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St. Marcus School  
www.stmarcus.org

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Governor Scott Walker visits 1st grade at the ECC

## The ECC is on Green

Written by: Sara Kysely, Communications Specialist

The first thing I noticed about Nehemiah was the sticker on his forehead. He pointed to it with pride and eagerly shared the story behind the sticker, "I'M ON GREEN!"

I smiled because I often hear students talking about what color they're on. As part of St. Marcus' high expectations, all teachers monitor behavior closely. Adopted by Uncommon Schools, the color system grants students control of their own behavior by providing specific boundaries and correlated consequences. Instead of receiving a letter grade for their behavior, students move up and down on a chart throughout their lessons and receive a color rating when the school day is complete. **Green = Strong.** For the first time since starting at the newly opened Early Childhood Center (ECC), Nehemiah ended his day strong; an awesome accomplishment. That evening, his family celebrated.

Lakesha is a single mother raising two children. Like all mothers, she wants the best education for her son, Nehemiah (K4), and her daughter Serenity (K5). While Nehemiah was accepted to St. Marcus' Main Campus on Palmer Street for the 2014-2015 school year, Serenity was 14th on the waiting list for K5. The likelihood of Serenity getting off the waiting list was very slim; but Lakesha had no doubt her daughter would attend St. Marcus with her son. She contacted Milwaukee's Common Council and her local Alderman in the summer months of 2014, expressing why St. Marcus was the best option for her family and showing her support for St. Marcus' expansion. She *knew* St. Marcus was the best choice because of the structure provided and the relationship between teachers and parents.

Continued on page 3

## Letter From the Superintendent



**Humbled.**  
**Impressed.**  
**Grateful.**  
**Invigorated.**  
**Hopeful.**

Those are the words that come to mind as I write this letter on September 2nd, the ninth day of school and the first day of operations for the newly opened St. Marcus Early Childhood Center. St. Marcus' enrollment jumped from 740 to over 840 students with the opening of the Early Childhood Center (ECC).

I was **humbled** and **impressed** by the number of people, employees, contractors, professionals and volunteers who turned the building around in a mere *four weeks*. I observed an army of people pulling together to be trained, order furniture, mobilize contractors, haul away trash, paint, lay new carpet, create posters, enroll children and seal the parking lot amongst a litany of other tasks.

The opening of the ECC couldn't have gone more smoothly. My hat is off to April Richter, Director of Early Childhood, her husband Brad, and everyone who helped to make it happen. Many thanks to Gary Evans (Chairman of the Board's Facilities Committee), Barry Spencer (Parish Administrator), Gail Getka (Business Associate who went above and beyond to get things done), Karl and Marva Schlueter (honorary grandparents to 840+ kids) and, of course, the teachers and staff of the ECC who worked like crazy to make day one an excellent first day.

I am extremely **grateful** to the successful men and women who choose to give in order to bless others, refusing to stand on the sidelines, but instead giving boldly so that these children, their parents and our community can move forward one child at a time. Your generosity paved the way for the opening of the ECC. *Thank you.*

I am **invigorated** and **hopeful** as a result of the numerous conversations I had with parents whose child had gone from #23 or #31 on the waiting list to finally getting a seat in the school of their choosing. Some of these parents had waited not just for one year, but for two or more.

*Can you imagine knowing that there is a great place for your child – where your child will be challenged, nurtured and disciplined – but not being able to access it? Can you imagine the relief when the phone rings and the opportunity of a lifetime arrives?*

**The 2014-2015 school year is filled with HOPE:**

- **The launch of the ECC** not only provides hope for 100 students, but it shows that further replication and expansion *is indeed possible*.
- **The main campus on Palmer Street has never looked better.** Having grown from 7 classrooms and 90+ students in 2001-2002 to 28 classrooms and 740 students today, the main campus is at capacity. Stability, at last!
- With the **addition of two critical positions** – Assistant Principal and Director of Primary Grades – an expanded, stronger, more experienced administrative team will drive the school's mission and improve academic outcomes.
- **Collaborative relationships with other schools**, particularly our sister schools (Atonement, Siloah and St. Lucas), are resulting in overall improvement of all these schools. This bodes very well for the future of Christian education throughout the city.

As we celebrate the opening of the ECC and the blessing of serving over 840 students, I find myself asking, "How did we get here?" We got here by the grace of God! **God's grace, mercy and kindness granted us a mission and a ministry with eternal ramifications.** Thank you for partnering with us as we strive to live out our simple calling as described in Micah 6:8, "*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*"

I look forward with hopeful anticipation to what the coming years will bring to serve even more children and their families. (133 students remain on St. Marcus' waiting list despite the opening of the ECC.)

I look forward to our continued partnership to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before our God.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry Tyson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Henry Tyson**  
Superintendent





*Serenity and her brother, Nehemiah*

*...continued from page 1*

Lakesha never gave up hope. She knew in her heart that God had a place for both of her children, and it wasn't on a waiting list or at a second-choice school.

On the first day of school at the ECC (9/2/14) Nehemiah (who changed campuses to be with his sister), Serenity, and 98 other K3 - 1st grade scholars began their journey to *Play, Learn, and Grow* with Jesus.

The ECC welcomes guests from all walks of life. On September 3rd, Governor Walker visited the school and spent time reading with 1st grade scholars (cover photo). Soon after, Alderwoman Milele Coggs visited K3 students.

On September 21st, friends of St. Marcus, staff and students celebrated at the ECC Open House.

If you haven't visited the Early Childhood Center (four blocks north of St. Marcus' Main Campus on Center and Richards Streets), we invite you to visit soon. There's something special about the space: hope for the students and families in the City of Milwaukee dwells in each of the six classrooms and shines brightly in the faces of these young children.

***The ECC is on green: strong scholars, parents and teachers never gave up hope that St. Marcus would be their home.***



*Sheriff Clarke visits the ECC for the Open House*



*Andy and Jan Fleckenstein with Ms. Burris (K3 teacher)*





## Rockin' 2014 Summer School

“Teaching is a practical endeavor. You can talk theory all you want, but it’s not going to get you there.” Charlie Ungemach, new 4th grade lead teacher at St. Marcus, is talking about his training with the Center for Urban Teaching (CfUT), which culminates in teaching Summer School at one of five Lutheran schools in Milwaukee. How was a twenty-something, Packers-sized guy with a red beard going to connect to St. Marcus scholars? Charlie doesn’t hesitate. “It’s all about love.”



**Guided by CfUT staff, Charlie demonstrated that students were loved by helping them be leaders: leaders in the classroom and leaders in their neighborhood.**

Charlie taught his class that their community is looking to them to lead. He had them record personal messages on camera where they put into words how they could be leaders. He celebrated their tenacity through a “leadership board,” tracking instances where children courageously did the right thing. Charlie was taught that for kids to lead, teachers must set the expectation that they *will* lead.

CfUT’s program at St. Marcus taught 200+ children to lead through a love of learning. **Four weeks were filled with relationship-building, high-quality learning and enrichment programs fostering the talent that will one day bridge the achievement gap in Milwaukee.** Students took individually-tailored math and reading tests at the beginning of Summer School, and the end, to measure

their achievement. Mornings pushed reading and math growth, while afternoons featured enrichments like visual art, music, sports and science. Some students were required to attend, but many voluntarily enrolled!

“Summer School was amazing!” stated Kevin Festerling, CfUT Teacher Coach and former St. Marcus teacher. **“Our data marks were much higher than last year due to a better organized effort to identify common learning objectives...and the teachers collaborated at a much higher level across campuses within grade levels.”** That

means double the growth in math scores in 2014 compared to 2013, and triple the growth in reading. Erin Hollmann, Director of Primary Grades, adds that culture is crucial. “We started every morning in assembly with a devotion, dance and classroom chants. This set the tone for the rest of the school day and started the day with a sense of family and pride.”

The CfUT family, a teacher pipeline, remains practical, loving and open to the unexpected. Charlie had no intent to be a teacher. He wanted to lead in military service, but CfUT put an application in his pocket and told him to keep an open mind during a two-day teaser. By his own admission, he was having none of it until the second day when he toured Siloah Lutheran School. Charlie witnessed the transformative work he could lead

and told CfUT staff, “I can’t not come back!”, writing a new life action plan in his head as he spoke.

Every day, Charlie discovered exemplars of work ethic and leadership. His students pushed hard to match his leadership...and to win a friendly competition. This past summer he challenged his students to beat the pack in reading and math scores. Beat the high score in reading? He’d shave his (enviable) beard into a moustache. Math? Rice Krispie Treats. His kids won the snacks, but inevitably Charlie’s cheeks should prepare for the autumn chill next year!

***Summer School is critical to St. Marcus because it sets teachers and students ablaze with passion for what they can do together.***



## *Never Forgotten: 9/11 Tribute*

*On September 11th, 740 students silently walked down Palmer Street, flanked by the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, to Engine 21 Fire Station.*

Older students held the hands of younger students; and selflessly offered their school blazers to those who were chilled by autumn breezes. Students somberly formed a circle in front of the fire station and its firefighters as Principal Jon Boche led an all-school assembly.

While this emotional experience has become a tradition at St. Marcus, it was the very first time some students heard the news of 9/11. Principal Boche explained, "For many of you, almost all of you, these events happened before you were even born, but it is important that we take this time to remember the people who gave their lives on that day. The many people, fire department, police, sheriff, first responders ran into a situation that was extremely dangerous and many of those men and women died that day. So today, on September 11th we come to our local firehouse to say thank you to the men and women who protect us and remember all those whose lives were lost and changed forever on that day."

The church bells rang at 8:46 am in observance of the first plane that struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Students silently bowed their heads and contemplated what it means to love unconditionally and protect courageously. The ceremony closed with these words from the book of John: **Greater love has no one than this: to lay down his life for his friends.**

*We will not forget.*

Visit <http://youtu.be/bR5zkF13cuk> or scan the code below to watch a video of the ceremony.





# DONORfeature

## Happy 10th Anniversary to Catalyst Construction!

*Matt Burow is a self-described transparent, simple, “wear my heart on my sleeve” type of guy.* He prides his company, Catalyst Construction, on being the type of business that works hard with a sense of mission and can be counted on to do what it says it is going to do.

When asked to name his hero, without pause, Burow names three. “My grandpa suffered with polio for 50 years, but I never once heard him complain about his life and he loved helping others; growing up, I watched my dad with this incredible work ethic, balancing church, family, school and work with discipline and integrity; as a young adult, Dr. Spitzer [MSOE President Emeritus] made a profound impression on me — he can always find the positive in every situation and believes that every individual has the potential to positively contribute to society, no matter how they may appear on the surface.” This combination of qualities is what attracts Burow to St. Marcus.

**“A no-excuses attitude really stands out,” said Burow.** “I remember my first visit to a classroom, seeing an empty desk and a student standing doing their work in the back of the room. When I asked why he wasn’t sitting at the desk, I was told that it was a privilege to have a desk, and students knew they had to meet behavioral standards to use one. **In each classroom I visited, I could see the love and compassion** from the teachers, but just as important, I saw them teaching high standards, accountability,

respect and discipline.”

After visiting St. Marcus nine years ago, Burow was “hooked” and has consistently been generous with his time and resources towards expanding its mission.

“What I love about St. Marcus is its sense of passion and unrest. As a successful school, it would be easy to become content, but instead the leadership at St. Marcus believes that it is unacceptable that every child in Milwaukee does

not have access to high-quality education, so **they continue to push the boundaries of what is possible.**”

In addition to its sense of restlessness, St. Marcus also stands out because of its willingness to share “its recipe for success.” “Instead of being guarded, St. Marcus continually reaches out to other schools and, in good faith, tries to help others replicate what they are doing. They understand that the big picture is not St. Marcus, funding or politics — it’s education and helping kids in a holistic way.”

“By helping Milwaukee’s kids, we can make an everlasting impact. We are creating this generational capacity where every child can learn that everything around them has the possibility to be changed for the better.”

Much appreciation and respect to Matt and Catalyst

Construction for their prayerful support, advice, expertise, investment and unwavering partnership. Together, serving God, and Milwaukee’s children and their families.



*Matt Burow (left) and Scott Boettcher (right) of Catalyst Construction with St. Marcus Scholars*



## ***St. Marcus School Benefit Gala***

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**Over 400+ guests are expected to attend this year!**

Visit [www.stmarcusgala.com](http://www.stmarcusgala.com) to reserve your seat and for sponsorship opportunities.

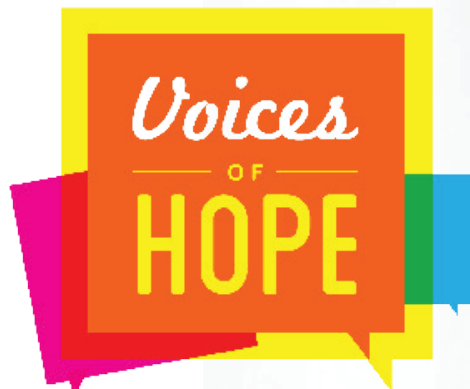
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Contact St. Marcus' Mission Advancement Office for more information and to volunteer by calling 414-550-8746 or e-mail [shemagne.okeefe@stmarcus.org](mailto:shemagne.okeefe@stmarcus.org).

*Proceeds benefit St. Marcus' nationally recognized urban education program.*



2014 ST. MARCUS SCHOOL  
BENEFIT GALA





# St. Marcus School

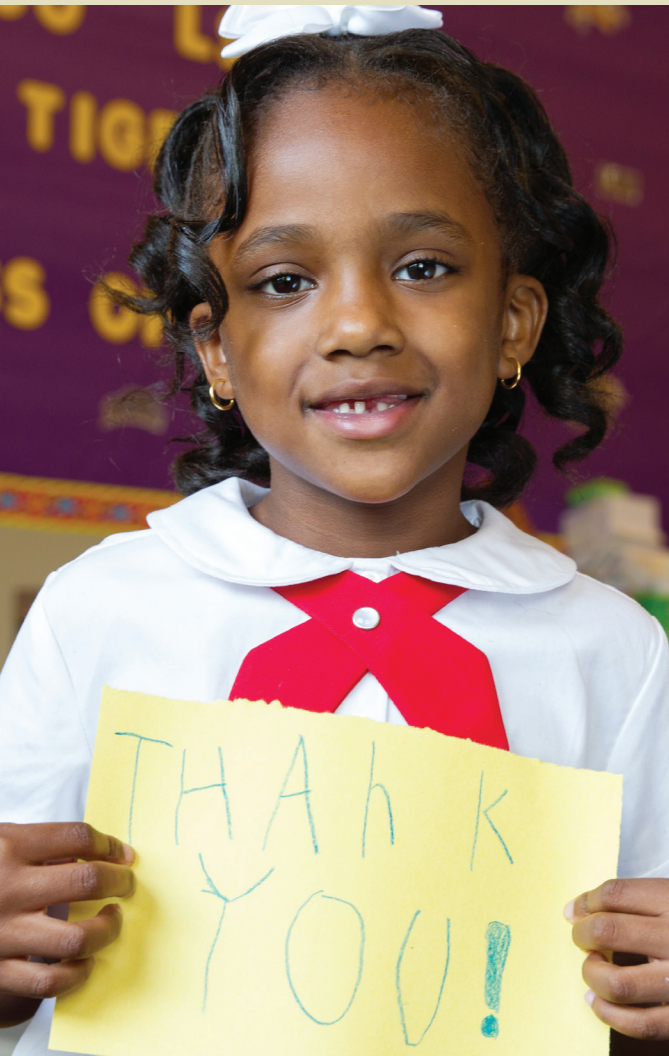
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St. Marcus School is a Christian, college prep school serving over 840 students at two campuses from K3 through 8th grade. St. Marcus is at the forefront of educational reform and student transformation. Graduating students are fully prepared for high school and positioned to excel in higher education, and as leaders in their communities. The Christian focus and no-excuses approach encourages growth in wisdom, dedication and self-discipline.

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