



ST. NORBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

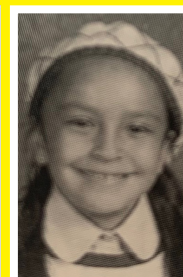
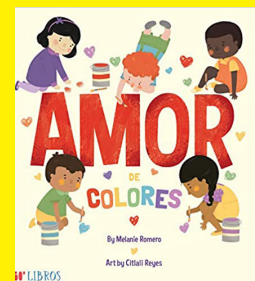
ALUMNI NEWS

instagram: SNCSHawks

saintnorbertschool.org/alumni

June 2022

COLORES of Inspiration



St. Norbert alumna, editor and author Melanie Romero (left) is joined by Lil' Libros editorial assistant Emma Garcia. (Above) As a SNCS student, Melanie spent hours in the school library.

As a young girl, Melanie Romero spent much of her library time in the Goosebumps section. Mrs. Bartholemy, the resident librarian, would encourage students to find the section where their book would go one day, hoping to instill a love of reading.

Well, it worked. Today, Melanie is not only a voracious reader but also a writer, publishing her first book—Amor de Colores—last month.

After graduating from SNCS in 2012, Melanie attended Rosary Academy then Foothill High School before earning her bachelor's degree at USC, followed by a master's in literary editing and publishing.

Melanie is now an editor at Lil' Libros, a "small but mighty" company in Los Angeles. She meets with prospective authors and illustrators, heads sales conferences with distributors to boast their season's titles, reviews submissions, and creates copy and descriptions for their roster of 8 to 12 books each fall and spring.

In addition to Mrs. Bartholemy, Melanie attributes her career path to her 7th grade teacher.

"It was in Mrs. Shutler's class in which she encouraged us to write creatively," Melanie says. "The first time I became enamored by writing was writing a measly 'I Am...' poem about John Lennon, one of my childhood heroes. After that poem, I found myself tackling every writing prompt that came my way. I never did stop writing."

Melanie grew up in a multilingual household with an emphasis in Spanish due to her Mexican heritage. She found it difficult to transition to English at school and Spanish at home because she always felt like she needed to pick one language over another. She says she suffered a lot from imposter syndrome and believed she needed to keep these two worlds separate.

At university, she wanted to place emphasis on both her American culture and Mexican heritage. She promised

herself that she would only pursue a work sector where she could revel in her bilingual upbringing.

"At Lil' Libros, I have had the opportunity to create bilingual books for the child I used to be; never in a million years would I have imagined I'd work hand-in-hand with my favorite thing in the world (books) to ease the next bilingual generation into dreaming in two languages," Melanie says. "There is no greater feeling to heal my inner child by editing and publishing the books I wanted to see on my bookshelves."

Amor de Colores, a heartwarming read that teaches children the colors of the rainbow and all of the colorful ways we see love in the world, is available at Target, Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

IN THIS ISSUE:
Updates on students, staff
and faculty, happenings
on campus & more!

ALUMNI in the NEWS

1980s

Registered nurse **Dawn (Rackauckas) Pattison (1981)** is working as an oncology nurse at Kaiser Permanente in Anaheim.

Lisa (Signaigo) Stephens (1986), voted Most Likely to Succeed in 8th grade, is doing just that as a junior high teacher at SNCS.

Mater Dei High School graduate **Peggy Pughe (1987)** is the principal of Aptos High School in Northern California.

John Stratman (1988) went on to graduate from Mater Dei High School then eventually earn a masters degree at Chapman University. Currently, John is the senior director, Public Affairs & Brand Communications, for the Kaiser Permanente Orange County Leadership Team.

1990s

Dr. Jennifer (Sharkey) Husson (1994) is an infectious disease specialist in Baltimore, Maryland.

Mater Dei High School and Pepperdine University graduate **James Diesto (1994)**, a certified public accountant, is the senior director of Royalty Audits at Universal Music Group in Santa Monica.



Kindergartner Kennedy Blalock (left), who underwent heart surgery last month, is supported with signs in front of the school and paper dolls of her classmates (above).

Students show support for one of their own

It was Kennedy Blalock's last Monday assembly before surgery.

Red balloons and posters wishing her luck hung outside her kindergarten classroom and the school said a blessing over her that day. Students in every grade were given a red "Kennedy Strong" wristband donated by a St. Norbert school family to remind them to keep her in their prayers.

At birth, Kennedy, 6, was diagnosed with Heterotaxy Syndrome and Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome and has undergone six open heart surgeries since, most recently May 3 at UCLA. After three weeks in the hospital, she returned home and is recuperating.

Proceeds from Student Council ice cream and otter pop sales during the month of May were donated to help the family with medical bills, while updates on her progress have been given to the student body at subsequent morning assemblies.

Kennedy's family has strong ties to the school. Grandparents Tim and Leigh Ann McNamara (1972 and 1973 respectively) met on the St. Norbert playground and their twins, Ashley

(McNamara) Blalock and Brian McNamara (1997), and son Sean McNamara (1999) also are alumni.

Classmates have made Kennedy cards and a book about what it's like when they feel scared or nervous and what makes them feel better. Classroom aide Tina Hanna's mom made a beautiful soft blanket in her favorite colors—purple and pink—and classmates signed their names on the blanket and also gave her a stuffed unicorn.

"We pray for Kennedy in class and talk about her often," says kindergarten teacher Vicky Brady. "At our recent mass, lead by the first and second graders, one of the petitions was 'for those who are sick and in a special way for our friend, Kennedy Blalock.'"

Both of Kennedy's teachers have offered to tutor her once she is well enough.

Says Vicky, "I can't imagine what they've gone through as a family and we hope these little kindnesses have eased their burden and reminded Kennedy of how much she is loved."



GET INVOLVED

Become a Guiding Light for SNCS

St. Norbert Catholic School's Consultative School Board (CSB) is made up of community members who offer their time, talent and knowledge to guide our school in the areas of faith formation, governance, finance and mission. Do you have experience that would benefit our school's administration? Please consider submitting an application to serve a three-year term on the CSB, which meets once per month. For more information, email Principal Mr. Ciccoianni at mrc@saintnorbertschool.org.

School's Music Education Program Honored

St. Norbert Catholic School has been honored as a NAMM "2022 Best Communities for Music Education" school! NAMM recognized our longstanding dedication to music education under Mrs. Miraflor, as well as our shift to Music Universe (and instructor Samantha Dominguez) for our music education, which has provided the following for the students:

- Introduction of a full music curriculum.
- Music theory as well as practice, currently with desk bells, and moving into other forms.
- A continued choir and rehearsal schedule for all St. Norbert school performances.

"We are proud of our dedication to enhancing our students' lives and their academics with music education," says Principal Joe Ciccoianni, "and we are grateful to NAMM for recognizing us with this prestigious

Join Rosary Every Monday in Church

Recently brought together by a tragic accident, a group of St. Norbert parents began praying the Rosary in our parish church each Monday evening at 7 p.m. The group has continued to pray together even after seeing the fruits of their prayer, and they have expanded their prayers for the entire community. For more information, contact Therese Bornhop at (714) 363-2053.

St. Norbert's Christian Service needs your help

Alumna Michelle (Ortiz) Navarro (1990) is heading up St. Norbert Church's Christian Service food distribution and is looking for volunteers 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Join alumni, current families and parishioners as they assemble bags of food for more than 150 families a week behind the St. Norbert Family & Youth Center. For more information, call the Ministry Center at (714) 637-4360 or email christianservice@stnorbertchurch.org.

Catch up with Alumni at Golf Tournament

Join St. Norbert School's 7th Annual Golf Tournament June 27, 2022, at Yorba Linda Country Club. Foursomes are \$800; individual golfers \$200. Proceeds benefit the school's Legacy of Light, which funds much-needed capital projects such as new HVAC units, upgrades to LED lighting and a new softball backstop. Looking for more information or interested in sponsoring the event? Please visit saintnorbertschool.org/golf or call Principal Joe Ciccoianni at (714) 637-6822.

Numbers whiz **Joe Svoboda (1994)** is serving as math department chair at Canyon High School in Anaheim.

Servite High School and UCLA graduate **Evan Hunsberger (1999)** is director of business development for Absolute Technologies Inc. in Anaheim.

2000s

Lt. **Joshua Gaston (2005)**, a graduate of Servite High School and University of Notre Dame, is serving as the navigator/operations officer on the mighty warship USS Key West in Guam.

Matt Bernard (2006) recently helped launch two boutique hotels in Solvang as the regional general manager of The Winston and Vinland Hotel & Lounge.

CSUF graduate **Madeline Carnovale (2008)** is a 6th grade math and science teacher at public charter school Oxford Preparatory Academy in Irvine.

2010s

Christina Ziegler (2010) will be graduating from Loyola Law School this month.

Former SNCS decathlete and Mater Dei High School graduate **Kayla Allen (2018)** has been awarded a full-tuition Camras Scholarship to Illinois Tech to study architecture in Chicago.

What have you been up to? We'd love to hear! Email your Alumni Update to alumni@saintnorbertschool.org.

IN MEMORIAM

STAFF & FACULTY

Sr. Mary Sullivan
Pre-K teacher

Sharon Dolan
Principal 1999-2000

STUDENTS

Jonathan Schulte
Class of 2003

Kevin Hogate
Class of 2012

Vicky Brady says 'farewell' to kindergarten

After 20 years of service, Vicky Brady is retiring this month as one-half of the dynamic kindergarten teaching duo.

"I know it's time for the next part of my story," Vicky says. "Like any good book, you've got to finish it (and take an AR test) before you can start a new one."

Her favorite memories include the craziness leading up to SNCS's annual Christmas programs and hearing the whole school sing together. Vicky says she will also miss:

All the special days when we get to see our school families involved like May Crowning and Special Person's Day; saying good morning to each individual child as they enter my classroom each day; hearing spontaneous singing ring out in the classroom while kids are working; that feeling you get when you've taught a great lesson and the kids are totally involved and enjoying what you're teaching.

I'll even miss waking up at 5 in the



morning thinking. "Oh this would be a great idea in order to teach that concept!"

I'll miss seeing former students in the hall, and having them say hi or

reminiscing about something they remember from kindergarten.

I'll miss that pride you feel when the ones that struggled finally catch on and gain confidence and you know you played a small part in that.

I'll miss getting to teach whole families and in the process getting to know and love the kids even more.

I'll miss working side by side with the best grade partner and friend you could ever ask for. Two decades with Patty McKimmey, so much laughter, tears, frustrations and joy...That's what I'll miss the most.

Vicky says she is looking forward to spending more time with her 90-year-old mom. In September, she's heading to Ireland with her husband, Jeff.

"After that, I'll have a little time to hopefully figure out what comes next," Vicky says. "I can't wait to see the plans God has for my next chapter. Just know that St. Norbert will always have a very special spot in my heart."

A Small but Mighty Aide

Liz Ostic retired in June 2019 after 18 years of service as a teacher's aide. But before that, she was a SNCS mom from 1986 to 1994 and then from 1996 to 2004. Liz says she enjoyed being in charge of the Talent Show and helping the children get their performance together. Also, she loved the many friends she made with the faculty, staff and parents.

"The children were all so special to me and I cared for each and every one of them and loved seeing them achieve," Liz says. "I was also supervisor on the playground so it was great to stay in close contact with the children from 2nd to 8th grade."

These days Liz is enjoying frequent outings with her husband, time with their grandchildren and being available to help her parents as they age.



Committed to her Community

Sister Jane Bonar, who taught 2nd grade at SNCS from 1975 to 1978, is living in Los Angeles, where she has been co-director of the Presentation Learning Center for 21 years. In collaboration with San Miguel Parish in Watts, the center's mission is to empower and liberate the poor, especially through education.



Master of Colons & Semicolons

Former 7th grade teacher/curriculum coordinator Francie Shutler, who worked at SNCS from 2004 to 2014, is a 6th grade teacher at Anaheim Hills Elementary School.

