

SAINT STEPHEN'S

Volume 7 Issue One Fall/Winter 2016



From the Head of School's desk . . .

With the ever-changing landscape of education today, it is important not only for educators, but also those in the community to pay attention to the trends and forces that influence and impact schools and students. Whether it means adding innovation to the core curriculum, rearranging learning spaces, individualizing instruction and/or collaborating to solve problems, these trends influence how learning happens. And external forces – political, economic, environmental, global, social, or technological – affect the focus and mindset of teachers and students.

Four words come to mind to help us understand where education is headed, how teachers share information and encourage thinking, and what students may need to do to ensure they are preparing for the future. These words are TIME, PLACE, PATH, and SPACE, as detailed in the spring 2016 issue of the Independent School Magazine. Many questions arise when considering these words within the context of the future of education. Do class periods have to be 45 minutes long? What is the appropriate length for a school year? What should schools look like? Where else can learning occur and still be considered school? How should a curriculum be shaped in order to be truly valuable?



To help answer these questions, on Sept. 20, 2016, Saint Stephen's hosted an educational summit we called ALIVE: Assembling Leaders for an Innovative Vision of Education. The objective was to gather local thought leaders and harvest their ideas about what education could be. We felt that not only would SSES glean valuable information to influence its strategic thinking, but those attending would be able to take back the outcomes of these discussions to share within their communities.

We invited 18 leaders affiliated with area colleges, universities and schools, along with CEOs of businesses, experts in economics, child psychology, social advocacy, the arts, and researchers in science and technology. It was our hope that by bringing together people from a broad variety of disciplines, the discussion would be robust and approach key questions from different angles. Although many were meeting for the first time, there was a common thread binding the group – everyone truly cares about children.

The participants answered an array of questions in an effort to uncover the emerging forces/trends that our young people will face and how education can best be designed to help them thrive. The answers came without hesitation in an hour-long back and forth. Participants were then asked to create the school of the future using



Special thanks to Kim Meile, Doug Van Dyke, Elizabeth Baran, chair of the board's long range planning committee; and Gayle Popp for their work planning, coordinating and carrying out the ALIVE summit.

simple props including popsicle sticks, straws, markers, cotton balls and glue. Through this activity, a variety of ways to present education, construct schools, and encourage student learning emerged.

The outcomes of the Q&A and design sessions uncovered a number of major themes. It is apparent that most feel education has never been in a greater state of change than it is today. Navigating different pathways of learning to meet individual needs is important and the structure of a program influences how much students gain from the experience. It is also clear that technology is a huge influence on how students learn. With so much knowledge at one's fingertips, it is imperative that students are taught skills over content, that environments are created where students learn to problem solve, think critically and globally, and can navigate their own learning rather than just being receivers of information. The classroom should exist beyond four walls of the school building.

There was much discussion about students being able to develop keen emotional intelligence to help them learn to be more adaptable in accepting and including others. Education must become more experiential with a hands-on approach that allows for exploration, and educators need to create a culture of constant creation and re-creation that allows students to collaborate with others, yet be grounded in who they are and what matters to them.

The time the group spent together went quickly, but the conversations were truly ALIVE! In capturing this "blue-sky" thinking about the future of education, we set forth on a path that we hope will eventually lead to a new blueprint for learning – a great goal for the next summit!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jan Pullen

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ON THE COVER

Flags representing the native countries of our many international students line the entrance to the Lower School. Read more about the focus on global education at Saint Stephen's starting on page 10.

Saint Stephen's Magazine

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On Campus

JUNE

Nearly 400 youngsters participated in the 2016 **Saint Stephen's summer camp** program, with roughly 65% of those campers joining us from outside the school community. From chess to surfing, college essay writing to drone building, the unmatched variety of summer programs clearly offered something for everyone.

JULY

Sixteen Saint Stephen's Latin students joined more than 1,600 of their peers from around the country at Indiana University for the **2016 National Junior Classical League Forum**. By the end of the week, SSES student Cassandra Haakman won a National Championship in Novice Level Certamen, and senior MaryAnn Placheril battled to a second-place finish at the Advanced Level. All 16 students earned at least one top-10 finish in the academic or creative competitions in their respective divisions. Special congratulations to SSES teacher Tony Haakman, who coached the Novice Certamen team weekly all summer and notched his first win at the national level.



AUGUST

The inaugural kindergarten class in Lakewood Ranch made the step forward as a group to become Saint Stephen's first-ever first graders at the **East County campus at Harvest United Methodist Church**. The school year opened with 15 students, as a class of eight new kindergarteners kept the momentum moving into 2016.



Advanced Placement scores from the exams 10th-12th graders took in May were released with impressive results. In total, 131 Saint Stephen's students took 271 exams and 92% scored 3, 4 or 5 on at least one exam. In comparison, the percentage of Florida students receiving 3, 4 or 5 was 54%, and globally the rate was 60%. Perhaps even more impressive, 36% of SSES students produced the high score of 5. That's up from 27% in 2015.



The **re-imagined Freddy Falcon** made his debut as we said goodbye to the old bird at a raucous Green & Gold rally during the opening chapel in Hoagland Arena. Freddy has been our beloved mascot for more than 30 years and, thanks to a challenge from the Falcon Athletic Boosters who chipped in half of the funding, the SSES community rose to the occasion and supported an online campaign to give Freddy his much-needed makeover. Saint Stephen's worked with BAM! Mascots in Ontario, Canada to design a custom concept for the new costume.

SEPTEMBER



Four seniors were named semifinalists in the **2017 National Merit Scholarship** program: Alex Siegal, Vanessa Yan, Mary Ann Placheril and Emma Jones. The group is among 16,000 semifinalists nationally. Finalists will be named in the spring for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$33-million. The process of becoming a semifinalist begins

during the junior year of high school when students take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Those named semifinalists are the highest-scoring entrants in each state — fewer than 1% of all U.S. high school seniors. About 90% of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and about half of those will win a National Merit Scholarship. Since 2005, SSES has had 33 finalists. Saint Stephen's also produced three Commended Scholars: Jonathan Boyd, Ian Sharff, and Juliana Rodriguez.

Saint Stephen's supporters once again rose to the occasion during the **2016 Giving Challenge** presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. The school was honored to receive 559 individual gifts totaling more than \$76,000 during the 24-hour online challenge. The number of gifts to Saint Stephen's represented a 26% increase from the previous year.



A crew from **The College Board** visited the Upper School to film in Mr. Patrick Whelan's history classroom. Because of Patrick's national reputation as a mentor in AP World History education and the annual success of SSES students on the exam, Saint Stephen's was chosen as one of three schools in the U.S. to create professional development modules for AP history teachers.

OCTOBER

Senior Indre Zalepuga, editor-in-chief of the SSES student newspaper *The Gauntlet*, was one of 10 students internationally who won a **2016 Youth Honor Award** from *Skipping Stones: A Multicultural Literary Magazine*. The award honors students whose creative work promotes an understanding of cultural diversity and/or appreciation of nature. Indre's article, *Kugelis: An Aroma of Reminiscence*, is published in the magazine's October/December issue.

The final phase of the school's **waterfront upgrade** to host both crew and the marine science program was completed during the first week of October. With the reattachment of the ADA kayak ramp to the brand new crew dock, there is now fully functional access to the McLewis Bayou for our rowing program, kayaks and boats from Freedom Boat Club. Many thanks to the

Sandin Family, Mark and Karen Liebel, and Duncan Seawall for their collaboration on this amazing upgrade of our waterfront facilities.

Mandarin teacher Crystal Zhang was recognized with a "2016 Most Valuable Teacher" award from **The Florida Foreign Language Association**. The Most Valuable Teacher award recognizes foreign language teachers who have experienced professional success in the past year. FFLA members nominate their colleagues.

NOVEMBER

Four Saint Stephen's students were named winners in the annual **Sarasota International Airport Art Show**. Judges reviewed hundreds of submissions from local schools and selected works by Benjamin Kaleta (1st) and Oliver Forrester (2nd) in the kindergarten through second-grade category, Amelia Sabo (3rd) for 3-5 grade, and Connor Davis (1st) in 6-8 grade. The art will be on display at the airport for the next year. In addition, artwork from the following students will be framed and displayed in the ticketing wing: Hailey Mallard, Kaitlyn Liebel, Sophia Creneti, Grace Baxendale, Alexa Griffin, Elle Johnston, Hailey Castellucci, Chase Nicks.



Eighth Grade Social Studies teach Mary Louise Sternberg was named the **Florida History Teacher of the Year** by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York. The award recognizes outstanding K-12 American history teachers across the country and includes a \$1,000 prize, an archive of classroom resources, and recognition at a special ceremony.

Saint Stephen's Academic Teams continue to excel in Manatee County competition and beyond. The Green and Gold teams placed 1-2 at the second and third meets of the season and stood first and third overall in the county as SSES prepared to host the final meet on Dec. 6. Six Falcons were among the top 10 individual scorers. The team also competed in a statewide Quizbowl in Lake City on Nov. 19. Saint Stephen's A finished in third place and Saint Stephen's B finished fourth, making SSES the only school to have two teams reach the semifinals.

Small Boat

Big Idea



Caitlin Lynch



Ann Marie Shields

By David Glaser

Science Department Chair Ann Marie Shields says it has become, “a school puppy – an unofficial mascot that has engaged our imagination.” In reality, the four-foot long vessel looks more like something a toddler might find under the tree on Christmas morning. But this is no children’s toy.

When the Saint Stephen’s mini sailboat “Kestrel” launches into the Atlantic Ocean from the northeast corner of Biscayne National Park off the coast of Miami in January, it will begin a journey that is likely to be a highlight of this school year . . . and the next.

“We’ll watch the tracking and hope to get it back in a year and a half,” Ann Marie said. “That’s pie in the sky, but that’s our goal.”

Don’t let size fool you. The project is much bigger than the small wooden boat at its center.

It began as a collaboration between Saint Stephen’s and two high school students at Maurick College in the Netherlands. Ad Browsers, Maurick’s outreach coordinator, discovered Saint Stephen’s through connections within the marine science community. As faculty advisor to a capstone project in English with students Amber Smeulders and Sabine van den Boer, Browsers and Smeulders opened up a conversation with Ann Marie and SSES 11th grade student Caitlin Lynch.

“What I really love about this collaboration with Saint Stephen’s and the University of Miami is that it is so student-driven,” Bremen said. “For the most part, we’ve been coordinating with students. It is a fantastic way to not only introduce them to the science that will help us protect this planet, but also to give kids the skills they will need to impact their world as adults.”

The progress of the Kestrel, named after a diminutive falcon in a campus-wide contest, is being tracked daily thanks to an on-board GPS unit that pings a satellite monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. A tracking map is available online at www.educationalpassages.com and www.nefsc.noaa.gov/drifter/drift_ep_2016_2.html.

Also aboard are some interesting keepsakes, including Saint Stephen’s marine science t-shirts, information about SSES, Bradenton, and instructions if the boat runs aground. The message asks anyone finding the Kestrel to take it to a nearby school, where it is hoped that the receiving school will contact SSES for additional collaboration to re-launch the boat so that it can continue on its trip around the Atlantic Ocean.

Commercial fishermen and various Coast Guards are aware of the boats, although that doesn’t guarantee success. One miniboat launched from the U.S. traveled to the coast of Africa and was tracked oddly moving inland. It was eventually



“It really was like raising a child. You spend a lot of energy getting it ready to do its own thing.”

– Ann Marie Shields / Science Department Chair

That eventually led to a plan to launch two miniboats – the Kestrel in fall 2016, and a second in April 2017 when the students and their advisor will travel from Holland to visit Saint Stephen’s. To prepare for the first launch (which has twice been delayed by bad weather), Ann Marie and Caitlin set about creating partnerships to make the most of the opportunity.

The Biscayne launch was part of a 35-miniboat regatta, sponsored by Educational Passages. Ann Marie had met Dick Baldwin, founder of Educational Passages, at a National Marine Educators Association conference and connected the dots. The necessity of a south Florida departure site also brought into play a collaboration with Park Ranger Gary Bremen at Biscayne National Park that nicely tied in with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service. And Bremen suggested a partnership with Laura Bracken from the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, which launched a CARTHE drifter as part of the regatta. The drifter studies ocean currents to help predict where oil or other toxins may go in the event of a future spill.

discovered that a local fisherman had picked up the boat and brought it to his home, where it now serves as a coffee table.

“Recently, NOAA and the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance consisting of 29 nations has started collaborating with us because they feel these miniboats amaze people of all ages and can be used to help engage the public to take better care of our oceans,” Baldwin said. “Our mission is to provide an exciting marine science educational program that informs students and adults around the world about the importance of our oceans and encourages a wealth of inter-cultural opportunities.”

At Saint Stephen’s, the Kestrel is expected to serve as an educational tool throughout its journey.

“It really was like raising a child. You spend a lot of energy getting it ready to do its own thing,” Ann Marie said of the preparation to launch. “But this is just a great marriage of our marine science program and our global initiative, with amazing potential for international cooperation between schools and students. This school is looking forward, and it also speaks to the United Nations goal of working toward sustainable human interaction with the ocean.”



All (Heark **BEATING THE ODDS**

By David Glaser

Michael Burch limped to the sideline, listing to one side like a battleship that had taken a torpedo. He dropped to a knee to catch his breath from a helmet in the ribs, but was back on his feet almost instantly and ready to return to the field until athletic trainer Heather Hodges intervened. After a more than two-year journey to this point in time, it wasn't easy to convince Burch that he could wait one more snap.



Watching No. 32 slice through blockers to make a tackle was a sight no one expected to see in 2016. Three years ago, as a freshman, Burch brought hope to a struggling Saint Stephen's football program as a standout linebacker and running back. The 27 tackles for loss he recorded that season still stand as a school best. Head Coach Tod Creneti called Burch, "the piece we were going to build around."

That all changed following a routine doctor visit.

Burch was born with a heart murmur that persisted into his teens and required monitoring but was always considered benign. His 2014 physical, however, identified something different – hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). This condition causes the heart to increase in size, resulting from the thickening of the heart muscle and a disruption in the organ's electrical functions. It typically reveals no symptoms but is the leading cause of sudden death among young athletes. Former NFL players Thomas Herrion, Mitch Frerotte, Gaines Adams, and Derrick Faison; NBA standouts Reggie Lewis, Jason Collier, and Kevin Duckworth; and Loyola Marymount basketball star Hank Gathers all died from HCM.

The diagnosis was unexpected and chilling for Burch and his family.

"When the doctor came in and told us, I couldn't believe it," Michael said. "I remember the look on my parents' faces and it was devastating. Everything just stopped. I felt fine, healthy, no different than ever and that was really the hardest part."

A complete change in lifestyle was required. Any activity that raised Burch's heart rate was now considered potentially fatal. No running, no roller coasters, and – most certainly – no football. The game he had loved since early childhood was taken from him in one afternoon. Saint Stephen's, however, proved to be the perfect haven for Michael, despite the uncertainty of his initial enrollment.

Burch's father, Emanuel, grew up in the Tampa area and was an all-state football player and wrestler at Chamberlain High School. He went on to play collegiately at Davidson and Bethune-Cookman. Now an administrator at a Hillsborough County school, Emanuel admits that the choice to send his son to Saint Stephen's was one that came after plenty of soul searching.

"When it was time to choose a high school for Michael, my wife and I were considering Saint Stephen's and Tampa Jesuit, and I really wanted to send him to Jesuit," Emanuel remembered. "I grew up and played with Terry Rupp (former University of Tampa and Maryland baseball coach, and now Jesuit's athletic director). I felt like because of that relationship he'd be taken care of there. But it was ultimately Michael's choice."

A visit to Saint Stephen's sold the younger Burch and, ironically, a prophetic question from Emanuel made all the difference.

"It's strange to think back now, but I remember my Dad saying to me, 'If football were taken away from you, where can you see yourself going to school?'" Michael said.

"I'm just glad I let him decide," Emanuel chuckled. "He wanted to be part of building something at Saint Stephen's. He's thrived there and everyone has treated him with the same love, warmth and care – whether or not he was playing football. We couldn't be happier."

While Burch continued to succeed in the classroom, Creneti made sure he was never far from the football field. Throughout his sophomore and junior seasons, Michael attended every practice, game and team function as though he was an active member of the squad. He also spent time coaching the middle school team, all the while hoping for another chance to suit up that never figured to be more than just a dream.

Five weeks into Burch's senior season, however, fate intervened once again. A routinely scheduled stress test and MRI indicated that his HCM no longer existed. Emanuel said that no one could readily explain the change over a two-year period, although there is research showing some African-Americans have hearts that appear slightly enlarged compared to their white counterparts. It's possible this could have led to the initial diagnosis. People of faith, the Burches feel there was a level of divine intervention.

"We believe that if his heart had some abnormalities, God healed it," said Emanuel, who broke the news of Michael's healthy diagnosis

over a joyful, tear-filled dinner three days after the MRI. A call to Creneti quickly followed.

"He's just a very special young man and he's easy to root for. He really dug into the classroom. It was hard for him and it was hard for us as coaches. He's a difference-maker for us. We all struggled with his absence from the field, but really enjoyed his presence on the team," Creneti said.

Adding to the drama, Burch's return to the field was scheduled for Friday night, Oct. 7, in a game against local rival Out-of-Door Academy. A hurricane threat delayed that kickoff one more day and Burch finished with four tackles, including two for loss, in the 41-18 victory. After missing the opening five games, Burch proved to be a key player as the Falcons put together the best season in school history to win the Sunshine State Athletic Conference championship with an 11-1 record. He finished his abbreviated senior campaign among the team leaders with nearly 40 tackles.

"I just have to say how grateful I am to everyone at Saint Stephen's. They've been my family through everything and I really don't think it would have been like this if I'd gone anywhere else," Burch said.



Summer/Fall Alumni Events

1. The Alumni Office hosted a fabulous regional alumni reception in New York City in May. A great crew of alumni living or working in Manhattan gathered at Papillion Bistro in midtown. The highlight for many was a visit by current faculty member Bernie Yanelli. Attending were Mike Colonna '96, Russell Eckenrod '97, Gabriella Weiser '98, Justin Weinkle '04, 2006 classmates Doug Baillie & Jenny Pullias, Joy Pullias '08, Ariel Hughes '09, Kathleen Addison '10 and 2011 Falcons Jeremy Perron, Mickey Ingerman, Christina McQuiston and Eddie McQuiston. Alumnus Todd Goergen '90 caught up with Laurie McFeeley and Jim McDaniel by day and Jamie Green (former Falcon and brother of Thomas Green '95) came to reconnect with the green & gold crowd.

2. Saint Stephen's 5th Annual Alumni Happy Hour was once again a nice opportunity for local alumni to meet up and network. Alumni from classes of '92-'13 enjoyed the shabby chic vibe at Beulah, located on Main Street in Sarasota. Among the guests were Matt Seider '92, Daniel Volz '03, Kaleen Nora and Michael Donato from '04, Sarah-Jane Southern '05, Caitlin Davis '06, Jean Morrow '07, 2008 classmates Sarah Clark and Apryl Lynne Faulk and Eric Roberts '14.

3. Homecoming '16 on Sept. 23 was terrific! Gabriella "Gabi" Guinta '10 and fiancé Taylor Simmons visited the Alumni Tent to share upcoming wedding and theater engagement plans. Thomas Freeman '12 was back and Jay Manson '13 (former Falcon football player) covered the game as a journalist for a local paper. Gavin Lee '97 brought his whole family, including his dad who remains a proud Saint Stephen's past parent. Perhaps Steve Horn '95 and wife Beth '98 found themselves wondering if their young Falcons, Charlie '29 and Jack '25, might one day be members of the Homecoming Court, regally presented during halftime festivities in keeping with tradition.

4. The annual Senior Breakfast is always a "hit!" This first celebratory gathering feting the Class of '17 was held on Oct. 19. The seniors were treated to a sumptuous breakfast of French toast, pancakes and superb egg dishes, all homemade by Dr. Pullen and her merry band of senior advisors, administrators and staff (who love this event as much as the students!). Dr. Pullen opens her lovely home for this event each year. Her patio and lush gardens make a magical venue. All dressed up for the occasion, the class grew visibly closer as they realized that their time together is fleeting. The camaraderie among friends was a pleasure to behold.

5. The first installment of the 2016-17 Brown Bag Series; Conversations with Alumni welcomed alumnus Rob Chapman IV '97 back to campus. Rob is an award-winning marine artist, outdoor columnist and tournament-winning angler from Bradenton. He is also the founder/creator of Outdoors360, a venture he hopes will become the premier digital outdoors brand in the world. His focus includes making a positive impact by enhancing the outdoor experience for everyone - from first-timers and weekend warriors to seasoned veterans and professionals. Rob's lessons for the students were diverse, from fishing advice to the use of social media to build a robust business model.

6. Class of '16 alumni were the happy recipients of Halloween packets sent directly to them at college (or at home, for those still local). Upper School students and members of STAT (Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow) enthusiastically packed up goody bags containing treats and notes from current seniors, all in an effort to let our newest alumni know they are greatly missed on campus. Saint Stephen's looks to always be a home away from home for all members of its esteemed alumni family.



A World of Learning

By David Glaser

Enter through the gate leading to the Lower School and you're immediately confronted by a colorful array. Rows of flags flutter gently in the breeze flowing through the atrium that connects the Campus Center to the library. It's an iconic sight and one that represents the global diversity that is part of the culture at Saint Stephen's.

The flags change from year to year to reflect the nationalities of enrolled students, but the commitment to providing a truly "world-class education" never does. While similar phrases at other schools may not be much more than marketing jargon, the commitment to being "world class" is a literal reality at Saint Stephen's.

"Ever since I started here almost 30 years ago, we've had international students, so that part has been consistent. What has changed is the school's response to global education," said Upper School teacher Patrick Whelan. "We've been much more – as teachers – brought into this global education ethic. It's touched every single division and every single department. Instead of being something that we just do because we want to check off a box, I think it informs the decisions that we make."

Today, a visit by Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen to a classroom in Tanzania in 2007 is pointed to as the formal start of the school's global initiative. That trip began an email exchange between the

schools. Two years later, another trip by Dr. Pullen to a school in Guilin, China created a second core connection. There are now five schools considered "sisters" to SSES, with the subsequent additions of connections in Japan, Argentina and Honduras.

In the early days of the initiative, the relatively new video chat technology provided by Skype was utilized to help Saint Stephen's begin to shrink the globe. While it's likely that a visitor to campus today will encounter individual classrooms tuning in daily to interact with students in Canada, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Italy, or elsewhere, the first Skype sessions were much less frequent.

"Every other Tuesday for China and every other Wednesday for Tanzania, we would meet them on Skype," said Spanish teacher Jennifer Hambrick, who has coordinated the global initiative at SSES since 2010. "Our teachers would march their classes across the campus and into the reading room off the library. Someone from technology would be there to push the button and make the connection. They'd do their lesson and then go back to class. It looks a lot different today."



CANADA • PERU • HONDURAS • ARGENTINA • SWEDEN • ITALY • ME



Japanese students visit



Jennifer Hambrick

Saint Stephen's regularly connects with 40 schools in 21 different countries. All seven continents have been in reach, including Antarctica where students interacted with a scientist conducting penguin research. Forty-four SSES teachers have already been active in the initiative. Many of them have created "partner teacher" relationships that have helped them shape their exchanges into truly meaningful academic lessons. They have come to consider their overseas counterparts friends.

The evolution of the program has also grown to include technologies other than Skype. Middle school students recently created a video exchange through YouTube with classes in Kenya, China, Honduras and Sweden.

Their video showed the contents of a common U.S. first aid kit and asked the other schools, "What does your first aid kit look like?" Sixth graders have used an application called Padlet to discuss books they've read with students around the country and the world. Eighth graders utilized Google Drive to share photos with students in Mexico who used the images to create sketches they returned to their Saint Stephen's counterparts. Marine science students have spoken with turtle researchers.

"My class is world cultures, so our global initiative has been great in that not only are the kids studying about it, but they actually get to meet and interact with students from a variety of other countries,"

Intermediate School teacher Chris Valcarcel said. "We've spoken with students from Japan when we were studying about Asia. We've spoken with students from Brazil when we were learning about Latin America and South America. We've talked about colonialism with students in Africa. We've used Google Earth to have international students show us their houses in Russia and China. We do virtual field trips to study the Great Wall of China.

"I've never been part of a school, as a parent or a teacher, that has really gone into the depth that we do at all levels and all grades. It's not uncommon for a Social Studies teacher to connect with other countries, but we do it with math, science, foreign language. I think we do a great job of implementing it across all of our divisions and all of our departments."

International travel is also a key component of the initiative. After many years of virtual visits to Guilin, Hambrick and Mandarin teacher Crystal Zhang took their first group of students to China last summer. Next summer, Hambrick and Whelan will guide a dozen SSES students to Japan on a visit that will include Shibuya Junior and Senior Highs in Tokyo. The school has sent its students to Saint Stephen's in each of the past three years and this will be the first reciprocal trip by SSES. The Dominican Republic and Haiti have also been on the travel list, and Hambrick hopes to add Cordoba, Argentina, where a former Saint Stephen's exchange student is teaching, to the roster in 2018.

"I think it's a unique program because our global education involves so many areas. The conversation in class looks and sounds very different because we have such an international flavor on campus. Global education programs at many schools consist of only travel. While that's great and is an important component, that also can leave it open only to those that have the means to travel," Hambrick said.

"We're also learning together throughout the year. I don't know any other schools that are doing it with the regularity that we are doing it. And it's not just, 'Hi, what's your name?' We're learning science, we're learning math, we're talking about novels, we're learning about poetry together. I think that's very unique to Saint Stephen's."



MEXICO • KAZAKSTAN • JAPAN • CHINA • BRAZIL • TANZANIA • KENYA



USF Conference Institute



SSES in Guilin, China

MOON



From record-setting student-athlete at Saint Stephen's and Annapolis to U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander, alumna Allison Moon has charted her own path to success.

RISING

By Laurie McFeeley

Allison Moon and friends at Forward Operating Base Summerall in Iraq in 2008.



While many enlisted men and women come from families with a history of service in the armed forces, that is not the case for alumna and U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Allison Moon '00. Her parents have no military connection. They met in elementary school in Bradenton and have remained in the community they love ever since.

Allison credits her decision to attend the Naval Academy almost entirely to Judy Southerland, Saint Stephen's Director of Admissions and College Guidance Counselor during her junior year. Allison recalls the college search process at the time included running a program that generated a list of schools that were potentially a good fit for each individual. When it came time for Allison to discuss her list, Mrs. Southerland had just returned from visiting the Naval Academy for a teacher symposium. She had been extremely impressed by the experience and strongly suggested that Allison consider Navy among her possible college destinations. Allison did just that, and eventually applied to three service academies. Just one year later, she was off to her plebe summer in Annapolis as a member of a class that was 15-20 percent female.

Allison came to Saint Stephen's in seventh grade from public school, motivated to make the move after having written what she describes as a mediocre paper, but earning an "A" grade.

Both Allison and her parents wanted more for her academically. Allison's writing at SSES started out under the tutelage of Carol Kuykendall, for whom Allison toiled with her writing only to receive average grades. However, she caught up before long in all subjects, buoyed by Mrs. Kuykendall and teachers like Ann Marie Shields, whose famous lecture about molecules changing states remains ingrained in Allison's memory. She notes her math teacher, Magnus Maccow, had an uncanny way of knowing what material his students failed to grasp, and worked hard to help them overcome challenges. And, like many alumni, Allison recalls William "Doc" Townsley as inspirational in his biology classes.

At the Naval Academy and in Navy work post-college, excellent physical fitness remains a priority for Allison. While on Ford Island in Hawaii attending SCUBA school, Allison recalls doing push-ups next to strafing marks in the old concrete, made during Japanese attacks. She says it was hard to complain about physical pain when staring at stark reminders of the start of WWII, and the great loss of life that ensued.

Growing up, Allison was always fit and participated in sports from an early age. She ran cross country for six years and swam competitively for a club. She hoped to continue swimming in high school, but found in ninth grade that Saint Stephen's didn't sponsor a competitive team. The custom at the time was for SSES swimmers to get county approval and train/swim at

Manatee High School. But when Allison applied via the usual channels, she was refused – leaving her unable to participate in the sport she loved.

Thankfully, her mom stepped up and got certified to become the coach of record at Saint Stephen's. She eventually directed the swimming program throughout Allison's high school career and beyond. The Moon family donated the swim record board that hangs in the Upper School today. As a Falcon, Allison was a standout and still holds the school mark in the 100-meter breast stroke. She went on to an impressive career at the Naval Academy, winning nine Patriot League Championship relay titles, tying her for the most in school history. Allison finished as a three-time all-conference selection, the 2004 Patriot League Scholar-Athlete of the Year, and holder of relay records in the 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, and 400 freestyle.



Photo courtesy Navy Athletic Department

In reminiscing about her Falcon days, Allison recounts the comical nature of having both her French and calculus classes in what was then a strip mall on Manatee Avenue. She says studying amid ladies getting their hair done was indeed a hoot. She also fondly recalls a Falcon friend uncovering the date of the annual "Fall-Out" day, when students are surprised with a trip to the beach in lieu of attending classes. The sleuth, who remains nameless, cleverly called local pizzerias to uncover

the date the school had arranged for a large pizza delivery.

After the Naval Academy, Allison went to Navy Explosive Ordnance School and became an EOD officer/technician. EOD technicians' missions take them to all environments, every climate, in every part of the world. Allison's team had many assets at their disposal for missions, including open and closed-circuit scuba and surface-supplied diving rigs, parachute insertion from fixed-wing and fast-rope, rappelling and Special Purpose Insertion Extraction from rotary aircraft. When stationed in locations including Iraq, Allison and her team assessed dangerous situations and gathered evidence to send to the lab. She performed lab work herself while in Afghanistan. These investigations had an intriguing "who-dunnit" nature Allison relished, but she was most gratified in helping to ensure the safety of people in dangerous wartime environments.

Allison is pursuing her master's degree in systems engineering at night school and had her first child in September. She worked up until the baby's arrival, with her job centered on the Harpoon Missile project and oversight of the installation of the missile on the combat ship U.S.S. Coronado. Saint Stephen's is exceptionally proud to call LCDR Allison Moon an alumna, and our country is lucky to have such a bright and dedicated patriot looking out for us in both war and peacetime.

Philanthropy Focus...

Endowment Fund

Saint Stephen's will turn 50 years old in the academic year 2020-21. The school has come far since its founding in 1970 by a group of 25 visionary families, and has managed its limited resources well to emerge as a leading college preparatory school that is respected by the local, national and international academic communities. Its students are routinely accepted into top-tier colleges and universities.

With almost no endowment throughout most of its history, and a limited pool of alumni (now 2,497), the school has grown its programs and facilities to create a rare institution where learning goes beyond the classroom, teachers are highly motivated, and parents are actively involved. Over the years, Saint Stephen's has invested in campus facilities, adding a new high school complex, a new middle school, a multi-sport, state-of-the-art athletic complex and, most recently, the Marine Science Center.

These are surely achievements to be proud of, but the key to the school's long-term financial sustainability is the need to aggressively grow its endowment. This is the ideal time to capitalize on the impact of the legacy gift received in 2012-13 from Dr. Betty O'Dell, which has grown the school's endowment to more than \$5.5-million. The fund is now becoming an impactful endowment, providing \$137,500 per year at an assumed conservative payout rate. This payout allows for the long term growth of the fund, including administration expenses and inflation.

Each additional gift of \$1-million can impact the school's annual program by \$25,000 – providing funding to support the following areas:

Teaching and Learning: Endow a programmatic area – whether it's an academic discipline like English or history, a co-curricular program such as athletics or the arts, or a multidisciplinary program like global connections. Assist in the professional development of Saint Stephen's teachers at a level that helps them maintain their current position of leadership around the state and across the country.

Campus and Master Plan: Over the past 10 years, campus facilities have been transformed through the generosity of donors and their unprecedented leadership gifts. The challenge going forward is to ensure and sustain these extraordinary facilities for future generations of students, teachers and families. A large and growing endowment can meet this challenge, freeing up the school to focus on necessary capital improvements and programs that will sustain the ongoing excellence and position of leadership Saint Stephen's enjoys today.

Student Financial Support: Affordability and access are priorities for Saint Stephen's as they are for all independent schools. SSES has long desired and labored to provide an unparalleled experience for as many students as possible. Need-based

financial aid is available for deserving students who contribute in meaningful ways to the school community. Currently, \$35,000 of the more than \$1-million in financial aid provided annually comes from the endowment. Each \$1-million in new endowment funds substantially enhances the effort to support deserving families.

After much consideration, the school's Endowment Trustees recommended to the Board of Trustees that Saint Stephen's should strive to nearly double its endowment to \$10-million by the Golden Anniversary year in 2020. Over the next five years, there is an extraordinary opportunity to leverage Dr. O'Dell's and the Turner family's visionary gifts into a transformative event for the school. Growing the endowment to a level exceeding \$10-million will provide a base from which the next immediate generation will surely thrive. If Saint Stephen's succeeds in this initiative, the legacy of this generation of leaders will truly be described as "visionary" and will be similarly honored in 2070 when the school's 100th Anniversary is celebrated!

Saint Stephen's Falcon Legacy Society

A gift to the Saint Stephen's endowment endures. Leaving a gift to the endowment fund in your will ensures the stability of the school for generations. For many parents, grandparents, alumni and friends of Saint Stephen's, a bequest is the easiest way to make a gift. Utilizing your will or other estate planning vehicles, you can name Saint Stephen's as the beneficiary of as much of your estate as you like.

Benefits of bequests:

- Make a gift that costs you nothing during your lifetime
- Save on federal estate taxes
- Create a fund named for you or someone you wish to honor
- Make a gift that leaves your cash flow and current financial structure unchanged

For more information about the Falcon Legacy Society, please contact Director of Endowment Rose Carlson at RCarlson@saintstephens.org or call (941) 746-2121 ext. 1601.

Alumni Class Notes

1980s

Charles "Chip" Sanford '89 started singing at a young age in his church choir and graduated to rock bands and other music groups in high school. After receiving a bachelor's degree at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. (where he concentrated on vocal studies and began singing as a tenor), he turned his focus to vocal pedagogy and performance while working towards his music degree at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J. Charles became a baritone and has performed with the New Jersey Opera Festival, the Sarasota Opera, Orlando Opera, Lyric Opera Cleveland and Central City Opera. Just a few of his leading roles include Die Fledermaus, La Boheme, La Cantarina and Amahl and the Night Visitors. His oratorio performances as a soloist have included Handel's Messiah and Bach's Magnificat and Christmas Oratorio.

1990s



Claudia "Dia" Essers was a student at Saint Stephen's in 1991. She returned as a surrogate mom of sorts in 1994, when her brother Bastian attended SSES.

When Dia and her father arrived at the school in '91 to meet with former Admission Director Judy Southerland, they were under the impression that

Saint Stephen's was a boarding school. What a shock to find that wasn't the case after coming to the school from Germany on the recommendation of dear friends. But, after one phone call, Mrs. Kris Murphy (mother of Tara Murphy '94) walked into the office just a short time later and greeted Dia with, "Hello, I'm your new Mom!" And she was just that for the next four months.

Dia had to repeat ninth grade at SSES to polish her English. She says teachers who were around at the time likely recall her barely speaking in the early part of her stay. It took time, but Dia picked up English and jokes that those same teachers probably longed for those quieter times before Dia became comfortable with the language.

Dia says Saint Stephen's teachers, students and her host family all devoted much time and energy teaching her English, and proper pronunciation. She went on to study in Chicago, work in Australia and Norway, and now teaches English in Germany.

Dia wants all at Saint Stephen's to know what is in her heart: "It would have not been possible without you. THANK YOU!"

Blair Dalton Bloomston '98 and husband Shane welcomed baby boy No. 2 on Oct. 4. Kyle Benjamin "Kirby" is now part of a dynamic duo with adorable brother Beau.

Congratulations to alumni brothers **Brandon Silverman** '98 and **Derek Silverman** '05 on Facebook's acquisition of their company CrowdTangle. The news broke on Nov. 11. Brandon is co-founder and CEO of Crowdtangle, formed in 2011. CrowdTangle tracks how links are shared on social media. Publishers use the service to discover stories that matter, measure social performance and identify influencers. It's used by newspapers, television stations, digital media outlets, investigative journalists, entertainment companies, sports teams and nonprofits all over the world. Hundreds of newsrooms and thousands of journalists use the tool every day.

Calusa Brewing Company in Sarasota started out as a three-man operation consisting of business partners **Victor Falck** '99, **Geordie Rauch** '99, and head brewer **Jason Thompson**. Vic and Geordie were Saint Stephen's classmates and grew up together on Longboat Key. Vic has an MBA from University of South Florida. Calusa Brewing Company is creating its own unique brand that represents who Vic and Geordie are, as well as incorporating the heritage of the Suncoast. They chose the Calusa tribe name because they wanted something that represented their brand and ties it to the history of the area.

2000s



"She's in the Army now!" **Jessica Casciola** '00 left her job as a public defender in Manatee County and has joined the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG), the legal branch of the military. She completed her mandatory six-week basic training at Fort Benning, Ga. in November and moved on to Charlottesville, Vir. for her Judge Advocate Officer basic training. Jessica is direct commissioning as a first lieutenant in the Army Reserves. After completing JAG school, she will be a Judge Advocate General for the United States Army Reserve Corp where she'll defend soldiers accused of violating the United States Code of Military Justice.

Lindsey Clark-Ryan '00 is an assistant professor of art at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. where she teaches printmaking, drawing and interdisciplinary studio art courses. She earned her B.F.A. at Washington University in St. Louis and a M.F.A. at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Lindsey's art has been exhibited nationally and internationally and she routinely participates in site-specific residency programs to expand her studio process.

Recently, Lindsey was an artist-in-residence at the Ayatana Artistic Research Program in Canada and at the Elsewhere living museum in Greensboro, N.C.



Featured alumna **Allison Moon '00** and husband James Whitlow (above) welcomed their first child, a son, three weeks early. James Koston Moon arrived on Aug. 25, ready to meet the world!

Kip Carbone '00 received a computer science degree from Ringling College of Art and Design and is currently a senior environment artist and team leader at Armature Studio in Austin, Texas. Kip seeks to elevate the art found in video games, "allowing it to connect us to an emotion and appeal to our intellect." Each year, an exhibition called Into The Pixel is held celebrating the work of professional video game artists. It is a big honor to have art selected and Kip was one of the 2016 honorees. His work was on display from June 14-16 at the L.A. Convention Centre.

Parks Robinson '00 and wife Kate welcomed Brendan Parks Robinson, Jr. on Sept. 1. The family resides in Bradenton. Parks and her father started Fit2Run in 2006, a company that continues to grow with multiple locations and prides itself on its strong community involvement. Fit2Run was voted "Best Running Shop" in the Southeast by Competitor Magazine readers.



Megan Galizia '01 married Darby Kealey in a stunning outdoor wedding at Dana-Powers House in Nipomo, Calif. on Oct. 1. The reception was in the venue's a charming old barn replete with crystal chandeliers and incredible ambiance.

Bryant Kirkland '03 received his PhD in classics from Yale University in May. He is delighted to report that this fall, he joined the faculty of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio as Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics for the academic years 2016-2018.

Kudos to **Vanessa Casciola '04** upon successfully defending her dissertation entitled, Preservice Teachers Engaged In Facilitated Learning Community To Explore Critical Literacy and receiving her PhD from the University of South Florida in May. More congratulations are in order as Vanessa wed Scott Marasco on July 16 in a beautiful ceremony at the Ritz-Carlton in Sarasota.



Stunning bride **Vanessa Casciola Marasco '04** flanked above by sisters **Melissa '05** and **Jessica '00**.

Christie Eastman '04 received her Master of Science from the University of Florida Graduate Department of Periodontics in May. Dr. Eastman has joined her father, Dr. Lindsay Eastman, in his practice with offices in Bradenton and Lakewood Ranch.



Brittany Scroggins '05 and Joe Dickerson (above) were married on Nov. 5 at First Presbyterian Church in Bradenton. Their reception followed at Pier 22. Many SSES alumni were on hand to celebrate with the couple. Brittany and Joe honeymooned at Riviera Maya, Mexico where they both relaxed and explored the Yucatan Peninsula's local cenotes and Mayan ruins.

Amaris Monosiet Baumgard '05 and husband Joshua welcomed a third son on Nov. 1. Samuel Baumgard joins sweet brothers Raphael and Gabriel and the family lives in Sarasota.

Granger Beaton '05 married Candice Colon on Aug. 20 at the beautiful Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego. Granger has put his amazing golf skills and coaching experience to work at Blast Motion, a leader in sports motion capture technology.

Dr. Jennifer Moscoso Conde '05 participated in an international dermatology elective in Gabarone, Botswana. Calling the experience unforgettable and fulfilling, Jennifer had a wonderful time working with the local medical students from University of Botswana and teaching them about dermatology. She finished her travels with an African adventure before returning to the U.S.



Wishing happiness always to **Melissa Casciola** '05 on her marriage to Neal Shelton on April 30. The wedding was held overlooking the shores of Lake Juliana in Auburndale at Town Manor, a historic and grand old home that now serves as a charming bed and breakfast.

Josh Whitaker '06 married Christine Denning Whitaker on Oct. 4, 2014. Josh received a B.S. in mathematics at Birmingham-Southern College in 2010 and earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering at the University of Alabama in '13. Josh and Christine welcomed daughter Payton on June 8. The family recently moved back to Florida after living in Alabama, where Josh worked as a distribution engineer at Alabama Power.

Paul Klein '07 is a staff accountant providing accounting and tax services at Love Bailey & Associates in Laurens, S.C. Paul graduated from Presbyterian College with an accounting degree and was a member of the men's soccer team. Paul attends graduate school, working towards his master's in taxation while fulfilling requirements to obtain his CPA license. Paul is a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church where he and Mary Beth Carlson were married on Dec. 19, 2015.

Congratulations to **Lindsey LaValliere** '07 on passing her VTNE boards (American Association of Veterinary State Boards) and on her becoming a Certified Veterinary Technician.

Mark Oljaca '07 lives in New York and works as a tennis and mental toughness coach at John McEnroe Tennis Academy. At SSES, Mark was tennis team captain during his junior and senior years and team MVP. He was selected to the All-Area team, ranked No. 69 in the UTSA Under 18 National Ranking and was ranked No. 15 in the state of Florida. He played tennis in college for the USF Bulls.

Andrew Persson '08 was a lifer at Saint Stephen's with the exception of pre-kindergarten and the 8th grade. He writes, "My Saint Stephen's classroom education prepared me for a smooth transition into the Union College Engineering program, and the diversity of the arts program has kept my passions and creativity alive. Today, I build dreams. I work with a team of artisans and designers to bring stage shows to life." As the Sales Engineer at Scenic Solutions, based in West Carrollton, Ohio, Andrew designs and provides solutions to lighting, rigging, and scenic dilemmas for organizations and venues of all sizes.

2010s

Joining the ranks of married alumni couples are former SSES classmates **Morgan Johnson** and **Cameron Allen** '10. The Allen's were married on Nov. 12 at the Johnson home. Their reception immediately followed at the scenic Riverhouse Reef & Grill. Morgan works at HSN where she is an Assistant Brand Manager under the Electronics & Culinary Team. Cameron is an accountant at NDC Construction Company in Bradenton.

Gabriella "Gabi" Quinta '10 and her fiancé Taylor Simmons will be performing their second production together as the iconic Peter Pan and Wendy. They'll perform at Freefall Theatre in Saint Petersburg from Dec. 10, 2016 through Jan. 29, 2017.



Best wishes go out to **Ann Marie "Annie" Berdusco** '11 on her September engagement to Philip Gough.

Aiste Zalepuga '12 graduated from Yale University last spring and is now at Oxford in England pursuing her master's in law, media and technology. She remains a lover of learning and a world traveler.

Elizabeth Djinis '12 graduated from Duke University in May and headed for New York City where she participated in The New York Student Journalism Institute. During the program, students are working journalists supervised by reporters and editors from The New York Times. Students cover actual events in New York City. Opportunities include reporting, copy editing, still photography, web production, newspaper page design, video journalism and interactive graphics and data journalism.

Jena Pirozzolo '12 is a senior at Ringling College of Art and Design majoring in photography and digital media with a minor in business of art and design. She enjoys her studies and has had a variety of internships including working with Porsche and Audi. She was the photographer for the cover of Porsche Profile and her internship with SRQ Magazine resulted in some of her work being published. Jenna's goal is to specialize in the entertainment side of photography and digital media in film production, television or magazines.

This past year, **Josh Kezar** '12 served as a Centennial Volunteer Ambassador with the National Park Service at Big Cypress National Preserve. From May '15 - May '16, Josh doubled the number of annual volunteers, recruited, planned, and coordinated seven university Alternative Breaks trips and quadrupled the preserve's social media presence and engagement. From May through July last summer, Josh worked with the national organization Break Away, the Alternative Breaks Connection, hosting four week-long national conferences from Atlanta to northwest Idaho. Josh returned to SMU this fall to complete his senior year.

Carlos Montero '12 anticipates receiving his bachelor's degree in Allied Health from the University of Tampa in May '17. The major's primary focus is core biology and chemistry studies, but it also incorporates classes pertaining to nutrition, exercise, motor development, prevention of injury and overall well-being.

Griffin Quinta '12 (University of Tampa) and **Kyle Whelan (Vassar)** '12 have moved to Seattle where they are teaching at the same school.

The State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota (SCF) chapter of Delta Psi Omega, the national theatre honorary fraternity for community colleges, held its 50th annual Awards Banquet on stage at SCF's David S. and Anne V. Howard Studio Theatre on May 17. The Bernie Awards, named in honor of former theatre professor M. Bernice Pepke, are given to the best theatre students at the end of the academic year. Among the winners was **Nicole Freij** '13, who won in the category of Outstanding Technical Achievement.

Justin Gregorius '14 has co-founded an application offered in the iTunes App Store as of July. StoryTime, with its novel READwithME component, is perfect for parents who travel, grandparents living far from their grandchildren, divorced parents who don't live full-time with their children . . . anyone who loves reading with a child, but can't always be in the same location as the little one. The StoryTime App contains an extensive database of children's books and purchasers subscribe to the library and select a book to share with a child, wherever he or she may be. The reader and the child can then both see one another and view/turn the pages of the book simultaneously, creating an experience akin to being in the same room and reading aloud together. StoryTime was conceived and developed by Boston College junior Justin and his brother. Hat's off to the duo on bringing to market a brilliant and heart-warming innovation.

Austin Siegel '14, a junior at Northwestern University, was recently awarded a Jim Murray Memorial Foundation Scholarship. The Foundation was created in 1999 to perpetuate Los Angeles Times sportswriter Jim Murray's legacy and his love for and dedication to his extraordinary career in journalism. To date, the Foundation has awarded 93 \$5,000 scholarships to talented student journalists. Austin submitted an essay to a nationwide competition open to second and third year undergraduate journalism students and was among the winners selected by a panel of nationally known journalists. Initially, only the top 15 journalism schools in the nation were invited to participate in the student essay competition. That number has grown to 32 over the past 15 years.

Natalie Pleyerova '15 is making a name for herself playing golf for Queens University of Charlotte, N.C. She garnered a first place finish individually after totaling a 149 (72-77) when the women's golf team grabbed its first win of the season at the Anderson Invitational in September. She then led the Royals at the Starmount Forest Fall Classic in October. Her nine birdies that day tied her for first in that category.



Natalie Pleyerova (center) and her Queens University teammates at the Anderson Invitational



Monday, December 26
10:30 a.m. Warm-up/11 a.m. Game

Registration for players & fans:
www.saintstephens.org/alumnisoccer16



Monday, December 26 7-9 p.m.
Motorworks Brewing, 1014 9th St. W, Bradenton
Questions? Contact lmcfeeley@saintstephens.org

Legends of the Fall

Vanessa Yan
Golf

Letherio Jones
Football

Andrew Csubak
Cross Country



Photo credit: Gary Sweetman

A little more than six minutes of football in Oviedo on Nov. 19 provided a storybook ending to not only a record-setting campaign for the 2016 gridiron Falcons, but to an entire fall athletic season at Saint Stephen's.

One year earlier on the same field at The Master's Academy, the Falcons had been humbled in a shutout loss to Lakeland Santa Fe Catholic in their first-ever trip to the Sunshine State Athletic Conference Championship Game. The second visit appeared to be headed in the same direction until the Falcons scored three touchdowns in a span of 6:02 of the fourth quarter, turning a 14-point deficit into a 21-14 victory over Vero Beach Saint Edward's School.

The win earned Saint Stephen's its first independent state football title and capped a thrilling 11-1 season. Heroes were everywhere.

Junior quarterback **Fred Billy**, Most Valuable Player of the championship game, became the school's career passing and rushing leader. Junior running back **Chase Brown** ran for more yards (1,416) than any other prep player in the county. Senior receiver **Peyton Vining** was among the area's best with 20 receptions for more than 400 yards, including a leaping grab against Saint Edward's that kept the Falcons' hopes alive. Senior defensive back **Letherio Jones** registered 106 tackles, giving him 200 over the past two seasons to lead the team.

"When people talk about Saint Stephen's, there's a lot to talk about," Head Coach Tod Creneti said following the SSAC title game. "It's a tremendous place academically. We do a lot of things with the arts. We come to compete on the football field and come to compete as athletes, as well. That's part of the story."

And it was a story of unprecedented success. Of the eight varsity teams competing in the fall, five won district titles, three were regional champions, and six qualified to compete at their respective state championships.

The boys golf team completed an undefeated regular season in dominating fashion, winning by an average of nearly 22 strokes per match. They then went on to win their sixth overall district championship, third consecutive and fifth overall regional championship, and finish third at the state tournament. The Falcons also captured the Manatee County Golf Championship for the first time, with junior **Ryan Kinkead** taking the individual title. Junior **Massimo Mbetse** shot 69 to take medalist honors at the regional tournament in Fort Myers for a team that looks primed for the future.



Falcons Ryan Kinkead and David Gao with golf legend Jack Nicklaus at the state tournament.

On the girls side, the Falcons won their fifth consecutive district and regional titles and finished 13th at the state tournament. Senior **Vanessa Yan** paced the team all season to finish her stellar career as one of the best all-time at Saint Stephen's. She shot 72 to finish second at the regional and posted her third straight top-30 individual finish at state. The regular season included lopsided tri-match victories against Braden River and Cardinal Mooney (by 37 strokes) and Manatee and Out of Door (by 36 strokes).

The cross country teams made school history by winning district championships for the first time in both boys and girls meets. They then followed that up by finishing second (boys) and sixth (girls) at the regional run to qualify for the state championships. The Falcons eventually placed 17th (boys) and 19th (girls) in Tallahassee. Senior **Andrew Csubak** was a standout throughout the season and became the first Falcon to win two events in the same campaign, leading the pack across the finish line at two of the biggest meets of the year – the Venice Invitational and the District Championship.

Under first year Head Coach Jeff Logsdon, boys swimming broke four school records and qualified for the state meet in two individual events and one relay. The Falcons were also named state Academic Team Champions with a combined GPA of 3.785.

Early Signings

Three Saint Stephen's student-athletes signed National Letters of Intent in November to compete at the collegiate level:



MaryAnn Rompf - tennis
University of Wisconsin



Emily Hiebner - lacrosse
University of Montevallo



David Gao - golf
Rollins College



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THE DATE
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5:00 P.M.**

