

CATALYST

A young boy with dark skin, wearing a white dress shirt and a dark tie, is holding a glowing lightbulb in his right hand. The lightbulb is bright and emits rays of light. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a staircase.

Your word
is a lamp...

a light on my path.

PSALM 119:105

ST. MARCUS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021



YES, IT'S BAD FOR MILWAUKEE'S NORTH SIDE KIDS. IN FACT, I'M SAD TO SAY THAT IT'S NEVER BEEN WORSE.

The international paper, The Guardian, got its headline correct on Wednesday, January 27th, when it wrote that, "Milwaukee was already failing students of color. Covid made it worse." The article fails to identify the real problems, but it's worth the read if only

because the school referenced, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, is just three blocks away from our new Harambee Campus that will open in August. Tragically, 75% of the students at King, Jr. scored "below basic" on the Forward Exam in 2019 (that's the lowest category).

Aside from the very real challenges posed by large numbers of students living in poverty, the teachers' union is the fundamental problem, putting the interests of adults over students. Milwaukee Public Schools, at the insistence of the teachers' union have operated virtually this entire school year, with pending plans for some form of in-person instruction to begin mid-April. Despite this, schools that have opened and followed safety protocols, like St. Marcus and other voucher and charter schools in our city, have seen no COVID-19 spread on campus and the CDC has clearly articulated that it is safe to open schools with precautions.

The net result is that the vast **majority of students on the northside of Milwaukee will have missed almost an entire year of school** and will have fallen even further behind. I've lost sleep wondering how we will deal with the 160 four-year-olds and 80 five-year-olds who will walk through our doors next school year having never been in school before. The gap between existing St. Marcus students and new students will be enormous.

In the midst of all this, **I'm deeply encouraged by the St. Marcus community's response to these challenges.** Led by our core values of Christ First, Biblical Discipleship, Sacrificial Love and Radical Expectations, and committed to putting God first, kids second, and ourselves third, we move forward boldly and we watch God work. Consider the following:

1. St. Marcus has been fully open since November 2nd and now has over 70% of students receiving in-person instruction with the numbers continuing to climb.

2. The school and church have worked together through our Benevolent Fund to provide 61 micro-grants to families in need as a result of COVID-19.

3. 99% of the students who started the school year with us remain enrolled.

4. 100% of school staff showed up and put kids first by serving them in person.

5. The opening of the Harambee Campus is on-track and moving forward. God has blessed us with an incredible leadership team (see their feature article at the end of this newsletter) and the building was vacated on January 31st so that renovations can begin.

6. Our friends and donors have continued to give with stunning generosity so that we could deliver excellent education during the pandemic and acquire and start renovations at the Harambee Campus.

7. A Summer Learning Task Force has been convened to develop an intensive plan to prepare new students and parents for the 21-22 school year. We will not wait until August to start educating!

8. Through a new foundation supported initiative, over 150 school parents and alum will receive 1:1 life coaching to assist families in breaking the cycle of poverty. These families will also be connected with other amazing non-profit partners like Habitat for Humanity, Acts Housing, WWBIC, and Milwaukee JobsWork to move from stability to prosperity.

We know what our scholars and their families are capable of. We know that we have been called to serve at a time and in a place where there is incredible opportunity. **We choose to boldly move forward, trusting God and seeking his blessings for the children and families we have been called to serve.**

Thank you for not becoming discouraged or standing on the sidelines but rather jumping in with us to defy the norm and help Milwaukee families thrive.

Henry Tyson
Superintendent

*To read the article referenced from The Guardian, visit:
tinyurl.com/mkefailingstudentsofcolor*



A message from Superintendent Tyson to the school staff on January 22nd:

"I WAS GETTING A BIT WORRIED ABOUT HOW ODD YOU ALL ARE AND THEN I READ 1 PETER CHAPTER 1 WHERE PETER REFERS TO BELIEVERS AS, "STRANGERS IN THE WORLD."

What strangers you are! I've been struck by how "strange" your responses have been: to COVID - setting fear and personal interest aside and serving children so courageously; to racism and racial

conflict - mixing truth with love and grace the way Jesus did as evidenced by your relationships and refusal to adopt a worldly response; to the educational genocide of the poor in this city - giving, spending, expending yourselves and believing in kids when so many more lucrative and comfortable options are out there. By His grace, may the light of our Lord shine brightly in your life today and may the light of Christ emanate brightly from our ministry together."

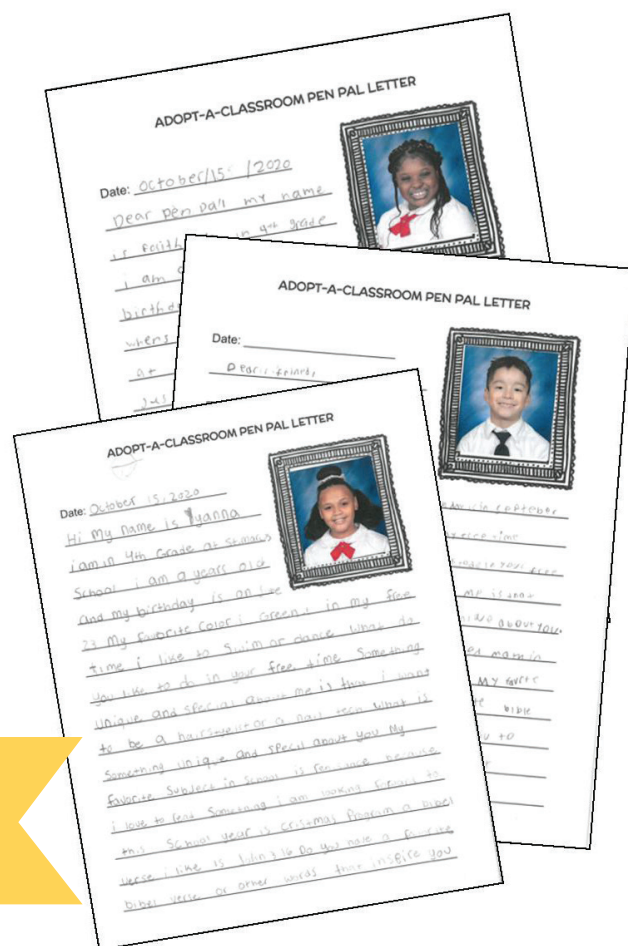
Adopt a Classroom Update

In Fall 2020, St. Marcus introduced a new giving opportunity for supporters: Adopt a Classroom! Through this program, individuals collectively support an entire classroom of St. Marcus scholars with a personal investment of \$2,500 each. In addition, donors and individual scholars from the adopted classroom cultivate a fun friendship through pen pal correspondence and interactive (virtual) classroom activities. This year's partner classroom is Ms. Kelsi Daffner's 4th grade.

Representing the gap between state funding and the actual cost to educate one St. Marcus scholar for the school year, the \$2,500 investment ensures that every student in the classroom receives the highest levels of academic instruction; access to technologies, tools and resources for digital learning; and crucial enrichment activities. With approximately 30 students in the classroom, investments of \$2,500 will fund a year of education.

With support from a number of generous friends like you, the classroom is currently 55% funded. Fifteen more scholars are eager to meet you! Will you help us reach 100%? It's not too late! You can still join the program and enjoy personalized pen pal correspondence, video messaging, and other virtual interactions this spring with your own 4th grade friend.

We hope you'll join us! For more information or to become an Adopt a Classroom supporter, visit www.stmarcus.org/school/get-involved-0.





**February
Black History
Month**



REImagine thank you

Despite a very different gala experience in 2020, your support remained, reimagined, and reinvigorated scholars and staff. A heartfelt shoutout to every one of our 2020 sponsors! Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support.

The 2020 Fund-A-Need raised just over \$305,000, directly supporting the transformation of the third campus, opening this fall. Thank you to those who supported with a gift of any amount, and special thanks to our generous friends who provided matching gifts.

In total, nearly \$610,000 was raised.

If you attended our virtual event or shared our story in some way, thank you. If you donated an auction item or bid in the auction, thank you. If you made a financial contribution of any amount, thank you.

**We can't wait to share what Gala 2021 will look like on
Saturday, November 13th!**

Thank you to our generous 2020 gala sponsors!

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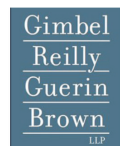
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REImagine



Coronavirus and the Classroom

THANKS TO YOU AND DEDICATED MISSION-DRIVEN STAFF, AN UNCERTAIN YEAR WAS TURNED INTO SOMETHING HOPEFUL FOR ST. MARCUS SCHOLARS.

And although there are so many stories about the pandemic - it can be overwhelming and exhausting - bear with us for one more story about shining our light during one of the darkest times.

An unexpected week out of school is probably a dream for many kids. What happens when that week turns into two weeks, the whole month, the rest of the semester? That was the reality for millions of students.

Children are said to be more adaptable than adults to changing situations. St. Marcus scholars proved

that theory at the beginning of the pandemic, throughout virtual learning, and now as in-person learning carries on through this school year.

“I was happy that I didn’t have to do a lot of classwork when schools closed last spring,” fifth grader Naliyah says. “But after it shut down for a month I wasn’t that happy.”

Naliyah says when St. Marcus moved to virtual learning she relied on Google Classroom. Her fourth grade teacher sent notes of encouragement to scholars, but it remained a challenge for Naliyah because of the independent learning and missing personal connections with teachers and friends.

This school year is easier thanks to Zoom, Naliyah says, which St. Marcus did not use last spring but now uses for virtual students and school-wide virtual Fridays. Naliyah is happy to now be in person with some of her classmates.

“I hope that COVID goes away soon so we can all be together again and have a better learning experience,” she says.

Fifth grade classmate Serenity agrees that being in person this year is easier academically and mentally. Serenity says she likes Zoom because she can see her teachers and friends, but prefers in-person learning and was excited to return to campus this past fall. Even though she has to be socially distanced from her friends, Serenity is glad she can learn about adding and subtracting in math and about germs in science in person.

“We’ve adjusted well to masks and social distancing, and our teachers have done a good job keeping us safe,” Serenity says. “It still makes me sad to be distanced from friends but I’m happy to be in school because I love school.”

Excitement filled fifth grader Donovan when he heard he could return to campus. It’s a pretty different experience, he says, but notes one of the good parts of in-person learning is that he and his classmates are less distracted by friends because of social distancing.

“It feels spaced out with less people and it makes me feel a little bit weird because it’s not what I’m used to,” Donovan says. “But we are more focused now because of it.”

Donovan, Serenity, and Naliyah have come to a greater appreciation for their in-person education. They’re thankful for their teachers’ commitment.

St. Marcus was vacated March 13, and ten days later on March 23 remote learning commenced with the school being the second in Milwaukee to move to virtual learning. The prompt response at the onset of the pandemic with top-notch virtual learning for its scholars gave confidence to the school’s hardworking teachers.

Fifth grade North Campus teacher Brittany Toliver, who teaches from a converted cafeteria for social distancing purposes, says St. Marcus quickly dispersed electronic devices, such as Chromebooks, to scholars so they could connect online. She knows it was a challenge for families to adjust to virtual learning but appreciates the collaborative team effort of parents, scholars, and staff.

“I would not have been able to successfully teach their children without all of their support,” Brittany says. “I am grateful for my scholars and their parents, especially during these hard times.”

Brittany adds that without the help of parents, she probably would have been teaching on mute.

The St. Marcus COVID-19 Health & Safety Committee ensured the school had protocols in place to protect scholars, teachers, and staff. This resulted in St. Marcus being one of the first ten schools in Milwaukee to have an approved reopening plan. This gave Brittany confidence in returning.

“After seeing all the safety precautions and the opening plan, I was fully onboard with St. Marcus moving forward with in-person instruction,” Brittany says. “It has truly been amazing having students back in the building.”

St. Marcus recognized the challenge the pandemic presented. Alterations such as technology updates and extra support for special education and counseling staff, an essential part of the school’s mission as racial justice moved to the forefront in 2020, were implemented. St. Marcus’ community development program also expanded its services to serve families impacted by the pandemic.

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“St. Marcus has been an amazing resource for people seeking help during these hard times,” Brittany says. “I have had families reach out to me asking for help and Moe, a St. Marcus life coach, was able to organize support for them.”

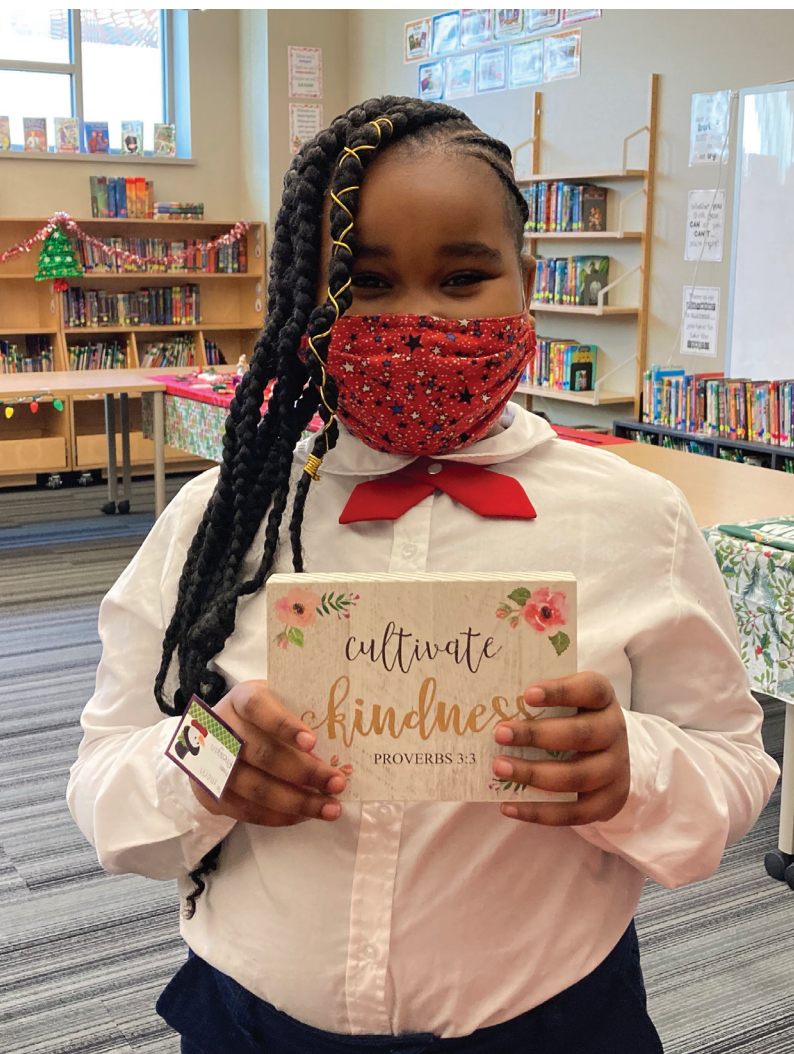
COVID brought challenges, but also many blessings. Brittany says the community has become tighter knit and the school family bond has grown stronger.

“I think we all have a newfound appreciation for the different roles that people play and realize we need every member of this team in order to be successful,” she says.

“If you can teach during a pandemic, or homeschool your children while working, you can do anything.”

Brittany says that during the pandemic she has relied on God more than ever. School might be the only place scholars hear about their Savior, she says, so her call to teach is incredibly meaningful to her.

“I am so grateful to work with a group of passionate people who truly care and love every single child in the building,” Brittany says. “Parents and scholars have been patient, forgiving, and loving, and I am grateful to all the donors because they give students at St. Marcus the opportunity to receive the best education.”



Christmas Traditions *Reimagined*

The outpouring of support was astounding!

COVID-19 LED TO CHANGES AND ADAPTATIONS IN 2020, AND TWO OF ST. MARCUS' BELOVED CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS WERE NO EXCEPTION.

Though they had to be carried out differently this past holiday season, the annual Christmas Store and Christmas Angels programs greatly blessed scholars and school families, with supporters' generosity flowing more abundantly than ever!

At the Christmas Store, scholars experienced the joy of giving by selecting a holiday gift for a loved one. At the Main Campus, a "mobile" version of the store travelled the hallways and welcomed a few shoppers at a time from each classroom. At the North Campus, the learning lab housed a socially distanced store visited throughout the day by small groups of scholars. **Thanks to contributions from St. Marcus friends, more than 300 scholars shopped the 2020 Christmas Store.**

Through Christmas Angels, donors provided gifts and household necessities to school families needing and deserving extra blessings. Participating families were thoughtfully referred by school teachers and staff. This year, the program was carried out as a gift drive with scheduled, private shopping appointments for 30 families. From numerous wrapped gifts, to the vast assortment of toys, household goods, baby necessities and more, each family left the drive with an abundance of items that both met critical needs and ensured an unforgettable Christmas.

Infinitely more valuable than any Christmas Store or Christmas Angels item is the knowledge that our scholars and families are loved, supported and lifted by YOU. Your acts of kindness are worth more than anything under the Christmas tree.

Thank you for touching hearts and lives with your generosity this past holiday season!

We welcome year-round support for these annual Christmas initiatives. To keep our Christmas Store inventory well stocked, we are seeking item donations that scholars can easily handle and place into a standard or small-sized gift bag. These include gift items such as:

- Holiday ornaments/small decorations
- Photo frames
- Small home decor items/knick knacks
- Kitchen linens
- Gift lotions/soaps for men and women
- Candles
- Mugs
- Socks for men and women
- Small tools/hardware
- Packers/Brewers/Bucks-themed items
- Jewelry & accessories
- Holiday gift bags (standard to small-sized) and gift tags (sticker style)

Christmas Angels partnerships launch in mid-fall in preparation for the holiday shopping season. If you would like to support either of these initiatives in 2021, please contact Cecilia Davis from the Mission Advancement Team at 414-217-0253 or cecilia.davis@stmarcus.org. Thank you for your generosity!

Faith. Motivation. Drive. Vision. Persistence.

These are natural characteristics of an entrepreneur. But the stories of success become even sweeter when they happen to hardworking, inspirational people who achieve their dreams after enduring roadblocks and obstacles along the way. Achieving their dreams by God's given graces has allowed these St. Marcus parents to reach for the stars and land on the moon. Their motivating journeys and achievement of success in the most unlikely of circumstances has secured their place as some of Milwaukee's most successful entrepreneurs. Allow us to introduce you.

JASON ALSTON

HEAVEN'S TABLE BBQ

*Parent of Noah,
K3 St. Marcus Scholar*

Heaven's Table BBQ is the culmination of talent and prayer. Jason Alston always loved to cook. He started his culinary journey when he would ask his mom if he could help her cook. But his passion and talent for barbecuing came from his granddad and uncle who showed him the skills of how to perfectly cook meat.

His quest for more culinary knowledge led him to MATC where he completed a degree in culinary arts. This led to working in the culinary industry at MATC, Marquette University, and as an Executive Chef at the SURG Group, among others. His most recent role was working at Ascension Healthcare. It was during his time at Ascension in 2018 that he was approached by the group opening the Crossroads Collective Food Hall located in Milwaukee's East Side to start his own BBQ restaurant.

They had heard about his talent for delicious food and BBQ and wanted him to join them. He was on his way to Atlanta for management training for a new role at Ascension when he got the call. He spoke to his wife and prayed. He needed to choose between the safety and security of a good job or venture out on his own and start a new business.

That was when it became clear to him that this was what he was meant to do. God was calling him to do more.

"If I hadn't stepped out in faith, I'd never have done

this," Alston said. "I'd still be working at my old job."

Since then, his restaurant, Heaven's Table BBQ, has won numerous awards and accolades, including Milwaukee's Best BBQ in Milwaukee Magazine. And the success of his restaurant at the Crossroads Collective has propelled him to move on and open an even bigger space in Milwaukee's popular Washington Heights neighborhood at 5507 W. North Ave., near the



Wauwatosa border. Heaven's Table BBQ will be opening in May, but will offer its delicious meals via a food truck for now.

Alston hopes St. Marcus scholars can learn from listening to their parents and teachers and working hard. And to keep in mind that every opportunity can be a learning experience. He says, "Every job prepares you for the next one."

Asked what words of wisdom he might have for others, Alston shared, “Whatever you do when you are older that you enjoy and seems natural, that’s what you were meant to do.” He says, “follow your heart and you won’t regret it.”



BRIDGETT WILDER

AUTHOR, AND OWNER OF PERSEVERANCE HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHING

*Parent of St. Marcus scholars, Joshua,
6th grade and Gabriel, 8th grade*

Tragedy hasn’t stood in Bridgett Wilder’s way of achieving success. In fact, it has motivated and inspired her to help others. After the death of her 37-year-old husband due to heart disease, followed by the death of her six-year-old daughter due to a neurological disorder, she was left to raise nine children alone. The tragedy motivated her to become healthier, lose weight, and to make sure that she would be around for her children. As a diabetic, she began by losing 173 lbs. She decided to go back to school to study nutrition and its impact on health. She wanted to be able to teach others about the role of food and its effect on health.

She completed her bachelor’s degree in dietetics and psychology from Mount Mary University and embarked on a career helping others. She opened Perseverance Health & Wellness Coaching to improve lives by teaching concepts of self-improvement, self-empowerment, and the importance of investing in overall wellness. She assists individuals through counseling and provides wellness programs for companies to improve employee health.

“I’m determined to show others that no matter what obstacles are stacked against you, you can be and do all you desire,” Wilder said. “Other people’s perception of you is not your reality, and God predestined us all for greatness.”

Wilder also authored a book, “Why Me? A Question I Refuse To Ask God”, which chronicles her experiences growing up and her journey to self-love. Numerous individuals who have read her book have reached out to thank her for sharing her story, which resonates with them.

And she can’t thank St. Marcus enough for supporting her in this journey. Wilder said St. Marcus has had a huge impact on her family by being a support and network to her as a single mom. And the impact of what it has offered her children is even more profound.

“St. Marcus is teaching responsibility, accountability, and a sense of independence and structure to my children,” she said. These are all incredibly useful skills as they enter adulthood.

Wilder has this to share. “One thing about storms in life is that people underestimate their value. The beauty of a storm is that someone needs to rebuild after it. It’s a brand new start.”

RAHSHENIA PATRICK
OWNER OF REVITALIZE BODY
SHOP, *Parent of St. Marcus scholars,*
Kendall, 2nd grade and Aidan, 6th grade

Jeremiah 29:11 - “For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Little did Rahshenia Patrick know how these words from scripture would apply to her future. An embarrassing moment in school when she was a teen during her monthly cycle helped Rahshenia realize that not many girls are comfortable talking about this often taboo subject. As an adult, and after irregular and painful cycles, Rahshenia turned to the ancient and natural healing practice of Yoni steaming. She decided to open Revitalize Body Shop in April 2018 after experiencing the healing and natural benefits of steaming and wanting to educate others. After much prayer, she realized she can help other girls and women through this holistic approach. Revitalize Body Shop specializes in Yoni Steaming, personal care hygiene, and organic products.

Her mission is for women and young girls to take care of themselves through a holistic approach. Rahshenia started steaming herself at home due to irregular and painful cycles. With consistency, she was encouraged with the results and now it's a lifestyle for her. Her goal is to spread awareness about Yoni steaming and help other women heal.

She wants to empower young girls to have a sense of individuality and to take collective action to live healthy lives. The end result of her education is to assist girls to be ready to transition to womanhood with increased

knowledge and awareness about health and wellness. She teaches hygiene classes to girls in Milwaukee area schools. She's even taught classes to St. Marcus girls in 4th and 5th grade.

St. Marcus means a lot to Rahshenia. She chose St. Marcus for her children because of its Christian values. “If I could go back to when I was young, I would attend St Marcus,” she said. She had God at home growing up, but not at school. A Christian education is very important for her children to have.

As for faith, Rahshenia has had to rely on it and word of mouth for her business. While Yoni steaming has become popular around the country, Rahshenia's Revitalize Body Shop is the first of its kind in the Milwaukee area. As a result, she has been educating others about the importance and healing aspects of it.

As to what advice Rahshenia can offer others, she says, “There are no limits to what you can do. Don't get in your own way. God is the boss; we are the managers. We need to put God first. He gives us the vision and we are the vessels to carry it out.”





RAQUEL SYLVESTER

AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR

Parent of St. Marcus K5 scholar, DJ

It's not everyday a person sets out to be an author. Sometimes it can be the last thing from their minds. And so was the case for Raquel Sylvester. As a special education teacher at MPS, a mother, and a minister, her plate was full. But yet she was inspired to write the book "Fight, Don't Faint: Strategies to Overcoming Opposition."

"God put it in my heart to write the book," Sylvester said. "God literally broke it down for me in a vision."

The book's message is for individuals who've been dealt a bad hand and get stuck and don't know how to push through. It offers strategies for people feeling overwhelmed with life and paralyzed trying to move forward. It includes strategies that Sylvester used herself when she went through tough times. It helps the reader focus on the positive and not on despair. The book also includes scripture, testimonies, and lots of laughter.

In what was truly a sign from above, it was only a 90-day process for her to write the book from print to publish. She was incredibly motivated to finish writing to deliver God's message to help others.

"We are victorious in Christ if we acknowledge Him that way and He will put people in our path to help us win," Sylvester said.

She was determined to finish her book and finish God's assignment. The book was published this past December. Writing a book was never actually a dream for her. It wasn't even on her bucket list. She was truly happy being a teacher. But the vision and God's message to help others persuaded her to venture into uncharted territory. "Anything to please God," Sylvester said.

Discipline is a trait that is very important to Sylvester. "As you move into adulthood, you need to be disciplined but you also need to walk with the light of Jesus," Sylvester said. "And I think that is what St. Marcus is imparting into our children." She loves that St. Marcus has exceptional teachers and she can trust them to impart the word of God and ensure it is implanted in scholars.

As for the book, she's had many individuals purchase it, as well as plenty of St. Marcus parents. They all express their gratitude for helping them overcome challenges with God's message. She continues to pray that His message is received and people are encouraged to not give up when times get tough and tap in to their God given purpose.

Sylvester shared, "For anyone who is having a hard time, don't look at your "now" situation and think that it is a "forever" situation. At some point, we have to get up and dust ourselves off. There is a brighter day ahead."

Because of your support, there are numerous life lessons that St. Marcus students are learning, preparing them for their own stories of success. And there's lessons we can learn - like following our hearts and trusting Him. ***What message and purpose might God have in store for you?***

Hope. Teamwork. Evolving.

Meet the 3rd Campus Leadership Team

When we sat down with the founding leadership team of the Harambee Campus, those were the words that came to mind when describing St. Marcus. This diverse trio of successful educators bring 52 years of combined experience in education, including 16 years of combined experience in school leadership. Jomoni Haynes is a St. Marcus graduate, and she's served in several capacities on both the kindergarten and primary grade teams for the past ten years. These strong women of faith and talented educational leaders provide a solid foundation upon which to build an exceptional school.

What is your background?

Tracy Eastburn, Principal: I joined St. Marcus in 2019 as an educational consultant, working as a hiring and summer school enrollment coordinator, and with the administration team to assist with staff coaching and mentoring. I have served as a classroom teacher, curriculum specialist, high school academic guidance counselor, elementary principal, and most recently an educational leader at the Hmong American Peace Academy. Driven by the belief that children are our greatest natural resource, I am committed to supporting and empowering teachers so they can do what they do best - ensure that students reach their potential by receiving an excellent education. I see opportunity in every circumstance, especially the opportunity to share the hope of the Gospel.

Laura Tyson, Director of Kindergarten and Primary Grades: I have been serving at St. Marcus for the past four years as the Word of God instructor for grades 5-6 and as the 6th grade Team Lead. Prior to joining St. Marcus, I served as a principal at the Hmong American Peace Academy. I have a total of 19 years in education and four years in school-wide leadership. I am deeply invested in supporting parents and scholars and building meaningful relationships as we grow together in our faith.

Jomoni Haynes, Dean of Kindergarten and Primary Grades: I started as a student of St. Marcus back in 2002 and then returned as a staff member in 2011; I have served in several capacities at both the kindergarten and primary grade levels ever since. I have been a lead K4 teacher at the main campus for the past 5 years. I strive to make sure that by operating in an intentional and creative manner, I continue to promote a relationship-building culture on the kindergarten team that has helped build meaningful lifelong relationships between scholars, teachers, and parents. I am passionate about educating children with the knowledge that I and Jesus love them.

What does it mean to you to be the founding leaders of the Harambee campus?

Tracy: This is such a dynamic team of leaders that bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table. I am so excited to work with these talented women!

Laura: I know this is where God has called me to be. The combination of a fresh team to work with and being able to share new ideas excites me. PLUS we're all decade babies!

Jomoni: I am super excited, and that is where my hope lies. I have been with St. Marcus at the Main Campus for a while and have been involved with a little bit of everything. It is where I made my home, and now I am moving which is different and exciting! The Harambee Campus is going to

have its own look, and I am excited to be a part of developing the culture with three, strong women leaders. There are so many great things to come!

Why is continued growth so important?

Tracy: St. Marcus has a proven track record to help all scholars reach their true potential, not only academically, but spiritually and relationally. That is why I think it's so important to keep growing, so we can impact the lives of even more children.

Laura: It is sometimes easy to think that you have to perfectly refine something before you keep building. But, if we don't continue growing, I think about the kids in our city that are stuck in a rut, a bad routine, or a low-performing school.

And here we are...we have light and hope and the path forward and we don't want to keep it to ourselves. We want to share it! I am excited that we are vessels used by God. I'm not expecting that year one will be perfect, but God will use us to reach more students and families. God's grace is perfect!

Jomoni: The proof is in the pudding. Looking at the waiting list, knowing that there are so many kids that know about St. Marcus and what we are about - they've seen what we've helped to develop and want to be a part of that. I am a product of the 2002 St. Marcus expansion, and I want more kids to be able to experience that. It's an awesome opportunity to continue to expand this great work farther into the Harambee community!



continues...



*It's OK, Jim!
Those endow-
MINT chocolate
chip cookies
are sure to
sustain your
grandchildren—
at least until the
sugar wears off!*

Conversations with Christine: A St. Marcus Cartoon Series

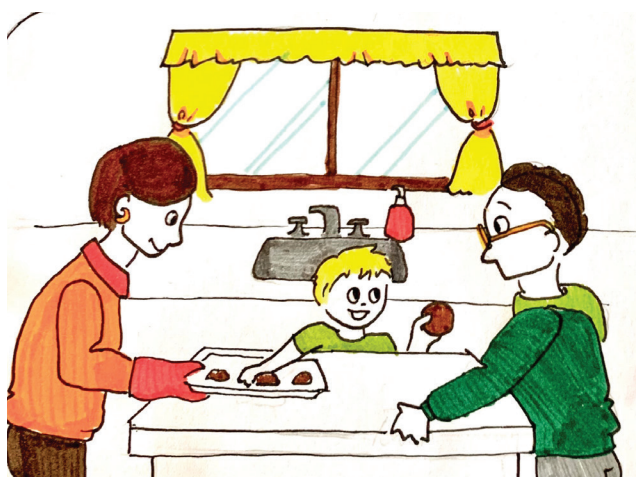
Did you know that St. Marcus School has growing endowment funds? The Amy Madson Memorial Endowment Fund was lovingly established 16 years ago by her family members. At its inception, Amy's Fund was intended to honor Amy's memory, extend her values and hard work, and eventually provide funded scholarships to help more students attend St. Marcus. It has grown from an initial \$5,000 seed gift to almost \$700,000 today and now provides funds for school operations - putting St. Marcus further on the path of long-term fiscal sustainability.

A contribution to Amy's Fund is a gift that keeps on giving! For some donors, giving to an endowment is a way to be a "wrangler of abundance." For others, it's a stop on their planned giving journey. However, one important but seldom recognized fact is that anyone can give to an endowment at any time...be it a one-time "in honor of" gift, a bequest, or a number of creative giving options. Suffice it to say, giving to an endowment helps donors make sense of the abundant generosity of God.

How do you cope with God's generosity? If you are or want to be a "wrangler" of abundance, have already included St. Marcus in your legacy plan, or would like more information on giving options, please let us know so that we can connect with you! For more information about Amy's and other St. Marcus endowment funds, contact Christine at 414-750-6498 or christine.safranek@stmarcus.org.



Christine: "Jim, these are endow-MINT chocolate chip cookies. It's a restricted batch -- for future generations only!"



Ellis: "That's right, Grandpa! These are just for me because I'm a growing boy!"

What will be the biggest challenges?

Tracy: Finding great people and building a new team.

Laura: The repercussions of COVID and the long-term impact of having so many kids out of school. We will have to work super hard to close the achievement gap.

Jomoni: One of the biggest challenges will be to create buy-in from new parents, especially because of COVID, and being in a new space while it is being renovated.

What are your hopes and dreams for this new campus/scholars?

Tracy: I love how the Main and North Campuses have built really tight-knit communities. It is like a family. My hope is that we can also build a community like that, which honors the Lord, listens to our community, our families, and one another so that we can continue to help scholars figure out what God has gifted them with and that they have futures filled with lots of opportunities.

Laura: I want our church and school to be a shining example of a microcosm of many different races working together as a unified community - listening to each other, all centered around Christ.

Jomoni: I am excited to be part of cultivating a strong culture of UNITY. I want to help shed light on the dark areas that our community experiences. To have all races, working together and learning from each other.

Why should people get involved and support this growth?

Tracy: The staff here at St. Marcus is pouring their all out for scholars and families. This isn't just a job. It's a passion, a heartfelt mission to make a difference in the lives of scholars. It's not just one

person, or one teacher - it's a community coming together for the success of children. I haven't seen anything like this at any other school. If you need passion in your life or want to see it in action, St. Marcus is the place to visit and be a part of.

Laura: We produce really great results; we work hard and kids are loved. But it's not all about producing good results - it's about kids being part of a community that believes in them. If people want to see real change in our society, this is where it starts. It starts with our kids.

Jomoni: It's important for the community to be involved, so that they can be part of something bigger. Helping St. Marcus continue to grow to serve even more scholars is an amazing impact that others can have on the lives of scholars.



The Harambee Campus will open in the fall of 2021 with 200 scholars in K4-2nd grades. Enrollment began on February 1st.

Planning for phased renovation work to prepare critical spaces for the opening is in progress for the upcoming months. In total, this campus will grow to serve an additional 600 scholars.

YOU are a critical part of this journey. If you are interested in learning more, supporting this growth, or would like to tour, contact Christine Safranek, Director of Mission Advancement, at christine.safranek@stmarcus.org or 414-750-6498.



St. Marcus School

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

St. Marcus is a Christian, high-expectations school serving 920 students (K3 through 8th grade) at two campuses. St. Marcus' vision is that every family has access to high-quality education in the city of Milwaukee. As the school continues to grow and expand, it consistently delivers excellent academic results, dedicates itself to community transformation, and serves as a catalyst for citywide school reform. St. Marcus believes there is no excuse for failure, and **through Christ, nothing is impossible.**



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