



Pass It On!

NEWS & EVENTS FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE MADELEINE

WINTER 2024

A key component of our English-Language Arts instruction is a comprehensive writing program that promotes written expression starting in kindergarten.

Read more about how our younger students learn to read and write!



During the day, students learn through structured play, using hands-on materials in all subject areas like magnetic letters in language arts, games in math and science, and a host of opportunities to create in art, music, and Spanish. The kindergarten classroom is a place where children come to have fun. While children play, you might observe a student reading a sight word on the cover of a game, students discussing their observations of leaves collected on a nature walk, or students laughing as they read a book together, noticing details in illustrations and letters they recognize. While children engage their imaginations with a Maker Space creation, they are learning to take turns, compromise and practice the stamina needed to work on something that is a process. This learning translates into the invaluable skills of self-advocacy, communication, compromise and empathy. Amanda has observed, ***“Children come in with varying levels of academic exposure, but they all know how to play. Play is the entry point to knowing how to be together, and then the catalyst for building in those academic skills.”***

A Child’s Work The Madeleine Whole-Child Kindergarten Program

By Cat Cabral and Sheila Ring

The School of The Madeleine kindergarteners are thriving, thanks to an unparalleled program led by kindergarten teacher Amanda Tharayil that emphasizes learning through play and the whole-child approach to education.

The Madeleine kindergarten team takes play very seriously, as Amanda emphasizes, “Play is a child’s work. We use play to help students learn the life skills of effective communication, problem solving, collaboration, and sharing.” Play is integrated into the instruction of all academic standards determined by the State of California. Students immerse themselves in imaginary play, build with Legos, blocks, and create art. Unstructured play allows children the freedom to engage with one another naturally, with a teacher on the periphery to gently shepherd and use inquiry when a boundary is reached or crossed.





A valuable part of the kindergarten experience that emphasizes children's play is the Buddy Program. Each kindergartner is matched with a fifth grade buddy who cares for that child in an intentional way throughout the year. The buddies will often play together at recess and engage in more structured play-based activities together. The fifth grade students take very seriously their responsibility to help make their buddy's introduction to the Madeleine a positive one. The Buddy Program is an extension of the Faith Family Program that forms Faith Families comprised of students from each grade. The Faith Families meet at designated times to work on service-learning projects and other activities that are designed to emphasize fun and community throughout the year. Students also attend monthly school masses in Faith Families. This program encourages many students across the grades to know each other by name, and gives kindergartners the security of knowing that older students are watching out for them.

At the Madeleine, educators are encouraged and expected to meet each student where they are. This focus on the child allows each learner to receive the support they need in order to achieve personal and academic success- whether that means tailored support for struggling students or adjusting the curriculum for a student who needs a greater challenge. Amanda believes it is her job to say, ***"I see who you are, I see that you have a need, and it's my job to teach you what you need."***

In addition to the learning-through-play model that allows students to build both academic and social skills, the kindergarten team recognizes and nurtures the spiritual side of children.



Students are encouraged to see the loving hand of the Creator in the world around them. The kindergarten incorporates intentional time for quiet contemplation which allows students the sacred time to quiet their minds and bodies so they can listen to their own inner voice and seek that spiritual connection that all children need.

Madeleine kindergarten students are an integral part of the Dominican educational experience where the timeless knowledge of the best environments for children combines with a dedicated commitment to each child's continual growth to create a place where children thrive.



English-Language Arts in the Primary Grades

By Sheila Ring

Walk into any primary grade (K-2) classroom at the Madeleine during an English-Language Arts (ELA) period and you will see a rich combination of literature, phonics and vocabulary instruction. Children will be practicing both silent and oral reading or composing various type of written expression.

The Madeleine's primary grade teachers have adopted and adapted many of the recommendations that have been developed by the Science of Reading.

The Science of Reading is an approach to the instruction of reading that combines years of research in cognitive psychology, linguistics and neuroscience to develop evidence-based strategies that promote reading efficacy. These strategies have been shown to be effective for both struggling readers and intuitive readers who appear to have been born reading. At its very basic level, the Science of Reading distills words to their smallest parts and teaches children recognizable patterns to decode increasingly more complex words. The Science of Reading also recognizes vocabulary development as essential to reading comprehension. Children learn not only to read but to understand what they are reading. Children are given ample time to practice and enjoy reading both silently and orally.

Another key component to ELA instruction is a comprehensive writing program that promotes written expression starting in kindergarten. Children view themselves as competent writers as they compose a variety of writing samples. The ELA program also stresses cross curricular writing where, for example, students write about topics they are studying in science or create poems that enrich an art activity.

The ELA team at the Madeleine has chosen a literature rich reading and writing program where students engage many genres in both their reading and writing. The students are encouraged to ponder the literature they are exposed to and make connections with their own lives. Their writing reflects their engagement with all that they are learning. The primary grade team at the Madeleine is a highly educated group of professionals who implements both the latest research and techniques gleaned from their (nearly 50 years combined) experience as ELA instructors.





Passing It On...

The School of the Madeleine isn't just teaching our son—it's helping shape him into a caring, curious, and engaged young person. Every day, we see how the school's commitment to inclusion and academic excellence creates an environment where all children can thrive. Supporting the MAD Annual Fund is our way of ensuring other families can experience this remarkable community where every student is truly welcomed, valued, and empowered to make a difference.

— **Andy & Jason Pinost**

Joseph Pinost, Class of 2031

Please consider a donation to our MAD Annual Fund

Your gift to the School of the Madeleine has a direct impact on our students. With your help we can create a robust and nurturing early educational environment that will set a solid foundation in discipline and empathy for students to have the necessary tools to navigate a complex world.

Remember the School of the Madeleine in your estate planning and leave a lasting legacy for our students and community. Contact Advancement by emailing advancement@themadeleine.com or call the school at 510-526-4744 for more information.

The School of the Madeleine is a non-profit organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Celebrating Madeleine Milestones



Deep and meaningful relationships are a cornerstone of our Catholic school community. Madeleine students can spend nine years together as a class, growing from five-year old “babies” into fourteen-year-old young adults. Long-lasting teacher connections provide opportunities for students to grow and learn from committed, caring adults in an environment of consistent trust.

Many of our Madeleine teachers have been a part of our faculty for a full Kindergarten-to-Eighth grade student cycle. It is amazing to watch a graduating class that we have known since their first days on campus.

Celebrating their tenth or more years at the Madeleine, the following teachers have demonstrated a decade or more of commitment and dedication to our school community.

Congratulations, Madeleine Teacher “lifers”!

Ten years or more:

- Amanda Tharayil, Kindergarten
- Jenn Walwark, Second Grade
- Marilo Aceves, Third Grade
- Gisele Teixeira, Third Grade
- Gina Gamble, Eighth Grade
- Amalia Pereira, Spanish
- Sheila Ring, Librarian
- Raul Leon, Maintenance
- Debbie Dinneen, Advancement
- Paula Rice, Vice Principal
- Joseph Nagel, Principal

Twenty years or more:

- Dace Rapa, Music and Spanish
- Jennifer Ashworth, MAD Band
- Kate Wynne, Fourth Grade
- Mary Schweska – Secretary

Forty-Eighth Year!

- Heather Skinner – Vice Principal



Please view and share our new “virtual tour” video highlighting all of the amazing activities and opportunities to be found at the School of the Madeleine. The “virtual tour” was filmed and produced by MAD alum Brian Christ, 2001. Visit him at www.wildroadfilms.com

IN MEMORIAM

Legacy Parents Joanne Kelly and Joe Fitzgerald

By Heather Skinner

In this issue of Pass It On we also remember and honor two of our legacy parents, whose support for the School of the Madeleine and St. Mary Magdalen Parish went far beyond the years their children were students at the Madeleine. Joanne Pennington Kelly, who passed away in May, was a devoted Madeleine Mom, an active and generous member of the parish, and a deeply committed citizen of the Berkeley community. Her four beloved sons, Mark, David, Eric, and Chris, all went to the Madeleine and continued to provide support and services to the school and parish long after their school years. Joanne's favorite quotation, which reflects her philosophy of parenthood and grandparenthood, is the iconic quote attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: "There are two lasting things we give our children. One is roots and the other is wings."

Joseph Edward (Joe) Fitzgerald, who passed away in July, also left a legacy of generosity and service to the school, the parish, and the community. Joe was the devoted husband to Ann Carbis Fitzgerald for 60 years, and the loving father of Madeleine students, Madeleine, Eamon, Neil, and Owen. Throughout his 30 year career with the United States Postal Service, Joe was known for his warmth, attention to service, and empathy. He was regularly inspired by his personal hero and saint in the making, Blessed Solanus Casey, who reminded him always to "Thank God ahead of time."

SCHOOL OF THE MADELEINE

THE ANNUAL BLUE & GOLD GALA 2025

Together We Shine: A Night of Celebration and Giving

Saturday | March 22, 2025 | Berkeley Country Club

The Blue and Gold Gala returns to the Berkeley Country Club!

By Martha Flores

In March of 2024, 180+ parents, teachers, and community members gathered to celebrate all things MAD at the Berkeley Country Club. Nestled in the hills overlooking Berkeley and San Francisco, guests enjoyed an evening of community and celebration, all in support of our beloved School of the Madeleine. The event returns to the BCC on March 22, 2025 - save the date!!

Our biggest fundraiser of the year, the Blue and Gold Gala includes an auction and crab feed (a 3 in 1 deal!). Funds raised support projects that improve and beautify the school for current and future students. Last year we hit a new fundraising goal of \$60,000. We seek to exceed this amount in 2025 and hope our entire alumni and parish community can get involved.

Come to the event! Our eighth graders will help serve guests, an important Madeleine right of passage. Our lively auctioneer, Partick, will lead a bidding battle for some exciting items. And there will be drinks, music, and dancing for all! Make it a date night or a reunion with your Madeleine besties!



Support the auction with a donation. We are collecting items for the auction as well as cash gifts. We'd love donations of vacation homes, event tickets, wine, etc. Reach out to madauction@themadeleine.com if you have a contribution, or scan the QR code below to make a direct donation.



The School of the Madeleine doesn't end at 8th grade - class of '74 rekindles friendships!

By Janet James

The School of the Madeleine class of '74 met on Saturday June 29, 2024 for their 50th year reunion. Thirty-six people attended, including 24 classmates, 8 spouses and 4 teachers. While most classmates are local, many traveled from different states including Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Texas and Massachusetts to join this event. Participants admired the Dominican Garden and then took a tour of the school and marveled at its enhancements.

Afterwards, they walked to the Norton and Magdalen Halls to watch a video, look at photos, listen to music, view a handmade quilt (to be donated to the PTA), share stories and enjoy a delicious buffet dinner. The next day, some classmates attended mass, and then joined each other at the Berkeley Country Club for lunch. Subsequently, they took a walk in the beautiful Berkeley Rose Garden. The two day event was a big success and brought together friends who had not seen each other for 5 decades. The Class of 1974 is grateful for the fine education and upbringing provided by the School of the Madeleine and the Church of St. Mary Magdalen. Classmates are already planning their next reunion for June of 2025!



Top row left to right:

Dan Jensen, Phillip Mower, Joe Loverde, Steve Below

Second row left to right:

TJ Murphy, David Fike, Claude Curtis,
Marianne (Mandy) Getschow Elliott, Jenny Gray,
Pat Mighetto Stanley

Third row left to right:

Kurt McDonald, Sheri Avalos Jensen, Maria Ryken,
Mark Perkins, Mario Carranza, Helene DeVogelaere McKee,
Michelle Johnson Lucchesi, Rita Hanlon Rei,
Anita Madrid (teacher)

Fourth row left to right:

Clifford Wu, Ann McWalters, Janet Mazzucchi James

Front row:

Annette Zavala, Mary Poppingo, Eileen Larkin,
Dolores Salas (teacher)

Join our team!

If you would like to contribute to upcoming newsletter editions or participate, please contact advancement@themadeleine.com.

Panther community - Please send us any news and photos you have for our next issue. We love to hear about your gatherings, reunions, interesting events or experiences.

Just email advancement@themadeleine.com!

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Our Mission

The Mission of the School of the Madeleine is to inspire students to grow as educated, morally informed individuals. In the tradition of Catholic education we believe that every student is an exceptional learner, and our goal is to help students become lifelong learners and compassionate leaders.

If this newsletter is addressed to a daughter or son who no longer lives at your home, please help us stay connected. Please mail, e-mail, or phone in the correct address.
Thank you!

Email: ddinneen@themadeleine.com
Phone: (510) 526-4744



ROOTED IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION
SINCE 1937

IMPORTANT DATES:

- *Open House - K-8 Information Session (in person) - January 10, 2025*
- *Campus Tours - Mornings @ 9:00am, call to reserve your spot*
- *Priority Application Deadline - January 31, 2025*

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering David Gleason

By Heather Skinner

David Gleason, former MAD Dad extraordinaire, passed away in June of this year after an extended illness. David was the husband of former Madeleine Mom extraordinaire, Sandra Backovich, and the father of Madeleine alumni, Cristian and Nathaniel Gleason. David was a veteran of the Marin County Sheriffs' Department, serving with distinction for decades. In 2002, he developed and implemented an integrated automated law enforcement information system allowing all Marin County law enforcement agencies to share critical public safety information from anywhere in the county. Sheriff Gleason was a key advisor to school and parish staff on safety issues over the years. He was also known as the dad who was willing to do anything and everything at various Madeleine and St. Mary Magdalen events.

His funeral Mass took place in July at Newman Hall/Holy Spirit Parish, a community that was also very near and dear to his heart. Friends and family members reminded all present that he was a person who was inspired by others and inspiring in his own right. The three who most inspired him, his wife Sandra, a sought after family therapist, his son Cristian, a firefighter and EMT serving the San Jose Fire Department, and his son Nathaniel, presently working with Oakland youth, are inspiring others, serving, and honoring David's memory every day.

