



The official cutting of the ribbon at The Star Campaign Celebration, which took place on October 26.

San Miguel School
PROVIDENCE

San Miguel School News

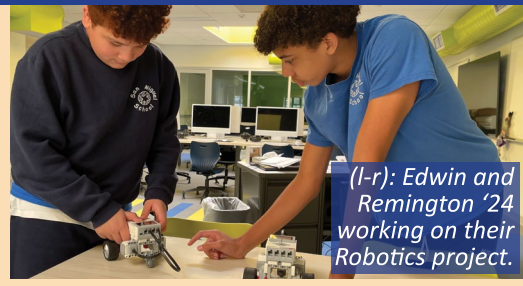
Winter 2024

STEAM Center Creates Endless Possibilities

On October 26, we cut the ribbon on the long-anticipated STEAM Center on Branch Ave. Thanks to many donors to The Star Campaign, this dream has become reality. The space is beautiful, functional, and inspiring. Currently housing technology and robotics classes, the space has only begun to fulfill its full potential. Intended to be a space for active, hands-on learning, collaboration, and creativity, in many ways it is still a blank slate.

Recently, board member and educational technology specialist, Marlon Henry, spoke with the board of directors about the unlimited potential for the space.

“San Miguel’s investment in building a beautiful, new STEAM Center is only the beginning of the vision to provide rich experiences in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. With this dedicated space, San Miguel students



(l-r): Edwin and Remington '24 working on their Robotics project.

and faculty have access to resources that make deeply integrated, interdisciplinary, and technology-enhanced learning opportunities within and beyond the academic program realistic and achievable. The STEAM Center allows SMS to imagine, design, innovate, and engage with various technologies in ways that weren’t feasible before. From robotics and graphic design courses to virtual and augmented reality coding and film production, the possibilities are as endless as the curiosity of our students and as powerful as the imagination of our community.”

He went on to say, “The STEAM center represents a significant leap forward in our ability to provide San Miguel boys with educational experiences that will prepare them to take on the challenge of advanced coursework in high school and begin to imagine themselves in career fields that don’t typically have wide demographic representation.”

Continued Inside Left

Who Was Brother Charles Kitson?

In October we dedicated the newly renovated counseling space in memory of Br. Charles Kitson, FSC. The following excerpt written by our school’s founder, Br. Lawrence Goyette, FSC, reveals why...

My longtime best friend, Brother Charlie Kitson, was usually the person I went



Br. Charles Kitson, FSC

to when something was bubbling around in my head. Also, as an introvert, I was often reticent about sharing my latest idea or brainstorm until I had all the details

ironed out. So typical of me!

It was Charlie I went to in 1989 when I began what would become the three-year process of dreaming about (then implementing) a new type of school. He and I were 40% of a Christian Brothers Community on Potters Avenue in South Providence. We could see the “lost kids” up close and personal on the streets

Continued Inside Left



Mr. Garcia and Jesse '25 in the STEAM Center.

Save the Date! **Friday, April 5, 2024**
San Miguel’s 19th Annual Gala and Miguel Medal Ceremony

"Who Was Brother Charles..." Continued

of this low-income neighborhood. Too many kids seemed to be falling through the cracks.

On our regular walks through the neighborhood he and I would often share dreams of "what could be..." By the time this dream became a reality about three years later, Charlie was following his dream of working in a remote section of Guatemala teaching indigenous kids in El Estor.

Once the school opened in September of 1993 it became clear that this dream-turned-reality was going to be much more challenging than I had ever imagined! Charlie and I spoke regularly about the future miracles looming ahead. With his support, the craziness of "our" dream was looking real.



Bob McMahon speaking at the ribbon cutting.



Charlie with students from the Class of 2017.

While Charlie was not officially a member of the school community, he did begin a Latino Parents Support Group, offered help with translations, began the Dance Team, and was available for all kinds of support. He was around school so often that everyone grew to know him and love him.

By the time Brother Charles joined the staff around 2003 the Counseling Program was up and running, helping the boys and also the families. With the dedication of the new counseling center named in Charlie's honor, he will be remembered well into the future!

A favorite quote of both Charlie's and mine is from the writing of Joseph Cardinal Suenens from Belgium, **"Happy are those who dream dreams and are ready to pay the price to make them come true."** These words also capture the spirit and the success of The San Miguel School.

"STEAM Center Creates..." Continued

Innovation leader and friend of SMS, Meg Stowe, also commented on the center's potential for impacting learning and inspiring the boys' career dreams.

"When learning is designed around student interest, with access to cutting edge technologies, students develop a collaborative capacity with transferable skills to contribute to their communities and the world around them in significant ways. Preparing students for tomorrow requires opportunities to take on very real interdisciplinary challenges today, with collisions among those in business, tech, healthcare, the arts, design, and more. Having inspiring and powerful physical spaces supports the innovator's mindsets and works to level the playing field for all. At San Miguel, program goals are driving functional spaces and vice versa in an iterative cycle of designing, testing, learning, reflecting, and re-learning. Creating extraordinary learning opportunities and developing responsive curriculum is paramount as San Miguel continues to adapt to the future."

We are lucky to have both the beautiful space and these remarkable leaders to help guide this innovative program!

Emerging Leadership

The Board of Directors of the San Miguel School recently promoted current Director of Advancement and Strategic Partnerships, Mel Bride, to the top role at the school effective July 1. Current Executive Director, John Wolf, who has led the school for seven years, will remain on staff in a part-time role focused primarily on development and donor stewardship.

"We are very excited to have a school and community leader of Mel's caliber stepping up into this role in our mission. She is an amazing communicator and coach with a deep commitment to the advancement of the young men entrusted to our care," said Wolf.

Bride, a life-long educator, joined San Miguel in 2019 and led the school through its successful \$6M Star Campaign.

"We are incredibly lucky to have Mel taking on the Executive Director role at this point in the school's history. In her five years, Mel has proven herself to be an effective fundraiser, fantastic relationship builder, and student-centered educator. We are equally thrilled that John will be staying on. His leadership through the pandemic and the



John Wolf and Mel Bride.

campaign brought great stability and confidence to the mission," said Kim Butler.

"The San Miguel mission is like no other school community I have ever been part of. From the moment I walked into the building for the first time, I felt that this is a place I was meant to be. From the boys themselves and the unbelievably committed staff to the board and volunteers, San Miguel is a family and I am honored and humbled to be part of it," said Bride.

Mel graduated from Colby College and earned her Master's degree from Middlebury College. Fluent in Spanish, Mel has lived in Spain and Honduras, and for over ten years led volunteer youth trips to Central America. Mel lives in New Bedford with her husband and serves on the boards of several youth-serving organizations there.

Mentor Breakfast

In honor of National Mentoring Month, we hosted our annual Mentor Pancake Breakfast on January 12 to express our deep appreciation to all of the incredibly dedicated and caring adult mentors who participate in this wonderful program. Students were thrilled to join them in the cafeteria, as they shared stacks of delicious pancakes smothered in syrup and whipped cream, as well as a board-game or two before heading to class.



The boys very much look forward to their mentor days. This is made evident by the joy on their faces when their names are called over the intercom, as well as expressed in the

'thank you' letters they write. Fifth-grade student, Jackson (shown above with his mentor, Sue Davis), wrote: *"I appreciate the time you spend with me. We get to have fun playing games and sharing moments in our life together. The thing I like most about you, my mentor, is that you're able to relate to the different and little moments in my life ... Thank you!"*

Wardwell Foundation Supports Miguel Men

The word opportunity certainly resonates at San Miguel. And two students are now the beneficiaries of the hard work of a young man from West Virginia who, with only a 6th-grade education, found himself in the sewing factories of Woonsocket back in the late 1800's.

Simon Wardwell lived a scrappy life, and was a born engineer who over the course of his life developed over 150 patents, with a special focus on sewing and braiding machines. Woonsocket was the epicenter of this developing technology and Mr. Wardwell grew from a worker to a designer to an entrepreneur whose inventions permanently changed the industry. Crediting his employees



SMS graduates with Ms. Saavedra.

with his eventual success, Mr. Wardwell always dreamed of creating educational opportunities for young boys like himself. He ended up being very successful and in his will, left the interest from his estate to three generations of women in his family.

In 2020, his last great grand niece passed away at the age of 97. Subsequently, The Simon Wardell Foundation was established with the goal of supporting, among other things, educational programming in the greater Blackstone Valley. When Wardwell Foundation board member, Jack Partridge, read the March 2023 Providence Journal article about San Miguel, he encouraged the foundation's Executive Director, Maureen Sheridan, to reach out to San Miguel and see if the school would be a good match for a grant from the foundation. Several firm student handshakes later, the foundation decided to support both the Student Sponsorship Program and the Graduate Support Program.

"Simon would be so proud to see the young men at San Miguel and know that his resources are helping create opportunities for them to pursue their dreams," said Sheridan.

In addition to supporting the education of two fifth graders, the Wardwell grant also supports a programmatic expansion of the school's Graduate Support Program. For example, the GSP team was able to host summer college visits to the University of Rhode Island, Providence College, Bryant University, Roger Williams University, and New England Tech for rising high school juniors and seniors. Mr. Kue and Ms. Saavedra have also coordinated monthly visits to offer support to our alumni who attend local colleges. Here at school, Grad Support has been able to offer an additional day of afterschool programming to grads looking for academic, social, or career support. This spring, the office will be offering a first-time homebuyer workshop in March and financial literacy workshop in April.

"We are so appreciative of the support we have received from The Simon Wardwell Foundation because it has enabled us to support our graduates in ways we couldn't before. There is so much more we want to do and we feel confident that our program will continue to support our grads thanks to this generosity," commented Saavedra.

Planned Gifts Are Gifts of Love

You love San Miguel. You have been involved for years, maybe even decades. You want to be remembered as someone who cared about the boys of San Miguel. But you don't have the means to give a sizable financial contribution right now.

While no one likes to think about when they are no longer here, planning now for San Miguel to benefit from a gift of love at your passing is easy to do.

Leaving a gift to San Miguel in your estate plans is as easy as:

- 1. Assigning San Miguel as a beneficiary of your IRA, 403b, 401k, or pension**
- 2. Assigning San Miguel as a beneficiary of your Life Insurance Policy**
- 3. Set up a bequest in your will or trust—Identify a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to be left to the school**

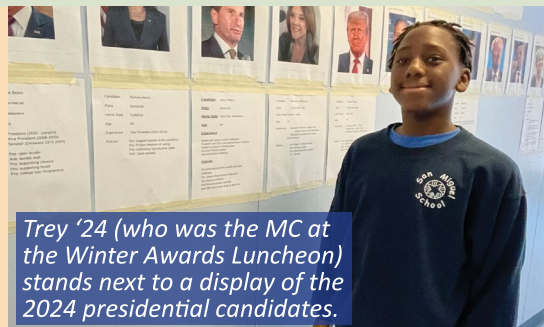
Your legacy matters to us. Let us help you make a gift plan that reflects your love for San Miguel. Have questions? Reach out to Mel Bride, Director of Advancement and Strategic Partnerships, at 401-467-9777 x117 or mbride@sanmiguelprov.org.

A New Civics Class

Political energy is rising at San Miguel! The eighth-grade Civics students, guided by their teacher Mr. Cormier, have been researching the candidates and the hot issues of 2024. This year doesn't disappoint them—there has been energy, controversy, and an ever-changing list of candidates. Each student researched a candidate and presented their party affiliation, origins and experiences, and stand on the issues. Each student was also required to give reasoned arguments about which candidate was their choice for President of the United States.

A Civics year often starts with the roots of our American political values and institutions, Civics teachers often include Current Events and hot topics of the day. Those are, indeed, part of the curriculum, but, being an election year, we get to delve into added dimensions. Students are required to cite the sources of their information, and examine their sources for relevance, political bias by the authors, and choice of words used in the document.

Secretary of State, Gregg Amore, visited San Miguel and talked to the student



Trey '24 (who was the MC at the Winter Awards Luncheon) stands next to a display of the 2024 presidential candidates.

assembly, then held forth during the Civics class. He discussed his role in elections, emphasizing the election process, security measures, how election fraud is headed off, and, when improprieties might arise, how they are handled.

Next up, the State Attorney General, Peter Neronha, will be coming to school to talk about his office's role in the American justice system. Our students in all social studies classes are preparing for their lives in college, careers, and as active citizens. In focused Civics class they get to further delve into their place in our country by acting as makers of policy and law, analysts, and future leaders.

"This is a new class and I'm getting great new knowledge from it. Now I will be able to talk politics with adults if I ever need to," commented Remington '24.

Look What's Cookin'

The San Miguel kitchen is starting to sizzle as new components join the mix.

After a brief hiatus, we are pleased to announce that our after-school Culinary Club is back in session! Each Thursday, a group of six students work alongside chef, Ben Miccinello, throughout the duration of a two-hour-long class. These Miguel Men have started to learn how to safely navigate their way around a kitchen and its cooking utensils, the importance of proper nutrition and a healthy diet, as well as how to handle and prepare foods in order to become more self-sufficient (and able to provide for others, too). Over the last few weeks, kids have made smoothies (shown right), pizza (shown left), and cookies, all from scratch!



Helping Ben is San Miguel graduate, Leury Lopez '17. Leury is a familiar face on Branch Avenue having returned to serve as our graduation speaker in 2021, then later made an appearance in The Star Campaign video, and now most



recently, to lend a hand with this exciting after-school program.

In addition to Culinary Club, we are striving to implement good nutrition into our daily meal offerings for all San Miguel students. In great thanks to Carol Peterson, a dear friend and donor of the school, we were able to first embark on this endeavor a handful of years ago. The Nutrition/Culinary Program has ebbed and flowed since, but this initiative remains a top priority.

Though at the moment we do not have an in-house chef preparing breakfast and lunch for the boys, we have been able to provide healthier options to compliment their current offerings, such as fresh fruit salad made daily by our own staff. We will continue to implement these alternatives until the potential of this program is actualized.

'What I Experience'

In addition to Civics, 'What I Experience' classes, which we refer to as WIX, are also new this year. Within this program, there are five stations that students rotate through over the course of the year, including Science/Engineering, Math, VR, Technology, and Chess. The boys spend several weeks in a class before moving to the next experience!

Through WIX, Miguel Men cultivate new skillsets and encounter new knowledge. Whether they are learning strategy in Chess, programming in VR, navigating Google Earth in Technology, or being challenged by a word problem in Math, their understanding of the world and ability to think critically are expanding.

Peyton '25 in Science.



A few concepts that students have explored in Science and Engineering include aerodynamics through paper airplanes, surface tension through marbling, as well as acids and bases through invisible ink, (among others). Needless to say, the boys are wicked excited about WIX!

Building Community Through Lasallian Networking Events

"Together and by association" is a fundamental characteristic of Lasallian charm and identity. This phrase resides at the core of all that we do and acts as a powerful reminder that as we strive to live out the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, we are never doing so alone. We are part of a worldwide family that shares in the same mission. The last few months have given the faculty and staff members of San Miguel two enriching opportunities to strengthen their Lasallian identities, while building community with people from different ministries.



Image courtesy of the DENA Communications Office

Huether Lasallian Conference

This fall was the 50th anniversary of the Huether Lasallian Conference, which was themed "Tradition and Transformation: Aspiring to Our Legacy of Educational Excellence." From November 16-18, Lasallian educators nationwide joined together in St. Charles, Illinois to build community through a variety of avenues. As educational issues were presented, reflective and analytical conversations with peers quickly followed, allowing attendees to share unique perspectives with each other. Similarly, shared meal time and socials allowed for many rich conversations to take place, and acted as a wonderful way to learn about other Lasallians and the ministries they serve.

Miguel School Conference

On January 18, a group of Lasallians from Miguel schools located in the District of Eastern North America (DENA) gathered in Eatontown, New Jersey for two days (shown above). The main purpose of this gathering was to provide an opportunity for members of each school community to join together to share ideas and best practices that may or may not be unique to their schools, while simultaneously building community with one another and reaffirming the shared mission that lies at the heart of the Miguel network. All of this, and more, made for an incredibly meaningful time together. *We are so grateful to have had both opportunities!*

SMS staff members at Huether's District Dinner.



The Reason for the Season

Each year, our school is blessed by the generosity of others. This remarkable support is what helps us to fulfill our Lasallian mission. The collective investment of our donors allows us to deliver a San Miguel education to 64 students, and through this act of giving, love, hope, and joy emerge. This altruistic, Christ-like spirit is at the heart of all that transpires within our community, and the holiday season in particular is a time when this genuine concern for others becomes increasingly tangible within our hallways. Over the last few months, many friends of the school joined together to offer support to Miguel Men and their families. Through a variety of giving programs, these individuals ensured San Miguel students a merry and bright Christmas. We are deeply thankful for all of these wonderful folks who have truly emulated *The Reason for the Season!*



Santa's Workshop by St. Sebastian's

On December 1, students and parents from St. Sebastian's School blessed the San Miguel community by setting up Santa's Workshop in our gymnasium. Adult volunteers from St. Seb's and San Miguel gathered to set up, wrap gifts, and spread holiday cheer. Miguel Men were assisted by their St. Seb's brothers in picking out special gifts they could give their families for Christmas.

This inspiring event was initiated by St. Seb's mom, Marie Carroll, and quickly embraced and supported by dozens of other families from the school. Boys from both schools commented on how much they enjoyed being together and sharing the Christmas spirit.

Providence Rotary Club Luncheon

On December 5, the entire school joined members of the Providence Rotary Club for this year's annual holiday luncheon. As one of our most cherished Christmas traditions, we look forward to this time together with great excitement. We are always appreciative to share in this meal together, but are even more so grateful for the rich conversation that takes place while doing so. Students are equally as thankful to receive a gift from Santa, and as a way of saying "thanks" for this great event, our school's Men and Poetry group performed for attending guests.

Winter Awards Luncheon

On December 8, the San Miguel community came together for this year's Winter Awards Luncheon. Faculty and staff, joined by families, mentors, and sponsors, gathered in the gym to celebrate student achievements.

The ceremony was led by 8th-grade student, Trey, while his classmate, Rafael, led attendees in prayer prior to sharing lunch together.

Students received a variety of awards designed to acknowledge a variety of achievements—from having the best sportsmanship to traditional categories like Effort and Improvement, Citizenship, and Honor Roll. Kids who have received Artist, Writer, Scientist, or Miguel Man of the Week at Morning Assembly were recognized as well. Students who made Honor Roll will have the privilege of attending the Honors Ski Trip to Wachusett Mountain on January 31.

Additional highlights from this year's lunch included a musical performance by sixth-grade students, Jose, Elijah, and Daniel, a poetry performance by the school's Men and Poetry group, as well as a special presentation to 'Read to Succeed' members for encouraging students to participate in their summer reading program (where they can earn \$1k towards a college scholarship fund)!

Rockin' With the Elves

On December 12, we threw our annual, schoolwide Christmas party—Rockin' with the Elves. This year, students rotated through four different stations. They competed in a basketball activity using fake snowballs in the gym, decorated Christmas-shaped cookies in the cafeteria, created handmade decorations in the art room, and filmed holiday music videos using the green screen in the STEAM Center. It was a busy afternoon, and with Christmas vacation nearing, the boys' energy was palpable! But it's during these moments

that community is most deeply felt and strengthened, and some of our favorite Miguel memories are made.

Embrace-A-Family/Gift Card Drive

Each holiday season, supporters of the school seek to "embrace" a San Miguel family by providing their son with additional presents to open on Christmas morning. This giving program, along with our annual gift card drive, provide students with significant support (and a whole lot of holly jolly spirit) during this festive time of year. Whether families are arriving to pick up a Thanksgiving basket filled with food in November, or a bagful of wrapped gifts in December, their sincere appreciation remains the same. Deep thanks goes out to all mentors, donors, friends, and community partners who contributed to this year's holiday giving programs.

Providence College

The Giving Tree Program, organized by Providence College's Campus Ministry, is one example of the extraordinary support we receive from community partners throughout the year. Headed by Director of Service and Justice, Eileen Dignan, this fundraising initiative provided each Miguel Man with two gifts this holiday season—one "want" item and one "need" item. Additionally, the college's Computer Graphics Specialist, Paul Bienvenue, created customized ornaments for our students (each one had a Miguel Man's name clearly displayed on them)! We are incredibly grateful for all of the time, thought, creativity, and generosity that made this year's program possible.

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This newsletter is published by the Office of Development.

For more information, please contact Mel Bride, Director of Advancement and Strategic Partnerships, at 401-467-9777 x117.

Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve

Part of the San Miguel mission statement reads: "Inspired by the pillars of faith, service, and community, each "Miguel Man" is encouraged to learn, to serve, and to grow to reach his full potential." We are proud to share that the seeds of service that were planted at San Miguel are flourishing on college campuses and beyond. Here are just a few examples:

Adrian Mora (SMS '19, LSA '23, URI '27) is a freshman at the University of Rhode Island and a member of a student group called B.O.N.D—Brothers On a New Direction. Adrian elaborates, "BOND is a group that assists Rhode Island communities, in addition to being a brotherhood. A genuine brotherhood is a BOND. It makes me think of San Miguel and how brotherhood was also a part of San Miguel. Just by joining this program alone I was able to create so many connections and I want to continue to do so. BOND assigned us various projects involving community service in Rhode Island. My group helped Pastor K. Percy Ballah of Impact Center PVD. The Impact Center has their own core values (Community Partners, Loving their Neighbors, Good Stewards, Servant Leaders, and more). So, on Wednesdays they would have a weekly soup kitchen and on Thursdays and Fridays they would have a food pantry. We made the decision as a group to prepare the food for the impact center and help them bag the food. Just by doing this, I felt really good about myself and that I could

positively influence Rhode Island communities."

Tommy Bratini (SMS '16, LSA '20, PC '24) will be the first to admit that being Pre-Med at Providence College is no walk in the park. Tommy credits having two Pre-Med students as Residential Advisors on his floor freshman year with his ability to make it through his first year. Knowing how lucky he was to have the advice of those older students, he and several other now seniors, have started a mentoring club for Pre-Med students at PC. Older students will be able to steer younger students in the right direction and provide support, and PC graduates who are in their first year in medical school will give back by mentoring PC seniors applying to medical school.

Kirby Nuñez (SMS '07, LSA '11, URI '16) recently returned to share how his love for drawing and basketball led him throughout his journey at URI where he earned a BFA and then at his job at PUMA. In sharing his experience with the boys, he commented, "I wasted a lot of time in high school because I was not willing to embrace my passion for art. Looking back, I would tell my 8th-grade self, 'Don't be afraid to be artsy. Just look where I am now!'"

Twins, **Leo and Zeke Muñoz SMS '23**, both freshmen at St. Patrick Academy, are also familiar faces on Branch as they return often to complete their two hours/week of service by helping Mr. Kue organize the Robotics Room, clean and sort uniforms, and prepare food bags for graduate families.

Miguel Moments



Congratulations, Ms. S!

On December 9, Jacquelin Saavedra, Assistant Director of Graduate Support, graduated with her Masters Degree in Family and Human Development from Arizona State University. We are so proud of her wonderful accomplishments!



A Visit from Br. Lawrence

We had a special visitor making his way to each classroom on December 6! It was truly a gift to have Brother Lawrence back at Branch Ave with us right before the holidays. Students love talking to the man who started it all!



Fall Handshake Event

On October 13, we hosted over 30 guests at our Fall Handshake Event, which serves as an opportunity for visitors to learn about the school straight from the students, as well as from graduate, Mitchell Tiah '07, who was our guest speaker.



Veterans Day Ceremony

On November 10, we honored SMS graduates Jonathan Del Rosario (Army) and Carl Alves (Marines, Army Reserve, National Guard), along with mentor Bill Rogers (Air Force), and staff John Wolf (Navy) and David Cormier (Army).

Mark Your Calendar!

April 5 - 19th Annual Gala and Miguel Medal Ceremony
May 10 - Spring Handshake Event

May 17 - Spring Awards Luncheon
June 10 - Graduation
August 12 - 16th Annual Golf Tournament



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LASALLIAN EDUCATION
Transforming lives since 1680