

CATALYST



ST. MARCUS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER • FALL 2021



AUGUST WAS AN ASTONISHING MONTH AND WAS UNQUESTIONABLY MY MOST CHALLENGING IN 19 YEARS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

Here's what occurred at St. Marcus:

August 10: Violent storms swept through southeastern Wisconsin. The North Campus lower level flooded due to a failed

sump pump. The new Harambee Campus, due to open in a week, lost power for five days and renovations ceased.

August 15: Power returns to the Harambee Campus and renovations resume.

August 17: New and returning St. Marcus scholars start their first day of the 2021-2022 school year. 1,050 scholars, including 154 new K4 through 2nd graders at the Harambee Campus, are ready to learn.

August 20: Two classes at the Harambee Campus enter a two-week quarantine for potential exposure to the Delta variant of coronavirus. School leadership responded swiftly to ensure protocols were maintained to keep the school open and as many children in seats as possible.

August 23: A late summer heat wave hit the Midwest as temperatures climbed into the mid 90s in Milwaukee. Scholars, teachers, and staff persevered through the heat, especially at the non-air conditioned Harambee Campus.

As you can see, the commencement of this school year has been nothing short of tumultuous - specifically for the Harambee Campus which already witnessed construction delays because of pandemic-related supply chain and city permitting issues throughout the summer.

Staff at all levels grappled with the impact of the pandemic on student learning loss and reduction in social and emotional competencies amongst students. Recent Forward exam data regarding the full extent of the pandemic's impact on education in Wisconsin, and especially in Milwaukee, will be sure to shock and sadden those of us who lament inequality and inequity in educational spaces.

Despite the obvious challenges that St. Marcus faced at the start of the school year, I was overwhelmed with pride in our community for coming together for the sake of Milwaukee's future leaders. Here's what I felt:

Gratitude: Despite the chaos of opening the Harambee Campus, I feel a deep and abiding gratitude for our staff, teachers, scholars' families, and donors.

Perspective: To have the ability to open a third campus despite obvious obstacles and to have over 1,000 Milwaukee scholars learning in a St. Marcus classroom this school year exemplifies the commitment and dedication of so many supporters. Wins like this make a difference despite seemingly distressing situations.

Resilience: The success of tens of thousands of children in our city is denied due to broken families, systemic poverty, and chronically substandard schools. We must be resilient and steadfast in refusing to give up until every child in our city has access to high-quality education.

Joy: What a joy it was to watch dozens of volunteers, church members, and donors rally to defy the challenges and make sure that the Harambee Campus opened on time. It was an even bigger joy to watch those young Harambee scholars walk through the doors in their school uniforms. Parents were beaming with pride. It's also been a joy to watch St. Marcus staff come together to adapt to new challenges in what was already an almost impossible task.

Through all of this, I'm reminded of David's words in Psalm 27, "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident...I remain confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

Friends - let's not waiver in our personal and professional lives and in our acts of service. Let's rally together in resilience, joy, and gratitude and see what our great God does in and through us!

Blessings,

Henry Tyson
Superintendent



Harambee Campus First Day

Harambee Campus opened on August 17 to 154 K4 through 2nd grade scholars.

Praise be to God! Thank you to everyone who made this possible! Multi-day power outages and construction delays didn't stop the education of Milwaukee's future leaders, in the heart of the Harambee neighborhood.

“

It was such a blessing to open our doors to more students in the city! Even though we have had some challenges with the building itself, the kids light up when they walk in and nothing brings me more joy. – Susan Ferch - 2nd grade teacher

”

Scholars are learning in temporary classrooms on the first and third floors as construction continues. At the end of October, scholars and their teachers will move to the second floor into their permanent classrooms. Construction will begin on the other floors in a phased approach as funding allows.

Learning has not been hampered by ongoing construction. Naomi, a second grader, loves the Harambee Campus because of what she is learning and all the books she can read. Thank you for making it possible for scholars like Naomi to receive a high-quality Christian education!





**“TO FINALLY BE
IN THE PHYSICAL
BUILDING FEELS
ALMOST SURREAL.**

Our families have been more than amazing! Anticipation and excitement are still reeling as we wait, watch and pray for the first phase to be complete! While we have had our share of challenges these first couple of weeks, **God has provided!**

The expectation is that 150 scholars WILL be disciplined for Christ now and for all eternity and to be trained in excellence for their roles in their family, church, community, workplace, and country. Harambee understands the assignment.”

– **Jomoni Haynes**,
Dean of Kindergarten
and Primary Grades,
St. Marcus Alumnae,
2004



**“IT IS SUCH A JOY
TO BE ON CAMPUS
AFTER ALL THESE
MONTHS OF
PLANNING**

and interacting with our amazing scholars and families! Our families are supportive and thrilled to be on campus. Our goal is to build a community of grace and love in Christ, working together to help our scholars grow spiritually, academically, and emotionally.

There have been many logistical challenges as we are on campus while the building is being renovated and health challenges as the Covid Delta variant is raging through our community. But **the Lord has been faithful in providing help and support** when needed. We are blessed to be part of a strong family of Christians!”

– **Tracy Eastburn**,
Principal

**“Harambee understands
the assignment.”**

**"IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AT THE
HARAMBEE CAMPUS THIS YEAR.**

Both a viral and educational pandemic continue to persist in our city. Despite the many obstacles, students are in our third campus, and they are learning! The work is hard and relentless, but **the Lord continues to provide encouragement and support**, just when we need it most. Our new St. Marcus families are supportive and kind, and their partnership allows us to effectively pour into the lives of our scholars. We continue to push as we anticipate the continued spiritual, emotional, physical, and academic growth in the lives of our scholars.

– **Laura Tyson**, Director of Kindergarten and Primary Grades



HARAMBEE CAMPUS CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

total raised to date

\$9,276,384

total estimated
project costs

\$16,000,000



AN ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIP

SPEEDING CARS AND RECKLESS DRIVING HAVE BECOME MORE APPARENT ON NORTH AVENUE, where the St. Marcus Main Campus resides - putting the community and 600 scholars, staff, and parents at risk during arrival and dismissal. Thanks to a partnership between St. Marcus, Safe & Sound, and Artists Working in Education, there are now four vibrant crosswalks in Harambee that make the area a little bit safer and more colorful.

Maureen Gunn, a St. Marcus church member who joined the school as a community engagement specialist this past January, and scholars Jazale and Joshua who created images that can be found in the designs, participated in the project to advocate for safe driving on Milwaukee's North Side. They worked alongside Safe & Sound, a local nonprofit that focuses on community development to build safe and empowered neighborhoods in Milwaukee, and Artists Working in Education, a local nonprofit that seeks to provide art enrichment programs to area youth.

The project, titled "Cross/Words/North", brought artists, students, and residents living in Harambee and Riverwest to create the four crosswalks that symbolize the beauty and resources of the neighborhoods. Each crosswalk features an image that symbolizes a particular word: empowerment, love, unity, and diversity.

"This community art crosswalk project is a collaborative mosaic," Maureen said. "It has beautifully brought together individuals from our city government, community organizations, schools, art community, concerned parents, and community residents."

Two crosswalks are on North Palmer Street and two are on North Hubbard Street. The project had the support of Alderwoman Milele Coggins and is a small part of Mayor Tom Barrett's efforts to address and decrease reckless driving in Milwaukee.




photo credit: Coco Chenelle Photography

"I want the art to have a positive impact on individuals and I want them to remember we are a community and that we want everyone to be safe. I want to know that maybe someone saw this artwork and it encourages them to slow down and hopefully prevents an accident."

-Joshua, St. Marcus 8th grader



written by: Sean McNealy



The power
of scholars'
potential is
unlocked
with you by
their side.

ready
together

Join Us for the Annual St. Marcus Gala
on Saturday, November 13th

**Attend in person downtown at the Marcus
Performing Arts Center, Bradley Pavilion**

Plan for an evening of impact among great company! Enjoy a gourmet dinner, fine wine pull, program, raffles, and more!

Gather with us virtually

Invite your friends and family to watch scholars perform and hear from Superintendent Henry Tyson from the comfort of your own home. You can even browse and bid on auction items online!

For details and donations, visit
stmarcushgala.com

Thank you to our
generous top sponsors!

PREMIER SPONSORS
POWER OF PURPOSE



sommer's

Where customers send their friends



Lilli Gust

PRESENTING SPONSORS
WHATEVER IT TAKES

Barbara & John Trimble
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Ramirez Family Foundation

BE STRONG SPONSORS

Mark & Carolyn Smith



Dwayne and Stacy Kratt

Kole Knueppel joined St. Marcus in July as Associate Executive Director.

But Kole isn't new to St. Marcus.



He led the revitalization of St. Marcus from a low-performing school into a nationally-recognized model for faith-based, “no excuses” urban education from 2001 to 2004. He brings over 20 years of leadership experience, having led the expansion of HOPE Christian Schools, from one campus with 50 students to three campuses serving over 500 students. He served as the director of Wisconsin Lutheran’s Center for Urban Teaching (CfUT), where he trained urban teachers and school leaders. He co-founded Schools That Can Milwaukee (now City Forward Collective) driving the growth of high-quality urban Milwaukee schools from three founding schools to a network serving over 30 schools and nearly 15,000 students. Most recently, he served as the founding director of the Center for Transformational Educational Leadership at the University of Notre Dame, training principals at urban schools in Chicago.

Kole reconnects with former student ('02 alumna) and current parent, Sharrae.



Kole also served as a professor in the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, a nationally renowned program for school leaders from around the country seeking a Masters Degree in educational leadership.

In his new role at St. Marcus, Kole is leading community engagement efforts. His focus is on how to best walk alongside and invest in 689 school families. His team is working with parents so they can flourish spiritually and financially by connecting them to job and home ownership opportunities all while making sure their children receive a great education. His team seeks to create programs and work with community partners which have meaningful impact and are a good fit for families. With the addition of a third campus in the Harambee neighborhood, Kole is focused on St. Marcus’ involvement in community revitalization efforts and building a healthy, strong neighborhood.

Kole is also focused on leadership development - building a strong pipeline of church and school leaders and training emerging leaders as our school network grows, as well as assisting in strategic direction for the school.

Kole has a B.S. in English with a Secondary Education Certificate from Wisconsin Lutheran, a M.S. in Educational Administration from UW-Milwaukee and is now completing his Ph.D. at UW-Milwaukee.

Meet Kole

Why are you excited to be back at St. Marcus?

I am personally humbled and honored to be back. I've lived in the Harambee neighborhood for 20 years - now with my wife Anna and two kids, Sophia and Atticus. I'm so passionate and committed to the neighborhood and seeing families thrive...it is exciting to be back and have my everyday work be a part of this community.

With so many societal challenges, racial strife, and challenges that our country, city, and neighborhood face I am more and more convinced that so many of the answers are found in Christ; both in terms of building bridges and walking in partnership with others. What an amazing opportunity to come back to St. Marcus which is living and breathing that!

What is your leadership style?

I am very much a relationship person. I believe in positive leadership, focused on people. This creates powerful teams, living in service to others.

How are you looking forward to partnering with others?

I am excited to introduce and invite people into partnership with us to impact lives. It is a great time for people to get involved as St. Marcus' work expands.

In one word, how would you describe St. Marcus?

Can I have more than one word?!

Life-changing. Transformational.

I have seen so many lives changed and transformed through interacting with the St. Marcus community.

If you had a Bible passage/quote for your life and ministry what would it be?

I've had many challenges throughout my life and this passage has uplifted me through many dark times. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail, they are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23). God is there every morning. No matter the struggle, He is smiling and walking with you.

I am also inspired by Paul's word to the Philippians, which drives my approach to leadership: "Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice! ... Do not be anxious about anything...but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-8) No matter what is going on...we need to be joyful and positive with each other because the King of Kings is in our corner.

When you have free time, what are you doing?

I love to go hiking with my family! We are huge into walking in the woods together. And I love to be in the backyard with our kids. That is heaven on earth!

Where is your favorite vacation spot?

Our cottage in Door County, just south of Sturgeon Bay.

Fun fact!

I am a Big Ten football official! I started officiating when I was in college for youth and high school games. I am now in my fifth year of officiating in the Big Ten.



"Rejoice in the Lord always!"

-Philippians 4:4

YOUR GIVING MATTERS

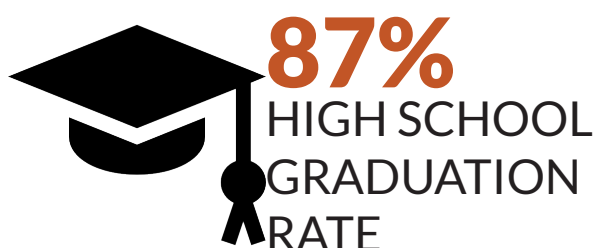
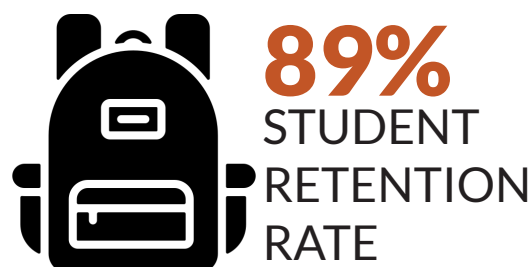
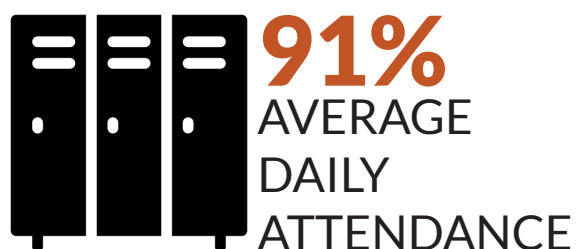
"When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things."

Psalm 104:28

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year*, **1,022 generous donors** gave **\$2,111,099** to support St. Marcus scholars. Every year donors help to close the funding gap of \$2,500 per student between the voucher amount and the actual cost of providing high-quality education.

Thank you for filling this critical need!

*Gifts received between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021



ST. MARCUS IS A 5-STAR SCHOOL,
SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS!

These results are only possible because of
the partnership, commitment, and continued
investment of our donors.

Thank you to the corporate and foundation donors who support our scholars!

CAPITAL SUPPORT

A.O. Smith Foundation
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
Priebe Family Foundation
The Bruce Krier Charitable Foundation
The Lakeview Foundation
WE Energies

OPERATING SUPPORT

Anon Charitable Trust
Bader Philanthropies
Brady Corporation
Foundation
Charles D. Ortgiesen
Foundation
City Forward Collective
Dr. Scholl Foundation
Einhorn Family Foundation
Gardner Foundation
Gordon Henke Family
Foundation
Greater Milwaukee
Association of Realtors Youth
Foundation
Jane Bradley Pettit
Foundation
Kaztex Foundation
Kearney Foundation
Patrick and Anna
M. Cudahy Fund
Ralph Evinrude Foundation
Reiman Foundation
Siebert Lutheran Foundation
The Lakeview Foundation
The Lynde and
Harry Bradley Foundation
The Van Dam-Hug
Family Foundation
Usinger Foundation
Weiss Family Foundation



ALUMNI spotlight

*“St. Marcus helped me grow
into who I am today.”*



JEROME WILLIAMS - 2006 ALUMNUS

I am a sergeant in the US Army - a Blackhawk helicopter crew chief in the MEDEVAC. St. Marcus is important to me because they helped me grow into who I am today. They gave me valuable skills I still use to this day, not just academically but life skills as well. One Bible verse that I have always kept in mind while working in the Army is Psalm 23:4: “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” This verse has always stayed with me through everything I have accomplished - deployed and at home. I know that I have a solid rock in my corner as long as I have faith in Jesus. My St. Marcus education also gave me many male mentors: Henry Tyson, Kevin Festerling, Patrick Hurley, and Brett Hopf who still to this day inspire me to be my best, not only for myself, but for those around me.



JHANE BROWN - 2012 ALUMNA

I am currently pursuing law school while working as a SCRAM CAM and Drug Test Technician. St. Marcus is always going to be important to me because it's a big part of who I am. I attended from K4-8th grade, so I was bound to learn some forever habits. St. Marcus definitely helped instill self-discipline. There are key phrases and actions that I still use today. I remember learning about bringing my "M.O.M." - aka mind over matter - during my first Discover America Trip in 5th

grade. Character, or who you are when no one is watching, sits in my mind all the time. They seemed silly at first, but they helped me make and get through a lot of decisions. I use these phrases to keep pushing myself through midterms, finals, an internship, deadlines, and other obstacles. The most important thing St. Marcus gave me was a love of God and gospel music. I still remember the words to songs we learned with Mr. Festerling and Mrs. Jeske, and I sing these songs when I want to celebrate God!



DR. MICHAIAH HINDS, M.DIV - 2006 ALUMNUS

I currently serve as the Transfer Coordinator at Winston-Salem State University, where I assist students who have previous college experience, whether at a community college or a four-year institution. I also serve as the director of a mentoring organization entitled J.R.A.M.S. This organization partners high school and middle school students with college mentors. Additionally, I am the Youth and Young

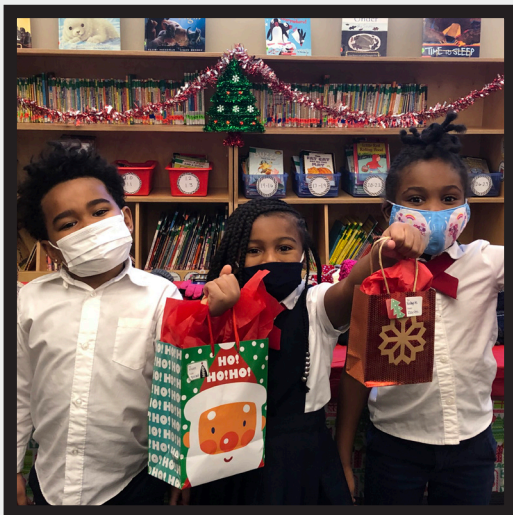
Adult Coordinator at Grace Church in Winston-Salem. St. Marcus was important to my growth and development academically, mentally, and socially. St. Marcus taught me the discipline that is needed to obtain success in life. Also, it afforded me opportunities outside of my community like the yearly camping and Discover America travel. I cherish those experiences to this day.

IT'S beginning to

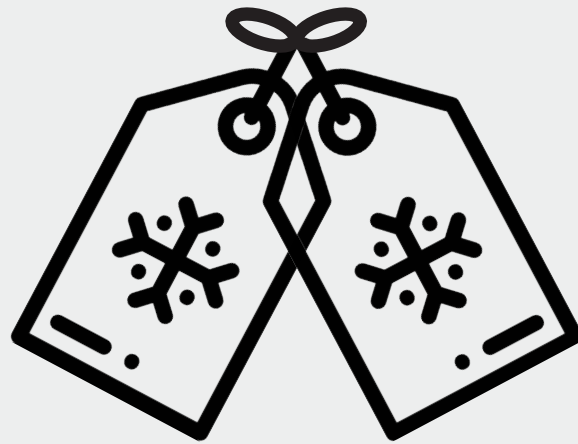
It's that time of year again! Every fall we look forward to beloved Christmas generosity traditions at St. Marcus. **Christmas Angels** and the annual **Christmas Store** provide special opportunities for friends to bless scholars and their families during the holiday season.

Christmas Angels invites donors to provide gifts and household necessities to school families in need of extra blessings at Christmas. Recipient families are thoughtfully referred by school teachers and staff. Last year, we carried out Christmas Angels as a gift drive in order to deliver the program safely during a pandemic surge. After receiving positive feedback from recipient families and donors about the gift drive process and experience (and to align with continuing school health and safety protocols), we will replicate this format in 2021!

The **Christmas Angels Family Gift Drive** will take place at St. Marcus Main Campus the weekend of December 18-19. Referred families will be invited to schedule private appointments to select gift items for each member of their household. Donors are invited to bless families with items including household goods, toys, baby necessities, and more. In addition, donors can help fulfill "wish list" items for the families that are gift-wrapped and delivered by staff.



look a lot like... CHRISTMAS?!



At the **Christmas Store**, scholars experience the joy of giving by selecting a holiday gift for a loved one. Scheduled for the week of December 6, a store will be set up at each campus location. Classrooms will take turns visiting the store to shop for their loved ones. Scholars don't need money to shop—all of the items in the store are generously donated by friends of St. Marcus. The Christmas Store inventory always needs replenishment! Brand new or gently used gift items such as ornaments, small home decor, jewelry, candles, mugs, and much more are gratefully accepted!

Feeling the Christmas spirit? Share the gift of your generosity with scholars and their families this holiday season! For more information about Christmas Angels or the Christmas Store, contact Cecilia Davis at 414-562-3163 ext. 7554 or cecilia.davis@stmarcus.org.

***“Every good and perfect gift
is from above.”*** -James 1:17



St. Marcus School

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

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](https://stmarcus.org/school)

Address Service Requested



whatever it takes

