catholic schools: "Let it be known to all who

enter here that Christ is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever-present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students." That focus drives the way we gather around our mission to protect students' potential. Thanks for joining us in that effort!



Eaglets Soar and Explore

Involving both parents and schools in children's education is key to a successful outcome! When The Community Foundation (TCF) for Northeast Florida put out an RFP that focused on parent involvement



in education, our GCS early learning team was right on it. With TCF's funding behind us, we launched a Pre-Kindergarten STEM initiative that brought parents to school for evening STEM Camps. Pre-K future engineers and their parents constructed castles and houses that even the Big Bad Wolf couldn't blow down! In classroom centers, the engaging STEM activities are the ones most frequently chosen by students. The outdoor Sensory Garden will continue to be a favorite place on the playground for students to be immersed in scents, texture, color and catching butterflies! Thank you to TCF for opening this door of opportunity to our youngest students and their parents.

Eagle Award for GCS

Congratulations to Auld & White Constructors, LLC (AWC) for being honored with an Eagle Award on August 27 at the ABC Excellence in Construction Awards held at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront. Guardian Catholic School is proud to be recognized among the recipients of this year's awards. We are blessed that our beautiful facility was recognized with this prestigious award. The Eagle Award is on display in the school lobby. Thank you AWC, ENB Architects and subcontractors!





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Eagles SOAR to Success

Try to imagine our students as young adults looking back on their days at Guardian Catholic and thinking, "I remember that my [fifth] grade teacher really taught me the importance of [respect]." Christian values are at the core of Catholic education. One of the ways we foster these values is through the schoolwide Guidelines for Success. Guardian Catholic's guidelines are represented by the acronym SOAR: **S**=Self Motivated; **O**=Optimistic; **A**=Act Responsibly; **R**=Respect God, Self and Others.

Each day teachers encourage students to instill these ideals within themselves, knowing that it takes more than academic content to ensure that students are not only successful at GCS, but will continue to be successful in high school as well as in life. Staff members are on the lookout for students living out the guidelines and give them a "feather" for exemplifying a SOAR trait. Every three weeks students look forward to the announcement..."*And the SOAR Award goes to....!*" Having accumulated the most feathers, these smiling 6th graders from Ms. Jones' homeroom class are the proud winners of the first SOAR Award trophy. And in the meantime, students striving to claim the SOAR trophy next, are busy being self-motivated, optimistic, responsible, and respectful of God, self and others. Visit our school, and see if you notice!