

# THE CELTIC 2018



## ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*Inspiring Student Excellence, Rooted in Catholic Tradition*

Dear Parents, Parish members and Friends of St. Nicholas,

“The future begins with what we do in the present.” Mahatma Gandhi reminds us that our decisions each day can transform the future, creating unlimited possibilities.

In just one short year, we renovated our gym, opened the Kevin Kannengeiser's Activity Center, installed a new gym roof, renovated three junior high classrooms, installed lockers and we now lunch together as a community under the big blue canopies in our quad area. Our teachers have traveled across the country to learn about the latest in curriculum instruction in language arts. We have integrated enrichment electives for our junior high students to have new experiences such as yoga, financial literacy, coding and photojournalism. We have invested nearly \$10,000 into our classroom libraries so that our students can select from the latest contemporary literature works and have a wide assortment of non-fiction selections to explore. All these measures help us build a future here at St. Nicholas School with unlimited possibilities.

Our school theme this year is “Practice Hospitality In our Classroom, School and Our Community”, taken from Romans 12:13, When God's people are in need, be ready to help them and always be eager to practice hospitality. We integrate this theme in all that we do each day, teaching our younger generation, who sometimes forget to look up and practice how to welcome each other.

I invite you to explore the newly formatted publication, *The Celtic*, and read about the school news happening around our campus. Read what our high schools are saying about how our graduates of St. Nicholas are prepared and see what impact these graduates have made in their high school environments. Examine our academic achievement scores and see how we compare to our local Los Altos public schools.

These achievements, and those to unfold in the near future, were made possible through the active gift of support to our Annual Appeal. Fundraising is a critical component to St. Nicholas's success; we depend upon it to allow tuition rates to remain affordable for all students to attend our school. Tuition covers 82% of the basic operating expenses for our school. We rely on funds raised by the fall Annual Appeal and the spring Auction to close this gap. Funds raised through the Annual Appeal go directly towards our educational programs and our tuition assistance programs. I am personally asking school families to consider a gift of \$2,500 or more to our Annual Appeal. No gift is too small.

Our unique, close community is one of the top reasons parents choose St. Nicholas School. Catholic Schools are the heart of the Catholic Church. Thank you for your support to our mission that seeds the future for our children to have a successful life full of purpose and promise. The future begins with what we do in the present.

With Much Appreciation,  
Jan Popolizio

# A Word From Our *Principal*





# Father *John*

Each year we send out an Annual Appeal brochure to share with everyone “The Good News” about St. Nicholas Catholic School and how proud we are about our mission to help form within our children the essential tools to help them succeed in life, that is, the tools to develop the Spiritual, Intellectual and Human formation. We are so committed to this mission that we want to make sure that Catholic education is accessible to everyone. In order to do this we have to keep tuition at an affordable rate but unfortunately it does not completely cover a student’s educational cost. What helps us meet our budget each year are generous donors such as yourselves.



My own story can attest to the gratitude toward those who helped subsidize our Catholic school. I grew up in a Catholic family with eight siblings and we were all blessed to be able to attend our local Catholic grade school. To this day, I have many fond memories, but I know as a child, I took more than a few things for granted. Two that come to mind are the amazing Catholic education I received as well as the fact that the tuition was made affordable for all of us to attend. If it were not for those generous donors, my siblings and I would not have received the solid foundation afforded by Catholic education, especially during the formative years of our lives. It has helped shape the person that I am today.

This is why our mission of Catholic education is so near and dear to my heart. Your generosity can and will benefit and help a child or a family you may or may not know by keeping tuition affordable. For this reason, I am asking you to consider a gift to our Annual Appeal. Each gift, no matter the size, is a statement of your belief in our mission.

With gratitude and prayers, I thank you for your support in embracing our school and its mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Rev. John L. Poncini



# Meet

## *The Giles Family*

Finding a great school is like finding a family doctor; you need the right partnership and fit for the whole family. This is our first year at St. Nicholas School, and from the beginning we have felt like we found that perfect fit. During the summer, our mentor family, the Engs, welcomed us, and Kate, their daughter, helped our daughter, Madison, ease into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class and school smoothly. Walking around the school and classrooms, you can feel the hospitality. It's not just in the marketing materials; it is genuinely pervasive. The many times someone asks, 'How was your day?' or simply says 'thank you' have made us feel right at home.



We appreciate that St. Nicholas School truly focuses on the student as a whole person, with life-long skills (GRIT) and enrichment programs in addition to a solid academic curriculum. Teaching a growth mindset and embracing diversity and teamwork in combination with different service programs – The Faith Family, TK Buddy, and Community Service - equip the students with the skills to lead, think more about others, and give back locally and globally. We are impressed with the partnership between the parents and teachers to create opportunities for the students to become independent and critical thinkers. Also, the teachers cooperate to balance students' workload with their extra-curricular activities.

For us, St. Nicholas's program of academics and life-long skills align with our core values and faith. St. Nicholas and its parish community have many events to keep both students and parents engaged, which, coupled with Fr. John's presence around the school, promote a strong Catholic community with emphasis on family success. We thank everyone for welcoming us, and we are proud to be part of the St. Nicholas and St. William school, parish, and community.

*We welcome our amazing new teachers this school year. They are such a blessing to our students.*



*From Left to right - 4th Grade: Kerry Marzoni  
5th & 6th Grade Science, 8th Grade Algebra: Jin Su Seo  
7th & 8th Grade Science, 8th Grade Religion: Angela Owens*

**New**  
*Teachers*



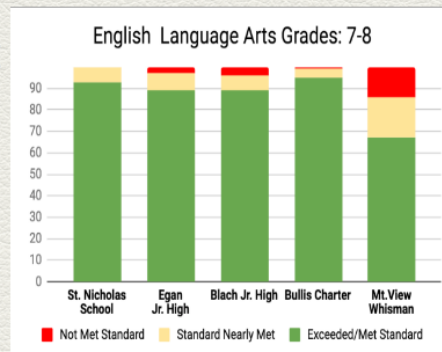
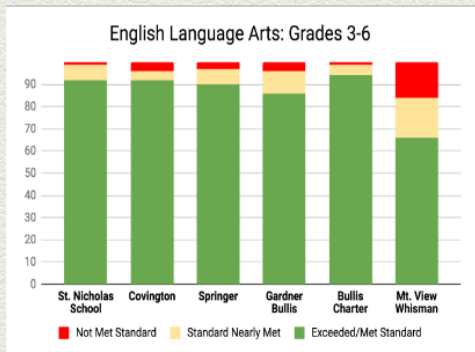
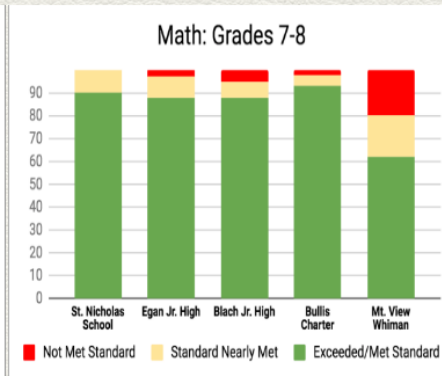
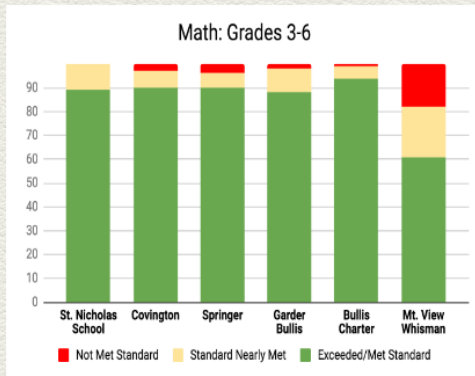


# Academics

## *Results Matter*

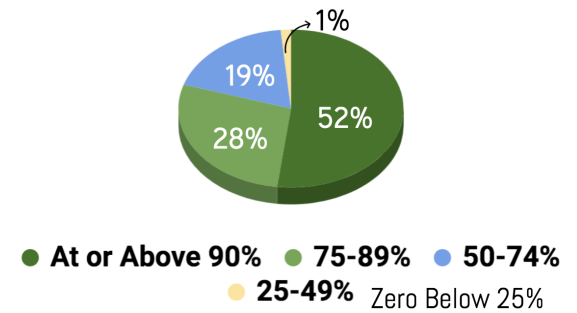
### St. Nicholas School Public School Comparison 2018

The following charts reflect the academic performance of St. Nicholas School on the 2017 CAASP\* against the following public schools near St. Nicholas School.

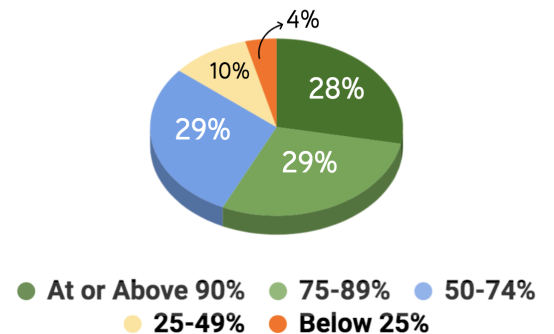


\*Renaissance STAR Assessment System data is calculated based on the student performance outlook on the April 2017 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

**Quartile Ranking Of Student Scores  
On STAR Math For Grades 1st-8th**



**Quartile Ranking Of Student Scores  
On STAR Reading For Grades 1st-8th**



Nearly **100%**

Of our students are accepted into a private high school

**100%** 7th and 8th Grade students are currently in advanced math course classes

**1/3**

Of our students participate in the annual theatre production

**\$ 143,000**

Raised for the 2017-2018 Annual Appeal

Number of sports teams offered throughout the school year **28**

**More Than 50%**

Of teachers at St. Nicholas hold a Masters Degree

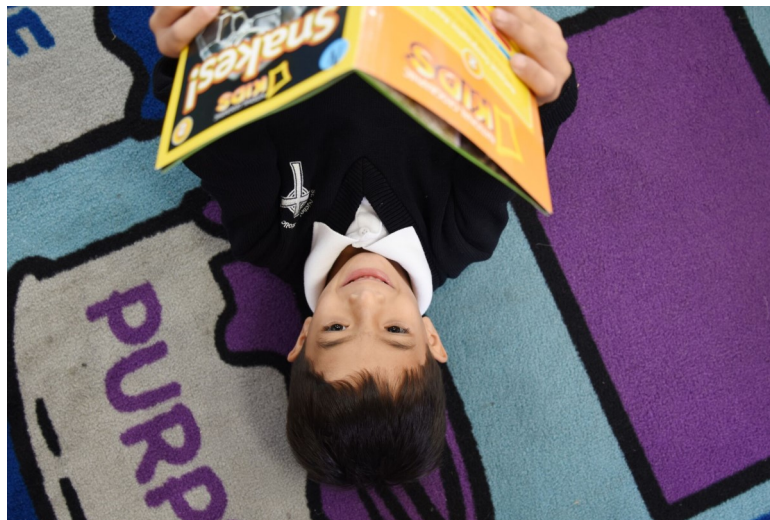


# Reading and Writing *Program*

Over the past two years, St. Nicholas School has launched a robust language arts instruction program that is designed to maximize student growth and confidence in reading and writing. Our programs go above and beyond the CA Common Core Standards and create a dynamic learning environment in which students grow by leaps and bounds.

Transforming the way we instruct students in language arts began with the implementation of the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Reading and Writing in grades K-8. Training of our teachers began at Teachers College, Columbia University where the curriculum was first imagined. This year, each week, teachers meet to discuss student learning, examine growth and share best practices for instruction. Our students have chosen to participate in our 40 book challenge this year, and their veracity for reading is translating into rich discussions about author's purpose, point of view and character development.

"They are experiencing their writing not simply as a stream of consciousness to fill the pages but as something that is more akin to the kind of intellectual property that must be crafted and developed and consciously re-worked in order to make it better," as stated by one of our parents. St. Nicholas School's success in raising the quality of teaching, resulting in high level student output has been recognized by the diocese, with over 40 educators visiting our campus to observe and learn about our comprehensive model.



Students are encouraged to develop higher level critical skills (synthesizing, analyzing and critiquing) while fostering effective reading strategies promoting purposeful, lifelong literacy.

The Writers' Workshop format focuses on a deep understanding of the critical areas of argumentative, informational and narrative writing, preparing our students for the rigors of their high school environments. The classes are structured with ample time available to provide clear goal-setting and most importantly, collaborative and constructive feedback. Students are guided in not only clean, single content writing but also taught to develop and refine strategies for writing across a curriculum integrating math, science, literature and religion. Our program is designed to help students meet and exceed rigorous global standards while creating strong writers who will have a voice in the world.



Each year St. Nicholas School recognizes the academic excellence and distinguished character of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Baccalaureate Mass. Two years ago, a parishioner and former St. Nicholas parent, Dave Beronio, graciously sponsored a new award to recognize the values of hard work and service for both a boy and girl who perform community service in our community. In addition, a monetary donation is made, in the students' names, to the service organization of their choice. The award, known as the Service Award, was named in honor of Kevin Kannengeiser, a former St. Nicholas teacher of over 30 years, who exemplified the traits that this new award personifies.

Last year however, a decision to rename the award was made after the untimely death of St. Nicholas alum, Jennifer Gonzales Shushereba. Jennifer was a counselor at the Pathway Home in Napa Valley, a non-profit organization that assists veterans. Jennifer was a true representation of the dedication and perseverance that embodies the spirit of this new award. She dedicated her life to helping others, and her sacrifice will never be forgotten.

At last year's Baccalaureate Mass, we were honored to have Jennifer's parents, Mike and Kathy Gonzales, present to share in the celebration of this award. **The recipients of last year's Service Award were Caelen Gross and Lauren Chung.** We, at St. Nicholas School, wish to thank the Gonzales family, Mr. Kannengeiser and especially Mr. Beronio for their support of our school, our students, and our mission to provide a faith-based education founded on love, support and community.

Photo - left to right: Kathy Gonzales, Kevin Kannengeiser, Caelen Gross, Lauren Chung, Mike Gonzales



In Memory of  
*Jennifer Gonzales*

Congratulations  
*Mary Bujalski*



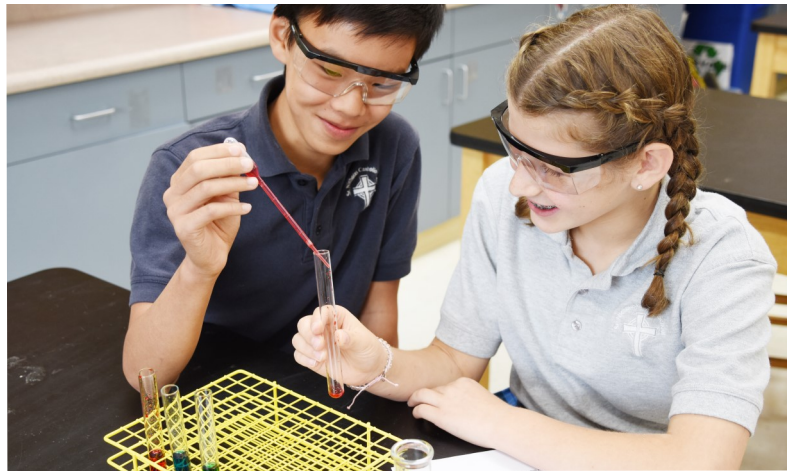
Congratulations to Mary Bujalski on her retirement! Mrs. Bujalski worked for the Diocese of San Jose for the past 24 years, spending her last 10 years at St. Nicholas School. Our science curriculum and program under the tutelage of Mrs. Bujalski, was transformed to offer our students the highest quality of educational experiences in the field of science. As many of you know and have experienced, she used a project-based learning approach to launch the Challenge Project in 8th grade, where students work to envision a company and create and market a new flavor of ice cream, gelato, sorbet or other frozen dessert. The teams develop a recipe that will attract customers, research chemical processes used in making frozen emulsion colloids, learn about proportions of fats to sugars, create a marketing campaign to sell their product and compose an expository essay detailing the entire experience. The challenge project ends with a schoolwide tasting and an award is given to the favorite flavor. She knew that these types of projects help our students learn science in real world settings.

Our alumni and student survey data suggests that Science continues to be one of our areas of strength with numerous students advancing into honor classes in Science in their high schools. This has been due to the dedication of Mrs. Bujalski over the number of years she was here at St. Nicholas School. Many alumni return to tout valuable lab skills that they learned from Mrs. Bujalski and cite her as the source of inspiration for their direction to study a particular field of science as they approach college. We are so grateful to Mrs. Bujalski's commitment to excellence and we look forward to following in her footsteps with many Challenge Projects in the future.







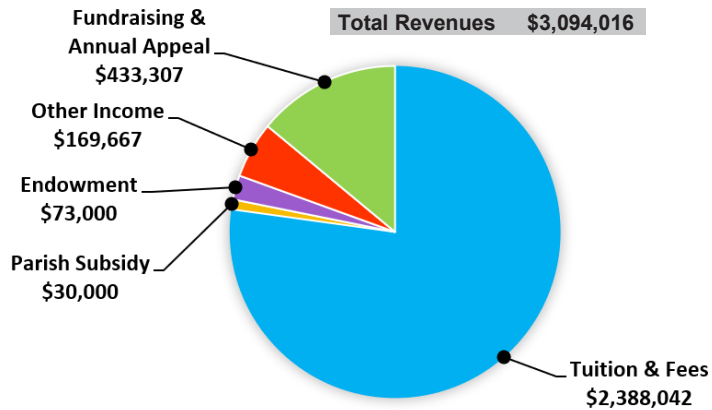




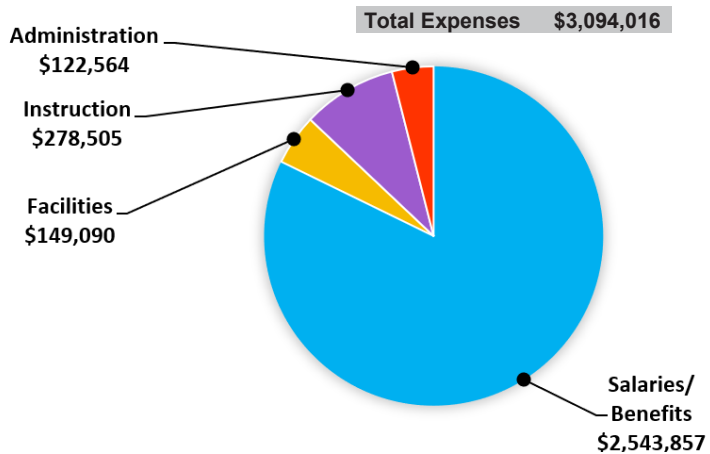
# Financials

## 2017-2018

### INCOME



### EXPENSES



St. Nicholas Catholic School



## Closing The GAP

Funds contributing to closing the GAP help to pay for our Educational Enrichment Programs, the low student to teacher ratio, and all other expenses required to operate the school. The actual costs of educating each student exceeds our annual tuition fees by nearly eleven (11%) percent. To subsidize the difference, we rely upon our Annual Appeal to keep tuition affordable in the Catholic tradition.

### The Mary O'Shea Scholarship Fund

This fund supports students who are otherwise unable to attend St. Nicholas School due to financial constraints. A gift here honors our retired, beloved long-time librarian, Mary O'Shea, who made an extraordinary impact on our school community. When you choose to support this fund, you are choosing to give the gift of Catholic education.

### The Endowment Fund

This fund is a gift that gives forever. Our Endowment Fund has a current value of almost **\$1.7** million with earnings that support our operating budget. As the principal of the endowment fund is never touched, the fund generates consistent and guaranteed interest income for our school. The predictability of this income allows us to plan for the future and sustain the level of excellence for which our school is known.

### Double Your Impact - Employee Match Programs

Many corporations match employee donations to St. Nicholas School. Please contact the Development Office at 650-941-4056 or [development@stnicholaslah.com](mailto:development@stnicholaslah.com) to find out more or you can inquire if your company participates in this program by going to: [www.doublethedonation.com/stnick](http://www.doublethedonation.com/stnick).

### Gift of Stock NO GIFT IS TOO SMALL TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION.

When you decide to give a gift of appreciated securities directly to St. Nicholas School rather than selling them and donating the proceeds, you could be creating a dual tax advantage for yourself. The full fair market value of the stock is tax deductible in the year you give the gift (as long as you have owned the stock for more than one year). You pay no capital gains tax on your profit no matter how much the securities have increased in value. The value of your stocks for income tax purposes will be set by the value of the stocks on the day that your gift is made. On actively traded securities, the value is the mean or average between the highest and lowest quoted sales price on the day of your gift.

# Annual *Appeal*



# Capital Improvements

We have demonstrated a deep-seated desire to improve the educational and environmental experience for current and future Celtics. Great work was completed over the past years, significantly improving our worn facilities and invigorating the spirit of the school. Each donation was an investment in our future. Over the past three years capital projects have strengthened our learning landscape and moved us closer towards addressing our critical campus needs. Our students have the opportunity to be inspired to learn and grow in these renovated spaces.

As a part of a two year plan, the most recent capital improvement at St. Nicholas School focused on bringing all of our original classrooms up to today's standards of teaching. We began last summer by focusing on the junior high classrooms to improve the regulation of room temperature by installing new insulated windows and fans, installing new carpet and freshened up the space with paint and new desks as well as new collaborative tables and whiteboards. New lockers were added outside the junior high classrooms. In addition, to improve safety, new locks were installed on all K-8 classrooms and now all children from grades 1-8 eat their lunch in community under the beautiful blue awnings protected from the sun. Finally, a special thanks to VMware, a global leader in cloud infrastructure and workspace technology, who donated 90 laptops to the junior high classrooms over the Summer. From this wonderful donation, students can now collaborate with other technological advancements in the classroom. These major improvements were made possible by the generosity of the parents and community and we are very blessed and grateful for their contribution to our school's future.



**2014-2015**

Technology Center

**2015-2016**

Transitional Kindergarten  
Facilities Paint  
Garden of Learning

**2016-2017**

Kevin Kannengeiser  
Activity Center





*"Tk is a bridge between preschool  
and kindergarten that prepares  
students for success in kindergarten  
and beyond! We ensure readiness  
skills in all learning areas as  
well as the social and emotional  
development of each child."*

*-Mrs. LoDestro  
TK Lead Teacher*







*"Shrek—The Musical"* Our Performing Arts program teaches our students many great skills such as public speaking, confidence, creative thinking, memorization, problem-solving, perseverance, vocal projection, collaboration, listening skills, and so much more. We look forward to next year's annual production!

# Our Alumni Are Prepared



## WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS SAY ABOUT ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL

"In my twenty years as an English teacher, twelve years as the Director of Activities and current role as the Director of Admissions, I have found that **St. Nicholas students consistently become some of our very best Lancers...** Additionally, St. Nicholas graduates understand the importance of educating the whole person, and it is common to find that our **top student leaders, performers and mentors come to us from St. Nick's.** Whether they are pioneering new programs to help our technology department, starring in our Spring Musicals or leading Student Council meetings, time and time again St. Nicholas students make an immediate impact on our campus."

**Simon Raines**  
Director of Admissions, Saint Francis High School

"For many years now, **St. Nicholas graduates** who matriculate to Archbishop Mitty bring a **superior level of academic and co-curricular excellence.** Virtually all are honors students, and most also contribute significantly to such important programs as athletics and performing arts."

**Tim Brosnan**  
President, Archbishop Mitty High School

"At Bellarmine, we cherish the relationship we have with the St. Nicholas community. The students that attend BCP are not only well **prepared for success** inside the classroom but are **actively involved and excel outside the classroom** as well. From our academic curriculum to the 100's of on-campus co-curriculars in which students can be involved, we see graduates of **St. Nicholas excelling across the board** in all we offer."

**Joseph Wagstaffe**  
Director of Admissions, Bellarmine College Preparatory

## OUR STUDENTS ATTEND THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIVE HIGH SCHOOLS:



Saint Francis High School



Bellarmino College Preparatory



Sacred Heart Preparatory



Woodside Priory High School



Archbishop Mitty High School



Presentation High School



Notre Dame High School



Serra High School



Menlo School



Castilleja School



Nathan Puentes

Graduating Class of 2014



Nathan is currently attending UC Santa Barbara, where he was recruited to play division 1 water polo.

*"St Nicholas helped teach me the values of hard work, faith and family while building friendships that will last me a lifetime." - Nathan Puentes*

St. Francis Magna Cum Laude Graduate  
USA Jr. Olympic Water Polo Champion  
USA National League Player  
All American Water Polo Player  
All American Swimmer  
St. Francis High School Senior Athlete Award recipient

St. Nicholas Class of 2014  
Saint Francis High School Class of 2018  
LMU Class of 2022

Benny is currently attending Loyola Marymount University, where he is majoring in Engineering Physics.

Saint Francis High School Blessed Basil Moreau Man of the Year  
Associated Student Body and Student Council President  
WCAL Wrestling Champion  
Peter M. Morey Award Recipient  
Student Ambassador  
Campus Ministry Retreat Leader  
Scholar Athlete



Benny Arra

Graduating Class of 2014

*"St. Nicholas School educates the "whole" child and the school community is incredible! We chose this Catholic school for all four of our children. Each of them went on to attend Saint Francis High School and are proud Celtics and Lancers!" -Patty & Dan Arra (Benny's Parents)*

*"St. Nicholas School is an amazing place and helped me get to where I am today."  
-Benny Arra*



# Our Alumni

*Are Prepared*

St. Nicholas Class of 2011  
Archbishop Mitty High School Class of 2015  
UCLA Class of 2019

Natalie is currently a Senior at UCLA where she is working toward earning her B.A. in Economics, B.S. in Statistics and minor in Film.

2018 UCLA Sharpe Fellow  
UCLA Dean's Honor List  
4th Place San Jose Spartan Super



*Graduating Class of 2011*  
**Natalie Shea**

*"St. Nicholas provided the resources, foundation, and discipline, for me to exceed in high school, from being prepared for honors classes to knowing how to study to managing my time among school, sports and clubs, and in turn, setting me up to do well in college." - Natalie Shea*

St. Nicholas Class of 2015  
Bellarmine College Preparatory Class of 2019

Outstanding Junior at Bellarmine  
As a member of Bellarmine's a capella choir,  
helped raise funds for Free The Children Project  
2018 qualifier Junior National and  
The National Freestyle Skiing Championships

*"St. Nicholas allowed me to grow as a student and as a person. I'll never forget the wonderful experiences I've had from DC to Science Camp to Mrs. Talesfore's geometry lessons."*  
*- Ryan Chen*



**Ryan Chen**  
*Graduating Class of 2015*

St. Nicholas Class of 2014  
 St. Francis High School Class of 2018  
 Santa Clara University Class of 2022

Luke is currently a Freshman at Santa Clara University where he is majoring in Business.

*"What makes St. Nicholas unique to me is the tight-knit, supportive community that fostered the education of not only my mind, but my soul and my heart as well. I know now that St. Nicholas was the foundation for who I am as a person, and I am forever grateful for that." - Luke Paulson*



**Luke Paulson**  
*Graduating Class of 2014*

St. Francis High School St. Andre Award  
 Campus Ministry Leadership Award  
 Retreat Leader  
 Varsity Basketball

*"St. Nicholas is not just a school, it is a community, a church and a family where children are taught to be caring, thoughtful & giving students. It is a school filled with teachers who are dedicated to educating children with faith woven throughout their lives. These values, this strong faith and the supportive foundation will stay with Luke and all St. Nicholas students forever."*

*- Greg & Jen Paulson (Luke's Parents)*

St. Nicholas Class of 2015  
 St. Francis High School Class of 2019

**Nick Juran**  
*Graduating Class of 2015*



Varsity Football  
 National Honor Society  
 Fellowship of Christian Athletes (Board Member)  
 Recruiting Ambassador  
 Saint Francis High School Club Mentor  
 BRIC Brothers  
 NEXTLevel Youth Flag Football Coach

*"St. Nicholas gave me great preparation in all the core academic subjects, which made the transition to St. Francis really smooth. I also made great friendships that have stayed strong even though many of us attended different schools."*

*- Nick Juran*



# Alumni

2017 ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL 2018

Principal: Ms. Jan Popolizio



Inaugural  
St. Nicholas School  
Alumni Tailgate

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

**Feb 1  
2019**

5:30-7PM



Join us as the alumni gather together before the  
8th grade tips off at the

**46th Annual  
Kevin Kannengeiser  
Basketball Classic**



Tell us how you are doing. We love hearing from our St. Nicholas Alumni.  
Contact the Development Director at  
[csanchez@stnicholaslah.com](mailto:csanchez@stnicholaslah.com)





Photo- Evening of Thanks, held in the Spring

# Donor Recognition

All gifts are welcome and appreciated. Your name will appear in next year's "The Celtic", which will acknowledge all donors to St. Nicholas School.

## Bronze Leaf

\$1,500-\$2,499

Bronze leaf on donor tree

Choice of message, name or in memory of

## Silver Leaf

\$2,500-\$4,999

Silver leaf on donor tree

Choice of message, name or in memory of

Evening of Thanks

## Gold Leaf

\$5,000-\$9,999

Gold leaf on donor tree

Choice of message, name or in memory of

Evening of Thanks

## Foundation

\$10,000 or above

Large boulder at base of donor tree

Choice of message, name or in memory of

Evening of Thanks

Families that give at the **Silver Leaf** or above will be honored at an "Evening of Thanks" reception in the Spring.

## Donor Tree

Like a nurtured tree with ever-growing roots, leaves, and branches, **St. Nicholas School** is proud to announce the production of a new **Donor Tree** to acknowledge all of the families, donors, parishioners, and friends who go above and beyond financially in supporting our **mission**.







### Change Service Requested

If you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list please email your mailing information to Catheryn Sanchez at [csanchez@stnicholaslah.com](mailto:csanchez@stnicholaslah.com). Thank you.

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