

ST. COLETTA NEWS

ST. COLETTA DAY SCHOOL OF MILWAUKEE

SUMMER 2017



Above: Mr. Bill and Savanna L. give a treat to Karma



Above: Kit takes a turn teaching Karma new tricks during Adventure Club

THE POWER OF WORDS

BY WILLIAM A. KOEHN

*"... Dream... Inspire...
Play... Dance... Learn...
Discover..."*

I saw these words displayed in the windows of a day care center near school. I was on my way home. The weather was dreary and I was tired. The words caught my attention and I stopped driving and smiled. It was one of those big, broad smiles that make other driv-

ers stop and stare and wonder what that person is smiling at. I realized right there while I was in traffic on North Avenue after a long day at school, that the words I was looking at describe what we do at school every day with our students. It has been an amazing time at St. Coletta Day School this past year.

Our students experience so much more than academics and this year we had some exceptional opportunities. Once again, Lisa and her

dog Karma, and Sam, her cat visited once a week for "Adventure Club". During that time our students practice teamwork and problem solving under the guise of having fun with the animals.

We connected with Danceworks during the spring semester and took the stage by storm with our "Tap Experience". What a wonderful and fun time! Who knew that our students and staff were so gifted at Tap dancing? Thank you to

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THE POWER OF WORDS,
from page 1

Ryan, our instructor, for believing in us and helping us to showcase our talents!

We were able to add music therapy to our schedule this year and that's just what we did. Now the students are dancing and moving and learning all at the same time. We are grateful to our music therapist, Jess who is so excited to be part of our student's educational experience.

I am particularly excited that St. Coletta Day School is beginning its Transition Program in the fall of 2017. This new program allows us to continue educating our students through age 21. Many of our former students have gone on to other experiences after their time at our school. Now, we will be able to offer a school-to-work program that will enable our students to hone their skills and talents and pursue a career and become contributing members of our community. We are excited to introduce this new program and Ms. CindySue who will guide our students into adulthood and employment!

The words at that day care center can be a gentle reminder to me that when there's one more report to finish, another meeting to prepare for or a deadline to meet, that I need to sit back and remember what is really important. What is really important is the education of our students. The relationships that we build are long lasting! Thank you for believing in our mission and our students.

A Reflection From a Three Term Board Member

BY SANDI TUNIS

I want to share how thrilled I am to be part of the St. Coletta growth and expansion! When I joined the board in 2008, there were only four board members and one classroom, but I could clearly see what the St. Coletta potential was! In 2008, there was one classroom with a teacher (Mr. Bill)

In addition, during this time we became an accredited private school, which means that our processes and teaching meet high standards!

In addition, we have added new programs -- music therapy and dance; our students now use iPads and thanks to the Urban Ecology Center have had a wonderful trip to



and one teacher's aide (Rachel). We now have two teachers and two teachers' aides and are preparing for a transition program to start with the next school year! We have been talking about this for at least as long as I have been on the board.

northern Wisconsin in mid-winter!

Every time I come to the Christmas pageant, I am moved to tears by the loveliness of the play and the performance of the kids!

SCDS Mission Statement

To provide an academic and social, functional curriculum to meet the needs of students with special needs that will prepare them to realize their full learning potential and become productive and contributing citizens.

From the Desk of Ms. Rachel

BY RACHEL LUSTIG

So often the world measures success by who won and who lost or by who got first place or what grade you received on your report card. Success for our students at St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee and many other students with exceptional needs, can and does often look different. At St. Coletta Day school, we have a growth mind-set, and this means that we measure success by looking at the growth a student makes academically, socially, and behaviorally. I am happy to report that we have had a lot of success this year at St. Coletta Day school.

All of our students have achieved growth this year. For some of our students, this growth can be measured by looking at numerical scores from assessments. As some of you are aware, I am finishing my Masters of Science degree in Special Education. As part of my thesis, I have created and conducted an action research project that about half of our 24 students were participants. These 13 students participated in a study that I designed to maximize growth, specifically in reading comprehension for these students. Each student's data was collected as a baseline to see what percentage of a text each student could comprehend when reading a text that they could decode at least 90% accuracy. Baseline data ranged from 30% to

60% of the text being comprehended by each student. I then administered a 12-week long intervention that I based on peer-reviewed research on reciprocal teaching.

Reciprocal teaching focuses on students using four comprehension strategies, predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing what they read and then using



dialogue between the teacher and a small group of students to increase comprehension. The students in my action research project first had reciprocal teaching the strategies and the dialogue modeled by the teacher and then scaffolded in such a way that the groups of students then start and lead their groups using the strategies and having the discussion. Eventually, the students use all four strategies independently and have the discussion internally and have learned that the purpose of reading is more than reading the words correctly. After

the 12 week study, my students had increased their comprehension from 30%-60% to all participants having achieved at least on 90% score in comprehension and many achieving multiple 100% scores for reading comprehension of an instructional level text. This growth is phenomenal, and everyone should celebrate these students.

Our other students also have experienced various degrees of growth too. Part of our curriculum includes an online program called Moby Max which we use for Math intervention for most of our students. This curriculum also takes baseline data for each student and then designs a personalized instruction based on this data. No matter what level a student begins at there is a program designed specifically for each student. After using this personalized curriculum all year, all 22 of the students who participated in this intervention experienced

growth. This growth ranged from .3 to .9 of an academic year or grade level, and this is significant since part of the reason many of our students are in special education is that they were not previously making academic progress that could be measured. Again this growth and these students should be praised, acknowledged and celebrated.

Numbers can measure not all of the growth that our students experience, and sometimes our growth is more social or behavioral. This growth is by no means less signifi-

FROM THE DESK OF MS. RACHEL,
from page 3

cant and is sometimes even more significant and visible. One student that made this kind of growth this year went from attending school for only part of the day to attending school for a whole day one day a week on top of the half of days this student was already attending. This student will continue to increase the amount of time the student attends school in the fall. This growth for this student is also something to be celebrated, too.

Growth can also be cyclical. A student can have some degree of growth behaviorally and then experience a time when growth ceases or even heads the opposite direction. However since we always believe at St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee that each day is a new day and that every day, each student has a choice to try their best, get along with everyone and make better choices, we continue to believe that growth will happen and it does. This belief combined with our high expectations that we have for each student that they will achieve, that they will become productive and contributing citizens as adults, is what makes St. Coletta Day school a place where we celebrate growth and the success of our students is our mission.



The Tap Experience at SCDS

BY JULIE BOROUCHOFF

“A five, six, seven, eight!!!!” and the tap shoes hit the floor. Energy abounds with DANCEWORKS and the students at St. Coletta Day School during the Tap Experience on Sunday May 21st.



ing certain rhythms.

The St. Coletta students were very excited on Friday mornings when Mr. Ryan would lead our dance classes at the church hall. During each class, we learned about team work, practiced our listening skills and discovered how to be spatially aware of others and of our surroundings. We learned that choreography means to create a dance. Plus, each time we danced we got an incredible workout. We look forward to more DANCEWORKS classes during the 2017/2018 school year!



The fun started in January 2017, when Ryan Cappleman from DANCEWORKS introduced twenty-four students and four staff members to the joyful noise of tap. Tap Dancing is a unique style of dance which is a fusion of several ethnic percussive dances including African tribal dances and Irish jigs. Tap is about listening to and copy-



A Business That Runs in the Family

BY MARIE, MEGAN AND KIT ZEIDLER

After years of artistic daring, Megan Zeidler began to regularly turn to her creative side the last few years. It was her best method of independently processing her feelings, and trying to express herself when words just didn't seem to hold enough weight. After playing with different mediums Megan felt more centered and focused. After while her artistic playtime turned into something more ambitious, Megan was slowly morphing her hobby into a side business.

Megan, who was living in Arizona at the time, would frequently make trips back to Milwaukee. While home she would do art projects with her younger brother Kit, a student at St. Coletta Day School (SCDS), and at other times as a Guest artist for St. Coletta's. Megan always make a point to be home for ColettaScope, St Coletta's largest annual fundraiser. A couple years ago, Kit had made a colorful, inspirational abstract painting. It's simplicity, and honesty was beyond touching, and a huge hit at ColettaScope! There were several people bidding on it and eventually a side agreement was made on who could bring it home, if copies could be made. Everyone in the family wanted a copy, and friends wanted ones too. Megan was incredibly proud, and a little perplexed. When she made nice things, everyone asked her to make one for them too and here

everyone was just asking to have a copy of Kit's piece? "That isn't the only piece he had ever made, or could ever make" Megan thought. That Christmas, time had passed and busy schedules had prevented copies to be made.



Pictured above, Kit and Megan Zeidler

On Christmas Eve Megan and Kit sat down to paint. While Kit made colorful acrylic wheels, Megan gathered quotes in a notebook. After all the paintings had dried, Kit picked out a colorful acrylic for each member of the family. He would then page through the quote notebook and pick a quote for each person. After framing each of them up, he passed them out as Christmas presents. Some people's eyes

welled up in tears, so touched by the messages picked out for them. They blamed Megan for each of the pieces identifying so well for each person. She threw her arms up innocent of their blame, telling them about how Kit had picked out each painting and each quote for them all. Treasures had been made, hugs were given, and another light bulb moment was born.

Megan decided to encourage Kit to take his talents to another level, and her intuition pushed her to share these with the public. She took a basket of his original paintings with her to her next Market with his picture, and his business cards. Each of his paintings would be sold with 20% of the sale being donated to his school, SCDS, and a short bio. People were touch by the quotes, and enamored by the color pallets. Kits paintings were selling alongside Megan's!

That weekend has since encouraged Megan and Kit business partners. They have brought Mom on as their third partner for "Zeidler Art" after she had put her art on the back burner for years. We look forward to his other siblings Andrew and Lizzy maybe joining the team one day. The family is grateful for their brother Peter building them a website, and the many friends, relatives, and SCDS staff who have encouraged this endeavor. Prints have since been made of the print that started it all and they have been sold and distributed to raise eventual funds for framing future

A BUSINESS THAT RUNS IN THE FAMILY, from page 5

ColettaScope Art.

Because of St. Coletta's, because of ColettaScope, and because of Megan's vision; Kit received his first paycheck from the business in December. His smile was ear-to-ear, and he could have burst with joy as he accomplished this, and that could donate a percentage of their proceeds back to his school. Kit has learned much throughout this project. He has worked with his sister to develop business card, make art, advertise it, make sale calls, track his sales, expenses and profits. Since Kit has severe Apraxia of Speech, verbal expression can be daunting, exhausting, and difficult. There is hope that Kit's continue to evolve and become a powerful tool of expression for him so that he may continue to share with us the gems within his beautiful mind.

To see Kit's art, go to Etsy.com search for Zeidler Art. Next, on the left under "Items" click on Kit Originals.

COLETTASCOPE 2017

{ Save THE DATE }

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NOVEMBER, 11TH
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Mount Mary University
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Our Staff

Our staff is a crucial element to the school's success and future. They are a big part of what sets us apart. It is their unwavering dedication to our students and school that have made St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee such a critical element in the lives of students with cognitive disabilities



**William
Koehn, aka
Mr. Bill -
Administrator/
Lead Teacher**

I am a teacher to students with special needs and have been doing what I love for over 40 years. You might say I have a passion for what I do. I have a Master of Science degree in Educational Administration, and for the past 25 years, I have been the Administrator and Lead Teacher at St. Coletta Day School. My students are a great inspiration to me. They are also a source of renewed energy for my spirit.



**Rachel Lustig,
aka Ms. Rachel
- Teacher**

I am proud to be a classroom teacher at St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee. My grandmother always told me that everything in life happens for a reason. I believe this to be true and that my coming to St. Coletta Day School 11 years ago, as

a Paraprofessional Educator, happened for all the right reasons. I am pleased to announce that after completing my post baccalaureate certification program with honors, that I will complete my Masters of Science in Exceptional Education in the summer of 2017. I now have an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree from Marquette University and Post Baccalaureate Certificate and Teaching License in Cross-categorical Special Education, Middle Child-Early Adolescence. This long journey from Paraprofessional to Teacher to Master's degree will be finished soon and I thank the St. Coletta Day school for their support during this process. I am a wife and mother to four children who attend or attended St. Sebastian, our host school. The connection to St. Sebastian was one of the reasons I was initially drawn to St. Coletta. The inspiring students and the environment of providing an education with integrity is the reason I have made St. Coletta my home and working with kids with special needs my passion.

**Traci S, aka Ms. Traci -
Teaching Assistant.**

I graduated from Southern Illinois University, and have worked with students of all ages and backgrounds at different therapeutic day schools before joining the St. Coletta team. I moved to the Milwaukee area in 2015.

Cindy Sue Nielsen, aka Ms. Cindy Sue - Transition Program Coordinator



I am a passionate person whom finds great peace; satisfaction and happiness in helping others suc-

ceed. It is those virtues that align so well with St. Coletta's mission and vision statements and has led me to this position. I am a student of life; hold a Master's in Adult and Continuing Education along with Educational Studies from Carroll University, am a mother to one amazing son. I enjoy animals, the outdoors, living in the moment and a hearty laugh. I look forward to supporting the unique culture at St. Coletta's, helping our students grow, pursue their dreams and success.., however they define it. Quote to live by: "When the student is ready, the teacher appears". Buddha



Jessica Giese, aka Ms. Jess - Music Therapist

I come to St Coletta Day School from Music Therapy Services of Waukesha County, LLC where I have been working as a Music Therapist for the past seven and a half years. I graduated from Alverno College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Therapy. I enjoy teaching, singing, song writing and playing the guitar.

Julie Borouchoff, aka Ms. Julie - Teaching Assistant



I was born and raised near Jefferson, Wisconsin. After graduating from Marquette University

with a degree in Theatre Studies, I was hired by Friends Mime Theatre (n/k/a Milwaukee Public Theatre). During my time with Friend's Mime Cream City Semi Circus, I became an accomplished juggler, puppeteer, mime, balloon artist and plate spinner. I also discovered my alter ego; Violet the Clown. I worked for Milwaukee Public Schools for 22 years. Most of my time at MPS was spent teaching children with special needs. This led me to discover that my passion in life was to use theatre as a life skills teaching tool. In 2010 I founded The SuperStars Camp - A summer performing arts camp for children on and off the autism spectrum. In 2015 I found a new family at St. Coletta Day School, where I assist in the classroom, as well as directing school plays and teaching a social skills class using puppets and role play.

Jennifer Sowinski, aka Ms. Jen - Administrative Assistant.



I am the proud Mom of a St Coletta Alumni. Although I have been part of the St Coletta Family since 2010 as a parent - In early 2017 I followed my heart, and joined the staff of St. Coletta's. I truly love coming to work every day and seeing the kids, they are my Heroes! I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Design with a minor in Marketing from UW Stout, and many, many years of experience as an Executive Administrative Assistant. My Husband and I have lived in the Milwaukee area for over 25 years, and have two teenage children who are a constant source of pride, laughter, and a few gray hairs.

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Class of 2017

It's always with a mixture of sadness and pride that we say good bye to a few of our students every year. This year's class is one of our largest, and we all wish them the best and brightest futures possible.



These three students have finished their time at St Coletta Day School of Milwaukee/St Sebastian's, and are now onto regular education high school!!!



These four students have completed their time at St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee, and we are very proud to announce that they will be the first group of students to join St Coletta's new Transition Program, under the guidance of Ms. Cindy Sue Nielsen – (bl) **Savanna Heltemes**; dreams to be employed by Penzey's Spices. (br) **Madison Morris**, enjoys working with children and animals. (fl) **Savanna Lewis**; her food service skills are one of her many assets. (fr) **Alondra Rivera**, her strong organizational and dearing skills will be an asset wherever she goes.

Alumni News

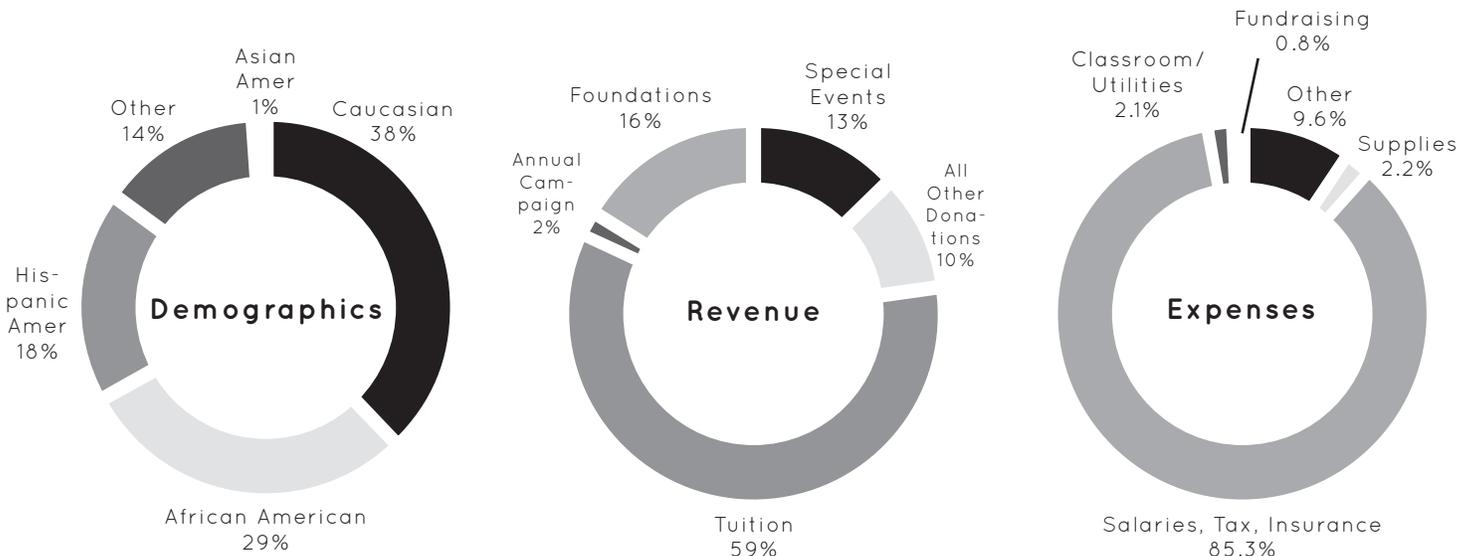
Music to Our Ears



Matthew Sowinski –

St Coletta / St Sebastian alumni (class of 2015) earned a first-place medal at the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) District Solo & Ensemble Festival, hosted by Divine Savior Holy Angels High School (DSHA) on 02/24/2017, for his solo Cello performance of *Allegro Appassionato*, Op.43 by Camille Saint-Saëns. Matthew is currently a student at Milwaukee Lutheran High School. Congratulations to Matthew, and his teacher at West End Conservatory, Mr. Patrick Reinholz.

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St. Coletta News

ST. COLETTA DAY SCHOOL
OF MILWAUKEE

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