



LAST SUMMER, I WAS CLEANING THE HOUSE AND STUMBLED UPON A PEN WITH THE WORDS, "WHAT'S YOUR WHY?" ON THE SIDE.

I couldn't get the phrase out of my head, and I couldn't quite answer the question either. So, I did what most of us do: I googled it! The search led me to a four-minute video of

comedian Michael Jr. stressing how important it is to know your "why." The video clip is hilarious and profound. Look it up! tinyurl.com/knowyourwhy2022

Weeks later, the St. Marcus staff began the 2021-2022 school year by defining our "why" corporately and individually. It turns out that most of us are very clear about "what" we do, but most have rarely thought about "why" they do what they do. **Do you know why you do what you do?**

My "why" started to crystallize in late 1998. I was in the third year of my first "real" job, managing home construction on the west side of Chicago with Habitat for Humanity. District leaders Arne Duncan and Paul Vallas were attempting to reform Chicago Public Schools. What I was reading in the paper about CPS' problems directly intersected with my own experience with Habitat: the children moving into our new, beautiful homes were not being educated. The educational system in Chicago was failing the city's poorest, most vulnerable children.

I had to know more. I enrolled in the Master's of Education program at DePaul University. My most meaningful class required comparing and contrasting two high schools in distinctly different neighborhoods. I was stunned and broken by what I had learned. New Trier High School in wealthy Winnetka, IL, was almost a college, providing vast resources for students and staff. Most notably, an entire wing of the building was dedicated to college entry, the walls plastered with posters from Ivy League schools. Meanwhile, Crane High School, a short walk from the Chicago Bulls arena, had no college admissions office and lacked even essential resources. Its bathrooms were nothing more than porcelain pots attached to the floors - no stalls, toilet seats, mirrors, or toilet paper.

I was horrified, heartbroken, and completely mystified. I kept asking myself, "How is this possible in 1998 in the United States of America?"

As I have wrestled with these questions over the past 25 years in urban education, my "why" has continually evolved. Today, it is shaped by a core belief that our God is a god of justice, deeply concerned about the poor and how they are treated. So, my personal "why" statement reads as follows: "My God of justice has called me to serve with others in this time and place to bring the Gospel, hope, purpose, and a bright future to as many children and families as possible."

The odds are long against poor kids finding success. Twenty years later, Crane High still scores 3% in reading and math. Many Milwaukee schools are no different, especially those serving poor Black children. More Black Milwaukee students will spend time in prison than get a two-or four-year degree. In 2019, there were 20 schools with predominantly Black student populations with reading proficiency rates of 2.5% or lower.

Over that same time period, St. Marcus has become the largest and highest-performing school of its kind in Wisconsin. Driven by a clear "why," St. Marcus has grown from 100 students to over 1,000, built three state-of-the-art campuses, and became a model for others. Things can change with belief in a sacred purpose. St. Marcus is filled with believers, all called to proclaim the Gospel, serve as Christ served, and offer children and families hope.

In closing, I want to thank you for equipping us to fulfill our "why." St. Marcus receives far less resources than schools in Winnetka and Mequon, but your gifts help us recreate the culture of growth I see there. For years, you have faithfully built classrooms when classrooms were needed. You have covered the \$2,500 "funding gap" for hundreds of children so we can serve them excellently. And most importantly, you have encouraged and prayed for us. Throughout this issue, you will read powerful stories of individuals who, driven by their own personal "why," have taken extraordinary action to bless the children of this city. May you see yourself in those individuals and share in our purpose.

Thank you and God bless,

Henry Tyson Superintendent



COURAGE TO COMMIT IS A COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN REFLECTING A WORKING GOAL OF \$30 MILLION. This campaign includes the Harambee Campus acquisition and renovations, and supports the overall growth, operations, and sustainability of St. Marcus School.

In this issue, you will hear stories of friends that are supporting each area of the campaign. Thank you for all the ways you are making life-changing education possible for hundreds of Milwaukee's children!

People



Annual giving (operating) supports programming and educational excellence, which fuels St. Marcus as a leader in urban education. Gifts made toward operating assist in covering the \$2,500 gap between voucher funding and the actual cost to educate one scholar. Bridging this funding gap is critical to provide the quality education children deserve.

Place



Capital gifts assist with the growth of the school and serving more children. Support specifically provides resources for the purchase and renovations of the third campus, the St. Marcus Harambee Campus. Gifts prepare spaces that will provide an additional 600 scholars with the highest quality academics and environments.

Promise



Gifts made to the endowment fund enhance the long-term sustainability of St. Marcus School. The endowment funds student aid, building maintenance for three campuses, operational support, and hedges against inflation and economic uncertainty. It ensures scholars continue to receive a life-changing education well into the future.

Since 2018, St. Marcus supporters have contributed nearly \$18,000,000 towards the overall working goal.

by Sara Roemer, Mission Advancement Team FOR KEITH MARDAK AND MARY VANDENBEDGE

a legacy of transformational philanthropy began with a \$35 contribution.

"In 1989, I met the Development Director of the Boys and Girls Club at a party," recalled Keith. After going through a divorce and acquiring Hal Leonard Corporation, I didn't have any money. But, I fondly remembered playing basketball at the Clubs as a kid, and made my first gift of \$35 shortly after that party and gave more each year. I've now been on the board since 1994. Mary and I have become major donors, establishing The Mardak Center on 6th Street, the Daniels-Mardak Boys and Girls Club on the North Side and the Vandenberg Arts Center at the Fitzsimonds Club, as well as active participants in supporting educational programming at all Clubs by forming the MARVAN scholars."

The growth and success of the corporation allowed Keith and Mary to begin supporting youth and arts-focused organizations. Their love for kids and education carried through in their company as the #1 provider of educational music publishing methods and resources for learning every kind of instrument, from guitar to piano to violin to clarinet, and everything in between.

Keith started the Milwaukee office for Hal Leonard Corporation in 1970 and acquired the company in 1985. "I hired Mary in 1973, and we grew the company together." Hal Leonard eventually grew to become the world's largest music print publisher. As a driving force in the industry, Keith was honored as a 2010 inductee to the Songwriters Hall of Fame, winning the prestigious Abe Olman Publishers Award, one of only 14 such inductees. He was featured in a People Magazine photo montage alongside other famous inductees that year, including Taylor

Swift, Phil Collins, and Earth, Wind and Fire. "My grandkids loved seeing that photo!" he recalls.

"Philanthropy wasn't a major part of our upbringing," Mary shared. "It was something we learned as our lives together went on. My family gave primarily to our church and parochial school, and Keith grew up in a working class family on the South Side of Milwaukee, with little extra money."

Keith and Mary sold Hal Leonard in 2016. Today, their extraordinary support extends beyond the Boys & Girls Clubs to such organizations as the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, All-In Milwaukee, Running Rebels, VanderCook College of Music, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Pathfinders, Milwaukee Rescue Mission, and arts organizations such as UPAF, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the Milwaukee Ballet among others. Their deeply held passion for helping kids drives it all. "It always comes back to the kids," they said. "We love Milwaukee," Mary added. "This city gave us the opportunity to lead well-rounded, successful lives. We want every child in this city to have that opportunity, too."

Keith and Mary first connected to St. Marcus through Senior Pastor Mark Jeske. After making a few gifts to the school, they toured the Main Campus with Superintendent Henry Tyson and Executive Director Fred Lautz. "I believed in what the school was doing," Keith shared, "and wanted to help."

"Once we toured, it opened our eyes to what was going on at St. Marcus," said Mary. "Keith and I became fascinated with what the school was doing. When we heard about the plans to expand with a third campus and knowing of the problems with education in our city...it spoke to us, and we knew we had to get further involved."

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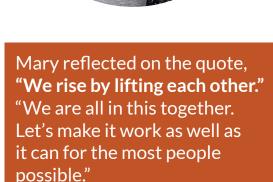
\$1.3M RAISED TOWARDS \$2.5M CHALLENGE When asked what guides their giving and their personal "why," Keith shared, "Taking care of kids; that's what this is all about. Every Milwaukee kid we can support provides amazing opportunity for the city."

"St. Marcus is an extension of everything we have been doing. It is a well-run organization, and we are very impressed with the teachers and staff. We want to be involved in the expansion of serving more kids in Milwaukee with a great education. You have to see it to believe it. If you did, you would support St. Marcus," Keith stated. "Once you meet the kids, it makes your gift real. You know who your gift is impacting."

Since that tour, Keith and Mary put forth an incredible \$2,500,000 challenge match to help with the renovations and construction of St. Marcus' third campus, the Harambee Campus, which will grow to serve an additional 600 scholars. All gifts and pledges to the Harambee project, up to \$2,500,000, will be matched through June 30, 2022. [a]

"Over the past 20 years at St. Marcus, through four building projects, I continue to marvel at how God sends the right people at just the right time, every time. Keith and Mary are stunning examples of God's provision. Through their extraordinary gift, hundreds of children will hear the Gospel and have access to incredibly talented and dedicated educators for generations to come. We are deeply grateful."

- Henry Tyson, Superintendent



Keith and Mary's impact on Milwaukee and St. Marcus will undoubtedly be experienced by thousands of children and families in our city for decades to come, and for this, we are so grateful! In the spirit of "Harambee,"... Let's all pull together!

"From the moment I began serving as Executive Director five years ago, my prime concern was how much we rely on the philanthropic, sacrificial investment of so many supporters to sustain continuing operations and growth. I never cease to be amazed at the extent to which God blesses our ministry through people like Keith and Mary. Their unprecedented challenge has proven to be a catalyst for our expansion into the Harambee Campus and reaching another 600 children. We are humbled by, and grateful for, their support and advocacy."

MAKING AN IMPACT. TOGETHER.

by Cecilia Davis, Mission Advancement Team

John and Mary Scheibel love the "Tale of the Starfish". If you aren't familiar with it, it relates the story of a young child walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. She was approached by an adult who asked her how she could possibly make a difference for the multitude of starfish on the beach. Her response? "Well, I made a difference for that one!"

The calling to make a difference through the power of personal connection is what inspired the Scheibels to support St. Marcus operations through Adopt a Classroom: An opportunity for individuals to fund a year of education (covering the \$2,500 gap per child) for a St. Marcus scholar. Through pen-pal correspondence and other interactive activities, Adopt a Classroom supporters connect one-on-one with individual scholars and cultivate personal relationships with them throughout the school year.

The path to the Scheibels' Adopt a Classroom involvement originated more than a decade ago through Mary's involvement as a member of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) Board of Directors. Mary first learned about St. Marcus and met Henry Tyson through her work on the MMAC Education Committee. "What struck me the most about St. Marcus is the intersection of faith and education," she recalls. "Henry's absolute commitment to embracing faith as the core of St. Marcus education really touched my soul."

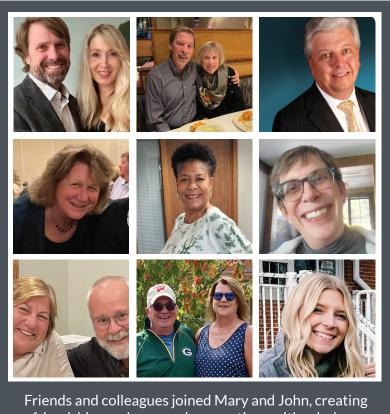


WHAT'S YOUR "WHY"?

Mary: "One of my favorite expressions is 'Your talents are a gift from God. What you do with those talents are your gift to Him.' It goes hand-in-hand with God's message in Luke 12:48, that 'from everyone who has been given much, much will be required. And from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be expected.' And when it feels impossible, and if I find myself saying 'no, not now, I've got so much on my list, I can't possibly do this, Lord', I remember the words of Isaiah 6:8: 'I heard the voice of the Lord. saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here I am: send me."

John: "When my days are done, I want to know there were children who, through my efforts, became something even greater than what they were destined to be before I met them."





friendships and personal connections with scholars.

Mary and John passionately believe that faith-based education is the single, most important factor in breaking the poverty cycle. "When you're really connected to God in a personal way, you rise above trials and challenges," says Mary. "You can see a future filled with possibilities, not just obstacles." The Scheibels are keenly aware of the obstacles faced by families in crisis, particularly through their first-hand experiences with individuals and families experiencing trauma. Over the years, the Scheibels have opened their home as a respite for battered women. Through their relationships with these families, the impact on the children was abundantly clear. "The kids' lives were so disrupted and their education couldn't flourish," says John. "It so clearly demonstrated," Mary adds, "that what kids experience in their early formative years can really set the course for what their future will be."

The Scheibels have personally grappled with this long-term impact as the parents of a child whose early education was compromised. One of their children, adopted at age 8, joined the Scheibel family from foster care. The hardship and disrupted education she experienced during foster care continues to burden her, even now in adulthood. Through her current highs and lows, John and Mary continue to provide loving guidance and support as she navigates life's challenges.

"Kids have always been important to me," says John. "I'm drawn to them and their welfare. I strongly feel that it's my responsibility-OUR responsibility as a community-to help pave a way for them.

How can we use our individual and collective wherewithal to help our kids transform from social underdogs to social heroes?"

Adopt a Classroom presented both an individual and, more importantly, a collective opportunity to act on this calling. John and Mary realized that together with friends and colleagues, a community of support and engagement could be established with an entire St. Marcus classroom. "We reached out to people in our network and invited them to ponder: What more can we do to really make a big difference? As we look at what has transpired these past few years in our country, our communities, and a city more divided than ever, the children are at a greater risk. Have we really done our share? Have we really done enough? Or are we just comfortable?"

With the Scheibels' encouragement, nearly 20 individuals (and counting!) have joined together to collectively support one of the program's participating classrooms this school year. Together, their involvement sponsors nearly every seat in the classroom.

John and Mary have no doubt that the friends and colleagues that have joined together for this effort are excited about what they are giving. But they are even more excited about what they are getting: A one-of-a-kind relationship with a 4th grade friend. "Sometimes, you step into opportunities like this fully intending to bless someone else," John remarks. "But what you discover is that the experience blesses YOU more than you could imagine."



ENDURING FAITH Supporting St. Marcus for the Long Run

by Michele Kitson, Mission Advancement Team

In 1957, the neighborhood where St. Marcus' Main Campus now sits, on the corner of North Avenue and Palmer Street, looked very different than it does today. It was that year that 11-year-old Lilli Gust and her recently immigrated German parents moved into a house on Garfield Avenue and became members of St. Marcus Church. Lilli was a St. Marcus scholar beginning in 5th grade until she started at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Today, she serves as a volunteer, supporter, a member of the church and altar guild, and most prominently as the president of the St. Marcus Foundation.

The St. Marcus Foundation is responsible for the stewardship of restricted assets for the benefit of St. Marcus Ministries. The board of directors oversees the management of separate endowment funds for both the church and the school. These funds are invested, and annual distributions are made to the church and school operating budgets each year.

Lilli and her fellow board members share an enduring passion for St. Marcus and its importance to the community. I recently had the opportunity to talk with Lilli and her fellow board member, Nell Speerschneider, to learn more about their dedication to St. Marcus and their Foundation support.

BOARD: Lilli Gust, President, Retired, The Primary Trend Fund, Inc. | Craig Schmutzer, Vice President, Westbury Bank | Brad Richter, Treasurer, JP Morgan Chase | Nell Speerschneider, Secretary, The Wagner Companies | David Borst, Milwaukee Lutheran High School | David Heller, Associated Bank | Kris Metzger, Wisconsin Lutheran High School | Matt Sims, Microsoft

St. Marcus Foundation		Annual Operating Contribution
Total Investment	\$3,249,097	
Church Endowment	\$2,511,670	\$73,118
Amy Madson Endowment (School)	\$737,427	\$34,050

Nell first came to St. Marcus seeking an educational opportunity for her daughter, Charlotte, over a decade ago. Nell recalls that Charlotte was 27th on the waiting list. Ten months later. Charlotte enrolled in K3 at St. Marcus. Charlotte is now in 7th grade. In addition to finding a school for Charlotte, Nell and her family found a home at St. Marcus as church members. Nell formerly worked as the Member Care & Programming Coordinator in the church office and has served in several volunteer roles for both church and school, including serving as secretary of the Foundation board.

Although their experiences and history at St. Marcus differ greatly, Nell and Lilli are bonded by their faith and their active investment in St. Marcus' future. They both give to the St. Marcus endowment. Nell shared that by Nell: "St. Marcus is a diverse community donating to the endowment, she with the common thread of faith in Christ. creates a safety That means so much to me, personally net for St. Marcus and the families it serves. "It feels good knowing that I can make a gift today that will be helping St. Marcus families far into the future." Lilli shared another perspective on giving to the endowment fund. "I have loved St. Marcus for 65 years! I can help keep it moving forward and provide future opportunities for the church and the school." Lilli has named the St. Marcus Foundation in her estate plan to fulfill that objective.

Prior to her retirement five years ago, Lilli worked as an investment advisor, so she understands the significance of the growth of the endowment and how impactful it will be in the future. For Nell, it took time for her to understand the true impact of how giving to the endowment can make a difference in the long term.

When asked to share a favorite Bible verse, Lilli said that throughout her life and career, she has reflected on Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It

has been both a comfort and an inspiration in many challenging situations. Nell reflected on her connection to St. Marcus and cited Ephesians 4:3 "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." For Nell, the St. Marcus community is united by the bond of Christ and the mission of discipling

the tiny Christians in

Pastor Mark Jeske started the St. Marcus Endowment back in the 1980s and serves as an advisor to the current Foundation board. He says, "We are thrilled at God's mighty be supporting St. Marcus Ministries until Jesus returns."

WHAT'S YOUR "WHY"?

Lilli: "Investing in St. Marcus for the long-term. Knowing that I am creating future opportunities for St. Marcus."

his word. and for my daughter, Charlotte, to grow up with such a strong foundation." blessings and the generosity of our members and friends. We hope that our Foundation will

Thanks to generous and thoughtful stewards like Lilli and Nell, the St. Marcus Foundation is beginning to thrive. We are grateful to them for their leadership and investment!



For nearly 150 years, St. Marcus has been the salt and light of urban Milwaukee.

Educating youth, embracing families, uplifting the community, and bringing people closer to one another and to their loving God. Today, you have the opportunity to lay the foundation for the next 150 years and beyond. By becoming a *Planned with Promise* member, you can create opportunities that will impact our community for generations to come.







FAITH

EDUCATION

COMMUNITY

40% is the potential amount of money your children will pay in taxes IF you don't have an updated will or estate plan. Is it time to get yours completed?

To help you explore these opportunities and how they can benefit you, your loved ones, St. Marcus or other charitable interests, St. Marcus has partnered with Craig Mellendorf of SFC Estate Coaching.

At no cost to you, Craig will meet with you and help create a guide for your estate planning that you can share with your attorney.

Questions: Contact Michele Kitson, St. Marcus Director of Development michele.kitson@stmarcus.org | 414.562.3163 X 7556



To learn more and schedule your personal visit, use your phone to scan this QR code.

Or visit: www.stmarcus.org/school/plannedwithpromise





Together we're ready!





Our hearts are overjoyed

For the first time in St. Marcus Gala history, over \$1 million was raised in support of St. Marcus scholars, providing a high-quality, high-expectations education and the knowledge that they have hope and a bright future in Christ.





The 2021 **fund**-**A-lleed** raised just **over \$485,000** to support renovations at the newly opened Harambee Campus, which is expanding to serve an additional 600 scholars.

Thanks to St. Marcus supporters Keith Mardak and Mary Vandenberg, every dollar raised during the Fund-A-Need (over \$485,000 of the \$1 million raised) was matched! Their \$2.5 million challenge will remain open until June 30, 2022!

If you attended the Gala in-person or virtually or shared our story in some way, thank you. If you donated an auction item or bid in the auction, thank you. If you made a financial contribution of any amount, thank you!

We can't wait for you to join us for the 2022~Gala on November 12th!



To view the virtual program playlist, visit: tinyurl.com/stmgala2021

REFLECTIONS ON AN 8-YEAR ST.

by Cecilia Davis, Mission Advancement Team

AMONTAYE IS AN 8TH GRADER
AT THE ST. MARCUS NORTH
CAMPUS. A "career" scholar,
Amontaye has attended St.
Marcus since first grade. This
spring, Amontaye will culminate
his St. Marcus education as a
member of the first, 8th grade
graduating class of the North
Campus.

"Thinking way back to Amontaye's early years," reflects his mother, Sheleeia, "I chose St. Marcus because I heard great things about the school. It was highly recommended by my mother, who has been an educator in Milwaukee for more than 20 years. We also witnessed the benefits of a St. Marcus education in Amontaye's uncle, who is a 2014 graduate and now manages an auto shop in Milwaukee."

Amontaye's journey of spiritual, academic, and personal growth at St. Marcus affords more memories than he can count!

"I have so many," he says, "but one of my most memorable experiences was visiting an Amish community in 5th grade during Discover America." A signature program, Discover America is an immersive, year-long experiential learning program that culminates in an educational travel experience at the end of the school year. "It was really eye-opening and I'll never forget it."

Amontaye earned his place as a Discover America traveler by demonstrating strong character and responsibility in and out of the classroom. These life skills are the foundation that Sheleeia believes his education has instilled. "Amontaye has developed into a leader. The St. Marcus team has helped me and his father guide him toward fulfilling his destiny."

Amontaye has also been a busy athlete, involved in soccer, basketball, and track & field during his St. Marcus years. He hopes to continue his sports involvement in high school, either at Pius XI or Wisconsin Lutheran. He feels ready for high school, prepared to meet the challenges and the opportunities he'll encounter. "My education put me in the right mindset for high school," he says. "The high academic scores and percentages we achieve show that St. Marcus is a great place to prepare for what we have to face for the next four years."

"We live in a state with some of the lowest academic performance rates for African American students," Sheleeia adds.

MARCUS JOURNEY



"I'll never forget the first time Amontaye made the honor roll in 5th grade. St. Marcus is pulling Wisconsin up because of its proven academic success. Kids that go to St. Marcus go on to do great things." And that's encouragement that Sheleeia has shared with new families through her involvement as an enrollment volunteer. "I have helped parents fill out applications, which can be an overwhelming process!" But, in Sheleeia's view, it's all worth it.

a real estate professional and property owner. He wants to achieve it for the betterment of othersespecially his little sister Ailani, a K3 St. Marcus scholar. "I learned about generational wealth from [Superintendent] Mr. Tyson and my grandmother. I learned that it's about building what we have and passing it down to our children so that they can do the same thing for their children. The reason I want to go into real estate is so that I can build

generational

my family, so

that Ailani, my

children, and

mv children's

have stability."

children can

wealth for

Beyond academics, even more central to Amontaye's St. Marcus career is his faith journey. "St. Marcus has definitely strengthened my faith," he says. "Faith

WHAT'S YOUR "WHY"?

Amontaye: I want to be a huge example for Ailani, so that she grows up to become better than me. A Bible verse that inspires me is Joshua 1:9: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Sheleeia: Amontaye and his sister keep me going. Everything I do, I do for them. The blessing of my children strengthens my faith and reminds me of Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

sets you up for blessings, and it grounds you as a person. I've learned that when I face a challenge or get caught in a tricky situation, prayer recenters me."

"When I think about all of the skills St. Marcus has helped him develop," adds Sheleeia, "like goal setting, being accountable, being professional, and achieving your best, prayer has been one of the most important parts of his foundation. It's a skill he'll take with him wherever his journey leads."

There's no doubt that Amontaye's journey is going to lead him to greatness. His dream is to become

As Amontaye's St. Marcus journey nears completion, little Ailani's journey has only just begun. But with her big brother's hard work, strong faith,

and positive example paving the way, she'll have a role model for life.





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St. Marcus is a Christian, high-expectations choice school serving students from grades K3 to 8th.

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.

St. Marcus' driving vision is that every family has access to excellent education in the city of Milwaukee.



