

CATALYST



ST. MARCUS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER FALL 2019



"You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. **Nothing would be impossible." - MATTHEW 17:20**

Dear Friends,

Urban education is complicated. It feels impossible to achieve sustainable success. There are days where I sit back and ask myself, "What on earth are we doing?"

There are very few great schools in Milwaukee; but *it's not because people don't care*. There is an army of people in the heart of our city who show up every day with the passion and dedication needed to **move mountains**. They press on when they're up against tough issues: lack of funding, politics, racism, and the damaging effects of social media on children who are trying to establish their identities. They move through emotional setbacks with angry thirteen-year-olds, teacher shortages, frustrated parents, and personal strife. (I take refuge in our Creator and in the companionship of people who care.)

Despite this army of passionate people, others scoff at a vision that demands we reach new heights as a community. In 2002, some people thought St. Marcus was crazy for wanting to be the best urban Christian school in America. At that time, we served 300 scholars at one campus. We now serve 920 scholars between two campuses, having seen enrollment growth of 142% since 2009. Our vision remains unchanged. **With our eyes fixed on Jesus and friends like you by our side, we keep going.**

Teachers work hard to help children step up in the classroom, but we can't ignore the educational desert that surrounds our building. There are children in nearby schools who can't read and others who can't add or subtract. They don't know God designed them for a purpose, has forgiven their every wrongdoing, and is paving a way forward through grace, love, and His unmatched, unimaginable power.

St. Marcus is called to be courageous. We boldly serve as a catalyst for transformation in the neighborhoods where we serve, but on some days, it feels like we're exhausted and the devil has us pinned down in a valley of despair.

We need support to move through hardship. On days when circumstances threaten progress, I turn to Scripture.

"You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." Matthew 17:20

And so, taking our Lord at His word, we press on, refusing to believe that we will fail. On the contrary, **we remain thankful for every child who moves mountains by overcoming incredible odds and starting to taste success.** We celebrate when a third year teacher **moves mountains** by breaking through and becoming a masterful conductor of a classroom. We rejoice when our friends come alongside us and **move mountains** by resolving an eviction, building classrooms, investing in a child, or funding a critical program.

Thank you for being one of those people who care. Thank you for refusing to stand on the sidelines and watch, instead choosing to be a climbing companion to over 900 children who are destined to be overcomers who achieve their dreams.

We are moving mountains. We will continue to challenge what threatens to hold us back until every single child in this city has access to a great school. *Impossible?* Not with our God. Not with you alongside us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Henry Tyson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Henry Tyson
Superintendent

P.S. We expect to have some very exciting news to share at the annual St. Marcus School Gala on Saturday, November 9th. We hope and pray that you can join us to celebrate the progress we've made together and set our sights on the next mountain!

It promises to be an amazing evening. Don't hold back!
We climb together.



Our mission is to prepare them.

Thank you for making it possible.

Because of YOU,
920 children started school
at St. Marcus on August 20th.

Scholars walk our school halls every day with the knowledge that they are loved and supported. They show up to learn with determination, focus, and the desire to accomplish great things.

WE ARE SO *grateful* FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

What did you love about **SUMMER?**





"We were outside all the time! It was like having recess all day. My favorite thing we made was a rain stick. I also liked theatre and dance."

HENRY, 3rd grade
Wilson Center: Art in Nature Camp

"This summer I played my viola in a lot of gigs. It was good to perform...I played one gig at Denim Park with Sista Strings."

JAZALE, 6th grade
Sista Strings

"The best part about [my summer at St. Marcus] was getting to talk to the kids and share God with them. **I was always amazed by their faith and how they opened up to me.** It was truly a beautiful thing. It made the saying 'If you love what you do you'll never work a day in your life' so true."

TERRY, St. Marcus Alumnus, Chaplain Intern
Chaplains in Schools

"Basketball camp was awesome. We did drills with Coaches Meyer and Kock. It was fun. Some people just sit around all summer. I would tell them, 'Get up and do something, okay?'"

SAIYEUN, 2nd grade
St. Marcus Basketball Camp

"I loved making new friends and going on field trips. I also liked that we had A LOT of outside time and we could pick any activity that we wanted to do for that day. I even tried a new sport (baseball)."

DONOVAN, 4th grade
Camp Umoja

"I start St. Marcus in fall. On first thought, it'll be easy and fun. But, on second thought, it will be hard, I know. In preschool, I could teach others, but now the St. Marcus teachers will teach me!"

JOSETTE, K5,
CfUT Summer School

"I liked the art studio with wool and paint. I also liked dance class because I learned different moves we had never seen before. I liked being a ballerina."

ELSA, 2nd grade
Wilson Center: Art in Nature Camp

"I got to do something new and exciting with my brother, Manny. We drummed on steelpans through MYSO [Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra] at Calypso Camp. I learned new songs, learned about new people, and learned a new instrument! Now, I can play "Matilda" by Harry Belafonte. What was also cool was the Conservatory [Wisconsin Conservatory of Music] music camp. You could pick four instruments to learn how to play, and every class would be about a different instrument...Someone even donated a keyboard to me, so now I can play more piano at home."

SOFIA, 6th grade
MYSO at Calypso Camp



Where One Leads, Others Can Follow

A submission from Alumni Alicia Webb

This summer, I was chosen for the state of Wisconsin's Community Ambassador Program, newly created with the intent to increase diversity within state government.

The interns and I were picked to attract more youth of diverse backgrounds into state internships. Through those, they can get exposure earlier on in their careers which will lead them to work for the state in the future.

The other "ambassadors" and I visited fourteen of the seventeen departments under the governor to learn about the array of state jobs offered in each department. At each department, we documented what we learned through paper, photo, or video. The first eight weeks of the program were filled with touring all of the

departments, but the last week, we put together all that we learned to create a recruitment video to reach youth. We also had the chance to witness in person Governor Evers signing off on the state budget and did other cool things like getting a behind-the-scenes tour of the Capitol, meeting our state representatives, and shadowing an amusement park inspection.

Before this program, we had little to no exposure to state jobs. Yet at each department, we found a position in which we could envision ourselves in the near future. Depending on the department, job positions ranged from legal counsel aids to meat inspectors to traffic systems supervisors as well as many other jobs that the working population in the Milwaukee area doesn't know are available to them.

I enjoyed the program because I was able to network throughout it and line up a few jobs and internships for next summer already. It was also pretty cool to see all that the state does every day to make sure our lives run smoothly. I could definitely see myself as the chief legal counsel of a state department one day!

Move mountains



At St. Marcus, we provide tools that keep young leaders moving up. **With you as their climbing companion, children reach new heights.** Join us at The Gala on Saturday, November 9, and let's ascend together.

For tickets and donations, visit www.stmarcushgala.com.

Thank you to our generous top gala sponsors!

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POWER OF PURPOSE



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PRESENTING SPONSORS
WHATEVER IT TAKES

Barbara & John Trimble
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BE STRONG





NEVER FORGET

Scholars, parents and staff honor those fallen on September 11, 2001.

As long as we live, we will remember. Thank you to those who serve and protect.

Lights are flashing
Wheels are rolling
Sirens are blaring
because.....
We Thank You

K3
Kemp

Engine
21

RAISING the BAR

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

By Maggie Enters, Mission Advancement Team

JHANEЕ BROWN-SANDERS KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE PART OF A LEGACY. Nearly every person in her family has walked the halls of St. Marcus—six aunts and uncles before her, two siblings and two cousins after her, and a niece who just started this year. The 2012 graduate is entering her senior year at Ball State University in Indiana, but she can still clearly remember her days at St. Marcus.

A student from K4 all the way to 8th grade, Jhaneе credits much of her success to the lessons she learned in our classrooms. "St. Marcus does a great job of teaching you how to recognize and appreciate the diversity in others," she explains. **"You learn how to find common ground and use that to communicate, instead of judging others for their differences."**

Starting college can be an intimidating transition. Jhaneе faced the added challenge of finding her footing nearly 350 miles away from Milwaukee, where she grew up.

"Freshman year was really hard, because everything was so new and I was kind of forced to start over," she recalls. "St. Marcus really instilled the concept of 'mind over matter,' so I knew that if I kept working when things got hard instead of giving up right away, I'd make it through."

Branching off from her family to write her own story was a brave decision, but Jhaneе didn't have to make it alone. St. Marcus' alumni support team was there with her every step of the way.

Now in his second year as St. Marcus' Director of Graduate and Spiritual Support, Jim Datka originally knew Jhaneе through his position as Dean of Students at Milwaukee Lutheran High School. Even in his previous position, Datka found his passion in mentoring and guiding students long after they graduated.

"Mr. Datka's son was in my K4 class, so we basically grew up together," Jhaneе remembers. "Even as the dean, he was always there to give me advice about colleges or point me towards scholarship opportunities."

With three St. Marcus graduates of his own, Jim is familiar with the anxiety that high school and college decisions can bring. Working with Lance Meyer and Jacarrie Carr, his team works tirelessly to ensure that St. Marcus graduates have guidance and resources to succeed in whatever path they choose.

"I love helping our alumni in every area of their lives. I love to see the plans God has for each one of our alumni and I am

Continued from page 8

blessed to help them achieve their goals and see God's plan fulfilled," Jim expresses.

Since 2004, the Alumni Support team has been tracking St. Marcus graduates for eight years after they graduate from St. Marcus... through high school and into college to identify patterns and areas of need. In an effort to provide fellowship and Biblical guidance to alumni, Lance Meyer started Raising the BAR (Bible, Academic, Recreation) in October of 2016. This after-school program now sees up to 40 graduates each week! "We get a lot of high school freshman and sophomores," Meyer shares. "The goal is to provide them with a safe, loving community while they figure out a completely new school. By junior and senior year, they generally feel more established and comfortable at their high school, which is great! That's ultimately the goal."

Students participate in a group devotional and share a meal together, but perhaps the most impactful part is the relationships they form. Adult mentors make themselves available for things as simple as homework help or a pick-up game of basketball, and it is often these small gestures of support that build an environment of lifelong trust.

"Seeing kids grow into adults is the most rewarding part of our programming," Meyer affirms. "We get to coach students through

basketball, high school, and life stuff. It's really incredible to see what God is doing in their lives."

In addition to our in-house programming like Raising the BAR, the Alumni Support team goes above and beyond to make sure St. Marcus students are successful long after they leave the school. Datka frequently visits high schools to check in with graduates and see how the year is going. Meyer regularly takes groups of alumni on college visits and even to out-of-state leadership camps. Community-building efforts like bowling, skate nights, and trips to Great America allow students to relax and invite their friends to a night of fellowship and fun.

This varied, extensive alumni programming is unique to St. Marcus but should be no surprise. **Instead of focusing narrowly on academic success, we walk alongside students and minister to them in a way that empowers.** When a student is loved, supported, and challenged to reach their full potential, everything else begins to fall into place. With God's grace, we will see countless new legacies begin to form in the coming years.

The Alumni Support team truly embodies St. Marcus' mission, to disciple children for Christ, now and for all eternity, and to train them in excellence for their roles in their family, church, community, workplace and country. We are blessed to have them!

87%
**of St. Marcus
alumni achieve
high school
graduation in
four years.**

**St. Marcus
students believe
that college is a
reality through
hard work and
self-discipline.**

Students complete work one grade level above their actual grade, and classes identify themselves by the estimated year of their entrance into college.



Volunteers: the *heart and soul* of an organization.

By Cecilia Davis & Maria Watson
Mission Advancement Team

St. Marcus students are blessed with caring, passionate volunteers who make them feel loved. Volunteers help in classrooms, tutor one-on-one, mentor scholars, and support evening events. Meet two rockstar volunteers, **Lynn Schroeder and Dennis Francis.**

Lynn has been at St. Marcus for six years, and Dennis is going on two. Lynn started volunteering at Saturday School and now works with individual students. She prefers being in the classroom with children and helping them stay on task. She also enjoys working with students one-on-one that St. Marcus identifies as needing a helping hand.

Dennis also enjoys working with students one-on-one. He assists students in K4-4th grades with reading. He reads with students who need extra help in addition to strong readers whose skills he can help reinforce.

Dennis was born and raised in a small village in Jamaica. He attended high school at Campion College, a rigorous, Catholic boarding school for boys. With fond memories of a rich educational and spiritual growth experience at Campion, Dennis sees many similarities in the St. Marcus school culture.

“I am always so impressed with how caring St. Marcus teachers are. Growing up, my teachers were very kind and supportive and expected much from me. When I am volunteering, I see this in the St. Marcus teachers’ love, support, and high expectations,” Dennis says.

Modeled after the British education system, Dennis’s school, like St. Marcus, held students to high standards of personal and academic excellence. That included a polished, professional, dress-for-success appearance. At St. Marcus, if a scholar’s shoe, necktie, or uniform shirt

is out of place, Dennis doesn’t hesitate to offer him or her a friendly reminder!

“If scholars see me coming down the hallway, I often catch them checking their uniforms to make sure everything is in place before I walk by!” he chuckles. Dennis talks with scholars about striving for their best achievements, and he enjoys attending the St. Marcus quarterly award ceremonies to celebrate their successes.

“The hardest job of being a volunteer or staff member is seeing how badly some of the **students seek a connection, a smile, or a kind word from adults,**” says Lynn. Dennis relates that in his conversations with students, he learns that some have difficult home lives or personal situations

Both volunteers state that faith played a big role in their justification for volunteering. They emphasized that service is important. Lynn learned to serve others because of her Catholic upbringing. Jesus’ work of embracing people from all walks of life inspires her to engage with others on a sincere, human level. Volunteering is “about being human. It’s what a human’s job is,” she says. “It’s what Jesus asked us to do. He made everyone a part of His world. It’s why we’re here!”

What keeps Lynn and Dennis coming back week after week? “You are able to receive so much more than what you are giving to students,” Lynn says. “Just walking out of the building and getting a



that weigh on them during the day. This makes focusing on school incredibly difficult. Lynn agrees. “There is a little pool of kids that just want your attention, whether it be a nod of approval or a hug. Even trying to take a nap, the kids need you to rub their back to fall asleep.” Our volunteers comment that **it’s all about relationship-building, and they become like family to scholars.**

The bonds volunteers build with students go beyond school walls. Dennis received a birthday party invitation from one of his students. Lynn maintains close relationships with some of her students and their families, staying connected even as students go through high school.

little hug or a smile from a child. At the end of every experience, you are amazed by the resilience of the students and how hard they actually do try; that little one-on-one with them is so worth it,” she said.

“You know that your time is going some place and helping someone,” says Dennis. “When you leave the building, you feel that you accomplished something and that you have helped someone who really needs you.”

Volunteering touches more lives than just the students’. It leaves an indelible mark on the volunteers’ lives as well. **“Once you experience St. Marcus, you’ll never be the same!”** Lynn says.

In the 2018-19 Fiscal Year, St. Marcus raised **\$2,086,663** to *fund the gap* between the voucher amount and the actual cost of a high-quality education.



DISCOVER AMERICA

112 Travelers (grades 5-8)
62 Locations
5 College visits
\$94,436 Invested



ANNUAL GALA

409 Guests
163 Volunteers
693 Volunteer hours
\$609,723 Invested



GENEROUS FUNDERS*

Individuals: \$1,777,897
Grants: \$1,100,616
Foundations: \$779,037
Other: \$386,698

**numbers include operating and capital gifts*

Thank you for your generous support!

100% of St. Marcus scholars experienced discipline, love, and relentlessly high expectations.

920 predominantly low-income, African American students are enrolled at St. Marcus.

100% of students dress in uniform. Middle school students wear specialized ties to showcase their academic achievements and positions of leadership. Students outperformed the district on the 2019 Forward exam. In fact, our 2019 scores set a new St. Marcus standard.

87% of students return each year.

142% enrollment growth since 2009. Current demand drives continued expansion.

92% of alumni in the St. Marcus class of 2019 graduated high school.



95% voucher students

82% low-income students

10% students with special needs



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**Thank you to
the foundations
who help us grow.**



HAVE YOU
VISITED
ST. MARCUS? 🥰



NOT YET... 😞
Do you live close
enough to visit?

YES!!
Cool! What would
you like to do next?





Just over a year ago...

ST. MARCUS EMBARKED ON A STRATEGIC VISIONING PROCESS TO EXAMINE THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN MILWAUKEE.

Among community partners, discussions were held to help address critical needs of students and families.

The expansion of the North Campus, the addition of 350 children, and Phase I of the *Courage to Commit* comprehensive campaign being nearly complete prepared St. Marcus and key stakeholders to realize a vision for the campaign's *next* phase.

The expanded vision calls on St. Marcus to continue creating a healthy community and supporting families to prosper.

Even with ongoing growth over the past 17 years, the surrounding community's demand for excellent education has continued to overwhelm capacity.

The anticipated purchase and renovation of a third campus in the Harambee neighborhood, plus additional community partnerships, positions St. Marcus to expand its services once again. Currently, 175 children linger on the waiting list.

As the North Campus fills to capacity, we cannot ignore the outcry for expanded development. A third campus will provide more students with access to a high-quality, Christian education and opportunities for families to work with partners on home ownership, job opportunities, financial literacy, and the like, focused on the Harambee neighborhood.

Many partners reinvested in the past year in support of this expanded vision for Phase II of the *Courage to Commit* campaign.

Margaret Lund from the Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, a critical foundation partner of St. Marcus' last expansion efforts and an early investor in the anticipated purchase of a third campus, shares,

"Our foundation's focus is on initiating and sustaining programs and organizations which promote a higher quality of living for children and families in the community, and St. Marcus does just that. It's part of our core mission to help children and families and build strong neighborhoods... We believe in St. Marcus' vision, strong leadership, and commitment to the community; this is a great foundation for the anticipated third campus growth and we think this will allow St. Marcus to impact even more students and their families."

The Lakeview Foundation is also an early investor in St. Marcus' continued growth. Greg Meuler shared some thoughts regarding their partnership.

"There is a strong need for improving education in the city of Milwaukee. The foundation, since it was started in 1996, has focused mainly on education, and supporting underserved youth in the Milwaukee area. We have limited the number of schools that we support, so that our investment can have a significant impact. St. Marcus falls into the category of supporting schools that have and are showing strong success with their students, not only in academics, but students that are prepared for high school and the next step in their life as a successful adult and contributing member of their communities.

The Lakeview Foundation's investment is not only about supporting school growth, but a commitment to St. Marcus' vision of positively impacting a neighborhood and building of a strong community.

I definitely encourage others to visit one of the campuses, meet the students and look at where St. Marcus has been, where they are succeeding and consider how they can help continue the impact and growth of the school."

These two foundations, together with multiple individuals and other foundation partners, are laying the groundwork for third campus growth.

As St. Marcus expands to serve more children and families, we give thanks for the partners who have helped drive this vision forward. YOU change lives in profound and lasting ways. Thank you!

Want to learn about how you can get involved? Reach out to Fred Lautz, St. Marcus' Executive Director, at fred.lautz@stmarcus.org or 414-267-8389.

Courage to Commit Phase II

PEOPLE

Annual giving to support programming and operational excellence, which fuel St. Marcus as a leader in the urban school movement

PLACE

Gifts toward purchase and renovation of a third site, located in the Harambee neighborhood

PROMISE

Funds for an endowment to provide maintenance and support for ensured sustainability

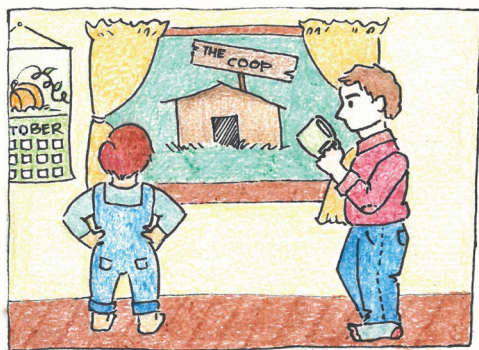
WE GIVE HEARTFELT THANKS

to those who reinvested early in Phase II of the *Courage to Commit* campaign and the anticipated third campus acquisition.

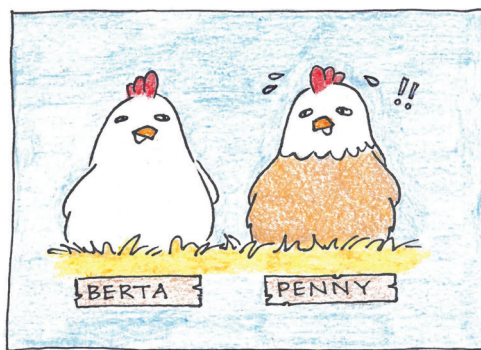
The A.O. Smith Foundation, Barbara and John Trimble Family Foundation, Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Lakeview Foundation, and numerous individuals continue to share their blessings. **We treasure your meaningful partnership.**

Partners listed are invested at the time of print.

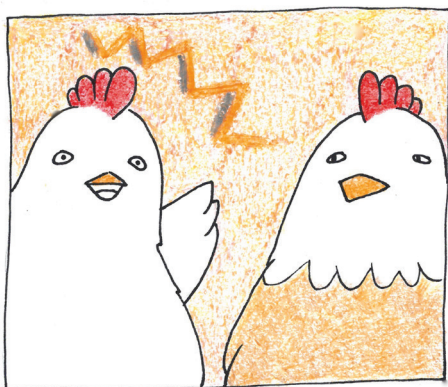
Conversations with Christine: A St. Marcus Cartoon Series



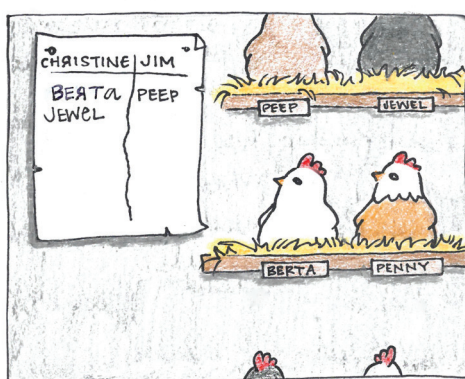
Christine: Jim, does it seem like the chickens are acting strangely lately?



Meanwhile in the coop –
Penny: I'm feeling uneasy, Berta.
It feels as if the sky is falling! The end is near!
What will I do with all of my eggs?
None of my affairs are in order.



Berta: Penny, don't fret!
NOW is the perfect time to make a legacy plan for your eggs! We don't know when our time will come, but if we make a plan, then we can rest easy knowing our eggs will be stewarded responsibly.



Berta: The coop is making a plan to entrust either Christine or Jim with our eggs.
What's your pick? So far Christine is winning!

Penny: Hmm...That is a tough decision, but let's face it: The rooster makes all the noise, but the hen rules the roost!

Discussing end-of-life plans can feel like walking on eggshells. But don't let the topic ruffle your feathers.

Now is the perfect time to incorporate generosity into your legacy plan. It's easy to do. It can be done at any time, and at any age. Designating St. Marcus as a beneficiary of your will, IRA or life insurance can help you fulfill a philanthropic dream while also helping you achieve your estate and financial goals. Imagine the impact on future generations of St. Marcus scholars—blessed, lifted, thriving and excelling TOMORROW thanks to a thoughtful and loving plan you make TODAY.

If you have already included St. Marcus in your legacy plan, please let us know so that we may connect with you!

For more information about legacy giving, contact Christine at 414-750-6498 or christine.safranek@stmarcus.org.



*May the Lord make your love increase
and overflow for each other and for everyone else,
just as ours does for you.*

- 1 THESSALONIANS 3:12





St. Marcus School

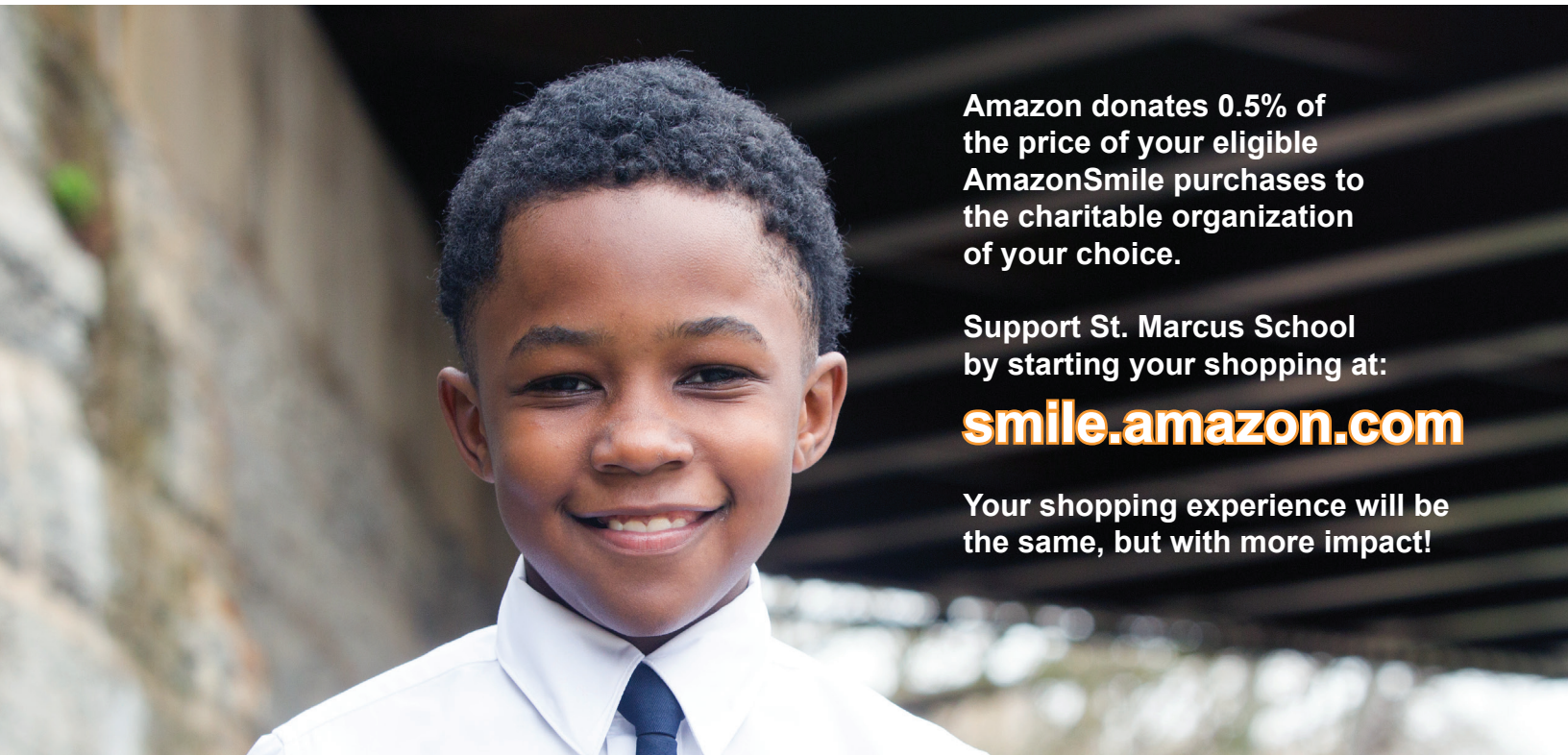
2215 North Palmer St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 562-3163

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



WWW.STMARCUS.ORG/SCHOOL

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