

# THE blarney stone

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



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Notre Dame Marist Academy-Middle: 248-373-5371  
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## Lower division earns IB authorization

### Authorization brings rare distinction to NDPMA

**Only Catholic school in the United States and one of only ten schools, public or private, in the U.S. to offer all three levels of prestigious curriculum**

After a long, tedious, but ultimately rewarding application and approval process, the International Baccalaureate Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, voted to extend the IB program of study to Notre Dame Preparatory and Marist Academy's junior-kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

The lower division is now fully authorized as a world school for the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). Last year, NDPMA received authorization to offer the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) to its middle division and in 2007 received the IB Diploma Programme authorization.

According to lower division principal Diana Atkins, the progression leading up to authorization was a thorough and intense process, but ultimately, very rewarding.

"It allowed the faculty to look at exactly what we say we do, in terms of curriculum and teaching, and to authenticate it with well-written documents," said Atkins. "There were items we needed to tweak along the way to ensure our students are taking delivery of the material presented, and although it was tedious and time-consuming, the entire faculty knew the important benefits it would have on our students' learning."

Those benefits now are afforded to an

entire student body at Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy. This distinction makes NDPMA the only Catholic school in the United States and one of only ten schools in the U.S.—public or private—with such a range of IB programs.

Currently, NDPMA is the only Catholic school in Michigan with any level of IB curriculum. This in a state that has seen an explosive growth in IB programming, going from a total of four schools with IB as recently as 2004 to 33 schools today.

**"I was astounded by the depth of their responses."**

Fr. Leon Olszamowski, recalling a recent classroom conversation with NDMA fifth graders

"We are extremely proud to now present this demanding program to every single one of our students," said Fr. Leon Olszamowski, president of NDPMA. "Like our existing IB programs, the inquiry-based instruction of PYP will serve to expand the

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Lower-division students celebrate their new International Baccalaureate status on the International Day of Peace on September 21.

**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.**

**HEALTHIER CHOICES FEATURED IN  
SCHOOL'S NEW LUNCH PROGRAM**

(See page 3)



# Not behind a desk

2008 ND Prep grad Matt Stelmach writes about his experiences at the Naval Academy and NDP

by Matt Stelmach '08 (NDP)

From a young age I had a desire to go to the U.S. Naval Academy in order to live every young boy's desire to be a Navy SEAL. About sophomore year of high school, the Naval Academy started to become a real option and upon visiting the school I decided it was where I wanted to go in order to become an officer in the United States Marine Corps.

I always wanted to do something different than the "regular path." I had no desire to go to college just to get a corporate job as soon as I finished.

The Academy offered me a chance to directly make a difference in the world of the sailors and Marines that I would one day be leading, and to protect the American way of life we are so blessed to have. It also allowed me to get out from behind a desk and do some really awesome and exciting things.

My family has been my biggest source of support since the first days of applying to the Academy. They've sent me food and letters when I needed it, gave me a "pat on the back" when it was really stressful, and were always around to hear about both my successes and failures. Additionally, my friends from Notre Dame Prep have been huge supporters. I'm always calling or texting my classmates from high school and it's awesome to hear about their lives "on the outside." The NDP football and wrestling families have stuck with me and every time I'm home I see my old teammates and their families.

"Plebe Summer" (basic training) is a different experience than "boot camp." It's shorter (about eight weeks) and has less to do with preparing one for the rigors of combat and more to do with preparing one for the rigors of the stiff

academic regimen of the academy, as well as building the foundation of officer-ship. However, it still teaches the basics: uniform standards, military etiquette, discipline, marching and drill, even how to make your bed properly!

Once I started to grasp the concept



Notre Dame Prep graduate Matt Stelmach is in his junior year at the United States Naval Academy. He looks forward to "protecting the American way of life."

of team unity and company success, it was easier to help others to succeed. If one person failed, we all failed. We spent hours reciting "On the strength of one link in the cable, dependeth the might of the chain" until it was second nature.

Currently, I'm going into my Second Class (junior) year at the Academy. I'm studying Economics and hoping to get picked up for a program to get a Masters in Finance from Johns Hopkins University. However, my total focus and ultimate goal is to graduate with a commission into the United States

Marine Corps as a 2nd

Lieutenant. From there I hope to get a billet in the infantry and serve my country for at least the seven years that is required after graduation.

If one is thinking about joining the service, I say, go for it! There is a ton of opportunities in the military; you will do more exciting things there than anywhere else in the world. I've traveled from Alaska to Germany, spent a month in San Diego, flown in jets and helicopters, met three presidents as well as many military leaders, musicians, and sports stars. I've been on all types of ships from aircraft carriers to submarines; I've taken over 72 credit hours of classes, fired machine guns, pistols, and grenade launchers, and met and worked with some of the best people in the world. All that happened in just two years!

The opportunities get better and better the longer you're in, and I can't wait to hit the operational forces. For those considering joining the armed forces, do some research to recognize what each branch's mission and current operations are, and then see what opportunities await you within that branch. Check out your enlistment options as well as officer-commissioning programs such as ROTC, the Academies, and Officer Candidate School. Most of all, talk to people

who have been in the branch that you are looking into (besides a recruiter). They can tell you all about it.

It is definitely an honor and a privilege to serve your country, and its something all young men and women should definitely consider.

As far as my time at Notre Dame Prep? The NDP experience definitely helped shape me. I feel it was a very important stepping stone to a bigger and brighter future. As far as personal experiences, being part of the football and wrestling teams were some of the best memories I have. I still talk to my Navy buddies about the times I had on



Stelmach with fellow cadet at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland

the varsity teams. Being part of the choir for four years also was huge in my life. I got signed up freshman year through a mistake in the registration, and it is still the “best mistake of my life.” I’m in the Men’s Glee Club at the Naval Academy, which is where I’ve performed for and with all kinds of famous people all over the country. Ultimately though, it was the people at NDP who made it such a good experience. The friends I made and the teachers pushed me to be the best that I could be. 🇺🇸

### CLASS OF 1960 FOOTBALL TEAM HONORED AT ND PREP GAME

Over a dozen former Notre Dame High School football players from the class of 1960 received special recognition before the Sept. 24th varsity football game against Divine Child. ND Prep principal Fr. Joe Hindelang and Varsity Club leaders Alex Rink and Erin Collins presented the alumni with mementos from the school. The class of 1960 held its 50th reunion on the same weekend. More photos in the alumni section of [ndpma.org](http://ndpma.org). 🇺🇸



## Healthier choices in school cafeteria

Beginning with this school year, food-service provider Sodexo and NDPMA have initiated a new dining program at the Pontiac campus with a complete menu makeover.

Students at NDPMA now have at least 10 healthy entrées from which to choose each day at several different à la carte areas in the cafeteria, including grill, deli, pizza, and culinary-creation stations. Previously, the school offered only one main lunch entrée per day.

“I’m proud that our culinary program is reshaping the perception of school lunch,” said Erika Radwan, general manager for Sodexo. “Our team of chefs is delivering creative, healthy options that students love.”

This year is the first year that the school is working with Sodexo.

Along with offering more delicious and high-quality dining choices, NDPMA’s new program focuses on healthier choices such as serving baked alternatives instead of fried foods. In addition, the school is offering an extensive daily salad bar with a large selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, and its deli station offers whole grain bread and spinach and tomato-pesto wraps.

“We asked Sodexo to accomplish three things with the dining program: add more variety, improve the quality of the food, and make healthier options available more frequently,” said Fr. Leon Olszamowski, president of NDPMA. “They met our needs and are good partners

in our goal of providing the best nutrition possible for our students.”

The school’s new program announcement coincided with National School Lunch Week, which was Oct. 11 to 15. President Obama issued a proclamation supporting NSLW, stating that he is committed to making sure that the National School Lunch Program encourages “meals that will contribute to the health and well-being of a new generation.”

The proclamation also stated that when “one in three children in this country is overweight or obese, we all have a responsibility to make sure our kids receive good nutrition at school and learn to make healthy choices early in life.” 🇺🇸



[Mypyramid.gov](http://Mypyramid.gov), a website that identifies U.S. Dietary Guidelines for what’s recommended for all ages, advises children to consume at least three servings of vegetables (1-½ cups) and two servings (1 cup) of fruit per day.



### Lower Division, from page 1

range of possibilities in our curriculum, which is built on already very high academic standards. Our faculty and staff have made an outstanding effort towards this achievement, and we truly appreciate their commitment to expanding our academic offerings.”

Lower division principal Atkins seconds that sentiment.

“When we received word of our authorization from Jeffrey Beard, the general director of International Baccalaureate, I was not only very pleased that we had been approved, but extremely proud of the faculty for all their dedication in preparing and going through the sometimes grueling PYP authorization process.”

According to Fara Galati, IB coordinator for the PYP program at Notre Dame Marist Academy, junior-kindergarten through fifth-grade students who participate in PYP will be very well prepared to move into an IB course of study in middle school.

“Though knowledge is a key component of this program, we are also intensely focused on skills, concepts and attitudes, which are fully integrated across all of our

grades through the 12th,” she said. Galati added that PYP and the curriculum framework the school uses is designed to help children succeed in an increasingly competitive, global society.

Students who graduate high school with an International Baccalaureate diploma generally benefit from much higher acceptance rates at competitive universities and can earn college credit in the process.

Summing up very well the benefits of an IB education, principal Atkins quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson. “Emerson said that ‘All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.’ Our students now—even those in junior kindergarten—have the opportunity to be immersed in an environment of healthy risk-taking learning,” she said. “It’s an environment where visionaries of tomorrow are learning today that their decisions and actions can impact their community, both locally and globally. And our already strong student-teacher bond helps to further mold the children into becoming good Christian people, upright citizens, and academic scholars.”

Galati adds that she’s noticed that the

students have become real “thinkers,” even at such a young age. “They truly analyze things through different lenses,” she said. “The students also have become more reflective of their learning and their actions. In the PYP there is a model called the “Action Cycle” (choose > act > reflect >), which the students and teachers use for anything from a research project to discipline. The Action Cycle has aided with the students development of being good reflectors.”

Olszamowski recalls a recent conversation he had with ND Marist Academy fifth graders on North American martyrs, including Isaac Jogues and Jean de Brebeuf. “I was astounded by the depth of their responses,” he said. “When speaking of the rough treatment and suspicion of the Huron and Iroquois tribes, one student said, ‘This shows us how important it is to learn about other cultures so that we do not view them with suspicion.’ That was quite a nice transfer of the IB principle of International Understanding to a specific instance.” 🇺🇸



Troy Sassack, a junior and member of the Notre Dame Prep varsity football team, reads to first-grade students at the Waterford campus on September 17. Sassack was joined by seven teammates in reading to ND Marist Academy's younger students.

# Retired middle-division principal is traveling, but still misses the kids

by Kelly A. (Cole) Patterson, director of alumni relations

Sandy Favrow recently retired after serving fifteen years with the Marist Fathers and Brothers. She was hired as the first principal at Notre Dame Marist Academy—Middle Division and was active in the opening of the Lower Division in 2003, serving as principal of both divisions for two years. The first time she met with Father Leon in 1995 she spoke with him about the mission and vision for the school and she recalls feeling excited by the daunting task. With her many years in education serving as a teacher and administrator, she felt she was a good fit for the job and was a true believer of the mission of Notre Dame.

She calls it “the opportunity of a lifetime” and credits school president Father Leon Olszowski for the opportunity to serve in this significant role.

“To see the success that both divisions have had is so fulfilling to me,” Favrow said. “I had no idea how it would grow, especially now with the International Baccalaureate. I knew there would be growth and change, but not to the extent it has taken.”

She says some things haven’t changed, though. The kids, for one. Just like in the beginning of the school, Favrow understands that kids always need both encouragement and adults who listen and are compassionate. “I truly enjoyed those aspects of the job. I loved, LOVED middle school.”

Favrow also said that fun was an important part of the middle-school experience. She notes that even though the school is highly regarded for its academics and IB, and that its IOWA scores are consistently high, the middle-school students needed a lot more than the grades to keep them motivated. She emphasized a balance between being prepared academically and being prepared socially. “They need to be able to say that they were in a play with Ms. Corteville. They need to enter art projects in the art show with Mr. McGuire, or participate in Christian Service projects with Sr. Barbara Ann.”

She mentions key people who were there with her along her fifteen-year journey. She recalled the wisdom and dry sense of humor of retired assistant principal Cindy Donovan and fondly recalls her 14 years with administrative assistant Kathy Mitchell. Favrow also says that the middle division’s new principal, Jill Mistretta, is perfectly suited for the position. Mistretta served as Favrow’s assistant for two and a half years. “My whole staff was excellent to work with on a daily basis,” Favrow said.

When asked about the hopes and visions for the future of the school, Favrow says that she would like to see a student exchange program with students from other IB schools throughout the world. “I love traveling, so for me this would be great—to be able to experience other cultures in a way that e-mail and the Internet cannot.”

One of the biggest things she will miss is contact with the kids in the hallway, particularly greeting them and offering treats at the end of the day. “I miss that experience with the kids. I enjoyed the madness of middle-school students moving about the

hallways. I will miss chaperoning the dances and initiating the snowball exchange with the students.

Favrow plans on spending a good deal of time in retirement traveling with her husband Roger, also retired. They have been traveling with a group called the Nomads, and recently returned from a trip to South America. This fall they have plans to go to Manitoba, Canada, on a Polar Bear Expedition. Favrow also finds herself volunteering for her town’s Meals on Wheels program, volunteering at both Crittenton and Beaumont hospitals, and continuing to serve on the Pontiac Area Vicariate.

Reflecting on her fifteen years at Notre Dame and her formative years at St. Juliana and Dominican High School where she says she learned to love Catholic education, she says it’s everything in a school “top to bottom” that makes it great. “It’s not one person, one principal, or one program; it’s the entire experience. And if I can leave families with just one piece of advice: Please listen to and talk with your children. Support each other because that is the Marist Way.” 🇺🇸



Retired middle-division principal Sandy Favrow with husband Roger at last year’s St. Peter Chanel dinner.



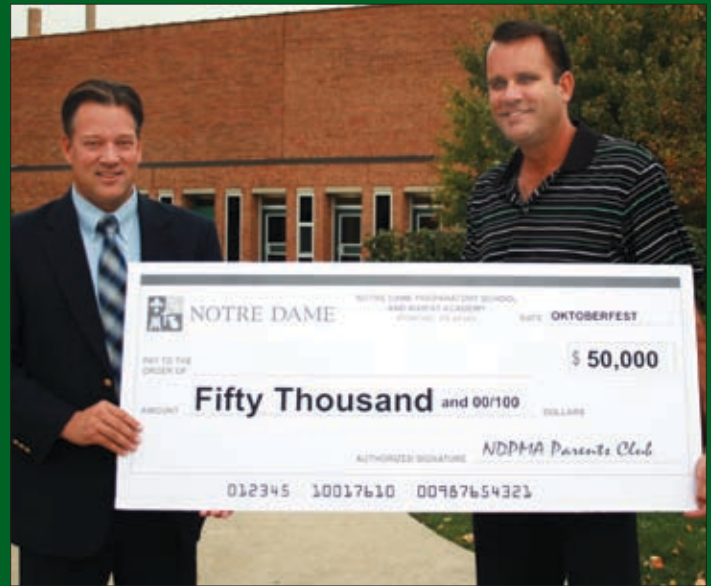
**MORE ON CHINA VISIT BY SOPHOMORES (correction)**

In this space in the last Blarney Stone (September-October 2010), we ran a story on the Summer Bridge Program, sponsored by Michigan State University's Confucius Institute and Hanban (Chinese Language Council International) in which tenth-graders Arian Kambakhsh and Ryan Dau participated. The accompanying photo had an incorrect caption. The photo is repeated with corrected caption below. In addition, more information on how others can get involved with the program follows.

The Chinese Summer Bridge Program was created to reach students interested in China, but who have little or no exposure to the language or culture of the country. Applications from high school students in Michigan are accepted in April and May for the coming summer. The Confucius Institute coordinates airfare and visas and Hanban provides all in-country expenses. Selected students pay only for their airfare and visas. See Ms. Joanne Liu, Arian Kambakhsh or Ryan Dau for more information.



Arian Kambakhsh, left, and Chinese student Xu Peng Xiang at the tomb of Confucius in China.



Super Raffle grand-prize winner Russ Sassack (right) and NDPMA VP for Advancement Andy Guest hold check for \$50,000.

**PARENTS WIN \$50,000 FROM SCHOOL**

The Super Raffle grand prize of \$50,000 was won by Audra and Russ Sassack at the Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy Oktoberfest celebration. The drawing for the annual raffle was held October 8, 2010, on the school's Pontiac campus. NDPMA also awarded \$10,000 second-place and \$5,000 third-place checks.

The Sassacks have a junior in the school's upper division.

**EAGLE SCOUT FOR SENIOR**

NDP senior Marty Opthoff recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout, scouting's highest honor. He was honored for this achievement at a recognition ceremony held June 6 at Waterford Central United Methodist Church. Opthoff is President of the school's Environmental Club and races on the varsity ski team.



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*A higher grade of learning*

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