

SAINT STEPHEN'S

Volume 7 Issue Two Spring/Summer 2017



FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL'S DESK . . .

The comment is often made that Saint Stephen's is truly a family. Being a family means that everyone works towards common goals, members provide care and support to one another, and when things become difficult, everyone pitches in to make things better.

I see this play out in a variety of ways throughout the school year. I watch students support one another in the classroom and on the playing fields. I see it when families meet for the first time; then one invites the other to a school event. They get to know each other better and the next thing I learn is that they are taking family vacations together.

During the year, when there is an activity or event at school, it's not unusual for parents to parade into Jen Sabo's office in the Campus Center to drop off food, supplies for a luncheon, or sit down at her table to stuff envelopes or make centerpieces. So many people have rallied this year to support Tammy O'Dell as she has struggled once again with cancer. I know how much it meant to Tammy when all the students in the Intermediate School came up with a project to raise money. They wanted to surprise her with something nice, since she had been dealing with horrible cancer treatments. This summer, Tammy will be able to take her boys out west for a trip that has been on her bucket list. We are so fortunate to have this family-like culture. We don't take it for granted. This kind of spirit doesn't happen everywhere and we are thankful to have "it" at Saint Stephen's.

As the seniors and their parents enjoyed the festivities of Senior Dinner, Baccalaureate and Graduation, this idea of "family" came up often. I listened to them talk about how the teachers really knew the students and spent time with them – how they cared not only about their success with the curriculum but also their personal growth. For me, I've seen many of the seniors grow up before my eyes and I've often felt like mother-hen to all of them. I wanted them to always be the best they could be.

When Father Nathan, Alumni Director Laurie McFeeley, and I gathered the Forever Falcons or "Lifers" for a luncheon before graduation, I could only smile as I listened to each of the 16 share memories from their many years at Saint Stephen's. They didn't discuss the academic lessons they had received. They talked about life experiences they had shared and what it was like being there for one another. Talking with others who came after Kindergarten from all over the country or from around the world about their Saint Stephen's experience, they had that same feeling as the Forever Falcons – they greatly appreciated each other.

Graduation speaker Michael Schick, Class of 2007, not only commented during his Commencement address that, "You (graduates) should feel pretty good about the value of a Saint Stephen's education, because if you can go from the middle of the pack (at SSES) to valedictorian at MIT, you're in pretty good hands here," but it was clear that he was happy to come back home. Saint Stephen's played a special role in his life because of the people at the school. He said that his best friends today are still those he met while at Saint Stephen's.

Seeing 78 amazing young people receive their diplomas, we are very proud of all of the amazing accolades this class achieved:

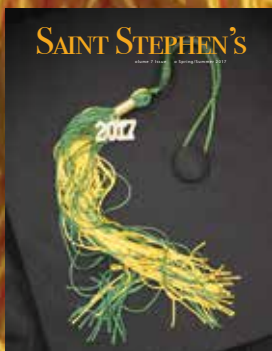
- Forty-seven seniors who identified a first-choice college were accepted to that college
- Graduates were accepted at 7 of the 8 Ivy League schools and 8 of the 20 most selective U.S. colleges
- Six graduates will play collegiate sports, including football, golf and tennis
- Four graduates were named National Merit Scholarship finalists – raising the total to 37 at Saint Stephen's since 2005 – and two received the scholarship award
- Vanessa Yan was named a 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholar – one of only 161 nationwide
- Graduates were offered more than \$7-million in merit-based aid; two grads received their college's top merit scholarship

And yet, the conversation at the close of graduation wasn't about those accomplishments at all, it was about how they would miss being at Saint Stephen's every day, and being part of such a wonderful family.



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ON THE COVER

On May 19, 78 graduates walked across the stage at Harvest United Methodist Church in Lakewood Ranch to collect their diplomas. It was the 43rd commencement ceremony in Saint Stephen's history.

Saint Stephen's Magazine

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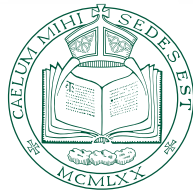
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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2017

ARTEMIY ANDREY	NICOLAS ESPARZA	MATTHEW NOTA	ERIC VERBEKE
GRACE BARNES	CALEB EYRE	NICHOLAS PABON	EMA VIACKOVA
ALEXA BARONCELLI	DARIA FOMINA	THOMAS PIERCE	ADAM VILIMOVSKY
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ANDREW CSUBAK	GUOLIANG LU	GRANT SOMERVILLE	INDRE ZALEPUGA
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DANIEL EISENMAN	JORDON MURRELL	JACOB THODAL-NESS	
KHASHAYAR ESHAGHI	CARSON NEEVES	WILLIEM VACEK	

On Campus

JANUARY



■ The true story of an English slave trader whose life-changing experience inspired him to write the hymn "Amazing Grace" was the subject of the winning play written by SSES junior Luke Valadie in **Theatre Odyssey's Fifth Annual Student Ten-Minute Playwriting Festival** at State College of Florida. Valadie received a \$500 scholarship from Theatre Odyssey and a plaque for Best Play. The eight plays selected for production were among more than 30 received from area students. Including Valadie's, six of those eight plays were penned by Saint Stephen's students: "The Lies in a Perfect Life" by Guinevere Pijor; "Tomorrow" by Pierce Carnell; "The Price of Friendship" by Demetrius Davis and Fred Billy; "The Scientist" by Kassandra Hackman; and "The Battle" by Emily D'Amico.



■ Senior Indre Zalepuga traveled to London to interview the **Lithuanian ambassador to the U.K** for her website, Baltic Bridge (<http://www.balticbridge.info/>), a resource designed to preserve the culture and history of Lithuania. Zalepuga also took the opportunity to introduce the SSES multi-lingual magazine *The View*, which she co-founded, to Ambassador Asta Skaisgirytė

■ SSES placed fourth overall at the **regional math competition** at King High in Tampa. The Statistics team of Vanessa Yan, Ben Zhang, Jerry Wang, and Jack Lu took first place. Yan (2), Wang (6) and Ben Schnur (8) all finished in the top 10 individually.

FEBRUARY

■ Saint Stephen's has always been very proud of its beautiful, scenic campus and was honored to be nominated for a **"Green Schools Award"** from Keep Manatee Beautiful. The nomination noted the school's tree planting and efforts in marine science as special highlights.



■ Middle School Social Studies teacher Mary Louise Sternberg and Dr. Pullen welcomed to campus Lynne Jackson, the **great-great granddaughter of Dred Scott**. Jackson helped students learn more about this landmark slavery case

that reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1857 and is considered one of the catalysts of the Civil War.

■ Middle school mathematicians from schools all around the area traveled to Saint Stephen's for the annual **MathCounts** competition. Saint Stephen's was proud to host for the second straight year.



■ SSES hosted students from **Shibuya High School in Tokyo**. The students offered presentations about Japanese customs and culture in various classrooms,

attended chapel, spent time with their host families, and had a fun kayak adventure on the McLewis Bayou. This is the third year that Saint Stephen's has welcomed the students. A group of Falcons made a return trip to Japan in May.

MARCH



■ The Tampa Bay Business Journal/ Niche.com ranked Saint Stephen's the **No. 3 private K-12 school** in the entire Tampa Bay area. Niche assessed 1,594 private schools throughout the country that offer

grades K-12 by looking at multiple metrics including test scores, percentage of seniors who go on to college, student-teacher ratio, and feedback from parents and students. Saint Stephen's was given an A+ ranking and was listed behind only Tampa's Berkeley Prep and Shorecrest Prep in St. Peterburg in the greater Tampa Bay area.



■ Saint Stephen's celebrated the official opening of its **Confucius Classroom**, a collaboration with the University of South Florida Confucius Institute in Tampa. The partnership provides access to educational resources and funding to enhance the Mandarin language programs at Saint Stephen's. SSES joins Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School in St. Petersburg, Pineview School of Sarasota, and Hillsborough County Schools among the Tampa Bay area Confucius Classrooms. Representatives from the USF Confucius Institute were on hand for a program of song, dance, and a martial arts exhibition that was preceded by the unveiling of a special plaque signifying SSES as a program partner.

■ The Falcon Athletic Boosters' **Game Changers Tents & Turf Tailgate Party** was one of the most fun and energetic events ever held on campus and raised more than \$70,000 in support of Falcon Athletics. In just five years, net proceeds totaling more than \$200,000 have been used to help fund projects such as the Intermediate School outdoor basketball courts, playground at the Moore Athletic Complex, total renovation of Hoagland Arena and more.



■ Junior Charlie Price was nominated for the Straz Center's **Broadway Star of the Future Awards Showcase** in the category of "Outstanding Supporting Role" for his portrayal of Scar in the SSES production of *The Lion King Jr.* The Straz Center in Tampa presents this awards showcase annually to honor area high school musical theater programs and students. The event features musical numbers representing the best of Tampa Bay area high school productions. Awards are presented in multiple

categories including Best Actor and Actress winners who will represent the Straz Center in the 2017 National High School Musical Theatre Awards, "The Jimmys," in New York City during June.



■ Saint Stephen's seniors Jonathan Boyd and Ian Scharff met with former **President of Mexico Felipe Calderon** prior to his talk at the Van Wezel as part of the Ringling College Library Association Lecture Series.

■ Social Studies Chair Patrick Whelan traveled to Morocco through a fellowship sponsored by **Teachers for Global Classrooms**, with the backing of the U.S. State Department. He



visited various schools, splitting time between the capital Rabat and Guelmim, a town near Western Sahara in the south. Whelan was hosted by Ayoub EL Idrissi, an English teacher in a Moroccan school. He chronicled his visit in an online blog at: <http://globalroadstomorocco.blogspot.com/>

■ Senior Tanner Wade, a first-year photography student, had his work, "Shadows," selected for display at the **Embracing Our Differences** international art exhibit at Island Park on the Sarasota bay front. There were 10,761 submissions from 115 countries, 48 states and 204 schools. In describing "Shadows," Wade said: Depression isn't always something you can see coming. Sometimes it can creep up on you like a shadow. What's best is that you look to the future, keep moving forward and remember that you're not alone. What's best for others is if they are willing to be there for you.

■ Fourteen Upper School students were inducted into the prestigious **Cum Laude Society**, recognizing their academic achievements and more. Included were seniors Bernie Chajkowski, Yawen Qiu, Julia Woodson, Kristyn Weaver, Mpho Cho, Kash Eshaghi and Indre Zalepuga; and juniors Luke Valadie, Hayes Chatham, Henry Howell, Emma Lexhed, Sarah Glaser, Meredith Pratt and Gaby Pung.

■ Students in the Intermediate and Middle schools were the winners of the annual **Americanism Essay Contest** sponsored by the Bradenton Elks Lodge #1511. Each student wrote an essay of no more than 300 words on the topic of "Why Is It Important to Vote?" The essays were judged on originality, development of theme, and mechanics of writing by a team of retired educators who are members of the Lodge. All winners receive a monetary award and plaque. The fifth grade winners were Yakov Ibragimov (first place), Lyia Lester (second), and Grey Klein (third). Middle school winners were Anusha Singh (first), Emma Craig (second) and McKenna Gunn (third).



■ A group of students and teachers from one of Saint Stephen's sister schools – **Holy Trinity Episcopal School in La Ceiba, Honduras** – spent a week on campus while also enjoying the hospitality of their Saint Stephen's host families.

APRIL



■ Led by five SSES students, the Manatee Academic Team represented the county in Orlando at the state's official academic competition – the **Commissioner's Academic Challenge** sponsored by the Florida Department of Education. Team Manatee got off to slow start at the Challenge, falling immediately into the consolation round, but they fought back through the bracket to reach the finals and ultimately finished sixth in the state in Division One, the largest classification in Florida. Throughout the fall, Manatee County high schools competed head-to-head in matches of 60 questions each, covering all academic subjects. Students were awarded points for speed and accuracy, and the top six overall scorers were invited to become members of the all-star county team. This year's team was comprised of MaryAnn Placheril (SSES), Alex Siegal (SSES), and Vanessa Yan (SSES), Jack Berry (SSES), Matthew Thomas (SSES), and Jack Lyons (Manatee High).

■ Musical kudos were handed out to Falcons Carter Beckstein (trombone), Sidney Knowles (piano), Rishab Ramamurthy (clarinet), and Bill Cao (alto saxophone). Knowles and Cao both received "Superior with Distinction" ratings at Pompano Beach High School for the state **Solo & Ensemble Music Performance Assessment**. Beckstein and Ramamurthy were accepted into the Suncoast All-County Honors Band through an audition process. They will join chosen students from area schools for clinics and a performance on May 7 at the Sarasota Opera House.

■ **The Visual Arts Conservatory Distinction Candidates' Show** was held at The Manatee Performing Arts Center. Saint Stephen's partnered with MPAC for the first time to present this show of outstanding work by 11 Conservatory students. Their pieces remained on display through May 10.

■ Saint Stephen's Latin students came, saw and conquered at the **Florida Junior Classical League's Latin Forum** in Orlando. In academics, the SSES senior team took fourth place in the state. In the overall sweepstakes, the Falcons finished fifth. It was the 13th consecutive year that Saint Stephen's has placed in the top 10 in academics and the fourth time that senior division students placed in the top five. Matthew Thomas led the way with three first-place finishes, including the Academic Decathlon which earned him a \$100 prize. MaryAnn Placheril, Annie Class and Carter Beckstein also earned first-place finishes. Astrid Culp (vice president) and Thomas (parliamentarian), won elections for next year, making it the fifth straight year that at least one SSES student has served as an officer of FJCL.

MAY

■ Senior Vanessa Yan was named a **2017 U.S. Presidential Scholar** - one of only 161 nationwide. The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects students based on their academic success, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and commitment to high ideals. More than 5,100 candidates qualified for the 2017 awards determined by outstanding performance on the SAT and ACT exams, through nominations made by Chief State School Officers, and other partner organizations. The 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large.

■ The Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County recognized Saint Stephen's with its **2017 Community Partnership Award**. SSES was saluted for its collaboration with the Boys & Girls Clubs to provide student tutoring, host their annual track meet, and participate in the Falcon 5K and 1-mile Fun Run.

■ For her years of leadership, community involvement and more, Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen was named one of three 2017 **"Wonder Women"** by the Women's Resource Center.

■ Senior Kristyn Weaver's photograph, "Untitled" took a second place in the **2017 High School Congressional Art Competition**, a district-wide showcase for young artists. Her work is on display at the Ringling Museum through the fall. Entries came from Manatee, Sarasota, and Hillsborough counties.

A partnership between SSES and the Opening Doors Foundation has paved the way for qualified students to become valuable members of the Saint Stephen's family.

DOORWAY



By David Glaser

"I guarantee you the Joneses won't let you down."

That was the promise Marjani and Letherio Jones Sr. made to Father Dennis Kezar five years ago. On May 19, as Letherio Jr. walked across the stage to collect the prestigious Head of School's Award and his diploma, it was a promise kept.

Saint Stephen's, in collaboration with Father Kezar and the Opening Doors Foundation that bears his name, have literally opened the door for Letherio, his younger sister LeNae, and more than two dozen other students to attend the school. In return, they have enhanced the campus community in countless ways.

"My own experience helped shape this," said Kezar, a retired Episcopal priest who played a role in the earliest history of the school, serving as rector at Christ Church and as a Saint Stephen's board member for 25 years. "I was able to attend and graduate from both New College and Oxford because I was supported by several generous sponsors. My parents wouldn't have been able to do it on their own."

Later, in his role as director of admissions at Canterbury School in

excel in the classroom, on the athletic fields, in the arts, drama, music – everywhere on campus. Kezar considers the Jones family to be pioneers in the program. They were among the earliest to attend Saint Stephen's and complete the first real cycle of the collaboration with Letherio Jr's graduation last month.

There have been no better ambassadors. Letherio, who will attend Sewanee University in the fall, excelled in the classroom, was a key member of SSES state championship teams in football and track, played lead roles in several musicals, was part of the school's Harvard Model Congress delegation, and received the top Art Department award – the Book Award – as a senior. LeNae Jones, a rising senior, carries a 3.4 grade point average and is one of just a handful of Falcons to play four varsity sports.

"Saint Stephen's has let our kids know that the sky is the limit," Letherio Sr. said. "We're very thankful to Father Kezar. The foundation has been a God-sent thing for us. That made it affordable for us to come into the Saint Stephen's family and we've never felt out of place."

That same sentiment is shared by DeLisa Carnell, whose son, Pierce, came to SSES as a freshman and will attend the University

TO SUCCESS

St. Petersburg, Kezar said he pleaded for the expansion of financial aid in order to provide socio-economic diversity within the student body because, "a great education shouldn't be limited only to those with financial means."

The extension of that philosophy eventually became the Opening Doors Foundation (www.fatherkezaropeningdoorsfoundation.com), and Saint Stephen's has been the perfect partner.

The school identifies qualified enrollment candidates in sixth grade or higher during its regular admissions testing and financial aid process. If those families are in need of further tuition assistance, they are referred to the Foundation in order to fill the gap. There are no scholarships. All families who eventually enroll their children have their own financial commitment to the school.

"The best thing about my experience as a priest was being tied to Saint Stephen's, and what the school has done with these kids is everything we could have hoped for," Dennis Kezar said. "Jan (Pullen) understood the need and how it would benefit the school. The way the kids have responded to the opportunities presented is truly incredible."

Students sponsored by the Foundation have seamlessly become integral members of the SSES community. They continue to



of Central Florida in the fall to study computer science. Pierce also collected one of the school's top department awards – the Book Award in technology – prior to his graduation.

DeLisa credits Saint Stephen's with not only her son's academic growth, but also his emotional maturity.

"Pierce wouldn't be Pierce if it wasn't for this experience. He wouldn't be where he is emotionally and with his self discipline," she said. "The kids at Saint Stephen's challenge

each other. He wouldn't have gotten that somewhere else. He still has friends who attend public school and I see the difference in the goals they have set for themselves. Pierce expects to achieve and won't settle."

As the relationship between Saint Stephen's and the Opening Doors Foundation continues to evolve, Father Kezar's immediate challenge is to endow and fund the foundation so that it has a secure future. A commitment to provide \$184,000 in financial aid has been made, \$65,000 of which was presented at the close of the 2016-17 school year. Kezar feels the program has already proven its worth to students, families, and the school.



THE QUEST

At Saint Stephen's, each school year ends with students and teachers on a journey for new learning experiences that reach beyond the classroom.

By David Glaser

While those who study education and speculate about its future don't agree on everything, there seem to be certain threads common among them. When it comes to how schools will deliver their product, the consensus is that education will become more personalized and won't be held by the typical four-walled classroom.

At Saint Stephen's, the flavor of this kind of experiential, non-traditional learning has been part of the recipe for years. It's called Interim Quest or "IQ," and it provides a tasty finish to each school year.

In the Middle School, a student stands before his classmates holding an odd-looking, cardboard device that seems strangely familiar. He's spent part of his week learning about, dissecting, and recreating the makeshift air filtration device that saved the lives of the Apollo 13 astronauts and was made famous in the 1995 film starring Tom Hanks.

Walk into the Lower School and each classroom has been transformed. One resembles a planetarium with colorful models of the planets in the solar system dangling from the ceiling tiles. Another is adorned with the Olympic rings and flags of competing countries. Students are gathered on the floor while scenes from equestrian events are projected onto the wall. Enter the blacked out doors at the end of the hall and pajama-clad kindergartners are huddled in a darkened room, learning about the habits of nocturnal animals.

Intermediate School students are on the move all week throughout the Tampa Bay area, visiting the Florida Aquarium, Thomas Edison Estate in Fort Myers, Mote Marine Laboratory, Tampa Bay History Center, and Museum of Science and Industry.

IQ reaches its peak in the Upper School, where students are presented a menu of options including skill building, personal improvement, externships with local professionals, community service, and travel abroad.

In 2017, the offerings included instruction on cooking, playwriting, yoga, SCUBA, and fitness, as well as shadowing opportunities with area attorneys, physicians, veterinarians, and even a personal trainer. Overseas travel played a large role. Students journeyed to Japan for the first time to visit Saint Stephen's sister school in Tokyo (Shibuya High School), made service trips to Nicaragua and Haiti, and traveled with Marine Science teacher Cris Skey to explore the waters of the Bahamas.

"It's an opportunity to do what we can't do during the school year and gets the kids out of the classroom," said faculty member Anna Conn, who coordinates IQ in the Upper School. "We encourage the students to leave their comfort zone and try something new."

The program – then literally called "the May Program" – was introduced at Saint Stephen's in 1987 by former head of school John Howard. He brought the idea with him from a previous institution as a way for teachers to create programs that share their personal passions and engage students. This type of experiential learning sparks critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills. It goes beyond theories taught in the classroom. When students have first-hand involvement in solving a problem or executing an activity, they're more likely to take ownership.

While travel and field experiences are common, experiential learning doesn't require that students leave the classroom. Instead of lectures that transfer knowledge to be recited back on an exam, the teacher takes the role of a guide, moving students through the process of learning, providing information and resources as needed.

"During IQ week, our children are immersed in lessons and activities that go beyond daily classroom curriculum," Lower School Assistant Director Luci Hartmann said. "The learning environments are transformed and students are given experience with specialized materials. The week culminates with presentations that showcase what they've learned."

Over the years, the nature of IQ at Saint Stephen's has evolved to reflect the direction provided by the leadership in each division. At times it has been primarily community service-oriented. Other years have been heavy on travel. Teachers have their own favorites and are encouraged to re-imagine their programs. New teachers bring their own, fresh perspectives.

"It's really an example of innovation and an opportunity for learning beyond the four walls. It also can be in keeping with what we do during the rest of the school year encouraging cross-departmental curriculum," Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen said. "One day you may be using engineering skills to build a robot, and the next you're working with art to decorate it."

"My favorite part is that it works within our mission to create a love of learning. It's nice that the children are able to finish the school year not thinking about page 97 in a math book and grades. I love it when I hear from them that they hate to see it end."

Winter/Spring Alumni Events



1. Breaking with tradition, the 2016 Alumni Soccer Gathering was held on Dec. 26 instead of the Sunday before Christmas. The new date proved very popular and will now be the permanent day for this beloved event. While some alumni participants still live locally, other alumni players and spectators came home to SSES from all around the country. Players (both gents and a few former lady Falcons) hit the turf in record numbers. Coach Marc Jones divided the field and ran two games simultaneously to enhance playing time for all. Many other alumni were on hand to enjoy mini-homecomings with old friends, past families, current faculty members and ultimate Falcon sports fan Dr. Jan Pullen.

2. The annual Alumni Panel on Jan. 4 was manned by a lively crew of graduates, including 2013 classmates Brian Gentry (North Carolina State) and Camron Tally (Furman); 2014 alumni Savannah Glasgow (FSU), JJ Byrnes (Wheaton) and Kemery Colbert (Ithaca College); Valerie Arias '15 (Davidson) and Toby Howell '15 (Marquette); and Shreya Patel '16 (George Washington). Each year, alumni panelists are warmly welcomed back to Saint Stephen's. This year's group offered not only excellent insight into college life and academics at the next level, but put forth some real-life advice for Upper School students that truly resonated. The level of maturity and collective wisdom shown by participating alumni was indeed a great source of pride for faculty and staff on hand for the panel discussion.



Seated (L-R): Brian Gentry, Toby Howell, JJ Byrnes, Camron Tally;
standing: Kemery Colbert, Valerie Arias, Savannah Glasgow & Shreya Patel

3. We warmly welcomed 27 college-age alumni back to campus on Jan. 4 for the 5th Annual Winter Break Luncheon. Our alumni visitors were thrilled to be back on campus and current students lingered and enjoyed hearing first-hand about acclimating to college life.



L-R: 2016 alums Hannah Sage, Annie Brey, Tatiana Esparza & Josh Willard

4. Our January installment in the Alumni Office's Brown Bag Luncheon Series: Conversations with Alumni, featured engineer Josh Whitaker '06. Josh has a BS in mathematics from Birmingham Southern College and a BS in mechanical engineering from Alabama. The students learned much as Josh spoke about his different roles as a manufacturing engineer, a distribution engineer and a protection and control engineer.



(L-R) Josh Whitaker flanked by his former teachers Jamie Moore & Elisa Bolotin

Mark Your Calendar . . .

Sept. 28: Annual Alumni Happy Hour (Bradenton)

Oct. 6: Homecoming Football & Alumni Tent Reception

Nov. 3-5 Weekend: Class of 1997 20th Reunion

For details, contact Alan Bellittera: abellittera@bradenton.com

Dec. 23: Class of 2007 10th Reunion

For details, contact Jean Morrow: ilovemyschool@hotmail.com

Dec. 26: Annual Alumni Soccer Game

5. February's Brown Bag Luncheon alumni speaker was Daniel Volz '03. Dan spoke to interested students about his real estate career in Sarasota and Manatee counties. He discussed the skills he's honed to master the art of negotiation, market analysis, making wise real estate investments and selling high-end residential property. Dan graduated from Loyola University (New Orleans), where he majored in advertising and international business.



Daniel Volz, Alumni Director Laurie McFeeley & Jamie Moore

6. Patrick Hillstrom '07 returned to campus on April 12 to speak at the Upper School Academic Banquet. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania and working in finance at his first two jobs, Patrick joined LinkedIn in San Francisco. He worked in business operations and became a senior associate & global content products lead. He then shifted to business operations and product strategy for Lynda.com, an educational arm of the company. Patrick left LinkedIn in 2016 and is now co-founder and CEO of a recruiting start-up called Hirevisor. Patrick is also a member of San Francisco's Alchemist Accelerator, a venture-backed business incubator focused on accelerating start-ups.



Patrick Hillstrom

7. The annual Senior Luncheon was held April 24 and alumnus Gris Bettle '90 again catered the event from his Sarasota restaurant, Chicken Kitchen. Our special guest speakers were married alumni Kiley Eastman Riccardi '06 and Jordan "Jordy" Riccardi '04. Kiley is a realtor at Premier Sotheby's International Realty in Lakewood Ranch and Jordy is an attorney at Icard Merrill in Sarasota. After meeting the class, Jordy and Kiley were confident the soon-to-be graduates will continue to hold up the strong reputation of success in life after Saint Stephen's Episcopal School. Calling the experience a bit surreal, Kiley and Jordy deemed their tour with Mrs. Klein "the icing on the cake!"



Kiley Eastman Riccardi and Jordy Riccardi

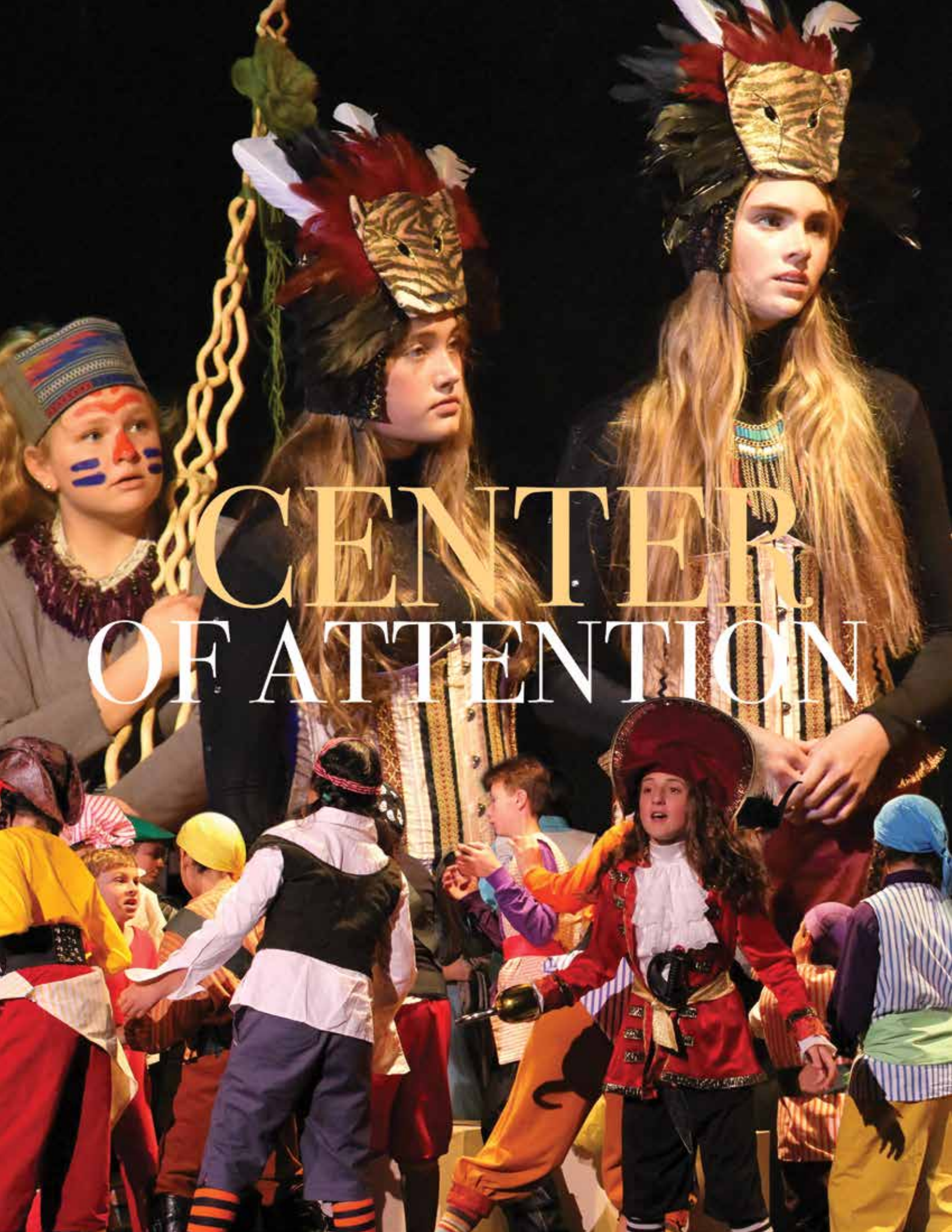
8. Saint Stephen's held its first-ever regional alumni reception in Boston on May 4 at the InterContinental Hotel. Alex Brown '08 sponsored the event and all who attended had a marvelous time. Anne Barnes '85 reconnected with Rebekah "Becka" Smillie '83. The two had not been in touch since their Falcon days. Classmates Spencer Schlitt and Deanna Mcgrath '07 reminisced while Andrea Maginot Kennedy '99 and Kendra Amin Dufton '97 swapped stories. Wyatt Knopfke '15 (Boston College) and Cheyenne Fauvel '16 (Simmons College) came for a much-needed study break. All of our Falcon alumni rocked their SSES sunglasses and agreed that they missed the Florida sunshine on a chilly Boston evening.



9. A great crew from the Class of 2006 met at Motorworks Brewing in Bradenton on Dec. 26, 2016 to celebrate the group's 10th Reunion. A perfect night in the Brewery's festive outdoor courtyard proved ideal for reminiscing. On hand were Eleni Sokos, Jill Tuckerman Leverett, Caitlyn Davis, Anum Ahmed, Isabella Sobel, Katie Ball Terman, Liz Lutz, Nick Mollanazar, Jason Duke, Jordy Riccardi and Kiley Eastman Riccardi '04, Kenton Cook and Molly Tuckerman Cook '08 and Juanita "Nita" Harles. Time stood still at this memorable reunion of Falcon friends.



(L-R) Nita Harles, Katie Ball Terman, Nick Mollanazar & Isabella Sobel



CENTER OF ATTENTION

The drive to build a much-anticipated performing arts center on campus has begun.

By David Glaser

Even now, it's really not that difficult to imagine what the feeling will be like when the lights dim and the curtain rises for the first time. Decades of improvisation – both from the performers on the stage and from those who built the makeshift theaters those young artists graced – will come together in one giant, contented exhale.

With no existing space for construction on the school's 35-acre campus, the Saint Stephen's Board of Trustees and Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen began discussions with Christ Church Rector Fr. Joel Morsch and the church vestry on an agreement that was approved in May 2016. Christ Church has given its more than 67,000-square-foot property west of 41st Street West to the school for the construction of a performing arts center and parking lot to be used by both entities.

Saint Stephen's will also build a 3,500-square-foot facility to replace the church's existing thrift shop and food pantry.

When it's constructed, the SSES Performing Arts Center will most certainly have its own unique flavor, however, one of the early scouting trips undertaken by school and church officials was a visit to Saint Mary's Episcopal School in Tampa for a tour of its multi-purpose Saint Mary's Hall. The impressive structure, which features

a reception foyer, raised stage with backstage and technical support, and open floor seating, is being used as a template for the 850-seat building Saint Stephen's will create.

Necessary permitting and other negotiations with the city and county have proceeded as expected, and the school recently chose Hall Architects in Sarasota for the project.

This new venue, which has been on the SSES Master Site Plan since 2003, will provide a long-anticipated home for the school's performing and visual arts programs. With moveable walls that create smaller spaces, it will also be able to host a wide variety of school functions, including commencement ceremonies, special celebrations, luncheons, dances, guest speakers and more. There is the potential to offer the facility for public rental, as well.

Almost since the founding of the school, Saint Stephen's thespians and musicians have done their best with the cards they've been

dealt. The first school musical was presented on the second-floor deck of the gymnasium. Productions eventually moved to the main floor, with the stage at one end and the patrons seated in folding chairs. The entire gym and bleachers were then utilized when a grid system was installed that could be raised to the ceiling to hold lights and backdrops. Today's theater presentations are held in the Falcon Playhouse, a space that's not much more than a glorified classroom and seats only 100 guests.

Those limitations have provided plenty of challenges along the way to opening night.

For a performance of *Grease*, long-time former music and theater teacher Preston Boyd discovered the perfect prop, an old Hudson automobile that had been gutted and placed on casters. It seemed like the ideal setting for one of the play's key scenes. After much effort, the Hudson was transported to the gym. But there was a problem – no door was large enough for the prop to fit through. The actors eventually settled for a "tricked out" golf cart.

"Everyone was always very forgiving," Boyd remembered. "But my thought process always was, when we began loading in, the space wasn't a gym anymore. Even though there were basketballs flying in there a week earlier, it was a theater."



"When it was over, we were always a little surprised about the quality of the final product. We'd look at each other and think, 'How did that happen?'"

That legacy has continued under current theater instructor Jeannine Elisha. While the all-school musical has now given way to separate age-group performances, the satisfying flavor of what feels like organic theater remains. The 2016-17 school year featured eight sold-out performances of two different shows in the Falcon Playhouse. The

Upper School actors presented *The Lion King*, while their younger counterparts gave us *Peter Pan*.

The prospect of a proper venue to showcase future productions already has the entire Saint Stephen's community energized.

"Despite the hassle, there was something unique about performing in the gym. In the end, perfection didn't matter because you always had the support of the people in front of you and behind you," wrote SSES alums Gabriella and Griffin Guinta. "That being said, we're both ecstatic at the arrival of a new performing arts center. We're enlivened that young performers will have the chance to experience the true ins and outs of an actual theater."

If you are interested in finding out more about how you can support the fund-raising for this project, please call Director of Development Jim McDaniel at (941) 746-2121 ext. 1118.

GIRL HARVEY

Alum Lea Szymanski turns passion for drawing into vocation

By Laurie McFeeley



Who knew?

Saint Stephen's teachers, classmates and family, that's who!

Nearly 20 years ago, when she was named "Most Artistic" in the 1998 yearbook by her classmates, it was evident that Linnea "Lea" Chapman Szymanski possessed amazing creativity and natural artistic ability. Since then, her life has been punctuated by artistic pursuits, but her love for art began at Saint Stephen's.

Lea was born in Sarasota and raised in Bradenton. Her older brother Rob '97 came to SSES in the eighth grade and, shortly after he enrolled, Lea's parents decided the school would be a good fit for the rest of their children. All are now proud alumni. Lea started in ninth grade, sister Erika graduated in 2000, and brother Jon is a member of the class of 2003.

Lea earned an associate degree in business from Manatee Community College (now State College of Florida) and went on to the University of South Florida, where she received her bachelor's degree in finance. Throughout college, Lea worked full time and babysat on weekends. While at MCC, she worked at a sign shop and enjoyed being able to "get a little creative." As a USF student, Lea worked for a dermatologist, performing front desk duties. She strongly believes that working during college was instrumental in her learning the importance of drive and focus. It also taught her how to deal with customers in a variety of settings. Babysitting fostered a sense of responsibility that translated into even more confidence in dealing with people of all ages.

"Other than my art projects, cheering for the soccer team at states with my face painted green and gold was a blast!" – Lea Szymanski

When asked if any SSES classes resonated more than others, or if there was a teacher or teachers that made a difference in her life, Lea recalls two instructors having a profound impact. The first was French teacher Mrs. Bogusewski. Lea remembers "Mrs. Bogey" as always having a smile on her face and an enjoyment in teaching not just the French language, but also about French foods. She taught the class how to make crepes, which remains one of Lea's favorite Saint Stephen's memories.

A ubiquitous name in Falcon alumni recollections, Lea also points to Mr. Langeneger as inspirational ("rest in peace, Mr. L!"). While teaching Lea's art class, he incorporated the acronym KISS: Keep It Simple Stupid. Lea has applied that strategy in every aspect of her life, from her art projects to her enjoyment of life's simple pleasures. Another hallmark moment related to art class involved a custodian enlisting Lea to draw a turkey. Lea worked on the project during art class. The random assignment took some 40 hours, but the final product was absolutely beautiful.

"I kept it simple, like Mr. L taught, but I captured every single detail that I could using a mechanical pencil instead of the traditional drawing pencil," she said. "This allowed me to capture even the smallest details. My work looked so life-like; this project began my lifelong obsession with drawing animals."

Lea attributes her strong work ethic, positive attitude and the ability to appreciate new and different people to her Saint Stephen's education. She loved that students came from all over the world. Those relationships broadened her horizons and

taught her to be kind to people, no matter where they're from.

"That kind of education is priceless," she says.

Lea is married to fellow Falcon alumnus Geoffrey Szymanski '99. The couple met on the math team during Lea's sophomore year. They dated on and off throughout high school and eventually attended different colleges. After doing their own thing for awhile after college, they reconnected when Geoff emailed Lea a picture of his parent's black German shepherd, Halley. Lea, who had been doing dog drawings for friends and co-workers for years, asked if she could do a drawing of Halley. She brought it to Geoff the next time they were both in Bradenton. Soon after, the couple began dating. They married in 2007 and have two beautiful children: Ryan (8) and Sidney (6). Sidney is Lea's "mini me," with the same blonde hair Lea had at her age and her eager passion for drawing.

It seems that in every job Lea has held, people discovered her talent for animal drawings, and many retained her services. After having children and staying at home for a few years, the creative bug bit Lea again. She began sewing and set up an Etsy shop. She also made creations for a few shops in Apollo Beach, sewing everything from baby bib and burp cloth sets to pillows, napkins, table runners and more. In February '16, an artist friend asked Lea to join her in a small art show at a local restaurant. Lea got to work drawing a pelican, tarpon, and egret. She also submitted two dog drawings she had done just for herself and had kept over the years. Lea got so inspired that she started posting some

of her old drawings on Facebook. While drawing one day, she both realized and decided that art is what she wanted to "do."

About a week later, Geoff's cousin Matt Beall asked if he could show Lea's drawings to the team at Bealls. She gave permission, thinking nothing would come of it, but Bealls liked what they saw and made Lea an offer. A self-proclaimed "go with the flow" kind of girl, Lea accepted and got to work. Unsure of what the designers would do with her drawings, the results so far have been amazing. The first line, launched in March, included 10 men's long-sleeved fishing shirts made with a new lightweight fabric called Reel-Tec. The fabric and artwork make a cool combination that's also cool to wear. This summer, Beall's will launch ladies' t-shirts, home goods, wine bags and more. Also upcoming: boys shirts, men's collared shirts, cargo shorts, t-shirts, bathing suits, ties and even underwear. A local gal called Lea, "Girl Harvey," a moniker Lea finds very flattering!

Lea's advice to current students is to work hard, have a positive attitude and be kind. In life, she says, "be as kind to the janitor as you are to the CEO. Don't be afraid to talk to people. You never know who you'll meet and what the conversation might lead to. The education and work ethic provided at Saint Stephen's is a huge head start in the race of life. Once in the thick of that race, use that head start to your advantage. But don't be afraid to slow down to help others in need of a little help or encouragement along the way. That is also the Saint Stephen's way!"

Alumni Class Notes

1970s

Michele Schmacker English '79 is a state certified building contractor. Her company, Sticks and Stones Custom Homes, operates in Manatee County and vicinity. Michele attended Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale and was a freelance graphic designer before embarking on her construction career. A lifelong Manatee County resident, she has 12 years of building experience and in her free time has served on the fundraising committee of the Bradenton branch of Habitat for Humanity.

1990s

Stephen "Steve" Rees '97 graduated from Bates College in '01 and the University of Maine School of Law in 2005. After law school, Steve practiced real estate and land use law at the Sarasota law firm Icard Merrill. Steve returned to Maine in 2012, where he lives with his wife and two children. He is the president and managing attorney at Consumer Title, a provider of title and settlement services for the lending and real estate industry in Maine and New Hampshire.

Susan Cox Starr '98 and husband Judd are thrilled to announce the birth of their third daughter, Elle Lynne Starr, born Dec. 12, 2016.

Loren Ann Mayo's '98 new company, luxeFIT, offers week-long luxury fitness retreats to exotic destinations. The company's first retreat was held this spring at a beachfront estate in Barbados. The excursions combine workout sessions and activities like surfing, paddleboarding, snorkeling and yoga. Participants dine on healthy cuisine prepared by a private chef.



Brianna Ewert '99 (daughter of Lower School faculty member Mary Ann Ewert and staff member Brian Ewert) lives in Montana where she works as Farm to Institution Program Coordinator at Lake County Community Development Corporation in Ronan. She also co-manages a diversified farm. Brianna earned a Master of Science degree in Environmental Studies with a focus in Sustainable Food and Farming from the University of Montana. She works to improve access to fresh, nutritious foods for area schools, hospitals and other institutions and expand markets for the region's farmers and ranchers. Brianna's past job experience includes teaching in elementary and middle schools and eight years of diverse work throughout the food system. She has also taught both writing and community food systems courses at the University of Montana. In October '16, Brianna was honored to participate on a panel at the Montana Farmers Union's 101st annual convention in Great Falls.

Chris Martoni '99 is a biotechnology consultant in Canada working for UAS Laboratories, The Probiotic Company. Chris received a BS in chemistry at the University of Virginia in '03. He went on to McGill University in Canada that same year to pursue a master's in engineering, but transferred to a PhD program in biomedical engineering in '05 that culminated in his receiving a doctorate degree in 2009. He and two colleagues are inventors holding two U.S patents, one for development of Epsilon-Poly-Lysine capsules and the other for Bacterial Compositions for Prophylaxis and Treatment of Degenerative Disease.

2000s

Alejandra Perez Rollins '00 lives and works in Washington, D.C. She is a member of the Virginia Bar and a certified Project Management Professional. She graduated with a BS in Biology from the College of William and Mary and received her JD from The George Washington University Law School. As a Principal at Control Risks Group in D.C., Alejandra's practice involves Control Risks' Compliance, Intelligence, Investigations and Technology. She oversees the Legal Technology Project Management Team and manages a full range of eDiscovery projects. Alejandra also integrates in-house Legal and IT teams with outside counsel and technical services to create high-performance teams for litigation and crisis response.



Congratulations to **Eric Pullen '00** on his marriage to Ali Severson at Old San Juan, Puerto Rico in April. Several SSES grads were in attendance: **Tyler Pullen '98**, **Derek Huss** and **Will Moody '99**, **Logan Walters**, **Sam Petlock**, **John Stevely** and **Suzanne 'Seagle' Moody '00**, **Amy Shoukry** and **Morgan 'Pope' Hodgkins '01**.

Diane Nguyen George '01 is a marketing manager at Campbell Soup in Philadelphia. She handles Sauces and Meals Brand Activation, having worked for the company since July '13. Diane got her BA at Harvard in '05 and earned an MBA in Marketing & Operations at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business in 2011. Prior to working for Campbell, Diane was a marketing manager at Chase Freedom, a division of JPMorgan Chase. Diane lives in Philadelphia with her husband Michael and young son.

New parents and Sarasota residents **Ashley Richards Simmons** '01 and Damien Simmons welcomed Aiden Robert Simmons on Feb. 7, 2016.

Perry Swenson Livonius '01 lives in her childhood home of Charlotte, N.C. and works in personal insurance for Hood Hargett & Associates. Perry was a standout on the Saint Stephen's girls golf team and went on to play for the University of Texas before joining the LPGA Tour. Perry was ranked among the top five amateur golfers in the world in 2003 and 2004 and was the 2004-05 Texas Team Academic MVP. One of her five career holes-in-one came as a junior at SSES - on No. 16 at Augusta National, home of the famed Masters Tournament.

Jessica Searcy '03 was engaged to Sean Murphy on March 11. Jessica is the Director for Student Leadership and Engagement at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Her primary area of responsibility is advising the Student Government Association. Jessica graduated from TCU and did her graduate work at USF.

Katherine Hernandez Polenz '04 and husband Patrick welcomed their first son, Theodore "Theo" Alfred Polenz, on Dec. 9, 2016 - just in time for the holidays!

Susan Butler Ciniglio '05 was promoted in December '16 to Senior Associate at Princeton University Investment Company. PRINCO manages Princeton University's \$22-billion endowment. Susan joined the firm full-time in August 2009 after graduating Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude from Princeton (A.B. in Economics/Certificate in Finance). At Princeton, Susan received the Quin Morton '36 Writing Seminar Essay Prize, the Shapiro Prize for Academic Excellence, the Junior Prize in Economics and the Class of 1939 Scholar Award. She earned the CFA charter in 2015 and is a member of the New York Society of Security Analysts.

Jana Azar '05 is a Smith College alumna and received her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree cum laude from Boston University School of Dental Medicine. After completing a general practice residency at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., she returned to BU where she received a certificate in advanced graduate studies in Pediatric Dentistry. She now works at The Pediatric Dentistry Group in Milford, Mass.

Kaitlyn Wolk Reid '05 and husband Ryan welcomed their first child this spring. Finlay John Reid was born on March 8, 2017 at Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

Kartik Telukuntla '07 has earned a General Cardiovascular Medicine Fellowship at the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic. The comprehensive three-year program provides skills required for a successful leadership career in both academic and clinical practice. Kartik did his undergraduate work and medical school studies at the University of Miami. He recently completed a residency at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

Alison "Ali" Fraraccio Newsome '07 served on the 58th Presidential Inaugural Committee in Washington, D.C. as Deputy Director of Operations for Special Events and Public Events. She was in charge of recruiting and managing more than 3,000 volunteers and coordinating the credential process



with the U.S. Secret Service. Ali worked on the following historic events: the Welcome Concert; the Swearing-in Ceremony; the Candlelight Dinner; the Inaugural Luncheon, Inaugural Parade and the National Prayer Service; and three inaugural balls. Ali's past experience includes working as a campaign intern for the Republican Party of Florida in the 2010 Gubernatorial Campaign (Rick Scott of Governor). In the 2012 Presidential Campaign, she was a Republican National Committee Victory Field Director in Bucks County, Penn. and an operations assistant at the Republican National Convention in Tampa. In early '16, Ali worked the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio as Deputy Director of Operations. Over the past four years, she has been a business development manager at Aerotek Government Services, building and managing a \$20-million portfolio and providing human capital solutions to large government integrators in the Department of Defense and in the intelligence community.



Gabriella Quinta Simmons '07 married Taylor Simmons on Dec. 30, 2016 on Pier 22's patio in Bradenton. Saint Stephen's alumni in the bridal party included 2010 alumni **Katie Field, Hanna Persson, Bianca Pol, Kathleen Addison, Jamie Davis, Michael Morrow, Mike DePree, Eric Muslawski** and **Griffin Gunita** (brother of the bride). The couple resides in New York City where they're auditioning and working. Their honeymoon, a wonderful road trip from April 26-May 20, included camping in scenic destinations including the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite, and visiting Griffin in Seattle.

Sarah Jane Oliver '07 and Jonathan Michael Perry announced the arrival of Jackson Simon Perry on Nov. 3, 2016. Sarah, Jonathan and Jackson have moved to Gulf Gate in Sarasota after completing renovations in their new home. Sarah works for White Sands Realty Group in administration and is working towards obtaining her Florida real estate license.



Troy Tolentino '07 and bride-to-be Ashley Tremblay celebrated their engagement with many SSES alumni. (L-R): Dalton Cross '07, Paul Carlson '07, Ishpaul Bhamber '12, Chad Tolentino '12, Troy, Joshua Jacobson '07, Jean Morrow '07, Michelle Vogler '12 and Matthew Vogler '07.

Caitlin Carnahan '08 earned a master's in Computer Science at Florida State in 2014. She is now a member of the faculty in FSU's Computer Science Department where she teaches Programming Languages, Computer Organization II and Python Programming. Caitlin also did her undergraduate studies at FSU, receiving a BS in Computer Science and a BS in Physics (with honors) in '12. Her undergraduate honors thesis, "A Quantum Compiler for Topological Quantum Computation," resulted in prototype software for "visualizing quantum 'circuits' for qubits encoded using Fibonacci anyons." She co-authored a publication in May '16 related to this work in Physics Review A, an American Physical Society Journal covering atomic, molecular and optical physics and quantum information.

Joseph "Yusef" Audeh '08 studies at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning. The program will culminate with his receiving an M.S. in Art, Culture and Technology, with a concentration in film/photography. Yusef's work rotates between photography, mechanical sculpture and video, questioning how technological infrastructure - from simple machines to complex systems - can reveal dominant cultural and political ideologies. With a B.A. in Architecture/Urban Design from New York University '11, Yusef has exhibited works on the Qatar Foundation TV program Stars of Science, at Red Bull Studios (New York), and at NEW INC, the New Museum's Incubator for Art, Technology and Design and Townhouse Gallery, both in Cairo.

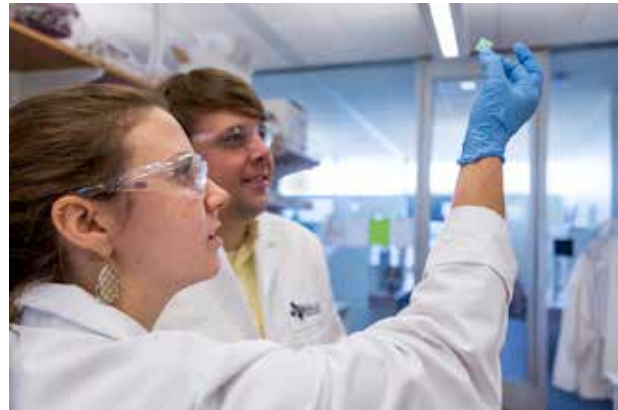
Rebecca Loh '08 graduated from Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College on May 23. She will stay on at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia for her residency in internal medicine. Rebecca hopes to pursue a fellowship in gastroenterology upon completing her residency requirements.

Best wishes to newly married couple **Alex Walters** '09 and Zoe DeBruycker Walters. Both alumni of the University of North Carolina, they chose to be married there at the beautiful Governors Club on April 8, 2017.



Hanna Shea Persson '10 jetted off to New Zealand in January to attend a two-year costume construction and design program at Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School, the country's premier drama school in Wellington. Hanna will continue her education in a place where the film industry is growing by leaps and bounds. Hanna admits that New Zealand is also a great place to be and says "Cheers" to her Saint Stephen's family.

Jennifer Boothby '10, a doctoral student in the Department of Bioengineering at the University of Texas in Dallas, is among 11 students chosen this year for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program established by the National Science Foundation. The program provides three years of support for graduate studies and a cost-of-education allowance. Jenny works on smart materials for biomedical applications in the lab of Dr. Taylor Ware. Jenny and her colleagues envision advances in point-of-care technology that will allow for the



diagnosis of diseases as quickly as litmus paper changes color. She is also on a quest involving point-of-contact sensors for use in developing countries, the goal to create powerless devices capable of replacing expensive, unwieldy electrical equipment currently used in medical testing.



Kylie Kaufman '11 graduated from Columbia University in December '14 and worked at Morgan Stanley in both their NYC and Chicago offices. She then worked for a small startup in the Chicago area where she learned how to run a small business - in preparation for launching her own enterprise in March called Rock a Box Baby. Rock a Box Baby is the first completely customizable baby gift box on the market. Patrons select a lacquer-finish keepsake box that they can monogram and fill with an array of baby gift items.

Danielle Wall '11 is working at Stanford School of Medicine as a clinical research coordinator in the Psychiatry Department/ Pediatric Moods Disorders Program. Daneille studied neurobiology at Harvard and graduated in 2015.

Congratulations to **Cameron Keating** '11 on his engagement to Alyson Miller in March. The couple was on a cruise celebrating four years together when Cam popped the question.

Jena Pirozzolo '12 has published her first book, GLITCH. Jena's inspiration was her wish to, "contrast what is common to the eye and what is uncanny." She says: Traditionally, fashion photographers have been obsessed with creating images that are seamlessly perfect, with the notion that something so beautiful needs to remain flawless. GLITCH challenges this idea of perfection with the introduction of temporary flaws or imperfections. It takes what would normally be considered a beautiful fashion photograph and alters the final version in order to show the image in a new and unexpected way.

Elizabeth Djinis '12 is a reporter with the The Herald-Tribune Media Group, publisher of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. She has written a myriad of articles covering local news and events like the Women's Solidarity March in Sarasota and a moving piece about three survivors of the Holocaust who spoke on Holocaust Remembrance Day at an event in Tampa's Ybor City. Elizabeth is a 2016 graduate of Duke, where she majored in Classical Languages and Medieval & Renaissance Studies with a minor in Policy Journalism and Media Studies.

Victoria "Tori" Biach '13 was named to the 2016 Academic All-America Division II Volleyball Second Team. Tori played for and graduated from Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D. She appeared in all 24 of the Wolves' matches, starting 22. She played 87 sets with 203 kills, 78 digs, 81 blocks, 26 service aces and a team-leading .379 attack percentage.

Congratulations to Midshipman **Spencer Nora** '13 on participating in the tradition and excitement surrounding the United States Naval Academy Ship Selection on Jan. 27. Spencer crossed the stage and pulled the plaque designating his choice to serve on the USS Little Rock LCS 9, based in Mayport, Fla. LCS vessels are high-speed, shallow draft multi-mission ships capable of operating independently or with a strike group.



The ships are fast, maneuverable and networked surface-combatants executing missions including surface warfare, mine warfare and anti-submarine warfare.



StoryTime, the app co-founded by **Justin Gregorious** '14 and his brother Brian, was awarded the "One to Watch" award at the Reimagine Education Conference co-sponsored by Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the SEI Center for Advanced Studies in Management. The conference is a global award

ceremony for organizations that produce "innovative education pedagogies for enhancing learning and employability."

Omar Sammour '14 transferred from Penn State to the USF Honors College in Tampa after his freshman year. After spending nine months working as a research assistant in a Cardiovascular Psychophysiology Laboratory, Omar's fascination with the brain prompted him to apply for a research position at the Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. He was accepted in spring '17 and has begun his work focusing on neurological disorders. His research will target two neurodegenerative diseases; Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Jeremy Jackman '14 will be a senior at Stetson this fall. As a rising junior, he was among the first five students chosen for the school's new Writing Fellows Program. A writing fellow tutors a specific class, helping students with written assignments and teaching lessons. Jeremy began as a writing fellow for a senior level Business Management class of 18 students. In spring '17, his role expanded to include four sections of Professional Communications and Jeremy gave presentations and led discussions for 72 students (freshmen through seniors). He is also a tutor at the Stetson University Writing Center. In February, Jeremy was hired as a lead tutor, a role he'll continue during senior year. In November '16, he represented Stetson at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing in Tacoma, Wash. His individual presentation, Analyzing the Role of Authority Between Tutors and International Students During a Writing Center Session, was made before writing center directors and students from colleges and universities across the nation.

In early '16, **Tim Maachi** '15 became a nationally-certified Emergency Medical Technician and joined a student-run volunteer ambulance group at his college, George Washington University. The group operates two ambulances and provides free emergency medical response and transport to the D.C. community 24/7. Tim and crew also help the city with major events, including a visit by the Pope. The responders also worked on the presidential inauguration and inaugural balls.



Joseph Schneider '15 will live out his dream this summer after being accepted as a Bat Boy for the Bradenton Marauders/Pittsburgh Pirates 2017 season. Joseph will be a junior at The University of Florida this fall.

YEAR OF THE FALCON

Hollywood couldn't have written a better or more dramatic script. When the SSES boys' 1,600-meter relay team crossed the finish line at the state track and field meet at IMG Academy on May 6, it was the final official athletic event of the 2016-17 season. Their second-place finish clinched a share of the Florida Class 1A state team championship and put an exclamation point on a year unlike any other in Falcons sports history.

The campaign produced 10 district and five regional titles, and an unprecedented three state championships (football, boys track, boys tennis doubles). In all, 11 of the 19 varsity teams advanced to compete at the state level. Only three programs finished their schedules with records below .500, and one of those was girls basketball (10-12), which had its finest season in nearly two decades, notching double-digit wins, a district runner-up finish, and its first regional appearance since 1999.

"This was the kind of season we've all envisioned at Saint Stephen's. In the three years I've been at the school, I've witnessed the incredible commitment to excellence put in every day by our coaches, student-athletes, and their families," Athletic Director Lenny Paoletti said. "Everything we do is centered around making sure our students have the tools they need to be successful, in an atmosphere that's positive and focused on their growth as people and as student-athletes. If you do things the right way, it produces the kind of results we've had on the field and off. The best part is we're just getting started."

Each season produced historic milestones for the school. The fall saw the first SSES state football title and the first-ever district championships by the girls and boys cross country teams. The winter season included the first SSES district and regional wrestling champion (Jake Ross) and first state wrestling medalist (Alan Morano, fourth place). The spring season culminated with the school's first state championship in track and field.

Individual statewide accolades for the Falcons were just as impressive. Football offensive lineman Josh Stevens and kicker Alex Virgilio were named first team all-state. Quarterback Fred Billy was chosen as the Florida Independent Player of the Year by FloridaHSFootball.com. The Sarasota Herald-Tribune selected MaryAnn Rompf as its regional Girls Tennis Player of the Year, covering Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties; and lacrosse stars Baylee Barker and Kendall Miller made the U.S. Lacrosse All-American team. Barker was also chosen as the Lacrosse Athlete of the Year in the Tampa Bay area by Spectrum Sports.



Falcons Chenhe Li and Max Damm had some special fans rooting them on during their path to victory at the Florida Class 1A Tennis Doubles Tournament in Orlando in April. SSES alum Jim Spencer, who won the same championship with teammate Jim Courier in 1986, was on hand for the matches. And Courier, a former world No. 1 who captured 23 singles and six doubles titles during his Hall-of-Fame professional career, sent along the following email note to his fellow Falcons:

"Congratulations on your state championship in doubles for Saint Stephen's. I remember how wonderful it felt to be a part of a winning Saint Stephen's team at state and I hope you are still riding the same euphoria that Jim Spencer and I experienced at that time. Enjoy the moment and the fact that they can't take it away from you. All the best from a proud fellow Saint Stephen's grad!"

Jim Courier
Hall-of-Fame professional tennis player

COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES – These Class of 2017 graduates have committed to play at the collegiate level:



Letherio Jones, Jr.
football
Sewanee University



Peyton Vining
football
Denison University



Jordan Murrell
football
Stetson University



Alex Virgilio
football
Wingate University



MaryAnn Rompf
tennis
University of Wisconsin



David Gao
golf
Rollins College

CONGRATULATIONS FALCONS

10
DISTRICT CHAMPIONS

5
REGIONAL CHAMPIONS

3
STATE CHAMPIONS

2016-17

FOOTBALL

SSAC Independent State Champions

BOYS TRACK & FIELD

District/Regional Champions
State Co-Champions

BOYS TENNIS

Unbeaten regular season
District Champions, Regional Finalists
Doubles State Champions

BOYS GOLF

Unbeaten regular season
Manatee County Champions
District/Regional Champions
3rd at State Tournament

GIRLS TENNIS

Unbeaten regular season
District/Regional Champions, State Semi-finalists

GIRLS GOLF

District/Regional Champions
13th at State Tournament

SWIMMING

State qualifiers in two individual events/one relay
Fla. Academic Team Champions

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

District Champions, Regional Runners-up
17th at State Meet

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

District Champions, Regional qualifier
19th at State Meet

BOYS SOCCER

District Champions, Regional Semifinalists

WRESTLING

Six Regional Qualifiers, Four State Qualifiers
First State Medalist

GIRLS LACROSSE

District Champions
State playoffs 2nd round

GIRLS BASKETBALL

District Runners-up
First Regional berth since 1999





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