



ST. NORBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ALUMNI

News

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saintnorbertschool.org/alumni

June 2023



Born to MANAGE

It was 1983 and Jim Vanderpool's first day at St. Norbert Catholic School. He and his family had just moved from San Clemente to the apartments next door to the rectory and he didn't know a soul.

"Being a new kid, it's the middle of the school year and I didn't have a uniform yet so **Sr. Francis O'Leary** told me to wear my uniform from Our Lady of Fatima," Jim recalls with a tinge of embarrassment.

So Jim, a 7th grader at the time, reluctantly walks onto campus and is greeted by a familiar face: **Mrs. Stollenwerk** (formerly Ms. Coons).

"She had been my 6th grade teacher at Our Lady of Fatima," says Jim, 52. "I was super excited to see her again and have her as my 8th-grade teacher."

Jim grins ear to ear talking about St. Norbert and the family he formed while there, including lifelong friends **Rich Arco, Jim Needham** and **Mike Bosse**, and his many fond memories.

He recalls the time the SNCS cheer team returned to school one weekend as first-place winners of a regional competition and screamed over the fence and into the apartment complex, urging Jim to join the celebration.

"Luckily I was home; I'm sure my mom cracked open the Sunny Delight and we headed over," Jim laughs.

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Jim Vanderpool, now the city manager of Anaheim, served as an altar server while at St. Norbert School.
(Photo courtesy City of Anaheim)

ALUMNI in the NEWS

1970s

Jim Duquesnel (1976) earned his bachelor's in mechanical engineering at California State Polytechnic University-Pomona. Today, he is president of Wyngate Consulting and also leads business development for the Ric Scalzo Institute for Botanical Research at Sonoran University of Health Sciences.

Ted Hoffmann (1978) is teaching fourth grade at Prospect Elementary School in Orange.

Kevin Conway (1979), a graduate of Servite and Loyola Marymount University, is helping clients diversify as a certified financial planner with Grove Point Financial in Tustin.

1980s

Susan (Corti) DeGennaro (1982) graduated with a master's degree in business in 2004, returned to school to earn her teaching credential from National University and is now a special education teacher for Moreno Valley Unified School District.

After graduating from Santa Margarita High School and Chapman University, **Julie (Savant) Sulick** (1989) is now a Realtor in South Orange County, mother of three and wife of Santa Margarita Catholic High School president Andy Sulick.

Charlie Levandowski (1989) is a business trainer for Citi Group financial services in Orange County.

AROUND CAMPUS

Alumni leads teammates in Red & Gold win

Congratulations to the Red Team, winners of Rosary Academy's 2023 Red & Gold Competition, especially SNCS alumni Reagan Beuerlein (2019), executive producer; Jacee Baumann (2020), drill captain; Riley Martinez (2020), fashion captain; and Molly Muse (2019), historian captain.

Congratulations also to the gold team leaders Isabella Walker (2020), co-producer; Brooke Skipton (2020), drill captain; Emma Oskorus (2019), drill captain; Camila Zavala (2019) and Sydney Swenson (2020), fashion captains; and Karissa Garcia (2019), stage tech captain.

SNCS music program earns accolades

St. Norbert Catholic School has been named one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants for the second year in a row.

The criteria for the award focuses on the importance of music in the

academic curriculum, teacher qualifications and the school's historical approach to music.

SNCS implemented its music program 37 years ago with a dedicated teacher who focuses on music theory in each of the kindergarten through 8th grades, producing three musical performances a year. The school offers optional instrument and band lessons with biannual recitals and a dedicated music studio. In addition, SNCS has a robust choir that has competed in the Diocese Choral Festival throughout the years.

The music program was led by Antoinette Miraflor until 2020, when she retired after nearly three decades and handed over the handbells to Samantha Dominguez of the Music Universe school music program.

Founded in 1901, the international NAMM Foundation advances active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs.



Class of 2021 Reunites

Several alumni participated in St. Norbert Church's Confirmation 2 retreat in April, including (front row from left) Abigail Zabala, Isabella Navarro, Jaelyn Tran, Jillian De Vega, Emma Gamez, Samantha Oskorus, Jazzlyn Sandoval; and (back row, from left) Jaden Harrell, Luke Silva, Evan von Rotz, Joseph Oskorus, Noah Gomez, Art Sanchez, Nathan Desousa, Jack Bazant, Jackson Hoffmann, Ethan Delgado, Santino Miladinovich, Wyatt Pearson and Ethan Fetter. Not pictured: Ben Ciccoianni, Jadon Wavita and Andrew Jiminez.



More than 35 years after graduating from SNCS, Curt Bauer is thrilled his daughter, Megan Ouellette, is teaching 6th grade at the school.

Family TIES

Megan Ouellette was recently out of college and had earned her teaching credential at California State University Fullerton when she was ready to look for a position in an elementary school classroom.

Like any good daughter, she consulted her dad for advice. **Curt Bauer** (1979), in turn, suggested she check out his alma mater: St. Norbert Catholic School.

His classmate and good friend, **Deanna (Fisher) O'Keefe**, was teaching 8th grade at St. Norbert at the time.

"I have known Deanna from growing up as my dad and her have remained good friends," says Megan, who married and baptized her daughter, now 2, at St. Norbert. "My dad reached out to her and sure enough she told me that St. Norbert was looking to hire a new 5th grade and 6th grade teacher. I immediately applied and with Deanna's support, received an interview."

Megan met with then-principal John Loffer. She got the 6th-grade teaching position in August 2014 and has been at the school ever since. As a first-year teacher at St. Norbert, Megan



Curt Bauer in the 3rd grade

says she felt a lot of pressure because "I wanted to make Deanna and my dad proud."

Luckily, she was up for the challenge—thanks to a little support.

"I remember going to help Megan set up her classroom prior to school starting," says Curt, an account manager for Diversified Thermal, an air conditioning/refrigera-

tion service and installation company in Anaheim. "She asked me if I remembered what the school nickname/mascot was. She was shocked that I remembered and she put up a big sign in her classroom that read, 'It's a great day to be a Trojan.'"

Luckily, a fellow teacher caught the mistake before any students arrived.

"How was I supposed to know that the school changed its nickname?" Curt laughs.

Megan says her dad often talked about his "amazing" grade school friends. Some of his best memories were from his St. Norbert days.

1990s

Danielle (Ellis) Munoz (1991) is the chair assistant in the Graduate Division at UC Santa Barbara.

Mater Dei High School graduate **Kelly (Parra) Ricker** (1996) is a certified registered nurse anesthetist for Kaiser Permanente Fontana.

2000s

Madeline Carnovale (2008) graduated from California State University Fullerton and is now teaching 6th grade math and science classes for Oxford Preparatory Academy—Saddleback Valley based in Aliso Viejo.

Rachel Sosnowski (2009) is living her best life as senior event manager at Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority in North Carolina.

2010s

California State University Fullerton graduate **Jen Davis** (2012) is managing accounts for Passport Brand Design creative branding company in Newport Beach.

After graduating this spring from Creighton University, Servite alum **Micah Navarro** (2015) is now working as a business tax services associate at KPMG in Omaha, Nebraska.

Do you have news to share? We'd love to hear! Email your Alumni Update to alumni@saintnorbert-school.org.



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IN MEMORIAM

STAFF & FACULTY

Sharon Dolan
Principal 1999-2000

Audrey Hoffmann
School Secretary

Jeanne Honikel
Health Room 1988-1997

Janet Llewellyn
Pre-K teacher

Sr. Francis O'Leary
Principal 1983-1997

Sr. Cabrini Riordan
4th Grade Teacher
1980-1983

STUDENTS

Peggy Sue (Bunch) Nay Class of 1975	Mieke Riccio Class of 1986
Timothy Michael Bunch Class of 1979	Ronald Arlt Class of 1986
Julie Griffis Class of 1980	Greg Aarl Class of 1990
Darin Haskins Class of 1980	Jonathan Schulte Class of 2002
Charlie Levandowski Class of 1980	Alexander Benuzzi Class of 2008
Paul Molthen Class of 1980	Kevin Hogate Class of 2012
Phillis Piczyk Class of 1980	

GET INVOLVED

Connect with alumni at annual golf tournament

Show off your swing at St. Norbert Catholic School's annual golf tournament Monday June 12 at Strawberry Farms Golf Club in Irvine. Assemble your own foursome or we'll match you with a group and enjoy a day of golf and camaraderie followed by an awards reception. The tournament is always a fun day with parents, alumni, parishioners and friends of SNCS. For information, visit saintnorbertschool.org/golf.

Donate your Time

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 250 families each week behind the St. Norbert Family & Youth Center. To sign up, email christianservice@stnorbertychurch.org.

Invest in our Future

Honor a loved one who valued Catholic education by donating a monetary gift or non-cash financial instruments, such as stocks or mutual funds, to St. Norbert Catholic School. Our needs include:

- **SNCS Endowment Fund:** Provides financial support now and into the future. Funds are used to reduce or stabilize the school's deficit.
- **Tuition Assistance Fund:** Gifts of any amount help families struggling to meet their child(ren)'s tuition costs (about \$7,400/year).
- **Legacy of Light:** Contributions help finance projects that improve the school's safety, durability, beauty and energy efficiency.
- **Kathy Oldham Children's Fund:** Supports our school in a way that honors our dear friend Kathy Oldham and her love of family, children, faith and art education.

To arrange a donation, please call (714) 637-6822 or email info@saintnorbertyschool.org.




LEAVE A
Legacy
THAT TRANSCENDS TIME



Imagine the impact you can have
on the future of Catholic education.

Ensure your legacy with Planned Giving
to St. Norbert Catholic School.



(714) 637-6822 information@saintnorbertyschool.org www.saintnorbertyschool.org/planned-giving

from VANDERPOOL, page 1

Then there was 7th grade teacher **Gerty Abbas**.

"She could be strict but she loved silly time," Jim says. "The class would be going nuts and she'd let it happen. She would just sit back and smile; she loved the energy."

The music teacher was a "guy with a piano who sang the same songs every Monday," and altar serving for funerals was a real treat.

"We loved getting pulled out of class and we got a \$5 tip from the family for doing the Mass," Jim recalls.

Jim was a member of the school's Magic Club and Student Council, loved to play checkers and bowl and planned on becoming a lawyer, buying a beach house in Hawaii and driving a Mercedes-Benz, according to the class's underground yearbook.

After he graduated from St. Norbert in 1985, Jim went on to Servite with Rich, Jim and Mike only to return for their high school graduation in the church. With initial aspirations of working in politics, Jim earned his bachelor's degree in public administration from Purdue University and eventually a master's from University of Phoenix.

Fresh out of college, Jim says he "loafed



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”

around" for a while. At his mother's urging, he started looking for a job. He walked into Tower Records in Sacramento, where he was loafing at the time, and picked up an Orange County Register. A management internship with the city of Mission Viejo caught his eye—and eventually launched his impressive career.

Today Jim serves as city manager of Anaheim, the largest city in Orange County. The city has a \$2 billion budget and 3,000 employees. All but two of these employees—the city attorney and city clerk—work for him.

"I basically orchestrate the operations of the city," Jim says humbly. "I don't know how to fight crime or fix things, but I know how to hire the people who do."

He grew up eating helmet sundaes at Angel Stadium and dancing with friends at Disneyland's Videopolis. After working for the city of Buena Park for 25 years, Jim says he feels at home in Anaheim's city hall. He loves the employees and the people they serve.

Jim is father to daughters Emily, 21, and Hayley, 20, and resides in Orange with his family. As for Jim and his SNCS friends, they still get together once a year to check out a local punk rock show.

"I feel blessed to be where I am today," Jim says.

from BAUER, page 3

"He lived in Villa Park and would ride his bike to school every day," says Megan, who attended St. Serra Catholic School and Santa Margarita Catholic High School in South Orange County. "He is still close with a handful of his St. Norbert friends after over 40 years."

At St. Norbert, Curt was known as a "goofball" who tried to get teachers off topic, Megan says.

Curt says recess was always "the best" and included tackle football, Crack the Whip and other games on the grass.

"**John Hoffman, Bob Ammann, Jeff Sherer, John Durazo and Matt Taylor** were always the instigators," Curt says. "They would jump on the ground and yell 'Johnny Pile' (named after John Hoffman, he was usually on the bottom), and a good old-fashioned dog pile would ensue. Bodies piled up to 6 feet high."



Curt Bauer, wife Melinda with their daughters, Megan (left) and Katlyn.

Nobody ever got hurt but Curt says they had a lot of fun.

"We would return to class muddy and sweaty," Curt says. "We didn't have air conditioning at the school and the classroom was hot and smelly. That is when Mrs. Greene had a talk with all the boys. She discussed our need for deodorant."

After Mater Dei, Curt attended California State University Fullerton, where he played soccer for three years. He mar-

ried Melinda, his Mater Dei classmate and prom date, in St. Norbert Church in 1988.

Deanna O'Keefe was a bridesmaid while SNCS alumni **Randy Ruegger, Curtis Hughes** and **Kevin Conway** were groomsmen and Kevin is godfather to Megan's sister. In addition, Megan taught two of Kevin's sons—**Brendan** (2018) and **Seamus** (2020) **Conway**.

Curt also remains close with St. Norbert friend **Bob Almond**, who also went to Mater Dei. In fact, 25 of Curt's classmates attended Mater Dei.

Megan says getting the job at St. Norbert has, at times, felt surreal.

"It is crazy the circles and places that life and God take you," Megan says.

Adds Curt, whose siblings Susan, Erik and Kevin also attended SNCS, "Life goes full circle and SN has been a huge part of the Bauer family for over 45 years."