

THE blarney stone

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



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Art education takes the next step

Successful visual arts program at Notre Dame looks to build on momentum

It has become all too common to lament the fact that the arts in America, especially arts education in America, are given short shrift when it comes to funding with public money.

Some might say, “who cares,” and point to the fact that the United States has become the world’s great superpower not because of its artists and art schools, but because of its titans of business and the business schools they attended.

On the other hand, arts advocates might say: Maybe America got to be “super” because our parents and teachers kept telling us as students to use our imaginations, get creative, and dream big. Or perhaps it was because we’ve had presidents tell us to dream really big and then go to the moon.

And here is an interesting fact to consider: Harvard, the oldest university in the U.S., opened its business school more than 30 years after its fine arts department was established.

In a 2015 article in The Atlantic magazine about moviemaker George Lucas’s plans to build the Lucas Museum for Narrative Art in Chicago, Roberta Smith was quoted in her New York Times review of Walmart heiress Alice Walton’s Crystal Bridges art museum in Arkansas: “Crystal Bridges doesn’t charge for admission, a fact that conveys the belief that art, like music and literature, is not a recreational luxury or the purview of the rich. Rather, it is an

essential tool. . . [that] helps awaken and direct the individual talent whose development is essential to society.”

Essential to society. Three words that help define perhaps why Notre Dame devotes so much of its time and dollars to teaching art, a devotion of which surely has

not been for naught. Witness the recent news that student-artists from Notre Dame earned 27 awards from the Southeastern Michigan Region of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition, a new record for the school. Or that more students than ever have been enrolling in the school’s rigorous International Baccalaureate art courses over the past several years.

Sandy LewAllen, who teaches visual art in the school’s upper division, is chair of Notre Dame’s art department. She says the trend toward IB art definitely is on the way up.

“I am seeing fewer students taking AP visual art and more students shifting toward the IB course instead,” LewAllen said. “However, that could change depending on population and need, but in general, IB students are seeing the benefit of the breadth and depth that this program offers while they build their portfolios. They are able to explore authentic themes of their choosing, work with artists as mentors, research existing techniques as well as develop some of their own.”

She adds that IB art exemplifies international mindedness on a great many levels. “It is such a great, well-rounded curriculum,” she said.

The IB art curriculum comes with a cost, however. Like the IB program proper, Notre Dame took on significant new costs when it established the International Baccalaureate in 2007, including new training require-



Notre Dame alum Reagan Kazyak ('15), a first-year student at The College of Wooster, hopes to develop a self-designed major in studio art and biomedical engineering.

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



NOTRE DAME GRADUATE FINDS OUT HOW BIG OF A DEAL HIS HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION WAS: PG. 2

Politics, a priest and a preparatory school

Notre Dame graduate finds out how big of a deal his high school education was

“I can tell what motivates you, what you’re interested in and the types of people you want to affect,” said the priest to a current Purdue graduate student when he was in high school.

“Stick to politics, Kulesza,” said Father Strasz of Notre Dame Preparatory School.

Chris Kulesza, a Ph.D. student in political science at Purdue University, listened to the advice of Strasz and now starts every morning by reading no less than five news outlets on his phone before even getting out of bed.

So began a recent article in a student newspaper out of Purdue University that featured a very busy young man who is active in many things in and around West Lafayette, including the governing bodies of Purdue and the communities surrounding the university.

Notre Dame Prep 2006 alum Chris Kulesza already has spent six years on the Purdue Graduate Student Government where he served as secretary, president and chair of the grants committee. He said the experience has provided especially keen insight into the workings of a major university.

“It is honestly just something that I love doing,” he told *The Exponent*, an independent college newspaper published by the Purdue Student Publishing Foundation. “I love giving back to my community, and I like working toward improving the lives of the people around me. When I see an issue or a particular problem happening around me, I like to see it get fixed.”

On top of all that, Kulesza is currently in the middle of a dissertation that will gain for him a Ph.D. in poly sci from Purdue. A very busy guy, indeed. But he did manage to find some time recently to talk about his high school, which he said, in addition to Fr. Jim Strasz, has had a number of other faculty members with a rather profound impact on his educational journey thus far.

Kulesza said Notre Dame and many of its teachers contributed to an almost seamless transition into college. But he narrows his list of influential teachers down to a select few of them who he says specifically inspired his college major as well as what looks more and more like a career in politics.

“There were some teachers in particular from Notre Dame who were highly influential in my decision to pursue political science,” Kulesza said. “Mr. (Russ) Cannon (retired 2007) comes immediately to mind. We had endless conversations about politics that really pushed me to get involved in my local political party. I must admit, there was not very much we agreed on in terms of policy, but that being said, he continuously challenged my views and attitudes in a way that made me realize how infinitely complex the political process is. It’s that realization that kept my interest alive for so many years.”

Kulesza, who spent his first four years of college at Michigan State University where he earned a B.A. in economics and a B.A. in political science, recalled that coming to MSU from NDP was



Notre Dame alum Chris Kulesza ('06) said Notre Dame and many of its teachers contributed to an almost seamless transition into college.

not much of a problem at all for him.

“I would argue that the workload at Notre Dame Prep was very similar to my freshman- and sophomore-year classes at Michigan State, he said. “I remember other students in my classes at MSU feeling completely overwhelmed by the pace of college. Fortunately, I did not have this problem. I was already used to very high expectations from my experience at Notre Dame.”

In fact, he said he was surprised to find out how similar the coursework was between MSU and Notre Dame. “I recall looking at the syllabi thinking I was merely continuing my regular study routine from NDP.”

Please see KULESZA, page 4

ART, from page 1

ments (and the attendant expenses) to make sure the art teaching staff was up to speed with this innovative method of teaching primary and secondary students.

Including IB courses, LewAllen said she and fellow NDP art teacher, Ned Devine, have a full load of 13 different art courses for Notre Dame students. “So far,” she added, “we are able to accommodate the needs of all our art students.”

EXPANDING FACILITIES?

But the writing is on the wall as the department continues to grow. LewAllen said that since she first hired in to the school, the IB art program has gone from one student in 2014 to a projected 14 or 15 in 2018. Accommodating this increase along with the many students pouring into the other art courses in all three divisions will be a challenge, according to school officials.

In fact, there already has been some discussion about expanding facilities for the school’s visual arts department, though details and any decisions are still very preliminary.

Fr. Leon Olszamowski, s.m., Notre Dame’s head of school, is a strong proponent of education in the arts. He said that a fine arts studio at the school dedicated solely to the visual arts has been on his wish list for some time.

“Such a studio will provide a setting that encourages and fosters imagination as well as to serve to demonstrate to our art students and their parents that Notre Dame encourages and values creativity,” Olszamowski said. “Things that we’d like to see eventually improve facility-wise include more natural lighting, abundant wall and floor space, proper worktables, ample shelving and

storage, and a kiln room, all of which will provide an environment that enables aspiring young artists to flourish. And, of course, we’d love to see a bright, modern gallery to exhibit all the great art our students create.”

One of those students who now is creating art in college is Reagan Kazyak. She graduated from Notre Dame in 2015 and is pursuing a double major in studio art and biomedical engineering at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. As a senior at



Gabrielle Jacoby, SILVER Key: Drawing: Floating Freely

Notre Dame, Kazyak earned the national Gold Key Award in the 2015 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards competition, the first time an NDP student has won this award. She said her experience with NDPMA’s art program was “truly amazing.”

“For me, high school art was not just another art class,” she said. “It was a place where we learned to grow individually and as a group. The nine of us in IB art at the time learned to challenge, support and strengthen each other. And it taught us to dig deeper into our emotions, and it challenged us to question the rules of what is or is not acceptable in society.”

IT’S WHY I BECAME A NOTRE DAME STUDENT

Another former art student at Notre Dame also had nothing but positive things to say about the art curriculum. In fact, he said, it’s the reason he became a Notre Dame student in the first place.

“I came to NDP because of the art program,” said Brennan Eagle, who now is in the industrial design program at the prestigious College for Creative Studies in Detroit. “Mr. Devine really impressed me when I came to the open house as an eighth grader, and the work in [then art teacher] Ms. [Katie] Swicca’s room convinced me that I would be able to make something of myself at Notre Dame Prep.”

Eagle said that every year he saw his art

improve along with the proper work ethic and patience necessary when he’s working on big projects.

“Art pretty much consumed all my free time during my senior year, but it was definitely worth it,” Eagle added. “There seemed to be an abundance of resources available at Notre Dame and I consider myself privileged to have been able to take advantage of them during my time at the school.”

MIDDLE- AND LOWER-SCHOOL MATTERS

Matthew McGuire, who has been teaching art to Notre Dame middle-division students for 15 years, has witnessed much change since he first came to the school. He said the kids have been doing some great paintings and drawings over the past several years. Also, McGuire’s end-of-the-year student art exhibitions have continued to impress visitors who often marvel to find out the work is being done by sixth, seventh and eighth graders, not high schoolers.

But, like Olszamowski, McGuire has a wish list for improving his department even more.

“My wish list has three things on it,” he said. “Wish one? More space. Wish two? More space.” And for wish three, according to McGuire, you guessed it: “More space.” McGuire also said he gets much-needed



Sabrina Kloss, GOLD Key: Painting: Fading Light

help with teaching art from math teacher Joan Cross, who works with some of the sixth graders.

Lower-division art teacher Lynn Quetell, who has bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Oakland University, works with her students in one of the most comprehensive elementary art programs in the area, thanks in large part to the influence of the school’s IB program, which focuses on the develop-



Charles Wenaas earned a SILVER Key in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition for his “Drawing: Self Portrait.” Other award-winning artwork by Notre Dame students is featured on this page and on pages 6 and 7.

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Another teacher from Notre Dame who was part of Kulesza's "regular study routine" was Norm Kotarski, who retired in 2011.

"Before I began thinking about switching from physics to political science, Mr. Kotarski invited me to attend the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association (MIFA) student congress in Lansing," Kulesza said. "It was through this program and his support that I realized that political science was my true passion."

He said that without that invitation by Kotarski to go to Lansing, he likely would never have decided to enter into a Ph.D. program, much less come to the realization that political science was what he was meant to do.

Kulesza also gives a big shout out to current Notre Dame social studies teacher Dave Osiecki.

"Mr. Osiecki's econ class ultimately made me decide to begin my undergrad program in economics," Kulesza said. "It was not until my junior year at MSU that I added the second bachelor's degree, but I had always intended to do graduate work in political science, not economics. That being said, the economics degree greatly helped me in getting admitted to graduate school."

So what does Kulesza want to do with his life once he leaves Purdue? For one, he may not leave higher education at all when he joins the working world.

"I am hoping to enter academia, perhaps in university administration," he said. "But ultimately I would like to serve in a political office. I am the type who enjoys not just studying politics, but being an active part of it. This sometimes differs from the norms of the discipline, but I believe for political science to stay relevant, we have to do more to practically apply our research." 🇺🇸

Notre Dame announces homecoming date, releases varsity football schedule



October 7 homecoming football game to be played against Bloomfield Hills High School on William Kozyra Alumni Field; rest of season schedule nearly set.

The athletic department of Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy announced late last month that the school's 2016 homecoming game will be held Friday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m.

According to Betty Wroubel, NDPMA's athletic director and assistant principal, the Oct. 7 homecoming game joins nearly a full regular season schedule of games in 2016 for the Fighting Irish varsity football team.

"It has been a lot of work to get this schedule together, but we actually are further along in the process than we were last year at this time," Wroubel said.

She said that the first two games of the season, versus Redford Thurston and Tecumseh high schools, are against the same opponents as last year's first two games.

"Coach Fox and his staff are really looking forward to this new season," she added. "Our September 23 date remains open as of today, but we plan to fill that fairly soon as well."

The school also said it is well on its way to filling all other fall sports schedules, with those for boys soccer, volleyball, girls swimming and diving, and cross country nearly complete.

The following is the Notre Dame varsity football schedule (subject to change):

- August 26 (Fri.) at Redford Thurston High School, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 1 (Thurs.) at Tecumseh High School, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 9 (Fri.) home vs. Rochester High School, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 16 (Fri.) at Berkley High School, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 23 (Fri.) TBD
- Sept. 30 (Fri.) home vs. Clarkson Secondary School (Mississauga, Ont.), 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 7 (Fri.) homecoming vs. Bloomfield Hills High School, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 14 (Fri.) at Benton Harbor High School (time TBD)
- Oct. 21 (Fri.) home vs. Birmingham Seaholm High School, 7 p.m.

Read about Notre Dame's decision to withdraw from the Catholic League on the school's website at ndpma.org. 🇺🇸

WHY GIVE?

Making a gift to The Notre Dame Fund isn't always easy. We know you are juggling tuition, college, fees, sports, activities, life... We get it.

For this reason, we also know a gift is a choice that requires some thought. You probably have questions. Where does the fund money go? What if we can only make a modest gift? Why does the school need support beyond tuition? These are fair questions.

So, let's talk. I'm here to chat when you're ready.

See you soon,

Greg

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'The Outsiders' featured in middle division community read day

Each year, students in Notre Dame's middle division read a book together on a day designated as "Community Read Day." The book chosen for this year was "The Outsiders," a coming-of-age novel written by S.E. Hinton and published in 1967.

According to middle division IB MYP Coordinator Brenda Kambakhsh who helped plan this year's read day, the book was chosen to tie in with the school's themes in Scheduled Release Time (SRT), during which students have been focusing on character, values, morals and being true to oneself.

"The book explores how each person contributes to a community and society through actions and behavior,"

Kambakhsh said. "And how those actions are often based on stereotypes."

Throughout January, all teachers in various subject areas in the middle division shared in the effort to read and discuss the book. The month's activities finally culminated with a number of events on Friday, January 25, beginning with a session with Fr. Patrick Gonyeau, a young and inspirational priest from Royal Oak's National Shrine of the Little Flower parish, who covered topics ranging from God's plan for vocations to the importance of character and honor and living up to what it means to be a Christian.

"Father wrapped up his discussion by asking the students to love others and to ask for God's help along life's path,"

Kambakhsh said. 🇺🇸

Students get a dose of real-world lessons in financial literacy



Notre Dame students in Katrina Palushaj's accounting class spent nearly a full day in downtown Detroit on Feb. 9 at the Quicken Loans Junior Achievement Finance Park.

that what students learn in a classroom get regular doses of reality.

On Feb. 9, a number of students from Notre Dame's accounting 2 class spent a good part of their day at the Quicken Loans Junior Achievement Finance Park in Detroit where they learned more about the budgeting and finance skills they eventually will need to know to become financially responsible adults.

"Our class already was studying how to budget personal finances and what real-life responsibilities are like," said NDP teacher Katrina Palushaj, who organized the trip. "But



"The Outsiders," a coming-of-age novel written by S.E. Hinton and published in 1967, played an integral role in Notre Dame's middle division Community Read Day.

Not completely everything needed to live a happy and prosperous life is always taught in school. Things such as running a household, managing a monthly budget or buying a house sometimes need some outside input in order to make sure

taking what they learned in class and going to the JA Financial Park to apply what they've learned in more of a real-life setting was invaluable."

The Quicken Loans JA Finance Park is a Junior Achievement program that teaches financial literacy concepts and career exploration opportunities. At the end of the program, students typically have a one-day budget simulation where they'll put their knowledge into practice.

Notre Dame students joined other area students in learning more about recognizing the fundamental role of income in managing their personal finances and the factors that affect income and take-home pay. It is hoped that after a session or two at the JA Financial Park, they also will begin to understand that the decisions they make about education and career will have an impact on their potential income and quality of life.

The students also explored the concept of saving and comparing investments as a part of their overall financial planning as well as examining risk and how insurance may help protect savings. 🇺🇸

JV basketball goes the distance for young athletes with disabilities

On Feb. 21, the Notre Dame JV girls basketball team spent a good part of their Sunday volunteering for the Rochester Soccer Club's TOPSoccer program. Sponsored by US Youth Soccer, TOPSoccer is "a community-based training program for young athletes with disabilities." Along with RSC, the program gives boys and girls with mental and/or physical disabilities the opportunity to play soccer and be active for an hour every Sunday. RSC's goal is "to enable the thousands of young athletes with disabilities to become valued and successful members of the US Youth Soccer family."

The Fighting Irish players began the day Sunday with a training session after which they went to the Van Hoosen Middle School in Rochester Hills to pair up with their "buddies," who ranged in age from 4 to 18 years old.

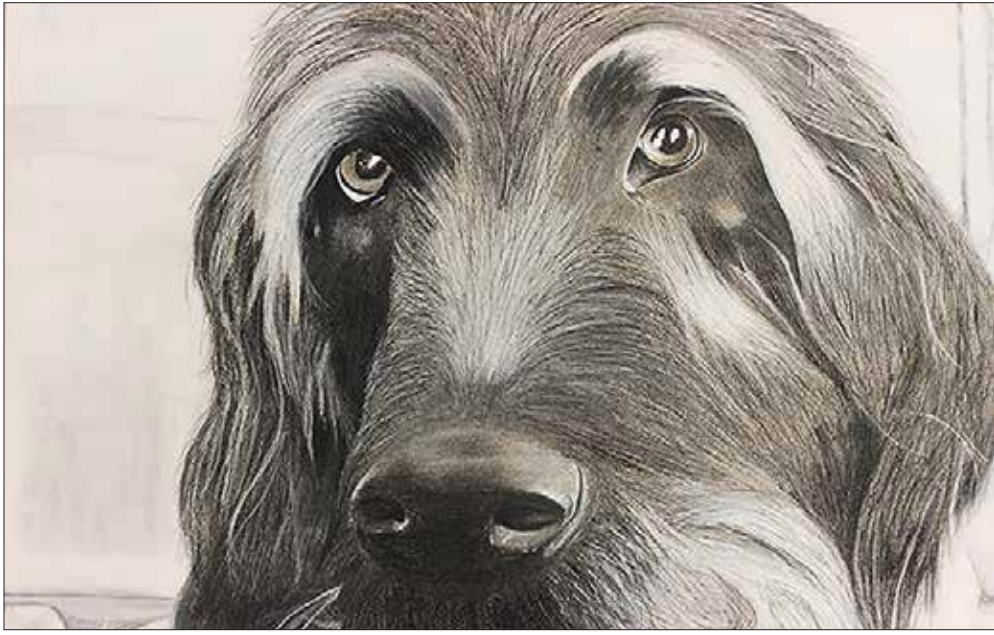
"The ability level of the participants ranged tremendously," said Kathleen Offer, Notre Dame's dean of admissions and the JV girls basketball coach. "Some were unable to speak, and others were unable to walk without assistance, but despite their challenges, the boys and girls seemed to really enjoy the opportunity to play with the volunteers."

Offer said that in giving of their time and talent, the Fighting Irish players found the day to be very rewarding.

According to Notre Dame sophomore Maddie Morris, her experience Sunday with the kids was amazing.

"At NDP we have many clubs that have a goal of helping people and making a difference," she said. "Working with these kids was a chance to do that, and I believe that all of us felt that we helped them in a small way." 🇺🇸





Caitlin Fitzgerald, GOLD Key: Drawing: Trooper

ment of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

AMAZING TEACHERS

Like the rest of Notre Dame's faculty, Quetell, McGuire, Cross, Devine and LewAllen are part of a special mission at Notre Dame that is forming Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars. And they're doing so by sacrificing many of the perks that other art teachers may enjoy at public schools and perhaps at some of the other elite private schools in the area. Perks like higher salaries, bigger facilities and additional staff.

However, you really wouldn't know there were any real wants or needs within NDPMA's art department if you only asked more alumni about it—which is what we did.

Allie Isabell, a current student at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan, said she could go on forever about the ways in which NDPMA's arts programs have influenced her and prepared her for college.

"What made my experience amazing were my peers and teachers," Isabell said. "Mrs. LewAllen is such an incredibly kind, loving, and inspirational woman, she quickly became a mentor to me and still is to this day."

Isabell said that the IB art program at Notre Dame was especially helpful to her in shaping her perception of art, the world around her, and her own creative abilities.

"IB art forced me to create art with meaning, while specifically thinking about social justice issues and the impact my art could have on an audience," she said. "In this way, art helped me to be more aware of my surroundings, to think critically, and see the symbolism and possibility in everything."

Erika Cryderman, who is majoring in illustration at the College for Creative Studies, is another former Notre Dame student with a recognition of what her high school art program brought to her.

"My experience at NDPMA, particularly in the art program, was very positive," she said. "Rather than being discouraged from creating, I was encouraged to continue in art and I also received a lot of assistance in finding out what my options are for a future career in art. The teachers in the art department were extraordinarily helpful and encouraging. It is thanks to them that I continue to improve at such a fast rate at CCS."

Cryderman's CCS classmate Eagle also has high praise for his art instruction in high school. "The art teachers at NDP are phenomenal and working one-on-one with them was great,"

Eagle recalled. "I think that I am where I am today because of the education I received from them. Mr. Devine and Mrs. LewAllen are absolutely wonderful mentors and they care about the students and what the students create. Plus, I know that it is truly important to them to see their students succeed in high school, college and beyond." 🎨



Jennifer Redoutey, HONORABLE Mention: Drawing: Self Portrait



Gretchen Altenberger, GOLD Key: Digital Art: The Precipices Embrace



Kate Joslin, SILVER Key: Drawing: Petey



Anna Madison, SILVER Key: Drawing: Self Portrait



Margaret Henige, GOLD Key: Photography: disquiet in reflective surfaces



Michael Ignagni, HONORABLE: Mention: Sculpture: Baroque Art Deco Figure



Mary Riss, HONORABLE Mention: Photography: Abandoning Youth



Nadia Burbank, SILVER Key: Drawing: Elsin And Karen



Alexandria Garland, HONORABLE Mention: Drawing: Self Portrait



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Above, NDP junior Nadia Burbank, is standing alongside her artwork and the art's subjects: her grandmother, left, and 99-year-old great grandmother at the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards ceremony in Detroit. Right, junior Anna Madison is with her mother, who was the subject of her award-winning portrait.

In a ceremony held last month at the Detroit Film Theatre in the Detroit Institute of Arts, Notre Dame student-artists were honored alongside hundreds of fellow high school artists in the area who earned accolades in the Southeastern Michigan Region of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition.

Notre Dame's Anna Madison and Gretchen Altenberger received additional scholarship awards along with Margaret Henige and Caitlin Fitzgerald, who had their artwork appear in the Scholastic Arts special publication that was distributed at the DFT event. 🎨

