

THE blarney stone

A PUBLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY
OF NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL
AND MARIST ACADEMY

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Alumni association reaching out to all grads

The Notre Dame Alumni Association has undertaken a campaign to unite the alumni of six schools, all sharing a common mission.

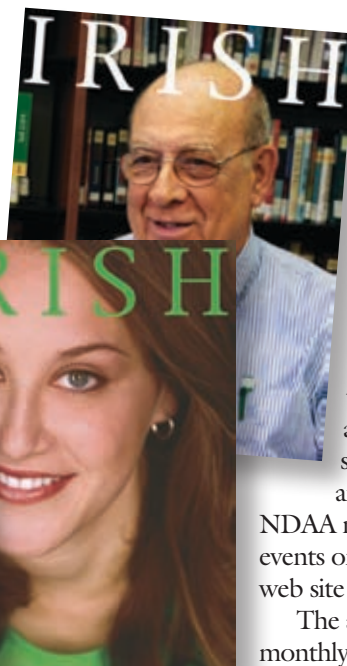
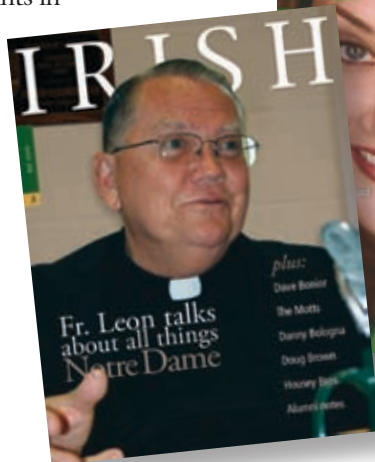
It probably goes without saying that Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy has become an academic powerhouse and a school of choice in Oakland County. But what shouldn't go without saying is that NDPMA would not be where it is today without the hard work and dedication of the numerous participants in the school's early years and most especially not without the legacy and tradition of alumni from Notre Dame Prep, Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods, St. Michael, St. Frederick and the schools that occupied the Pontiac campus previously: Pontiac Catholic and Oakland Catholic.

Keeping these seemingly disparate groups together and focused firmly on the future without forgetting the past has fallen on the very capable shoulders of NDP alum and Director of Alumni Relations Kelly Cole Patterson. A 1999 graduate of Notre Dame Prep, Patterson finds herself in a role quite different from her previous job.

In 2008, NDPMA asked Patterson to switch from teaching fourth grade at the school's lower division to the new position of alumni director—a position previously

only part time. Since then, she has spearheaded many changes that have significantly strengthened the ties that hold the alumni groups together.

Patterson, who says that all alumni play an integral role in the continuing success of NDPMA, has a somewhat unique perspective. Not only are she and her siblings graduates of NDP, her mother is an alumna of Pontiac



Catholic, and she has family who

attended NDHS in Harper Woods.

She is well aware that her primary role is to ensure that alumni feel a connection to NDPMA, the living, breathing and thriving descendant of its three predecessors—and equally important, to keep them close to their own alma maters. Not an easy task.

In just a year and a half, though, an alumni board of directors was formed by Patterson to help in this process. The board members each serve as representatives of the various schools from which they gradu-

ated. They also work together to organize events and to generally market the association. In addition, other alumni are increasingly getting involved in a variety of ways. Many have volunteered at NDPMA school events as well as association events, including the Traveling Irish Dinner series, where alumni gather in college towns for a free dinner and drink. In March, NDAA will kick off Irish Week at the school with an evening of special activities for alumni. NDAA is also sponsoring an Alumni Hockey Game and an Alumni Art Show in January.

NDAA maintains a complete calendar of events on the alumni portion of the school web site (ndpma.org/alumni).

The alumni group also sends out monthly e-blast updates on alumni goings-on and publishes a biannual magazine called *IRISH* that highlights the many accomplishments of former students.

While enjoying great early success, Patterson says that getting alumni involved and keeping them connected does have its challenges. "I found out quickly that not all alumni are like me," she said. "I loved high school and wanted to participate in everything while I was in school and afterward. But I also realized that the most important

See alumni, page 6

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy provides its economically diverse student body a Catholic-Christian and internationally recognized college-preparatory experience of lasting value.

UPDATE ON THE WROUBEL ATHLETIC
PERFORMANCE CENTER
(See page 4)



Andy Pauwels, an '05 alum of Notre Dame Prep, stands in front of the mural nicknamed "Touchdown Jesus" on the campus of the University of Notre Dame.

NDP/UND grad committed to helping others

Notre Dame Prep alumnus Andy Pauwels ('05) graduated recently from the University of Notre Dame and is now involved with Teach for America, a program created under the U.S. AmeriCorps umbrella. TFA places top graduates from the best universities in struggling public schools, mostly in large cities. Last year alone, TFA placed 4,100 new teachers in public schools across the country. Pauwels, who also attended ND Marist Academy's middle division, currently is teaching at-risk middle-school students in Florida. He was kind enough recently

to spend a few minutes and describe that experience and give an update on what else he's been up to.

After graduating from NDP, what was your next step?

I graduated from the University of Notre Dame in May of 2009 and President Obama spoke at my graduation. It was an awesome experience. I chose the University of Notre Dame for many reasons. First, my dad went there, and I have been going to football games since before I can remember. I have always loved the university. Second, I wanted to go to a relatively

small school. I was particularly drawn by the university's International Peace Studies program, which was one of my majors, and in the commitment to social justice as crucial to academic study.

Were you involved in your college? Did you hold any special office?

In college, I was involved in a program called Take Ten, which teaches non-violent conflict resolution to students in local South Bend schools.

What advice would you offer current NDP students about getting more involved?

I would say two seemingly contradictory things: explore your interests and be committed. By exploring your interests,

don't be afraid to try something new and quit if it is not for you. You are young—give it a shot! Also, once you find something you like, take a leadership role. And volunteer any chance you get. Colleges love students who are passionate about and committed to changing the world.

How did you get involved in Teach for America?

I plan to someday go to law school, but currently I'm in the first of my two-year commitment with Teach for America. I have always wanted to go to law school, but after graduation, I wasn't ready and decided to get involved in something that would allow me to help other people and to learn valuable skills that may help in any future career. Teach for America seemed like a good fit.

What inspired you to do this type of service?
That's a tough question. As the son, grandson and nephew of educators, you could say teaching runs in my blood (Andy's mother Ginny Pauwels teaches sixth-grade English and eighth-grade American History at NDMA). I have always loved learning and I want to pass that on. And this is the challenge: to get kids who have no passion for learning to discover the joy of knowledge.

Describe the application process for TFA?
The application process is intense and highly selective. Only 4,100 were selected from 35,000 applicants last year. It's very competitive. For example, 16% of Yale's graduating class applied. These applicants are the best of the best. The process begins with an online form and a couple of essays. Of course, there are minimum GPA requirements, and then there is a phone interview. The final step is an in-person interview, which lasts a whole day and includes an opportunity for applicants to "teach" a five minute mini-lesson. It is an intense application process.

Where are you currently teaching?
I currently teach middle-school math at Eugene Butler Middle School in Jacksonville, FL. I teach in a program for students who are two years or more behind grade level. I think my youngest middle-school students are 13 years old. I have many who have already turned 16. It is an extremely challenging position, but the reward will be tremendous if I can make breakthroughs.

Do you feel that Notre Dame Prep prepared you for TFA and for life in general after high school?

It certainly prepared me for college. I was especially prepared for the work load and the intellectual difficulty because so many teachers pushed me to go further. However, as a teacher at an inner-city public school, I feel privileged to have received my NDPMA education. And the worst behavior of a student from ND Prep would be some of the best students in my TFA classroom.

Was there a certain teacher at NDP who inspired you in a special way?

There are so many to name. Obviously, my mom, Ginny Pauwels, played a pretty big role. I always found myself aspiring to be like some of the great teachers I had: Dr. Alkidas, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Borton, Ms. Derico, Ms. Anderson, Mr. McCaskey, Mr. Osieki, and Ms. Bembas. I could go on, so let's just say my mom if I have to pick only one.

What do you see as the value of your ND education and of Catholic education in general?

I think the biggest part is the moral aspect, which (essentially) is the commitment to helping others. That knowledge can be used not just to better ourselves but to better others. A lot has been placed on our table, as a generation, and I honestly think the social justice tradition of Christianity will play a huge role in deciding whether this planet and our society, as we know it, survives much longer.

What is your favorite memory from NDPMA?

My favorite memories are still being made, many involving close friends from NDP. I have been blessed to have such great lasting friendships that began back in 6th grade at ND Marist.

Going forward, what are your hopes, dreams or aspirations?

Right now, my dream is that my students start understanding math and that people around the country start giving public education the support it needs to succeed. My students have lived lives that most of us cannot imagine, and I want to play just a small role in making their lives better. 🇺🇸



SELL STUFF. HELP SCHOOL.

NDPMA moms are invited to participate in the Lower Division's first-ever Moms-to-Moms Sale on Saturday, April 17, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school's gymnasium. If you are looking to find another home for clothes, toys, games or furniture your children have long outgrown, the Moms-to-Moms sale will provide an opportunity to do so while making money and helping the school. NDPMA moms can register in advance and at a reduced rate beginning Jan. 11. If you have any questions about registering or if you would like to volunteer at the event, please contact Associate Dean of Admissions Kathleen Offer at 248-682-5580, or koffer@ndpma.org. Please note that only 40 tables will be available, so register early to guarantee a spot in this landmark event! 🇺🇸

NDP STUDENTS BECOME EAGLE SCOUTS



NDP seniors John Bommarito, Neil Dwivedi and Patrick Connolly, above, and sophomore Anthony Lograsso recently earned the coveted Eagle Scout Award from the Boy Scouts of America. Bommarito's Eagle project involved refurbishing furniture for the St. John Fischer Chapel. Dwivedi planned, organized and executed a care-package program benefiting American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Connolly's work was at the NDPMA Pontiac campus, where he designed and built storage space for the band, and Lograsso's service project was rehabilitating a playground at St. Paul's School. 🇺🇸

Wroubel center nears completion

School officials report that the exterior structure for the new Betty A. Wroubel Athletic Performance Center is complete.

The new 4,000-square-foot facility will include a weight and fitness area, a training room and hallway to provide easier access to the Jim Grimaldi Athletic Center and Beverly Gifford Music Center. The new facility is paid for 100% through private donations and will provide NDPMA students a first-class athletic performance center.

The name was chosen to honor the school's long-time employee and current athletic director/assistant principal Betty A. Wroubel. According to NDPMA president Fr. Leon Olszamowski, Wroubel has been an institution at 1300 Giddings Road since she first began teaching in 1980. "She has been instrumental in building our athletic department, which is one of the largest in the state

of Michigan, into an exemplary model of a mission-driven program. I couldn't be happier with the choice of name for this new addition to our school," said Olszamowski.

Andy Guest, vice president for advancement, says the idea of naming



the facility after Wroubel was donor-conceived and supported 100% by the administration of the school. "It's always exciting to see a donor, in this case a group of donors, step out of the box and initiate a naming opportunity that recognizes a special employee of the

school. It is a positive message of support and philanthropy that sets a great example for others. We are very grateful to all our donors, but in particular to Tom and Susie Parsons, Gene and Sonia Jurkiw and Daron and Linda Gifford, without whom this project would not have been possible."

The new facility is called an "athletic performance center" since it is being designed to house functional training stations in addition to more traditional weight and fitness equipment. The idea is to create opportunities for athletes to build muscle strength and endurance at very sport-specific levels to increase overall performance.

The equipment plan and strategy was designed by the school's athletic department, with input from the coaching staff and advice from several parents, including Arnie Kander, strength and conditioning coach for the Detroit Pistons.

The new facility is scheduled to open in February 2010. 🇺🇸

Students star in film about safe driving

Driving simulators, Wii systems and tricycles will share the silver screen with NDP students who recently participated in the production of an instructional video designed to enlighten other students about the dangers of driving while distracted.

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and Takata Corporation, a manufacturer of

automotive safety systems, texting, talking on mobile phones and eating while in a car causes distractions that result in more than 4,000 traffic accidents every day in the United States. Fellow teen passengers also contribute significant distractions to drivers, according to NHTSA. New research shows having just one friend in the car can double the risk of a fatal crash for teen drivers.

Takata brought its Safe Driver program and a film crew to NDPMA on November 11 to teach high-school students how to minimize driver distractions and make good judgments while driving. With its hands-on driving simulator called the Wii Driver Distraction Challenge, a game show called Are You Smarter than a Crash Dummy, and

other activities, the Safe Driver interactive program focused on basic driving behaviors that can significantly reduce accidents and save lives.

The footage that Takata obtained at the school will be used to promote the program and its safety sessions to other schools and local media around the country.

The sessions offered an engaging way for students to learn driver safety in an environment that feels more like an arcade experience than a classroom—but they are taught very real lessons.

"This program has a great impact on the students because they are having fun while learning," said Robert Fisher, senior vice president at Takata and an NDP parent. "As a global safety leader, Takata believes we need to focus on safety education as well as the manufacturing of safety products. Safe-driving habits will reduce motor-vehicle-related injuries and fatalities more than anything else," he said. 🇺🇸





Students pitch in at healthcare roundtable

Eighteen students from Notre Dame Prep's junior IB government class recently took part in a roundtable sponsored by Wayne State University, Ambassador magazine and WWJ-AM 950 radio.


This past October, Mr. John Smith took his IB government class to the auditorium of WSU's law school to witness and participate in a discussion of healthcare reform. The roundtable was featured in Ambassador magazine's December issue.

The panel, which was moderated by Denise Ilitch of Ambassador magazine, consisted of: Donald Bronn, MD, PhD,

managing director, National Consolidated Technologies and clinical professor of Health Sciences, Oakland University; Michael Duggan, CEO, Detroit Medical Center; Doug Halladay, director of Michigan Cover the Uninsured Network; Bob Liggett, businessman

and entrepreneur; Herbert Smitherman, MD, assistant dean of Community and Urban Health, Wayne State University; Marianne Udow-Phillips, director, University of Michigan Center of Health Care Research and Transformation.

According to Smitherman of WSU who started the discussion, healthcare reform is an important part of the history of this country. "We've been trying to get universal care for all Americans for the last 100 years," he said. "A lot of different presidents have tried to do this, and what we've got is incremental change—Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP. There have been a lot of very positive things that have happened with respect to the coverage of people in this country, but I think this is our last big push."

NDP teacher Smith said that his students were awesome. "Most of the them wanted the meeting to go on longer so they could continue to ask questions. Several did get their questions answered. In fact one of the panel members said that their questions were very intelligent and well thought out. I was really proud of them." 

"I was really proud of them."

*IB government teacher
John Smith*

NEW PLAY-TO-LEARN PROGRAM AT LOWER DIVISION


NDPMA announced recently the addition of a half-day "Play-to-Learn" (PTL) preschool program at Notre Dame Marist Academy's lower division. The program will be open to all children between the ages of 2½ and 3½.

The PTL program has been designed to provide an alternative for parents looking for a half-day program for their younger children within a caring, Christian academic environment. Parents who desire a full-day program for their 3-year-old children are encouraged to enroll them in the International Baccalaureate PYP Junior Kindergarten program.

PTL Program Details

- Runs five days a week, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Begins Sept. 7, 2010, the day after Labor Day, and will conclude May 26, 2011, the Thursday before Memorial Day. Between those two dates PTL will run on the NDPMA school calendar.
- Children who are 2½ before Sept. 1, 2010, and 3½ before Dec. 1, 2010, will be eligible to enroll.
- Children do not have to be potty-trained to enroll in PTL, but parents of children who are not potty trained will be required to provide diapers.
- PTL will be guided by an Early Childhood-certified adult, at a ratio of one adult per eight children.
- Daily activities will include: circle time, small group activity, gross motor activity, fine motor activity, craft time, free choice, story time, snack time
- After completing one year in PTL, children naturally will progress to Junior Kindergarten for one year in order to prepare for Kindergarten.
- Tuition will be \$4,000 per child.
- The registration fee is \$400.
- Beginning February 2011, parents will be able to register their children to start Junior Kindergarten in 2011-12.



If you are interested in more information on the new Play-to-Learn program at NDMA, please contact Associate Dean of Admissions Kathleen Offer at 248-682-5580 or koffer@ndpma.org. 

thing is that *all* alumni have a place to call home no matter how much they want to get involved. And I want all to know there is indeed a thriving 'Fighting Irish' school they can send their kids to. That's really what it is all about, carrying on tradition and the love of a Catholic and Marist education."

The NDAA also started a unique way for alumni to help the school financially. "Donor for a Dollar is something the board created and is geared toward young alumni who want to participate, but are not sure how," said Patterson. "We are focusing on alumni *participation* rather than the dollar *amount*. Within only a year, alumni participants to the Annual Fund have more than tripled."

But most importantly, Patterson says, the fact that more and more alumni are reconnecting both with classmates and with the rich Notre Dame and Marist legacy is very rewarding. "It has made me realize how special a Notre Dame education was not only to me and all who have graduated before but to the many lucky kids who will benefit from this school for years to come." 🇺🇸

Three first places at robotfest

A group of Notre Dame Marist Academy middle schoolers traveled to Saginaw, Mich., in November to compete in the 2009 FIRST LEGO League (FLL) "Ready, Set, LEGO" Smart Move Challenge held on the campus of Delta College.

The Yellow Jackets, comprised of NDM 7th and 8th graders, took first places in technical robot design and overall points, and the Yellow Jackets Too, all 6th graders, received a first place in teamwork.

A total of 280 students making up 28 teams competed against one another in the regional tournament, which was sponsored by Nexteer Automotive, an automotive supplier based in Saginaw.

This qualifying contest was part of the 2009 FLL Challenge where kids use research and robotics to solve issues relating to transportation safety or efficiency. In this competition, kids ages 9 to 14 put their eight weeks of research, design and programming to the test.

Commenting on her experience with the LEGO league, NDM eighth grader Ellen Green said, "Before FLL, I would

have never thought math, technology, science and engineering could be this fun!"

The Yellow Jackets and Yellow Jackets Too joined the top teams at the state competition in Flint this December. There are over 6,600 teams of students ages 9 through 14 in the United States and Canada. The aim of the FLL program is to develop the skills and knowledge required of future engineers. 🇺🇸



Sixth-grader Perry Outman prepares the Yellow Jackets Too LEGO Robot entry at the 2009 FIRST LEGO League "Ready, Set, LEGO" Smart Move Challenge in Saginaw. The Yellow Jackets Too received a first place in teamwork.

A higher grade of learning

The Blarney Stone is published five times per year by the Advancement Office of NDMMA. Contact The Blarney Stone at 248-373-2171 or jkopyreck@ndpma.org. School web site: ndpma.org

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy - Middle Division are International Baccalaureate "World Schools."



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