



MISSION DOLORES ACADEMY

2012-13 ANNUAL REPORT



The education of tomorrow
rooted in tradition



MISSION DOLORES ACADEMY

2012-13 Annual Report

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mission Dolores Academy is an independent K-8 Catholic school established in 2011 by the merger of Megan Furth Academy and Mission Dolores School.

We serve primarily students whose families otherwise would not be able to afford a high-quality Catholic education. Our innovative and rigorous curriculum prepares students to succeed in the Bay Area's best high schools while building a moral foundation to support them the rest of their lives.



MISSION DOLORES ACADEMY IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE MEGAN FURTH MEMORIAL FUND.

To Our Friends

Dear Friends of Mission Dolores Academy,

It's our privilege to present this annual report for 2012-13, the first such document for Mission Dolores Academy. Thanks to benefactors like you and the hard work of our staff, students, and parents, the past year was truly a watershed.

On the financial front, we are happy to report the school broke even just two years after the Megan Furth Academy-Mission Dolores School merger. Our annual luncheon with its celebrity chefs format was a huge success, raising over \$600,000 while also earning coverage in the *Chronicle*.

Academically, our second year as a blended learning school (see article on page seven) resulted in outstanding gains in learning, particularly in Math. We also had our best year ever with high school placements—90% of our eighth graders are now attending Catholic, private, or charter high schools.

We're happy to report 2013-14 is off to a great start as well. Enrollment, a key indicator of school health, increased from 230 to 250, and it's clear our parents and students are truly happy to be here. We're also excited to have Fr. Gagan back from sabbatical to help the Dominican Sisters with our students' spiritual and moral development.

Thank you for your support in getting the school where it is today. We hope you will continue to support the children of Mission Dolores Academy. Together, we will accomplish still greater things in the year ahead.



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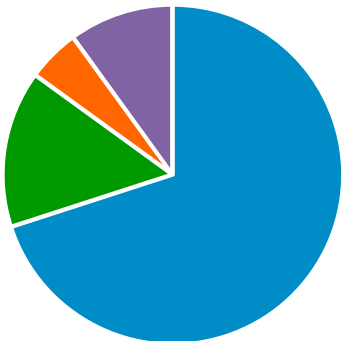
Bob Lalanne
Chairman



[Signature]

Dan Storz
Principal

CLASS OF 2013 High Schools Attending

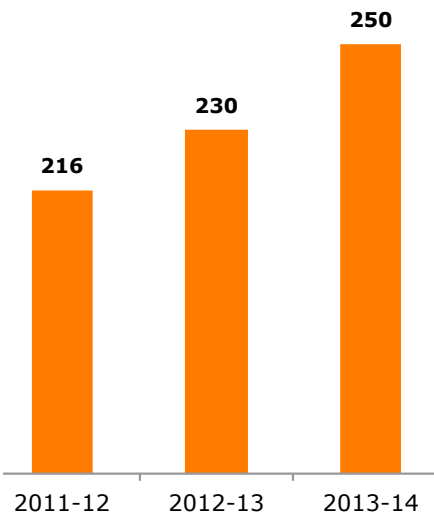


- Catholic - 70%
- Charter - 15%
- Other Private - 5%
- Public - 10%

SCHOOLS INCLUDE:

- Archbishop Riordan
- The Bay School
- Gateway
- Immaculate Conception Academy
- KIPP Academy
- Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep
- Saint Ignatius College Preparatory
- Stuart Hall

ENROLLMENT



My Dear Friends,

Recently returned from a year-long sabbatical, it is a joy for me to witness the growth of Mission Dolores Academy. In just its second year, the school achieved a level of financial stability not seen in years, significant measurable gains in academic performance, and increased enrollment.

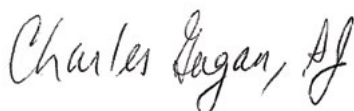
Thanks to the generosity of my religious superior Fr. Michael Weiler, S.J. who has missioned me to work full-time at MDA, I join a talented and dedicated faculty and staff in their desire to give the best education possible to the children entrusted to us. Especially impressive are the efforts of our Dominican Sisters, Ann and Annette, who coordinate the religious education and liturgy programs. Every Friday when the entire school gathers for Mass in the Basilica, I look out at our 250 children and thank God not only for our faculty and staff but also for you, our donors, who make it possible for even the families most in need to receive this excellent education.

None of this development, whether intellectual, emotional, or spiritual, could continue without your help. I consider your support an investment; like any investment you deserve to know whether it is worthwhile.

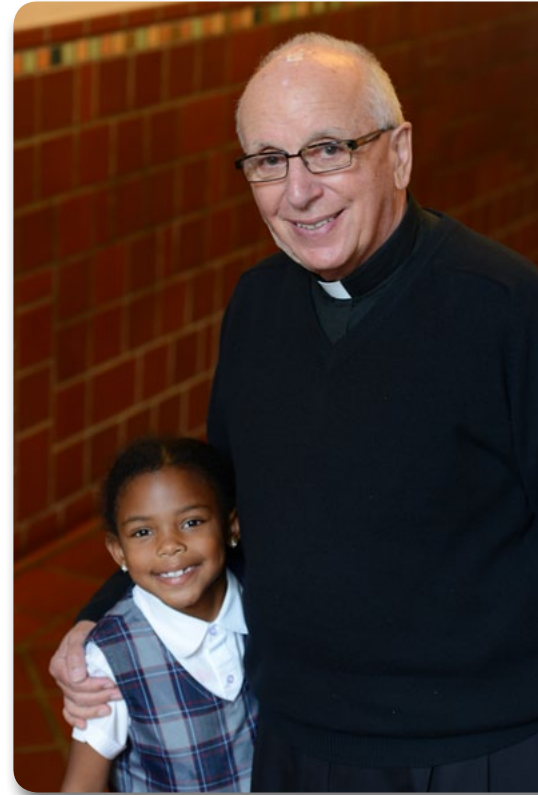
The graphs and statistics in this newsletter give ample evidence that you have invested well. They also indicate the opportunity to serve so many new students this year requires greater resources. In particular, Mission Dolores Academy requires additional scholarships to support that growth. I ask that you continue with your support or consider increasing it. Together, we will continue to extend the blessings of Catholic education to even more deserving children.

Ultimately, the best indicator of our shared success is the faces of our children, full of joy whether at work or at play. To witness this, one has to visit the school. The children love to have visitors and to explain what they are learning and how much they love the school. Please call me at (415) 638-6223 to schedule your visit; you will not be disappointed.

Gratefully,



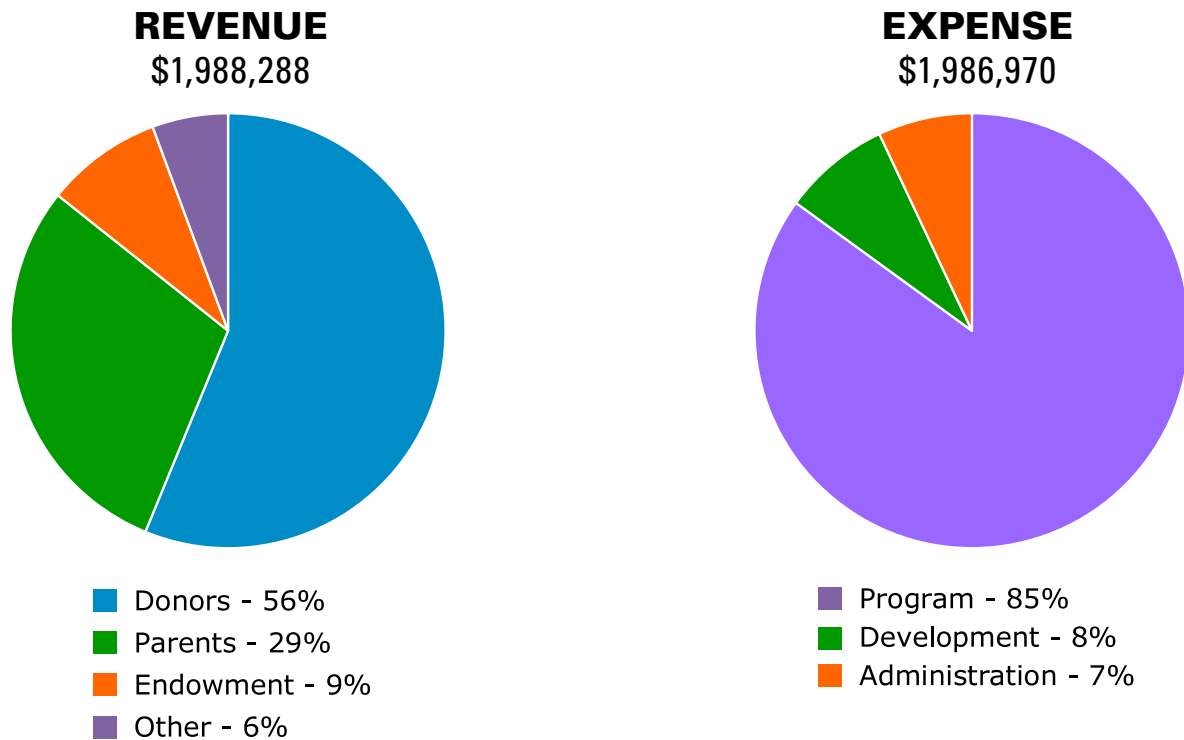
Father Charles Gagan, S.J.



Father Charles Gagan, S.J. returns to the school he helped found to serve as Chaplain.

Financial Highlights

For the fiscal year starting August 1, 2012 and ending July 31, 2013:



\$8,636 Average annual cost to educate a student

\$5,000 Annual tuition for a child to attend Mission Dolores Academy

\$2,555 Average tuition and fees per student paid by parents

90% Percentage of students receiving financial aid

60% Percentage of families below federal Title 1 poverty levels

\$155,578 Scholarships provided in 2012-13 academic year

\$207,520 Scholarships needed for current academic year

Student: **Essey Keleta**

Sixth grader Essey Keleta is a high-achiever and model MDA citizen who was just named October's Student of the Month. Looking at this bright, happy young man, it's difficult to imagine just a few years ago the tragedy he and his family have had to overcome.

In 2007, when Essey was just five years old, his father passed away unexpectedly. Essey's mother, Selamawit, a recent immigrant from east-African country of Eritrea says the resulting upheaval in their lives was hard on everyone, particularly Essey. Selamawit saw her son's anger build, as he fought with classmates and ignored his schoolwork.

Sensing he needed a change, she enrolled Essey at Megan Furth Academy starting in third grade. Gradually, she began to see him become more engaged, with greater and greater motivation to achieve and make new friends. "He has changed a lot," Selamawit says, explaining that, for a time, she was fearful of what each school day would bring. "Now I'm always happy when I pick him up. We love this school!"

"We love this school!"

Selamawit credits the turnaround to a faith in God, encouragement from teachers and staff, and the supportive school community, which has become like extended family. "He's very happy with everyone at school. He's very comfortable here."

Essey is clearly highly motivated to learn. Selamawit explains that she once had to push him to read. Now she can barely get the books out of his hands, and he eagerly waits for her to bring home new books from the library. Essey says his favorite subject is social studies. Most recently, he says he enjoyed learning about Mesopotamia and is currently working on a biography of Albert Einstein. A sports enthusiast, Essey also enjoys playing CYO soccer and basketball.

"School is fun," Essey says. "All the adults here help me get better and work harder. They influence me to do more. I'm trying to go to Saint Ignatius and to do that I know I need to work hard."

Selamawit says Essey is clearly focused on his future. "He tells me he wants to get into a good high school and get a scholarship. I don't have to tell him what to do any more. Now he's telling me what he needs to do. Praise God!"



Essey Keleta and his mother Selamawit

Profiles

Alumni: Jerome & Cheryl Williams



Cheryl and Jerome Williams pictured with Sr. Annette Scheaffer, O.P. (left) and Sr. Ann Providence, O.P. (right) at the school's annual luncheon May 9, 2013.

Jerome and Cheryl Williams have come full circle in their association with Mission Dolores Academy and the Dominican Sisters who remain at the heart of its religious education. When the couple recently toured MDA at the urging of a former classmate, they were surprised to discover two of the Sisters who had been part of their formative education were still teaching and nurturing inner-city children over 40 years later.

A graduate of St. Dominic's Elementary, Jerome maintains fond memories of his final year there in 1969 with 6th grade teacher Sr. Ann Providence, O.P., now Director of Religious Education at Mission Dolores Academy. Cheryl graduated from Sacred Heart Grammar School in 1970 when the school was under the leadership of Principal Sr. Annette Scheaffer, O.P., now serving as MDA's Liturgy Director.

St. Dominic's and Sacred Heart elementary schools merged in 2003, later becoming Megan Furth Catholic Academy in 2004. In 2011 another merger took place, this time with Mission Dolores School, to form Mission Dolores Academy.

Lifelong San Francisco residents and married for more than 22 years, Jerome and Cheryl credit the Sisters and their faith-based education for giving them a spiritual foundation that has supported them through the years. Their reunion with the Sisters encouraged the couple to learn more about MDA and get involved with the school. "It's a wonderful school, and it's clear they're doing a great job educating the underserved youth in our community," Jerome says. "We're happy to do anything we can to help guide these kids—our kids—in a positive direction."

The couple supports the students of MDA in a variety of ways with their time, talent, and treasure. Cheryl has pitched in supervising students going to and from Mass, grading student work, and assisting with catechesis. An alumna of St. Ignatius College Preparatory, Jerome works with other SI alumni to provide scholarships to MDA graduates needing financial assistance to attend his alma mater. Both enjoy supporting the school financially at the annual luncheon.

They welcome the chance to give back. "These kids represent us," Jerome says. "We were them. We are them. None of us came

from well-to-do families. Our parents were hard working.

They gave, they

volunteered—all we're doing is repeating what we were taught." Cheryl echoes Jerome's comments, "It's nice to give and not expect anything in return, knowing someone else benefits from it," she says, adding that her volunteer work gives her "a fulfilled heart."

Cheryl says she finds joy working with the students and reconnecting with the Sisters. "It's great to feel that connection," Jerome agrees. "It's like family still."

"It's like family still."

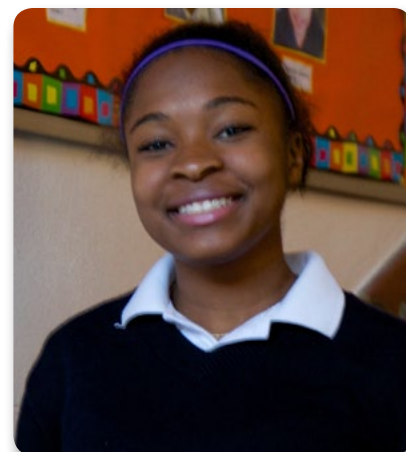
Recent Graduate: **Tyler Racklin**

Tyler Racklin is a sophomore at San Francisco's Mercy High School and the recipient of a four-year Achieve scholarship. A year-round scholarship and enrichment program for underserved students, Achieve places students in internships and volunteer positions to prepare them for a successful career path.

As part of the program, Tyler spent six weeks last summer working for Sephora as a marketing research intern and volunteers regularly for a number of organizations including the Jewish home for elderly and the Food Bank. Tyler said she's looking forward to touring colleges with the Achieve program in her junior year.

Tyler is one of just a few sophomores on the varsity Track and Field Team and also participates in Chorus, Mercy Athletes' Association, and the Community Service Club.

Tyler says her MDA education set her up for success, particularly in Math. "Math class with Mr. Recktenwald prepared me for any math I could take anywhere," she says. As a freshman, she received certificates for excelling in Math and Science and placed into honors Biology. As a sophomore, she is currently taking geometry and chemistry, classes traditionally taken junior year.



Staff: **Matt Safranek, *Director of Development***

When Matt Safranek joined Mission Dolores Academy in January as the school's Director of Development, he brought a deep and personal appreciation for the value of Catholic education.

Born and raised in Arkansas before coming to California in 1991 to attend Stanford, Matt is the youngest of 10 children. His father, the son of an immigrant barber, attended Creighton Prep then Creighton University and Medical School in Omaha. Matt and his siblings all attended Catholic school growing up, with all 10 graduating from college (including two from the University of San Francisco).

A parishioner at St. Dominic's, Matt decided to give back to Catholic education by volunteering

at St. Dominic's School from 2000-2003. After leaving for business school at UC Davis, he returned to San Francisco and became a donor at Megan Furth Academy and then Mission Dolores Academy. Matt upped his commitment in January when he decided to make a career switch to work at MDA.

"Throughout my years in marketing at Wells Fargo and Charles Schwab, I kept feeling a gentle tug to support Catholic education with my time and talent as well. When I learned about the Development opening at MDA, I thought it was the perfect opportunity to apply what I'd learned in the corporate world for the benefit of inner-city Catholic education—a cause that's meant so much to me and my family."



Blended Learning at MDA

You may not realize it, but Mission Dolores Academy is quietly working on the front lines of the effort to save inner-city Catholic education in America.

According to the National Catholic Education Association, enrollment in Catholic schools has fallen from a peak of 5.2 million in 1965 to just 2 million. Between 2000 and 2013, 2,090 Catholic schools either closed or consolidated. It was declining enrollment that forced the merger of Mission Dolores School and Megan Furth Academy in 2011.

The merger, however, provided a unique opportunity for a fresh start. With a \$500,000 grant from Seton Education Partners, the school implemented what's known as "blended learning," where each classroom splits in two during instruction—one half works independently using educational software on computers while the other half receives teacher-led, small group instruction. After 20-30 minutes, the groups rotate.

The main academic benefit of blended learning is customized instruction. Because students sign on to their computers, the software knows where each student is academically. Students who are behind get questions that help them get caught up; students who are ahead get more-challenging questions.

The software also gives teachers daily feedback on each student, so teachers spend less time grading and more time planning and running highly tailored small-group instruction. "I can log in as a teacher and see what each student did [and] where they're stuck," said first grade teacher Rochelle Reid. "I can then say, 'These are all the kids that had a hard time—we can do a small group with them using a different approach.'"

Financially, blended learning offers a model for reducing per-pupil operating costs. With half of each class working independently at the computers, class sizes can increase with minimal additional cost.

In its first two years as a blended learning school, Mission Dolores Academy's results have shown



great promise. For example, last year's seventh graders started the year slightly behind grade level in math but ended the year testing at *tenth* grade levels, while the school's per-pupil costs dropped 5% compared to the previous year. "Blended learning is new, and we're still learning what works and doesn't work," says Principal Dan Storz. "We're very encouraged by our initial results, which we've shared with other schools."

Catholic education leaders from around the country have started to take notice. Last year representatives from Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, Seattle, and San Jose paid visits to Mission Dolores Academy, and the Diocese of San Jose launched several blended learning schools for the start of this school year.

Though still in their early years, Mission Dolores Academy and its fellow blended-learning schools offer a beacon of hope for inner-city Catholic education.

To learn more about blended learning, go to mdasf.org and watch the video highlighting our first year's success. To see blended learning firsthand, schedule a visit by checking the box on the enclosed envelope and mail to the school. You can also email us at development@mdasf.org or call (415) 638-6212.

With Gratitude

We are very grateful for the many individuals and organizations who have supported Mission Dolores Academy in the previous year. Together, we help provide the foundation for our students to realize their God-given potential.

Included below are supporters giving to the school between August 1, 2012 and July 30, 2013. If a gift you made during this period is either not listed or listed incorrectly, please contact our Development Office at (415) 638-6212, so we may properly acknowledge you.

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Charles Phan of The Slanted Door family of restaurants with Luncheon Co-Chair Michele Meany at the school's 2013 luncheon, Top Chefs for MDA, held May 9th at the Julia Morgan Ballroom.

Save the date! This year's luncheon will be April 2, 2014 at the Julia Morgan Ballroom.

With Gratitude

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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