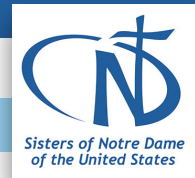


NETWORK NOTES

SND NATIONAL SPONSORSHIP AND NETWORK OFFICE NEWSLETTER



Maria Early Learning Center Receives Accreditation

Congratulations to **Maria Early Learning Center (Toledo, OH)** for achieving accreditation by the

National Association for the Education of Young Children! NAEYC-accredited programs commit to ensuring that their environment, policies and practices are continually aligned with NAEYC's early learning standards and recommended practices. Accreditation is valid through January 2, 2026.

Celebrate Excellence with SND National Network Awards



Celebrate excellence in your ministry community through the SND National Network Awards! The SND National Sponsorship and Network Office's National Network Awards Program is designed to formally recognize and celebrate the outstanding contributions of employees and/or volunteers in the SND Network for witness to the mission, vision and charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame. While COVID forced the delay of the program launch, the program resumes with perfect timing to recognize all the dedicated, creative and exceptional work across the SND network during this trying time.

- **Transformative Leadership Award** recognizes individuals who are catalysts for growth; inspire hearts; and transform lives of those with whom they minister.
- **Gospel Witness Award** recognizes those who reflect and nurture the Notre Dame charism, spirit and mission within their professional communities and among all they minister.
- **Father Bernard Overberg "Teacher of Teachers" Award** recognizes educators that demonstrate exceptional, inspirational impact on the formation and professional learning of teachers.

Nominations are due by March 31, 2021. All nominations remain active for three years. Nomination forms as well as more information on the awards can be found by visiting www.snded.org/national-awards.

The Distinguished Graduate Award (DGA) recognizes graduates who value their relationship with God; strive to live Gospel values in their daily lives; work to their ability and challenge themselves academically; and distinguish themselves in expressing God's goodness and provident care through service and outreach to others. Order forms will be sent to sponsored and affiliated schools soon and are due back by April 1, 2021. More information can be found at www.sned.org/distinguished-graduate-award.

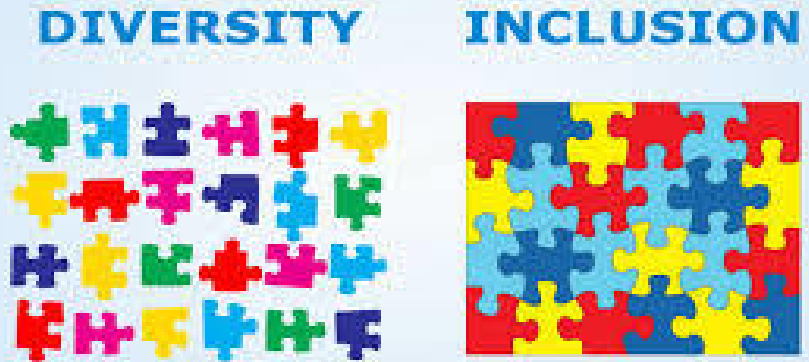
Winter 2021 Issue

EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

SND Schools Elevate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awareness

In June, the Sisters of Notre Dame released a statement with the sentiment that they "stand with our brothers and sisters in faith and all people of good will in prayer for an end to racism and violence and stand ready to move forward in faith and action toward a country and world where every person is valued, seen and heard." As school opened in the fall with attention to a variety of in-person, remote and hybrid learning models, many also elevated awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion in response to today's climate of racial division.

According to Lilliam Paetzold, President and Head of School at **Notre Dame Academy (Los Angeles, CA)**, NDA-CA takes great pride in their extraordinarily diverse community. "The events of this year demonstrate the need to take a more relevant and intentional support for the diverse groups within our community," Lilliam said. Since June, the NDA-CA community has worked tirelessly to build a foundation for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative.



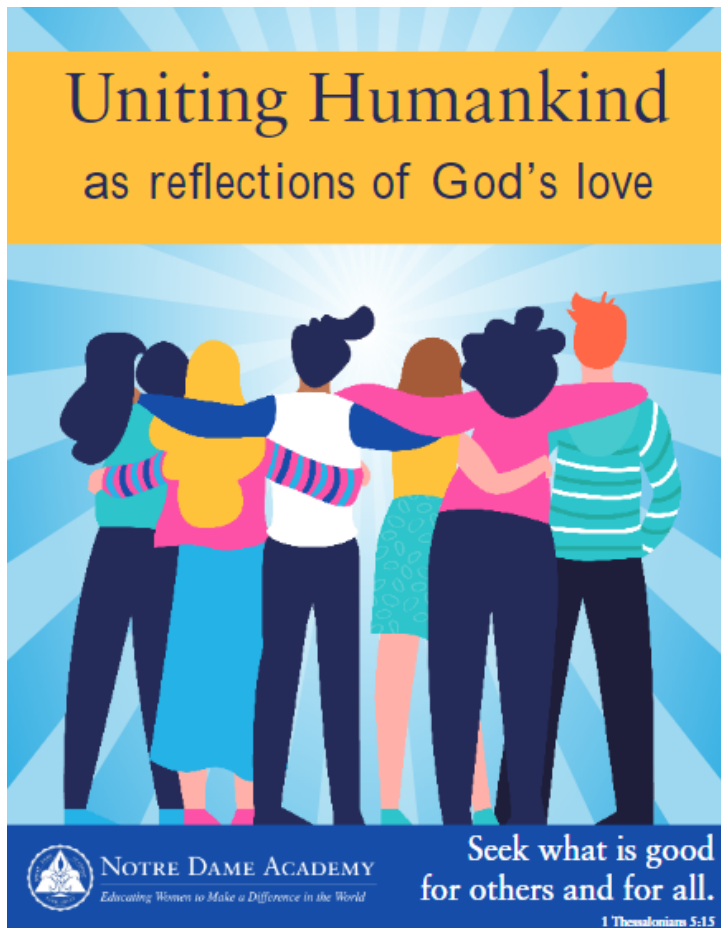
NDA-CA hosted training and devoted 10 weeks of theology curriculum to understanding bias. They coordinated workshops encouraging respect for differing views and promoting respectful language and interactions among students. The school community participated in studies promoting DEI topics and, to ground their efforts in the Catholic faith, studied "Open Wide Our Hearts," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter against racism.

The school is reviewing and updating both student and employee handbooks; addressing specific needs of students of color in the college counseling program; and expanding their admissions reach to support recruitment of applicants of color. A Black student union; a diversity council composed of faculty and staff that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the student body; and an online networking platform for alumnae to connect were established.

"I have great hope for what is to come as a result of this initiative," said Lilliam. "This is only one piece of a greater effort to expand what we learn today to form other groups, curriculum, experiential opportunities and partnerships in the broader community to continue to grow as a Catholic school of the future."



Students at NDA-CA celebrate the diverse background of their student body.



This graphic, depicting NDA-KY's 2020/2021 theme, is found in every classroom and gathering space, throughout the hallways, on masks, device decals and bookmarks at the school.

Each school year **Notre Dame Academy (Park Hills, KY)** focuses on one of the four SND Principles of Education. This year they are celebrating the 2nd Educational Principle of the Sisters of Notre Dame - the Human Dignity of Each Person as an Image of God. "Our guiding scripture is 1 Thessalonians 5:15 - Seek what is good for each other and for all," said NDA-KY's Campus Minister Bridget Price. The theme was developed by the school's Student Peer Ministry and the administration teams.

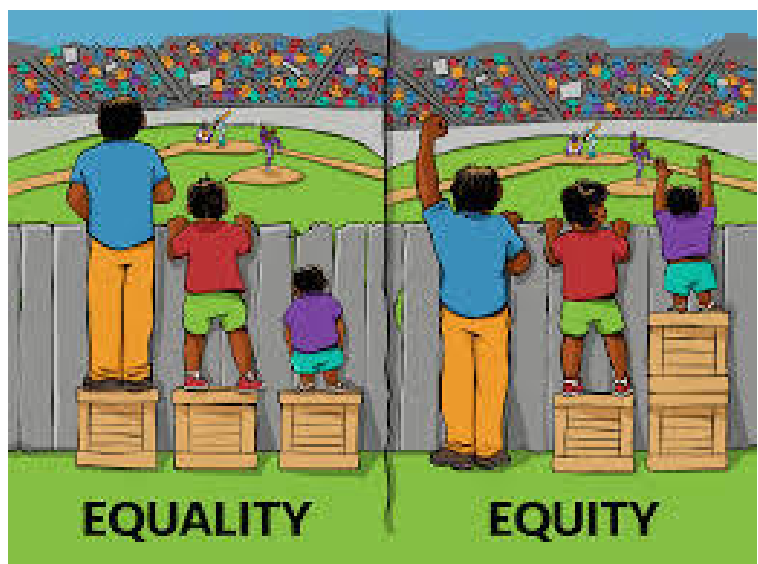
Reminders of this year's theme are present in many forms throughout the day. Morning prayers focus on recognizing each person as a child of God. The theme is discussed in classrooms as well as in assemblies. "We have also taken to the song 'Together' by for King & Country,

which is quite fitting for everything that is going on in the world today," Bridget said.

Over the summer for their annual Common Reader book, NDA-KY's faculty, staff and students read the book *Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson, which focuses on the historical blue people of Kentucky and the fierce and brave Kentucky Packhorse librarians. The book touches on issues of miscegenation, bigotry, poverty, the Depression, Roosevelt's WPA program, domestic abuse and the self-empowerment of women in the early 20th century. During Common Reader Day, presentations addressed unconscious biases; former unjust laws and some that are still in place; and understanding different cultures. Celebration of the book also included a Zoom meeting with the author who talked about the importance of being kind and looking at the whole person.

"Our school theme, Uniting Humankind as Reflections of God's Love, is most appropriate for the time in which we find ourselves," said Dr. Laura Koehl, President.

"This theme reminds us to accept others for the persons God made them to be and to extend our kindness and care to each person we meet," she continued.



GOSPEL WITNESS

Nakita Gibbs: A Hero Among Heroes

Submitted by Amy Riddle, Marketing & PR Director, St. Claire HealthCare

Nakita Gibbs became a celebrity in her hometown of Morehead, Kentucky. She's the girl in scrubs and cowboy boots on the front line of the pandemic, collecting specimens for COVID testing. Nakita began working at St. Claire as an environmental services assistant. Shortly thereafter, she was hired as a certified nurse assistant in the Emergency Department (ED) where she was finally able to do what she most wanted - help people.

When the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic found its way to Eastern Kentucky, a temporary drive-thru testing site was set up to offer community testing. Nakita stepped away from the job she loved in the ED and offered her services on the front line. As the cold and often rainy days in March turned into the hazy days of summer, the testing site moved from a temporary tailgate tent to a more permanent

part to slow the spread of illness in the community where she was born and raised.

People began referring to Nakita as a superhero. When asked about her superpower, she jokingly said, "If there's one thing I'm good at in life, it's swabbing people's noses." Not only is Nakita now considered the local expert on nasal swabs, but this single mom is also a full-time nursing student. During a global pandemic when many are giving up their careers in healthcare, Nakita is more passionate than ever to take her career to the next level. She's currently working toward her RN with future plans to pursue her BSN.

Nakita says she always knew she wanted to work with patients, but ultimately she's doing it all to give her daughter, Stella (3), a better life. She lights up when talking about Stella. "She is my absolute world," Nakita said. Stella can certainly be proud of her mom. Nakita's hard work and dedication, and her commitment to St. Claire HealthCare's mission of proclaiming God's goodness through a healing ministry to the people of Eastern Kentucky, has been unwavering. She is a true healthcare hero.



facility. Nakita stayed on the front lines five days a week, doing her



Sunday, June 20 - Thursday, June 24, 2021: **Partners in Mission Annual National Advancement Summer Institute for Catholic Schools** presents *The National Enrollment Management Conference for Catholic Schools* and *The National Advancement Conference for Catholic Schools*. Visit www.partnersinmission.com for more information.

MISSION Moments

We asked the SND network to share a mission moment or unexpected way that something good came out of the past difficult year. As we begin a new year, may these encouraging words fill us all with hope and courage.

At our school, both teachers and parents have affirmed their vocation! Parents want to be parents and admire teachers even more than they did before! Teachers have affirmed that they love to be teachers - in their classrooms with students and appreciate their space and time with students in a whole new way. I can't wait to be able to hug my students again! - Sheila Martinez, Principal, Our Lady of Victory School, Washington, D.C.

The Leadership and Response team has rallied around our community and learned to communicate, trust and lean on one another in a deeper way. I'm proud to say that we have been making critical decisions based on love and strength and have not been governed by the fear of the unknown. Our students have been forced out of their comfort zones and had to adapt quickly to changing situations and things outside of their control. There is a great learning and value in that for our students. - Lannie Davis-Frecker, President/CEO, Julie Billiart Schools, Lyndhurst, OH

We are grateful for the flexibility, adaptability, and creativity of our faculty and staff. They have gone above and beyond day in and day out to make

student learning happen. This has happened in both the in-person setting and the remote learning experience. The Educational Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame has been evident this entire period. - Jack VonHandorf, Principal, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY

Lial has a tradition of creating a live nativity the first weekend in December. This year, we had more cars in line than ever before and raised almost \$3,000 in a little over an hour for the "Let's Build Beds" organization, which is a charity building beds for children in the local area who are without - just like the night baby Jesus was born. Cars were lined up for over a mile each way. - Lynn Cherry, Head of School, Lial Catholic School, Whitehouse, OH

The ministry is living the mission every day. - Donald Lloyd, President/CEO, St. Claire HealthCare, Morehead, KY



On December 21, St. Claire HealthCare received its first shipment of the COVID-19 vaccine.

MINISTRY ON THE MARGINS

At the heart of the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame is embodying the love of our good and provident God. This is expressed through serving others, responding to the needs of the times and especially the poor and marginalized. It is in this same spirit that SND schools seek ways to improve the lives of those in need in their own communities. By working together, students, families and staff are making a difference in a variety of ways.

Metro Catholic School (Cleveland, OH) was

formed in 1988 from the successful merger of three inner city parish schools: St. Boniface, St. Michael and St. Stephen. It is a preschool through grade 8 program located on two campuses on Cleveland's Near West Side serving the education needs of a diverse and changing



Students celebrated gratitude in November by holding a canned food drive for the Hunger Center at St. Augustine Church. They also colored placemats to brighten up the center and bring smiles to the guests.

population. Eighty percent of the school's families are at or below the poverty line. Cleveland Food Bank, Urban Community School and neighboring parishes assist Metro Catholic families with food and school supply donations. In turn, Metro students pray for these parishioners and find ways they can give back.

Students collected money to help the local Boys and Girls Club purchase a van when theirs was stolen. In awareness of their responsibility to care for God's creatures, students also collected money for the local Animal Protective League and sponsored a llama for a family in the Andes.

The school supports a student Green Committee that focuses on our relationship with endangered and marginalized environment. The school provided support for 23 eucalyptus trees after the forest fires in Australia, providing shelter and nourishment for koalas adversely affected by the fires. Students have partnered with DRINK LOCAL TAP to assist with the provision of clean water in Cleveland and Uganda. Their sustainability efforts have resulted in being named a Green Ribbon School and Metro being declared as a Kateri Site in honor of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, a young, Native American woman who loved God and is a patron saint of conservation.

At **Our Lady of Victory School (Washington, D.C.)**, middle school students are offered opportunities to develop leadership skills and spiritual growth by participating in VISTO, Victory in Service to Others. VISTO raises awareness of and funds and supplies for those in need in a variety of ways throughout the year.



Each week, students are given a brown paper bag and asked to fill it with a packed lunch that is then donated to a local homeless shelter (photo above). On "Free Dress Days" students are relieved of their uniforms if they donate money to a designated charity. At Christmastime, parish families donated coats for the "Giving Tree" program that went to children at local shelters.

The school celebrates the Lenten season by filling Food Drive Bags with non-perishable food for families in need. During Catholic Schools Week, Our Lady of Victory collects layettes for the Christ Child Society to help local mothers and babies in need.

For many years, **St. John's Elementary School (Delphos, OH)** was a WE School. According to their website, WE Schools are part of the global community of dreamers, doers and difference-makers who are out to make an impact alongside thousands of others across North America and the UK to create incredible social change. "The best learning experiences happen when we contribute to making a meaningful difference in the world ... from ME to WE," the website states.

Each year St. John's focuses on one of the components of the WE Schools program including: WE Scare Hunger; WE Walk for Water; and WE Are One.

In addition to the WE Schools program, St. John's collects non-perishable food for their parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Faith and Ministry are at the very heart of the community of **Cardinal Gibbons High School (Raleigh, NC)**. They offer a number of programs to foster the spiritual development of students, educators, parents, alumni and friends. While 2020 has been a challenging year, the pandemic has not prevented the school community from serving others. If anything, the pandemic inspired innovative and new meaningful ways to serve their outreach partners. Their faith is fueled by love, and this love transforms them to want to help others even more.

***"This year more than any,
gratitude truly does arise from and
inspire gladness and generosity"***

*- Gary Meyerl, Director of Outreach, Cardinal
Gibbons High School*



Cardinal Gibbons students assemble Soup Kits.

During the first semester, Cardinal Gibbons' students and educators collected materials and created baffles for a Habitat for Humanity home; constructed over 1,200 Soup Kits and distributed them to families served by Catholic Parish Outreach (CPO) in preparation for Thanksgiving; held a Book Drive netting over 1,100 books for Wake Up and Read; and continue to staff the Shepherd's Table Soup Kitchen every Monday with a small army of parent, educator and alumni volunteers. The impact of the COVID-19 virus is felt throughout the school and surrounding community but has not altered the commitment to serving and seeking to improve the lives of those on the margins in the community. "This year more than any, gratitude truly does arise from and inspire gladness and generosity," said Gary Meyerl, Director of Outreach.

Through its Cause-A-Month initiative, the campus ministry team at **St. Pius X - St. Matthias Academy (PMA), (Downey, CA)** is hard at work providing help to those who need it most. In September, the team called on fellow students to help the children and schools impacted by the explosion in Beirut through two separate campaigns. The first initiative was to create art supply care packages. Students assembled packages and shipped 200 pounds worth of art supplies to Beirut. Their second campaign was to raise funds for the art program at a K-12 Catholic School in Beirut. PMA students raised and donated \$425.00.

CALENDAR

Jan 25

Sponsored Ministry
Leadership Virtual
Meeting: Session 1 -
Sponsorship in SND USA

Jan 31 - Feb 6

Celebrate Catholic Schools
Week! Visit ncea.org for
daily themes and planning
tools.

Feb 24

Sponsored Ministry
Leadership Virtual
Meeting: Session 2 -
Sponsored Ministry
Assessment

Mar / Apr TBA

Sponsored Ministry
Leadership Meeting:
Sessions 3-5

Apr 6 - 8

NCEA Virtual Conference.
Visit ncea.org for more
information

June 20 - 24

Partners in Mission Annual
National Advancement
Summer Institute for
Catholic Schools

Mission Meetings

The annual Sponsored Ministry Leadership meeting for board and ministry leadership will take place virtually with five 90-minute Zoom sessions addressing various topics suggested by a committee of ministry leaders.

- The first Zoom is scheduled for January 25 with Sr. Margaret Gorman and the National Ministry Corporation Board addressing sponsorship in SND USA.
- The second session is scheduled for February 24 when Sr. Joanne Keppler will present information and answer questions about the Sponsored Ministry Assessment.
- Topics for subsequent sessions will address race, diversity and inclusion; strategic planning; and the impact of social media.



Prayer Line

The Sisters of Notre Dame will pray for your needs via the Prayer Line. The power of prayer is available to everyone, and the sisters consider Prayer Line Ministry one of the most critical and needed ministries in the world today. Young and old, of all nationalities and faiths, and even those struggling in their personal faith journey are encouraged to call the SND Prayer Line at 440-279-1163, day or night, 365 days a year. A sister is there to personally answer calls from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST Monday through Friday. You can also access the SND Prayer Line by visiting www.sndchardon.org/prayer-requests.

Need a Prayer Sister?

Would your school or ministry like a Prayer Sister? Someone to regularly keep your ministry in their thoughts and prayers? Please contact Lisa Fredrickson at lfredrickson@sndusa.org, and you will be connected with a Sister of Notre Dame in your area. Sisters appreciate receiving ministry news and, if able, attending special ministry events or making special visits to the ministry.