

# THE blarney stone

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



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## Help for the journey ahead

### Big changes in counseling to help students with colleges and careers

Just like a summer vacation, which usually involves finding the best way to get from home to a destination, getting students from high school to the next stage of their lives requires a good plan—a road map that clearly guides each step toward his or her desired destination.

The Notre Dame Prep guidance and counseling department has taken a big step forward in the past few months that will make getting to the right college and then to a fulfilling career much easier for students. And the NDP counselors and advisors will be providing that help in shiny new digs.

It's quite a different story elsewhere, though. Schools and school districts throughout the state and

the country are dealing with unprecedented budgetary challenges as they prepare for the new school year. And many schools have been forced to cut counseling due to these funding cuts. In Jackson, Mich., the school board in June proposed the elimination of its full-time counselors and replacing them with five counselors who would work two days per week. In Oakland, Calif., Skyline High School's principal, after learning he'd need to cut his budget by 12 percent, decided to eliminate his counseling staff altogether and shift most of their responsibilities to his assistant principals.

Meanwhile, Notre Dame has been beefing up its counseling activity with some new faces, a larger office and technology upgrades.

Earlier this past summer, the school introduced an innovative and powerful Internet and software program that allows students to more easily research different careers—some they may never have heard of before.

According to Vlado Salic, a counselor at NDP, the Naviance system will help students figure out their areas of strength and interest, develop a four-year educational



New guidance and counseling office is located in the area formerly occupied by the school's IT department. Campus ministry also shares space with counseling.

plan for NDP and prepare them for the next educational step of college.

“Naviance should streamline and expedite the entire college search and application process for students, while offering them insight into careers more suitable for their skills and personality,” he said. “It will also help the counseling department communicate more efficiently with students through announcements and with a frequently updated calendar of important dates.”

#### Meeting with parents

On June 14, shortly after school ended, over 70 parents of juniors attended a meeting to be introduced to Naviance and to be shown how students will use the program to expedite the college-application process. A number of students who had already heard about it in school also came to the meeting with their parents. According to Salic, the response across the board was very positive and appreciative.

*Please see Counseling, page 3*

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

SPANISH TEACHER IN THE MIDDLE DIVISION CAME TO NOTRE DAME ALREADY SCHOOLED IN THE MARIST TRADITION  
 (See page 4)

# NDP alum studying medicine in unique program

2008 Notre Dame Prep graduate says tough academics at NDP prepared him well for medical school

Chris Maltese '08 (NDP) is studying to become a doctor. He says his father is a doctor, which was highly influential in his decision to study medicine. But he also cites his experience at Notre Dame Prep as being a big factor in getting him ready for the rigors of med school.

Maltese recently finished up his third year of undergrad studies in a rather unique program at Wayne State University that combines traditional pre-med with medical school in a complete eight-year program called "MedStart."

According to the university, MedStart is a collaboration among WSU's Honors Program, the School of Medicine, the Michigan Technological University and Northern Michigan University. This highly competitive program trains medical innovators and creative thinkers. It nurtures the future leaders in medicine by treating freshmen as part of the medical community.

The program is one of many innovative medical school initiatives started recently around the country to try to address a looming physician shortage. According to local officials, Michigan faces a shortage of 4,000 doctors by 2020 in nearly all specialties. WSU's MedStart emphasizes mentoring and research opportunities for each student and provides immediate contact with the faculty and upperclassmen from the school of medicine. MedStart undergraduates also are honors program students and are expected to meet the requirements set forth by the honors program.

When Maltese began the program, he received one of only fifteen positions awarded that year at WSU and two that were offered at both MTU and NMU.

Earlier this year, he spent a few minutes discussing his experience at WSU and looks back at his time at Notre Dame Prep.

*When did you decide that you were going to study medicine?*

My dad's a doctor so I grew up with the influence. I became familiar with everything [medical]. I like helping other people and I'm into science. Medicine became a real interest. I enjoy the human body and being in the hospital setting, so my heart

took me to medicine.

*What in your personality do you think makes you a good candidate to be a doctor?*

I have a passion for what I do. I'm personable, I believe I'll be able to connect with the patients. I can sit down with them and talk about their life, the news, as well as discuss the important things like diagnoses, etc.

*What in your opinion is a pressing issue in medicine or healthcare today?*

I'm aware of the politics, but really don't want to discuss. People need care and I'm sure we'll figure out a good way to get people healthcare, but I'm still learning and experiencing. We are the biggest, most industrialized nation. We will figure something out that will help people who need it.

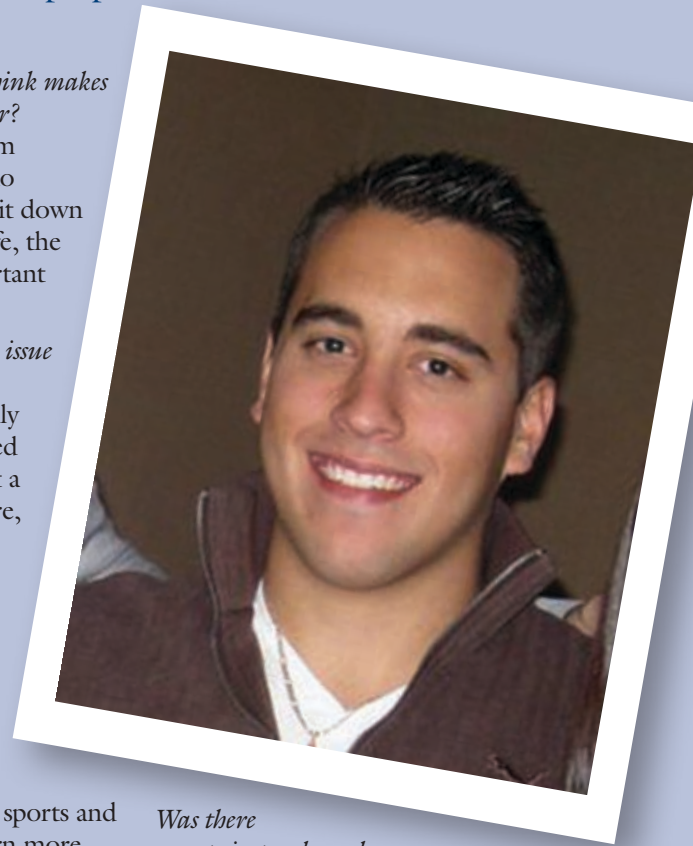
*What are your specific goals in medicine?*

I have five years left [in my med-school program]. I grew up with sports and at some point I would like to learn more about kinesiology and the human body's movement. I am interested in orthopedic surgery, but it may change tomorrow or next month. Maybe sports interaction and health.

*What sports did you play at ND?*  
Football, basketball and baseball

*Miss anything about ND?*

Structure! [With Catholic schools], you always knew what you were going to wear! It really wasn't too stressful for me as a teenager. But I miss the friends. In college, the friendships are different—not at all like the ones from Notre Dame Prep. I also miss the sports. But I chose med school over sports. Therefore, I hope to make my living with my brain not my arm or my body. I also miss the priests and miss the love and caring you get from them, as well as the criticism—just the interaction every day with them. I do go back and talk to some of the priests at NDP. I realize now that while you're in school, you may not necessarily appreciate them as much as you do afterward.



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

Fr. Strasz! In school, when my friends and I were acting up, Fr. Strasz would call on me and ask me what the heck was going on. He may have laughed at me, but he also was pushing me the right way.

*How do you think your years at Notre Dame prepared you for your career?*

I feel ND has prepared me way more than I could have ever expected. Writing a paper, for example. In college, many fellow students can't understand how I already knew how to do so many things. Even the AP classes at NDP—they were tough but they prepared me. The school also taught me to manage my time well. I managed to go to practice, do my homework and still be a sane teenager in high school. You can lose time in college if you're doing badly. NDP teaches you how to prepare. The community aspect of a Catholic school, especially Notre Dame, also was important to me. It's different from other schools. More nurturing and it does prepare you. I believe it's a real family and I'm proud to be a part of that family. 🇺🇸



## MARIST YOUTH LEADER CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA – ‘A CALL TO GREATNESS’

This summer, seven Notre Dame Prep students, who are seniors this fall, joined students from Marist School in Atlanta for a Marist Youth Leader Conference. The conference was held June 13-15 on the campus of Berry College in Rome, Georgia, about 1-1/2 hours north of Marist School's Atlanta campus. Kelly Patterson, who was director of alumni relations at NDPMA and is now teaching in the middle division, and Larry Jack, NDPMA's bookstore and transportation manager, accompanied the students at the conference.

The purpose of the three-day conference was to empower young leaders in Marist schools for Christian leadership in the "Marist way." This includes formation skills, spirituality and a faith perspective. According to the guiding

principles laid out by the founder of the conference, Fr. Mark Walls s.m., a Marist priest from New Zealand, who works with Marist youth and education ministry in his home country and Australia, the participants learned that they have a voice and "that voice needs to be heard if we are to announce the 'Good News' to its fullest."

According to Walls, the main focus of the conference was that "We are not trying to make your school great, but to make *you* great." 🙏



Seven seniors and two mentors traveled to Atlanta this summer for a Marist leadership conference.

### Counseling, from page 1

#### New office

What parents and students didn't see on June 14, but surely noticed when they returned to school after summer break, was that the entire counseling department has moved. Now sharing a much larger space with campus ministry, ND counselors have moved to a renovated and repainted space



Notre Dame Prep counselor Vlado Salic

directly across from the main lobby and office. To make way for the move, the school's IT department has moved to counseling's original office near the B-wing triangle.

Salic says the new location is a more welcoming environment. "It's a larger space, more centrally located and more conducive to small group meetings and presentations," he said. "The computer stations are available for students to work on under the direction of their counselors. And the fact that we share space with campus ministry will give us a chance to work in collaboration with the available pastoral counseling when needed."

#### New faces

Besides Salic, the NDPMA counseling department includes Justine Sciriha, Margie Willis Bond and Sheri Yanik, who has replaced Carrie Lytle as the department administrative assistant (Lytle is now working in the upper division school office.). In addition, Jamie Rodda has returned to NDPMA to help out in the department as freshman counselor and AP-testing coordinator. Rodda was a teacher in the upper division's science department and one of her new primary responsibilities will be the transition of the freshman class into NDP.

#### New system

The biggest change, though, in how the counseling group conducts business is by far the new Naviance system. The online tool is actually called Naviance "Succeed" according to the company, which describes it as a "decision-support system that is integrated directly into a the school's technology infrastructure."

The company says that demographic and general academic achievement data from NDP, college- and career-readiness indicators from testing agencies, personality- and interest-profile results, survey data from students and families will all fit together in an online portfolio that will be accessible to the school as well as to students and families. This portfolio is maintained in a safe and secure environment, free from advertising and sponsorships and available to all students regardless of their personal financial resources.

Middle-division eighth graders will be introduced to Naviance through the middle-division counselor, Kim Smith. Their main focus will be the program's "Career Key" interest inventory and career choices, according to Salic.

#### The whole package

Donna Kotzan, who oversees the NDPMA counseling department and is the vice principal of the upper division, said that when they began looking at online systems for counseling, there were many available, including Career Cruising and the Michigan Career Portal. "We closely reviewed several of them, but chose Naviance because it offered the whole package for students. Other programs we looked at had only parts of the pieces of the counseling puzzle. We checked with other schools who are



NDP vice principal Donna Kotzan oversees the counseling group

using Naviance and received glowing reviews. It really is the state-of-the-art program for counseling today."

Students and families are provided with access to the system through Family Connection, a web-portal within the Naviance system. Using the tools provided, students can map their own path starting with assessments to help learn more about themselves, and to set goals and explore careers. With the help of Salic and the other counselors, students can then begin setting up a plan to achieve those goals.

The system compiles data such as grade-point averages, test scores, assessments, program completion, graduation plans and career goals in one place to make decision-making easier for students and parents.

"Students will have all standardized test data available online," said Salic. "They also will be able to compare their scores to historical data from past students at NDP. It will help them predict which colleges will be most likely to accept students with similar GPAs and test scores."

With this new easy-to-use college and career system and a more inviting and comfortable office, the NDPMA counseling department is now poised to provide a top-tier experience to students. And, as with the entire school faculty and staff, the counseling group remains completely focused on the mission of the school.

"The aim of guidance and counseling is to enable our students to recognize their abilities, interests and personalities and to help each of them become a Christian person, upright citizen and academic scholar of Notre Dame," said Kotzan. "Our counselors concentrate on every student in collaboration with parents, faculty and the community at large. It really does take the care and nurturing of the whole organization to develop a mission-inspired student." 🙏

# Spanish teacher brings Marist way from Guadalajara

Now in her second year teaching Spanish at Notre Dame Marist Academy's middle division, Andrea Novak brings experience and a heritage of education to her job that began with the Marists in Mexico.



Hailing from Guadalajara, which is located in the western-Pacific area of Mexico, Novak attended Colegio Cervantes, a primary school and high school operated by the Marist

Brothers of the Schools, who have the same roots and philosophy of education as the Marist Fathers who staff NDPMA.

When she finished high school, Novak wasn't sure which career to choose and decided to spend a year trying to find her way. At that time her career direction was pointing toward accounting, medicine or business administration. But a suggestion by a nun from her high school sent her in a completely different direction.

"The sister said that she thought I'd be a good teacher, and that I should try it," Novak said. "She said that I wasn't planning to study anything this year anyway, so give it a try. I thought it was a good idea. So instead of wasting my time, I started in the teachers school that the Marist Brothers ran in my hometown and began to like the idea of the power of the education. I wanted to do something big for my country, to be able to make a big change. I then understood that education was the best way to do that."

Novak was born in Guadalajara in 1975. Her parents are Luis and Rosa María, who still live in Guadalajara and she has an older brother, Yuri Luis, who

is married and also resides in Guadalajara and a younger sister, Andromeda, who lives in Michigan.

After leaving the Marist school in Guadalajara, the next leg of Novak's journey to Notre Dame was to enroll in a Jesuit-run university in Guadalajara called the Technological Institute and Superior Studies from the West. In Spanish, she says it's called Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, or ITESO.

"At ITESO, I studied for the Bachelor of Educational Sciences program," she said. "They prepared us not only to become teachers, but to design educational curriculums, design educational materials, and perform educational research in order to improve the educational process.

In all our classes, we were analyzing about how we learn, how we teach, how we think and how we create, which is very

much like the International Baccalaureate core philosophy."

As examples, Novak noted that some of her university classmates decided to set up their own kindergarten, others wrote text books, some decided to work with native Indian communities or low-income communities, and still others started to work on university research projects.

After finishing at ITESO, Novak started working as a teacher in a Catholic middle and high school in Mexico that remind her of the Marist school she attended. "I started as an arts teacher, teaching theater and traditional Mexican dance. After a year, they offered me the Spanish class in seventh grade, and after a semester they offered me an opportunity to participate in a project for developing thinking skills in students. I really enjoyed working with teenagers and being somebody who could influence their lives in a positive way."

At the end of four years, Novak sought

*Please see Novak, page 6*



NDMA Spanish teacher Andrea Novak, far right, with her daughter (7), her mother, and sister Andromeda during the Christmas holidays in 2010.



## Record amount of scholarship and grant dollars for class of 2011

Nearly \$12 million dollars (\$11,775,014 to date) in university scholarships and grants have been offered to the Notre Dame Prep graduating class of 2011, which numbered 160 students. This is a record amount in total for the school and the \$73,594 per-student average exceeds the per-student average of 16 previous NDP graduating classes. 🇺🇸

## Killer Bees win “all-star game” in Indiana

Notre Dame’s robotics team, the Killer Bees, won the 2011 Indiana Robotics Invitational on the weekend of July 22-23. The IRI is the “all-star game” of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and was held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Many of the best teams in the world all come together in Indianapolis every year to compete at this event.

FIRST selected Team 33 as one of 66 teams out of 200 of the world’s best robotics teams that applied for the competition. The Killer Bees have been invited every year to this event since it began and this is the second time in the team’s history that it has won this event. Only 10 teams have ever won the IRI more than once. 🇺🇸

## IB students in Kentucky for Habitat for Humanity

Fourteen Notre Dame students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma program traveled to Lexington, Kentucky, recently to help build houses for the local Habitat for Humanity organization.

The IB students, who will be seniors when school starts in August, planned the trip on their own, according to NDP English teacher and IB Diploma program coordinator Sharon Derico. She says IB Diploma program students are required to complete community service over their two-year program. She said this assertive group “[obviously] took the task seriously!” 🇺🇸



## Fighting Irish football team helping out in the community

Members of the Notre Dame Prep varsity football team also spent time this summer on a number of community-service projects.

On July 30, NDP football players worked on a project with Habitat for Humanity where they assembled and finished furniture for current and future Habitat for Humanity homes. It was a special project just for the NDP group, with the final products helping out many families.

Later that same weekend, Fighting Irish football helped with a major fundraiser for Community Sharing, an outreach center that feeds, clothes and offers emergency financial assistance to nearly 1000 needy people in the Huron Valley area. The event, called “Summerfest 2011: A Barnyard BBQ Benefit,” was held at the

Lazy J Ranch on Hickory Ridge Road in Highland Township. The Fighting Irish directed cars in the parking area, cleared tables and helped with check-in and check-out along with assisting in clean-up after the event.

Community Sharing provides food, clothing, pet food, emergency financial assistance, referrals, advocacy, and tutoring (K-12 and GED) for eligible residents of Milford, Highland and parts of Wixom. Its goal is to help its clients achieve financial independence. 🇺🇸

## Oktoberfest 2011 coming October 1

Parents and friends of Notre Dame are invited to attend this celebrated annual event organized by the NDPMA Parents Club. Join the NDPMA community on October 1 at the Pontiac campus for dinner, drinks and fun door prizes. Tickets are \$30 each and include dinner, beer and wine. Come party the German (er, “Irish”) way and bring your family and friends. Purchase tickets through the advancement office by calling 248-373-2171, ext. 1. 🇺🇸

## Busy summer yields upgrades to school

Over 20 technology, building and grounds projects were completed over a busy summer at Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy.

While many students and faculty enjoyed much-deserved R&R over the summer break, a myriad of activities designed to improve the look and function of Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy was going full tilt.

From replacing the chapel roof to moving the counseling offices into a new location, members of the school administration, the maintenance staff and outside vendors have been working since literally right after the final exam on much-needed improvements to the school’s physical plant.

According to NDPMA facilities manager Julie Frakes, the summer months are some of the busiest of the year for her and her staff. “We had over 20 major projects to complete before we welcomed the kids back to school.”

In addition to the new chapel roof and counseling move, summer changes and upgrades for the Pontiac campus included replacing the floor tile in the A-wing, installing a new phone system, developing an online tuition-payment capability, repairing exhaust fans in the main gymnasium, and cleaning up the cross-country trail. Frakes says that work also was done on a drain in the south parking lot to alleviate excess water running over the sidewalk.

“Our beautiful campuses need constant attention to remain beautiful and functional,” said head of school Fr. Leon Olszawowski, s.m. “And if it wasn’t for the consistent success of our walk-athon and Super Raffle, most of the projects would never get done. We are eternally grateful for the generosity and hard work of our school community year after year in raising the necessary funds for this work.” 🇺🇸

**Novak, from page 4**

other professional and educational experience and began designing educational curriculums for another small school in Mexico, where she worked until getting married and then moving to the U.S. She said it wasn't easy at first due to the difference in culture and language. "Even the grocery store provided challenges."

But those challenges quickly turned into opportunities when she landed an interview at NDPMA. "When I got this job, I thought it was a sign from God," she recalled. "You can not imagine how big this opportunity was for me! It was not only a job, it was a job with the Marist family, the very family that opened my mind and taught me how to serve others, how to think big and how to be a good Christian. It was a great opportunity to teach in the Marist way."

Novak, who has a seven-year-old daughter, said that when she came to her first interview at Notre Dame and saw the statue of the Mary, the picture of Marcellin Champagnat, s.m., and the school mission on the wall, it was almost like she was home again.

In her hometown of Guadalajara, the Marists currently run four elementary



Andrea Novak, second from right, with classmates and one of the Marist brothers (Javier Duarte) on her last day of high school in July 1993.


schools with 500 students each, three middle schools, two high schools and one university. So it's easy to see why Novak feels at home at Notre Dame. She said the Marist Brothers are recognized as having some of the best schools in Mexico, "where the students are very well prepared to start in any college." She says there typically is a very long waiting list to get into the schools.

Meanwhile, back at Notre Dame, Novak is enjoying her teaching position. "I love to teach Spanish, I know my language very well and I love to share my Hispanic heritage. I have fun and I make sure some

of that joy is carried to my kids. We dance, we sing, we tell both funny and serious stories—but the most important part of my job is helping the students become good, better and even outstanding persons. The universal values are the same everywhere, no matter what your country of origin."

Middle division principal Jill Mistretta says she counts Andrea as one of her blessings at school. "She has proven to be professional, hardworking and always looking to make class not only challenging, but fun at the same time—which can be especially difficult considering the material and her expectations of the students. Mistretta says Novak is such a natural in the classroom and that it's hard to imagine the school without her.



Novak sounds equally pleased. "It may be a little too sentimental, but I really, really love working here! I'm not in Mexico. I'm not in my hometown. But I am with the Marists and I feel completely happy and comfortable here: going to mass, doing community service, going to retreats, having all the art expositions, sports events, cultural events, pushing the kids to do their very best and especially seeing the Marist spirit all around. Just like home!"



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