



San Miguel School
PROVIDENCE

The graduating Class of 2022, gather in the school garden with Mrs. Maloney, their first teacher here.

San Miguel School News

Spring 2022

Our Mutual Journey of Discovery

By: Janet Maloney, 5th Grade Teacher

Almost four years ago, sixteen boys and I started our journey together at San Miguel School. They were incoming 5th graders and I was the newly hired 5th grade teacher. We each had a lot to learn and a lot to discover. We wondered about our place in this experience; students wondering how they would fit in with their peers and how they would handle the challenges of a new school and I wondering how I would be received by my colleagues and how best to support the needs of each of my students. Also, as to be expected, there is a culture and a character that is unique to San Miguel. We learned our way around the building and learned the lingo of the school. We discovered the qualities expected of a Miguel Man, we learned about Morning Assembly, and we quickly learned the



Mrs. Maloney's class in 2018.

“green bench” is not a place you want to be. Ah, so much to learn!

From these beginnings, the students and I embarked on our mutual journey of discovery. In the classroom, we learned each other’s strengths and weaknesses. They learned (perhaps to their dismay!) that I had experience as the mother of five children and as a former school principal so I knew most of the ‘tricks,’ and I learned the uniqueness of their individual characters and personalities. Through hard work we were able use our strengths to reach our goals and objectives while also addressing our weaknesses. These

students learned to improve their reading skills, use higher order thinking, ask clarifying questions, stay organized, and self-advocate. But, most importantly,

they learned about themselves, both through their class work and by exploring the multitude of experiences San Miguel has to offer. They embodied the characteristics of St. John Baptist de La Salle as they learned to work to their individual strengths and develop holistically into young men.



Class of 2022 bus trip in 5th-grade!

Now, as these four years are surrealistically drawing to a close, I marvel at how these anxious fifth graders have matured into the confident eighth graders I see today. It’s this opportunity to witness

and contribute to its mission that first attracted me to San Miguel. Four years later, it is with pride that I pay tribute to the young men of the Class of 2022. They hold a special place in my heart and I admire each for their inspiration, motivation, enthusiasm, and most of all for their perseverance. Of course, I will always think of them as “my boys.”

So, with mixed emotions I bid them adieu and I look forward to witnessing their continued progress. May they continue to be a “fire burning bright” in the world. Godspeed.



Class of 2022's 5th-grade class photo.

After-School Programs Build Belonging

In October of 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics declared a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. Citing shockingly-high levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidality in children between 2010-2020, the academy only saw these levels exacerbated during the pandemic. Furthermore, “More than 140,000 children in the United States lost a primary and/or secondary caregiver, with youth of color disproportionately impacted.”*



Social Worker, Mrs. Farrell, meets with student.

These are challenging times for us all, and particularly for young people. But thanks to the vision and generosity of the greater San Miguel family, not only were

we able to beef up our mental health support this year with the hire of a full time social worker, but we have realized that many original pillars of the school program (after-school activities, close teacher/student relationships, athletics, access to counselors, small classes, etc.) are proving to be what are called “protective factors” for our boys.

Protective factors are aspects of a child’s routine and life that provide support for their proper development and sense of safety. Among these are things like proper nutrition, adequate sleep, a sense of belonging, physical activity, emotional support and opportunities to socialize with peers. When children have these supports in

place, it can be easier for them to navigate challenging times.

Recently, we decided to take a closer look at one of these factors; belonging. We administered a student survey to get a sense of the level of belonging felt by the boys at San Miguel. On a scale from “not at all” to “tremendously,” they were asked to rank statements like, “I feel like I matter at San Miguel,” “People at San Miguel understand me as a person,” or “San Miguel is a welcoming place.” The results reflected that students at San Miguel overwhelmingly feel seen and feel like they belong. As one might expect, that sense of belonging grows over the course of the four years with the strongest sense of belonging reflected in the 8th grade.



“I feel connected to teachers and staff.”

81%

of students answered “tremendously” or “quite a bit”

that they feel help build their sense of belonging. Topping the list were: sports teams, after-school clubs, and close relationships with teachers, staff, and the social worker. It makes sense—programs like Green Team, golf, flag football, crew, Cooking Club, and after-school basketball all give students the opportunity to be part of an even smaller group that has its own identity, and which in turn, creates an additional layer of belonging.

We may not be able to regulate how much sleep the boys get or even what they eat, but we can feel good knowing that the impact of our after-school offerings go way beyond exercise.

(<https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>)



The boys letting their energy out at flag football!

“I feel like I belong.”

86%

of students answered “tremendously” or “quite a bit”

Being part of a community where you are known and seen and respected for who you are can have a very positive effect on your mental health and can build resilience. You feel seen when you are selected as Miguel Man of the Week, when you are asked to give a school tour, when you are selected to water all the plants for Mrs. O’Malley, when the school sings Happy Birthday to you on your birthday, when you are singled out for performing a good deed, when your brothers pray for you when they know there’s been a loss in your family. All of these seemingly small acts show you that you are cared for and even needed in our community. This feeling of being part of something decreases feelings of isolation and increases self-esteem and confidence.

In the open-ended section of our survey, we asked the boys to list specific aspects of the school’s program

“I think San Miguel is a welcoming place.”

88%

of students answered “tremendously” or “quite a bit”

What's Cooking at San Miguel?

For many years it has been a dream for staff, students, and donors alike to have both breakfast and lunch prepared internally at San Miguel. In 2016, long-time friend and donor, Carol Peterson, began supporting our culinary program, which through renovations and many equipment updates, left us with a professionally equipped kitchen. A few weeks ago, this shared dream was made a reality. San Miguel is thrilled to welcome Darrell Lazire (shown right with students) as our School Chef!

Chef Darrell graduated from Johnson & Wales University in 1999 and has been cooking ever since! He and his wife started their own business,

Ad Hoc Culinary, offering culinary experiences through private cooking lessons, catered events, and contracted food services, which we have become the most recent beneficiary of! Arriving early each day, Chef Darrell prepares breakfast for all 64 students, ranging from eggs and bacon to pancakes and waffles with syrup!

Once the morning rush is over, he then shifts gears and begins prepping for lunch. The quality and wide variety of lunch-time offerings is no less impressive. Students have enjoyed freshly made chicken parm sandwiches, beef tacos, mac and cheese, cheeseburgers, pizza, chicken broccoli alfredo, and more! Chef Darrell loves the creative element to cooking, and takes his role very seriously, stating that preparing meals for others is a relationship that requires a great deal of trust. He is incredibly happy to be serving our community, and enjoys the daily role he plays in bettering the lives of students.



Culinary Club works with Chef Darrell!

Nutrition is a key contributor to anyone's well-being, but it particularly plays a critical role in a child's ability to learn. Teachers have already stated that students are displaying more energy and focus within the classroom, which makes sense considering that students

who once refused to eat pre-prepared meals at lunch are now happily lining up for seconds, and eagerly asking for thirds!



Students breading chicken!



JC and Isaiha helping with food prep!

Stir, Plant, Row, Throw, Let's Go!

Monday is golf at Buttonhole. Tuesday is basketball, Scholar's Club, and crew at Narragansett Boat Club. Wednesday is Green Team. Thursday is crew again, Cooking Club, flag football practice, and Scholar's Club. Friday is basketball. Sunday is the flag football games. What a week! Putting that schedule together took a sophisticated algorithm, but was worth it in order to accommodate as many programs and boys' schedules as we could. Winter season is far too short for our guys who love basketball, so Mrs. Paulo formed an after-school

basketball program. Mr. Mac has a mix of veterans and novices swinging the clubs at Buttonhole. Eleven guys are part of the Learn to Row program at NBC, with one student already in their intermediate program. Flag football has been very popular, boasting two teams (5/6 and 7/8). Coached by Mr. Kue and Mitchell Tiah, the teams play games on Sundays in the NLPA flag football league which, coincidentally is managed by SMS alum, Will Winfield '97. Both teams are 3-1 as they head into the playoffs!

Cooking Club remains a top choice for many, not only because they get to work under the tutelage of Chef Darrell and SMS alum, Geo Barbosa, but because, come on, who doesn't love chicken parm? The garden is coming alive with bright colored flowers and vegetable starters, many of which



(l-r): Jekhobi, Sherwyn, Jayden, Dioner, and Kai are ready to play some flag football!

germinated inside in the later winter, thanks to the Green Team. Last but not least, Scholar's Club remains a popular time to do homework and get extra help on academics. To say the boys are busy and thriving would be an understatement. We are grateful to our program partners and coaches for creating these incredibly

popular opportunities which play an important role, according to the kids, in creating their strong sense of belonging (see related article).



Maurice and Miguel cooking in the kitchen!



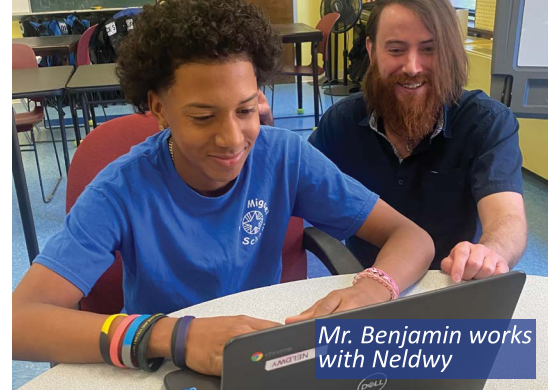
Nathen perfecting his rowing form!

Campaign Creates Learning Opportunities



To make learning be the best it can be for everyone—that is the goal of Kim Kimball (shown left), San Miguel's first Learning Specialist, who joined the staff in a part-time role this year as part of the school's ambitious Star Campaign. Long a wishlist item for teachers at the school, a learning specialist provides academic support to students no matter where they are on their academic journey. Some receive direct instruction, others come for

small group reading practice. Whether it's reading or division, she tells them, "Don't panic. You'll get there." Additionally, Kim meets with all 4th grade applicants as part of the school's admissions process just to be sure the school can fit the student's needs. Kids find solace and support with Ms. Kimball because, as she says, "You need to get to know them as individuals and validate their feelings and where they are coming from. There may be challenges at home or with friends, and it's hard for them to focus on learning if you haven't connected in some way." Kim brings extensive



Mr. Benjamin works with Neldwy

"The results of the addition of our learning specialist, Ms. Kimball, have been immediate and significant," says John Wolf, Executive Director. Commitment to adding a trained professional to the team serving our young men has meant that each student has someone with experience and expertise looking at their learning closely—from standardized test scores, diagnostic evaluation, conversations with parents and teachers, and one-on-one discussion about how they are doing. The positive effect of this important layer of care can't be overstated. The bottom line is that we are becoming much better at 'meeting students where they are at.'



Neldwy and Felix work with Ms. Kimball

experience to the job with a degree in Elementary Education from URI and 30 years in grades 1-6 in South Kingstown as a classroom teacher and literacy specialist.

Rooted in Giving and Gardening

In 2000, the 'San Miguel-Epiphany Garden Project' was featured in the Spanish Page of the Providence Journal. The article described how San Miguel students worked in the yard of Epiphany Church. While some worked the land, clearing it of old weeds, others sat on the ground painting a sign that read 'Flower Bed.' At the time, the

they intended to do with the crops. "We'll give them away," said Isaias, SMS '01, who was then 13 years old.

Twenty-two years later, and the San Miguel School community is still rooted in giving and gardening. Long-time friend, Sue O'Malley, leads the 'Green Team,' an after-school club that maintains the entirety of our outdoor and indoor gardens. With over 30 years of experience, Sue works with students weekly to teach them this incredibly valuable skill-set. The boys then take their knowledge and use it to better nearby communities, just as San Miguel students were doing two decades ago. This spring, our 7th grade class will once again volunteer to do yardwork at ReFocus, an adult-care facility located one street over from our school. Prior to COVID-19, students had created garden beds for their outdoor space. Last year, we received a Garden Grant from the Whole Kids Foundation, which will help to support and expand this program over the next few years. An ideal growth opportunity would be to



Leo, Dante, and Pablo maintaining our outdoor garden!

incorporate the importance of nutrition into our curriculum, as well as implement garden grown food into our culinary program. Though our primary focus is to first make this available to students and staff, in time we would love for our garden to serve alumni, families, and our local community as well. Who knows how far our reach will extend in another twenty years!

Please visit www.sanmiguelprov.org/publications to view the original 2000 Providence Journal article!



JD near our indoor garden!

of the garden wasn't close to being finished, never mind reaped, yet the boys already knew what

17th Annual Gala and Miguel Medal Ceremony

On Friday, April 8, the San Miguel Community (finally) reunited in person for the 17th Annual Gala and Miguel Medal Ceremony at the Pawtucket Armory Arts Center. We warmly thank our Anonymous Presenting Sponsor, along with all event sponsors, donors, and attendees who made this year's gala an incredible success. Their kind support helped us raise over \$140,000 for our Student Sponsorship Program! The entire San Miguel Community is deeply blessed by this generosity.

This annual event would not be possible without all of the wonderful individuals who are connected to the school. This year's Miguel Medal

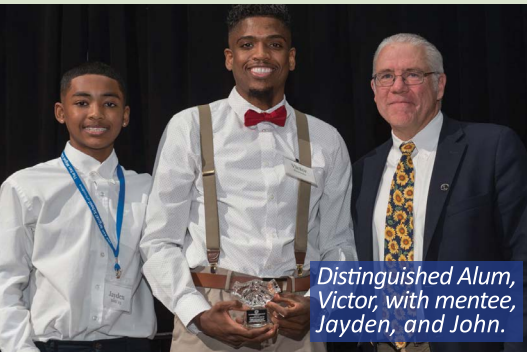


San Miguel's Student Poetry group at gala.

Recipients, Pat and John Biasuzzi, Annette Loiselle, and Saint Raphael Academy have all been deeply committed to the San Miguel Mission for many years. It was a true celebration to honor these incredible people for all of the time, support, and love they have given to our school. We were equally as honored to present the second-ever Distinguished Alumni Award to Victor Reynoso, SMS '07—a graduate who continues to embody what it means to be a Miguel Man!

Student Poetry members who put on a phenomenal performance, reciting each poem with confidence and ease! We deeply appreciate Ned and Polly Handy for graciously being our Event Auctioneers (yet again) and the Event Planning Committee for helping to organize and execute our biggest fundraiser of the year. Thank you all!

We sincerely thank our Masters of Ceremonies, Ronald and Yancarlos, SMS '22, for doing an extraordinary job leading the event, as well as our



Distinguished Alum, Victor, with mentee, Jayden, and John.



Marie and Deborah with Miguel Medal Recipient, Annette Loiselle, at gala.

A Fiesta of Friends

For the second time this year, we were blessed with beautiful weather as we gathered with dear friends and supporters of San Miguel at The Agawam Hunt Club for The De La Salle Leadership Society and Founders Legacy Society Dinner. After a gray, rainy, and cool week, the clouds finally parted, allowing the sun to shine through just in time for the event, which was held on Thursday, May 5th. Due to the creativity and quick thinking of our gracious host, Carol Peterson, the dinner was transformed into a Cinco de Mayo themed party, filled with vibrant colors, stunning flower



Happy guests surrounding event host, Carol Peterson.

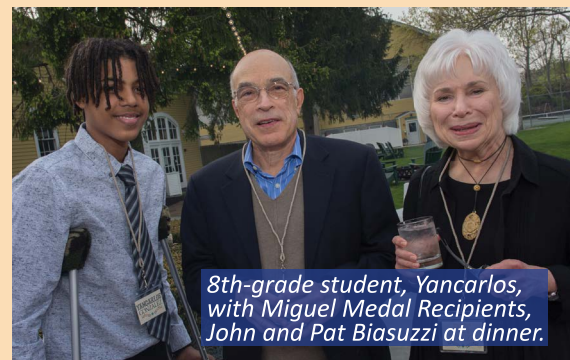
arrangements, and authentic, mouth-watering Mexican cuisine! From sunrise tequila cocktails and stuffed jalapeño poppers to plates of homemade tortillas and tender pork and seafood, all of the traditional staples were professionally executed. Before dinner was served, guests took a seat and had the chance to listen to three heartwarming stories. One from Carla Espinal, a student's mother, one from Kim Butler, a student's mentor, and one from Yancarlos, the 8th-grade student himself! Each individual spoke so sincerely from the heart about what their experience with San Miguel has meant to them, and it became quickly evident that the bond formed between

these three people over the last four years has profoundly impacted each of their lives for the better.

The speaking portion of this event is a key element that makes tangible the many reasons why those gathered together there are so deeply committed to the school's mission. Carol's annual appreciation dinner brings together San Miguel's leadership level donors, as well as those who have included the school in their estate plans, to express the school's gratitude for their commitment to students and families. We deeply appreciate the continued generosity of our host, Carol, who makes this event possible, as well as all those who were in attendance. Thank you!



(l-r): Carla Espinal and Kim Butler



8th-grade student, Yancarlos, with Miguel Medal Recipients, John and Pat Biasuzzi at dinner.

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*This newsletter is
published by the
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*For more information,
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CLASS OF 2022 HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

Aiden Alejandro
School One, '26

Jayden Arias
Saint Raphael Academy, '26

Jeancarlos Batista
La Salle Academy, '26

Neldwy Cruz
Saint Raphael Academy, '26

Ronald DeLeon
Milton Hershey School, '26

Josnell Duarte
La Salle Academy, '26

Joel Flores
St. Patrick's Academy '26

Felix Franco
Saint Raphael Academy, '26

Yancarlos Gonzalez
Providence Country Day School, '26

Isaiah Johnson
East Providence High School, '26

Jekhobi Marsh
La Salle Academy, '26
Sherwyn Martinez
La Salle Academy, '26

Aloniel Mora
Rocky Hill Country Day School, '26

Jordan Quinones
Highlander Charter School, '26

Dioner Bello-Restituyo
St. Andrew's School, '26

Jeremy Rodriguez
Saint Raphael Academy, '26

CLASS OF 2018 COLLEGE PLACEMENTS



Alex De La Cruz
Classical High School, '22
Community College of RI, '26



Yoshbel Florencio
La Salle Academy, '22
United States Marine Corps



David Santana
Bishop Hendricken High School, '22
University of Rhode Island, '26



Aaron Diaz
La Salle Academy, '22
Providence College, '26



Joseph Franco
La Salle Academy, '22
University of Rhode Island, '26



Octavio Santos Jr.
La Salle Academy, '22
University of Rhode Island, '26



Edwin Domenech
Classical High School, '22
Community College of RI, '26



Devin Guertin
Davies High School, '22
Community College of RI, '26



Pio Shabani
La Salle Academy, '22
Providence College, '26



Liva Dunner
La Salle Academy, '22
UMass Dartmouth, '26



Armani Pena
St. Raphael Academy, '22
Johnson and Wales University, '26



Kamill Suero
St. Raphael Academy, '22
Rhode Island College, '26

ALUMNI NEWS



Almanny Nunez, San Miguel Class of 2019, Rocky Hill Country Day Class of 2023 (*shown left with his family*) received the 2022 Rhode Island Civic Leadership Award on Friday, May 13th. This prestigious award recognizes two Juniors from every high school in Rhode Island for outstanding contributions to their school, local community, and state. Almanny was selected by the school leaders of Rocky Hill Country Day for his dedication to civic engagement, community service, and academic achievement. We are all very proud of Almanny and are optimistic for his bright future!



Aaron Diaz and **Pio Shabani**, San Miguel Class of 2018, La Salle Academy 2022 (*shown left*) have received the MLK Scholarship—full tuition for all four years to Providence College. Congratulations to these two Miguel Men. We couldn't be more proud, and look forward to all that they will accomplish during their time there!



Victor Reynoso, San Miguel Class of 2007 (*shown left with his mom*) graduated Cum Laude from Rhode Island College on Saturday, May 14th. He also received the second-ever Distinguished Alumni Award at this year's gala. We are amazed by all he has achieved over the years and know that with his level of drive and determination, the sky is the limit!

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