

# THE blarney stone

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



## Six-year plan sets direction for future

*Strategic plan results from intensive analysis and study*

NDPMA's board of trustees recently put the final touches on the school's road map to the future.

The Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy Six-Year Strategic Plan was officially recognized and approved at the board's December 2, 2008, meeting. A brochure summarizing the plan was mailed to parents and alumni in February.

The planning process began in early 2008 when the board solicited proposals from a number of consultant companies that specialize in private-school management. After careful review of the proposals, the board decided in August on Independent School Management, Inc., (ISM) out of Wilmington, Delaware.

During the summer, Walker Buckalew, Ph.D., an experienced consultant from ISM, presented to the board a detailed proposal and schedule for how the planning process was to be conducted, beginning with phase one: information and fact-gathering.

In early October, Buckalew began interviewing representatives from several NDPMA stakeholder groups, including parents, students, faculty, administration and board members.

Participants in the interview phase were comprised of the following: four

board members; three principals, the school president and business manager; six teachers (two from each division); four sets of parents who have or had multiple children in the school; eight seniors from the upper school, including those who have been at the school at least since the ninth grade and some who have attended the school from childhood; and the enrollment and advancement directors. Interviewees were

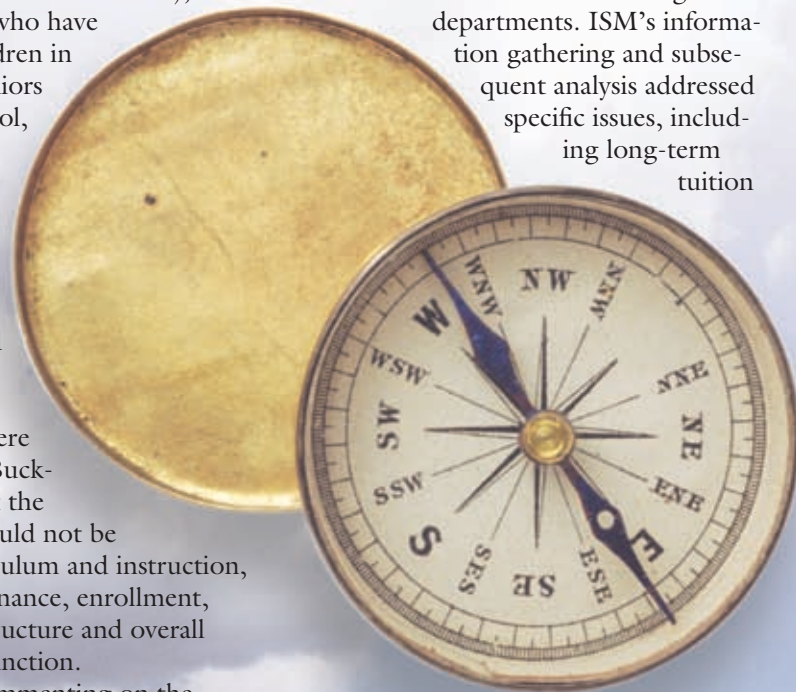
told by Buckalew that the focus would not be on curriculum and instruction, but on finance, enrollment, board structure and overall school function.

Commenting on the school's first strategic-planning process that took place seven years ago, Fr. Leon Olszamowski, school president, said that the process took a lot longer and was more expensive.

"This time around, though, the whole process was very focused, streamlined and efficient."

In addition to the interviews in phase one, ISM reviewed and evaluated more

than 80 school documents from the business office as well as from the athletic, advancement and recruiting departments. ISM's information gathering and subsequent analysis addressed specific issues, including long-term tuition



rates, internal communication, external marketing, faculty enhancement, overall governance, financial stability and the institution's Catholic and Marist identity.

According to Buckalew, the primary lens through which ISM views private schools is an 18-item list known as the ISM Stability Markers. These 18 items correlate strongly with a private school's ability to

*See Future, 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.*

**ND PREP'S MME SCORES RANK HIGH AMONG STATE'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
(See page 3)



Left: Kala Thomas '00 (NDP) graduated from Thomas M. Cooley Law School after completing studies at Purdue University. Top: Kala and fiancé Stephen Parker are planning a September 2009 wedding.

# Kala Thomas sets her goals high and then meets them

*Law-school alum says she quickly realized during undergrad studies at Purdue that not everyone there had the same advantage she had from attending ND Prep.*

Kala Thomas '00 (NDP) knew right away that Purdue University was the school of choice for her. When asked what made her choose Purdue, she said, "Actually, another NDP student mentioned that she had received literature from Purdue and was not interested. I asked her to bring it to school—something about it just made me want to find out more." After she visited the university and learned more about it, she was hooked.

In the fall of 2000, Thomas was off to West Lafayette, Indiana, to begin her college career. At first, she thought she was going to major in medical technology because she wanted to go into the field of forensic science, but later she discovered that although the field was extremely interesting, it wasn't for her. "I hated the classes required for the major," she said. She changed her major during her sopho-

more year to Law and Society, a combination of sociology and criminology, and she loved it. She minored in psychology.

Recalling life on campus, Thomas candidly says one of the best things about her time at Purdue was sorority life. "I really enjoyed it. And the friendships I gained will last a lifetime, I believe."

At Purdue, she was the membership chair of the Epsilon Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. But her memberships didn't stop there. Thomas was also part of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, the Mortar Board National Honor Society, and the 2nd Vice President of the Black Student Union.

Upon completion of her studies at Purdue, Thomas decided to apply to Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing. "I have always considered law," she said. "But I always questioned

whether or not I truly wanted to practice it—and actually, I am still considering that same question."

During her tenure at Cooley, Thomas continued her very active lifestyle. She participated in the Moot Court Program as a First Year Competitor. She also was an Intra-School Competitor, a judge, a senior judge, and a teaching assistant/competition coordinator in the program, in addition to time spent as a legal intern in Cooley's Estate Planning Clinic. Thomas also was a coach for a Michigan Youth-in-Debate team.

Currently, Thomas is a policy writer for a day-care corporation. She hopes to one day go back into education.


She also spent time teaching seventh-grade English and Social Studies, though she'd prefer to be on the administrative side of the classroom and focus on school reform.

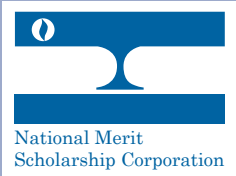
Thomas noted that Notre Dame Prep prepared her well for life after high school. She said that her first year at Purdue was like 13th grade at ND Prep. "I realized after getting to know other people in college that not everyone had the same advantage I had from attending Prep."

Mr. Greg Simon, who taught her World Cultures and Government, and Ms. Connors (Elbode), who was her French teacher, were special inspirations to Thomas throughout her time at NDP and beyond.

Simon said that as a high school student it was clear that Thomas was going to be successful. "Kala was bright, well-mannered, and had a maturity that is always wonderful to see in young people," he said.

Irish Week during her senior year was a favorite memory from Notre Dame. Thomas also remembers Mr. Simon's Government Class' presidential rallies and elections. She was the campaign manager and later was voted in as Speaker of the House. She also enjoyed the law class trials and chemistry-class experiments with Mr. (Ed) Cackowski.

Thomas made it a point to say that without her Catholic education she wouldn't be where she is today. "I truly value my preparation for college. The transition was extremely smooth for me. I attribute that to Notre Dame." 



**THREE FINALISTS IN NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**  
 The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced that NDP seniors Christine Convery, Ryan McIntosh, and Elizabeth Wattai were named Finalists

in the National Merit Scholarship Program. It is a rare honor—about 15,000 seniors of 1.5 million who took the Preliminary SAT have been

named Finalists—which opens them to a variety of scholarships.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Program. Scholarships are underwritten by NMSC with its own funds and by approximately 500 business organizations and higher education institutions that share NMSC’s goals of honoring the nation’s scholastic champions and encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence. 🇺🇸

*Future, from page 1*

sustain, over a multi-year period, excellence in all its programs, and by its mission-focused definition of excellence. In other words, each of the 18 stability markers shows a strong statistical correlation to mission-specific classroom excellence.

Phase two of the planning process was a comprehensive review in November by the NDPMA board of ISM’s findings, summarized as the Strategic Performance Analysis. Buckalew and the board then met during an intensive four-day session where the actual plan was written.

“The board was exceedingly engaged during this long weekend of meetings,” said Bruce Barron, chairman of the board of trustees. “There were lively discussions and some even got a bit contentious. But the bottom line is that we all agreed on a great plan that sets into motion a great future for a great school!”

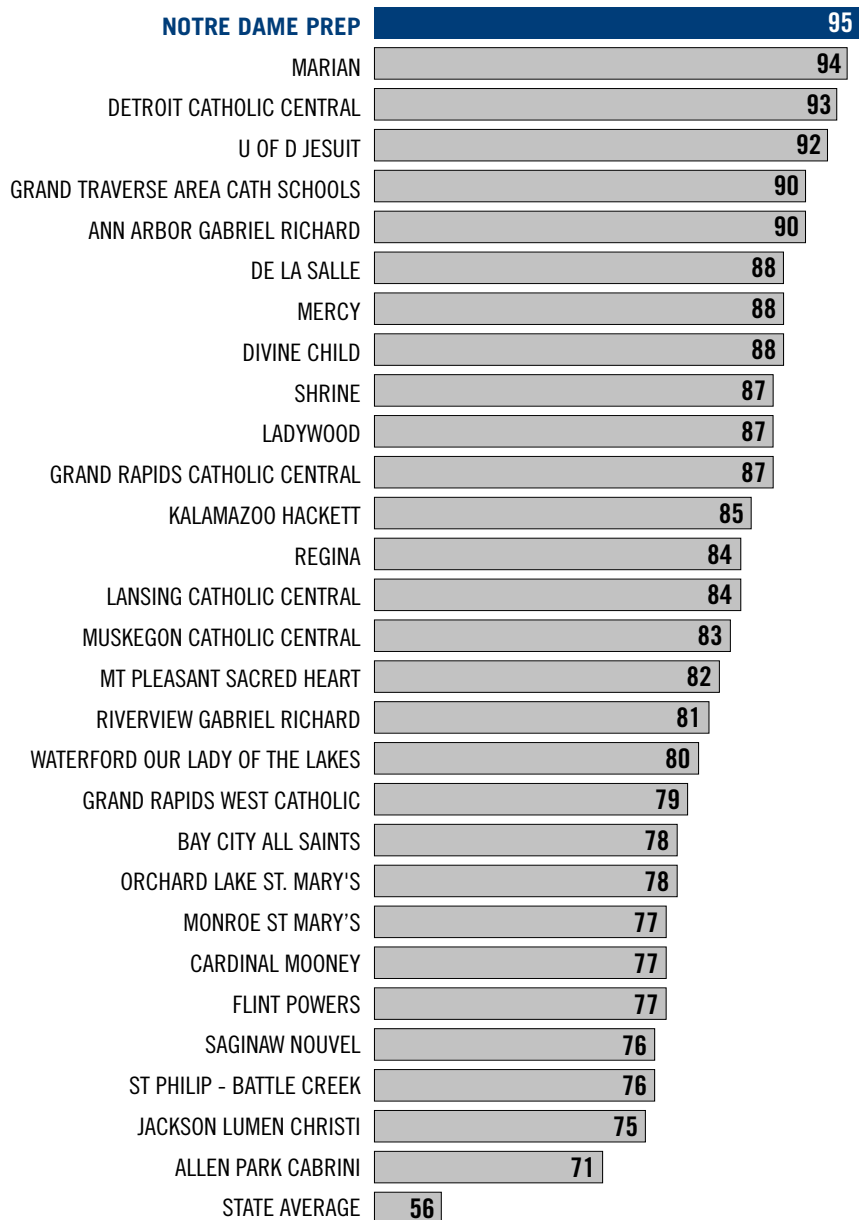
Fr. Leon said the strategic plan will serve as the foundation for future plans and priorities at all three divisions of the school.

“We are anxious to get started on building this future for Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy. While we are fully aware of the current state of the Michigan economy, we remain hopeful and confident about our school’s future. We continue to believe that dollar-for-dollar we are the best value for cost among all the private schools in southeast Michigan.” 🇺🇸



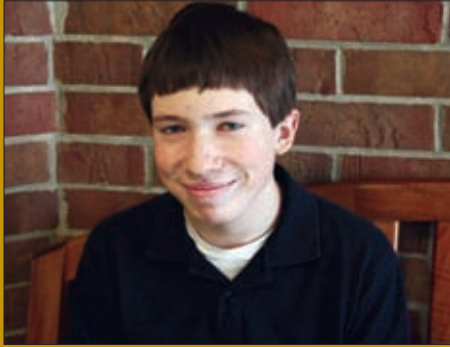
**ND PREP RANKS HIGH AMONG STATE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS**

In a recent comparison of Michigan Merit Exam (MME) scores among state Catholic high schools, Notre Dame Prep was at the top of the list. Graph shows two-year average (2007-2008) for MME scores among Michigan’s Catholic schools. Schools testing fewer than 30 students were omitted for statistical accuracy.



Source: Comparative study of MME results by Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools

## JUNIOR FINISHES STRONG IN MATH COMPETITION



Notre Dame Prep junior Jon Shepard finished in the top 10% of Part 1 of the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition (MMPC). He attended the 52nd MMPC awards banquet on March 7, at Saginaw Valley State University. Part 1 of the MMPC is open to all students in Michigan high schools.

The exam consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions involving topics from high school mathematics. Jon finished in the top 100 of 9,000 students who took Part 1. From approximately 9,000 participants in Part 1, the top 1,000 students are invited to take Part 2 of the MMPC. Students with the top 100 scores in both parts of the competition are honored at an awards program.

Approximately \$21,000 in scholarships are awarded this year. The MMPC is offered by the Michigan Section of the Mathematical Association of America to encourage students to develop their interests and abilities in mathematics.

## MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Have you ever been “caught in the act?” The middle school recently started a program to see if students could get caught in the act of living one of the ten Learner Profile attributes of the International Baccalaureate (risk-taker, balanced, caring, knowledgeable, inquirer, thinker, reflective, principled, communicator, and balanced).

The Learner Profile attributes are learning outcomes for the 21st century and express values inherent to the IB

*See MYP, page 6*

# International Baccalaureate exercise turns fourth graders into marketers



Fourth grader Zachary Atkins, left, demonstrates new products to kindergartners Eli Seitzinger and Andrew Philippart.

*By Diana Atkins, Principal, Notre Dame Marist Academy-Lower Division*

“Market research,” “supply and demand,” “profit and loss,” and “advertising” are terms Miss Tina McLaughlin’s fourth-grade class at NDMA’s Lower Division became familiar with recently. But not because these terms are headlined in the news lately given the nation’s current economic crisis. It’s because the students actually worked on launching new products to sell school wide.

During a recent unit of inquiry for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, the fourth graders were asked to design and develop a product to sell to the school. The item had to be priced no higher than \$2.50 and must be child friendly. Prior to their store opening, the students created a list of items, ranging from key chains to water-bottle holders and polled the entire student body to see which items ones would sell the best. The budding marketers then determined what the cost would be to

produce and sell the product in order to make a profit. They took the results of this research and went into production mode.

Two weeks before the store opened, the kids created a poster to hang in the



Kindergartner Jonathan Clem, standing left, ponders a purchase. Fourth-graders Trevor Bishop, back, Ryan Moncrief and Emily Stegmeyer look on.

hallway to advertise their products. Items were sold in the store for a week, with

*See Marketers, next page*

“I think that art and design inherently speak to social issues,” said Ned Devine, Notre Dame Prep’s new art teacher. “Our mission at NDPMA says we form Christian persons, upright citizens and academic scholars. What could be more Christian and socially responsible than using art as a voice for the misrepresented and underrepresented? I also believe that art education teaches students to think critically about all situations.”

Devine’s career path to becoming a teacher started when he realized that his passion for art went beyond creating it himself. “I love to share my interest in art with other people, and as a teacher, I feel like I can use art to inspire,” he said.

His circuitous path to Notre Dame Prep began in the metro-Detroit area, where he attended U of D High School in Detroit and graduated from the U of M School of Art and Design in 1993. He completed his art-education program at the University of Wisconsin in 2000 and began teaching in a public school in a small rural district outside of Madison, Wisconsin.

Coming back to Michigan, though, Devine was hoping to get a teaching position in a parochial school.

“While there may be a bit more acceptance of art as a career path in a public-school system, parochial schools stress that achievement and self-fulfillment are important in all areas of study, including art,” he said. “And that’s important to me. I feel that parochial schools instill in their students a lifelong desire to above all use their knowledge for the purpose of serving other people.”

When Devine first interviewed at ND Prep, he knew he had found everything he’d hoped for—and more. “But I was really nervous at first. I was confident in the material, but was anxious

about all the new faces and courses. I was relieved to get here and feel so comfortable so quickly. The staff and teachers and even the students all accepted me right away,” he said.

Devine’s philosophy of teaching art has shifted since he began his career in Wisconsin. “My goals initially were to teach certain art and art-history concepts with projects to accompany them. My goals now are definitely different. I try to teach students

ND Prep art teacher Ned Devine with wife Jenn.



## Mixing art and religion

*Art teacher Ned Devine believes that art education fits perfectly within the parameters of a Catholic-school curriculum.*

how important the process of creating art is, and then breaking things down in order to understand them. I try to show students how art is compassionate and inspirational.”

Trained as a fine-art photographer, Devine has found time away from his

teaching duties to help out the school with some fresh new photography, which is being incorporated into marketing and publicity material. He also has a strong interest in stained glass and is excited to work in an environment that encourages the production of his own art. But with two daughters at home and a full teaching schedule, “if only I could just find the time. . .” 🎨

### Marketers, from previous page

the proceeds going toward the purchase of technology equipment for the entire school.

Participants also learned an additional lesson in marketing. During the week, a few students placed their items “on sale” in order to move product more quickly and potentially create a larger profit.

Fourth-grader Alyssa Huth, who created NDPMA Spirit Water Bottles was the top money maker. Victor Wagner, creator of Fuzzy Pencil Holders, and Ryan Moncrief, creator of Decorated Chocolate Pretzels, were top product sellers and sold all of their stock.

“It was fun to sell stuff to the other classes and we learned how to market things and get new ideas to make things for the future,” said Trevor Bishop. Emily



Fourth-grader Nadia Burbank helps kindergartner Justin Stone with a sale.

Stegmeyer added, “I liked how we got to make our own products and to do things on our own to experience it.”

The entire class had a great experience and made over \$800 for the technology fund. Teacher Tina McLaughlin said it was great to see what the kids went through to select, market, and sell their products. “The enthusiasm they had for learning economic terms was much greater than from only reading a book,” she said. “The information gained will stick with them a lot longer than if they had only taken a test. IB really gives the students an opportunity to become 100% engaged in the learning process.” 🎨



Notre Dame Prep's varsity boys basketball team greets Detroit Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace before handing out food and gifts to Detroit's needy children. Inset photo: ND Prep senior Bradford Woelke assists with food and gift distribution.

# NDP athletes assist needy

*Varsity boys basketball team helps Detroit Pistons feed needy children*

On a recent frigid day in Detroit, the Notre Dame Prep basketball team got a chance to work with the Detroit Pistons as they handed out presents and food, including over 5,000 chickens, to Detroit's needy children. The event, which started in New York six years ago, is a joint project between the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) and "Feed the Children," a Christian, international, nonprofit relief organization. The program helps deliver food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to individuals, children and families who lack these essentials due to famine, war, poverty or

natural disaster.

Detroit was chosen by Feed the Children to be one of the cities this year along with Los Angeles and San Francisco. Pistons legend Dave Bing offered the use of one of his warehouses downtown for the distribution.

Current Pistons Rasheed Wallace, Allen Iverson, Tayshaun Prince, Jason Maxiell and Kwame Brown worked with the NDP players during this event. Pistons head coach Michael Curry, who was the president of the NBPA six years ago, helped coordinate the project. 🇺🇸

*MYP, from page 4*

continuum of international education.

Students and teachers in the middle school try to catch each other living one of the Learner Profile attributes. They then complete tickets that are placed in a special box. Five tickets are chosen each month and the winners receive a casual-day pass award. The first five winners were Troy Bishop, Adam Cole, Nicholas Gust, Francesco Munaco and Jamie Wade.

## NDP MUSICIANS PART OF ALL-STATE SYMPHONY



Two NDP students, Christian Koo and Claire Zavolta, recently performed as part of the Michigan All State Symphony Band, a prestigious group of high school students from around the state. The group performed as part of the Michigan Music Conference held in January in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Out of 3,300 students that auditioned, only 100 were selected and Notre Dame Prep was the only private school that made the cut. They also performed at the Michigan Solo and Ensemble Festival at Clarkston Sashabaw Middle School on February 7th.



## NOTRE DAME

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The Blarney Stone is published five times per year by the Advancement Office of NDPMA. Contact The Blarney Stone at 248-373-2171 or [jkopytek@ndpma.org](mailto:jkopytek@ndpma.org).  
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