

THE blarney stone

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



Notre Dame Prep named a top-50 school

“This award is recognition that we live our mission and are recognized as one of the best in the country at integrating Catholic identity with civic responsibility and educational excellence.” - Fr. Joe Hindelang

Notre Dame Preparatory School announced in November that it had been named to the National Catholic High School Honor Roll, a compilation of the nation’s best 50 Catholic secondary schools.

The purpose of the National Catholic High School Honor Roll, which is sponsored by the Acton Institute, an international research and educational organization, is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education. A critical resource for parents and educators, the Honor Roll distinguishes those schools that excel in three categories: academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education.

This is the third time in four years that Notre Dame Preparatory School has received this honor and follows the school’s recent authorization as Michigan’s only Catholic International Baccalaureate “World School.” The school previously was named to the Honor Roll in 2005 and 2007. This year it is one of

only six schools in the state and the only school in metro Detroit to receive this special recognition.

“We are once again honored to be named as one of the top 50 Catholic schools in the U.S.,” said Fr. Joseph Hindelang, Principal of Notre Dame Preparatory School. “It is a real testament to our teachers, students and parents, and

the country at integrating Catholic identity with civic responsibility and educational excellence.”

According to Anthony Pienta of the Acton Institute, it is a great accomplishment for Notre Dame Preparatory School to have received a Top-50 award in multiple years. “Not only is the competition very intense by itself, but schools

are actively trying to improve each year to maintain their Honor Roll ranking. The healthy competition is one of the great things about this award, because schools are incentivized to more fully do what the Church is calling them



Notre Dame Prep freshman Maria Padilla and German and English teacher Melissa Archer look over an assignment in the school’s Media Center.

their commitment to the ideals of Catholic education. Our mission is to form Christian people, good citizens, and academic scholars. This award is recognition that we live our mission and are recognized as one of the best in

to do - to educate students academically, form them fully in the Catholic faith, and prepare them for vocations in the world once they graduate,” he said.

The Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute, and is

See Top 50, page 3

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



Harvard student wants to be a force for change

Notre Dame Prep alumni continue to impress and inspire. Class of 2003 alum and current Harvard grad student Bridget Maher is no different. And, like many other NDPers, she wants to be a force for positive change in America. Bridget answers a few questions from The Blarney Stone.

Bridget, what are you currently studying and why?

Currently, I am in the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. I am working toward a Master of Education degree in Language and Literacy, and

most of my coursework is split between literacy and education reform/policy courses. Education is the great equalizer. Education is the way that societal inequalities can be at least somewhat corrected. Education allows access to knowledge,

inquiry and information for people of all backgrounds. I also think that literacy is a huge part of the responsibility of education. Our citizens must to be able to read, write and convey meaning, not only to be informed about issues, but also to have their voices heard. I am pursuing my current degrees in the hopes of being a part of a positive change in our country's schools.

Where did you earn your undergrad degree? What field?

I graduated from the University of Michigan, with a triple major in History, English and Social Studies, and a degree in Education. My focus at Michigan was secondary education, grades 6 through 12.

Are you involved in other ways at Harvard? Do you hold any special office?

Part of truly experiencing all that a school environment has to offer includes being involved in campus activities and opportunities. Currently, I am a research assistant for a professor's continuing study in local preschools. I am also assisting in organizing the "Graduate Student Research Conference" on the Harvard campus, which is the largest in the country. Because of my interest in several career fields, I sit on the advisory board to the Career Services office for the Graduate School of Education. It is a great experience to learn about job opportunities and market trends.

Do you feel that Notre Dame Prep prepared you for life after high school?

I developed many important attributes while at NDP. I developed my leadership skills. NDP provided me with a great foundation for my academics, and sparked my interest in so many subjects. I think that one of the most valuable preparations gained while at NDP was the relationships with classmates and teachers. Those relationships have been what I have relied on many times after high school: for advice, for help, for friendship.

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

Notre Dame Prep has such incredible teachers who constantly inspire me, even today. It would be impossible to name all the teachers who inspired me while at

See Harvard, top of next page

Harvard, from previous page

Prep. Mr. Cannon and Mr. Osiecki taught me to understand and appreciate history through incredible stories and exciting details; history is still my first academic love. Dr. Alkidas taught me to always be myself, and showed me what it was to love to read. Mr. Simon, still a friend and mentor, helped me harness my leadership potential even as an unruly freshman. He always believed in me, and still does; I am forever grateful. I know I would not be where I am without the examples and enthusiasm of great teachers at NDP.

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

My Catholic, Notre Dame Preparatory education provided me with academic rigor, integrity and focus on caring about

others. These values are still the foundation of my life. My education and values have influenced the path I have taken to get to where I am today, and will be with me in the future. I think it is the values from my Catholic education that made me want to work in the education field and to work for social justice.

What is your favorite memory from Notre Dame Prep?

I have several: Student Council events, preparations, and meetings. Going to the “Stuffed Bun” in the morning for breakfast with classmates. Playing basketball, and traveling on the varsity bus between gyms with the most hilarious girls I have ever met in my life. Caribou Coffee with friends, and studying for finals. Watching creative friends play music, perform in plays and produce works of art; all things I am not able to do, but

appreciate greatly. Prep was just full of incredible people.

What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations?

I have too many dreams to list here. I know that I will be involved in bettering education in some way. I want to get my PhD. I want to write a book. Yes, just far too many to name...

Thanks, Bridget. Any other comments?

I would also like to acknowledge all the incredible classmates and alumni of NDP, who are constantly doing amazing things with their lives. I should hardly be the one getting any focus while they are all doing such amazing work in the world.

Look for more articles and interviews about NDPMA graduates in upcoming issues of *The Blarney Stone*.

Top 50, from page 1

produced in consultation with an advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and scholars. Advisory board member Very Rev. David M. O’Connell, President of Catholic University of America, said the Honor Roll’s evaluation method is indispensable. “Catholic schools must examine themselves on a regular basis using a well-rounded approach that assesses adherence to the Church’s educational calling,” he said. “The Honor Roll strengthens schools by encouraging high standards and vibrant Catholicism.”

The list of the top 50 schools, as well as lists of the 10 honorable-mention schools in each category, is available at www.chshonor.org.

In its five years, the Honor Roll has seen over 50 percent of America’s nearly 1,300 Catholic high schools participate at least once. This year nearly 300 schools completed the three detailed surveys that measure a school’s adherence to the Church’s educational mission. Each school also received an evaluation to see how it compares to other schools nationwide.

The best schools demonstrate a balanced excellence, which includes an active Catholic culture, sound college preparation and integration of Church teaching in all departments. These schools



Notre Dame Prep seniors, from left, Rose Brickley, Evelyn Everhart and Katie Hynan are under the watchful eyes of AP Psychology teacher Beverly Williams. The school recently was named one of the top 50 Catholic schools in the United States.

also display sound moral, catechetical and civic formation that prepares students for vocations in the world as political, religious, scientific, and business leaders.

“The CHS Honor Roll is designed with the heart of Catholic education in mind,” added Pienta. “Obviously, schools need to be educating students well, but that alone is not what makes Catholic schools distinct. Catholic schools are also

called to provide catechetical and moral formation, and to prepare students to live the faith in the world. Schools that do that well deserve to be recognized and imitated.”



*A note
from
Father
Leon*

As a first response to the communications and marketing recommendations of our recently completed strategic-planning process, the *Blarney Stone* monthly newsletter has evolved into a totally new kind of publication, featuring, in the main, alumni and student news. The *Blarney Stone* will also add a column featuring Catholic faith and school-related issues.

The monthly news items, general information, and advertisements (formerly part of the *Blarney Stone* content) will now be delivered to your home computer via “blast” e-mail messages. The monthly news items will be available in the parent-accessible newsletter page of the school website. We are adding a feature (currently under construction), which allows you to access the daily high-school announcements (sound recording) from the parent-login section of the school website. We hope these changes will be to your liking.

Our fast-paced daily schedules demand that we, as a school, catch up to you where you are. We are determined to become more digitally oriented in our communications with you. It is our hope to keep in contact with you as much as possible. We invite you to access the website often and hope you enjoy the new format of the *Blarney Stone*.

In future editions, this column will be devoted to short vignettes apprising you of current Catholic School and Church Issues.

Questions and comments about our communications media may be addressed to Joan Kopytek, Advancement Office at jkopytek@ndpma.org.

Blessings and Peace!

Fr. Leon

Middle-division students study child-labor issues

“Community Read” day spearheaded by International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme

By Brenda Kambakhsh, IB Coordinator Middle Years Programme, NDMA

Students and teachers at Notre Dame Marist Academy-Middle Division in Pontiac spent a unique day recently (October 1, 2008) exploring the topic of child labor and considering the question: “What is childhood?”

All members of the school community including teachers, students, parents, and office staff participated in a community read. The book chosen for the community read was “Iqbal,” the story of a young Pakistani boy sold into bonded labor at the age of four, who escaped and eventually became an activist for ending child labor, primarily within the carpet industry. Iqbal Masih was murdered in the streets of Pakistan in 1995,

most likely by the “carpet mafia.”

Students began their day listening to one of their own cafeteria workers. Anita Cordova told the story of her life as a young child laborer, picking fruits and vegetables from the age of five in the fields of Texas and Michigan. One student reflected at the end of the day, “While we were listening to Mrs. Cordova talk about her childhood, it made me think about mine. She had to start working at age five! When I was five I didn’t have a care in the world!”

During the community-read day, child-labor simulation rooms were created by teachers so that students could experience what it was like to be a child laborer. Classrooms were darkened and strict rules were enforced as students were instructed to make beaded bracelets and key chains. Some had their fingers taped if rules were not followed exactly, making the task even more difficult.

One student wrote



Photo above: Notre Dame Marist Academy student Michael Durgham works on a project simulating child labor. Below: Anita Cordova, an employee of NDPMA, speaks with students about her experience as a child laborer.





Math and Social Studies teacher Brandon Jezdimir, top, takes NDMA middle-division students through a discussion circle after they viewed "Stolen Childhoods," a film documenting child labor around the world.

at the end of the day, "When I did the simulation of how to make beads, I found out how hard it would be to actually work in one of these factories with the darkness, the harsh conditions, potentially in a lifelong service to a carpet master."

The bracelets and key chains were sold at Notre Dame Marist Academy's parent conferences in October. All donations were given to two organizations dedicated to eliminating child labor: Free the Children and Rugmark.

"Stolen Childhoods," a documentary about child labor, also was shown to students, exposing them to child laborers around the world. Students learned that even in our own country, labor laws for agriculture differ from other child labor laws, allowing very young children to work.

The students learned about Fair Trade products and companies that do not employ child labor. Discussion circles allowed students to respond to the issues and concerns raised in the film and to discuss actions they could take to help end child labor.

The Notre Dame Preparatory School Concert Choral and their teacher, Mr. Dave Fazzini, talked to students about the history of slave labor and the music that developed during that period in our history. Using songs such as "Wade in the


Water," they demonstrated the sounds and rhythms of spirituals.

Each student had time for self-reflection on the day's activities and events. "I thought today was truly eye-opening. It inspired me to try to do something about child labor and I was excited when



NDMA middle-division students Emalie Parsons, left, and Alexis Shaw light candles in a ceremony at an October-1st Community Read day.

I heard we would donate the money from the bracelets to child labor organizations," one student wrote.

Another student summed up the day as follows, "This day really opened my eyes. We are really lucky that we don't have to work in the fields and carpet factories. It made me feel disappointed that there are kids who will never have a chance to get an education." 


Neal, from back page

According to his coach, Doug Green, Neal is a highly skilled soccer player whose ability to score goals is only one of his greatest attributes on the field. "Neal has a great understanding of the mental aspect of soccer to go along with his skills," coach Green said. "He understands his role as a team player whose goals are for the team versus himself."

Green says that Neal's strengths are geared toward the offensive end of the field, but because he understands his role as a team leader, he also has the ability to come back to play defense when necessary. "Neal's versatility, skills, and knowledge of the game allow him to be put in positions where he can excel in either offense or defense."

This season, Neal also earned All-Catholic, third-team All-State and All-County honorable mention honors.

For next year's season, there is great anticipation, according to Coach Green. "A returning core of solid players, including Neal, will give this team a blend of experience and skills that should bring a lot of excitement to next season."

As far as Neal's plans after high school, he also has high expectations. "I intend to get a soccer scholarship and play throughout my college career." 



The Notre Dame Prep boys varsity soccer team took the Catholic League division title for the second year in a row.

IRISH SPORTS

NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The varsity volleyball team won their second straight regional title and fifth in the last seven years by defeating Marysville in three close games (27-25, 26-24, 25-23). Last year, they broke Marysville's streak of 19 straight regional titles by beating them on their home court and Marysville was looking for some revenge this year at NDP. The Irish advanced to the quarterfinal against Ida but came up short in a hard-fought and spirited match. The team finished the season at 47-13-3.

Notre Dame Prep varsity boys soccer (10-10-2) fell to Detroit Country Day 6-2 in the district final. Neal Al-attar scored both goals, giving him eight total goals in the district tournament. He scored 29 goals this season and now holds the school record for goals in a single season. (see article at right)

NDP cross country had a great performance at the Catholic League Championship meet. The boys team placed 6th overall. Brad Lorant (10th place) and Chris Burns (14th place) earned All Catholic honors. The girls placed 4th overall. Sara Barron (6th place) and Alex Lallier (9th place) earned All Catholic honors.

Both boys and girls cross-country teams qualified for the state finals by finishing second overall in their respective regional meets. This is the first time both boys and girls teams advanced to the state finals, which were held November 1 in Brooklyn, Michigan, at the Michigan International Speedway.

Many of NDP's runners set new personal best records at the cross-country regionals. Boys runners Brad Lorant, Chris Burns, Logan Lawson and Matt Kurowski all placed in the top 15 spots. On the girls side, Sarah Barron, Alex Lallier, and Rachel Hanson placed in the top 15.

NOTRE DAME MARIST ACADEMY

NDMA cross country participated in the CYO Championship meet. Top finishers for the Irish were Eric LaRose (29th), Raymond Griffin (30th) and Maggie Martinez (31st).

Varsity football had a fine season, finishing 4-1 in league play and narrowly missing an appearance at Ford Field.

JV football ended the season on a winning note with a 12-6 victory over St. Raphael.

Varsity volleyball defeated St. Regis in the first round of the CYO district play but fell to Our Lady Star of the Sea in the district final.

NDMA green volleyball was defeated by St. Regis in the first round of district play.

Two athletes from NDMA were selected as CYO Scholar-Athletes: Kianna Eurick and Francisco Munaco.

CHSL HONORS

CROSS COUNTRY

All Catholic Girls

Sara Barron

Alex Lallier

All Catholic Boys

Chris Burns

Brad Lorant

FOOTBALL

All Catholic

Chad Powers

All League

Branch Kampe

All Academic

Joe Koterba

VOLLEYBALL

All Catholic

Destiny Tolliver

Catherine Wiczorek

All League

Katie Bloomgren

Lindsay Kander

All Academic

Lauryn Hammond

Honorable Mention

Dalton Tolliver

Hannah Ziegler

BOYS TENNIS

All League

Alex Horak

All Academic

Andrew Anderson

BOYS SOCCER

All Catholic

Neal Al-attar

Sean Grogan

Nicholas Hafner

Brad Woelke

All League

John Gulvezan

William Kanuit

Lawrence Navarre

Francisco Padilla

All Academic

Weston Lawson



Junior Neal Al-attar broke the school record this fall for goals scored in a season with 29.

Prep junior breaks soccer record

Notre Dame Prep junior Neal Al-attar, who set a school record for goals scored in a single season with 29, is used to playing at a higher level.

“I’ve been playing soccer since I was three years old, but it was on a team of five year olds, he said. “My five-year-old brother was on that team.”

Neal was given the “Emerald Boot” award from the school as a result of his scoring record.

See Neal, page 5



NOTRE DAME

Preparatory School
1300 Giddings Rd.
Pontiac, MI 48340
248-373-5300

Marist Academy
Middle Division
1300 Giddings Rd.
Pontiac, MI 48340
248-373-5371

Marist Academy
Lower Division
60 South Lynn Ave.
Waterford, MI 48328
248-682-5580

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