

# Transfer of school, transformation of life

**By Debbie Sinopoli,  
Director of Marketing and  
Admissions, St. Hilary School**

Offering comprehensive preparation for today's complex world, St. Hilary School is the choice of hundreds of families who believe in the school's Christ-centered mission to develop future leaders. This faith-based institution known for academic excellence and a focus on traditional family values enrolls close to 100 new students each year. As many of these students and their families transfer from other school settings, they often find themselves transformed for life by the move.

## Welcoming with open arms

Enrolling in a new school can be a daunting experience for any child, but imagine coming into an environment where most of the students in the class have already been together for

eight years and trying to break into that social dynamic as a newcomer. That's the situation Zach Brown found himself in as a new eighth grader at St. Hilary School last fall when he transferred from a local public school. But not only did Zach fit in, he flourished.

Zach became involved in a host of activities ranging from sports to singing in the choir and everything in between. "Attending St. Hilary has been an excellent experience," said Zach. "The students and faculty welcomed me with open arms. I feel as if St. Hilary has helped better prepare me for high school than my previous school did. St. Hilary offers rigorous academic courses, nice learning facilities and great teachers."

Zach's father, Mike Brown, echoed Zach's positive assessment of the move to St. Hilary, saying simply, "I wish I would have enrolled him sooner."

Joining Zach as a new eighth grader last fall was Clara Krohn. Clara's family made a fast transfer to St. Hilary just before school started as her father accepted a new job and the family relocated from Pennsylvania. A busy girl who dabbles in just about everything, Clara immersed herself in school life, even sewing the costumes for the school's spring musical.

Clara observed a spirit of unity at the school, saying, "I feel like there are more school activities here than at my old school that really help the classes come together. And my old school had Masses only on the first Friday of the month. Weekly Masses at St. Hilary give students a greater sense of reassurance."

Clara also commented on several other attributes she has found appealing at St. Hilary. "There is definitely more diversity here than at my old school, and all of the students here have been very welcoming. The teachers try to incorporate real life into the curriculum, so the school has offered me guidance for the outside world," she said.

Nine new seventh graders enrolled at St. Hilary School last year. Among them were Jeffrey Olson, Lily Jaroch, and Audrey and Samantha Klippel. Jeffrey Olson's mom, Stephanie Wilkerson, shared that the move from another Catholic school was entirely positive. "Jeffrey has really thrived in the St. Hilary environment. All the faculty, students and parents have been welcoming, helpful and friendly. The transition to St. Hilary has truly been a blessing to our entire family," she said.

Lily Jaroch's mom, Leslie Jaroch, says Lily felt quickly at home in her new school. "The class sizes are much better than at her previous Catholic school, which gave Lily the



Clara Krohn and Zach Brown wasted no time getting involved as new eighth graders at St. Hilary School. They both received New Student Spirit of St. Hilary Awards for their extensive participation in school activities.

ability to have friends within different groups,” said Leslie. She adds, “The religious component is much more thorough, we love the use of iPads, and we feel Lily will generally be better prepared for high school because of St. Hilary. We were very happy with the smoothness of the transition, and are so happy we switched!”

Twins Audrey and Samantha Klippel generated questions from friends and family when they moved to St. Hilary last fall. Said their mother, Kim Klippel, “We were asked many times why we transferred to St. Hilary. The kids had great grades, lots of friends, and positive experiences all around at their public school. But my husband and I felt that the middle school years can be pretty rough and we wanted the kids to have a faith-based education during these years. Our public school offers a great education, but it is not able to encourage and participate in the development of their character as St. Hilary does.”

### Fostering love for learning

In the younger grades, new students and their families are benefiting from their transformative transfers to St. Hilary School, as well. Selene and Stefaan Alnemr enrolled in the school’s first and fourth grade classes after attending a local public school. Andrea Alnemr, the children’s mom, said, “The kids love how caring and helpful the teachers are, and how they are challenged due to the quality education. They love going to weekly Mass with their class!”

Sia and Sehar Mahesh were new in the school’s second and fourth grade classes, having transferred from an area Catholic school. Their mother, Shefali Mahesh, said their family has been very happy with the change. “Our girls have had a wonderful experience,” she explained. “We were looking for more of an academic challenge when we made the switch and we could not be more pleased.

The focus on education is evident; yet, the girls are having fun. At this age, it is imperative that the love for learning is fostered, and that’s what we found at St. Hilary.”



Sia and Sehar Mahesh transferred from another Catholic school and never looked back.

Coming all the way from Mexico was Arantxa Larrauri-Gonzalez, who joined the school’s third grade class in late September when her family relocated due to a job shift. Arantxa’s mother, Carmen Gonzalez, shared, “Coming to a new school from a different country is a big challenge. As a parent, you want to find as many favorable conditions as possible to trust the education of your child. My daughter has come home every single day feeling happy about her school, friends and teachers.

“Guiding all of the school’s activities are values and respect; but above these, the school knows how to plant the seed of the faith in the children’s hearts. I also like the way St. Hilary School develops the academic program so the kids may commit themselves to their education and grow their passion for the different subjects. We are so happy with St. Hilary School.”

### Finding a new home

Sometimes families are so drawn to St. Hilary School when they visit that they feel the need to make an immediate change. Not originally from the Akron area, Davene and Patrick Garvey felt called to explore school options other than the local Catholic school their son Patrick had been attending. They visited St. Hilary School in December with an eye toward enrollment this fall.

But as Davene explained, “When we toured St. Hilary, it was love at first sight! We decided shortly after our December visit to transfer Patrick to the school’s fifth grade in January. For Christmas, we wrapped his admission acceptance letter with a Saber t-shirt and gave it to him, and he was ecstatic.

“It has been the best decision that our family has made all year! We can’t believe the amount of joy and love that we feel when we walk into St. Hilary—for or God, for learning, for the good of the children.

“Everyone here seems to put 110% into everything they touch. There is always an extra boost of something special, it seems. No one does the bare minimum here. From the homemade food in the cafeteria to the broad range of extracurricular programs to the STEM project-based learning and the fine arts—St. Hilary is a very special place.

“We have found our new home at the school and in the church. Even our Catholic faith has had a rebirth, and it is a great feeling of comfort,” Davene concluded.

If you would like your child and your family to experience the benefits of a St. Hilary School education, now is the perfect time to begin exploring all that the school has to offer. Call 330-867-8720, ext. 343 to schedule a personal tour or shadow day.