

CATALYST

A young Black girl with her hair in a high bun of braids is sitting against a brick wall. She is wearing a dark blue school jacket over a white collared shirt with a large red bow at the neck. She has her chin resting on her right hand and is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression.

ST. MARCUS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER FALL 2017



Dear Friends,

WHAT WERE YOU DOING SIXTEEN YEARS AGO?

It's probably easy to remember because of the tragic events that unfurled on September 11, 2001. I was teaching social studies to high school students in Skokie, Illinois. That fall, I spent several weekends visiting a former colleague and friend who had become the principal of an old, small, Lutheran school on the corner of North and Palmer in Milwaukee. Little did I know that this church and school would become a huge part of my life's work.

At the time, St. Marcus was serving just under 100 students. The vision was to grow the school to about 300 students and create the best urban, Christian school in America. Three hundred seemed enormous! If we grew that large, we'd need a new school building and we'd go from being one of the smaller Lutheran schools in Milwaukee to one of the largest in the country. I remember being in awe of the vision to not only grow the school, but to make it excellent.

Several months later, in the early summer of 2002, I drove down North Avenue to begin my new life in Milwaukee. As I drove past the school, it was symbolically significant that a wrecking ball was literally demolishing the old school building. (See photo to the right. The original sign on the building as well as some of the cream city brick now reside in the Middle School entrance). Just one year later, in the fall of 2003, a new school building opened with 240 students enrolled. In just one short year, we were already well underway.

God has blessed our work over the past sixteen years. The government removed the caps on voucher enrollment, providing access to an unlimited number of students. Parents lined up in droves, loving the mission, focus and discipline of the school. Supporters, many of whom had very little exposure either to Lutheranism or urban Milwaukee, opened their hearts and resources and partnered with us to build again and again. And so it was that a 350-student addition was completed in 2011, the B. Bruce Krier Center was completed in 2013, the North Campus was purchased

in 2014 and a 300-student addition at the North Campus was added in 2017. St. Marcus School opened its doors this fall on August 23rd with 931 students. **Growth has been a constant and we have been blessed by your partnership beyond measure.**

It probably won't shock you to know that, at St. Marcus, we spend a lot of time talking about having a "growth mindset." Surprisingly, this does not have anything to do with numerical or physical growth. Indeed, "growth mindset," is all about personal growth – endlessly seeking to grow spiritually, socially and educationally. And therein lies the thrill of being a part of the extended St. Marcus family: watching myself, children, families, staff, teachers, leaders and supporters grow closer to Jesus and become more successful and impactful in their relationships, their community and their work.

This issue of the Catalyst focuses heavily on the concept of "growth." **I am deeply grateful for your partnership with us in growing the school to serve almost 1,000 children.**

I am more thankful for the ways that we have partnered together, under the goodness of God's grace, to achieve personal growth so that, together, we can be more useful, have a bigger impact and enable more of Milwaukee's children to grow into all that God intended them to be.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry Tyson".

Henry Tyson, Superintendent





Pictured: Every year, the Schlueter's purchase Bibles for scholars to keep.

Expanding the Mission

*By: Heather Schubert,
Mission Advancement Team*

14 years ago, Marva Schlueter had just retired from running a family business with her husband, Karl, and was unsettled with the change of pace. "I prayed to God, 'Please put something in front of me and I'll try it.'"

What God put directly in her lap was the opportunity to chaperone nearly thirty middle school students from St. Marcus on a two-week Civil Rights experiential learning trip through the South.

"I ran into a friend at a charity event and he asked if I might have the time and interest to volunteer at this wonderful school on one of their Discover America trips," explains Marva. "I knew in my heart this was God answering my prayer and I immediately agreed."

Marva agreed five more times, even chaperoning multiple trips in the same month.

"The kids kept me coming back. I was so warmly accepted by staff and the children; the experiences were so moving. What is achieved by these kids going on these trips is amazing, and what they learn cannot always be taught in a classroom. I had never been to an Indian reservation or slept in Yellowstone Park so these were a lot of firsts for me, too, and I felt grateful to be able to experience this with the scholars."

According to Marva, she and Karl feel like *they* are the ones who benefit by volunteering or donating to St. Marcus.

"It is gratifying to know the children are getting an excellent education and are learning the Word of God so that, whatever direction they go in life, they are forever changed by this school. I get so much joy when young men or women that I knew since they were boys and girls come up to me with arms wide open and say, 'Mrs. Schlueter, it's so good to see you,' and give me a big hug. The relationships here have helped us grow in joy and passion outside of our work and family, and now we feel like all these children are part of our family."

For Karl, the draw is also the sense of purpose he has developed being a part of an ever-growing school community. In remission from pancreatic cancer, Karl believes St. Marcus is part of God's plan for him and Marva.

"God has blessed us for a reason, and one of those reasons is to expand the mission of this school. To have been involved in the growth from a hundred students to almost 1,000 is remarkable and I am thankful that I played my small part in this. It still hurts that there are hundreds of children on the waiting list, and I know it continues to be urgent that I spread the word about the life-changing work happening at this school."

Reminiscing on their 14-year history supporting St. Marcus scholars, what surprises Karl is the consistency.

"The staff can change, the principal changes, phenomenal growth occurs, but the culture remains the same and is not compromised. They never say we can't keep up our standards because we are too big. It also makes me so happy to hear that the staff at St. Marcus are now becoming leaders at other schools in Milwaukee. Selfishly, I don't want to see them go, but I can see the greater good this growth is helping when teachers from here share what they have learned elsewhere and help even more children."

In addition to St. Marcus School, Marva and Karl are also passionate supporters of the Angelman Syndrome Foundation.

Thank you both for your tremendous commitment and support.

Celebrating **15 Years of GROWTH**



*Original St. Marcus School building,
torn down and rebuilt*



New school building opened, 2003



Primary grades building opened, 2011



Thank you
for your
partnership
over fifteen
years of
growth.

*Krier Center
opens, 2013*

1999

Began \$5.5M campaign to build a new school

2003

New school building opened, 300 students
Reached capacity by 2005

2004

Schlueter Library added

2008/09

\$12 million *Unlock the Potential* campaign
begins for expansion

2010

Primary School building groundbreaking

2011

Primary School building opens, 350 students

2012

Krier Center groundbreaking

2013

Krier Center Dedication, *Unlock the Potential*
Campaign closes (\$13.5M raised)

2014

Early Childhood Center (ECC) opens,
100 students
Courage to Commit Campaign begins (\$18.8M)

2015

ECC becomes the North Campus
North Campus groundbreaking for expansion
Main Campus additions

2016

North Campus commissioning and
continued expansion

2017

Courage to Commit Campaign expanded
(\$19.9M), North Campus expansion project
nears completion

Today

St. Marcus serves 920 students between
two campuses.

We seek to close out the capital portion
of the *Courage to Commit* campaign (\$1M),
which will add four classrooms and provide
paths for further expansion.



*Above: Early Childhood Center (now North Campus)
opens in 2014. Below: Expansion begins in 2015.*



Today, North Campus expansion is nearly complete!

Growing by Leaps and Bounds



Since her 2013 graduation from St. Marcus (and her 2017 graduation from Wisconsin Lutheran High School), U’Nasia has witnessed more than a decade of St. Marcus expansion. “There are so many more students at St. Marcus, and now that there are two campuses, St. Marcus can reach even more kids in the Milwaukee area. More people know about this awesome school than ever before.” Neva adds that the school’s expansion has also greatly increased opportunities for educators, for whom the climate and professional support at St. Marcus is a phenomenal career opportunity.

By Cecilia Davis, Mission Advancement Team

“YOU CAN DO NOTHING BUT GROW FROM ST. MARCUS— EDUCATIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.” This is the joyful conclusion St. Marcus graduate U’Nasia Vann draws when she reflects on her 10-year journey as a St. Marcus scholar. As U’Nasia begins college this fall, she’ll stand firmly upon a foundation of faith, academic achievement and personal excellence that St. Marcus helped shape when she was a young scholar.

The seeds were planted back in 2003, when U’Nasia’s grandmother, Neva Hill, was seeking a school that would provide her with a Christ-centered, academically rigorous education. Neva was referred to St. Marcus, and in a stroke of God’s perfect timing, U’Nasia received the last remaining open seat that fall. “It was nothing but God,” Neva recalls. “He has a remarkable way of guiding you to the right place at the right time!”

U’Nasia flourished at St. Marcus. Neva attributes her granddaughter’s success to an academic and spiritual balance that St. Marcus instilled every single day. “St. Marcus taught U’Nasia that nothing we do is possible without Christ. It taught her that as our challenges get bigger, God has to get bigger for us.”

For Neva, the school’s family-oriented, nurturing culture remains one of its most distinguishing hallmarks. Teachers became family, and from those bonds, crucial teacher/parent partnerships grew. As a champion of parental engagement, Neva has actively volunteered as an ambassador for new St. Marcus parents, teaching them about the critical importance of their involvement. With another grandchild who graduated from St. Marcus shortly after U’Nasia, plus three additional grandchildren currently attending the school, Neva remains wholeheartedly—and tirelessly—engaged.

As St. Marcus grows by leaps and bounds, so is U’Nasia, who is now about to embark on an exciting new life chapter. Through her high school involvement in Lead2Change, a local organization that helps prepare young people for college, career and community success, U’Nasia completed internships at the Marquette University Police Department and at the Lead2Change administrative offices. These internships afforded her invaluable experiences in administrative and field work, job shadowing and professional networking. U’Nasia also received awards from both for her exemplary achievements.

This fall, U’Nasia heads to MATC for core math, science, economics and history coursework. From there, she plans to study environmental science at either Marquette University or Alverno College.

“I learned to think for myself, rely on my faith and be a humble leader.”

Outside of her studies, U’Nasia is an accomplished violist, cellist, handbell ringer, guitarist, pianist and vocalist. She loves visual art and received accolades in high school for her ceramic works. U’Nasia also has a passion for reading and creative writing, and she is currently working on a collection of short stories that she plans to complete during college.

“St. Marcus taught me to dream big,” U’Nasia says. “It’s easy to lose yourself in social pressures, social media and other temptations. But St. Marcus taught me to develop strong self-awareness and a strong sense of self. I learned to think for myself, rely on my faith and be a humble leader.”

*Thank you,
Top Sponsors!*

Thank you for
partnering with
St. Marcus School
to **see change.**

*With generous community partners like you,
we raised \$560,000 at the gala last year.*

It's not too late to make a contribution!
This year's theme is "Power of Purpose." What's your
purpose? Where does your power come from?

Saturday, November 11, 2017
Visit www.stmarcusgala.com to donate.

**"But I have raised you up for this very purpose,
that I might show you my power and that my
name might be proclaimed in all the earth."**

-EXODUS 9:16



All event proceeds support St. Marcus School's
nationally-recognized, urban education program.



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St. Marcus School

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

St. Marcus is a Christian, college prep 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.

**INVEST IN CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN TRAINING
WWW.STMARCUS.ORG/SCHOOL**

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Christmas angels + Elves

St. Marcus connects generous friends with school families who need support during the holiday season. We call these donors "Christmas Angels."

Christmas Angels thoughtfully purchase gifts for each member of the scholars' immediate families, as well as food and other essentials. Any level of participation makes a significant impact!

Every year, St. Marcus K3-5th grade scholars have a special opportunity to shop at the Christmas Store. Each student selects a Christmas gift for a loved one. The store allows children to experience the JOY of giving!

Elves are generous volunteers and donors who lovingly gift their time, talents and treasure to make the Christmas Store an unforgettable experience for scholars.

To be a Christmas Angel or Christmas Store Elf, contact Cecilia:
414-562-3163 ext. 7554 or cecilia.davis@stmarcus.org

Contact us at communications@stmarcus.org to opt-in to email updates or schedule a tour and *witness remarkable.*