

CATALYST

ST. MARCUS SCHOOL MAGAZINE • FALL 2022

*A Family's Wish
Answered*
p. 2



Great time to
read the
magazine as
it's all yours
to enjoy.



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

HOW HAS GOD USED PEOPLE, PLACES, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND EVENTS TO SHAPE IT?

WHO WERE THE BIGGEST INFLUENCES?

WHAT ROLE DID YOUR EDUCATION AND YOUR TEACHERS PLAY IN THE WRITING OF YOUR STORY?

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, IT HAS TO MEAN THAT YOUR STORY IS UNFINISHED . . . YOU HAVE SOME UNKNOWN AMOUNT OF TIME LEFT TO COMPLETE THE UNWRITTEN PART OF YOUR LIFE. WHAT WILL THAT LOOK LIKE? WHAT IS GOD CALLING YOU TO DO IN THE REMAINING BLANK PAGES?

In the first fifteen years of our lives, the vast majority of our stories are written for us. We have no say in where we are born, which family we are born into, whether we are born privileged or in poverty, or how those first fifteen years will shape the contents of the rest of our lives. After age fifteen, with God's guidance, we play an important role in writing our own stories and in shaping the unwritten stories of others.

That's why our work together at St. Marcus is so compelling. We are in the business of shaping and helping to author the current and eternal stories of thousands of young people. At this very moment, over 1,000 young people - *largely unwritten stories* - are in our classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums. We build a culture of intensity and intentionality where every moment, every interaction is not just a passing event, it is an important and potentially life altering moment in the unwritten stories of children.

Furthermore, as we reflect Christ through our own lives, as we disciple children and their families, and as we train children in excellence, it is our hope, prayer, and expectation that we will not only help write the unwritten stories of our students but that St. Marcus will continue to be used to write a better, brighter, more hopeful version of our city's collective story.

Throughout this issue you will read about people whose stories have been deeply impacted by their St. Marcus experience. From alum like Hannah Wallace who is thriving as a sophomore at UW-Madison to parent Wishkub Kinepoway and her children whose unwritten stories took a dramatic turn when she found St. Marcus.

It's interesting to me how your story, Wishkub's, my story, and the stories of all of our scholars are in important ways intertwined. Earlier this school year, as I greeted students at our Harambee Campus, a nine-year-old boy by the name of Marquon walked through St. Marcus doors for the *very first time*. You may never have met but *his* story is now connected to ours and it is our responsibility to make sure that his unwritten story is bright - full of hope, purpose, and in service to our Lord Jesus.

Isn't this humbling...and amazing that God chooses to use us to help write the unwritten stories of his beloved children? Thank you for your faithful partnership in this work of unmatched importance!

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Tyson'.

Henry Tyson
Superintendent



**A Family's Wish
Answered**
by Sean McNealy

*“I truly and strongly believe that
God knew my family personally
needed St. Marcus.”*

A MOVE FROM RURAL SHAWANO COUNTY TO MILWAUKEE IN 2015 LED WISHKUB KINEPOWAY TO SEEK OUT NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HER FAMILY OF FOUR.

A new home, a new city, and new schools - their transition to Milwaukee was in progress when Wish decided to take a chance and seek out new educational opportunities for her kids based on their experience in a district charter school. Now, the family has the St. Marcus experience made possible by dedicated staff, donors, and committed parents.

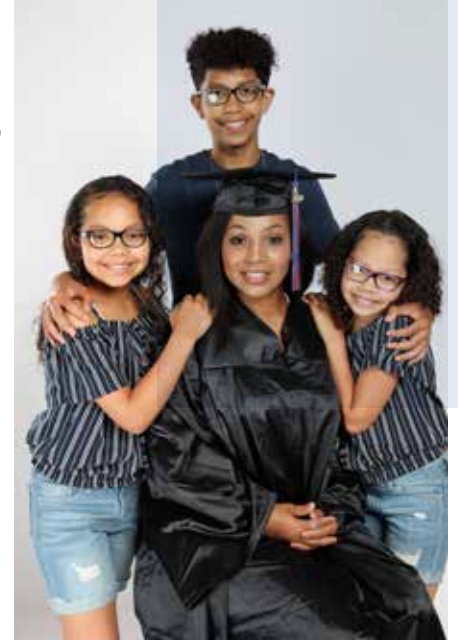
Wish, who grew up Black and Indigenous as an enrolled member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, says she wanted her children to live in a diverse city with peers who resemble them because of her own isolating experience in northern Wisconsin near the Menominee and Stockbridge reservations.

"I grew up in a small town, actually it was classified as a village, that bordered the reservation," Wish says. "However, there weren't many kids in school who looked like me, which was part of a push to raise my children in a bigger place to give them exposure to the world's diversity."

As Wish and her family navigated life in the big city, she enrolled her children - Enaem (16), Anii (13), and Tuhkiw (10) - in a district charter school for four years. However, Wish says the annual staff turnover seemed to affect the academic success of her children. She wanted a change.

Unfortunately, change did occur, but not in the way she expected. The pandemic hit hard in March 2020; weeks later, her ex-husband passed away. In a time of extreme isolation, confusion, and grief, the kids finished their academic year virtually up north at their grandparents' while Wish finished her early childhood education degree at Milwaukee Area Technical College.

When their school years wrapped up, Wish decided to make a plan for the kids' return to Milwaukee, which included finding a new school. She heard about St. Marcus from a friend who mentioned the school was close to their home.



"I did some research and only found remarkable results about St. Marcus," says Wish. "I knew I had to find a way to enroll my kids when I saw the test scores and the school's five-star report card."

Unfamiliar with choice schools, Wish had been touring public schools in the city to find the right fit for her kids but none were a match. She learned about choice schools - the applications, the deadlines, the waiting lists - through her own research and applied to St. Marcus without guidance and sometimes wanting to give up.

Now, the family reaps the benefits of being enrolled at St. Marcus. Anii and Tuhkiw are scholars at the Main Campus, while big brother Enaem is at Martin Luther High School. The girls love learning at school and feel they can embrace their intelligence, be challenged, and grow in their academics and faith.

Mental health and counseling services have been a godsend for Wish's two girls as they manage the grief of the loss of their father and transition to a new school. Wish considers the counseling services, offered in partnership with Christian Family Solutions, "a blessing and valued piece of the puzzle that keeps the girls balanced mentally and emotionally."

“One of the reasons I like St. Marcus is because I can be smart, and don’t have to pretend. I can be smart, and my friends don’t make fun of me here. I fit in.”

– Annii

In addition to the excellent education and counseling services her kids are receiving, Wish has taken advantage of parent resources offered by the St. Marcus community engagement team. She connected with life coach Moe Lawrenz to learn about restoring credit, achieving home ownership, and marital finances.

“I have made great strides by accepting guidance from the community engagement team,” Wish says. “Moe has resources beyond measure to help families find success - this is one of the many assets to being a part of the St. Marcus family.”

We at St. Marcus are grateful Wish allows us to walk alongside her family as they continue to live, learn, and work in Milwaukee. We are grateful to you - our donors, supporters, and friends - for walking alongside St. Marcus and being a catalyst for change in our community.



(from left to right): Wish, Tuhkiw, Enaem, Annii

“My favorite part about being at St. Marcus is learning about God and who he is.”

– Tuhkiw

“In October 2021, I had to reschedule a surgery for the third and final time. I had to do it, but it would affect my ability to drive and my ability to get my girls to school. I signed the girls up for virtual learning, but their teachers had other plans. Their teachers committed to transporting the girls to and from school because the teachers “want the girls in school and in class.” And they did just that.

St. Marcus is a part of my family.

– Wish

HARAMBEE CAMPUS, PHASE II

by Regan Parbs

Catalyst Construction has been hard at work pushing to complete Phase II of the Harambee Campus renovations. Many exciting changes took place over the summer and we were thankful to open the doors to 219 K4-3rd grade scholars this fall at the Harambee Campus. Phase II will be completed in February thanks to dedicated friends like you!

Gym: The gym floor has been completely refinished (*pictured below*). Pat Connaughton of the Milwaukee Bucks, through his foundation, and other St. Marcus friends made this happen. The gym will be used for assembly and chapel space, physical education and yoga classes, after school athletics, theater and stage production, and community events. This space is an enormous blessing to our scholars and community. Thank you, Pat and St. Marcus supporters!



Infill: The campus had a two-story courtyard in the center of the building. We decided that space would be better utilized as our Kindergarten/Primary School Library and Middle School Learning Commons. This summer, steel pilings were driven down through the ground level of the building (*pictured below*) giving us the stability to create two new enclosed learning spaces.



Topping Off Ceremony: Scholars at the Harambee Campus signed a steel beam placed in the new east entryway (*pictured top right*), celebrating the completion of the structural phase of construction.



Their names and stories will forever be a part of this building. Their legacy as the first St. Marcus Harambee scholars will pave the way for generations to come! Thank you to Catalyst Construction and Ramlow-Stein for helping facilitate this special moment!

Gateway: The Mardak | Vandenberg Campus Gateway will be completed this winter. This September, the steel framing for the three-story addition was put in place. This space will provide new classrooms and special education spaces, along with a safer entry way for scholars. In Phase II the first two floors of the addition will be completed and the third floor will be completed in Phase III. We are so excited for scholars and staff to use the space for years to come.



Areas not pictured but included in Phase II include: two additional classrooms on the second floor, art and music rooms, cafeteria commons, a large motor skills room, a health & wellness wing which will include counseling, dental, and nursing suites, and a multipurpose and large conference room.

Thank you for helping get us to this point of the campaign. Because of your support, 219 scholars are learning and growing at the Harambee Campus.

ALUMNI *Spotlight*

by Sara Roemer

Since she was five years old, St. Marcus alumna Hannah Wallace has been reaching for the stars - and not only because of her fascination with outer space. Her academic success has allowed her to nourish her curiosity about space and today learns from NASA mentors and images from the Hubble space telescope.

Hannah, who graduated from St. Marcus in 2017, is currently pursuing degrees in astrophysics and atmospheric science as a sophomore at UW-Madison and shared that St. Marcus influenced her story in many ways and provided her with a strong foundation for success.

St. Marcus provides scholars with a range of opportunities to explore their interests in academics, athletics, and the arts to establish a foundation of success. Hannah played on the soccer team and was coached by Mr. Tyson for four years.

“The soccer team was influential, teaching me hard work and the value of teammates, who are still friends today.”

Hannah credits the popular Discover America program for her love for hiking and exploring the beauty of God’s creation. She says the program gave her experiences that she still remembers and cherishes to this day.



Hannah (pictured on far right) on a Discover America trip to the Grand Canyon her seventh grade year in 2016.

By the time her education at St. Marcus was culminating and it came time to explore opportunities for high school, Hannah wanted to select a challenging and high-intensity school - similar to St. Marcus. She landed on Brookfield Academy.

“I received a lot of financial aid to attend Brookfield Academy, but there was still a tuition gap that my family couldn’t afford,” says Hannah. “We worked with Mr. Tyson who identified a St. Marcus donor who assisted in covering the first two years of my high school education.”

There are many paths St. Marcus graduates take. Hannah opted to further her education at college. As part of our alumni program, we track scholars for eight years following graduation, so she was able to receive guidance, particularly about financial aid, from St. Marcus staff when it came time to apply to college.

“St. Marcus was there for me as I began identifying colleges that would be a good fit and the majors I wanted to pursue,” says Hannah. “I’m incredibly grateful to be going to school debt free now and pursuing my passion.”



Hannah (pictured fifth from the left) at Dartmouth College during her 8th grade year at St. Marcus.

Just like at St. Marcus, Hannah stays busy. She is a member of the fencing club and volunteers with Christian organizations on campus like Badger Cru, InterVarsity, and Christian students at UW-Madison and learning more about how she can make the biggest impact, helping the most people possible through the Effective Altruism Club.

Hannah is taking advantage of every opportunity at UW-Madison, just finishing a summer working with the Letters & Science Summer Excellence in Research program - called LASER. Perfect for her long-held interest in science and outer space.

“I worked about 30 hours a week, researching dust and gasses moving in and out of a quasar with astrophysicists; processing and studying images that the Hubble space telescope sent us,” says Hannah. “It was a really great opportunity and gave me hands-on analytics experience as part of my undergraduate research program.”



Hannah (pictured third from the top left) with other students who participated in LASER at UW-Madison.

“Academically she always has been a hard-working, driven individual that knows what she wants. She wanted to go to a high academic institution and is doing incredibly well at UW-Madison.”

- Jim Datka, St. Marcus Director of Graduate and Spiritual Support



Hannah fencing at UW-Madison.

“There are a lot of kids who can’t afford to go to a high quality, private school like St. Marcus and Brookfield Academy. I’m one of them,” says Hannah. “A lot of the things I have done so far in my education I wouldn’t have been able to do without the support of others. I’m very grateful for the things that St. Marcus has been able to do because of donor support and the foundation that it has laid for me.”

Hannah’s story is still unwritten, but as she continues to pursue her passions, we know she will do remarkable things.

Thank you for being a part of her story.

GENEROSITY REPORT

7/1/21-6/30/22

BECAUSE OF YOU, SCHOLARS ARE THRIVING!

760 generous donors gave **\$2,464,382** to fund the \$2,500 per student gap between state funding and the cost of a St. Marcus education.

THANKS TO YOU..

1057 scholars were trained in **excellence** and disciplined in Christ



718 families were supported with **love & care**



3 St. Marcus **campuses**

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

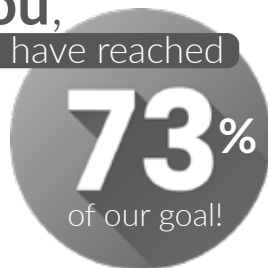
God gave everyone families to love, nurture, and support each other. To me, St. Marcus is part of our family. It's a blessing for me to have grown from being a St. Marcus parent to being both a parent and staff member to help continue serving the hearts and minds of our future generation. I am grateful to the supporters of St. Marcus who have made such a difference to hundreds of families like mine.

– Tamika Marable, Proud parent of St. Marcus scholar, Rahmeek (K4) and St. Marcus Graduate, Jayden (2022) and St. Marcus Special Education Teacher



Campaign Update

Thanks to **you**, we have reached



People



\$10.4M Goal (since 2019)

\$7,993,099 Raised to date
covers annual \$2,500
per student gap

Place



\$19M Goal

\$14,614,277 Raised to date
covers purchase & renovations
of the Harambee Campus

Promise



\$1.6M Goal

\$89,967 Raised to date
endowment fund for
long-term sustainability

We are deeply grateful for the following corporate and foundation supporters:

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IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE... CHRISTMAS?!

It's that time of year again! Every fall we prepare for Christmas generosity traditions at St. Marcus. **Christmas Angels** and the annual **Christmas Store** provide special opportunities for friends to bless scholars and their families during the holiday season.

Christmas Angels invites supporters to provide gifts and necessities to school families in need of extra blessings at Christmas.

The 2022 Christmas Angels gift drive will take place at St. Marcus Main Campus the weekend of December 17-18. School teachers and staff thoughtfully refer recipient families for the program. Families are invited to schedule private shopping appointments to select gift items for their households. We invite you to donate brand-new items to stock the gift drive! Items include household goods, toys, baby necessities, and much more. In addition, donors can help fulfill specific "wish list" items requested by the families that are delivered to them at the gift drive.

Interested in being a Christmas Angel?

We welcome support not only from individuals but also from groups! Many families, community groups, and even corporate teams have supported the gift drive as a holiday generosity activity.

If you, your group, or corporate team would like to participate, contact:

Cecilia Davis

414-562-3163 ext. 7554

cecilia.davis@stmarcus.org



At the **Christmas Store**, our youngest scholars experience the joy of giving by selecting a holiday gift for a loved one. Scheduled in early December, a store will be set up at each campus location. Classrooms will take turns visiting the store to shop for their loved ones. Scholars don't need money to shop—all of the items in the store are generously donated by friends of St. Marcus.

Our Christmas Store inventory needs replenishment!

Items (brand-new preferred) such as ornaments, small home decor items, jewelry, candles, mugs, and much more are gratefully accepted!

Interested in supporting the Christmas Store?
Contact:

Kathryn Leistekow
kathryn.leistekow@stmarcus.org
414-334-5231

Maureen Gunn
maureen.gunn@stmarcus.org
414-232-4091



**EVERY GOOD AND
PERFECT GIFT IS
FROM ABOVE.
-JAMES 1:17**

VOLUNTEERS WHO GIVE OF THEIR TIME AND TALENT TO SERVE OUR 1,000+ STRONG LEARNING COMMUNITY AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THE ST. MARCUS MISSION IS CARRIED OUT.

That's why we are excited to introduce Kathryn Leistekow, our new volunteer coordinator!

Kathryn transitioned from her role as an elementary support teacher at the St. Marcus Main Campus to ministry-wide volunteer coordinator this past summer. She is eager to work across the ministry to manage resources and engage donors, congregation members, school staff and parents, and community residents in the purposeful work of St. Marcus.

A native of Oregon who has spent time on the West Coast and Midwest, Kathryn served as a support teacher in a Main Campus fourth grade classroom for four years before her new role. She graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College in 2015 with a degree in biology. Before her professional journey took her to St. Marcus, Kathryn performed mission work in China for two years. She has also worked as a barista on and off for five years.



As a St. Marcus church member, Kathryn volunteered with the COVID response team and continues to use her voice in worship during Saturday evening services.

“I’m so blessed to have the opportunity to serve in this new role at St. Marcus and use new gifts and skills to help move our mission forward!” says Kathryn. “I’m excited to engage with the community by bringing together our talents and resources to serve our school, neighborhood, and city.”

Since she started her role, she has coordinated outdoor worship, meals for families, and volunteers for Habitat builds and moves.

A large project that Kathryn is now involved in is the Christmas Store, where scholars select a holiday gift for a loved one. She will enlist and work with volunteers to bring Christmas spirit and generosity to scholars in December!

Watch for opportunities to volunteer from Kathryn, or if you want to learn how you can get involved now, email: kathryn.leistekow@stmarcus.org.

Welcome, Kathryn!



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UNWRITTEN STORIES

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TOGETHER, WE WILL WRITE STORIES OF
HOPE, POSSIBILITY, AND SUCCESS.

www.stmarcusgala.com

Tickets, sponsorships, and event details



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Using a proven urban education model, St. Marcus seeks to instigate change and provide a community of learning where children and families live, grow, and thrive.

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