FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL’S DESK . . .

Merry Christmas! It is the season to reflect on the past year, be thankful for blessings received, and give special gifts to others. I think you’ll find that this issue of Saint Stephen’s Magazine will have you doing these same things as you read about what has happened at school since August.

One of the major events on campus this fall was the school’s five-year accreditation visit that occurred the week of Oct. 7. Prior to the 12-person accreditation team’s visit, our administration, faculty, and staff spent months working together to prepare a self-study demonstrating to the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) that we have successfully reviewed and engaged in conversation about the 18 standards for which FCIS holds us accountable. These standards cover a wide range of areas, including finance, curriculum, safety, and faculty professional development, just to name a few. After the visit, I was proud to announce to the community that the accreditation team gave us 10 special commendations, indicating that we passed their evaluation with flying colors. The team was extremely impressed with the detail we put forth in every aspect of the school – from hiring outstanding faculty, keeping our campus safe and manicured, to continuing to stay on the cutting edge of core course offerings and developing our amazing signature programs.

In a season of thankfulness, I know I am very thankful that Saint Stephen’s is an Episcopal school. Our school’s Episcopal identity is important and, in this issue, you’ll read that an Episcopal school’s mission is to provide students with strong academic programs to enrich their minds, encourage different points of view from the different voices, celebrate the many blessings God has given us, and instill in everyone a sense of caring and responsibility to help others. You will learn Rev. Rich Clark’s perspective on how Episcopal schools share the teachings of the Christian religion, but also do so much more.

You’ll also discover the many gifts that are given to make a difference in our lives. Two stand out as particularly exciting — the international Water Is Life Conference and the completion of the Christ Church Food Pantry and Thrift Shop. We are now on a countdown of just days, as we get ready for Water Is Life in June 2020. This conference is truly a special gift for Saint Stephen’s. Even though we are the ones planning, preparing, and hosting this amazing event for 250 students and faculty from all over the world, we will benefit from an opportunity to put Saint Stephen’s in the spotlight internationally. It also allows our students to connect with their peers from schools in more than 20 countries as they share their year-long research projects about water.

As for the completion of the Christ Church Food Pantry and Thrift Shop, in early February we will be thrilled to give the keys to the new building to those at Christ Church so that they will have a beautiful new space to serve others in Bradenton. And once we turn over those keys, we will receive the deed to the church’s large property across from the school, which will be the future site for our multi-purpose/performing arts center — the last building on the school’s master site plan.

I’ve only just begun to touch on the many wonderful articles you’ll read in this edition. There are updates on how our sports teams fared this fall, news from within the different divisions and, of course, amazing alumni news which always impresses. Our graduates are undertaking outstanding adventures with their careers and lives. The magazine also includes a year-in-review section from a development perspective that takes the place of our former stand-alone annual report. It presents financial data and recognition of our many generous supporters from fiscal year 2018-19.

As Saint Stephen’s approaches its 50th anniversary, we are thankful for how far we have come and are excited about where we are going.

Enjoy,

Jane
ON CAMPUS

AUGUST

■ For the fifth year in a row, Saint Stephen's Latin students returned from the National Junior Classical League's annual convention with national championship recognition. Sophomores Tyler Kadivar and Michael Thomas were part of the Florida team that won the title at the Intermediate Level of Certamen – a Jeopardy-style quiz. The convention brought together more than 1,200 students from around the nation in Fargo, N.D. for academic testing, creative arts projects (including oral and written competitions) and athletics. As usual, Saint Stephen's students shone brightly in all three parts of the competition, with 19 students collecting at least one top-10 finish. Kadivar and Thomas added their names to the list of consecutive Saint Stephen's national champions that already includes: Joseph Class, Ethan Leuchter, and Maryann Placheril (Advanced 2015); Kassandra Haakman (Novice 2016), Matthew Thomas (Advanced 2017), and Sophia Berry (Novice 2018).

■ Demolition was completed at the site of the new Christ Church Thrift Shop & Food Pantry. That put SSES an important step closer to securing the property where it will eventually build the school's multi-purpose performing arts center.

SEPTEMBER

■ SSES first graders performed “God Bless America” and a musical salute to all of the branches of the U.S. armed forces at the 9/11 remembrance service on the campus of USF Sarasota-Manatee. It was the second year in a row the young Falcons represented Saint Stephen's at this solemn and memorable event.

■ Saint Stephen's partnered with the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund to collect donations aiding the relief effort in the Bahamas following the devastation from Hurricane Dorian. From Sept. 6-13, the Upper School and Campus Center offices accepted monetary donations and also created drop-off locations to collect needed items specifically requested by the government of the Bahamas. SSES aligned with Yellowfin Yachts, Agape Airlines, and the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure these items were delivered directly to those in need.

OCTOBER

■ Third-year acting students from the Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training performed an off-beat and shortened version of Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet in the gym for Upper School students.

■ Renowned folk singer/songwriter Ellis Paul visited campus and did two performances prior to his shows in Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, St. Augustine and West Palm Beach.

■ Saint Stephen’s welcomed back former presidents of its Board of Trustees, members of the endowment board, former headmaster John Howard, and others to reconnect and help brainstorm about the school’s upcoming 50th anniversary and more.

■ Lower School students made a special visit to deliver a birthday card to our friend and Saint Stephen's neighbor Mrs. Jean Hebert, in celebration of her 101st birthday.

■ As part of their annual trip to Boston, the eighth grade toured MIT and visited with SSES grad Zack Gromko, now a senior there. During his final year at Saint Stephen's in 2015-16, Zack set a Guinness World Record on a memorable morning in Hoagland Arena when a robot he created solved a Rubik's Cube in 2.4 seconds.
The SSES Parents’ Association’s annual Green & Gold Gala was a huge success. Held at the IMG Golf Club on Oct. 5, the gala raised nearly $140,000 to fund the PA’s programs for the year and it’s annual gifts to the school.

Children’s book author David Ira Rottenberg read his work, “Gwendolyn the Graceful Pig” to our Lower School students while dancers from the Sarasota Ballet performed the scenes on Oct. 2 in the Intermediate School.

SSES launched its new online Falcon Gear store in conjunction with BSN Sports. Visit saintstephens.org and the “Athletics” link.

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NOVEMBER

- Saint Stephen’s has six winners and three honorable mentions in the Manatee County Section of the 2019 Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport Art Show contest. All the student artwork is framed and on display in the ticketing wing of the SRQ Airport for one year, starting in December. Congratulations to Parthi Patel (1st, K-2), Hailey Cruz (1st, 3-5), Cayden Smith (1st, 6-8), Alejandro Bick (3rd, K-2), Marli Engel (3rd, 3-5), Katie Burgess (3rd, 6-8); Honorable Mention: Morgan Davis, Emma Schwartz, Makaila Hertzler. First-place winners also received a $100 cash prize. Third-place finishers received $25.
- Students in Mrs. DeZiel’s class were asked to submit art for the cover of this year’s Saint Stephen’s Christmas card and the committee ultimately selected a whimsical, colorful owl design by 8th grader Simona Krnakova. Dr. Pullen presented her with a certificate and some of the finished cards.
- Freshman Jackson Nealis took home the bronze medal on Nov. 16 in the 2019 Central Florida National History Bee Competition at Largo High. His scores qualified him for the national round in Washington, D.C. this spring and the International Olympiad competition.

Four of the eight 10-minute plays selected for production from 46 entries in Theatre Odyssey’s eighth annual student competition were written by SSES students. Chosen were works by Kassandra Haakman (The Jeffrey Effect), Mia Mariano (Past Life), Sarah MacPhail (A Whole Lot of Nothing), and Maxine Mandt (The Clock). Performances will be Jan. 25 and 26 at the Jane B. Cook Theatre in the Asolo/FSU Center for the Performing Arts. Author of the best play receives a $1,000 cash scholarship; runner-up receives $500; authors of other finalist plays receive $100.

Saint Stephen’s welcomed students from its sister schools in Argentina (Colegio Nacional de Monserrat) and Denmark (Eisbjerghus Internationale Efterskole) on consecutive weeks at the end of October and beginning of November. The students participated in campus activities throughout their visits and stayed in the homes of SSES host families.

Rangers from DeSoto National Memorial Park helped us celebrate on Nov. 14 as we unveiled the informational sign that will welcome visitors to the park’s new boardwalk. The artwork and design of the sign was begun two years ago by the SSES Class of 2026 when they were fourth graders. It’s now a reality and will be installed in January.

DECEMBER

- They did it again! For the sixth year in a row, the Falcons are the Manatee County Academic Challenge team champions. SSES clinched the title on Dec. 10 at home in the final meet of the season. Two Falcons - senior Kassandra Haakman and junior Adriana Vidal - also qualified to represent the county on the six-member team headed for state competition.
Stained glass in Christ Church.
Rich Clark's usual good-natured visage turns thoughtful and laser focused when he's asked to define exactly what it means for Saint Stephen's to be an Episcopal school. The chaplain searches for an answer that's perhaps easy to digest, but it's clear there is really no simple talking point to recite. While there are certain characteristics that Episcopal schools share in common, no one answer completely satisfies the question.

All Episcopal schools are distinguished by an environment where spiritual awareness is valued and God's presence in daily life is recognized, but how they get there is an individual journey. For Clark, Saint Stephen's chaplain since 2017, he moves quickly from a textbook-like definition to something much more personal.

"This is a community I've never truly experienced outside of family," he says. "You've seen the stickers on cars and t-shirts that say 'Salt Life,' right? Well, here I think it really is 'Falcon Life' – and that's more than just school pride. It's something bigger."

Saint Stephen's doesn't require families to identify a religious preference during application and the vast majority typically leave that question unanswered. However, of the 23% of the students enrolled during the 2019-20 school year who did specify a religious affiliation, only 2% identified as Episcopal – fewer than 20 students. While that may seem surprising, it's not unusual. According to the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), of the more than 160,000 students who attend 1,182 Episcopal schools worldwide, only about 25% are Episcopalian.

That trend wasn't necessarily the case at Saint Stephen's formation in 1970. Many of the school's founders were parishioners of Christ Episcopal Church. In fact, they relied on Rev. Fred Kyle, the church rector at the time, to support the concept of using its facilities to create SSES. He was in agreement, but the ultimate decision was left to the bishop of the Episcopal diocese, William Hargrave.

Several Christ Church members traveled to St. Petersburg to sit down with Bishop Hargrave in 1969 to make their case for the school. The bishop agreed, with the stipulation that Saint Stephen's would be independent of, but a mission of the Episcopal Church.

From its founding through 1987, Saint Stephen's was led by three Episcopal priests (Revs. Rodman Kypke, Louis Hayden Jr., and Bennett Barnes) who served as headmasters. But by the time of Barnes' departure, the makeup of the school had become more diverse and it was decided that Saint Stephen's would be better served by hiring an experienced educator as its leader.

Regardless of that transition, the school maintained its Episcopal approach to faith and spiritual education revolving around inclusion, understanding, compassion, character, and ethics.

The NAES "Principles of Good Practice for Chapel and Worship" describes Episcopal schools as communities established not solely for Christians but as diverse ministries of educational and human formation for people of all faiths and backgrounds. While Christian-centered, Saint Stephen's is proud of the diversity of religious faiths represented on campus. All families and children are welcomed without question. This diversity is a strength.

SSES is an "independent" Episcopal school (a school connected to a local Episcopal church but not governed by that church) rather than a "parish day" school (a school totally governed by the local church). Neighboring Christ Episcopal Church is the setting for regular services where scripture and inspiring messages are shared, prayers are offered, and student musicians perform. Chapel is an integral part of school life at every grade level. Each week, students gather in their respective divisions for 30-minute services.

Upper School students take further responsibility by planning their own chapels. It's a time when the entire school community -- Christians, Hindu, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, and people of no faith tradition — comes together to encourage individual and shared journeys of faith and spirit.

For the past six years, SSES Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen has been a member of the 21-member NAES Governing Board, which is made up of heads of school, rectors, chaplains and bishops from around the U.S.

"NAES is truly an organization that sets a high standard for how Episcopal schools conduct themselves to ensure that the institution provides a strong learning environment and one that instills the values of integrity, kindness, and appreciation of others," she says. "I have always loved that our students, because we are an Episcopal school, have the opportunity and freedom to discuss religion and attend chapel service to hear prayers and the viewpoints of others. For me, it brings us all closer to one another and to God."

According to Clark, who attended an Episcopal middle school, a Catholic high school, and also served as chaplain at the University of Florida, the reputation for academic excellence that Episcopal schools have established is interconnected with some of the basic concepts of the faith he learned as a seminarian: Do good work and strive for excellence because you have very specific gifts from God that are unique to you. Be a role model, a leader, and assert yourself in these roles.

"You have to be able to listen and to ask questions. Isn't that what also defines good education? Inviting people and connecting people is what good schools do," he says. "Saint Stephen's is a place – in the Episcopal tradition – that encourages creativity, innovation and truly proves that together we're so much stronger."

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**EPISCOPAL IDENTITY**

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1. Forever Falcon Dr. Samira Hassan ’09 eloquently addressed the Class of 2019 at graduation on May 25. Samira attended SSES from Pre-K through graduation. As an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University, she received a B.A. in behavioral biology and Spanish in 2013. Samira also holds an M.H.S. degree in biochemistry & molecular biology from JHU’s Bloomberg School of Public Health. She went on to earn her M.D. degree at the UCF College of Medicine and is now a resident in Obstetrics & Gynecology at Lehigh Valley Health Network Hospital in Allentown, Penn.

Pictured: Dr. Samira Hassan with Dr. Pullen & Alumnus Director Laurie McFeely

2. A big thank you to Kennedy (K.B.) Legler ’04, Whitney Scott ’05 and Brittany Scroggins Dickerson ’05 for talking with the senior class in September and encouraging students to apply for a Bradenton Herald Golden Herald Award. Established in 1978, the award recognizes outstanding high school seniors possessing strong characteristics of future leaders and who’ve shown their commitment to giving back to their school and the community through volunteering. Whitney, Brittany and Kennedy, all former Golden Herald Award recipients, now sit on the panel of judges who interview award candidates.

Pictured l-r: Kennedy Legler, Brittany Dickerson & Whitney Scott

3. Homecoming on Sept. 27 was a “W” for the Falcon football team with a nice turnout of graduates at the annual Alumni Tent Reception. Returning after a long hiatus were Class of ’94 alumni Christina Mann and John Farrell. With classes much smaller in the 90s, Christina noted the entire class would come to her nearby home to watch movies! Among others back to reminisce were Josh Breitwieser ’09 & family; Sisi Zhao ’09; Kaleen Nora ’04; Whitney Scott and Brittany Scroggins Dickerson from ’05; alumni and now current Falcon parents Amanda Buskirk Morris ’93, Steve Horn ’95 and wife/alumna Beth Bowie Horn ’98; and Tyler Pullen ’98 and family.

Pictured l-r: Amanda Buskirk Morris, Steve & Beth Horn, Tyler & Jennifer Pullen, Board President/Current Parents John Neal and wife Rebecca

Pictured: John Farrell ’94 & Christina Mann ’94

4. U.S. Army Captain Cameron “Cam” Ayala ’10 visited campus in October and met up with fellow alumnus Erik Schulz ’11 (assistant director at the SSES Club Falcon Fitness Center). Cam has moved to Fort Benning, Ga., where he is commander of a basic training unit. Cam reports that it is difficult work, but he finds it very rewarding to be responsible for the training and development of future U.S. Army Soldiers.

Pictured: Captain Cameron Ayala & Erik Schulz

5. Patrick Hillstrom ’09 visited an SSES classroom via Skype on Oct. 10 as a long-distance participant in the school’s Brown Bag Conversations with Alumni series. Patrick spoke with Mr. David Payne’s engineering class about his extensive experience in start-ups, business operations and development, product strategy, product management, talent management and entrepreneurship. He even touched on the ups and downs of living in San Francisco and the Silicon Valley, where he now resides. Patrick is a 2011 University of Pennsylvania alumnus.

Pictured: Patrick Hillstrom on the big (Skype) screen

6. Among alumni attending the 8th annual Alumni Happy Hour on Nov. 27 at Motorworks Brewing were accomplished Falcons Zach Bessette ’15, an Amherst College graduate working in San Francisco as a software development engineer at Amazon Web Services; Sisi Zhao ’09, an intervention therapist who recently passed her state boards and added LMHC to her title; Zack Sobel ’09, a former U.S. Army Officer and Princeton alumnus now in his second year at UCLA School of Law; and Joseph Schneider ’15, a Doctor of Physical Therapy Student at USF’s School of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Sciences.

Pictured l-r Zach Bessette, Sisi Zhao, Zack Sobel & Joseph Schneider

7. The Classes of 1999 and 2000 are gearing up for a fabulous joint 20th reunion celebration on March 14, 2020. All are invited back to campus for a tour, toast and reminiscing at 5:30 p.m., followed by ongoing festivities at a casual, local establishment. Class of 2000 friends Maryann Lawler and Rory O’Neil Facinelli, joined by Lisa Rotondo Bello and Kim Kellett Alvarez from ’99, are all on board to help rally the troops for a memorable reunion. Save the date for this celebration taking place during Saint Stephen’s 50th anniversary year.

Pictured: Patrick Hillstrom ’09 visited an SSES classroom via Skype

8. Class of 2020 seniors were the guests of honor at the annual Senior Breakfast on Nov. 5, foreshadowing their shift to alumni status upon graduation in May. This beloved tradition is held at Dr. Pullen’s welcoming home, with a bountiful buffet enjoyed in an idyllic garden setting. Class President Gus Bayard delivered a poignant speech, followed by a fun test of Falcon knowledge administered by Dr. Pullen and a rousing rendition of the school song. The students left satiated and with another warm and wonderful SSES memory to treasure.

9. Sending sweets to our sweet alumni is an October tradition at Saint Stephen’s. Our newest alumni, the Class of ’19, received festive Halloween goody bags from the Alumni Office in their college mailboxes. The packets are stuffed by current students eager for their turn to be on the receiving end of fun Falcon mail. SSES is ever thankful for its alumni family and all are cordially invited back to campus for the annual Winter Break Luncheon on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020 at noon.
Cut pieces of pool float help suspend mangrove plants in the water using a grid system of PVC pipe covered with a mesh net.
ON A MISSION FOR MANGROVES

When SSES hosts the Water is Life conference next summer, research from Team One Ocean will take center stage.

By David Glaser

Inspiration struck for Sofia Sanchez in the same place where it has for so many others – the shower. She could hardly wait to dry off, and rushed to the telephone to share her idea with friend and classmate Taylor Vara.

“I was really excited and I called her up as fast as I could and told her that I had it – we need to do something about sunscreen,” Sofia remembered.

The two, then-sophomores, represented Saint Stephen’s in December 2018 at the annual Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota. It helped to ignite their growing passion for marine science study. Part of the summit’s goal is to encourage attendees to develop action plans for their own ocean conservation projects. Sofia and Taylor came away with that motivation, and now they had an idea of how to put it into play.

“We knew that there had already been a lot of research done about the effect sunscreen has on coral bleaching,”Taylor said. “We thought we could make it more local for us by seeing what the effect is on mangroves. We have them everywhere here and they’re an important coastal protector.”

Recent studies have found that sunscreen chemicals in many popular products negatively affect coral. Oxybenzone and octinoxate, which convert sunburn-causing UV rays into harmless heat on human skin, can decrease corals’ defenses. These nanoparticles, once in the water, disrupt the coral’s reproduction and growth cycles, ultimately leading to bleaching. In essence, sunscreen has nearly the opposite effect on corals as it does on humans.

Sofia and Taylor set out to see if popular, off-the-shelf sunscreens can have similar effects on the mangroves that are so common to our area waterways. Their first challenge was to acquire mangrove samples. While Florida claims more than 555,000 acres of mangroves on public and private property, the state regulates their trimming or harvesting. The students, however, found their answer at Sarasota Military Academy, where Taylor’s father serves as head of school. SMA already had a cache of red mangrove samples in its science department and agreed to share them with its Saint Stephen’s counterparts.

Throughout the summer of 2019, Sofia and Taylor visited campus weekly to keep the samples healthy, and when school began, research commenced with the help of their Marine Science 2 classmates and teacher Allison Misiewicz.

The group set up four tanks and a control tank to test their hypothesis using different levels of reef-safe sunscreen and everyday sunscreen dissolved in water. The engineering of the research took center stage at the start as the students needed to find a way to suspend the mangrove samples in their respective tanks, but also allow for an efficient way to change tank water without damaging the samples. Through trial and error, they came up with an ingenious solution by creating a grid system of PVC pipe covered with a mesh net. The mangroves are wrapped in cut pieces of pool float and are suspended in the water using the grid. When the tank water needs to be adjusted, the students simply lift the rack system with the mangroves, make the change, and reseat the grid atop the tank.

“I’ve been impressed with the energy, focus, and drive the whole class has shown. They’ve really adopted this project as their own, whether that’s collecting data or perusing a hardware store for two hours to find the right pieces for the tanks,” Misiewicz said. “This is how real science is done. I’m not sure they realize how unique and special it is to be able to do that in high school, but, as a science teacher, that’s what gets me charged up. Most students don’t get to do this kind of research until college, maybe even until graduate school.”

After the first few months of the experiment, the results are already startling. The mangroves in the control and reef-safe sunscreen tanks are thriving. The mangrove propagules suspended in the chemical-filled sunscreen solution are exhibiting obvious distress.

The students’ research will take to a big stage next summer when it is submitted as the Saint Stephen’s entry at the Water Is Life international conference, which SSES will host in June. High school students in teams of four or less from more than 30 countries will visit campus to share their own water-themed research projects. Sofia, Taylor, and classmates Brock Gay and Alex Winterhalter will compose Team One Ocean from SSES, presenting their data to a panel of international judges in the form of a paper and scientific poster in the conference’s “Biodiversty” category.

“To not just be on Skype with them, but to be able to hear from people all over the world sharing their results is amazing,” Gay said. “And having (Water is Life) here on campus is very cool. Instead of just the research, we get to show the whole representation of what we’re doing.”
Alumni Spotlight: Paul Scovanner

By Laurie McFeeley

Ever since Paul Scovanner ‘01 was in middle school, he’s loved computers – taking them apart, fixing them and programming games. But he never would have expected that this love would lead to a Ph.D., drive him across the country to California, and land him his dream job at Google working on the popular Android phone.

Born in Virginia to Dennis and Jane Scovanner, Paul moved to Bradenton when he was just a few years old. He attended public elementary school and enrolled at Saint Stephen’s in sixth grade, thanks to the support of Headmaster John Howard. He was joined soon after by his younger brother, John (SSES ’04). Paul recalls attending middle school on the second floor of Christ Church. The high school was located in what is now the Intermediate School building, replete with its former sunken library and open classroom configuration. With classroom space limited at the growing school in those days, some classes met in the now infamous portable trailers. Even converted stores in the shopping center located where the Upper School now stands were classrooms for a time.

One of Paul’s favorite classes at Saint Stephen’s was a programming class taught by Mr. Will Southerland. Bitten by the coding bug, Paul recalls developing and writing code for a battleship game featuring very basic AI (Artificial Intelligence) as part of the final project for that class. He then worked as a technology intern for two summers under the tutelage of Mr. David Snodgress, the school’s Director of Technology and Media Services. This experience further fueled Paul’s interest in computer hardware and software. Also an avid mathematics fan, Paul joined the math team. During middle school, the team won the regional title in the Mathcounts competition. In Upper School, the team participated in Mu Alpha Theta competitions and consistently placed among the top five schools in the state. Paul credits Mr. Magnus Maccow, a formidable teacher and Department Chair, with encouraging him to join the math team and dedicate many after-school hours to practicing for competitions.

When Paul attended college at the University of Central Florida in 2001, he continued his academic interests by pursuing a Computer Science major. As the four years of college came to a close, one of Paul’s professors offered him a fellowship at UCF to study computer vision, a branch of artificial intelligence that is used to understand video and images (i.e., facial recognition in photographs). Although Paul already had a job offer at Harris Corporation in Melbourne, he decided to accept the fellowship that ultimately culminated in his earning both a master’s and a Ph.D. in computer science.

After graduating with his Ph.D., Paul applied to many different software companies, including several in Silicon Valley. When he received an offer from Microsoft to work on its Mediaroom streaming television product, he excitedly accepted, packed up his car and drove across the country to his new home in Mountain View, Calif. Paul worked at Microsoft for two years, and stayed on an additional three years working at Ericsson after the company acquired Microsoft’s Mediaroom team. Those years spent on the team paid off, and Paul became a Software Engineering Manager responsible for a streaming video product reaching 50-million devices worldwide.

Although he enjoyed his work at Microsoft and Ericsson, Paul dreamed of working at Google. He admired Google for its cutting edge products that reach billions of people around the world. In fact, when he first began applying for jobs after earning his Ph.D., Google was one of the companies to which he applied. However, Google’s reputation for its challenging interview process is well-earned, and Paul did not get an offer initially. But, during his time working at Microsoft and Ericsson, he continued applying to Google and on his fourth try, he got the offer!

Paul is now a Google Technical Program Manager for the Android phone operating system. He is responsible for the timelines, quality and overall performance of Android which runs on more than two-billion devices!

Not only did Paul’s childhood obsession with computers help him find his dream job, it also helped him find love. In 2012, shortly after moving to California, he met his future wife Samantha. Also a software engineer, Samantha works for the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and shares Paul’s love for computers and technology. They live happily with their two young sons, David (3 years old) and Michael (born October 2019).

Paul has a lesson or two to share with today’s students, along with a few flock memories he treasures. His time on the soccer team coached by Marc Jones had a great run, winning multiple regional championships and coming as close as second place in state competition. The Falcons would go on to win the state championship the following year with Paul’s brother, John, a member of that winning team.

Paul remembers senior speeches and the accompanying SSSE instruction on public speaking that helped quell the stress such a task often evokes. He also remembers a program he deems “formative,” wherein students were required to attend different religious ceremonies or services outside of school in order to experience other faiths. Paul said he found this a very valuable exercise and always felt an atmosphere of inclusiveness at Saint Stephen’s. All faiths were welcome and considered a valuable exercise and always felt an atmosphere of inclusiveness at Saint Stephen’s. All faiths were welcome and considered a complement to the School’s continuing, proud Episcopal affiliation and education.

Finally, Paul points out that achieving anything great requires a lot of persistence and dedication, but also help from family and friends. He adds that without the guidance of many educators and mentors, inspiration from fellow SSSE alumni, and the love and support of his family, none of his successful journey would have been possible.
1990s

Supervisory Special Agent Jason Kaplan ’91 was awarded the FBI’s Meritorious Achievement Medal in July. Presented by the Director of the FBI, the medal is awarded “for extraordinary and exceptional meritorious service in a duty of extreme challenge and great responsibility, extraordinary and exceptional achievements in connection with criminal or national security cases, or a decisive, exemplary act that results in the protection or the direct saving of life in severe jeopardy in the line of duty.” Upon encountering a fiery crash in November 2018, Jason helped two bystanders struggling to free a female passenger. As flames crept closer to her, he entered the car from the driver’s side and used sheer physical force to free her leg from under the mangled dashboard. Jason carried her to safety, extinguished her burning clothes and rendered first aid. His brave, decisive actions saved her life.

Dr. Lauren Peirce Carcas ’97 was honored to speak to women of all ages and stages of therapy at the 2019 Metastatic Breast Cancer Retreat on May 18. The event was sponsored by Susan G. Komen and Gilda’s Club with support of the Miami Cancer Institute, where Lauren works. She is triple board-certified in medical oncology, hematology and internal medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Lauren also did an exciting interview with Joan Lunden in August discussing treatment effects of chemotherapy in cancer patients.

Stephen D. Rees, Jr. ’97, an attorney at Icard Merrill in Sarasota, has been selected to serve as a mentor in the Booker High School Law Academy. The BHS Law Academy provides students with a rigorous academic program including coursework in law studies and criminal justice. Students receive materials, innovative instruction and real-world experience, and apply their knowledge and skills in a mock courtroom assembled for the program. The program was established by the Sarasota County Bar Association’s Council for Diversity and Inclusion. Steve graduated from Bates College in ’01 and earned his law degree at the University of Maine in ’05.

2000s

Mark Atalla ’00 leads the Medicare Advantage Value-Based Insurance Design Model and Part D Payment Modernization Model at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. At CMMI, Mark has led Medicare Advantage and Part D innovation. Previously, he was Director of Pharmacy at Fresenius Medical Care and a managing pharmacist at pharmacy benefit managers Medco and Express Scripts. Mark holds a Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Florida and an M.B.A. in Business Administration from Yale.

Big sister Selby Wohlwend welcomed little brother Graham Steven into the family on Sept. 9. Parents Lauren Graham Wohlwend ’02 and John could not be more thrilled.

Katherine Hernandez Polenz ’04 is the proud mother of two with the arrival of daughter Edith (Edie) Fell Polenz on May 21. Edie joins brother Theo and the family lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

From Kate Arpke Houle ’97: “We came, we saw, we got inspired, we made a film, and we won the People’s Choice Award at the 2019 Fresh Coast Film Festival!” Kate wrote and directed A Cut Above, a film exploring how the history of logging and present-day competitive lumberjacking is important to residents’ sense of place in the Midwest and Northern Wisconsin. The film, a personal and authentic look into how logging and competitive lumberjacking intersect, focuses on Wisconsin, the logging era, sustainability and how the future of the sport has the chance for mainstream visibility, as well as diversity and inclusion.

Huge congratulations to Blair Dalton Bloomston ’98 on winning a 2019 Bronze STEVIE Award for Women in Business in the category Female Executive of the Year, Business Services, 10 or Less Employees. Blair works at Game On Nation as partner and VP of Business Development. She graduated from Marymount Manhattan College with a B.F.A. in Drama.

Chris Martoni ’99 is a biotechnology consultant working as a Principal Scientist for UAS Laboratories, The Probiotic Company in Canada. Chris received a B.S. in chemistry at the University of Virginia in ’03. He went on to McGill University to pursue a master’s in engineering, only to transfer to a Ph.D. program in biomedical engineering in ’05 that culminated in his doctorate degree in 2009. Chris received numerous scholarships and awards during his educational journey, authored numerous publications, and he and two colleagues are inventors holding two U.S. patents.
**Dr. Vanessa Casciola Marasco ’04** is an instructor and Coordinator of Clinical Education at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at USF, and earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction: Elementary Education at USF Tampa. Prior to working at USFSM, Dr. Marasco taught elementary school and undergraduate and graduate level education courses at USF Tampa.

Forever Falcon **Lauren Carter ’05** graduated from the University of Florida in ’09 with a B.S. and earned her M.D. at Florida State in 2014. Following her residency training at Wake Forest, Lauren attended Stanford College of Medicine and graduated on June 6, completing a dual fellowship in Pediatrics and Clinical Genetics. Lauren has moved to Charlotte, N.C. to start her career at the children’s hospital affiliated with the University of North Carolina.

Best wishes to **Caitlin Davis ’06** on her May 10 marriage to Adam Casteel at Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium. The couple, both native Floridians, met while living in Rochester, N.Y. They are back living in the sunshine state and call Bradenton home.

**Nicholas Goss ’06** was an IPO lawyer at the iconic New York firm of Latham & Watkins before moving to Credit Suisse to sit on the firm’s investment banking team. He is now on the executive team at Parallel Markets, serving as Chief Operating Officer. Parallel Markets is a software company providing an easy interface for companies to view holdings, transmit updates and engage in a process to buy and sell shares.

**Stephanie “Eleni” Sokos ’06** received the first-ever Manatee Young Professionals “MVP of the Year Award” in October. Eleni founded Sokos Social in 2014. The firm, on Main Street in Lakewood Ranch, offers digital marketing solutions and specializes in social media, blogs, SEO, graphics, and web design.

**Kayla G’Sell Kirn ’07** and husband Kevin welcomed their third child on June 19. Kolby Michael joins big sister Kali Jo and big brother Kyler Dale. The growing family lives in Imperial, Missouri.

**Stewart Moon, Jr. ’07** was named to the Business Observer’s 40 Under 40 list for 2019. Each year, the Observer recognizes 40 business leaders from Tampa to Naples who exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit and shine brightest among their peers. Honorees were recognized at a special awards reception held on Oct. 17 in Lakewood Ranch.

**John Tinsworth ’08** is loving life in Korea where he teaches EFL at an English Academy. In an effort to teach the English language the best way possible, John researched Saint Stephen’s lower school curriculum. He knows from experience that an SSES education is both top-notch and cutting edge!

After SSES graduation, **Pete Carpenter ’09** took a gap year and played professional tennis before attending Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa. on a tennis scholarship. Pete stayed on after graduation as Duquesne’s assistant tennis coach for two years, and head coach for a year. He completed his M.B.A. in finance during that time. Pete then took time away from the tennis scene and headed west to hike the Pacific Crest Trail with fellow alumnus **Ryley Delgado ’09**. After the “outdoor adventure of a lifetime,” Pete returned to Pa. and lives in Philadelphia, where he works as a project manager at Chatham Financial, a finance firm based in Kennett Square and specializing in debt and derivatives markets.

**2010s**

Hat’s off to **Dr. Jennifer “Jenny” Boothby ’10**, who received her Doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Texas in August. Jenny earned her B.S. degree from Georgia Tech in ’14 (bioengineering major/biology minor). Her dissertation was entitled, “Water-responsive Liquid Crystal Polymers for Biological Applications.” Dr. Boothby has put her Ph.D. right to work; she and husband Travis McClung have relocated to Baltimore, where Jenny is working in Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab.
Club Falcon’s own Erik Schulz ’11 was selected to be a part of Leadership Manatee. The program consists of a comprehensive series of lectures, discussions, and field trips designed to educate community leaders about the present and future needs of Manatee County. Both of Erik’s parents are Leadership Manatee alumni. Each year, a Distinguished Leader Award is bestowed in honor of Erik’s father, Kent C. Schulz, who passed away in 1996. The recognition goes to a Leadership Manatee alumna/us who has demonstrated outstanding service in the community.

Alexia “Lexy” Khella ’11 graduated with honors from George Washington University Law School on May 19. Lexy was a Lombardi Scholar as a University of Florida undergraduate. Her selection was based on a strong commitment to academic excellence, community service, leadership and public responsibility. Lexy’s brother and fellow Falcon alumnus, Lewis Khella ’14, is following in her footsteps. He is currently enrolled at the University of Florida’s Levin College of Law.

Elizabeth Djinis ’12 changed jobs at the Tampa Bay Times in August. While she thoroughly enjoyed her role as a digital producer, she has now joined the Times’ editorial board, focusing on Pinellas County issues and working to enhance the board’s digital strategy. She’ll be posting more opinion content, writing editorials and occasional columns, and she’ll manage the Times’ social media accounts.

Kudos to Shannon Morrish ’12 on her graduation from Vanderbilt University School of Nursing with a doctorate (Doctor of Nursing Practice/DNP) in August. Dr. Morrish is Board Certified and works in Adult-Gerontology, specializing in pain management at AdvancedHEALTH in Nashville, Tenn.

Alexis “Lexy” Sedillo ’13 married David Patrick Foster on Oct. 26. The wedding and reception were held at beautiful Primrose Cottage in Roswell, Ga. The venue is a captivating antebellum mansion in the city’s historic district.

Logan Schulz ’13 graduated from the honors program at Florida Gulf Coast University in ’17 after majoring in philosophy with minors in chemistry and biology. He then completed a pediatric anesthesiology internship at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons in New York and is currently a Global Health Fellow for Medical Missionaries. Logan is spending a year in Haiti at a clinic fighting acute childhood malnutrition. Prior service trips to Honduras, Nicaragua and Zambia fueled his passion for international health. He plans to pursue degrees in medicine and public health in the future.

Sebastien Cook ’14 is officially a licensed private pilot and hopes this is only the first step in a lifelong journey in aviation. He did his instruction at Propellerhead Aviation in Sanford, Fla. and recently moved to Washington, D.C.

Gabriella “Gabbi” Berlanti ’14 graduated on Dec. 5 with a master’s in Forensic and Legal Psychology from Marymount University. Gabbi has a B.A. and a B.S. from the University of Mississippi, where she studied Psychology and Criminal Justice.

Megan Carr ’14 received a B.E. (Bachelor’s in Engineering) cum laude from the University of Florida in 2018. She works at CDM Smith in Jacksonville as an environmental attorney.
Anna Boyd '15 graduated cum laude in May from Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service with a degree in Global Business and minors in Spanish and Chinese. She was also awarded an Honors Certificate in International Business Diplomacy for her graduate-level studies in this field. Anna is now working and studying in Mexico City after being named a recipient of a prestigious Fulbright Binational Business Grant.

Bryce Liebel '15 graduated from the University of Tampa’s College of Nursing in May with a BSN. She has begun her nursing career in the NICU at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg.

Jenna Turner '15 graduated from Elon in May and moved to Winston-Salem, N.C., where she’s accepted a position with Direct Travel. Jenna is working in the educational travel department, following her passion for travel and working closely with Elon’s Global Education Center.

Luke Myers '15 and classmate Gera Versfeld '15 graduated from UCF’s Burnett Honors College.

Taylor Jones '15 transferred from Santa Fe College to the University of Florida in fall 2018, where she is studying elementary education. Taylor has one more year of undergraduate study and then intends to pursue a master’s in special education.

Annie Yang '15 graduated from Elon University in May. A chemistry major, she received the Senior Chemistry Achievement Award, which included a hand-chosen book from their research mentor that best exemplified their ambitions and provided guidance for their future endeavors.

Jane Lindsay '15 graduated in June with honors from the University of St. Andrew’s in Scotland. She is now employed by Adoptions Together of Calverton, Mary., on the development team. Twin sister Paige Lindsay ‘15 graduated cum laude from Wake Forest in May. Paige is now employed by Brooksource of Birmingham, Ala. as a technical recruiter.

Griffin Donnelly '15 is a Residential Structured Finance Analyst at Goldman Sachs in New York City. He graduated from Tulane with a B.A. in Finance. Griffin was in the Tulane Scholars Program, was president of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, and a member of Alpha Kappa Psi (Business fraternity).

Lindsay Barton '15 earned a B.A. in Public Health in May from Florida Gulf Coast University and was accepted into Florida Southwestern State College’s Nursing Program in November.

Cheyenne Fauvel '16 remains at Simmons College in Boston, where she completed her undergraduate studies in three years. She is now pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy, but will walk with her class of 2020 at the Simmons graduation exercises next spring after completing her first year of graduate school.

Congratulations to Peyton Vining '17 on being named the North Coast Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Week. Peyton racked up 139 receiving yards and a TD in Denison University’s 49-0 win vs. Oberlin on Oct. 12. His 26.42 yards per catch ranked sixth in NCAA Division III football.

Sarah Glaser '18 has landed a coveted internship for summer 2020 in the U.S. State Department, Bureau of International Affairs, Office of Peace Support Operations, Sanctions and Counterterrorism in Washington, D.C. The OPO advances the Department of State’s mission to shape and sustain a more peaceful world, guiding U.S. policies on United Nations peace operations and working to maximize the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions that help countries move from conflict to stability. Sarah is a sophomore Provost Scholar in the Honors College at the University of South Florida in Tampa, majoring in political science with a focus on international human rights.

Congratulations to Robert Smith ’18 on being selected as an Honors Symposium Team Leader at UCF’s Burnett Honors College. Robert will mentor incoming freshman as they acclimate to Honors College studies and student life. He is on track to earn a B.S. in physics and enjoyed being a physics learning assistant (tutor) for the physics department during his freshman spring semester.
In June, Morgan Healey ’15 checked in with the Alumni Office during a 4½-week stint traveling and working at different motorsport races around the country and in Canada. The trip took her to Austin, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pa. and included a couple of days in Niagara Falls before she arrived at Watkins Glen, N.Y. for an event. It was then on to Toronto on July 1.

Morgan is an independent contractor and works for several racing companies, performing different jobs and roles. She enjoys visiting different places and doing a variety of jobs, all while learning every aspect of the motorsports industry. She looks to grow into the role that is best suited to her and welcomes each new opportunity.

Morgan admits that had she had been asked a year ago where she’d be today, it wouldn’t be in her current situation. But, she’s grateful to be where she is, and doing all that she is doing. When questioned about her long term goal or dream, Morgan doesn’t have a definitive answer. But, her mantra remains, “If I do the best I can today, and I do the best I can tomorrow, then down the road I should land in the best possible place and situation.”

Currently, she strives to be the Race Director for IndyCar and is doing her best to learn all she can for that role by expanding her skill sets. Should the opportunity present itself, Morgan will be well prepared.

All race cars have transponders that monitor positions, lap times and more. Morgan operates the system monitoring that data. She is also a pit lane official for the International MotorSports Association. In that role, she is active in pit lane during pit stops, making sure teams are following all rules and safety procedures. Morgan communicates directly with the crew chiefs and team managers to ensure that things happen as they should.

Another role Morgan enjoys is working as a reply technician with RaceTrack Engineering. As a reply tech, she is at the race track very early in the week preceding a race, placing cameras around the track to capture all the corners. Those camera feeds come into Race Control, enabling the race director to monitor the race as, more often than not, the entire race track is not visible all at once. During event weekends, Morgan works closely with the race director, providing him or her with all of the information necessary to properly run the race.

Morgan is currently pursuing a degree in business management from SCF, doing the majority of the studies online due to her travel schedule. She is indeed on track (no pun intended) to have the job of her dreams one day.
3rd Annual Falcon Holiday Classic

December 26–28, 2019
Hoagland Arena

Participating Schools

**Girls Teams**
- King’s Academy
- Lakewood Ranch
- Palm Harbor
- Sickles
- St. Petersburg
- Saint Stephen’s
- Whitman-Hanson
- Zephyrhills

**Boys Teams**
- Bayshore Christian
- Canterbury
- East Bay
- King’s Academy
- Mount Dora
- Saint Stephen’s
- Sycamore
- Whitman-Hanson
FALL SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

CROSS COUNTRY: The boys team established a new school best by finishing 14th out of 32 qualifying teams at the state championship meet at Tallahassee in early November. It was the highest finish ever for SSES and the first time the Falcons have ever placed in the top half of the state draw. Four Falcons crossed the finish line among the top 100 out of 232 total competitors in Class 1A, led by sophomore Michael Thomas in 36th place. SSES was sixth at regionals in Lakeland, paced by Thomas (10th) and senior Jackson Dillingham (30th).

FOOTBALL: The Falcons (9-2) fell one step short of returning to the Sunshine State Athletic Conference (SSAC) independent state championship game for the fifth straight year, falling to Orlando's The Master's Academy (the eventual SSAC champs) in the semifinals. The loss to TMA snapped a 25-game home winning streak for SSES dating all the way back to the opener of the 2016 season. Since that game, the Falcons are an amazing 41-4. The 2019 season produced a slew of highlights, including a seven-game winning streak leading into the state semis that featured wins over a public school foe (Englewood Lemon Bay), and local rivals Out-of-Door Academy and Bradenton Christian (twice). The Falcons have won eight straight versus ODA and five in a row against BCS. SSES was well represented on the SSAC post-season all-conference teams. First-team choices included RB D.J. Clark, OL/DL Dylan Davis, DL Matthew Konkol and LB Cam Vining. Honorable mentions were QB Dylan Zervos, WR/DL Ty Barker, OL Alex Sket, DB Joel Erby, DB Ethan Kast, and PK Nolan Winterhalter.

GOLF: Ben Long capped off an outstanding freshman season by qualifying for the state championship tournament at Howey-in-the-Hills and was named to the Sarasota Herald-Tribune All-Area Team. Long was the individual district medalist and the runner-up at regional to advance and represent SSES at state. During the regular season, he also placed second at the Sarasota/Bradenton area's most prestigious high school tournament, the Donald Ross Invitational at Sara Bay Country Club. Senior Noah Cone provided another highlight when he finished atop the leaderboard to win the Manatee County Championships at Heritage Harbour in early October. Both boys and girls teams advanced as far as regional play after district runner-up efforts at the Dunedin Golf Club. The second-place finish snapped a seven-year streak of district titles for the ladies.

SWIMMING: The girls team made history by bringing home the first post-season trophy ever for SSES, earned thanks to a runner-up finish at the 1A-District 5 meet at North Shore Pool in St. Petersburg in late October. The Falcons were led by victories in the 200-freestyle relay and senior Anika Kennedy’s best effort in the 50 freestyle. Five swimmers ultimately qualified for the state championship meet in Stuart, where the girls 200-free relay team of Kennedy, Kaleigh Hart, Sofia Sanchez, and Elyse Skoumal, along with freestyler Nick Mattheys, advanced all the way to the final round.
The 2018-19 school year was punctuated, as always, by the graduation of an outstanding group of seniors. The 71 members of the Class of 2019 proudly received their diplomas on May 25 at Neel Auditorium on the campus of State College of Florida. The class was highlighted by four National Merit Scholar finalists and a National Hispanic Scholar. Every graduate was accepted to a college or university and, of those who identified a first-choice college, 92-percent were accepted to that college. Two graduates were awarded their university’s top academic scholarship, paying full tuition plus research and/or study abroad grants. Nine graduates were offered Honors College/Leadership program enrollment. Five graduates were recruited to play intercollegiate sports. In all, the class earned more than $6-million in merit aid and $1.1-million in Bright Futures awards.

Philanthropy of all kinds again highlighted the year. More than 350 parents logged volunteer hours in support of a wide variety of activities. The annual Parents’ Association Green & Gold Gala was held on Oct. 6, 2018 at the IMG Golf Club and raised nearly $123,000. The PA’s gift to SSES helped fund the purchase of a new school bus. The Game Changers Kentucky Derby Party at the Sarasota Polo Club on May 4 raised monies in support of our athletic department, and the generosity of all of our supporters through gifts to the annual fund generated approximately $240,000.

Generous donors to the “One Community, One Vision Realized” capital campaign helped us finish the first phase of that project, allowing construction to commence in summer 2019 on the Christ Church Thrift Shop and Food Pantry. With its expected completion in late January 2020, Saint Stephen's will officially take ownership of the property where our multi-purpose performing arts center will ultimately be built. That $6-million fundraising campaign is ongoing. The school’s current endowment stands at $6.2-million. More than $1-million in known legacy/estate gifts have also been communicated to the school by donors, increasing that total to approximately $7.2-million. Saint Stephen's continues to pursue its goal to increase the endowment's value to $10-million by the end of its 50th anniversary year in 2020-21.

Thanks go out to everyone who helped make it such a memorable year. Tuition revenue covers the majority of expenses involved with providing world-class education for our students, but your generosity and community spirit truly make up the difference.
### Revenue

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>Tuition</td>
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<td>Auxiliary Activities</td>
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### Expenses

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Restricted Gifts

On behalf of the students, their teachers and the community, we thank each one for his/her commitment to ensuring our world-class education for each child.

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