



Making our Mark

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2013

REACHING. Sharing. Giving. Growing. The spring always makes me feel refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready for continued growth. For some, the spring inspires cleaning, for others resolutions, and for still others, gardening. I may not have much of a green thumb myself, but I do consider our school to be a sort of garden, with faculty and staff continuously planting the seeds that will later bloom within our students. At St. Mark's, we not only strive to grow our students' intellect, but also their moral and spiritual character. This growth does not take place overnight; it requires years of nurturing, cultivating, and, at times, pruning. One of the best ways to really develop moral character is to instill a healthy, growing sense of service and to "water" that sense of service frequently. For this reason, we introduce our students to outreach opportunities at even the youngest age and continue outreach programs through 8th grade. This year our commitment to develop a meaningful and organized outreach program has made significant growth. Each grade level is responsible for developing and completing a project that will aid someone in need. Grades have selected projects that benefit animals, the environment, the elderly or the needy. We believe it is important to demonstrate gratitude within our community, but also to instill the spirit of giving within our children. Our projects vary in scope, action and reach, but they all benefit our community and encourage our students, who have been given so much, to give back. The ability to share our time, treasures and talents is not a new concept at St. Mark's; we are a community that gives abundantly. Our organized outreach program has become reborn, and it is a program that I am sure will blossom and root itself in the center of our community. In this edition of *Making Our Mark*, we invite you to learn more about the various outreach projects that our students are creating, organizing, and completing.



1st Graders with Mr. Wagers after creating Valentine's cards for Brighton Gardens

“ BUT OUR ORGANIZED OUTREACH PROGRAM IS ONLY BEGINNING TO SPROUT. IT IS A PROGRAM THAT I AM SURE WILL BLOSSOM AND ROOT ITSELF IN THE CENTER OF OUR COMMUNITY. ”

WE ARE EXCITED to UNveil the UNGala on Saturday, April 13, 2013. This year's event will take place on our campus, and offer a casual atmosphere. UNderwriting opportunities are still available, and reservations are available for \$75 per person. Come and share a good time and fellowship with fellow St. Mark's parents while supporting the school and enriching our programs.

Check out our online reservation form at www.stmes.org/ungala or call the Development Office.

Join Us!





FOR MOST St. Mark's graduates, outreach and service do not cease once they leave. Mackenzie Hicks, class of 2006, has continued to grow and develop her community involvement throughout her life. Last summer, she spent a month in Zambia working in a mission hospital in a rural village. As a Biology / Pre-Med Major at Davidson College, Mackenzie (pictured) assisted in the outpatient department and HIV clinic primarily, as well as working on her independent research project. Additionally, she spent most afternoons at the Centre for Orphans and Vulnerable Children playing with the children there. Mwandu has a population of roughly 8000 with 1300 orphans and vulnerable children (1+ parent has died of HIV). Through this experience, Mackenzie has developed a passion and a heart for HIV/AIDS victims and is looking to pursue more opportunities to give to this worthy cause. Mackenzie continues to



practice outreach, which is the best way to grow a servant's heart.



AT ST. MARK'S, we strive to leave a lifelong impression on our graduates. In turn, many graduates leave a lasting impact on St. Mark's. Alex and Seth Frank (St. Mark's class of 2003 and 2006, respectively) both earned the prestigious title of Eagle Scout through St. Mark's Boy Scout Troop 211. When it came time to complete their Eagle Scout Projects, Alex and Seth each decided to benefit a place that had given so much to them. For his Eagle Project, Alex installed all the shelving in the St. Mark's gym storage room. A few years later, Seth completed his Eagle Project by creating the Labyrinth between

the church and the school. Alex is a 2011 graduate of Texas A&M University with a BS in Recreation Parks & Tourism Science and is now selling real estate for Keller Williams Metropolitan. Seth is a Junior at Texas A&M University studying Environmental Geosciences. Seth was recently selected as one of 80 students to be a Fish Camp Co-Chair for 2013-14; this is a great honor and requires a great commitment of time for others. Although the Frank brothers no longer walk the halls of St. Mark's, their legacy of service remains. We still enjoy the fruits of their labor every day, and we strive to encourage today's students to develop a similar deep-rooted sense of service.

KUDOS to the following St. Mark's Lions who made the honor roll at their respective high schools:

CLASS OF 2009: Zachary Boihem, Blake Bourne, Nasim Dimassi, Cole Kinnie, Emma Krenzke, Sarah Lach, Manon Masson, Alex Palmer, Michael Prappas, Jessie Ramsey, Luke Samora, Catherine Urso, Matthew Vrabc; **CLASS OF 2010:** Lauren Adamski, William Wade Burton, John Clarke, Christopher Janssen, Amanda Nart, Colleen Phillips, Rami Sabbagh, Davis Stubblefield; **CLASS OF 2011:** Ashley Chainani, Lizzet Clifton, Lauren Graham, Stuart Masson, Ben Neukomm, Brandon Ogle, Isabel Rumbaut, Jake Samora, Ali Silverman, Eleanor Watts; **CLASS OF 2012:** Trey Bourne, Caitlin Clarke, Christian Clarke, Erik Garza, Wesley Herbst, Jake Irr, Neil Kerrigan, Sarah Klute, Clark Palmer, Lizzie Polikoff, Morgan Rogers, Nichole Scheffer, John Wall, Kalen Ziegler

HIGH SCHOOL AGE ALUMNI *Save the date!* Please join us on Sunday, April 28 for an Alumni Gathering here on campus. Please make sure that we have your updated email address to ensure that you receive all the latest information from our Development office. Email Lstansell@stmes.org today!



OUR CHILDREN are set to succeed. By succeed I mean they have a higher chance of access to the kind of education process that will see most, if not all, of our children attending college. Besides that high possibility, our children have access to medicines, doctors, and medical facilities unlike any children in the world. The healthy food choices our children have access to are also unparalleled. Our children are kept safe, sleep in warm beds, have access to travel. Our children have access to success.

This sets them in a peculiar and particular

place. That peculiar and particular place is a call to mindfulness. For me, mindfulness is an awareness of our gifts and the ability to act on behalf of someone else. It is peculiar, distinctive to our children, whose access to success is unequalled in history. It is particular, because our actual children, here at St. Mark's, are in this position. We helped make them, we are providing for them, and as such we have a chance to also raise the most peculiar and particularly emphatic children in the world. Children who become adults, who in turn seek to use their gifts for the benefit of the world.

We, the parents, are also set in a peculiar and particular time. Our children learn from our own mindful reactions to the world's needs, and our own successes and failures. For me, I seek to be so profoundly mindful of my surroundings that

my children cannot help but learn from me. I seek to be mindful of my gifts in such a way that my children cannot help but see me using them. I am mindful of my call to serve others, not as a priest, but as a human being, so much so that my children emulate and then make their own choice to live mindfully in the service of others.

With such an access to success, and such an opportunity to raise mindful, aware, and empathetic kids, we should not waste one minute seeking to figure out our own mindful, aware and empathetic selves. We could change the world. Maybe, even better, we will change the world. We will do this together, change the world now and raise kids who, in their lifetime, will also change the world.



- Rev. Patrick J. Miller

Springing into Action



St. Mark's is springing into action. We are digging in, branching out, and planting seeds of service within our students.

At St. Mark's, we have made a commitment to each grade to complete an outreach project, as we strive to make service a priority for our students. This year, our outreach program has taken on new life, with the addition of Outreach Coordinators and a structured process.

Outreach projects at St. Mark's encourage students to give of their time, talents and treasures. Grade-level outreach projects are organized by each grade's teachers, and managed by the school's Outreach Coordinators, 1st grade teacher, Andrea Hoelscher and science teacher, Jason Carroll. All grade-level projects are either hands-on community service, or drives in which students donate items to a charity. Andrea Hoelscher explains, "It is important to show kids at a young age the concept of charity and giving. It teaches students that not all rewards are tangible. I love to see the light bulb moment when a child sees how good it feels to make someone else's day."

Outreach Coordinator Jason Carroll is

excited for the new organization of the outreach program at St. Mark's. He shares, "Winston Churchill once said, 'We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.' I believe his words ring true

"As students grow and their perspective matures, we literally want them to see need and then willingly give of their time, talents or other blessings that God has bestowed upon them."

-Bobby Hicks



today. I want our students to value their community and understand the importance of giving back. We are a community engaged and our outreach program is a

testimony to that." It is exciting to have such passionate leaders like Mr. Carroll and Mrs. Hoelscher at the helm of the outreach program.

Students engage in a variety of outreach projects throughout the year, including projects organized by grade-level, student council, National Junior Honor Society, or individual students. As Lower School Head Bobby Hicks explains, "Whether creating cards for veterans, collecting shoes for local students, or collecting pennies for leukemia and lymphoma patients, we want our students to understand the support we are providing our neighbors."

According to Middle School Head, Lawrence DeLuca, "We attempt to foster our students' desire to contribute to our community selflessly, and we are proud that so many students are already making a difference." As students graduate and leave St. Mark's, we hope that their commitment to serving their community and world is rooted deeply within their hearts.



Jingle Bell Express

The PRE-K families (along with the St. Mark's community at large) gather new books and toys for young children and teenagers to be distributed at the CCSC during the Christmas holidays at a local church. This year, Pre-K exceeded their goal of 300 items by collecting 347 gifts. Items were bagged in groups of ten and carried out to cars of St. Mark's church members by the children. Pre-K students shared, "We liked sharing a lot of toys with children who don't have any."

<< Sebastian (K) and Lyla Rew (Preschool 3) show their toys for donation. PreK students help carry the toys out to St. Mark's Church members' cars. >>





Bird Feeders
The **PRESCHOOL 2s** classes create bird feeders for the birds on campus. Spreading peanut butter and honey on a bagel, the students then dip their feeders into birdseed

and each take a turn hanging the bird feeders on several of the trees on campus. Students get a taste of peanut butter once their feeders are complete, but it was hard for *Bailey Sausse (pictured)* to wait, because, just like the birds, she really likes peanut butter! Over the course of the next few weeks, Preschool 2s watch as their feathered friends come and enjoy a delicious meal. Even the youngest students at St. Mark's learn the importance of giving to all of God's creatures, big and small.

Easter Seals

In December, **STUDENT COUNCIL**, led by Secretary Alexis Covington, organized Pajama Day, benefiting the Easter Seals. Students (and faculty!) who donated one pair of new pajamas to children with disabilities wore pajamas to school. Student Council collected 284 pairs of pajamas for the Easter Seals.

>> *Officers Alexis Covington and Pierce Hollier collecting piles and piles of pajamas.*



Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Earlier this year, a student proposed a "Pennies for Patients" fundraiser to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Once approved, the middle school **STUDENT COUNCIL** asked students to gather their spare change in January. After three weeks of collecting, St. Mark's donated \$2,194.93 to the cause!



Water Conservation

Students in the **PRESCHOOL 3s** class complete a water conservation project. The project, held in April annually, begins with an explanation of the value of clean water. Students watch a video and learn that not everyone in the world has access to clean water, and some must carry buckets of water very far distances just to take a bath! The three-year-olds recreate this experience, by carrying full buckets of water to a "bath tub" that is located several yards away. At the end of the demonstration, the water from the "tub" is put back in the buckets, and the kids water the plants on campus. Following this demonstration, students take home a small water jar, and are asked to put spare change in the jar each time they use water at night in their homes. The spare change is sent to Living Water International to help with maintaining a well that is next to a school in Uganda.

<< *Preschool 3s experience what it would be like to transport water, April 2012*



Valentines for Seniors

In February, **1st GRADE** spreads the love by making Valentine's Day cards for residents at Brighton Gardens Nursing Homes. To create their loving cards, 1st graders learned the ancient art of Origami and created several cheerful Origami hearts. Owen Lynch shares, "It's better to give than to receive." Molly Brophy adds, "I like making cards for them, because it's the nice thing to do."



<< left, a handwritten Valentine;
>>right, Sophia Shapiro poses with her Valentine's Card

Houston Food Bank

On November 16, 2012, scores of fans filled the gym for the second annual **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY vs. Faculty Basketball Game**, benefitting the Houston Food Bank. The gym was rocking with cheers from spectators, cheering for both sides. Ultimately, the faculty managed to squeak out a 29-27 victory, overcoming the students. Although the faculty won the game, the real winner was the Houston Food Bank. St. Mark's School collected over 300 cans of food, which were served and enjoyed during the Christmas season.

>> top, NJHS Students and faculty; bottom, canned food items were donated to the Houston Food Bank



SPCA

St. Mark's **2nd GRADERS** participate in a "Purr-fect Howl-oween" project. Students donate dog and cat toys and grooming supplies for the Houston SPCA. This past October, our 33 students collected over 65 items. This project also helped raise awareness for the SPCA within 2nd graders; several students have been inspired to adopt pets from the SPCA. The SPCA was thrilled with the gifts...no tricks, all treats!



Beautification Project

5th GRADERS look close to home for their outreach efforts, completing the St. Mark's Beautification Project. In the spring, they complete an on campus project where students make positive environmental changes to our landscape. Goals of this year's project are to camouflage the chain link fence and the businesses behind the school by the science wing.



<< 8th Graders Sulafa Alkhunaizi and Fadila Farag volunteering at The Way Station

Center for Orphans & Vulnerable Children

The **3rd GRADERS** plan to operate a spring book drive for the Centre for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Mwandi, Zambia. It is estimated that 35% of the Mwandi population is infected with HIV/AIDS, and most children in the area either live with sick parents, or are orphaned. St. Mark's 3rd graders love reading so much, and they are very excited to share the gift of literacy with Zambia's vulnerable children!

Homeless Outreach

Each week, the **8th GRADE** students participate in Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church's Way Station, whose mission is to care for the Houston's hungry and homeless. Over 300 people go through the Way Station every morning, and our students greet everyone with smiles and treat them with respect, while serving them a delicious breakfast. By volunteering at The Way Station with their advisory groups, on a 5 week rotation, 8th graders are able to build the habit of outreach. For many students, the 8th grade outreach project is the culmination of their service experience at St. Mark's. Students truly feel the impact of this ongoing project. According to 8th grader Alexia Thomas, "Before I went to The Way Station, I didn't realize how many people need help. It's amazing to see the different side of our community and give back." According to Malia McKenna, the outreach program at St. Mark's has established a foundation of service. She explains, "I know that I will continue to take part in community service, not only in high school, but for the rest of my life. St. Mark's has taught me the importance of service, and I love feeling like I'm helping others."

Urban Harvest

6th GRADERS plan to work with Urban Harvest, whose mission is to promote healthy communities, sound nutrition and respect for the environment by educating children and adults and facilitating harvest and habitat gardens.



Friends For Life

St. Mark's **KINDERGARTEN** classes are pairing with their **4th GRADE** buddies and plan to conduct a pet food drive in May, benefitting Friends for Life. With a goal of collecting a lot of items for the many hungry kitties and puppies, kindergarten and 4th graders are excited for this opportunity to help furry friends, while spending time with their buddies. As kindergartner, Avery Kelling shares, "We should help them [the animals] so they can be happy, be clean and be full!"



Sheltering Arms Senior Center

Rotating by advisories, the **7th GRADE** students take turns volunteering at the Sheltering Arms Senior Center. This center provides care for seniors with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. Each week, our students spend time speaking with the seniors, playing games, and performing. Some of the performances included students playing the guitar, piano, and singing songs. According to 7th grader Camille Bourgeois, "I like to give the seniors company and spend time with them." Lana Elserag adds, "While we're here, we become new friends, and I think it makes their day better."

<< top left, 7th grader Lucy Wall calling the Bingo game at Sheltering Arms
<< bottom left, Austin McGinnis playing The Star Spangled Banner for the seniors



DRAWING inspiration from the St. Mark's Honor Code, the **Lower School Student Council** has focused their work this year on supporting classmates through kindness and responsibility. In the fall, the Student Council focused on encouraging kindness among classmates. They created a "Kindness Scavenger



Camille Hanna, Lauren Fulghum, Justin Kioumehr and Max Melton (all 4th graders) pose with their kindness letters.

Hunt," in which student council members placed large letters (spelling out kindness) around the campus, being careful to hide the letters in places where kindness should

be used, like the cafeteria and the gym. Camille Hanna believes that kindness is a trait that is extremely pervasive at St. Mark's. She stated, "I can't name one person at St. Mark's that is mean or unkind." Justin Kioumehr, who is in his first year at St. Mark's, shared, "St. Mark's is a community of kindness." This spring, the Student Council is focusing on responsibility, by creating a large responsibility banner that students will have the opportunity to sign. Their goal is for every student sign the banner, as a result of being responsible in the classroom. According to Lauren Fulghum, "We want the school to be a really nice community, especially to visitors." The Lower School Student Council members serve as role models for the rest of the school. As Max Melton stated, "We [as student council members] want to hold St. Mark's together." By showing kindness and responsibility to others through their own actions, the lower school student council members are demonstrating a different form of outreach.

ON 12-12-12 **Kristiana Alaniz** (6th Grade) celebrated her 12th birthday, and she wanted to make her "golden birthday" even more special and meaningful. When the time came for Kristiana to have her birthday party, she came up with an incredibly selfless idea. Instead of gifts, she asked her friends to bring new



or gently used coats and jackets to donate to the Star of Hope. Drawing inspiration from her parents, who have always encouraged her to give to those in need, Kristiana collected

62 coats and jackets for women and children. She went with her parents to deliver her birthday presents to the Star of Hope. According to Kristiana, giving is important because she enjoys "feeling like she's helped someone."

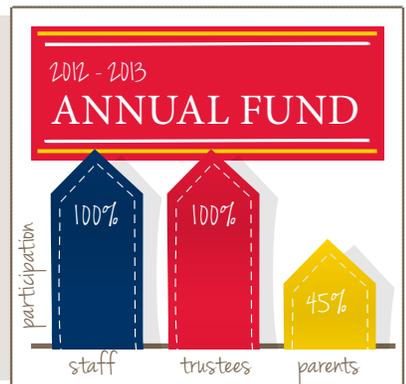
Dr. Brené Brown Enlightens St. Mark's Community

ON FEBRUARY 5, ST. MARK'S AND THE ST. MARK'S PARENT GUILD HOSTED DR. BRENÉ BROWN FOR A SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF "THE GIFTS OF IMPERFECT PARENTING." WITH NEARLY 400 ATTENDEES, THE EVENING WAS BOTH EDUCATIONAL AND INSIGHTFUL. ACCORDING TO BRENÉ, "THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A DEEP-SEATED SENSE OF LOVE AND BELONGING BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE WORTHY OF LOVE AND BELONGING." THE EVENT CONCLUDED WITH AN IMPROMPTU PERFORMANCE OF JOURNEY'S "DON'T STOP BELIEVING" BY BRENÉ AND OUR VERY OWN GARHETT WAGERS, WHICH HAD THE GYM ROCKING! SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED, OUR PARENT GUILD, AND OUR PARENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR, *Nicole Ellithorpe*. HOPEFULLY WE ALL GAINED SOME VALUABLE TIPS FROM BRENÉ TO "BE THE ADULT WE WANT OUR KIDS TO BE."



Thanks From Our Development Department

THE ST. MARK'S ANNUAL FUND is reaching new heights! Our current first and fourth grade classes are leading with 64% and 59% participation, respectively. You may have noticed our new thermometer on campus. We plan to keep you up-to-date on our progress throughout the spring. We are currently at 45% participation among parents. The national average for parent participation in giving in independent schools is approximately 69.2%. Go online, stop by the Development office, or call today and help us reach our goals!





Lions Sports News

THE BUZZER has sounded on the 2012-2013 St. Mark's basketball season, and with its conclusion, we reflect upon some of the highlights. St. Mark's students love basketball, so this year we created six teams. This is the first year in school history that three girls teams represented St. Mark's. Additionally, St. Mark's will have two new banners hung in the gym for our Boys Junior Varsity team and our Girls Varsity team!

Girls Varsity went 14-0 in conference play, defeating The Honor Roll School in an exciting, must-win last game of the year. This is the first GHAC Championship for a St. Mark's girls team since 2005-2006. The team's coaches, Fred Silverstein and Allison Akers, report that the team played outstanding defense all season. At the St. Mark's Invitational, both *Alice Watts* and *Emily Lander* were named on the "All-Tournament" team.

Our Boys Varsity, under Coach Edward White, struggled in a very competitive league but finished strong, recording two victories in the last month of the season. The team, led by three memorable six-footers, *Chris Luther*, *Sam Burton* and *David Stiles*, played with a lot of heart. David Stiles was named as the "All-Tournament Player" at both the St. Mark's Invitational and St. Francis Episcopal tournaments.

The Girls Junior Varsity team, led by Coach John Mitchell, finished with an overall winning record, despite playing a schedule against much bigger schools. They came in 3rd at the Duchesne Tournament and then placed 3rd again at the Cats Classic Tournament, defeating ROBS. *Sydney Cherek* and *Grace Schrimsher* were awarded "All-Tournament" trophies at the Cats Classic Tournament.

The St. Mark's Boys Junior Varsity team, coached by Noah Miller, finished as co-champions with an overall record of 8-5. This team will be recognized with the first GHAC Junior Varsity banner on the wall in the gym. Early in the season, the team won a consolation trophy

at the St. Mark Lutheran Tournament. At the last tournament of the season, *Christian Walmsley* was named to the Cats' Classic "All-Tournament" team.

Coaches Silverstein and Akers led the 6th Grade Girls team to an undefeated scrimmage season. The team was 10-0 in regular scrimmage games. The girls attended two tournaments. At the Lions' Tournament, the team placed 2nd, losing to a very good HCYA team, and *Elliott Leathers* was named to the "All-Tournament" team. The girls placed 3rd in the St. Francis Tournament, and *Kristiana Alaniz* was named the "All Tournament Player."

Reggie Wilcox coached our 6th Grade Boys through a full schedule of 14 scrimmage games and two tournaments. The highlight of their season came at the St. Mary's Tournament, when the team took home a third place trophy. At the Panthers' 6th Grade Tournament, *Joe Shapiro* was named the "All Tournament Player."

We wish our graduating athletes the best in their future endeavors, both athletically and academically, we and eagerly look forward to watching our current 6th and 7th grade athletes take the next step forward.



6th Grade Boys Basketball Team



6th Grade Girls Basketball Team



Boys Junior Varsity Basketball Team



Girls Junior Varsity Basketball Team



Boys Varsity Basketball Team



Girls Varsity Basketball Team

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ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL
A Community Engaged



St. Mark's Joins the Positive Movement

IN JANUARY, St. Mark's became the eleventh school to join the +Works (pronounced Positive Works) community. +Works is a parent-driven, non-profit organization, which strives for positive community change on issues including bullying and other community concerns. We are thrilled to grow as a more positive, forward-thinking community!

SPRING 2013 | NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events

March	
5-6	Texas Bluebonnet Breakfast
11-15	Spring Break
23	PSIA
28	Early Dismissal Grandparents Day
29	School Holiday Good Friday
April	
1	School Holiday Easter Monday
5	Elementary Field Day
8-12	ERB Testing
13	UnGala
24-26	5th Grade Class Trip 6th Grade Class Trip
29	8th Grade DC Trip (thru May 3)
May	
1-3	7th Grade San Antonio Trip
10	Heritage Festival
23	Baccalaureate and Graduation
24	Last Day of School



stmes.org/heritagefestival