

CATALYST

ST. MARCUS SCHOOL MAGAZINE • FALL 2023

*Scholars
Succeed at
St. Marcus
p. 5*





In late September, I conducted a tour of the Harambee Campus, which has now been named the “Burleigh Street Campus.” We stepped into the third grade classroom under the tutelage of Ms. Gryniewicz

and her support teacher, Mrs. Carlson. It was math class, and I kid you not, 100% of the scholars were on task, as evidenced by eyes on the screen and pencils furiously scribing. The room was silent except for the teacher’s voice. I smiled. I needed that moment.

The tour group left the classroom and circled up in the hallway. I noticed one of the guests, a former educator, wore a look of exaggerated disbelief.

*“How is she doing THAT with SO MANY kids?
How many were in that classroom?”*

Twenty-eight. There were 28 children in the class. The majority of those 28 scholars are substantially below grade level, a handful have special needs, and a majority live in some of the city’s toughest neighborhoods. Our guest made a great point - under these circumstances, it takes extraordinary talent to make a group of 28 third graders so focused and productive.



*Mrs. Carlson (top left), Ms. Gryniewicz (top right),
and three of the scholars in their class*

As the ‘23-24 school year has gotten underway, I am constantly reminded of the extraordinary talent and passion of the St. Marcus team. I am surrounded by incredible people, driven by a sense of purpose, who relentlessly pour themselves out for the children and families we serve.

But our efforts would not be enough without *your* commitment. The *intertwined* relationships between scholars, parents, staff, donors, congregation members, and volunteers are what make St. Marcus so effective. The task we have been given is challenging, so historically intractable, and so complicated that it just cannot be done on the backs of a small group of passionate, purpose-driven people.

It takes an army of *intertwined* relationships among radically committed people to achieve this kind of success.

Despite the blessings and God’s abundant grace, I remain painfully aware that our results are good but not good enough and that our outcomes are an exception and not the norm. The bottom line is that there’s hope, but there’s a lot of work left to be done. The daily challenges are enormous. My constant prayer is that God would build an army of *intertwined*, radically committed supporters and prayer warriors who will join us in this fight for the hearts and minds of Milwaukee’s children and America’s future.

Thank you for doing your part. Let’s keep going.

God Bless,

Henry Tyson
Superintendent



NEW CAMPUS NAMES

As we have expanded (totaling three campuses!) - and with the roll out of new branding, the timing made sense to prioritize new campus names, which had to logistically make sense with consideration for future growth.

We are excited to share with you our new campus names, which will officially be used starting January 1, 2024.

St. Marcus School | North Avenue Campus | Since 1875
(previously known as Main Campus)

St. Marcus School | Center Street Campus | Heart of Harambee
(previously known as North Campus)

St. Marcus School | Burleigh Street Campus | Historically Harambee
(previously known as Harambee Campus)

*Your Legacy
+ His Potential
= A Brighter
Tomorrow*

**LEGACY
of
LOVE**

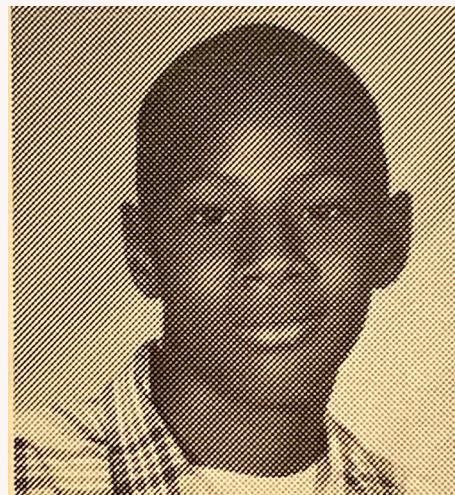


Find out more about creating a Legacy of Love by including St. Marcus in your will or trust.
Contact Michele Kitson, Director of Mission Advancement: michele.kitson@stmarcus.org | 414-562-3163x7556

HOLD ON TO YOUR FAITH

written by Cecilia Davis, Mission Advancement Team

FOR ST. MARCUS ALUMNUS AND CHURCH MEMBER DE'ANGELO TATUM, SPIRITUALITY IS A STRONGHOLD THAT TOOK ROOT FOR HIM BACK IN 1994, AS A ST. MARCUS SCHOLAR. LEARNING ABOUT JESUS IN 4TH GRADE SPARKED A FAITH THAT HAS SINCE BECOME A LIFELINE, CLOSELY INTERWOVEN WITH EACH TURN OF HIS LIFE.



WE VISITED WITH DE'ANGELO EARLIER THIS FALL TO TALK ABOUT HIS ST. MARCUS SCHOOL RECOLLECTIONS, HOW HIS YEARS AS A SCHOLAR HAS SHAPED HIS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS, AND HOW THE FAITH JOURNEY HE BEGAN BACK THEN CONTINUES TO GUIDE HIM TODAY.

CD: When did you start school at St. Marcus?

DT: I started in 4th grade. Back then, St. Marcus was a lot smaller, with barely a hundred scholars. It was just one building, separate from the church. The atrium where we're sitting right now wasn't even here. In order to go to church, we had to walk outside, through a small alleyway.

CD: Are there staff members that made a big impact on your St. Marcus journey?

DT: Yes - my relationship with Mrs. Adamson—who still teaches at St. Marcus today—is very memorable (*pictured right*). Although she wasn't one of my classroom teachers, she was constantly involved at school, and her encouragement really made an impression on me. My relationship with her was, and continues to be, very meaningful for me. I remember the first time I heard her sing in church when I was a scholar. It was amazing and I knew I wanted to keep hearing her sing! She also worked at my high school. So Mrs. Adamson has been a positive presence for me for many years.

Today, we're on the same bowling team, so our relationship continues even outside of St. Marcus. In general, my teachers really pushed me to dig deep, go hard, and be the best I can at everything I did in and out of the classroom. They taught me to do things honestly and trust God. I respected them as adults but I was able to be casual with them at the same time. In this respect, they were our friends, too.



CD: Do you stay in touch with any of your St. Marcus classmates?

DT: Absolutely. I developed very close relationships with my classmates, and it's one of the things I cherish the most about my time in the school. We stay in touch, and they're still my closest friends today.

CD: How did St. Marcus nurture your personal faith?

DT: I came to St. Marcus from a tough situation at another school in Milwaukee. Basically, that school was a disaster for me because I got into trouble. When I was in 4th grade, I only made it halfway through the year at that school. That's when I switched to St. Marcus, which was a totally different environment. Everybody was so much more caring, and it's also where I first started learning about Jesus. I wanted to look for ways to be like Him. In fact, by the time I was in 5th grade I wanted to be a carpenter, like Jesus was. Learning about Jesus was a turning point for me at that time in my life.

CD: Where did you go to high school? Did your interest in carpentry continue through those years?

DT: I attended Wisconsin Lutheran High School. I've always been an experiential learner and gravitated toward hands-on work. In high school, I loved working with wood and metals in shop class, and I also really enjoyed ceramics. I started to realize that skilled work was my passion and career calling.

AFTER GRADUATING FROM WISCONSIN LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL, DE'ANGELO DID, IN FACT, EARN HIS CARPENTRY DIPLOMA FROM MATC. BUT HE DIDN'T STOP THERE. HE ALSO EARNED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY, AND COMPLETED TWO YEARS OF ACCOUNTING STUDY, ALL WHILE WORKING A VARIETY OF JOBS INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION AND AUTO REPAIR. MOST RECENTLY, HE JOINED WORLDWIDE MANUFACTURING COMPANY HELLERMANTYTON AS A PROCESS TECHNICIAN II. WORKING THERE ALSO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO EARN HIS JOURNEYMAN'S LICENSE IN INJECTION MOLDING.

CD: Are there lessons from your formative experiences at St. Marcus School that still resonate with you today?

DT: I would say that the idea of holding on to your faith, no matter what, is what has stuck with me the most. After high school, I wasn't exactly going to church on a regular basis. And I went through some really tough times that left me feeling desperate. So I said to myself, you know what? I'm just going to go to church. I'm going to see what happens when I start going back. Over time, my faith started to build back up and it truly turned my life around. Coming back to church at St. Marcus was like coming home.

Since re-energizing his faith life as a young adult, De'Angelo has poured his heart and soul into St. Marcus as a church member and volunteer. He currently coaches 4th grade basketball at the school, and he also coaches soccer with Superintendent Tyson (pictured below). He ushers for Saturday church services, and also serves on the St. Marcus School Council. In addition, he has volunteered at the school's newest Burleigh Street campus, helping clear and prepare unfinished spaces for demolition and renovation.

CD: What drives you to remain so closely engaged at St. Marcus?

DT: One of the main reasons I stay involved is to minister to the scholars. I love connecting with them, and I know that the Lord will guide me to the kids that need me most. They need to know that once they go out into the real world, they should keep church in their lives and remember to hold on to faith. When you're in elementary school, it's hard to visualize how you can apply the faith teachings you learn in school to the real world. The outside world can be tough. That's when you have to stay strong in your faith, so that you have a firm foundation to face everything that tests you.



“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

—John 16:33, one of De'Angelo's guiding scripture passages

SCHOLARS SUCCEED AT ST. MARCUS

written by Michele Kitson,
Mission Advancement Team

In August 2021, Kela and her family began their St. Marcus journey when her son Aaron walked through the temporary entrance doors of the newly opened Burleigh Street campus and into a temporary K4 classroom where he was warmly welcomed by his teacher Ms. Kristina Gonzales. In those two years since Aaron joined St. Marcus, the school's third campus has almost completed its transformation into a state-of-the-art educational environment.

Last school year, Aaron was joined by his little sister Tiffany. Both are striving toward their own goals and milestones as proud St. Marcus scholars.

When Aaron first came to St. Marcus, he was timid and struggled with language and speech barriers. But his teacher, Ms. Gonzales, and the special education team at St. Marcus knew how to break down those barriers and help Aaron's sunny personality and full potential shine through. Today, both Aaron and his sister Tiffany (K5) are thriving. The loving care and the expertise of Ms. Gonzales, their very first classroom teacher, along with the support of St. Marcus' speech pathologist and special education team not only helped both Tiffany and Aaron to come out of their shells but also to



Completed East Entryway



meet the milestones along their educational pathways.

"My favorite part of being a teacher is encouraging my scholars to do their best and to always look for ways to help those around you," says Kristina Gonzales. "Immediately upon meeting Aaron and Tiffany, I knew that they were able and willing to do these things. They always offer to help. They strive to do the best they can with their school work, and they become leaders in the classroom. I pray for their family and still get the biggest smiles and waves every time we cross paths. I am thankful they are in my life and I pray I am a blessing to them as much as they are to me."

- Kristina Gonzales | K4 Lead Teacher—first teacher of Aaron and Tiffany (pictured above)

Kela shares that she felt the St. Marcus difference right from the beginning for her two scholars.

"When we had our first parent orientation meeting, St. Marcus was transparent about the milestones that the kids needed to meet," says Kela. "I felt empowered to get them ready for school and help them continue to succeed. Ms. Gonzales was amazing and I am so grateful that both Aaron and Tiffany got to be in her classroom."

Kela shared that despite their challenges in speech, both Aaron and Tiffany have consistently met their milestones and really have started to shine academically. A large part of their success is the opportunity for parents to partner with classroom teachers. The line of communication is always open and the level of care and love for her children is apparent. Kela appreciates that the teaching staff

Aaron and Tiffany have consistently met their milestones and really have started to shine academically at St. Marcus.

is providing her children with a loving and supportive environment where they are able to grow and thrive.

"Tiffany and Aaron have both come so far in speech therapy," says speech language pathologist Rebecca Latterman. "Although at times speech therapy can be frustrating, because they are working on speech sounds that are difficult to master, they both show great perseverance. I really admire how they come to every speech session ready to learn and practice."



Tiffany (K5) is very excited about the art class in the newly completed and furnished art room (pictured above). Liza Goetter, art teacher, is encouraging scholars to think like artists and explore art as a form of self-expression.



This year, both Tiffany and Aaron were excited to come back to school. Aaron (1st grade) was most excited about seeing his friends and getting to explore the recently completed music room (pictured above). His mom shared that Aaron loves to sing and dance. This year he and his fellow first graders are learning all about rhythm during music class on tambourines, rhythm sticks, and shakers.



Aaron with his lunch in the newly renovated cafeteria

Because of St. Marcus friends and supporters, the Burleigh Street Campus is becoming a reality and creating opportunities for students like Aaron and Tiffany to thrive.

A COMMUNITY KNIT

Over 130, Milwaukee-area students, including 80 St. Marcus scholars, bumped, set, and spiked at a free volleyball camp, called "Volleyball Day Milwaukee," in August at St. Marcus. Area volleyball coaches and St. Marcus parents and staff also participated in a coaches clinic that same weekend. St. Marcus is grateful for local volleyball aficionados who took time to use their talents and resources to serve children in our city.

Representatives from Milwaukee Sting Volleyball Club, Badger Region Volleyball, USA Volleyball and the Marquette University volleyball team participated in this community event to share their skills during drills and engage kids with the sport. Each child went home with their very own volleyball to keep their momentum going.

Brad Van Dam (*pictured below*), a coach and board member for the Milwaukee Sting Volleyball Club, had the vision to host a "Volleyball Day Milwaukee" to expose more urban youth to the sport. He also wanted coaches to get training, and to provide sustainability for the sport at other schools. St. Marcus was the perfect venue to host. Brad brought a dozen Sting volleyball coaches and high school players who volunteered to help lead the sessions for the kids.

"A volleyball, net, facilities, and accessing quality coaching for the sport of volleyball in urban areas of Milwaukee may be out of reach for many families, and the people who donated their time, effort, passion, and money to start this project believe that gap can be closed", shared Brad. "It was important for us to ensure every athlete got a ball and an opportunity to enjoy the game and learn from great coaches at no cost."

About 30 adults participated in the four-hour long coaches clinic the Friday before to develop a coaching philosophy, provide lesson plan structure, and ensure athletes have a great learning experience at practices and games.

"Young athletes don't get good at sports or develop the character and leadership skills that are associated with them just from participation alone," says St. Marcus athletic director Seth Kock. "Coaches are some of the biggest influences, positive or negative, a kid will have. Adding the coaches' clinic element has the potential to be a transformational piece."

Seth believes that St. Marcus can be a hub for youth sports development in the city because of its facilities, location, work ethic, ambition, and service-oriented mission.

"I really enjoy putting on big events that bring in participants from all over the area into our space of the city," says Seth. "I also like to find ways to introduce St. Marcus athletes to sports and give them tools to become good at those sports."



"My grandfather believed in helping school age children and expanding opportunity for them. He created a foundation to support this endeavor following his passing. We were pleased to invest in this great event at St. Marcus and have exceptional gratitude for all the resources and time dedicated by so many to start Volleyball Day Milwaukee. I cannot wait to see how this event grows next year and hope the word spreads when children play with their new volleyball and play the games they learned during the camp over whatever they decide is their net, inspiring others to participate and make the event even larger. We had 1,000 balls to give away, and we would like to run out of them next year when we host this event again!"

—BRAD VAN DAM

TOGETHER

Marquette volleyball players donated their time signing autographs and balls. Marquette head coach Ryan Theis shared that when he let the team know about the opportunity to work with kids in their city, hands shot up to volunteer. The players demo'd a drill, took photos, and chatted with the kids. Having future leaders meet current leader models, provided lots of inspiration.



Scott Spiess of Badger Region Volleyball Association said his organization and USA Volleyball, (the national governing body of the sport and parent organization of Badger Region Volleyball), jumped at the chance to be a part of the free "Volleyball Day" to introduce the sport to young athletes. It was a no-brainer for Badger Region to enlist the help of some of the greatest teachers of the game in John Kessel and Eric Hodgson of USA Volleyball. Together and separately they have traveled the world teaching not only athletes, but coaches and teachers.

"Volleyball is a lifelong sport, why not get started in kindergarten," shared Scott. "It was wonderful to work with the people of St. Marcus, and we hope that volleyball will continue to grow and be a part of the St. Marcus community for a long time."



"I love the energy from my teammates and being a part of a team. They help and support me when I am struggling."

- Zoey, 6th grade scholar & volleyball player

"The volleyball camp at St. Marcus helped Zoey with her leadership and volleyball skills. She saw how important sportsmanship is. She is learning to be a team player on and off the court."

- Vernita, Zoey's Mom



"I love spiking and setting. The intensity of the crowd gets me hyped up and I want to do my best."

- Keri, 7th grade scholar & volleyball player



ST MARCUS
MUSTANGS

300

SCHOLAR ATHLETES
(out of 1,188 scholars)

45

COACHES
(we're always looking for more!)

Interested in supporting St. Marcus athletics or volunteering? Contact Seth Kock at seth.kock@stmarcus.org.

SPORTS OFFERED: Coed Cross Country | Girls Volleyball (5 teams) | Coed Soccer | Boys Basketball (8 teams) | Girls Basketball (6 teams) | Wrestling (Boys & Girls) | Track & Field (Boys & Girls) | Tennis

2021 & 2023 Track Team Lutheran State Champs | 2022 & 2023 Wrestling team took 2nd place at Wisconsin Lutheran High School tourney with an alumni as their coach

intertwined

St. Marcus School Gala

Nov 11, 2023

stmarcusgala.com

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Be Strong



**"I want them to be
*knit
together*
by strong ties of
love."**
-Colossians 2:2

PURCHASE TICKETS:





2215 North Palmer St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 562-3163

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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.



STMARCUS.ORG/SCHOOL

