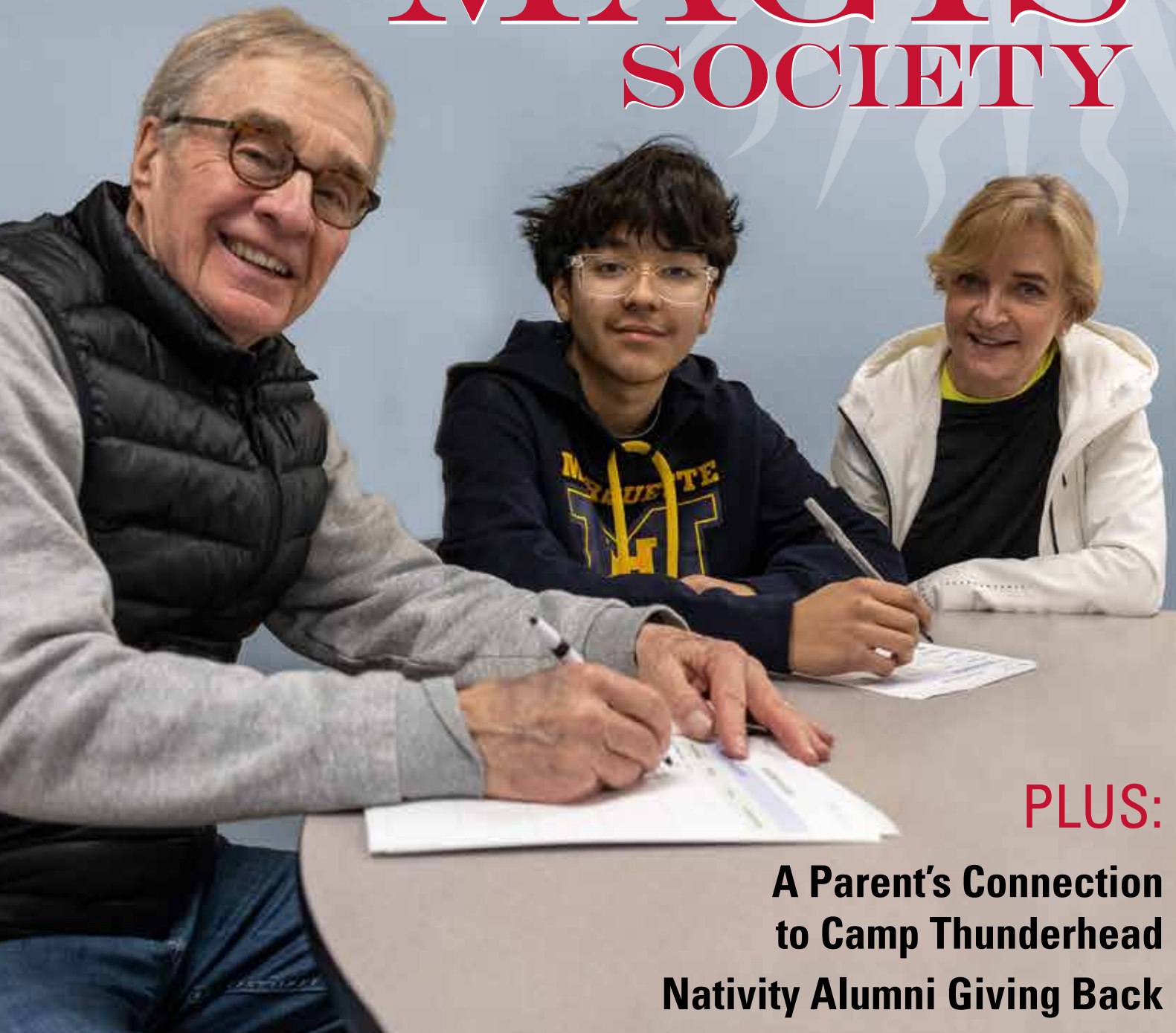


NATIVITY JESUIT

A C A D E M Y

SPRING 2023

NATIVITY'S **MAGIS** SOCIETY



PLUS:

**A Parent's Connection
to Camp Thunderhead
Nativity Alumni Giving Back**

EDUCATING YOUTH FOR A LIFE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

From Nativity Jesuit Academy’s humble beginnings to now, connections have been essential to our foundation, and they grow stronger every year. Within our “mission that does more” mindset, it’s not enough to educate—we must also provide lifelong learning opportunities and experiences. We are grateful each day for the wealth of connections that make up Nativity’s community.

These connections are evident through our:

- **Northwoods Campus**, when students apply what they’ve learned at camp to their classroom and home experiences;
- **Supporters** when they invest in the Nativity model and believe in the potential of Nativity students to transform Milwaukee;
- **Graduate Support Mentoring** meetings when volunteers assist Nativity alums to develop soft skills that are needed in college and beyond; and
- **Parents** who commit to active participation in their scholars’ education through volunteering, and who do everything in their power to support their children at Nativity.



Nativity’s President Vanessa Solis reads to the K5 class.

There are, of course, so many more.

In this newsletter, you will find stories about families, supporters, faculty, staff, alums and students who have been impacted by the connections they’ve experienced through our Nativity model of education. Through your partnership, you are strengthening these connections for future generations of Nativity students!

I look forward to the seeds we will plant and the connections that will blossom in the near future. Thank you for being part of our Nativity community!

Vanessa Solis
President, Nativity Jesuit Academy

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NATIVITY JESUIT ACADEMY
1515 SOUTH 29TH ST.
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Cover photo
Bob and Chrissie Monday
serving as mentors for
Marcos ‘21.

Nativity Jesuit by the Numbers

OUR STUDENTS

97%
Students qualifying
for a Choice voucher

99%
Families self-identifying
as Catholic

100%
Students self-identifying
as Latino

258
Total enrollment in
K4–8th grade

OUR MODEL

100%
Parent participation
in school conferences

4

Weeks of summer instruction
for students in 1st–5th grade

79

Middle school students
attending Camp Thunderhead,
our academic residential summer
program in Iron County, WI

99

high school-aged alumni served
through our Graduate
Support Program

OUR RESULTS

#1

School in the state of Wisconsin
serving a student population
that is 75%+ Latino

#3

Choice school
in Southeast Wisconsin

93%

College acceptance rate

23

Average ACT score
for recent graduates—
compared to national average
of 20 for all students
and 18 for Latino students

Make a Nativity Education Possible!

Nativity’s unique education model is made possible by care and commitment from generous people like you. With gratitude, we invite you to support our 258 K4 through 8th grade students and 99 high-school-aged alumni by funding one of the following items from our current wish list:

- **\$23** covers First Communion preparation materials for one second grade student.
- **\$141** covers coffee for Nativity faculty and staff for one month.
- **\$230** covers a year’s worth of art materials for one grade level.
- **\$525** covers a year’s worth of IXL, an interactive reading and math program, for one grade level.
- **\$744** covers three replacement Chromebooks.
- **\$1,816** covers summer classroom supplies for one grade level while at Camp Thunderhead, Nativity’s academic residential summer program.



Students deepen their faith with weekly Mass.

Please give today through the enclosed envelope or at nativityjesuit.org/support
Thank you for making a Nativity education possible!

Building the Nativity MAGIS SOCIETY Endowment

**In 2020, Nativity embarked on a journey to find a solution to the following problem:
How can each Nativity graduate afford to attend a high-performing Catholic high school?**

While at Nativity, 97% of students qualify for a School Choice (also known as Choice) voucher based on family size and income.

With the help of our Graduate Support staff, Nativity's seventh and eighth grade students start the high school application process, identifying at least three high schools they would like to attend that would be the best fit for them. Overwhelmingly, Nativity students and their families desire to continue their education at a Catholic college-prep high school, with 86% of graduates continuing their post-Nativity education at a Catholic high school in the last five years. The Catholic educational experience—focused on faith, values, leadership and service—is a top priority for Nativity families.

For almost all Nativity families, the transition into high school is likely their first time going from a tuition-free school experience to the world of tuition costs and financial aid. Luckily, many local Catholic high schools have some Choice seats available, but each school can determine the number of Choice seats they make available per class year. Due to this, a highly competitive lottery occurs at many local Catholic high schools where each student

who qualifies hopes they are randomly selected as a recipient of a tuition-free Choice seat. For some local Catholic high schools, the number of students who qualify for Choice far outnumbers the available Choice seats in any given class year.

For some students, this means learning in December that they were accepted to their dream Catholic high school, but they are then waiting eagerly until March for the Choice lottery to take place. What happens if a Nativity student is not the lucky recipient of a Choice seat at any of the high schools?

This is the point when the traditional financial aid process steps in to support the student. However, even with our local Catholic high schools providing very generous financial aid packages, the remaining tuition balance (typically in the \$3,000 to \$7,000 range) is often too much for Nativity families to afford, and a barrier to enrolling in their dream high school. Most Nativity families come from the 53215 zip code, with a median household income of \$41,810.

At Nativity, we believe all our graduates deserve to attend a high-performing Catholic high school, regardless of the family's financial abilities.



Seeking the “Magis”: Doing More for Nativity Graduates

Since 1993, Nativity has been a “mission that does more” for students and families on the south side of Milwaukee. The Nativity Magis Society builds on this legacy of “other-ness,” including finding innovative ways to support the students and families we serve.

The Nativity Magis Society is a group of generous donors who believe that Nativity graduates deserve the best education possible, and graciously provide support to make enrollment at area Catholic high schools a reality. Reflecting “magis,” a key element of Ignatian spirituality, the support of the Nativity Magis Society creates greater educational opportunities and ensures the lasting impacts of a Nativity education.

“Magis” means seeking something greater and doing something “more.”

The Nativity Magis Society seeks to do “more” for Nativity students and their families.



The Nativity Magis Society Endowment

The goal of the Nativity Magis Society is to build a \$4 million endowment to provide tuition support and wraparound graduate support programming, thus ensuring Nativity graduates can attend the Catholic high school of their choice. In addition, this initiative will provide the necessary sustainability to support Nativity graduates in perpetuity.

- This endowment will provide financial assistance to Nativity families who are unable to pay the remaining tuition balance—after receiving the high school's generous financial aid package—for their son or daughter to attend such local college-prep Catholic high schools as Marquette University High School, Divine Savior Holy Angels, Dominican, St. Thomas More, St. Lawrence Seminary and Pius.
- Please note this endowment would only become available if a student does not receive a Choice seat. Some fantastic local Catholic high schools, such as Cristo Rey Jesuit High School Milwaukee and St. Joan Antida, permit any class seat to be a Choice seat. This negates the issue of having a remaining tuition balance that can be a barrier to Nativity students' enrollment.
- Any additional funds available in the annual endowment draw will be used to provide graduate support services to high school-aged Nativity alums. At Nativity, we believe that our commitment and support of our students extend beyond a graduation date and their time studying within our school's walls. In addition, many Nativity students are the first in their families to attend a college-prep high school. This programming includes four years of wraparound support for each alum to succeed academically, social-emotionally and spiritually while attending a high-performing Catholic high school.

WE ARE CURRENTLY AT \$2,054,742 TOWARD OUR \$4 MILLION GOAL.

*Are you interested in making a gift, or learning more about joining the Nativity Magis Society?
Contact Emily Keuter at (414) 645-1060 ext. 151, or email keutere@nativityjesuit.org.*

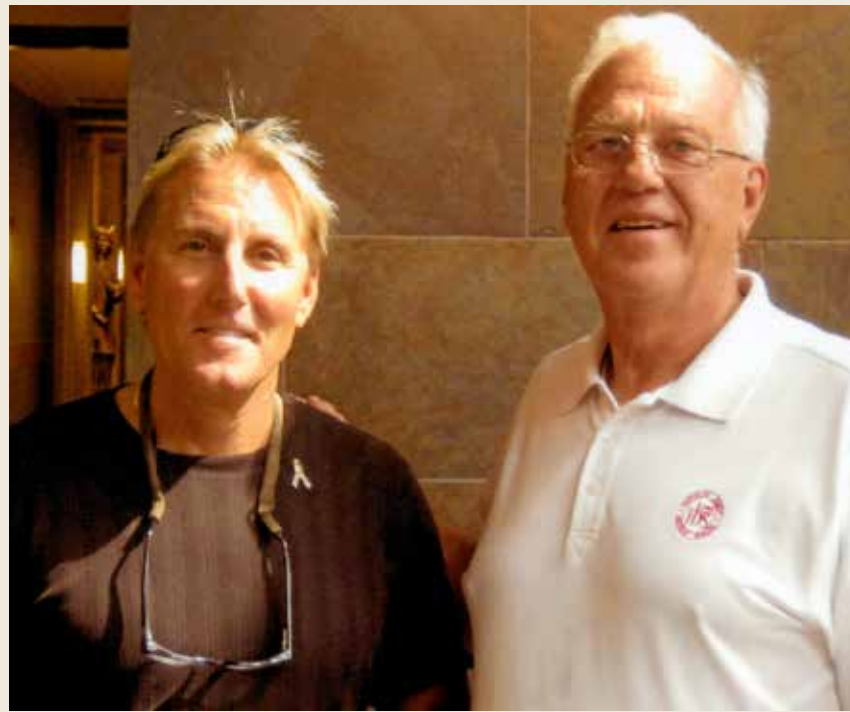
A LEGACY OF HOPE

Transformational Gift Given Toward Nativity Magis Society Endowment

Early in the 2022–23 school year, Nativity was blessed with a transformational gift—due both to its origins and its impact—that will shape our graduates’ lives for years to come. This gift to the Nativity Magis Society Endowment, in the form of a \$500,000 donation from Anne Kebisek Dudek, will be instrumental in ensuring that all Nativity graduates can attend the Catholic high school of their choice, regardless of their family’s financial abilities. This life-changing gift has many layers of meaning, as it is in loving memory of Anne’s late husband, John “JD” Dudek, and in honor of their close friend and co-founder of Nativity, Larry “Coach” Siewert.



Anne and her husband, the late John “JD” Dudek.



Co-founder of Nativity, Larry “Coach” Siewert, with his close friend, JD.



Nancy and Larry Siewert with JD.



Anne and JD.

JD and Anne’s beautiful marriage was full of shared adventures, unimaginable challenges, incredible love, and a depth of commitment to one another no matter what life threw in their direction. Anne was the bridge to bring this donation to Nativity, while Larry was the foundation and builder, sharing the dreams of what is possible for Nativity graduates.

The generous gift will fund countless male and female Nativity graduates’ high school tuition and extracurricular expenses. Being a self-starter and coming from humble means, JD knew what it was like to struggle. He committed himself to making his dreams a reality. This gift unburdens graduates and their families from the struggle of meeting the demands for high school tuition and daily living expenses. Students will be able to fully immerse themselves in the high school experience at some of the top Catholic high schools in the area without worrying about the financial impact on their families.

This gift also bolstered the creation of a Graduate Support Room at Nativity. High school-aged alums can gather for community, tutoring, postsecondary and career planning, fun and general support in this safe place.

According to Larry, “Social capital was key to JD—the importance of community and the bonds of love and friendship that carry us through life. JD truly loved people and wanted the best for them. JD wanted to know the stories behind each person he met, and if there was a way to help folks, he was eager to do that.” This new space at Nativity creates those same bonds of social capital that JD so cherished.

JD’s legacy—one of persistence, hope and the power of education—along with his friendship with Larry, have amounted to an opportunity of a lifetime for Nativity students. Through this incredible gift to the Nativity Magis Society Endowment, Anne has gifted the same legacy of hope to countless Nativity graduates in the years to come. As Nativity alums live on and thrive, so will JD’s legacy.

This timely gift also brought the Magis Society’s efforts to the \$2 million mark, the halfway point to meeting our \$4 million goal for the endowment. If you are interested in being part of building this legacy of hope for Nativity graduates, contact Emily Keuter at (414) 645–1060 ext. 151, or email keutere@nativityjesuit.org.

Parents Connect to Camp Thunderhead

A Parent's Reflection on Camp Thunderhead

For many alums, Camp Thunderhead is considered the most impactful part of their time at Nativity. The same can be said for parents of students who attend Camp. Esperanza Lopez is no different. Esperanza expressed immense gratitude to Camp and its impact on her and her sons, Donovan ('20), and Dosvan, a current Nativity 6th grader.

Camp Thunderhead is our academic residential summer program at our Northwoods Campus in Iron County, Wisconsin. Each summer, our 6th, 7th and 8th grade students spend time living, learning and developing leadership and life skills in the beauty of northern Wisconsin. In addition, our extended school year helps close the "summer slide" gap, when learned concepts and skills regress during summer break.

As a parent, worrying about sending your child away for five weeks is normal. Although she was nervous, she received reassurance from other parents that this would be a great experience for her son. After about three weeks, she got to visit Donovan at Camp. Although there were some tears, Donovan told his mother, "I do miss you, but I really love it here." As a mother, Esperanza was relieved.



Donovan '20 with his mother at Camp Thunderhead.

“
As parents, we don't
always get to learn
and experience the
same opportunities
as our children.
But we can learn
from them.”

When Donovan returned from Camp, she noticed a huge difference in him. He was self-sufficient and appreciative. Donovan started waking himself up in the morning and helping around the house without being asked. Throughout his time at Camp, he was given a chance to miss his mom and realize everything she does for the family.

When it was Dosvan's turn to attend Camp, Esperanza was no longer nervous but excited. She was excited to see the same changes in her youngest son. However, Dosvan had a few reservations. He hadn't spent much time outside before

attending Camp, and was a little scared to be away from home. As a young leader, Donovan was the person to calm his younger brother's nerves about Camp. Now, even though Dosvan has only attended Camp for one summer, Esperanza already sees the impact. He is starting to create good habits!

Esperanza is a mother of three, working to provide a good life for her children. "As parents, we don't always get to learn and experience the same

opportunities as our children. But we can learn from them. As a mother of Nativity students, I've learned so much from camp."

Camp Thunderhead has given her an opportunity to let go of her sons and let them live experiences on their own. Through Camp, her sons have learned to articulate their thoughts and feelings, showing her the importance of listening to them. Finally, she has learned the importance of independence for children. "As a parent, you want your children to be able to do things on their own because you won't always be there to help them. I am confident that if I go, my children will be sad in their hearts but will be able to survive and live without me."



Above: Dosvan and his mother Esperanza.
Left: Dosvan's first summer at Camp Thunderhead.
Below: Donovan '20 photographed with Director of Camp Thunderhead, Josh Kraemer.

While there are many takeaways from Camp Thunderhead, here are some that Esperanza noticed in her children when they returned home:

- Independence/Self-reliance
- Leading by example
- Moral experiences
- How to be part of a community
- Perseverance
- Getting exercise and movement
- Responsibility for oneself
- Creating good habits



Renewal of Nativity's Ignatian Sponsorship

On November 16, 2022, Nativity celebrated the formal renewal of our sponsorship as a Jesuit school by Fr. Karl Kiser, SJ., the provincial of the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus.

There is a shared appreciation for what Jesuit education can accomplish from current students, alumni, families, faculty and staff, the Board of Trustees and the wider Nativity community. As Nativity Board Chair Andres Gonzalez reflects, "Nativity does not just have an impact on the individual student's life. It has provided us with the ability to transform our community. We are privileged to raise the next generation of servant leaders who are formed to imitate the life of Christ."



"To me, going to a Jesuit school means that I can both get a great education and grow closer to God. I am encouraged to be the best person that I can be. Our values at Nativity—being loving, open to growth, religious, committed to justice, and seeking intellectual excellence—help form me to be an outstanding person. I have become more confident in myself and what I can achieve. I have been given many opportunities to follow my dreams. When I think about my experience, I am so grateful for my teachers. They do so much for us each day. Thank you for being part of our Nativity community. You are the ones that make it possible!"

—Naidaly, Nativity 7th Grader



A Beautiful Blend in Service of Nativity Students

About two years before Nativity's founding, Sr. Dawn Capilupo, OSF, became acquainted with Fr. Bill Johnson, SJ, when the Jesuits were in the "dreaming stage" of opening a school in Milwaukee's southside area. As a Wheaton Franciscan Sister and former educator, Sr. Dawn was enthused about the possibility of opening a first-rate school in an underserved area. From visiting the school periodically to helping raise funds for a van and other needs, a long-standing relationship between Nativity and the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters continues to this day.

This beautiful blend of two Catholic orders has deeply enriched the lives of Nativity students. "I believe that we are living out our deepest charisms—Franciscan and Jesuit—when we blend into the edges of one another in order to respond to the needs of our world," remarks Sr. Dawn.

St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, was deeply inspired by the lives of the saints, including St. Francis of Assisi. "St. Francis shifted the image of God for the world," shares Sr. Dawn. "Francis saw nature as a participant in worshipping the Divine. Ignatius held respect for creation in his emphasis of 'seeing God in all things.' We experience God's Spirit in nature and in the everyday, ordinary circumstances of our lives."

Both the Jesuits and the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters hold an impressive record of impact on Wisconsin in many ministries provided to the community. "The Wheaton Franciscans are small but nimble," shares Sr. Dawn. "We aim to respond to the needs of our times, sharing our resources and helping to empower those who are serving in underserved communities."

The Sisters identify four priorities for their engagement and financial support: women and children in vulnerable situations, mental health and dental needs in underserved areas, refugees and immigrants and the care of God's creation. In addition, their scope of commitments span both nationally and internationally.

Nativity's mission of educating youth for lives of Christian leadership and service is beloved by Sr. Dawn, and deeply embraced by the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters through their philanthropy and prayers.

"We are passionate about the bigger vision: The education of each youngster helps to lift a family, helps to lift a neighborhood,

a community, then helps to lift and transform a city," reflects Sr. Dawn. "There is an attraction to the expectation that a Jesuit education contributes to the formation of leadership that makes its return in service to others."



The Wheaton Franciscan Sisters will be honored at Nativity's Annual Scholarship Dinner on April 20, 2023, as the recipients of the Companions Award. The Companions Award recognizes that great works rely on the cooperation and support of partners in our mission.

2023 St. Ignatius Award Winner

Nativity is pleased to announce that Jay Schwister will be honored as the recipient of this year’s St. Ignatius Award at our Annual Scholarship Dinner on April 20, 2023. This award recognizes an individual whose support has profoundly impacted the mission of Nativity.

Jay has been involved with Nativity over the past sixteen years, serving as a trustee and chair of the Transforming Lives Capital Campaign, and later as our Board of Directors chair. The capital campaign enabled Nativity’s expansion into a full K4–8 co-ed academy.

Jay’s intentionality, incredible efforts and depth of generosity have transformed countless students’ lives and bolstered Nativity’s mission. “Education is the great equalizer,” reflects Jay. “The most important thing we can do in our society is to provide a high-quality education to every kid, regardless of their economic circumstances. Nativity is a living laboratory for successful urban education and serves as a beacon of hope and a model for the entire Milwaukee community.”



Thank you, Jay, for all you make possible for Nativity students!



DID YOU KNOW that Nativity Jesuit accepts gifts from Donor Advised Funds? Your philanthropic giving can be as easy as the click of a button! Donor Advised Funds typically include personal assets of cash, stock, company shares, real estate and more. Commonly known as DAFs, Donor Advised Funds can streamline your philanthropy by giving immediate tax benefits while you maintain the ability to recommend gifts from your fund over time.

Most Donor Advised Funds only need our nonprofit tax ID, or EIN, which is #39-1741141. For more information on making a contribution from your Donor Advised Fund, please contact Emily Keuter at keutere@nativityjesuit.org, or (414) 645–1060 ext. 151. You can also visit nativityjesuit.org/support.

The information above is not intended as legal, financial or tax advice. Please consult an attorney, financial advisor or tax advisor in your planning.

Called to Give Back Jose Gonzalez

For many adults and children, going to the dentist can be overwhelming. Nativity alumnus Jose Gonzalez ‘03 is working to change that. As a dentist, Jose splits his expertise between two places. Part of his time is spent at Dentamed Healthcare, a mobile clinic where he treats underserved children in Milwaukee schools. His other days are spent at Bitner Family Dentistry, where he largely treats pediatric patients on Medicaid. In both roles, Jose works to make dentistry accessible to families who need it.

For Jose, Nativity was more than just a school. It was a source of support. When he reflects on his time at Nativity, some of the memories he continues to cherish are of Camp Thunderhead, the rigorous academics and extracurricular activities. “My education at Nativity was made possible by the dedicated staff, educators and benefactors who serve Milwaukee’s youth,” Jose remembers.

After graduating from Nativity, Jose attended Marquette University High School and Marquette University. His Jesuit education has been a pillar of his daily life. St. Ignatius’ examen has been a daily practice for Jose. In addition, he lives servant leadership daily with his work at Dentamed Healthcare and Bitner Family Dentistry, where he serves students and families who don’t have regular access to a dentist. He chose to pursue dentistry to be a leader in oral health and to help serve others in his community.

Through his time at Nativity Jesuit Academy and Marquette High School, Jose was able to explore his passion for giving back to the community. “Giving back to the community through dentistry seems like my natural progression because I was the recipient of many support programs throughout school and college,” Jose points out.

Jose is an active member of the Nativity Jesuit Alumni Association, serving as a committee member. He helps facilitate events, mentors and guides Nativity alums. Jose hopes the Alumni Association can support alumni in all stages of their lives.



Jose Gonzalez with Larry Siewert.



Jose Gonzalez attending a Nativity Jesuit Alumni Association event.



Jose Gonzalez featured in the middle holding baby Jesus in the class photo.

Alumni Notes

- **Joseph Ayala ('19)** has been offered a half-tuition scholarship worth \$15,000 annually to attend Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.
- **Oscar Cervantes Rosales ('22) and Luis Roque ('22)** were a part of the Cristo Rey Jesuit High School soccer program, which won its first state soccer championship this fall.
- **Francisco Hernandez ('15)** spent the 2022 fall semester studying in Madrid, Spain, through Marquette University's Study Abroad program.
- **Irving Ibarra ('03)** has been named the Program Director for All-In Milwaukee. All-In Milwaukee is a scholarship and student-support program that supports high-achieving, limited-income students pursuing a college education.
- **Brothers Jayden ('21), Jonathan ('21), and Israel (Chris) Beltran ('19)** are sharing the court as part of the varsity basketball team for Cristo Rey Jesuit High School.
- **Alexis Sanchez ('10) and Ruben Garcia ('09)** joined Nativity's full-time staff at the beginning of this school year. Sanchez is serving in the role of Graduate Support Coordinator, and Garcia is serving as the School Program Coordinator.
- **Alexis Sanchez ('10), Ruben Garcia ('09), Dylan Ocampo ('14) and Adalberto Carrillo ('14)** served as Camp counselors during this past summer's session at Camp Thunderhead. Are you interested in working at Camp this coming summer? Visit nativityjesuit.org/about-us/employment-opportunities/ to learn more.

Mentoring Program

The Nativity Mentoring Program is looking for dedicated individuals interested in serving as mentors to high school-aged Nativity graduates. Mentors are paired with a Nativity graduate at the start of their freshman year, and work with the Graduate Support Program and the student's family to help support their academic and personal goals. Students and mentors participate in monthly meetings—which include a guided conversation over a shared meal—and social events such as a fall cookout and spring bowling night.

Nativity will host a happy hour for current and prospective mentors on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Interested in attending the happy hour, or learning more about how to join the next cohort of mentors? Contact Kevin Foley at foleyk@nativityjesuit.org.



Nativity mentors and their mentees during their montly meeting.

MEET A LOBO

Maria de la Luz Beltran

Meet Ms. Beltran, Nativity's K4 teacher. Although she's currently in her first year as a K4 teacher, her connection to Nativity goes back to 1995, when she decided to send her three sons to Nativity. In 2014, Ms. Beltran found her way back to Nativity as an academic aide alongside Vanessa Solis, current Nativity President, to teach our first co-ed K4 class.

Ms. Beltran moved to Milwaukee over 27 years ago with her three sons and daughter. Growing up in Mexico, a Catholic, Jesuit education was never accessible to her and her family. When the opportunity presented itself for her sons to attend Nativity, she knew it would be a huge commitment not only for her sons but also for her as a parent. "I had to do what's best for my children. It never felt like a sacrifice. It was an investment in their future."

When her youngest was in his last year at Nativity, she started as the K4 aide with Nativity's inaugural co-ed class. Throughout her time at Nativity working as a K4 and K5 aide, Ms. Beltran felt so grateful for



Above: Ms. Perez collaborating with students in small groups.



the Nativity community. She felt supported and encouraged to grow throughout those fourteen years.

Although she loved her role as an academic aide, she dreamed of becoming a teacher. In 2022, her dream came true when Ms. Beltran was hired as the K4 teacher. Now in her first year of teaching, she feels even more motivated and connected to the mission. "I love everything about my job. I get to see students grow every day and see them learn how to do new things."

For Ms. Beltran, Nativity's mission and core values are lived in her classroom daily. At the ages of 4 and 5, her students are learning to be loving servant leaders and learners. They are learning to focus not only on academics but on the whole person. As our youngest learners grow both academically and in our core values, it lays the important ground work for their future success.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

Thursday, April 20, 2023 at Greenhouse #7 (attached to the Mitchell Park Domes)
njadinner23.givesmart.com

GOLF OUTING 2023

Monday, July 31, 2023 at Westmoor Country Club
nativitygolf23.givesmart.com

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