Catholic Schools – a gift for life, here and hereafter.

The instruction on Catholic baptism teaches: “Parents, you are the first teachers of your children. May you also be the best of teachers.”

The responsibility of parents to love and help their children grow is both challenging and rewarding. As we recently were reminded in the sacred Scripture for the Feast of the Holy Family: “God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother’s authority he confirms over her sons” (Sir 3: 2). Any good parent takes very carefully the responsibility to bring up a child with faith, love, devotion and attention. God’s Holy Word also teaches: “As a father disciplines his son, so the Lord disciplines you” (Dt 8:5).

Good parents welcome the help of others in the development of their children. One of the greatest investments a parent can make in life is the education of their children. The tremendous sacrifice you parents make to send you child/children to a Catholic school(s) is laudable and inspiring.

Our Catholic schools are known for quality education and discipline. Even deeper is the formation in faith and maturity. These ideals are endeavored to be lived and imbued but cannot be forced. The highest form of leadership is that of example.

By special seminary education (master’s degree in educational counseling) and early priestly assignments (full time eight-year assignment in a Catholic high school as teacher, counselor and head administrator, Catholic schools supervisor), I have sought to promote the role of youth in our church and in our society. My visits to our school campuses have meant to underscore the church’s concern for them and their value, present as well as future.

Many of us who had the fortune of a Catholic education in the past century benefitted significantly from the contribution of religious order sisters and brothers, as well as deeply devoted priests, deacons and highly dedicated lay faithful. (The years of seminary high school and junior college I had with the Benedictines provided me with a quality holistic foundation.)

From The Bishop
Bishop Robert W. Muench

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*Please refer to our website for a more detailed description of our school’s programs.

The gift of Catholic education

A s we celebrate Catholic Schools Week at the end of January each year, we reflect on the gift that Catholic schools are to our families, community, nation and church in evangelizing hearts, educating minds, encouraging talent and embracing the future for young people. Such a gift is generous, as evidenced by the skillful talent and countless hours of dedicated work by staff in their ministry. Such a gift is precious, as sacrifices are made by families to provide Catholic education for their children. For this gift of Catholic education, we are truly grateful.

We are also grateful to our bishop, who has been especially generous in shepherding the gift of Catholic education in our diocese. Bishop Robert W. Muench has dedicated many hours and much energy in special attention to the church’s ministry to young people. Leadership sets the tone and expectations for any organization, and during Catholic Schools Week, we reflect on the gift that Bishop Muench has been for schools. The culture he has set for schools is one of love, joy and excellence, all coming from our bishop’s involvement in the work of the schools.

Since assuming leadership in the diocese in 2002, Bishop Muench has visited schools from classrooms to cafeterias and has presided at graduation ceremonies for high schools as students are sent forth to make a difference in the world. He has ensured that priests are closely connected with high schools through the chaplain program and has personally worked with volunteer priests to provide the sacrament of reconciliation at high schools throughout the diocese.

Catholic school students know his expression of “God love you” as a comforting phrase at the end of homilies and recognize his infectious laugh that reminds them of the joyful faith of our faith. Such leadership to establish a nurturing culture goes far beyond academic excellence; it speaks to the heart of humans, providing a glimpse of our loving God who welcomes us to learn and grow. Bishop

SEE MUENCH PAGE 11B

SEE VERGES PAGE 38
Brother Ray Hebert selected Distinguished Clergy member

Brother Ray Hebert’s first reaction upon learning he had been selected the Distinguished Clergy Member of the Year by the Catholic Schools Office was one of surprise. But for this Brother of Sacred Heart and Houma native, the selection was also one of affirmation of a career educating young minds and hearts.

“I see my selection as affirming the ministry to which I, along with all of the other Brothers of the Sacred Heart, have devoted our lives,” said Brother Ray, who for the past 14 years has served as counselor and chaplain at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge. “I am humbled and touched deeply by this recognition and am grateful to be chosen by the selection committee.”

Brother Ray, who was born in 1939, attended St. Francis de Sales Elementary School and St. Francis High School, both in Houma. He joined the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and spent his final year of high school at the St. Joseph Juniorate in Metuchen, New Jersey.

He made his novitiate there and professed first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on Aug. 15, 1958. He then went on to Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in secondary education.

His ministry in education took him to St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and at various schools in Dallas, Mobile and Bellingrere, New Jersey.

He returned to Louisiana in 1971 and until 1975 taught at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans. Brother Ray entered Notre Dame Seminary in 1975, and two years later was ordained by Bishop Stanley J. Ott at St. Francis de Sales Church in Thibodaux. He spent 12 years ministering to young men at E.D. White Catholic High School in Thibodaux, followed by more than five years in Rome before being appointed to Catholic High School.

Brother Ray’s international ministry has allowed him a unique glimpse into the value of a Catholic education and the impact it has on young lives.

“Values like honesty, respect, cooperation, compassion, forgiveness are very important in providing an atmosphere where students are surrounded with adults who assist in maintaining a sanctuary in which the young can mature into the people God created them to be,” Brother Ray said. “Those years are critical in the lives of young people as they search for role models and begin to discover who they are and how God has blessed them with personal gifts to be developed and shared with others.

“Building self-confidence and gradually becoming the person God created them to be is an adventure which requires affirmation, forgiveness, encouragement and opportunity.”

He added that faculty and staff members, along with the involvement of parents and guardians play a vital role in the success of Catholic education.

As the years slip away, Brother Ray has been able to remain in contact with many of his former students, attending their weddings, class reunions or through social media.

“Staying in touch through various means of communication is a gift which is humbling, affirming and energizing,” he said.
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Catholic education specifically forms the person to enable them to live well now so as to dwell with God for all eternity. Catholic education is specifically that ... addressing the development of the whole person in the light of the Gospel.

Father Jamin David
2018 Distinguished Graduate

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Career change right choice for Distinguished Educator

Growing up in the tiny town of Bayou Vista in St. Mary Civil Parish, Anna Bourgeois knew she wanted to be either a veterinarian or a teacher. As an only child, she formed a special bond with her pets but was torn between the two professions.

“In second grade, I said I wanted to be both of those,” recalled Bourgeois. “I ended up being a veterinarian and switched over to teaching after 13 years of being a veterinarian.”

Sixteen years later, Bourgeois, a biology teacher at St. Michael the Archangel Academy, was selected Distinguished Educator for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“I knew they were putting me up for this but they announced it after Mass one day and certainly it’s very humbling,” she said.

“I teach mostly seniors and after they announced, the majority stood up and started clapping and it crushed my soul; it was like, ‘Oh my gosh, this is unbelievable!’” she said through tears. “So probably more, for me, than winning the award was the response of my students. It just melted my heart, it really did.”

The decision to become a teacher came easily for Bourgeois but getting there took a little more time. She was 30-years-old when her father died and, at the time, she and her husband, Saint, had four young daughters, causing her to assess the time spent away from her family in her original profession. As a veterinarian, she was sometimes on call and worked Saturdays, when her children were at soccer games.

“I really felt God was prompting me to go in a different direction so I could spend more time with my girls and do what I love, which I love learning. And, I always loved school and thought I could make some kind of contribution in the education world. And, I kind of just started to follow that path. God kind of prompted me for three years before I kind of said, ‘Okay, what do you want me to do? How do I do this?’ because I knew I was going to have some challenges changing careers,” said Bourgeois, whose youngest daughter Jensen, 17, is currently a senior at St. Michael. Her other daughters are Skyler Bourgeois Stegeman, 26, Chandler Bourgeois, 23, and Conley Bourgeois, 22.

“After raising four girls, Anna understands the importance of making sure that young people are equipped with the skills and the knowledge to successfully navigate adult life,” said Ellen Lee, principal of St. Michael. “She keeps her students interested in what they are learning by relating each topic to how it could affect their lives or some else’s. She is a master teacher.”

Bourgeois said her students keep her young and bring her lots of joy, and she credits them with teaching her as well.

“They teach me how to be holy,” she said. “So many of my students and colleagues at St. Michael are so devout that it’s absolutely inspiring. They make me a better person.”

She said she loves keeping up with former students and hearing about what they are doing.

“They’ll thank me or tell me their accomplishments,” she said. “That’s my favorite part, knowing you might have played a hand in some of their success just makes me happy.”

“Anna’s teaching goes well beyond her science content area,” said Lee. “She is not only helping them learn valuable skills but she is also helping form them into the young men and young women that God calls them to be.”

Distinguished Administrator feeling ‘blue’ about prestigious award

Looking out at the blue mouths, lips and faces of jubilant students at St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge as they ate blue cupcakes to celebrate the fact that the school had received the national Blue Ribbon School Award in 2015 was one of the highlights in a fulfilling career for Gay Hebert, SAS assistant principal. She has been selected the 2018 Distinguished Catholic Schools Administrator by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“It was a huge celebration,” said Hebert, who added that the school had almost won the award the year before. “The day we found out Erin (Candilora, principal) ordered 1,200 blue cupcakes.”

Moments of celebration, however, are common at St. Aloysius. Hebert, who has served as assistant principal for the past 40 years, said it’s part of the “pray hard, play hard and work hard” school philosophy instituted by the Daughters of Jesus, who came from Spain and staffed the school from its beginning 1957 until 2002.

Hebert spoke of how the sisters molded the school into the success it is today and how they influenced her.

A Louisiana native and LSU alumnae, Hebert said, “I’ve always loved what I’ve done. But I didn’t realize that’s where I was headed.”

She entered LSU with the dream of becoming a veterinarian. She planned to major in music and get a bachelor’s degree in veterinary medicine but learned that women were not allowed to study at the veterinarian school at that time.

With the realization that there were more opportunities in education than in music, she earned her bachelor’s degree in education in 1973.

“But I sang in all the choirs all the way through college,” Hebert said.

She taught for one and a half years in an Atlanta public school before she realized she was “too far away” from her parents and returned to Louisiana where she taught for four years in the West Baton Rouge Public Schools.

Hebert was taking a class called “Coming Fully Human” taught by Sister Therese Azcua, a Daughter of Jesus, and confided in one of the fellow sisters in her community sitting by her

Joanna Bourgeois

Gay Hebert

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Arts education rounds out student development at OLOM

The mission of Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge is educating the whole person and providing the foundation for a balanced and purposeful life.

The comprehensive education focuses on language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and foreign language, which are instrumental in a child’s development. Educating the whole person also includes bringing children closer to God through their Catholic education, developing their minds and building character.

Rounding out these important areas of development are a variety of arts education options. Involvement in the arts is proven not only to increase academic success in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking and verbal skills, it also gives each student an opportunity to explore their gifts and share them with the school community as well as building confidence in participants.

Arts education is a part of every Mercy student’s experience. Music and art are offered in the younger grades; once students reach the fifth grade level they have the opportunity to choose band, choir or fine arts survey as an elective, and once a student reaches seventh grade musical theatre is added.

The band program gives students as early as fifth grade an opportunity to discover, develop and showcase their unique musical talents.

“The instruments students play are chosen based on natural fit and student interest,” says band director Duane LeBlanc.

The curriculum he utilizes is focused on creating a school concert band. Band members have various opportunities to perform for the school community throughout the year such as the school Christmas concert, Mardi Gras parade and a year-end concert in the spring. He uses the latest technology and band website as academic aids. Each year he takes his upper middle school students on a band trip to play in various locations.

OLOM is offering a new instrument instruction program this year through a partnership with Grace Notes Music Studio. Students at any level are invited to participate in an after-school program with instruction in violin, viola or cello. Beginner piano lessons will also be offered through the same program.

The Our Lady of Mercy Choir, led by Eleanor Bach, emphasizes healthy vocal technique while creating an excellent choral tone and blend. Students learn music literacy through sight-reading and ear training/aural development.

This year 10 students from the choir were accepted into the Louisiana Music Educators Association All District Honor Choir and four students were accepted into the Louisiana American Choral Directors Association All State Honor Choirs (Women’s, Youth Treble & Youth Mixed). The OLOM choirs have also received the highest level of ratings at the National Music Educators Association Competitions on the District and State Level.

General music, also taught by Bach, is offered as a rotating enrichment class for students in grades five and lower. Bach uses handbells, percussion and other classroom instruments in her instruction. The use of Promethean board technology and her website msbach.weebly.com enhances her instruction through interactive lessons and projects.

The fourth area of Mercy’s Arts Education is the visual art program. Students in grades Little Saints (Pre-K 3-years-old) through eight are exposed to art on various levels, each having a set art class or classes every week. Along with their weekly art classes, the Little Saints, Pre-K and Kindergarten classes have incorporated art into daily lessons through their homeroom teachers.

Education in the Arts at the elementary school level affects a student’s growth and development beyond the classroom, sees PAGE 7B

Visitors to the “Old Gym” of St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge will notice a large wreath above the bleachers.

The greenery of the wreath is made of handprints and on each handprint is a picture or a message explaining what each student and faculty member will do to make the world a better place.

The wreath initially had three purple candles and one pink candle. As the weeks of Advent progressed, paper flames were added to the wreath. For the season of Christmas, the candles were changed to the color red.

During National Catholic Schools Week, the candles will once again be changed to match the colors of the National Catholic Educational Association logo. Each candle will represent one word of this year’s theme, “Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.”

The word “Believe” will also be added to represent that Jesus Christ is at the center of our mission.
Sacred Heart of Jesus to implement House System

Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge is implementing a House System this year to promote camaraderie, service, and a deeper faith in Christ throughout the school community. Although the House System is familiar to many thanks to the Harry Potter book series, the concept originated in England and is a traditional feature of schools throughout the world.

The Sacred Heart House System will be comprised of four houses based on four of the seven virtues: House Fides (Faith), House Spes (Hope), House Caritas (Love) and House Fortitudo (Fortitude). Students and faculty will be sorted into the four houses and will participate in various activities that award points to each house. Each house has an assigned saint or a venerated figure who exemplifies the virtue of that house and will be represented by House colors, a unique logo, a faculty Head of House and a student leader.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) exemplifies the qualities of House Fides (Faith). A French Catholic nun, she promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus after experiencing several private revelations by the Sacred Heart. House Fides is represented by the color gold and its logo is the shield. St. John Paul the Great (1920-2005) who served as pope from 1978 to 2005, embodies the essence of House Spes (Hope). The house logo is the radiant and its color is blue.

House Caritas (Love) is represented by Ven. Henriette Delille (1813-1862), an American Creole woman from New Orleans who founded the Sisters of the Holy Family. The house color is red and the logo is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. St. Edmund Campion SJ, an English martyr, epitomizes the spirit of House Fortitudo (Fortitude). The house color is gray and the logo is the crown of thorns.

“Sacred Heart of Jesus is a school rich in Catholic tradition with a strong history in the city of Baton Rouge and throughout the Diocese,” said principal C.J. Laird.

The school’s history is represented in the colors and logos of The houses are pulled directly from the school logo, a shield surrounding the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That logo, in turn, was inspired by the Sacred Heart that has adorned the entrance to the main hall since the school was expanded in 1950.

Assisting Laird in the implementation of The House System are parent and advisory board secretary Mike Henderson and librarian and 2003 alumna Lizzie Cossé.

“One of the things that drew us to Sacred Heart four years ago for our daughter Marie is the manageable class sizes that allow the students to really get to know their classmates,” said Henderson. “Our son William is now a student and we continue to love the close-knit community that is Sacred Heart. Not only do our kids know their classmates, they know many of the students in the other grades. It’s great seeing the interaction among the students of all ages and The House System will only reinforce that.”

“As a graduate and a current member of the faculty, I can personally attest to the importance of our school traditions and what they mean to Sacred Heart,” said Cossé. “Our goal is to incorporate many of those traditions and programs into The House System to expand school spirit and foster an enhanced sense of belonging.”

Cossé noted that the school has been making weekly food donations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus St. Vincent de Paul food pantry since the pantry was established in 1987.

“Now each house could be awarded points based on donations made by its members,” Cossé said.

Other existing programs will be incorporated into The House System. Academic performance will be a key component of The House System, along with participation in athletics and extra-curricular activities.

Social outreach activities for each house will be added during the second year of the program. Both the activities and the recipient organizations will be student-recommended.

Various committees comprised of faculty and parents are now working on full implementation of the program. Areas of concentration include visual identity and house naming, initial sorting, points system and program roll-out, calendar review, and the annual sorting ceremony.

Sorting of the current student body and faculty will take place in the spring. Family members, including siblings and cousins, will be sorted into the same house.

Full implementation of the program will begin in the 2018-19 school year.

The annual sorting ceremony will take place at the beginning of each school year. A House Cup will be awarded each May, based on points accrued by each house.

Gonzales and Ascension Parish proclaim Catholic Schools Week

Gonzales Mayor Barney Arceneaux and Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa signed proclamations designating the week of Jan. 28- Feb. 3 as Catholic Schools Week.

“The City of Gonzales took this moment as an opportunity to recognize St. John Primary/St. Theresa Middle’s important contributions to the area by providing a high quality education to students in our community for 59 years,” Arceneaux said.

“Schools are a key asset to the parish and are an important factor when businesses and families choose to locate here,” Matassa said. “Our Catholic schools provide the additional opportunity for children to grow in their spirituality.

ARTS ▼

From page 68

both physically and academically. From motor skills to positive social interaction, from spatial and mathematical intelligence to creative expression, education in the arts benefits the whole child. In the words of art teacher Pamela Cuccia, “The arts at Our Lady of Mercy encourage children to develop a love and appreciation of the arts. In all the art programs at Our Lady of Mercy we strongly believe everyone has some type of artistic ability and with that knowledge each child has a chance to participate in something they love, whether it be drawing, painting, singing, dancing, playing an instrument or acting. Regardless of skills and talents the arts allow our kids to do something extraordinary.”
Technology enhancing education at Holy Family

The teachers at Holy Family School in Port Allen use technology throughout the curriculum to effectively enhance education. On a typical day, students use technology to carry out experiments, record observations, create presentations or conduct their own research. Learning is often project-based and sometimes messy, but students learn by doing, not by rote memorization.

All of the classrooms are equipped with interactive Promethean white boards and tablets. This allows teachers to easily bring technology into any lesson where it will add to the content being learned. During the summer, the technology lab, library and reading intervention center were updated to have all new computers. Multiple carts of classroom sets of computers are also available for teachers in the elementary and middle school.

Holy Family School also boasts a state of the art science lab separate from the science classroom.

"In the world our students are growing up in, technology touches every part of their lives and will from now to eternity," technology coordinator and instructor Annie Cagle said. “It is important for our students to receive a solid foundation in technology to be competitive in their future schooling and employment at a much earlier age than in the past.”

In the technology classes students do not just learn the basics of word processing, they gain a deeper knowledge of computer hardware and software, learn the basics of coding and work on logic and critical thinking skills. The goal is to teach the students the concepts that they can apply to real life learning and have Holy Family students become the problem solvers, innovators and inventors of the future.

Holy Family School offers an extra-curricular robotics club for second- through eighth-grade students. Robotics is a branch of engineering and computer science that deals with the construction and use of a robot.

In the club, students are challenged beyond what is offered in the classroom. Through robotics students learn science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts that they can apply to all areas of their life, but it is done in such a way they have no idea they are learning and not just playing. Students who may not normally flourish in an extra-curricular club, such as athletics, are given an opportunity to have satisfying achievements.

Robotics provides meaningful problem-based learning where students can learn problem solving, integration and application of knowledge, receive hands-on learning in cooperative groups, become self-motivated and demonstrate mastery of new skills.

Last year the Holy Family School robotics club qualified for the state championship with its fourth- through eighth-grade members First Lego League Robotics Club. The second- and third-grade club was the only school in all of Louisiana to qualify into the Junior First Lego League World Robotics Expo in Houston.

Using the classic Lego building toys and power motors, the students combined their understanding and application of design, construction knowledge, and programming to create a Lego based robotic project which included motorized parts.

The World Expo offered a great opportunity for the students to learn how far an interest and knowledge in robotics can take them. Students met with representatives of DOW as well as other top STEM based companies and saw ways robotics are used in industry.

“For robotics competitions, they learn how to motorize, how to program, how to code and they learn things that they are not even aware of such as team building and critical thinking,” Cagle added.

Additionally, Cagle said her students also learn time management and presentation skills. For many students, that’s a tall order, but it’s one she is blessed the students in her robotics club not only embrace, but also adore.

Holy Family School principal Michael Comeau stated, "I couldn’t be more proud of what Ms. Cagle and our students have accomplished. Our students are pushed to grow every week during robotics club and have answered that challenge in a big way!

Today’s knowledge-based economy thrives on invention and demands a workforce with an understanding of scientific and mathematical principles, and a working knowledge of computer hardware and software. The saturation of technology in most fields as well as in daily life means that all students, not just those who plan to pursue a STEM profession, will require a solid foundation in STEM, to be productive members of society.

At Holy Family School students as young as PreK4 spend time learning technological skills which will help them in future years of school and are the building blocks towards a more successful career.

Holy Family invites all to tour the campus to see technology in action, and meet the teachers and students to personally experience why the school is indeed a “Holy Family.”
Catholic school Distinguished Graduates selected

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge select one of its alumni as its distinguished graduate. The 2018 honorees will be recognized at a dinner Monday Jan. 29 at the Renaissance Hotel in Baton Rouge.

Ascension Catholic

Distinguished Graduate Troy Stephen LeBoeuf graduated from Ascension Catholic High School in Donaldsonville in 1989. Today, he works as a pharmaceutical sales representative and credited his experience in Catholic schools for his success.

“I believe my Catholic education has taught me how to be disciplined in my work and how to treat people with respect. Attending Ascension Catholic helped deepen my faith spiritually, emotionally and physically,” said LeBoeuf.

“My wife Ashley and I are now providing this opportunity to our own children and hope they take advantage and grow in their own faith.”

LeBoeuf has won numerous awards since graduation, including Ascension Catholic Alumni Hall of Distinction and Donaldsonville Citizen of the Year. He has also served as Ascension Catholic Middle School head football coach, chairman of the Ascension Catholic dinner and auction, commissioner on the Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission, member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1087, secretary of Elks Lodge and Past Exalted Ruler, usher at Ascension of Our Lord Church in Donaldsonville, member of Ascension Catholic Purple and Gold Club and member of the Donaldsonville Rotary Club.

“Troy’s heart truly belongs to the success of Ascension Catholic,” said Wendy Poirrier, secretary of Ascension Catholic High School. “Troy is a devoted alumnus who is always willing to step up and work on any project. He supports all alumni and is always trying to promote Ascension Catholic to new families and students in our community.”

LeBoeuf stands apart from other graduates, according to Poirrier, “by his willingness to always be available for what Ascension Catholic needs in all areas of fundraising, sports and recruitment efforts.”

Catholic of Pointe Coupee

Father Jamin David, Distinguished Graduate of Catholic High School of Pointe Coupee, has had a huge impact on the faith formation of others from his high school days, through the seminary and into his work life. He credits the root of his calling to the priesthood to his local church community of St. Ann Church in Morganza. And, his Catholic education provided him the tools to continue on successfully.

“Catholic education specifically forms the person to enable them to live well now so as to dwell with God for all eternity,” said Father David, who graduated from CHCP in 2000. “Catholic education is specifically that – Catholic or universal – addressing the development of the whole person in the light of the Gospel. It is in the environment of the Catholic school that the student learns discipline, core values and faith – crucial ingredients in holistic formation.”

Father David is the pastor of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Church in Albany, judge for the Diocesan Tribunal of Baton Rouge and director of Permanent Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“His time at CHSPC provided more than just an accumulation of knowledge in a Catholic setting, it provided a culture in which Father David could discern his unique gifts with confidence so that he might determine how to live them out according to his baptismal call,” said Colleen Caillou, principal of CHSPC.

“Father David has given back to the community so fold what our school provided! We are blessed to have such a servant leader as one of our graduates,” she said.

Catholic High School

Russel Joey Coco Jr., who works as an engineer, has made an impressive mark on the Baton Rouge community since graduating from Catholic High School in Baton Rouge in 1995.

“An indomitable desire and drive to succeed have always characterized Joe,” said Vicki Melancon of CHS. “He is relentless in working to achieve his goals — both personal and professional — and that makes him an excellent model for young people today, especially those who may feel less gifted. Joe recognizes that the individual is unique and gifted by God in special ways. He has personally benefited from the holistic education he experienced at CHS and wants to promote that experience for others.”

“Catholic education is a blend of Christian values with high quality instruction which cultivates youth into outstanding adults,” said Coco.

He is an active member of the CHS Alumni Board and often volunteers for CHS projects.

Coco has won numerous awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

“Having been named by the Baton Rouge Business Report as one of the ‘Forty Under 40’ recipients in 2011 and having received numerous other professional awards, Joey’s professional credentials are clearly noteworthy,” said Melancon.

“He has consistently pursued professional and career goals that have benefited the local community and the state of Louisiana. Examples of this are his work on the ASCE 24 Committee that promotes flood resistant design and his work as the deputy director of the 2012 ASCE Louisiana Infrastructure Report Card.

“Coupled with this community-minded professional focus is Joey’s appreciation of Catholic education and his commitment to furthering it. That has led him to demonstrate loyalty to CHS and to contribute to the experience of its students today.”

Franciscan Missionaries

Of Our Lady University

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University Distinguished Graduate Fay Heroman credits her Catholic education with giving her direction in her life and in her career.

“My Catholic education gave me structure and guidance for my life, a foundation for handling tough situations and the ability to understand and help others,” said Heroman, a 1967 graduate of FMOL.

“Dedicating her life to serving others as a nurse, Fay’s service was recognized by her peers with a Franciscan Service Award – the highest award given at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center,” said Tina Holland, president of FMOL. “Her greatest honor includes membership with her husband in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.”

Holland also described Heroman as a “a humble and caring individual with a servant’s heart.” According to Holland, SEE GRADUATES PAGE 108
Heroman continues to serve the church as well as students and alumni of FMOL. Heroman has practiced in several nursing fields including gynecology, pediatrics, urology and hospital education. When she retired in 2015, she was supporting the internal audit department for the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady of Health Care System.

Growing up in a small town that did not have a Catholic school, Heroman was particularly grateful for the Catholic mission of the Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing.

“I admired the sisters’ true desire to help all people,” said Heroman. “I appreciated the way they always cared for the whole person and the way they also included the family. They gave of themselves.”

Heroman said she believes the guidance of the sisters profoundly influenced her career and personal adult life.

“We received more than an education in nursing,” she said. “We received an education in how to form our adult and professional life in a Catholic way.”

Heroman and her husband, Hank, support Catholics in the Holy Land by providing support for Catholic schools and universities. They also support the Serra Club of Baton Rouge, which works providing support for Catholic schools.

“God gives all of us special gifts,” said Haroman. “I believe his hope is that we do something good with what he gives us. That is giving back to the church in whatever way we can, whether it is in prayer, financial or in good deeds.”

**Holy Family School**

Brandon J. Fremin, director of the criminal division at the Louisiana Department of Justice, has been nominated by President Donald Trump for U.S. attorney for the Middle District. The 1988 graduate of Holy Family School in Port Allen received the nomination Nov. 1 and is waiting for confirmation from the U.S. Senate. Before getting the nod from the president, Fremin had already put in many years of service.

He was platoon sergeant, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, assistant U.S. attorney, federal prosecutor and East Baton Rouge Parish assistant district attorney before his current job in the attorney general’s office.

“Brandon’s many years of service to the people of Louisiana and the United States of America along with his distinguished work in the Louisiana Attorney General’s Office have contributed to improving the lives of others,” said Michael Comeau, principal of Holy Family. “Brandon has distinguished himself as a student, Marine Corps Sergeant, and criminal prosecutor for some of the most dangerous and violent offenders in East Baton Rouge Parish and the state of Louisiana.”

Fremin credits his Catholic education with developing strong character in individuals.

“Catholic schools provide an excellent well-rounded Christ-focused education for all students,” said Fremin. “Catholic students grow to become outstanding people who contribute to their communities and church parishes.”

**Holy Ghost School**

Terri Ferrara Morrison, assistant principal of Holy Ghost School in Hammond, has been a staple of Holy Ghost for the past 35 years.

“She has taught countless students to live a productive and faith-filled life,” said Donna Wallette, principal of Holy Ghost. “Through her prayers, her words and her deeds, she continues to inspire everyone she encounters. She is a priceless asset to the Holy Ghost community.”

Morrison, a 1974 graduate of Holy Ghost, has been elected by her peers for many awards including Teacher of the Year, the Brotherhood/Sisterhood Award and the Wilson Wells Award for being an outstanding teacher and role model for students and staff, according to Wallette.

“Ms. Terri has taught several generations of students at Holy Ghost,” said Wallette. “She is known and loved by everyone in the community.”

**Mater Dolorosa School**

Julie Santangelo-Ponder, a 1992 graduate of Mater Dolorosa in Independence, credits her Catholic education with giving her the tools for life.

“I believe in a Catholic education because Jesus is the greatest teacher,” said Ponder. “I feel a nurturing environment of strong faith and education have prepared me in life both professionally and spiritually.”

Ponder is a nurse practitioner at the Women’s Health and Wellness Center in Covington and owns her own business.

Cheryl Santangelo, principal of Mater Dolorosa, nominated Santangelo-Ponder as Distinguished Graduated.

“Julie is clearly an outstanding professional, mentor and colleague, but I believe she should be viewed first as an outstanding leader,” said Santangelo. “She is and has been a leader of those in her profession.”
Louisiana State Police. Reeves, a 1982 graduate, was appointed the 26th Superintendent of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, the Office of State Fire Marshal, the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office and the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Commission. Reeves began his career with Louisiana State Police in 1990.

"Col. Reeves’ service in the state police department has elevated him to his current position of superintendant," said Chris Porche, principal of OLOM. "His commitment as a public servant represents the mission of Our Lady of Mercy School.

“He is a person of great integrity and has spent his career as a public servant protecting the community.”

Most Blessed Sacrament School

Matt George Moscona, who graduated from Most Blessed Sacrament School in Baton Rouge in 1996, is the voice of sports throughout southeast Louisiana and that talent has brought him recognition and awards not only statewide but nationwide as well.

Moscona’s radio show, After Further Review, is broadcasted by ESPN Radio in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The sports radio host works for Guaranty Broadcasting. He attributes his gifts to Catholic education. He and his brother attended Catholic school and many of his family members have worked for the Catholic Church for many years, according to MBS principal Cheri Gioe.

Moscona has won the 2016 and 2017 Louisiana Association of Broadcasters Prestige Award winner for Best Sports Radio Show. He was also named Radio Ink Magazine’s “Top 30 Local Sports Talkers” 2012 and 2014 – 2017 and he was honored with the Louisiana American Italian Sports Hall of Fame “Buddy D. Media Award” for 2018. He is also a board member of the Congenital Heart Foundation of Louisiana.

“Matt’s life is a living example of a person who has lived their faith,” said Gioe. “Publicly and privately Matt has called upon his faith to guide his decisions and has responded in a manner that is consistent with how God calls us to live.”

In nominating Moscona, Gioe noted that Moscona is surrounded by family that has been called to serve the Catholic Church. His father is Deacon Jodi A. Moscona, at St. Theresa of Avila Church in Gonzales.

“I also think the trust that he and his wife (Erika) have placed in God's hands during their son’s birth and medical journey stand out,” said Gioe.

Our Lady of Mercy School

On March 25, 2015, Colonel Kevin W. Reeves was appointed the 26th Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police. Reeves, a 1982 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge, also serves as Deputy Secretary of Public Safety Services which includes, besides state police, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, the Office of Management and Finance, the Office of Motor Vehicles, the Office of State Fire Marshal, the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office and the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Commission. Reeves began his career with Louisiana State Police in 1990.

“Col. Reeves’ service in the state police department has elevated him to his current position of superintendant,” said Chris Porche, principal of OLOM. “His commitment as a public servant represents the mission of Our Lady of Mercy School.

“He is a person of great integrity and has spent his career as a public servant protecting the community.”

Redemptorist St. Gerard School

Rose M. LeGrange, a 1977 graduate of Redemptorist St. Gerard School in Baton Rouge, continues to work with students at her alma mater every day. That’s because this Distinguished Graduate is the financial officer and administrative assistant and helps with admissions. Not only is she an alumnus of the school where she works, but three of her four children also attended the school.

“As a product of Catholic education at St. Gerard Elementary and Redemptorist High School, I continue my Redemptorist legacy through my children and through my profession,” said LeGrange.

“Rose LeGrange truly is an outstanding example of alumni support for Redemptorist St. Gerard,” said principal Aimee Wiles. “She has worked at both former Redemptorist High School and currently at Redemptorist St. Gerard.

“She is a vital asset to our school and our Redemptorist St. Gerard community. She works hard every day to help the school be successful in whatever way possible – from dealing with the financials to working with parents to simply keeping up with lots of documents. Not many graduates actually ever come back to visit much less work at the school.

“She is a blessing.”

Sacred Heart of Jesus School

Dr. Kimberly Stewart Davis, a 1984 graduate of Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge, has been selected the school’s Distinguished Graduate for 2018. Davis is a Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine doctor with Baton Rouge Neonatal Associates. She has been awarded the Knight of Peter Claver Service Award, St. Paul the Apostle Church in Baton Rouge Service Award and the Jetson Correctional Center for Youth Service Award. Davis credits her Catholic education with guiding her through her goals and achievements.

“My years spent at Sacred Heart allowed me to be myself and to grow in my faith.”
to learn in an environment where Christian values were infused into all aspects of my daily life,” she said. “My Catholic education (Sacred Heart, St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge, Xavier University of Louisiana) prepared me well academically, morally and spiritually for the challenges I have met both in my professional and personal life. Daily prayers, weekly Mass and service to others were natural progressions and have continued throughout my adult life. My strong faith and community service is a direct reflection of the Catholic education I received from my teachers in conjunction with the examples set by my parents, godparents and grandmother. Together this formed the foundation upon which I have built my life. Now as parents, my husband (E’Vinski) and I want to provide our children with the same type of education that I received and both of my children attend Sacred Heart of Jesus School. I want my children to be nurtured in a community where individuals learn how to remain true to themselves and to the teachers of God and the church. I want them to experience the same love for learning that I have and to develop a good moral and spiritual base that will guide them as they grow and spread their wings.”

“Kim embodies the Sacred Heart of Jesus spirit in her love of God and family and through her work and volunteer efforts,” said Lisa Cassel of Sacred Heart. “Her life is truly guided by her faith and Christian values, which is evident in everything she does. She is a wonderful role model for all.”

Besides her work, Davis is involved as a class room mother for son Ethan and daughter Audrey; Daisy Troop leader; choir and lector at St. Paul Church in Baton Rouge; member of the Knights of Peter Claver Court 251 Ladies Auxiliary; volunteer for numerous activities at St. Paul; March of Dimes and Big Buddy Program; and a member of the Baton Rouge Chapter of Jack & Jill of America.

**St. Aloysius School**

Steven Brooksher Jr., a 1996 graduate of St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge, is not only motivated but he’s a motivator. Brooksher served as youth group minister at St. Aloysius Church and “continues to lead adults in faith formation through ACTS (Adoration, Community, Theology and Service) and Mission Honduras,” according to Tiffany Quinlan Meek at St. Aloysius.

“Steven spearheaded many initiatives for faith-based programs including Mission Honduras at Catholic High School, Tulane University and LSU,” said Meek. “He helped to raise thousands of dollars and collected medical, school and home supplies and clothing for the program.”

While he was a student at Tulane, he was presented the Order of St. Louis Medal by the Archdiocese of New Orleans for his service to the Catholic faith.

“My Catholic education has been an integral part in forming the man that I am,” said Brooksher, who is an insurance agent in Baton Rouge. “Many of my core values were deeply influenced by it – faith, service, integrity, gratitude.”

“Steven was instrumental in lining up volunteers and donations to help the August 2016 flood victims in our local community,” said Meek. “He assisted with the cleanup and demolition of many flooded homes. He radiates positivity both at the school as a current parent as well as at the church as an active parishioner.”

**St. Alphonsus Liguori School**

Kristen Speeg Lazarine, a 2000 graduate of St. Alphonsus Liguori School in Greenwell Springs, lives her Catholic faith every day in her role as director of Youth Ministry at Christ the King Church in Daphne, Alabama. The seeds for continuing that faithful journey were planted early on in her life, as a young student.

“Catholic education provides a well-rounded education, while helping students form an authentic faith and instills a desire to spread Christ’s message of love to others,” said Lazarine.

“Mrs. Lazarine is deeply committed to Catholic education,” said Dr. Cynthia Ryals, principal of St. Alphonsus. “She has completed 20 years of Catholic schooling. She has taught theology at St. Joseph’s Academy and served as campus minister. She is the director of youth ministry in Daphne, Alabama where she enjoys helping our youth grow closer to Christ.”

Lazarine continues to maintain a close connection to the St. Alphonsus community. She and her youth group in Alabama helped the Greenwell Springs school and church families after the flood of 2016. “She works tirelessly in her youth ministry to keep the students...”
notable recipients are the Upside Down Foundation, Ben Meyer Toy Drive and Hi5 Youth Foundation for the Underprivileged.

"Mr. Meyer was recommended almost unanimously by the school’s advisory board. His work in the community with the underprivileged speaks to the school’s mission,” said Dr. Kathy Herpich, principal of St. Elizabeth School.

Meyer is a private wealth advisor in Thibodaux.

St. Francis Xavier School
Evelyn Marcelle Haney, Distinguished Graduate of St. Francis Xavier School in Baton Rouge, has lived and practiced her faith through her profession as a teacher.

"Catholic education provides daily teaching of faith and values, praying together and a strong academic opportunity," said Haney, who has retired from teaching. “My family has been strong participants through many generations.”

Haney, a 1958 graduate of St. Francis Xavier, has a master of education degree and has volunteered in numerous ways in her church and school communities including Girl Scouts, St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Francis Xavier School, St. Francis Xavier Church cleaning team, eucharistic minister and has visited the sick in nursing homes. She is also the chair of the rosary ministry and has spearheaded the making and delivery of almost 200 rosaries to “our school family,” according to Paula Fabre, principal of St. Francis Xavier.

“We chose to honor Mrs. Haney because her Catholic faith has been a tremendous part of her life,” said Fabre. “She has recited the rosary daily since childhood. This encouraged her to start the SFX rosary making ministry at our church. This resulted in the ministry providing handmade rosaries for the faculty and students at our October Living Rosary Celebration. This is but one example of how Mrs. Haney professes her faith.”

St. George School
A love of her Catholic faith has not only helped Staci Duhé thrive as the owner of a successful nursing service but also become active in community service.

Duhé, a 1977 graduate of St. George School in Baton Rouge, was selected as the school’s Distinguished Graduate for 2018.

“Catholicism is a faith full of love, compassion and grace,” Duhé said. “A faith that provides direction and holds me accountable through tender disciplines. A faith of community and sisterhood. A faith of beautiful prayer and celebration.”

Duhé, who earned a communications degree from the University of Alabama, was a founding member of the Knock Knock Children’s Museum in Baton Rouge and continues to serve on the development
Stephen Frantz recognizes the foundation and paint company in Baton Rouge, strive to instill in our graduates. The most important Gospel values that we her heart for service exemplify some of her charismatic personality along with part of the St. George family and that pose.

Her accomplishments continue to have a positive impact in Baton Rouge. Prejean said Duhé puts “God first in all things” and that she remains a community leader. Duhé will often assume leadership roles and the “high quality of her service is a direct result of her spiritual preparation.

“She seeks to lead for a higher purpose.” Prejean called Duhé an “important part of the St. George family” and that her charismatic personality along with her heart for service exemplify some of the most important Gospel values that we strive to instill in our graduates.”

St. Jean Vianney School
As the owner of a successful construction and paint company in Baton Rouge, Stephan Frantz recognizes the foundation for his future was established an early age in the classrooms of a Catholic school.

“I perceive Catholic education as an important preparation for life as an adult,” said Frantz, a graduate of St. Jean Vianney School and Catholic High School, both in Baton Rouge, and St. Jean Vianney’s Distinguished Graduate for 2018.

Tina Hector said Frantz, a 2000 graduate of SJV, is loving, kind and patient. She said he is always eager to help a friend, family member or stranger in need and donates his time and talents to surrounding church parishes through painting and volunteering. Frantz, according to Hector, also is active in supporting local charities and organizations.

Frantz is a sponsor of the annual Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital Fiesta along with helping sponsor other local charities and organizations, including parish and school events. He also donated paint to flood victims of St. Jean Vianney Parish.

“(Frantz) has always been known for his kindness and ability to get along with others,” Hector said. “He was well liked by every group of students from athletes to quiet kids alike. Even as an adult in the business world, he has maintained that reputation.”

St. John Interparochial School
Since graduating from St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine in 1961, Warren Schnebelen has never strayed far from his roots.

Schnebelen has remained active in supporting St. John by donating his time, resources and knowledge to the school and St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Plaquemine, where he is parishioner.

His commitment to service, however, extends beyond St. John, as Schnebelen also volunteers at the St. Vincent de Paul Society pharmacy deliver prescriptions to the needy and also supports other charities such as the Louisiana Pediatric Cardiology Foundation, St. Jude’s Children Hospital and the March of Dimes. For his commitment to not only his school but the community, Schnebelen has been selected as St. John’s 2018 Distinguished Graduate.

“The mission of St. John School and the values of human dignity, selfless service, honesty and integrity have been a major influence in my life,” said Schnebelen, a father of five children and who owns an air control engineering firm.

Schnebelen is a graduate of LSU, earning a degree in mechanical engineering. He has served on the board of directors for ITI Technical College and the East Baton Rouge Parish Engineering Inspection Board.

An annual retreatant at Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau, Schnebelen is also a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 970 and the St. John Alumni Association.

“He believes in Catholic education is evidenced in his actions, beliefs and support of St. John School,” Lisa Morel said. “We are proud to have him as part of our school family.”

St. Theresa Middle School
St. John Primary School
Alicia LaCaze Williamson, the Distinguished Graduate for St. Theresa Middle School/St. John Primary School, uses her education and faith generously in serving others. 
Williamson, a 1991 graduate, is an accounting teacher and coordinator for the Cooperative Office Education Program at East Ascension High School.

“My Catholic education taught me the importance of serving and treating others with respect, and it was a tremendous influence of promoting my spiritual and academic growth,” said Williamson.

She currently serves as chairperson of the bank on the St. Theresa School Fair Committee and is a lector for St. Theresa Church in Gonzales. Each summer she volunteers as the pre-school director for the St. Theresa Vacation Bible School. She also serves as a member of the Instructional Leadership Team and sponsors the Future Business Leaders of America Club at East Ascension High School.

Awards and recognitions she has received include the STA Award (as a fourth-grader), given to a student of each class who best embodies what St. John and St. Theresa students should be: polite, courteous, hardworking, adheres to a uniform policy and treats classmates in a Christian manner; president of the Junior Beta Club; and the Academic Fitness Award. She was also a member of the volleyball team and choir.

“Alicia is more than deserving of this award. She was a great student, strong academically and very active in school,” said Johnnie Ballantz, advancement director for St. Theresa/St. John. “She has always been a kind and giving person, a trait she has passed on to her children. Alicia volunteers at school and St. Theresa of Avila Church. We are honored to call her our distinguished graduate.”

St. Joseph School

Perrin, who graduated from SJS in 1991, is vice president of a local construction company. He attributes his faith life and success to his Catholic education.

“Catholic schools provide opportunities where through prayer, formation and service, students are empowered to transform their community and reach their full spiritual and academic potential,” said Perrin.

Ragusa said Perrin is always willing to help and contribute to the church and school to ensure the success of the students and parish.

“He is a very positive person and inviting to all members of our community,” Ragusa said.

“Mr. Perrin shows love and dedication to our community and school through his actions and words. He is one of our biggest cheerleaders for SJS and spreads the good news at our school. In his actions, he is very involved in the church and school.”

St. Joseph’s Academy

Deavers, who was given the distinction posthumously, served under three bishops of the Diocese of Baton Rouge as the longest serving editor/general manager of The Catholic Commentator.

In her eulogy, Bishop Robert W. Muench said, “Laura Deavers applied her Catholic faith in everything she did ... She was a model for all who aspired to excellence in life and their chosen vocation.”

Meg Gerald, mission advancement director at SJA, said, “Laura was a supremely gifted journalist and storyteller. She helped transform The Catholic Commentator to focus on the lives of Catholics in the diocese.”

The distinguished graduate was known for her dedication to her faith, family, friends and church, according to Gerald.

Laura Deavers
**GRADUATES ▼**

A 12-year graduate of SJIA (1966) Deavers went on to LSU, where she was a member of Kappa Delta sorority and graduated with a degree in journalism. She maintained ties with her SJIA classmates.

Deaver’s early career as editor of several publications took her to many cities, including Atlanta, New York and Dallas.

“Upon retiring after 30 years at The Catholic Commentator, where she enjoyed an outstanding career as a journalist, she continued to serve many civic and cultural organizations,” said Gerald.

“Laura was deeply rooted in her Catholic faith. A lifelong learner, she worked to expand her educational and religious horizons by enrolling in classes that focused on the Bible, canon law and church philosophy. As she faced pancreatic cancer, she put her faith in God and trusted that she was in his hands.”

Her daughter Ann Margaret Deavers noted that a Catholic education played an important part in her mother’s success in her personal, professional and faith life.

“A Catholic education provides the vessel for worldly knowledge to be infused with the spirit of Christ and our Blessed Mother,” said Ann Margaret.

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**St. Jude School**

Olivia Marie Gulino, the Distinguished Graduate of St. Jude School in Baton Rouge, draws from her education and faith life to evangelize others, particularly the youth.

Gulino, a 2006 graduate of St. Jude, is the associate director of youth and young adult ministry of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“Ms. Gulino has been eager to become involved in ministering to the needs of St. Jude School,” said Starr Driesse, mission advancement director at St. Jude. “She has already helped facilitate a fourth-grade retreat. “Olivia is a true representation of our school’s mission statement. She recognizes that she has been given the chance to use her education and experience to help grow the kingdom of God.”

Gulino is a National Merit Scholarship finalist and graduated with honors from St. Joseph’s Academy. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy from the University of Dallas. She went on to Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, where she graduated with a masters of arts degree in theological studies, with a concentration in moral theology.

Immediately after completing her higher education, Gulino returned to Baton Rouge with work, leadership and volunteer experience. Upon her return to the area she was in touch with her home parish of St. Jude to volunteer her time and talents.

A Catholic education plays an important role in people’s academic, spiritual and professional success, according to Gulino.

“A Catholic education is an education in excellence, both as an intellectual and as a human being striving toward virtue and ultimately heaven,” said Gulino.

The distinguished graduate’s commitment to excellence is evident to those she ministers to, according to Driesse.

“As a young person herself, Olivia was not intimidated to answer the call to ministry,” said Driesse. “She is approachable and open to making our faith meaningful to those around her and her ultimate goal is that others in turn evangelize others in a relationship with Christ.”

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**St. Louis King of France School**

James Batiste Pierce, the Distinguished Graduate of St. Louis King of France School in Baton Rouge, poured his education, talents and skills back into his school and parish.

A college student and employee at a marketing company, Pierce believes that an education and the Catholic faith work together to foster success.

“Mr. Pierce believes that a Catholic education is extremely important in growing a child’s faith,” said Paula Johnson, principal of SLKF. “That is what helped him to become the man that he is today. Through his faith and Catholic education, he has developed a deep relationship with God and other fellow men. In Catholic education, he discovered Christ through ways that supported his spirituality, foundation and growth.”

Pierce served on the SLKF Parish Council for the past two years. He also helped the ushers.

He supported the school’s athletic pro-

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**Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School**

- Strong Catholic Identity
- Average class size 25 students (20 or less in grades “Little Saints” Pre-K 3-year-old through 1st)
- Development of the whole child
- Band, Musical Theatre, and Choir offered during the school day
- “Little Saints” Pre-K 3-year-old program

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GRADUATES ▼
From page 168

program during the 2011-2012 season.

Johnson said Pierce's sincere faith attracted the attention of many.

"Mr. Pierce came highly recommended (for this honor) from several of his former teachers," said Johnson. "This recommendation was supported by several staff members that attended St. Louis King of France Church, interacted with him and knew of his faith."

St. Michael High School

Danielle Mistric Hollier, the Distinguished Graduate of St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge, views every aspect of her life from the perspective cultivated through her Catholic faith and education.

"It's important to me to have core values of Catholic faith rooted in education," said Hollier, a 2003 SMHS graduate. "To be in a learning environment where you are encouraged to base all of your thoughts, decisions, social situations and activities in your faith is an amazing gift that I still cherish today."

Hollier, who earned a marketing degree from Southeastern Louisiana University, where she was a member of the Lionette Dance Team, is the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce in Red River, New Mexico. However, she maintains her ties with Baton Rouge.

"(After living through an infant loss in 2010) Danielle has proudly established a non-profit organization called Ainsley's Angels — Support For Infant Loss, which offers assistance with burial expenses and emotional support for Louisiana families suffering from infant loss," said Ellen Lee, SMHS principal. "She has assisted over 100 local families through her organization.

"Danielle flies to Baton Rouge every three months to keep her organization running and to help with the planning of her annual brisket cook off fundraiser... This is a notable event in Baton Rouge highlighted yearly among local media."

Lee said that Hollier has consistently helped her alma mater and served as a highlighted alumnae during SMHS’ 2015 open house.

"Danielle embodies the mission of St. Michael by striving to help those in their time of need," said Lee.

St. Peter Chanel School

Dr. Dana Troxclair serves others based on compassion, commitment to her faith and community and strong values. She is the Distinguished Graduate of St. Peter Chanel School in Paulina.

"Catholic education lays the foundation of solid academics, morals and faith in students," said Troxclair, a 1998 graduate of St. Peter Chanel. "It instills knowledge, values and Catholic beliefs in leading students to rich, fulfilling lives. A Catholic education provides the opportunity for students to not only learn academics, but to shape their moral values in their lives and develop a solid relationship with God."

"These attributes set the groundwork for the student to become responsible members of society, and during the process, they realize that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them."

Following her graduation from Lutcher High School, where she was a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Troxclair attended Louisiana State University to pursue a degree in pre-medicine.

On her first day of college, Troxclair was faced with the death of her sister, Gina, who was a sixth-grader at St. Peter Chanel and suffered from cancer. Through her unwavering faith, Troxclair continued her studies and graduated from LSU in 1989.

She went on to work as a research assistant and autopsy assistant in the Department of Pathology at the LSU Health and Sciences Center in New Orleans until 1999. During that time, she earned her master's degree in pathology and was involved in atherosclerotic cardiovascular research.

"The values instilled in her as an adolescent were evident in her work ethic and played a key role in Dr. Troxclair becoming a medical doctor, particularly a forensic pathologist," said St. Peter Chanel principal Paula Poche.

Troxclair attended medical school at LSU and graduated in 2000. She completed a five-year residency in pathology and a one-year fellowship in forensic pathology. From 2006-2010, She was an assistant professor in the Department of Pathology at the school.

In 2010, Troxclair became an assistant coroner at the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office, where she is currently the chief forensic pathologist director of the toxicology lab and director of the morgue. She is board certified in Anatomic and Forensic Pathology. She has a gratis appointment in the Department of Pathology at LSUHSC and continues to supervise the pathology residents with autopsies. She is currently a member of the National Association of Medical Examiners, the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners and the College of American Pathologists. She has had 15 peer-reviewed articles in major medical journals and has presented six research posters at professional medical settings.

In 1995, Troxclair was nominated for the SEARLE Award for Excellence in Research, Education and Patient Care. She received the 2000 Holman Award for Excellence in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology. In 2004, she received the Golden Speculum Award for Excellence in Research at the LSUHSC OB-GYN Department.

A resident of Kenner, she is an active member of Divine Mercy Church, where she volunteers as a music minister and enjoys playing the guitar at Mass each Sunday.

"Dr. Dana has distinguished herself in the community through her participation in the music ministry at her church and her professional career as a doctor. She has the compassion and work in this field through her life experiences," said Poche.

She also continues to support her school community, according to Poche. "Dr. Dana has supported St. Peter Chanel School over the years through her prayers and contributions. Each year her family presents a scholarship to an eighth-grade student attending a Catholic high school. The memory of her sister, Gina, is alive in our hearts and minds as you walk down the halls," Poche said.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School

George “Butch” Oliver Roussel, the Distinguished Graduate for St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Hammond, is a life-long learner who focuses his life on serving others.

“My Catholic education taught me the importance of having a relationship with Jesus, the ultimate teacher," said Roussel. "Though him, we discover a foundation for a Christ-centered life. Those are lessons only discovered through faith."

The 2002 STA graduate is a clinical researcher.

He has been named to the Sun Belt Conference Commissioners List, Program of Athletes Commissioned to Excellence and nominated to the Professional Society of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Additionally, he was elected as a trustee to the Lafayette Public Trust Financing Authority and the Leadership Institute of Acadiaiana.

Joshua Wittie, STA technology coordinator, said, "Butch’s dedication to our school as an alumni and his commitment to serving his community..."
GRADUATES ▼
From page 178

are an example to all of our graduates and current students of what it means to be an STA alumni.”

In 2014, Mr. Roussel founded a non-profit organization called The 24 Hour Project, which empowers civic projects under the support of city officials and financial backers.

Since inception, his organization has funded $80,000, totaling 20 citizen-led projects.

Roussel is also a tutor for at-risk children in Lafayette, a community advocate, a TEDx speaker coach and a spiritual advisor to a Haitian mission group called Mission Renew.”

Roussel’s mission of helping others serves as an example of making a lasting impact in society, said Wittie.

“Butch’s commitment to community service in starting The 24 Hour Citizen Project is an example to all on living a life that serves others,” he said.

St. Thomas More School
Dr. Farrell Frugé DDS, the Distinguished Graduate of St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge, uses his skills in dentistry to serve those in need.

A 1974 STM graduate, Frugé is an active member of St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge Church and School.

He has served on numerous parish and school organizations including the school board and stewardship.

He returns to the school and preschoo every year to teach lessons on good health.

“Dr. Frugé is a former STM School Board member and past chair of the Stewardship Committee,” said STM principal Dr. Judy Armstrong.

“Currently, he is a church usher and works with the Louisiana Donated Dental Services to help the less fortunate, and serves as a board member of the Continuing Dental Education of Baton Rouge.

“Farrell is always available to be of service to our STM community at any time. All we need to do is call and ask,” Frugé attributes his desire to give back to his Catholic education.

“A Catholic education prepares you spiritually, socially and academically. The Gospel values learned will guide you through your entire life,” he said.
SJJA partners with Cristo Rey to offer after-school enrichment program

St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge has established a partnership with Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School, which opened in August of 2016, to offer a Catholic education to young people of limited economic means.

Funded in part by a Generous Promises Grant from the Congregation of St. Joseph and supported by the volunteer efforts of SJJA faculty and students, the partnership provides an after-school enrichment program for ninth- and 10th-grade students from Cristo Rey. Once a week, they visit the SJJA campus to learn sewing and cooking skills and to be exposed to cutting-edge technology in the Andrea Cleis Mc-Makin ’74 STEM Lab.

SJJA volunteers embrace the importance of relationships with “the dear neighbor,” expressing God’s love and answering the call to service within the context of the broader community, said Lori Harper, a member of St. Joseph’s science department and a Cristo Rey project volunteer. “It has long been my passion to share the gifts we take for granted with those who might not have the same opportunities and blessings. Our students are able to offer the Cristo Rey students their time and talents and, in return, the Cristo Rey students bring their own experiences and gifts to our girls. It is a wonderful experience for all involved. Our students look forward to this gathering every week, and I am so proud of our girls for this outreach work.

Cristo Rey principal Claire Willis, 1999 graduate of St. Joseph’s, said she is “thrilled to see the St. Joseph’s community open its doors and resources to the Cristo Rey family. Innovative learning and experiences should not be limited to only those with access, and this collaboration provides that for our students and our faculty members who have accompanied the students each week.

“The SJJA students and teachers have a vast wealth of knowledge and resources that many of our students haven’t yet had the opportunity to access, so this collaboration is an amazing experience for them academically and socially. Our students benefit from seeing that there are young people just like them who are dedicating their time to sharing their knowledge and experiences with others.”

Eric Ristroph, a member of the SJJA technology staff, is the project’s lead teacher in the STEM Lab. Thus far, Cristo Rey students have learned basic 3D modeling, laser cutting and circuit building and will soon tackle programming.

Faculty and staff at St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School enjoyed a day of giving back to the community during a back-to-school faculty retreat at the end of Christmas break.

Going hand-in-hand with this year’s theme “This is Our Call,” the faculty and staff wanted to set an example of the life of service we are called to as Christians. As a time of reflection and gratitude during the new year, teachers and staff took time to volunteer with the homeless, the elderly and the disabled in the Baton Rouge community.

Charities included The Missionaries of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul Society, The ARC of Baton Rouge, Live 2 Serve, the Baton Rouge Food Bank, Heritage House nursing home and the McMains Children’s Center.

“I was grateful that the St. Michael faculty and staff were so willing to step out of their comfort zone and be open to what God had in store for each one of them,” principal Ellen Lee said. “It is a great blessing that the one doing the service usually gets more out of the experience than the person being served does.”

Faculty and staff also shared lunch in solidarity with the poor at the St. Vincent de Paul shelter.

“It was uncomfortable at first,” says Josh Galasso, director of advancement. “But it gave me the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and hear someone else’s story and struggles.”

The overall sense of fellowship during the retreat provided faculty and staff with a fresh perspective going into the new year. Such opportunities serve as a reminder that there is always a way to support and serve the community.

The retreat concluded with a reflection and eucharistic adoration led by Father Ryan Hallford, a former St. Michael’s faculty member and currently the parochial vicar at Holy Family Church in Port Allen.
CHS senior wins Congressional App Challenge

Evan Goldsmith, a senior at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, was announced as the 2017 winner of the Congressional App Challenge from the 6th Congressional District.

Goldsmith’s app, “The Schedule Tracker,” was created to scan student ID’s and provide an interactive map of their campuses and class schedules. It also allows students to scan a friend’s ID to compare schedules and class location.


“Due to the size of many campuses, a majority of young students often find themselves struggling to make it to class on time and I hope this app will help them succeed as students,” Goldsmith said.

Goldsmith will receive a $250 credit in Amazon Web Services, his app displayed in the U.S. Capitol and on the house.gov website (10 million visitors a year). He will also receive an invitation to the House of Code, a reception in spring 2018 at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC.

The Congressional App Challenge is a national competition aimed at encouraging U.S. students to learn how to code by creating their own application. The challenge is intended to highlight the value of computer science and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education and encourage students to engage in these fields.

“We were blown away by the creative ideas and programming used to create these apps,” said Graves. “These students are the future leaders of Louisiana and I would like to thank everyone who submitted apps and encourage them to continue to generate new ideas on how to improve the lives of people across the globe.”

Rep. Graves surprised Goldsmith at Catholic High to announce the award. This was the first year for students in the 6th District to participate and Graves’ office had more than 30 apps submitted.

A panel of five judges helped select the winners: Dr. Judy Wornat, LSU dean of engineering; Nathan Cotton, interim president of Louisiana Science Teacher Association; Charlie D’Agastino, executive director of LSU Innovation Park; Beth O’Quinn, talent manager; Louisiana Client Innovation Center at IBM Corporation; and, Chris Kimmel, director of application development at Sparkhound.

HEBERT ▼

From page 5B

you, for you to say say ‘I’m disappointed in you’ is like a parent telling them that,” said Hebert.

She stated that what makes the school important is that it doesn’t take itself too seriously and it is “making it” academically while taking time to enjoy the children.

“We put on pajamas, we roller skate in the gym, we do all the things that make us look foolish and the kids love it,” said Hebert. “It takes balance.”

Hebert, who will retire on June 30, emphasizes that she does not take credit for all the school’s successes but attributes them to the sisters, principals and St. Aloysius pastors who have built upon the vision of the sisters.

“Our mission statement for St. Aloysius School is ‘To educate the whole child in the Catholic tradition for a life of meaning and purpose’ and that’s exactly what we do,” said Hebert.

She added, “Seeing the children of former students bring their children here tells me we’ve done something right. Their experiences were such they want their children to experience St. Aloysius.”