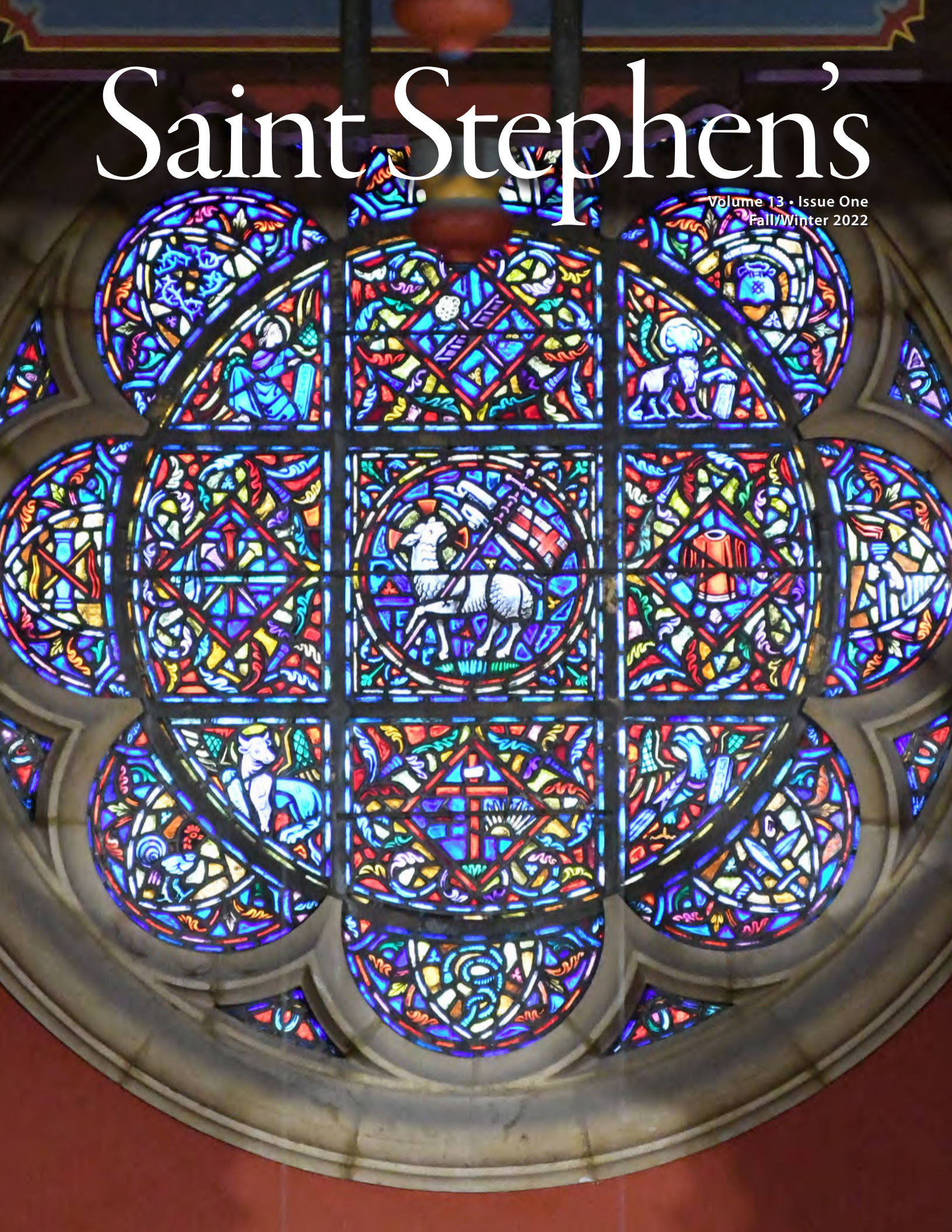


Saint Stephen's

Volume 13 • Issue One
Fall/Winter 2022





GIRL POWER

For the first time in school history, Saint Stephen's has launched a competitive weightlifting team for girls and boys during the winter sports season. The girls kicked off their inaugural season by hosting home meets against Lakewood Ranch High School and Braden River High School at the Falcon Fieldhouse.



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From the Head of School's desk . . .

The theme for the 2022-23 school year at Saint Stephen's is Life is a Journey, and this fall the journey has been both eventful and productive. Throughout the magazine you will read about how our students navigated a first semester that was filled with the excitement of big wins in the classroom, in academic and athletic competitions, on the stage and in reaching out to serve others. But they also had to deal with the unexpected – two hurricanes! Armed with determination, perseverance and youth, our students worked hard all first semester and are looking forward to semester 2.

Globally, you will learn that we welcomed visitors from both Africa and Denmark, while our advanced Spanish students had a 10-day immersive experience in different cities across Spain, including attending school in Bradenton's sister city, Barcarrota.

Reading about our alumni will make you proud of what Saint Stephen's does to prepare students for college and life.

Their journeys beyond the gates of Saint Stephen's are wonderful. It's been especially fun this fall to follow the University of Illinois football team, which features four of our alumni. As Dave Glaser calls it — Saint Stephen's North!

Looking to the future, Peter Kraft, our soon-to-be Head of School on July 1, 2023, has made two visits to campus this fall and will return again in January, March, and May. My weekly calls with him not only help Peter better understand Saint Stephen's, but also make me happy to know his beliefs and philosophies in education align with what we do at Saint Stephen's.

Each month that goes by is full of a "last event" for me. As I reflect on my 35 years at Saint Stephen's, the last 20 as Head of School, I only dwell on how thankful I am to have had the honor to be a part of this amazing school.

Finally, check out the update about the S.T.E.A.M. Center. Progress is being made and you will be hearing more after the first of the year.

Enjoy reading,



On Campus

DECEMBER



■ In the season finale on Dec. 6, the host Falcons' Green and Gold academic teams secured the No. 1 and No. 2 spots, outscoring all public school teams for the 2022 county championship. Seniors Elaina Bayard

and Jackson Nealis, as top individual scorers over the course of the season, qualified to represent Manatee County as members of the six-student team that will travel to state competition in the 2023 Commissioner's Academic Challenge.

■ The Honors Marine Science 3 class welcomed Dr. Terrie Bert to campus on Dec. 1. Dr. Bert is an accomplished marine scientist who recently retired following a more than 30-year career with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. She spent much of her career collecting data on stone crabs, publishing more than 150 scientific papers, running the Crustacean Research Program and the Molecular Genetics Lab.

NOVEMBER

■ There was no better way to head into Thanksgiving break on Nov. 18, than welcoming our grandparents to campus for an amazing morning showcasing all of our students. There was music from one end of campus to the other, food, photo ops, and smiles galore – and the weather couldn't have been any better for the hundreds of grandparents in attendance.

■ Sarasota WWSB television Chief Meteorologist Bob Harrigan was a special guest in the Advanced Placement Environmental Science class on Nov. 9. The timing was fortuitous as the date turned out to be the eve of Hurricane Nicole making landfall in Florida.



■ If Spectrum is your cable or internet provider, keep an eye out for some familiar faces. The new Saint Stephen's advertising campaign rolled out on Nov. 14 and will run through April 2023 on a variety of news and entertainment channels. The 30-second commercials feature eight SSES faculty members: David Johnson (Upper School English), Tyler Cotton (Upper School math), Andrew Angelo (Middle School science), Mandy Herren (Lower/Intermediate School science), Ashton Shirey (second grade), Patrick Whelan (Upper School social studies), Jennifer Batson (Intermediate School reading), and Katie Terman (second grade).

■ Two casts (Green and Gold) of talented Intermediate and Lower School students performed six sold-out shows of the Disney musical "Madagascar" in the Falcon Playhouse over three days, Nov. 15-17.

OCTOBER

■ While the Saint Stephen's community was mostly spared from the brunt of Hurricane Ian in last September, the school did its part to support its neighbors who experienced widespread destruction in Lee and Collier counties. The SSES lacrosse programs organized a drive that resulted in a massive amount of donated goods. "Superhero Day" was also held on campus, where students, faculty, and staff donned their best superhero gear in exchange for a monetary donation. More than \$7,500 was collected for relief efforts.

SEPTEMBER

■ Middle School teacher Tony Haakman was named the state's Latin Teacher of the Year by the Classical Association of Florida. He's the third SSES Latin teacher to win this award since the association began handing it out in 1981. Linda Mishkin won in 1997 and Geoff Revard in 2006.



■ Beating a downpour by just minutes – Saint Stephen's first graders participated in the annual 9/11 remembrance ceremony hosted by the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. The young Falcons brought some added sunshine to the solemn event by performing a series of patriotic songs.

AUGUST

■ Upper School history students received a virtual visit on Aug. 24 from 2006 SSES alumna and U.S. Park Ranger Jill Leverett. Leverett is assigned to Castillo de San Marcos in Saint Augustine, the oldest masonry fort in the U.S., dating back to 1672. Her history lesson gave the students an overview of the early French and Spanish conflict that eventually led to the fort's construction and how it evolved.

■ One of the surprises we all returned to campus to enjoy is the beautiful, newly outfitted and designed IT Inspiration Center in the Upper School. It's complete with a beautiful undersea mural created by seniors Amelia Sabo and Dagny Van Aken.



A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

A stop at airport customs provided the first challenge,
and with it came the realization that they had entered a new country . . . and a new world.

“I could look in their eyes and see that it was a little intimidating,”
Maggie Gustavus said. “There is a bit of immediate culture shock
when you’re surrounded by security people examining your
passport and asking you questions.”

For the first time in more than three years, Saint Stephen's students went abroad this fall when Gustavus and 10 of her AP Spanish students traveled to Spain on an immersive, 10-day adventure that transformed quickly from intimidating to life-changing. The group made stops in Seville, Cordoba, Madrid, and Barcarrota, home of one of SSES's eight sister schools around the world. They stayed at the homes of local families, took in the sights and sampled Spanish cuisine, tried a flamenco dance lesson, an art class, learned to prepare paella and gazpacho, visited an olive farm and olive oil processing agri-business, and much more.



It was a visit that served as a sort of re-launch point for Saint Stephen's signature global program. Although collaborative activities with schools around the world continued via videoconference throughout the restrictions placed on all of us by the Covid-19 pandemic, no face-to-face interactions had taken place since 2019. The visit to Spain signaled a welcome return of a large part of what makes the SSES program so special.

"I knew this was going to be meaningful to these students. I've taught most of them for four years and I know them pretty well, but I think I was surprised by how deeply they felt it," Gustavus said. "Some had never been out of the country or to a big city like Madrid and it really expanded their horizons.

"I hope the experience brings them more of a passion for the language and a desire to study abroad for a semester when they get to college. I know that some may never live in a Spanish-speaking country or speak much Spanish again after they leave me, but an opportunity like this teaches them that it's okay to try new things. Risk-taking isn't something to be avoided, but to be embraced."

By the halfway point of the trip, the students had fully found their footing and their confidence with the language, thanks to three days in Barcarrota and an opportunity to interact with young people their own age. Instead of a tour guide, waiter, or store clerk, discussions with their peers in Spain made them realize, "We got this! We can do this," according to the Gustavus.

The same can be said for the return of global interactions at Saint Stephen's in their entirety.

Beginning in early October, Adventina Emmanuel spent a month on campus observing classrooms and other operations to help grow programs for her school in Tanzania and create an even



stronger bond between her students and those at SSES. Tina hails from Iringa International School, the first of Saint Stephen's sister schools, and serves as the WAHI (We Are the Hope of Iringa) Project Coordinator with Global Outreach Tanzania. The voluntary after-school program is designed to motivate primary and secondary students to become strong and confident leaders as it addresses challenges faced in Tanzania education, including a lack of science, technology, and reading focus.

"Most Tanzanian youth, especially the ones in rural areas, have potential but they lack the opportunity to show their potential," Emmanuel said. "Therefore, it's our responsibility to create a space for them to showcase their abilities."

Students from another SSES sister school – Esbjerg International School in Esberg, Denmark – arrived on campus on Oct. 26 and experienced a full schedule of events before departing on Nov. 2. The 10 students and their headmaster interacted with classes in every division, participated in our Halloween celebrations, a kayak trip, and much more while being hosted by SSES families during their stay.



An earlier visit from Maria Benavides Sosa of Barcarrota helped set the stage for our class trip. Maria was in Bradenton as part of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce sister city exchange program. She is studying elementary education in college and spent a day at Saint Stephen's visiting classes and prepping our AP Spanish students for their October visit. She also hosted one of our students at her home during their visit.

Following Thanksgiving break, Anna García Guxens from Jesuïtes de Sarrià - Sant Ignasi in Spain was on campus for a day. SSES Spanish teacher Laura Vergés-Oller had made two previous visits to the PK-12 independent school in Barcelona, but this was Anna's first to Saint Stephen's. Our Upper School Spanish students were already participating in a collaborative project with students from Jesuïtes de Sarrià - Sant Ignasi, so it was a unique opportunity to meet one of the school's current faculty members.

The spring will bring a busy schedule of additional international interactions. Highlights include a return exchange trip to Denmark in March for 12 students and three teachers, a group of faculty members will attend the Global Education Benchmarking Group Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in April, as well as Saint Stephen's welcoming educators from all over the world from the Global Alliance of Leading Edge Sustainable Schools for a conference planning meeting during February break.

Alumni Event Recap Fall/Winter 2022



Graduation featured **Elizabeth Djinis '12** addressing the Class of 2022 at a beautiful ceremony held at Harvest Methodist Church on May 21. Elizabeth returned from Rome for the occasion where she is spending one year expanding her mastery of the Italian language and becoming a true international journalist. Elizabeth founded Grafon Writing Company in St. Petersburg and her literary works have appeared in The New York Times, National Geographic, Smithsonian Magazine and U.S. News and World Report, among other publications. Elizabeth is a Duke alumna majoring in Classics and Classical Languages, Literatures & Linguistics. She also studied Victorian Literature at Oxford and attended the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome.

Blair Dalton Bloomston '98 spoke to the seniors on Sept. 15 and kicked off a new program called Project 18. Created in an AP language class last year, the project's goal is to teach life skills to seniors before they head off to college. Blair is the CEO of Game On Nation in Bradenton and is an expert on game theory and game-based training. She facilitated the students working in teams to practice and hone the communication skills so necessary for success beyond the gates.



Homecoming 2022 on Oct. 7 was a spectacular day with comfortable temperatures for our alumni and Community Partner tent reception and football game. It's always fun to see alumni back and reminiscing with old friends and former teachers. We welcomed members of the class of 2002 at the tent, back to celebrate their 20th reunion weekend. They marveled at the Moore Athletic Complex and the amazing transformation of the fields since their days as Falcons.

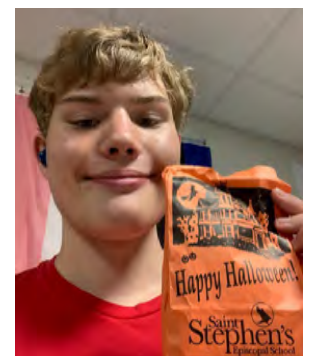


The second session of Project 18 was held on Oct. 10 and again featured alumni speakers. SSES Director of Strength and Fitness **Erik Schulz '11** and **Bobby Harrison '16** (Assistant Director of Strength and Fitness) explained the importance of establishing healthy nutritional habits in college and how they positively impact both the body and the mind.



Saint Stephen's went "On the Road" to Brooklyn, N.Y. on Oct. 19 and held an alumni reception for graduates living or working in the city. Our magnanimous host was **James Kernan '10** and the event space and view of the Manhattan skyline from the chic Wythe Hotel were nothing short of breathtaking. Dr. Pullen was thrilled to bid a personal farewell to a wonderful group of alumni who came out to wish her well on her upcoming retirement. It was indeed a night to remember with alumni guests **Griffin Donnelly '19, Alana Shukovsky '17, Reagan Sullivan '16, Blair North '15, Dylan Patterson '15**, 2011 classmates **Jeremy Perron, Lisa Subbiondo Graham** and **Alec Morris**, 2010 classmates **Kernan** and **Kathleen Addison, Patrick Hillstrom '07, Doug Baillie '06, Jesse Carah '06** and **Derek Silverman '05**.

Our newest alumni in the class of 2022 were reminded in October that they are dearly missed with the delivery of Halloween Goody Bags and accompanying notes from the Alumni Office in their college mailboxes. The Alumni Office loves to hear from graduates and **Connor Grindal '22** aimed to please, sending along a photo of him with his treats from the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne.



On Oct. 8, a small but mighty crew from the class of 2002 returned to school for a "Toast and Tour" of campus to celebrate their reunion. The group kept the night going with dinner at Motorworks in Bradenton. It was great to see **Jennifer Howard, Curtis Hamlin** and his wife/alumna **Grace Williams Hamlin '05, Scott Bernstein, Jack Braxton** and wife Meghan, and **Natalie Monosiet Shindore** with her husband, Justin. The consensus was that reunions are a blast and everyone present (Alumni Director Laurie McFeeley included!) hopes that many more classmates will return in five quick years to celebrate the 25th reunion.



Alumni Profile: Ben Petlock '90



By Laurie McFeeley

In chatting with alumnus Benjamin Petlock '90 from his home in Vietnam, where he lives with his wife, Fae, and works as a Senior Agricultural Attaché at the U.S. Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, the conversation about his Saint Stephen's days and what they mean to him belie the fact that he graduated 32 years ago.

His memories come streaming back as though events at school happened yesterday, as do the names of the teachers who impacted his life and those of fellow Falcons and their families who've come to define Ben's Saint Stephen's experience. That collection of people, many of whom Ben keeps in contact with to this day, along with a sense of belonging to a lifelong community, is what he feels distinguishes Saint Stephen's from other institutions. In particular, he fondly recalls classmates' parents whom he says, "looked after everyone." He credits many of his former teachers with providing a global education that prepared him well for college and life beyond, including his work abroad.

While Ben couldn't know what his future held at the time, in retrospect those faculty members nurtured an interest in international affairs that has culminated with Ben living in multiple countries and doing important work on behalf of the United States. Before moving to Ho Chi Minh City, he served at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, Japan, and Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ben works at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, which links U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security. As a Foreign Service Officer, Ben's favorite thing about his job is that no day is the same and that he works on a wide variety of issues. A typical workday could include being in critical government-to-government negotiations that can affect billions of dollars of bilateral agricultural trade. Other times, he travels into the Vietnam countryside to meet with local farmers and conducts research that is essential to trade reports his office issues for world markets. Ben also develops marketing campaigns and outreach events to help promote U.S. agricultural products and food culture to Vietnam's growing number of consumers.

Ben came to SSES in the sixth grade and his brother, Sam Petlock, joined him at Saint Stephen's in kindergarten and is a Forever Falcon who graduated with the class of 2000. As a student, Ben's love of literature was stoked by Mrs. Teahan's reading of "The Hobbit" to enthralled listeners at lunchtime. Ben also enjoyed Mrs. Rees's English and literature classes, which fostered his love

of reading. Ben recalls fun Middle School Latin classes with Ms. Mishkin and doing his best to master the French language with Mrs. Boguszewski in Upper School. Mrs. Margaret Sanford taught Ben's religion classes, which he found thought-provoking and served as a catalyst for lively discussions with her introduction to C.S. Lewis books. He recalls Mr. Whelan's "May Program" session on public speaking fondly, but when pushed for a favorite teacher from his SSES days, Ms. Pat Murphy shines brightly. Ben loved her U.S. history classes and her special constitutional law class piqued his interest in government and public service.

Ben went on to George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and, after graduation, he remained in D.C. and moved in with fellow Falcon alumni and best friends Jason Kaplan '91, Zack Kaplan '90, Daniel Miller '89, Will Pearce '89, and Pedro Ramos '91. The household helped foster a sense of community, especially

since everyone had just graduated from college, and Ben says their influence on him was profound. He valued their opinions and he still recalls and lives by a sentiment expressed by Daniel Miller, who passed away in 2017 and remains beloved by alumni in many Saint Stephen's classes. Daniel also treasured his SSES years, the education he received, and the abundant lifelong friendships he made. He encouraged Ben and all of his friends to always remember Saint Stephen's days and to give back to a place that was so important in all of their lives. Ben continues to take Daniel's advice to heart and is a loyal and deeply appreciated supporter of the school.



When asked if he has any advice for today's students, Ben suggests they strive to be honest, vulnerable, and open to new ideas, as well as recognize that there is always room to grow throughout life. He believes we change as people from day to day and encourages students to challenge themselves in all facets of life continually.

Ben truly values his Saint Stephen's education, and no matter where in the world his job takes him in the coming years, he'll always be grateful for his teachers and mentors, friends from a variety of classes ("a cool hallmark of an SSES education – friendships among students of all ages"), the caring parents of students who nurtured all who came through their doors, and above all, the experiences he believes shaped the man he has become in a myriad of significant ways.



A TALE OF TWO SEASONS

The football Falcons proved it's not how you start, it's how you finish during a Jekyll-and-Hyde 2022 season that culminated in the Sunshine State Athletic Conference 5A Championship. Saint Stephen's dominated Ocoee Legacy Charter, 47-7, in Lakeland on Nov. 12 to complete one of the most remarkable turnarounds in program history.

Following a 1-5 start, the Falcons ripped off five consecutive victories to win their third SSAC crown in six years. The transformation began during a week-seven triumph over Fort Myers Gateway Charter. That's when a sluggish SSES offense was energized by a change in scheme that put running back Evan Brown in the wildcat formation alongside senior quarterback Luke Donley. After averaging just 16.5 points per game over the first six, the Falcons scored more than 32 points per game during their run to the title.

"We lost some close games early because we weren't really playing as a team. But we kept at it and the guys started to gel together and understand that it was little things here and there that were costing us football games," Head Coach A.J. Brown said. "The kids took ownership of it and that really turned our season around. And when we put Evan in the wildcat, it got our offense going because we were able to start doing different things to take advantage of all the weapons we had."

Donley saved one of his best performances for last, completing eight of 10 passes for 133 yards and four touchdowns in the championship game. Fellow senior Justin Millican, playing his first season of football, finished the year with 31 receptions for 548 yards and 11 touchdowns – including three in the title game. Evan Brown, the catalyst for the Falcons' late-season offensive surge, finished his junior campaign with more than 1,300 rushing yards and 13 touchdowns. Junior linebacker Ivan Tulupov paced

the Falcons with 61 tackles and sophomore defensive end Austin Varga recorded a team-best 10 sacks.

The SSAC title was the Falcons' first since 2017. The 2016 and 2017 Saint Stephen's teams earned back-to-back all-division championships before the league broke its football post-season play into upper and lower classifications. The Falcons have now advanced to the SSAC finals five times in the past eight seasons.

BOYS GOLF FALLS SHORT OF REPEAT

After dominating the regular season, the prestigious Donald Ross Invitational, and the district and regional tournaments, the Falcons struggled during their state tournament round on Nov. 12, and finished in a three-way tie for eighth place in Class 1A. SSES was looking to defend its 2021 state championship, but was derailed by a tough day on the course and Hurricane Nicole, which altered the typical two-day event to a one-round, winner-take-all format. Senior Jet Chen shot 77 to pace the Falcons and finished tied for 25th place. It was a bittersweet close to a season in which the Falcons – led by brothers Ben and Alex Long – established themselves as the class of the area's high school teams.

SWIMMERS ADVANCE TO STATE

Five Falcons advanced all the way to the state championship meet at the Sailfish Aquatics Center in Stuart on Nov. 18, and although none brought home medals, the experience should mean a bright future for SSES swimming. Four of the five qualifiers are ninth graders or younger. Eighth grader Blair Wootson already established a new school record in the 200-yard IM this season and placed 21st in the Class 1A meet. The 200-yard free relay team of senior Elyse Skoumal, eighth grader Camryn Sanders, freshman Danielle Weathers, and seventh grader Piper Pullen swam to a 19th-place finish at Stuart.



HELP US CREATE A LEGACY FOR DR. PULLEN

With \$6-million raised, so many generous donors have already shown their support for our S.T.E.A.M. Center campaign that we've now reached a new phase.

Naming the building is a significant decision. The name can conjure up a variety of feelings, give it a personality, and categorize it. That's why it's so important to get it right. And while the process of completing a successful capital campaign presents challenging choices daily, this may be the easiest of them all.

Over the next three months, we're embarking on a \$3-million challenge to name the S.T.E.A.M. Center in honor of Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen. Her integrity, forward-thinking vision, collaborative spirit, and steadfast commitment to excellence over 35 years of service to the school define all of the qualities we hope to personify with activities in this new building.

I'm sure you'll agree that recognizing Dr. Pullen in this way just makes sense. And with your help, we'll ensure that her legacy is – quite literally – cemented at Saint Stephen's! If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved in this drive, **please contact Director of Development Elizabeth Krupnick at (941) 746-2121 ext. 1123 or email ekrupnick@saintstephens.org**

- Todd McClure, Capital Campaign Chairman





ICONIC.

That's what Chase and Sydney Brown have become in the history of the Saint Stephen's football program for their contributions during back-to-back state championship seasons with the Falcons in 2016 and 2017. And for those who knew them during their time here, SSES was clearly going to be a stepping stone to something bigger.



Pictured left to right: Sydney Brown and Chase Brown

The University of Illinois has offered a large stage for the 2018 grads and the lights shine quite a bit brighter in the Big Ten, one of college football's "power conferences," but the twin brothers continue to rise to every challenge. The Browns have led Illinois to one of its finest seasons in decades, and they'll return to the Sunshine State for the Reliaquest Bowl when UI takes on Mississippi State at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa on Jan. 2. It will be the close of another chapter in their story.

Chase led the nation in rushing for much of the 2022 season and finished second with 1,643 yards, helping him become the No. 2 rusher all-time at Illinois. He was one of three finalists for the Doak Walker Award, given annually to college football's top running

back. Sydney capped his UI career by being named a first team all-Big Ten defensive back. He played in 51 games for the Illini, snagged 10 interceptions (tied for the national lead with six as a senior), and made 319 career tackles.

Both brothers have accepted invitations to participate in the Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala., on Feb. 4. The game, and the practices leading up to it, are an opportunity to showcase their talents to NFL scouts as the Browns audition for their next stop – a career in professional football. They recently took time to discuss their journey so far . . .

[continued on next page](#)

Q: You both went from lightly recruited out of high school to all-conference college players. There must be special satisfaction in that.

Chase: It's definitely sweet, but we went to Saint Stephen's, a small school that's known for its academics, so I understand it. We didn't know what to expect from any of that when we came. We were there to make sure we were ready academically for college and to chase a dream athletically. I'm sure there are schools that wish they'd recruited us now.

Sydney: For sure. We were always confident in our abilities, but it was just part of the journey.

Q: It looked like you'd go your separate ways after graduating from Saint Stephen's. Chase signed at Western Michigan and Sydney at Illinois. Was that a conscious decision to pursue your own paths?

Chase: It wasn't anything we specifically talked about or planned. For me it really was about wanting to be a pilot and going that way for school. Syd was focused on chasing the football part of it as far as it would go. God kind of led us back together and I wouldn't change it.

Sydney: Right, it's just what ended up happening. It wasn't part of a plan, but I do think it was good for our growth, and it was a big step at the time. We'd always had each other to lean on and even when we were apart we were FaceTiming all the time. But being able to be here and graduate together is something really special.

Q: At Illinois, the marketing staff has done its best to make you guys the face of Illinois football. How did you adjust to that "celebrity" status?

Chase: It's a blessing really, and I think it just reflects on the hard work we've put in. I have people recognize me all the time – when I'm in a restaurant, pumping gas, wherever. I think the coolest thing was when they put my jersey on the alma mater statue – which is a pretty big thing here on campus. It is kind of cool. I'd be lying if I didn't admit that.

Sydney: In the moment it's always a little bit of a shock, but like Chase said, it all came with hard work, and with work you get opportunities. It's a little surreal, but this has been a dream of ours since we were 12. There are times in town where you can't walk anywhere without being stopped.

Q: Along the same lines, we've seen features about you on Good Morning America, read stories in Sports Illustrated, the Chicago Tribune, etc. Did you ever imagine those opportunities would present themselves?

Chase: When you're getting recruited, you don't think much about it. You think about making big plays and scoring touchdowns, not those other things. But people definitely have a passion for and love college football, and that's the attention that comes with it when you're successful.

Sydney: You can't force it. It just comes naturally. But it's been awesome. We just take it one experience at a time.

Q: You didn't reach your goal of winning the Big Ten, but you have to feel fortunate that you were able to play in some memorable games and bring some excitement to Illinois football that has been lacking.

Chase: It's something I'll remember for the rest of my life. When I first set foot on campus, it was not a great place. We went through a lot and there were some rough times. But I think we made up for a lot of that this year.

Sydney: In a lot of ways, it was just like when we came to Saint Stephen's. We wanted to help the program win and leave a legacy of toughness and dependability – set a standard. I walked in at Illinois with big time goals and aspirations. My first few years we didn't win, but hopefully we've helped establish a culture of winning here that they'll build on.

Q: Two of your former SSSES teammates – Peyton Vining and Dylan Davis – are also at Illinois. What's it like having those familiar faces around?

Chase: Really cool. I just love them to death. They're both extremely talented players, great guys, and it brings back a lot of good memories of Saint Stephen's having them here.

Sydney: It's been special. I could never imagine the four of us being here together. That's unbelievable to me, but it's a testament to how they work. They wouldn't be here if they weren't established players.

Q: When Covid-19 hit, you were stuck at home in Canada and couldn't get back to campus for awhile. What was that time like?

Chase: Well, it was interesting because we were in another country and couldn't get back even though we wanted to put in work with the team. I think it taught us that you have to make the most of every opportunity in front of you, no matter how big or how small. We could have said, "Well, we're in quarantine so we can just take a break," but we made the most of being home, bought a bunch of gym equipment and set ourselves up to be successful.

Sydney: It definitely was a lesson in perseverance and staying focused. You had to stay the course and believe that what you were doing now would pay off later. You learn about yourself and self reflect. A lot of it was through trial and error. We went back to what we know.

Q: Will you be leaving Illinois with your degrees?

Chase: We both are. I have a bachelor's in advertising and I'm halfway to a master's in business management. Syd's degree is in sports marketing.

Q: You have a bowl game and the Senior Bowl in the immediate future, then a chance to possibly play professionally. What goes through your mind when you think about those opportunities?

Chase: At this point, we're still considering what's best for us and whether or not we'll play in the bowl game in Tampa. But the Senior Bowl is a really big opportunity. I know that scouts from every NFL team will at least make an appearance there. So to be evaluated by the NFL alongside a bunch of NFL-caliber talent is a really amazing opportunity.

Sydney: What's funny is when you're going through the process you don't realize it's coming your way. It's amazing how it all fell into place. Right now, my focus is on really making a run at this and putting myself in a position to change my life and life for my family. We're taking it one step at a time, but I think we've been building up to this for some time. We've always practiced at being a "pro" and developing habits, routines, and accountability for ourselves. The more success you have, you find people trying to jump into your circle. It's important to keep it small with the people who have your best interests in mind. Eliminate distractions and focus on the people who love you for who you are and not what you do.

Q: The most obvious question we have to ask is what kind of impact your time at Saint Stephen's had now that you've had a few years to look back?

Chase: I will say this, and I'm not going to talk about athletics at all. The focus on academics and the relationships we built at Saint Stephen's were priceless. My leadership skills, work ethic, my whole mindset started at Saint Stephen's. It was developed there. I'm just grateful for everyone I crossed paths with. If we didn't go to Saint Stephen's we wouldn't be in this position today. That's a fact. We know we have unconditional support from everyone at Saint Stephen's and we love everyone there.

Sydney: We came in with nothing. We always had family support, but it was really like a last chance for us to change our lives. The people at Saint Stephen's – teachers, Coach Creneti, Coach Vining, Coach Brown – really poured into us. The values we learned there we lean on today. It changed our lives. Without the opportunity that came, none of this would have happened. I probably would have been working in a trade right now. We owe the world to Saint Stephen's for everything the amazing people did for us that we were around and introduced to. It was a blessing. We wouldn't be the men we are today without Saint Stephen's.

Alumni Class Notes

2000s

Congratulations to **Whitney Scott Morales '05** and her husband Christopher on the arrival of Charlie Scott Morales on June 14, 2022. Whitney practices speech-language pathology and holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She earned her degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of South Florida and holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida.



Jesse Carah '06 lives in New York and is the Team Lead at Google's Global Center of Excellence and Practices, AI & Analytics. Jesse holds a master's in political science from Washington University in St. Louis and he did his undergraduate studies at the University of Central Florida, where he majored in economics with a mathematics minor.

Cari Wurzbacher Watkins '07

has worked at United Airlines for more than eight years. She was selected for the 2021-22 Ladders season; the group is a team-based mentor program bringing together professionals with the highest merits and qualifications in the travel and meetings industry. Cari's team created an initiative focused on delivering industry awareness and education for travelers facing visible or invisible disabilities. Cari was honored with the "Mentee of the Year" award and also received the 2021 Pinnacle Award, an honor bestowed by the United Airlines Global Sales Team.



Jessica Ashley Katrandzhiyska '08 was selected as one of the "Dynamic Women" featured in Modern Luxury DC Magazine's Modern Luxury Spotlight in September. Jessica is the founder and CEO of Jessica Ashley Events and Design. Planning and design are her passion and, following many years of entrepreneurship, Jessica founded the business to pursue her dream of being one of the top designers and planners in the industry.

Congratulations to **Dr. Rebecca Loh '08** on her May 2022 marriage to Brett Harman in the stunning mansion at PARQUE Ridley Creek in Newtown, Pa. Rebecca is a Gastroenterology and Hepatology Fellow at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, where she was formerly the Chief Resident in Internal Medicine. Rebecca did her undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania and attended Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College.

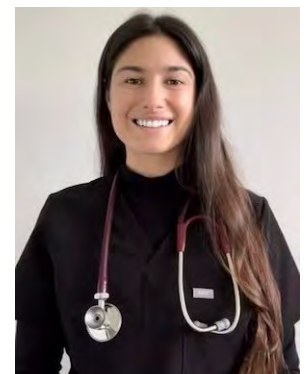
2010s

Gabriella "Gabi" Quinta Simmons '10 left New York City for Italy in October 2022 to perform in a production of West Side Story. Her husband and fellow actor, Taylor, joined the international tour of West Side Story at the same time. Gabi and Taylor will tour abroad for approximately one year.

Congratulations to **Jordan Sebastiano '11** on being named one of SRQ Magazine's 35 Under 35. Jordan and the other recipients were honored on Dec. 1 at Aloft Hotel in Sarasota. The award recognizes young professionals taking leadership positions at their companies or in the community. A former real estate broker in Colorado, Jordan returned to the area during Covid times and works at Sarabay Real Estate serving the community he loves.



Dr. Alena Bochi '11 is a licensed naturopathic physician and works at The Center for Naturopathic Medicine & Functional Nutrition in Connecticut. Alena holds a B.S. in Biology from Pace University and attended medical school at the University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine. She is currently finishing her M.S. at the University of Bridgeport Acupuncture Institute, after which she intends to pursue a master's degree in Chinese Medicine.



Congratulations to **Michelle Vogler '12** on her marriage to Rob Dee on Aug. 27, 2022 at The Concession Golf Club in Bradenton. The couple lives in Dallas, where Michelle is a recruiter at Stream Realty.

Happiness always to **Shannon Morrish '12** on her Nov. 12, 2022 marriage to Goran Manojlovic at The Bell Tower in Nashville, Tenn.

Nate Carr '12 moved to Coventry in the UK in August 2021, where he works for Amazon as a Pathways Operation Manager. Nate holds a B.E. degree in chemical engineering from the University of Florida and received his M.B.A. at the University of Washington in 2021.

Kaitlyn Moore DaSilva '12 and her husband Christian welcomed their first child, Jameson Guy DaSilva, on Oct. 8, 2022. The growing family lives in Sarasota.

Lidia Kurganova '13 interned last summer at Weil, Gotshall & Manges LLP. Next fall, following her graduation from Washington & Lee Law School, she'll join the firm's Capital Markets Group full-time in its New York office.

Monique Chicvak '13 graduated from Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota. She has worked at the college for more than three years and serves as the Interim Assistant Director of Facilities & Capital Construction and an Interior Designer/Project Manager responsible for all aspects of commercial design. She works closely with stakeholders from student leaders and general contractors to the college president, providing design and project management that "considers the past while projecting the future."

Congratulations to **Sam Lynch '13** on his marriage to Ashley Byczek on Nov. 4, 2022 at the Harborside Chapel in Safety Harbor. A beautiful reception followed at the Birchwood in St. Petersburg. Sam is a vice president at Kroll, an independent provider of risk and financial advisory solutions with a 100-year history of expertise spanning risk, governance, transactions and valuation.



Qing "Sunny" Jin '13 visited campus in November with her fiancé. Sunny graduated magna cum laude from Rice University, where she majored in mathematical economics. She lives in Seattle and works for Amazon as a manager in Analytics & Business Intelligence.

Hailey Nicklin '13 is an associate attorney at Rice Reuther Sullivan and Carroll, LLP in Las Vegas. After graduating from the University of Indiana as a psychology major, she earned her J.D. at the University of Nevada's William S. Boyd School of Law and an M.B.A. from UNLV's Lee Business School.

Devon Tallman '13 has worked for Google in Boulder, Colo. for nearly five years. She is a program manager in Partner Operations, Google Shopping. Devon graduated from the University of Denver, where she majored in marketing, communication studies, and psychology.

Valerie Arias '15 is the Assistant Director for Hispanic and Latinx Recruitment in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She was a graduate assistant for Social Justice Education at Florida State University while pursuing her M.S. in Higher Education Management. She earned her bachelor's degree at Davidson College in Art History and Classics & Classical Languages, Literatures and Linguistics.

Kudos to **Dr. Joseph Schneider '15** on passing the NPTE exam in November. Joe is now a licensed doctor of physical therapy, working in Bradenton at Manual Physical Therapy, a business founded and owned by former SSES parent Joann Pung, PT.

Brook Somerville '15 passed the Florida bar exam and has joined the Tampa office of Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel as an associate. Brook is a trial lawyer practicing primarily in maritime and admiralty law. Brook graduated summa cum laude from the University of Tampa with a B.S. in Entrepreneurship and earned her Juris Doctor degree at Stetson University College of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude.

In SSES middle school 11 years ago, **Cheyenne Fauvel-Decrombecque '16** placed a piece of paper with a drawing of a tutu and the words, "In 20 years, I will be the physical therapist for the Royal Ballet in London" in the school's time capsule. At 18, Cheyenne got a full-ride scholarship to Simmons College's accelerated doctorate of physical therapy program. Today, Dr. Cheyenne Fauvel-Decrombeque, DPT has her first job with none other than the Boston Ballet.



Ali Sammour '16 graduated cum laude from the University of Florida as a computer science major. He is a systems engineer team lead at Epic in Verona, Wisc., developing software to "help people get well, help people stay well, and help future generations be healthier."

Andrew "Drew" Vigne '16 is a QA Engineer ensuring vehicle field quality at Tesla in San Francisco. Drew earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering at UCF and graduated with honors.

SSES wishes happiness always to **Taylor McCart Fradenberg '16** and her new husband, Hil, on their Sept. 11, 2022 wedding at The French Farmhouse Venue in Collinsville, Texas. Taylor earned her B.S.R.N. at the University of Alabama and is a labor and delivery nurse in Odessa, Texas.



Jacob Westberry '16, a scholar-athlete and four-year member of the Fresno State Bulldogs football team, earned his M.B.A. in May 2022. Jacob earned his B.S. in finance in 2020.

Maryann Rompf '17 received her Master's in Accountancy from Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management

in August 2022 and is employed by Ernst and Young in Nashville, Tenn.

Kristina Schmidt '18 graduated from Boston College with a B.S. in accounting and is now a controller analyst at Goldman Sachs in New York City.

Chris Pennewill '18 graduated from Rhodes College in Nashville, Tenn. with a B.A. in Business & Personal Finance. He remained in Nashville and works as an investment banking analyst at Canaccord Genuity Group Inc. At Rhodes, Chris was the president of Rhodes Investors.

Katherine "Katie" Pierce '18 graduated from American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C. in 2022. Majoring in public relations and strategic communication, Katie works in New York City as a product analytics consultant for Amplitude.

Noah LaBelle '19 had a brilliant assist, propelling Babson College to a 1-0 win against Emerson College in the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC) Tournament final on Nov. 5. With its sixth consecutive victory, top-seeded Babson (15-3-2) claimed its third consecutive NEWMAC Tournament championship.



In the fall 2022 Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings, Florida Gulf Coast University teammates **Max Damm '19** and his partner Randy Wilson were ranked No. 50 in doubles.

Max and Randy played just two matches together this fall, but made enough of an impact to find themselves in the Top 60 rankings. Max is a finance major with a psychology minor at FGCU.

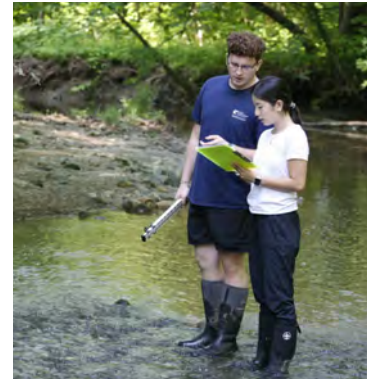


2020s

Anika Kennedy '20 assisted the Falcon swim team coaches with practices last summer and helped coach the first SSES swim meet before returning to Oberlin College to start her junior year classes and college swim team practices.



Alex Sket '20 and a fellow student did research alongside their Denison University environmental studies professor and their work is detailed in a November 2022 article entitled, "As rapid development comes to Licking County, researchers work to document and protect its waterways." The piece appeared at TheReportingProject.org, Denison's non-profit news organization that publishes work by students, faculty and community members. The research traces the ecological features and invertebrates in the streams in Central Ohio before and during Intel's move into central Ohio.



Taylor Vara '21 and her East Stroudsburg University teammates defeated West Chester University, 15-12, to win the 2022 Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Women's Lacrosse Championship in May. With the win, East Stroudsburg earned an automatic bid to the 2022 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship Tournament. The team came up just short in the Division II Championship game, falling to the University of Indianapolis, 11-9, after a record-shattering 20-2 record on the season.



Classmates Matthew Konkol '21 and **Peter Balos '21** were happily reunited when Matthew and the Johns Hopkins football team traveled to Ursinus College for a game in September. Matthew is on JHU's defensive line and is a mechanical engineering major. Peter is a member of the UC baseball team and is majoring in Applied Economics. He is also a Smith Scholar Liaison at Ursinus. In that role, he is responsible for connecting spiritual practices with the greater community.

2021-22 Year in Review

While school opened in August with Saint Stephen's still carefully navigating the lingering challenges of a global pandemic, the headline that would dominate was an upcoming transition in leadership. In September 2021, Head of School Dr. Jan Pullen announced that she would be retiring following the 2022-23 school year, setting in motion a national search for her successor.

Three finalists were brought to campus for interviews in early spring and Peter Kraft was eventually chosen by the Board of Trustees and announced in April 2022. With more than 25 years experience as a teacher and administrator, Kraft will come to Saint Stephen's from Oregon Episcopal School in Portland, where he has served as Associate Head of School since 2017. He officially begins in his new role on July 1, 2023.

The academic year produced a number of highlights. In the first in-person games since 2020, 36 Upper School and 11 Middle School students joined students from around Tampa Bay in February for the Regional Latin Forum. All 47 students earned at least 10th-place honors and SSES finished second overall. That same month, Saint Stephen's placed second overall at the Spoonbill Regional of the National Ocean Science Bowl at the USF College of Marine Science in St. Petersburg. It was the highest-ever finish in the competition by a Saint Stephen's team. Three Saint Stephen's students were part of the six-member Manatee County team that finished second in the state at the annual Commissioner's Academic Challenge, March 31-April 2 in Orlando. Falcons Jackson Nealis, Sophia Berry, and Luke Phommachanh helped Manatee win the preliminary and semi-final rounds to advance to the Division I Finals.

Library Director Christina Pommer was honored in March with the Marky Award, the highest award given by the Association of Independent School Librarians. It is presented annually to an AISL member who has made a significant contribution to the national organization. Pommer has been a leader in AISL for more than a decade.

Saint Stephen's celebrated its 47th graduating class in May with a commencement ceremony at Harvest United Methodist Church in Lakewood Ranch. The 58 seniors collected their diplomas and enjoyed an inspirational graduation address from Elizabeth Djinis, an alumnae of the Class of 2012, graduate of Duke University, and a decorated journalist. The Class of 2022 matriculated to 40 different schools in 20 different states and countries. The class featured a National Merit Scholar and multiple honors college acceptances. Seven graduates were recruited student-athletes.

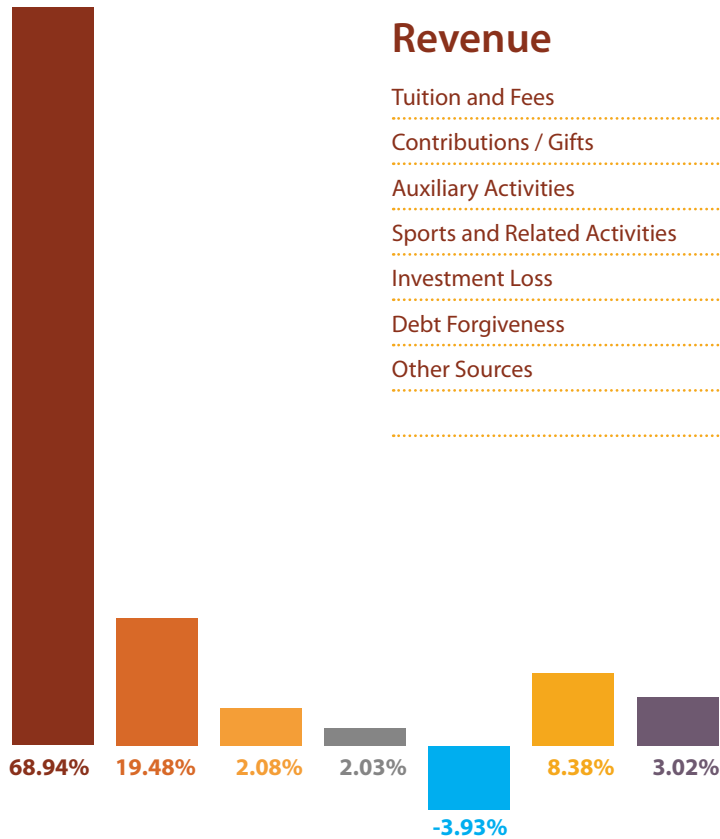
A state championship from the boys' golf team in November 2021 highlighted the year in athletics. It was the third state title in program history and the first since 2004. While no other Falcons team reached quite those heights during the year – boys tennis was state runner-up and girls lacrosse advanced to the state's final eight – SSES collected four district (girls golf, boys and girls tennis, girls soccer) and one regional championship (boys tennis).

Philanthropy of all kinds was an important part of the year. Local businesses helped support our Community Partner Program with more than \$100,000 and provided even more value through in-kind donations. During Annual Giving Week, our community of supporters donated more than \$176,000, and our endowment grew by \$61,850. The push to fund the S.T.E.A.M. Center was front and center all year as we raised \$4.132-million, putting us another step closer to making this dream building a reality.



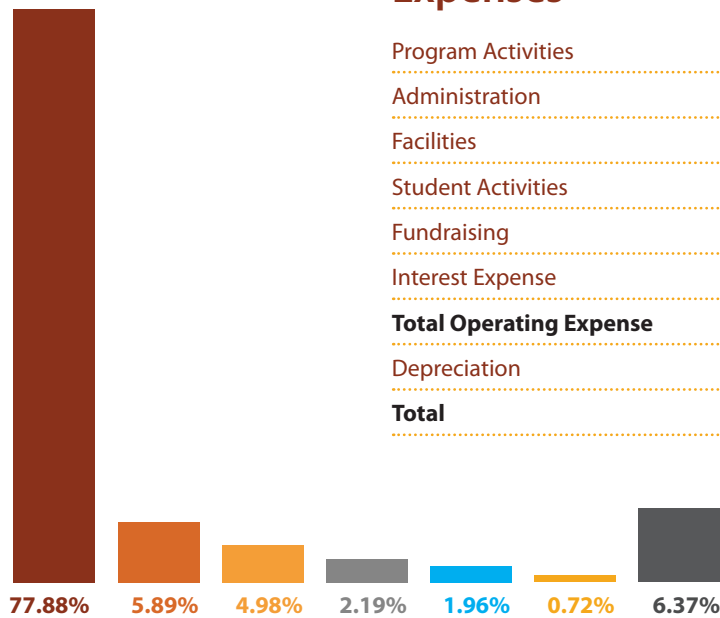
Revenue

Tuition and Fees	68.94%	\$ 14,998,189
Contributions / Gifts	19.48%	4,237,054
Auxiliary Activities	2.08%	451,731
Sports and Related Activities	2.03%	441,628
Investment Loss	-3.93%	(854,009)
Debt Forgiveness	8.38%	1,824,245
Other Sources	3.02%	657,528
		\$21,756,366



Expenses

Program Activities	77.88%	\$ 13,243,105
Administration	5.89%	1,001,382
Facilities	4.98%	847,156
Student Activities	2.19%	372,900
Fundraising	1.96%	333,471
Interest Expense	0.72%	123,138
Total Operating Expense		15,921,153
Depreciation	6.37%	1,083,387
Total		\$17,004,540



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Ms. Annette Larkin
Legler, Murphy & Battaglia
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Long
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Pettingell
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sisler
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Vining

General Restricted

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Mr. and Mrs. William Blalock
Ms. Joan Bramblett
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Callaghan
Mr. and Mrs. Brian Deters
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Ferguson
Hawthorne Family Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Stergios Kostas
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Leporin

Mrs. Jana McClure
Mr. and Mrs. Todd McClure
Ms. Chantele McDermot
Ms. Rebecca McRae
Mr. Gregg Moore
Ms. Antoinette Parker
Ms. Marguerite Pullen
Ms. Susan Sarmiento
Mr. Donald Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sterrett

Mr. Bart Whitaker
Ms. Erin Williams
Ms. Bonnye Woodlief

Lower School

Hawthorne Family Foundation

Middle School

Mr. and Mrs. James Collins

Annual Giving Fund

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Chiles Group
Circus Arts Conservatory
Detwiler's Farm Market
Fresh Market
Dr. and Mrs. Richard Hector
Jeremiah's Italian Ice
Ms. Tina Miccio
Mr. Chris Odenbach
River Club Golf Course
Smoothie King
SweetBerries Frozen Custard and Eatery
Miss Sheryl Walaszek
Mr. Earl Williams
Ms. Kelly Wood

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Mr. and Mrs. Garret Barnes
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blalock
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Carlson
Ms. Cheryl Hamilton
Mr. and Mrs. William Howard
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Keating
The Reverend and Mrs. Brock Leach
Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Leuchter
David B Lindsay Foundation, Inc
The Honorable and Mrs. F. Daniel Miller
Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Moon
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Morrow
Ms. Barbara O'Neil
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Porges
Mr. and Mrs. R. Gardner Sherrill, Sr.
Dr. and Mrs. Harris Silverman
Arthur Stillinger and Emma E. Stillinger Charitable Trust
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stoll
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Walters
Mr. and Mrs. James Wolcott, II

Founder's Circle \$10,000+

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Pakbaz

Head of School Circle \$2,500 - \$9,999

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Mr. and Mrs. William Blalock
Dr. and Mrs. David Cashen
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Mr. and Mrs. Roy Farr
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Frano
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Ms. Dixie Selip
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Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Winterhalter

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Mr. Mark Dalzell and Dr. Lihini Dalzell
Mr. XiaoFeng Gao and Ms. Xin Zhang
Mr. and Mrs. John Keenan

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Suncoast Communities Blood Bank
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The Falcon Legacy Society was created to recognize donors who have designated Saint Stephen's as a beneficiary in their estate plans or have supported the Endowment Fund in a significant way.

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