



St. Hilary School Alumni: Coming Back Home

There's something special about St. Hilary School. Once people pass through its halls, they find it very difficult to truly leave. They may venture out for a bit, but always tend to come back to the school they call home in one way or another. Currently, the school administration, faculty and staff includes 14 members who are St. Hilary School alumni, including Principal Jennifer (Conti) Woodman and Assistant Principal Darcy (Riley) Alexander. What's more, Jennifer Woodman's two sons, third grader Salvatore and kindergartener Santino, now both attend the school as well, following in their mother's footsteps as part of a strong trend in school enrollment. In fact, a recent survey of current school parents indicates that more than ten percent of this year's enrolled school families are headed by parents who are St. Hilary School alumni.

Not Always a "Given"

While alumni families are present throughout the school, this year's kindergarten class includes several students who are children of alumni parents. For some, there was no question that the St. Hilary School tradition would continue in the family. SHS alumnus T.J. Wolski and his wife Michelle were sold on the school without question for their son Grant, a current kindergartener, and younger sons Holden and Pierce. "It was going to be tough to convince us otherwise!" T.J. shares. "The school and parish have always made us feel like part of a big family." The opportunity to enroll the boys in an atmosphere where many of T.J.'s former schoolmates are now part of the school staff or fellow school parents was also appealing.

Perhaps a greater testament to the pull of the school for alumni parents

The Walter Family, left to right:
Madelyn, Cory, Kristen, Max, and Mia



is the fact that even if enrollment is not necessarily automatic, after exploring options, many still opt to have their own children attend their alma mater. SHS alumnus Andy Pullekens, who, along with his wife Mandy, enrolled twins Jordan and Jude in this year's kindergarten, said, "Although I had a wonderful experience at St. Hilary, it wasn't always a 'given' that our children would attend. My wife and I wanted to find the best fit for our kids. However, after doing much research, we quickly knew St. Hilary was the all-around best choice." SHS alumna Kristen Walter, whose daughter Mia is enrolled in kindergarten this year, agrees that enrolling Mia, and eventually younger siblings Madelyn and Max, was not guaranteed. She shares, "My husband, Cory, also grew up attending a Catholic elementary school and this was something that was important to both of us for our children. When

it came time to decide on a school for our oldest child, Mia, to attend kindergarten, St. Hilary checked all of the important boxes on our list for an outstanding elementary education."

Just the Right Fit

There is no one particular reason that draws alumni parents to enroll their children. Instead, many factors play into the decision. Ultimately, the common theme seems to be that the same excellent faith-based, nurturing education they experienced decades ago remains available to their children today. For the Walter family, Kristen notes, "Some of the attributes that led us to enroll Mia include faith being at the core of the curriculum, the rigorous academic structure, the use of up-to-date technology in the classroom, the dedicated faculty and staff, and the strong sense of community that surrounds the school and parish." Recalling her days at the school and

comparing to the present, Kristen adds, “St. Hilary feels very much the same in regard to its welcoming nature, challenging curriculum, and numerous opportunities for students and parents to become involved.” Andy Pullekens echoes these thoughts for his family and elaborates, “I believe the core values and exceptional academics have remained constant over the years. St. Hilary really offers the total package. We know our children will receive an outstanding education in a diverse learning environment that also emphasizes religion and spirituality.”

T.J. Wolski and his family appreciate that “the school has always placed a premium on the kids and families being seen as unique, and deserving care specific to their needs.” He continues, “Before Grant started this year, we had conversations with current families who made it clear that this was still the case, and we have experienced the same in our short time back at the school. We take such pride in being a St. Hilary family. The school has experienced so much growth and evolution over the past 20-30 years, while still maintaining the loving and inviting family atmosphere, and we can’t wait for our boys to experience that love for themselves!”

A Complete Package - Then & Now

The world is a much different place than it was when our alumni parents attended school. Now more than ever, parents need a stable educational institution on which they can rely to assist in developing their children as productive, principled

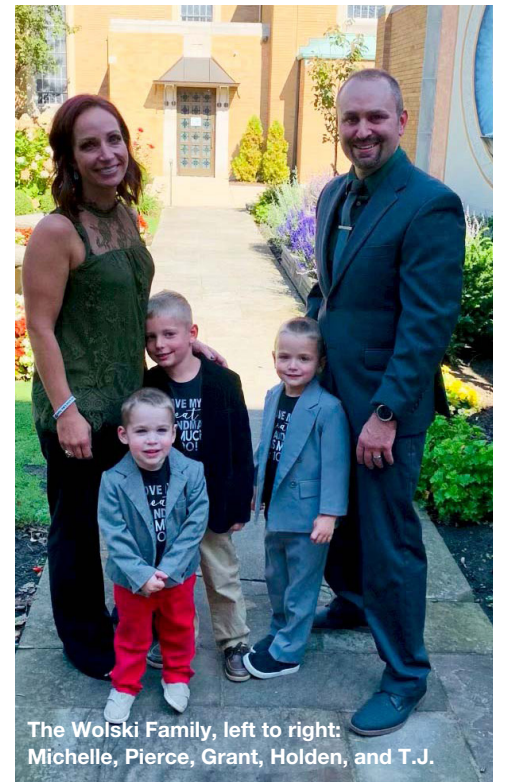
citizens of our world. As our alumni parents state, St. Hilary School meets all of these criteria and more. The faculty and staff at St. Hilary School are dedicated to ensuring that each child becomes the best person he or she can be. For more than six decades, the commonality of values among teachers, staff, parents, and students has made it effortless to reinforce at school what is taught at home. Shared morals are key to the school’s culture, and weekly school Masses and other special services help students to grow as faith-filled individuals.

A two-time recipient of the U.S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon award for excellence in education, St. Hilary School has been a beacon of excellence among schools in the area since 1960. The school continues to raise the bar by masterfully blending traditional core values with innovative teaching methods and cutting-edge programs. Differentiated instruction allows all types of learners to thrive at St. Hilary School. The school is a Jon Peterson Scholarship provider and Autism Scholarship provider, as well. Annually, 98% of graduating eighth graders continue their education at one of the area’s Catholic high schools.

While much is new at the school, much remains unchanged. This ideal blend of contemporary innovation and time-honored tradition has made the school the perfect choice for thousands of families, and makes it the perfect choice for thousands more to come. Built on a foundation of excellence, the future begins here.



The Pullekens Family, left to right: Jordan, Mandy, Andy, and Jude



The Wolski Family, left to right: Michelle, Pierce, Grant, Holden, and T.J.

Explore the School

If you would like your child and your family to experience the benefits of a St. Hilary School education, now is the ideal time to begin exploring all that the school has to offer. The school will host its popular Kindergarten Kaleidoscope program for prospective 2022-2023 kindergarteners and their parents on January 13, 2022 from 9-11 a.m. RSVP by December 30, 2021 to attend. An Open House on January 30, 2022 from 12-2 p.m. is open to all. Stop by to tour the school, visit classrooms and meet teachers. New Student Registration for 2022-2023 will begin online at www.st-hilaryschool.org on February 7, 2022.

For more information or to RSVP for Kindergarten Kaleidoscope, please contact Debbie Sinopoli, Director of Marketing & Admissions, at 330-867-8720, ext. 343 or dsinopoli@st-hilary.org.