

School Board News

2015-2016 School Year

SPRING 2016



For many years, I have had the joy of writing the School Board newsletter and have always used this edition to "spotlight" a family that will be leaving our school as their last child graduates 8th grade. Well, now it's my family that will be moving on with Grace's graduation. I have a myriad of feelings as I type this, and it is not an easy one for me to write! So, I decided to switch things up and reach out to all the other "graduating" parents. Here is what some of them chose to share.

Shae Hubka's family: With heart felt gratitude and appreciation for all our experiences, we leave the SMA Family. We selected SMA for its warm school welcome and strong school leadership. We will never forget the relationships forged at this community and the many good memories created here. It is with gratitude and bittersweet emotion that we leave SMA as we embrace the next adventure. Thank you from our hearts!!

Katie Zickert's family: It's hard to believe we made our first school drop off in 1998 with our son Zach, continued with our son Jacob and now 18 years later we will be making our last drop off with our youngest, Katie. Letting go of each of their hands was never hard to do because SMA has always been a safe and loving place for them. Each had such different learning styles but each was able to grow and thrive. It has been wonderful growing up with so many beautiful loving families. Thank You SMA staff & families!!

Melanie Morrison's family: I will miss the Walkathon, such a great "school spirit" booster! Both my girls have excelled in school as a result of the education here, specifically Workshop Way. They are very self-motivated, confident and eager to learn new things. I even use WW as I teach new nurses: It is intelligent to ask for help, we all learn from our mistakes and we are all unique in how we learn. My family and I will truly miss SMA and are grateful to God that we were part of this loving community.

Gabriella Soto's family: We feel thankful and blessed that all three of our children have spent their young, formative years at SMA. Mrs. DiMuzio, teachers, and staff have provided an environment that has fostered independence, a love of learning, and compassion in our children. We are confident that Gabriella is well prepared for high school as were her brother and sister. We will greatly miss this special faithful school community!

Mia Soto's family: As a parting family we want to say THANK YOU to the staff, parents, and students who made our combined 12 years at SMA a wonderful and grace-filled experience. From the moment we dropped Ben & Mia off at pre-school and throughout the years, we have felt a sense of belonging, support and Christian love. You will always have a special place in our hearts and we will continue to keep you in our prayers. God Bless.

Julia Warren's family: Julia has been at SMA for 9 years and it's hard to believe she is graduating from 8th grade already. She has learned so much and has made so many wonderful friends. As our family "graduates" from SMA, we will leave with many fond memories and special friendships. We are grateful to have been part of St. Martin of Tours Academy with Julia and her big sister Emily for the last 9 years.

Christian Byars' family: This concludes our second year at SMA. We have felt very welcome by the parents, staff, and students. The transition for Christian going to a new school went as well as could be expected and I believe that is due in large part to the values the parents instilled to their children and the high expectations from the staff. Thank you very much!!

Jakob Wood's parents: SMA has made a lasting impression on us. We selected SMA with the hopes that our children, Johanna ('15) and Jakob ('16) would receive an education and skills that would better prepare them for HS and beyond. The teachers at SMA truly care and engage deeply with our children and us as parents. We know our children have been deeply enriched by their experience and the relationships they've developed here with all those that make SMA a great school community. God bless SMA!

*Letting go of each of their hands
was never hard to do
because SMA has always been
a safe and loving place for them.*

-Lisa Zickert

Buzz Gardipee's family: St. Martin has provided an atmosphere in which our son, Buzz, has flourished academically, socially and spiritually! The teachers are ordinary people with extraordinary hearts, giving freely of their time, expertise and inspiration.

SMA School Board working with families to make a difference.

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Thank you for those who chose to share their thoughts. That gave me time to take a deep breath and write ours.

Grace Duppée's family: When we came to SMA 12 years ago, we already knew of Workshop Way and the school's excellent reputation. Our daughter Sophia graduated SMA in 2013 and now Grace is graduating. I honestly can't believe how fast the time here has flown by!

Mrs. Dimuzio was Sophia's 1st grade teacher. Her caring observations were a great help for Sophia. In Sophia's 8th SLE presentation, she acknowledged her gratefulness for the support she received from Mrs. Dimuzio. Through every grade, each of her teachers seemed to be the exact teacher Sophia needed at that time to be her best self.

Gracie was next for SMA. At the end of every grade, she would state that THAT teacher (for whichever grade) was her favorite! SMA provided a place for her to embrace her values and her teachers have always seen *her*, for who she is as a person, and I believe they do that for every child. All of her teachers have validated Grace's successes and been there with love, kindness, and understanding when she has had bumps in the road.

I know that we made the absolute right decision when we chose this school for our daughters.

Steve and I have found ways to support SMA. School Board, laminating, birthday book marks, calling & working bingo, and even writing this newsletter, are some that come to mind. We have been deeply grateful and blessed for each one of these opportunities to do service for our school.

Every parent I have interviewed for this "graduating family" edition mentions the wonderful school community here, and I agree. We have felt welcomed from the first day and felt that our presence here matters. One of our family's most difficult time was when I was hospitalized several times last year. I simply cannot find the right words, words with enough magnitude, to express how much it meant for Steve and me that Gracie, and even Sophia, were surrounded and cared for by people who loved them and kept them safe: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Thank you SMA, for touching our hearts, changing our lives, and allowing our daughters to thrive.

—Denise Duppée

In our middle school grades this year, we welcomed our 6th grade homeroom teacher Mrs. Mosel, who teaches English/Language Arts and Spanish and our 7th grade homeroom teacher Mr. Woltz, who teaches Math and Science. I checked in with them to hear about their successful first year with SMA.



Kristina Mosel: With encouragement from her past teacher and mentor Mrs. Mazzara (our 2nd grade teacher), Mrs. Mosel applied for the position for the language arts teacher. Having been a Workshop Way student herself, and with over 4 years working at a Charter school teaching middle and high school, Mrs. Mosel was a perfect choice. "It

has been a wonderful first year getting to know the students and the SMA community. They have helped make the transition a dynamic yet seamless one." Speaking of Workshop Way she said, "Teachers embrace each student's unique individual needs in order to learn in a more meaningful and effective manner, rethinking our approaches to make learning more relevant, engaging, and holistic." Recognizing SMA's remarkable achievement with Fair Trade, Mrs. Mosel looks forward to helping with the continued development of these practices. In closing, "I feel very blessed to have been a part of the SMA parish and school community this year. They are truly an inspiration in terms of developing a sense of community through their distinctive combination of faith, academic excellence, and civic duty."

David Woltz: In addition to teaching middle school math and science, Mr. Woltz is also our SeaPerch coach and yearbook advisor. After 20 years in the Navy, Mr. Woltz began teaching after his retirement, beginning his "second career" after completing his teaching degree. He taught for 9 years at another parochial school before coming to SMA. Mr. Woltz said that it was the people at SMA that helped make his transition here so enjoyable. "Everyone has just been fantastic. It has been a wonderful experience to become a part of the SMA family." In speaking of our school community he said, "I have been impressed with how involved families are with the life of the school. I have lost track of the times that parents from other grades have stopped to ask how I like the school." Looking to the future, "I want to expand and improve the program we ran this year and deepen the implementation of the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS) especially the engineering curriculum." Mr. Woltz finished by telling me, "I just want to thank everyone for helping to make this a great year. It has been a joy to come here each day."



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WINTER 2016



St. Martin of Tours Academy becomes a Fair Trade School!

The Fair Trade Campaign officially recognizes
St. Martin of Tours Academy
for committing to educating students about the issues of Fair
Trade and by sourcing Fair Trade products.

I am sure that you have seen our school and church signage letting you know that we use Fair Trade products. And for the 5th grade fundraiser (for their 6th grade camp), Fair Trade products were sold. By shopping more consciously and choosing to purchase Fair Trade products, we are supporting an international economic system that helps farmers, artisans, and workers lift themselves out of poverty.

Just that alone is a wonderful commitment made by our parish and school. But we did not stop there! Anne Pacheco gathered a committee of administration, staff, parents and children to work on having our school be officially designated as a Fair Trade School.

This is quite a distinction and one that we as a community should be proud to participate in and have acknowledged. When I went to the Fair Trade website, I saw the list of Declared Campaigns that met the required goals to achieve Fair Trade status. There were 21 from US schools, and 5 from California. Having just recently been recognized, St. Martin was number 21 on the list!



Fair Trade Committee

(L-R) Nan Soto, Chair Anne Pacheco, Tracy Giordano, Cory McMahon, Alicia Crockett, Diane Hartley (Front row) Isabella Giordano, Zachary Crockett, Presley McMahon, Toni Dimuzio

Mrs. Dimuzio told me that SMA has been chosen to be on the cover of the Spring edition of the NCEA (National Catholic Education Association) magazine, *Momentum*. In the edition, SMA will be highlighted for being the 1st Fair Trade school in the Diocese, and the first Catholic elementary school in the nation!

SMA School Board working with families to make a difference.

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Two of our School Members, Tracy Giordano and Cory McMahon, are also on the Fair Trade Committee. I spoke with Cory and got her thoughts on SMA's Fair Trade campaign, "As a part of the St. Martin community, I feel very proud of the hard work the School, The Fair Trade committee & especially Anne Pacheco has put into getting our School designated as a Fair Trade School. This is quite a distinction as we are the 1st elementary school in California to earn this designation. I am also glad our kids are learning about Fair Trade around the world as part of our school

"Fair Trade seeks to enable economic development through equitable trading partnerships. Fair Trade ensures consumers that the products they purchase were grown, harvested, crafted and traded in ways that improve lives and protect the environment."
 (fairtradecampaigns.org)

curriculum which enhances their understanding of different cultures."

Cory's 6th grade daughter Presley is one of the student representatives on committee. Presley shared, "I feel Fair Trade is good because people are paid fairly for things they sell and are able to support their families from fair wages."

The committee students and Anne were recently interviewed by the editor of the La Mesa Courier. Look for the edition to come out next Friday!



Presley and her sister Scarlett finding Fair Trade in the grocery store!



Presley, Isabella, and Zachary presenting to the class.



Check out the site to learn more and become followers:
<http://fairtradecampaigns.org/campaign/st-martin-of-tours-academy/>

The National Catholic Education Association will be having their national conference here in San Diego April 28th-April 1st. SMA and the other diocesan schools are hosting the conference. During the NCEA's conference, fifth

grade teacher Nan Soto will be presenting a workshop on Dyslexia. (Hosting the national conference is the reason our school will be on Easter Break for two weeks instead of the typical one week.)

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