

FALL 2021

The Messenger



Guardian
Catholic School

Protecting potential.

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New Roles for Familiar Faces



Amanda Rainey,
Assistant Principal

from UNF. After five years spent teaching in Title 1 public schools, she says she was drawn to Guardian because, "I wanted to be in a Catholic setting, but within a community where I could still make a difference." Working closely with school Principal Sister Cynthia Shaffer on a variety of administrative duties, Rainey is instrumental in maintaining the Early Learning Program's 5-Star rating from the Early Learning Coalition of Duval. "I love how everyone works as a team at Guardian," Rainey says, emphasizing the importance of partnership among teachers, administrators, and families to meet each student's needs.

"The teachers take the time, no matter the student or grade level, to help out and mold the child to be the best they can be."

We are excited to announce the appointment of Mrs. Amanda Rainey as the new Assistant Principal of Guardian Catholic School (GCS). Mrs. Rainey began teaching third grade at GCS in 2017, and in 2020, she also assumed the role of Early Learning Director, a position she continues to hold.

A graduate of St. Matthew's Catholic School and Bishop Snyder High School, Rainey has a master's degree in Educational Leadership



Julia Zimmerman,
Director of Advancement

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Julia Zimmerman as Guardian's new Director of Advancement. Julia began working in the Guardian Advancement Office in 2015 to assist with the *Build the Dream, Guard the Legacy* capital campaign to construct the new school campus. Since then, she has demonstrated her dedication to Guardian and its mission of bringing quality faith-based education to children regardless of ZIP code or financial means.

A graduate of UNF's Coggin College of Business, Julia holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics. She ties her current position back to her field of study.

"It is my strong conviction that education is the surest path to upward mobility and a brighter future."

Julia was the unanimous selection of the Guardian Board of Directors to lead us in the important work of our mission to raise funds for Guardian Catholic School. Her professionalism and belief in providing opportunities to protect each child's potential will lead us in new directions over the next few years. "I have seen firsthand the way this school changes lives," Julia said, "and that is why I am so excited and honored to serve as Director of Advancement for Guardian."



Thank You Summer Learning Program Donors

Guardian Catholic is grateful for the tremendous support of donors and partnership of United Way's Success by Six that made our 2021 Summer Learning Program possible. Because of their generosity, this year we were able to expand this important initiative to help students in Pre-K through 3rd grade maintain — and in many cases exceed — grade-level proficiency in reading.

(continued on pg. 2)

Our mission is to participate in God's work by providing advocacy, resources and governance to Guardian Catholic School. These resources enable the school to provide educational and spiritual opportunities to children and families regardless of financial situation or religious preference.



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Dear Friends of Guardian,

When something great is accomplished, we often hear the words, "Thanks, we couldn't have done it without you." These words couldn't be more true today with the challenges and opportunities presented to Guardian over the last year and a half.

To our donor family, faculty, parents and students, Board and volunteers, community partners and sponsors, "Thank YOU! We couldn't have done it without you!"

Guardian Catholic School is achieving its mission, and our students are continuing to excel in all areas of academics. The children are active in sports and used our beautiful gym to practice throughout the summer months.

Sister Dianne and Sister Cynthia planned, expanded, and implemented a full-service Summer Learning Program that helped children from Pre-K through 3rd grade not only stay on track in reading and math but advance their skills for readiness at or above grade level when school started in August.

Guardian Catholic has a tremendous Board of Directors, and all are giving of their time, talents, and treasure to raise the necessary funds for financial assistance, special initiatives, and technology for our students to have what they need to succeed — and succeed they do!

Ninety-six percent of Guardian graduates go on to finish high school, soaring above the average graduation rate of 78 percent for high schools in the area. Guardian alumni go on to college, a trade or into the military, breaking through the cycle of poverty with the life skills and values taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame and their wonderful faculty.

As you read through our newsletter, we hope you will consider a gift to the Guardian Annual Fund to provide hope and a future for boys and girls eager to learn.

Please contact me any time to learn more.

With appreciation and God bless you,

Jane R. Lanier
 Chair, Guardian Board of Directors
 (904) 477-0561



Summer Learning Program Donors, CONT'D.

This vital program positioned 113 children for achievement as they returned to school this Fall. We saw significant success with the first-year utilization of a digital learning lab, with assessments showing that all participating students demonstrated progress in learning. Especially impressive were the gains made by students in kindergarten, a critical stage for reading development.

In addition to academic growth, it was so nice to see the children just being children again and enjoying summer fun. Every child also benefitted from having two nutritious meals and a snack each day. What a relief for the parents who are working sometimes

two or even three jobs to make ends meet. The continued disruption of COVID-19 and its effects on academic achievement remain a hurdle, and we remain grateful for our many supporters' help to steadfastly protect each child's potential.

We give thanks to the 61 donors who made our program possible and offer a very special "Thank You" for lead gifts from: The Jack & Betty Demetree Family Foundation, Gayle Bulls Dixon, the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and Laurie Leonard, The Rice Family Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. Louis V. Walsh IV.



Message from Sr. Dianne

Dear Friends,

We're grateful to be back as a Guardian Catholic community for the 2021-2022 school year. While we've had to adjust some processes to be proactive in this new normal, our delivery of high-quality education for students in PreK3 through 8th grade is non-negotiable. Guardian students' ability to thrive, despite all challenges, is only possible through the steadfast support of their parents, our faculty and staff, and importantly, Guardian Catholic supporters.



I am proud to report that the Early Learning Program at Guardian is recognized with the highest rating (5 Stars) by the Early Learning Coalition's Guiding Stars of Duval Quality Rating and Improvement System. Simultaneously, the State of Florida has validated our program in conjunction with the National Catholic Education Association's Gold Seal Quality Care program. These significant recognitions prove what we already know — Guardian Catholic prepares students for success from day one! These ratings validate the way we define high-quality education: consistently exceeding standards for instructional learning and support, being responsive to diverse needs, and creating a positive, affirming environment that supports mind, body and spirit.



Students in PreK - 3rd grade were able to continue benefitting from our highly rated programs throughout the summer months, thanks to faithful donors. The importance of the foundation set through high-quality learning in the early years of childhood cannot be understated. With preschool enrollment at capacity this year, our ability to impact lives will expand — and by continuing to build relationships with their families — and with your support — we'll nurture the skills, character and curiosity of these students all the way through 8th grade, setting them on a path for success in high school and beyond!



With immense gratitude and God's blessing,

Sister Dianne Rumschlag, S.N.D.

Sr. Dianne Rumschlag, S.N.D., PhD
Head of School

CARES Act Extension

There has been an extension of the tax benefits offered through the CARES Act. This year the extension covers 100% of the donor's Adjusted Gross Income. However, it is for cash gifts only. Many donors will still choose appreciated stocks as a less expensive, and overall more beneficial, way to make a gift. As always, please consult your tax advisor as to the best way to make your gift in keeping with your philanthropic plans. Guardian Catholic appreciates all gifts regardless of size that assist us in fulfilling our mission.

Alumni Spotlight



Robbin Frazier is an executive with SunTrust Bank, now Truist Bank, in Jacksonville. Besides being a graduate of one of the original Guardian Schools, St. Pius V Catholic School, Ms. Frazier is also a graduate of the University of South Florida and holds a master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University.

"I know the teachers cared about us. They challenged me, encouraged me and gave me the opportunity to succeed. All those little opportunities shape who you are as an adult."

Robbin believes the solid foundation for her success began with Guardian because of the small class size and the individual and "... intentional attention of the teachers."

As a Board member, Robbin will continue to engage our alumni and other inspirational role models like her in our community to give Guardian students the encouragement they need to be the next generation of leaders.

Grants For Updated Technology



Guardian Catholic School is the grateful recipient of two grants for new interactive displays in our Early Learning classrooms. Guardian received a \$20,000 grant from the **Rotary Club of Jacksonville** and a \$6,000 grant from **The Catholic Foundation** for new smartboards in our preschool and elementary classrooms. This funding will allow for the replacement of outdated displays, which are more than 10 years old, require increasing troubleshooting, and no longer support the latest educational software. The new devices will allow our teachers to focus more on teaching and provide our students with access to up-to-date educational applications and curriculum.

We are grateful to the Rotary Club of Jacksonville and The Catholic Foundation for their generous support of our students and teachers!

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Our special thanks to those who have given generously in 2020 and 2021.
Thank you for designating your giving to Guardian Catholic School!

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Guardian Catholic School

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