

THE NATIVITY JESUIT



BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

# INNOVATION, EXPANSION, DIVERSIFICATION:

## A Course is set!

Seton Education  
Blended Learning Partnership pg 3

k4 growth-  
classroom renovation pg 5

Nativity's First  
Harvard Graduate pg 6

EDUCATING YOUTH FOR A LIFE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## DEAR FRIENDS OF NATIVITY

Over the past year Nativity board and school leadership have been discerning the following: how do we sustain and grow the good works of our Jesuit middle school? We determined that our strategic vision needed to include these elements: innovation, expansion and revenue diversification. I'm excited to share the direction Nativity is headed.

**INNOVATION:** After a rigorous application process Nativity was selected from a host of cities to become the fifth Catholic school in America to implement a blended learning model. Blended learning allows teachers to directly instruct students while integrating adaptable technology to better meet individual student learning needs. With the support of the Seton Education Partners, Nativity has made this innovative instructional shift this fall and joins the ranks of Catholic schools in San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. This is an unbelievable opportunity for our school and we look forward to sharing with you the impact this model has on student learning.

**EXPANSION:** After twenty years of successfully serving the Latino community as an all-boy middle school, it is time for Nativity to grow. Not only will we be adding to our middle school grades, we will be working with our students over a longer period of time as we expand to add primary school years. Our growth will be intentional, adding our first class of 4-year-old kindergarten in the fall and adding a class each subsequent year until we are a full K4-8th grade school. As we gradually fill our facility, we will better meet the community's demand for more seats in high performing schools.

**REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION:** Finally, our board has approved Nativity's participation in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). This year, 90% of our families meet income and residency requirements that qualify students for participation in MPCP. This will allow Nativity to diversify our revenue stream and be more sustainable for future years.

These three shifts - the blended learning model, expansion of our school, and participation in MPCP - will allow us to sustain and grow the good works of our Jesuit school. Thank you for your ongoing support and for being part of this journey with us!



MELODIE WYTENBACH  
PRESIDENT



*"Thank you for your ongoing support and for being part of this exciting journey with us."*

# GSP - GRADUATIONS, HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Four years ago, Nativity graduated 20 students from 8th grade. The Nativity class of 2010 had formed a brotherhood during their years at camp and school -- a brotherhood that would surely change and evolve during their high school years at four different private high schools. The 14-year-old boys have grown into young men. They share a desire for education and are ready to pursue college and careers, and their moral and faith formation means that they will do so with a commitment to leadership and service.

The vast majority of these young men are the first generation in their families to graduate from high school, and each of them is graduating from the private high school where he started as a freshman. Out of these twenty, 85% are enrolled in college in the fall. A Nativity record six students from this class will attend Marquette University: an Opus Scholar, two Urban Scholars, and three into the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Another student accepted a full scholarship to St. Mary's University in Winona, MN. Five will head to Cardinal Stritch University, four will attend UW-Milwaukee, two will start at UW-Waukesha, and one will be going to Edgewood College.



Having these kinds of opportunities to go to college is a credit to the

shared efforts of the boys themselves, their families, the high schools, Nativity, and our many benefactors. Our partnership with the families, mentors, and the high schools provides a support network for each young man to experience success. Their accomplishments are diverse: Abraham S. was his class president at St. Lawrence; Eliazar T. set a school record for powerlifting at Marquette High; Alexis S. led a Kairos Retreat at Dominican; Manny H. earned the group's only 4.0 GPA one quarter at St. Thomas More; and Eduardo D. told me the day after his BC Calc exam, "I know I got a 5!" The "Senior Slump" notion did not affect these boys.



These boys were in 8th grade during my last year as the camp director. This year, they graduated high school during my first year as the Director of Graduate Support. I am proud of them, and they embody the characteristics of Nativity alumni: open to growth, seeking intellectual excellence, loving, religious, and committed to justice.

JOHN MEULER  
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE SUPPORT



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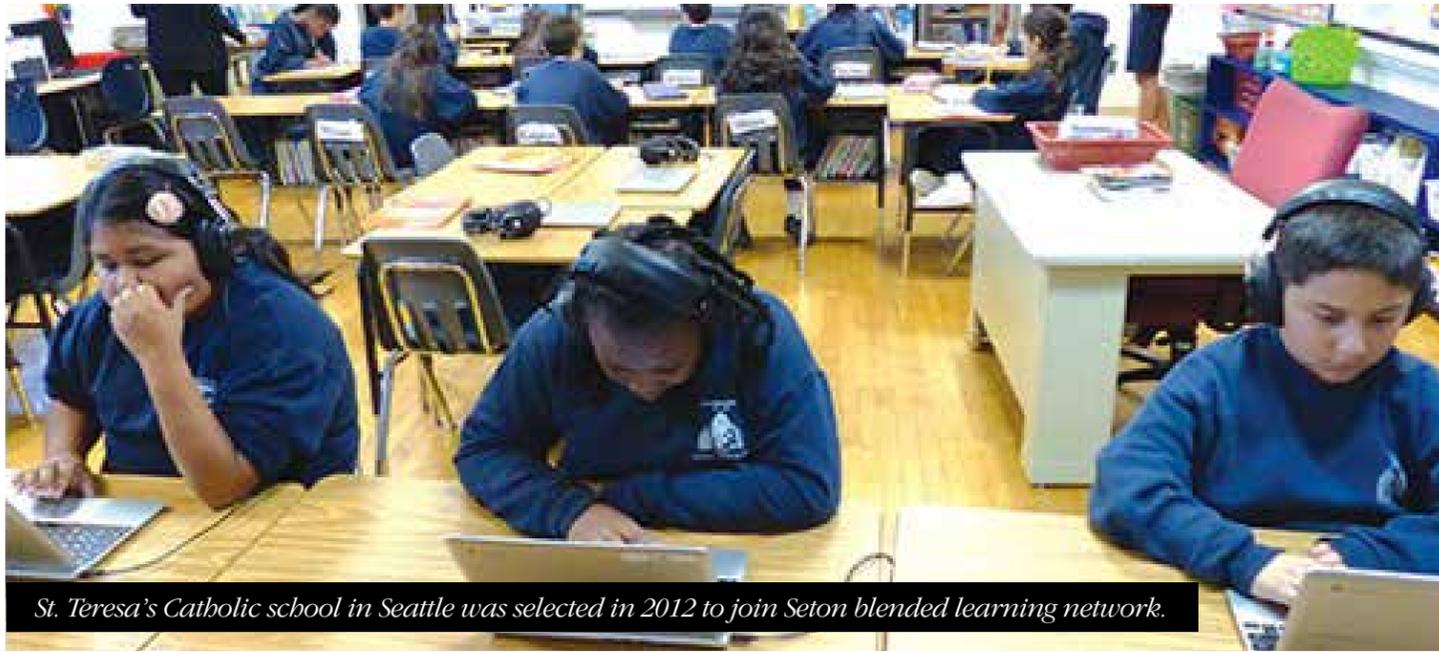
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# SETON EDUCATION BLENDED LEARNING PARTNERSHIP



*St. Teresa's Catholic school in Seattle was selected in 2012 to join Seton blended learning network.*

Computer technology has changed most aspects of our lives. Until this century, education had somehow escaped much change from technology. Teachers still directly instruct rows of students in classrooms. While whiteboards have replaced many blackboards, and computer projectors have replaced many overhead projectors, the lessons and projects are typically done in the same way they were a few decades ago.

Education's time for change with technology has arrived. In 2012, over four million students were participating in some kind of formal online-learning program. By 2020 researcher Michael Horn estimates over half of our nation's high schools will adopt some form of blended learning. As the technology trend remains strongest for university and high school students, more

sophisticated software has been developed for elementary and middle school students. Such adaptable software allows teachers to better tailor instruction to meet individual student needs.

An organization leading in school technology integration is Seton Education Partners. Driven to increase enrollment in Catholic schools nationally and drive stronger student outcomes, Seton Education Partners innovatively launched their first blended learning Catholic K5-8th grade school at Mission Dolores in San Francisco, CA in 2011. What resulted was robust academic gains - students outperformed the national average on the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, achieving one or more years of growth in reading and

math by double-digit numbers. This growth was on par or outpaced many other high performing charter school networks and it was clear to Seton founders, Stephanie Garcia de Saroki and Scott Hamilton, that this model needed to expand to more Catholic schools.

In 2012, St. Teresa's Catholic school in Seattle was selected to join Seton's Blended Learning Network, and in 2013 St. Anne's in Los Angeles and DePaul Catholic School in Philadelphia joined the growing Network. After a rigorous application process, Nativity Jesuit Middle School was selected from a host of cities to become the fifth Catholic school to partner with Seton and implement this blended learning model. Seton also expanded to Cincinnati in the fall of 2014.

Generous funding from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation make this programming possible.

"Nativity Jesuit Middle School has been an important partner in our mission of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for twenty years," said Dr. Kathleen Cepelka, Superintendent of Catholic Schools. "We're delighted that Nativity Jesuit is expanding its

outreach to underserved students through the Seton Blended Learning Initiative."

Director Jeff Kerscher is very excited about working closely with leadership at Nativity to implement this instructional approach. "The Seton Blended Learning schools offer individualized instruction, high-quality academics, and robust character education in a faith-based setting.

Every day scholars experience a cutting-edge model of instruction while learning what it means to achieve excellence and serve Christ in their communities. That is a combination you cannot get anywhere else," stated Kerscher.

*We look forward to sharing with you results of our students' outcomes as we adopt this innovative instructional approach.*

## PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSION - CLASSROOM RENOVATION



As a middle school, Nativity strives to prepare students for college-preparatory Catholic high schools in four short years. Many students come to Nativity below grade level and lacking study skills. After conducting focus groups, surveys with students, parents and faculty, the board made a decision to move forward by expanding Nativity to serve the primary

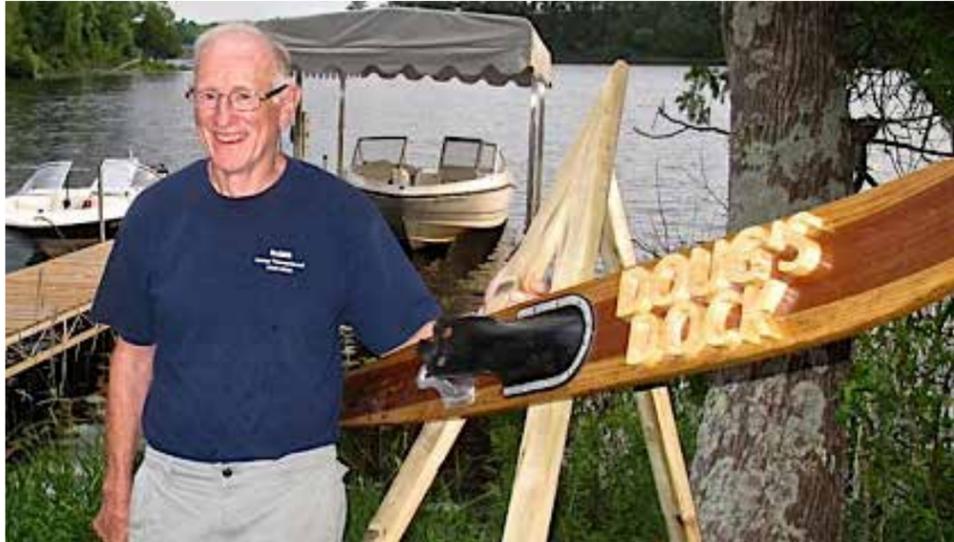
grades providing better opportunity for stronger outcomes. So...roll up those sleeves and put on your hardhats - preparations have begun for Nativity's facility renovation! Over this summer we have renovated our current music room space to allow for two additional classrooms. These classrooms will house our inaugural class of 4-year old kindergarten, set to begin in the fall of 2014. Nativity families spread the message about our growth this spring and we are excited to announce our K-4 enrollment is full. A special thanks to the Walton Family Foundation and Geiringer Survivor's Trust Fund for their

generous support of our renovation project!



*Current music room*

## CAMP THUNDERHEAD HIGHLIGHTS



### COACH HARDER SERVES 20 YEARS!

Doug Harder, MUHS math teacher for 39 years, has been teaching Nativity students to water ski for the last 20 years. At camp this summer he was honored with an award for his years of service.

*Thank you Coach!*

Here are some additional highlights from Camp Thunderhead, 2014:

- Eighth Graders' CLIV (Camp Thunderhead Leadership Village) Program, in its 6th year, was very successful!



S. Zarate, 8th graders and camper friends



6th grade Campers!

Eighth Graders were excellent role models, displaying strong leadership skills, Christian values of service and positive attitude throughout their camp experience. Memorable speeches were given and we look forward to seeing them as future CIT (Counselor in Training) and camp counselors!



B. Valladolid assists student in Woodshop

• Thundershop was open every day this summer! Thank you, Mr. Perea, A. Hernandez (CIT) and Mr. and Mrs. German for a great woodshop experience. Stay tuned for future innovations and additions in the Woodshop curriculum. Thank you to camp neighbor, Bob Collins, for a generous donation of lumber for

the Thundershop. The "Bob Collins" pinewood car was designed, constructed and raced this summer at the annual "Days of Thunderhead" Pinewood Car Race!



E. Carrillo coaches campers

- NJMS Alumni/Graduate Counselors – S. Esquivel, J. Soto, E. Carrillo, S. Zarate, B. Valladolid, R. Garcia – ALL did a fabulous job as counselors! The Counselor of the Week Award (weekly award given to outstanding counselor the past week – based on student and staff votes and director feedback) was awarded to a NJMS graduate each and every week of Camp. Congrats NJMS Alumni Staff!



R. Garcia and B. Valladolid after a soccer game



S. Esquivel, R. Garcia, J. Soto

## NATIVITY'S FIRST HARVARD GRADUATE



Carlos and his family



Carlos Torres - Harvard Graduate



Fr. Bill Johnson, Carlos Torres and Larry Siewert

Many of you will recall Carlos Torres.

Carlos began his education at Nativity in 1998, graduated from Marquette High with honors and went off to UW Madison in the Med Scholar Program as a Gates Scholar. He was an accomplished student and it was no surprise when he was accepted at Harvard Medical School. As Carlos graduated from Harvard this spring, he completed a distinguished

career there. Co-founders, Larry Siewert and Fr. Bill Johnson were proud to attend the graduation ceremony. Mr. Siewert is happy to share with Nativity followers that "Carlos received the honor or award given to the graduating doctor who showed the most compassion toward patients throughout his studies. He finished toward the very top of the class of 136

graduates." He went on to report that "Carlos was accepted to the prestigious residency program at Mass General in Boston in Pediatrics. His plan after residency is to return to Milwaukee to set up practice to serve Latino children. It is a thrill for all connected to Nativity to join his family in being so very proud of Carlos and all he has accomplished.

*He is truly a "Man for Others."*

### MENTORS NEEDED

*Men, women, couples: Research shows that success in school is greatly enhanced when a student has a caring mentor. The NJMS Mentoring Program assists students throughout the course of their high school education. Interested in finding out more?*

### PLEASE CONTACT

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## SAVE THE DATE!

NATIVITY'S  
ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP DINNER -  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2014  
TO BE HELD AT NATIVITY!

### Support the Ancient Order of Hibernians and support Nativity Jesuit Middle School, Notre Dame Schools and St. Leo/St. Rose!

Since 1995, the AOH has been supporting our schools through funds raised at Irish Fest and an Annual Spaghetti Dinner.

This year, plan to join them for

#### **A Taste of Ireland**

- Thursday, **September 18th**,
- **Turner Hall**, 1032 N. 4th St., Milwaukee, WI

All proceeds benefit these three great Milwaukee urban schools.  
Thanks for your support!