

St. Raymond School

2020 - 2021 • ISSUE 4

CLOSE UP



Since 1986, Celebrating Our 35th Year in Catholic Education



Message from Gregory Peterson, Principal

St. Raymond School began its 2020-2021 school year with students learning virtually at home due to the continued global pandemic. Teachers and students met each other in virtual classrooms and participated in a variety of activities and direct instruction. The dedicated faculty and staff worked creatively and tirelessly to continue its commitment to Catholic education. With the support of Father Erick, the school community joined together to celebrate Jesus and pray as one through our virtual school masses. Even at a distance, St. Raymond School continued to lead, educate, and serve its greater community.



"No matter the distance, St. Raymond is strong."

St. Raymond School was able to keep many of its traditional events, just done with a creative twist. With the help of the middle school Christmas elective, Mrs. Martin and her team brought together a festive Christmas program shared virtually for families to enjoy. Mrs. Spiller, our science teacher, led our 7th and 8th grade students through a virtual science fair. Unable to visit Sutter's Fort, our fourth grade teacher, Miss Lander, brought the experience to her students inside the classroom with a week of time period learning, activities, and costumes. These are just some of the exciting experiences students were able to participate in this year.

With positive changes in our county and city, St. Raymond School was excited to welcome students back into the classroom starting the second trimester. Through hybrid learning, teachers were able to provide direct instruction to students in-person and those joining virtually. Teachers have continued to provide formative and summative assessments, group activities, and meet the individual needs of their students throughout this entire year. It has been great to have students back in classrooms, playing outside with their friends, and hearing the buzz back in our hallways.

With this being my first year as principal, I'm filled with gratitude. Thank you to Father Erick for his partnership in strengthening the relationship between the parish and school. I'm looking forward to our continued work next year. Thank you to our faculty and staff for taking on the most challenging year in education. You have gone above and beyond the calling this year. Thank you for your dedication to Catholic education. To our families, thank you for your support as we maneuvered through the many challenges, checklists, Zoom links, and the ever changing guidance. And finally, thank you to our students. You are amazing and resilient more than you'll ever know. Thank you for giving your best, doing your best, and being your best self every day. We have all faced many changes this year, but together we have made it a positive and rewarding year. This year has been one of many firsts and I'm looking forward to building and growing our school community with our parish, families, and greater community.

As we set our focus on the next school year, St. Raymond School looks forward to completing its WCEA accreditation, moving forward with its field renovation, and having students back on campus for full time for in-person learning. St. Raymond School is ready and eager to get back in the classroom for the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

Mr. Peterson



St. Raymond School Accreditation

St. Raymond School holds a double accreditation with the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Accreditation was granted in 2015 and is held for six years. The St. Raymond Leadership team and staff have been actively preparing for the next accreditation visit which has been rescheduled for March 16th -18th, 2022.

A guiding principle of WCEA accreditation is to ensure that schools have developed an action plan outlining continuous school improvement across curriculum, culture, enrichment programs, platforms and technology focused on high achievement of all students. St. Raymond School will host a 3-day accreditation visit for a survey committee that will investigate the written evidence of our self-study report noting compliance with WCEA criteria.



Action Plan Goals include

- Transfer community outreach into authentic service learning
- Further develop the school/parish/family partnership
- Implementation of differentiated instruction & integrating innovative strategies



MISSION STATEMENT

Guided by our Catholic faith, St. Raymond School empowers all students to achieve academic excellence, prepare for the challenges of life, and serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

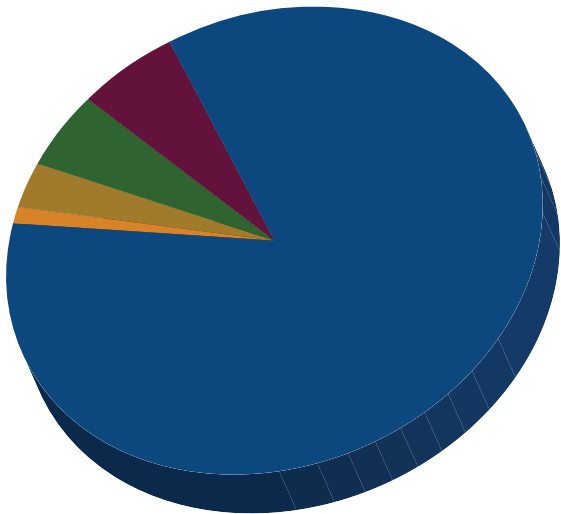
2019-2020 Finance

St. Raymond School strives to be prudent stewards of our resources. We strive to manage our budget efficiently and realistically for the long-term financial sustainability of the school and to be able to weather uncertain circumstances that we may be presented. The school’s income is generated primarily from tuition so the school does not have to be overly reliant on fundraising or financial support from the parish. Below is a breakdown of income by source for 2019-2020.

2019-2020 FINANCE UPDATE

Tuition	85%	\$2,100,046.00
Fundraising	6%	\$119,814.00
Fees	5%	\$131,519.00
Donations	3%	\$91,017.00
Other	1%	\$35,556.00

TOTAL \$2,477,952.00



St. Raymond Celebrates Catholic Education Virtually

National Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of Catholic Education in the United States. It is a week-long celebration that starts on the last Sunday of January. St. Raymond School, like many Catholic schools, kicks off the week-long celebration with Sunday Mass, a school open house, the annual science fair and activities for students and the St. Raymond community, which focus on the value a Catholic education provides. This year St. Raymond teachers, Parish staff and School Board utilized technology to bring the school and community together. Teachers hosted virtual bingo for the students to play during their asynchronous day to promote togetherness and fun. While we could not host the Grandparents luncheon this year, Grandparents were still treated to homemade art projects virtually taught and led by classroom teachers. The Catholic Schools Week Committee, led by JoAnn Gonzales, Margie Wiersma and Melissa Valdez, celebrated our teachers, school and parish staff with a hosted lunch from Torarenbou Japanese Restaurant in Dublin.



Greg Peterson, Principal of St. Raymond School, hosted the annual open-house virtually, together with Fr. Erick Villa and Julie McCormack, Vice Principal and First Grade teacher. Their warm and enthusiastic overviews were a reminder to new and existing families about the safe and welcoming environment a Catholic School has to offer. St. Raymond School strives to prepare students to be lifelong learners and to actively participate in their faith. The school also provides children the necessary resources to develop into confident and independent thinkers and leaders. Virtual tour videos were posted to the school website to showcase the school campus, dedicated classrooms, special programs and teachers' introductions. The videos are still available on the school website at www.straymondschool.org. Check them out!

Science Fair

The annual science fair is an opportunity for middle school students to take an active approach toward applying the scientific method to conduct their own independent research on a project or topic that interests them. It is an event that often requires months of advanced planning. St. Raymond 7th and 8th grade students begin to work on their science fair projects in October, brainstorming ideas and proposals before they begin their background research in November. Throughout December, students work on carrying out their experiment and writing up their projects using the scientific method. Student experiments ranged in category from biological, chemical and physical sciences. "Not being with the students in-person, to help guide each of them through the process and monitor their progress was the most challenging



as there is a huge advantage to being in person and having concrete, hands-on mentoring especially for students who were participating in the science fair for the first time," says Cyndy Spiller, St. Raymond's Science Teacher. To navigate these challenges, Ms. Spiller and supporting parents hosted mentoring sessions over Zoom to answer student questions. Students were also able to submit their work digitally so that Ms. Spiller could offer guidance and suggestions for their projects. Many students took advantage of these opportunities. "I am so glad that they decided to do the Science Fair even if it was online because it's fun and we get to learn about cool things that affect us each day," says Cassidy Rodriguez, who won 1st place and Best of 7th grade for her project titled, Eggs-periment, which tested the effects of different drinks on teeth.

Science fairs are usually rooms filled with tri-fold boards and students' experiments. This year, due to the pandemic, students' prepared and documented their science experiments on Google slides for presentation to science fair judges. "All of the students did an excellent job of presenting and explaining their projects. I was very proud of their accomplishments and their gratefulness to the judges and volunteers," says Ms. Spiller who was impressed by the students. The students' projects are judged on originality/creativity, scientific thought/method, report, skill, clarity, and oral interview. Dareus Paul won 1st place and Best of 8th Grade for his project on the Effect of Electrical Power using various electronic components. He looks forward to the science fair each year and had this to share "The science fair is a time to learn and let your mind flourish. Even if you don't place, you learn something. The science fair should help you learn something new or deepen your understanding about something you're passionate about."

This year 22 judges, including parents, former students, former teachers, and STEM professionals from the community helped review the projects. Thank you to Cyndy Spiller for an excellent first ever virtual science fair and special thanks to the Brunnett family who played a large role this year to mentor students, plan and implement the science fair, and judge projects. Great job to all of the 7th and 8th grade students on their science experiments!

Resilience Reinvented

Resilience can be defined as the ability for one to recover swiftly from a difficult situation. Children are known to be resilient, but our children just this past year, have not simply defined resilience but have reinvented its meaning. Our children will be forever changed and some will come out stronger and fierce, while others will be mindful and present.

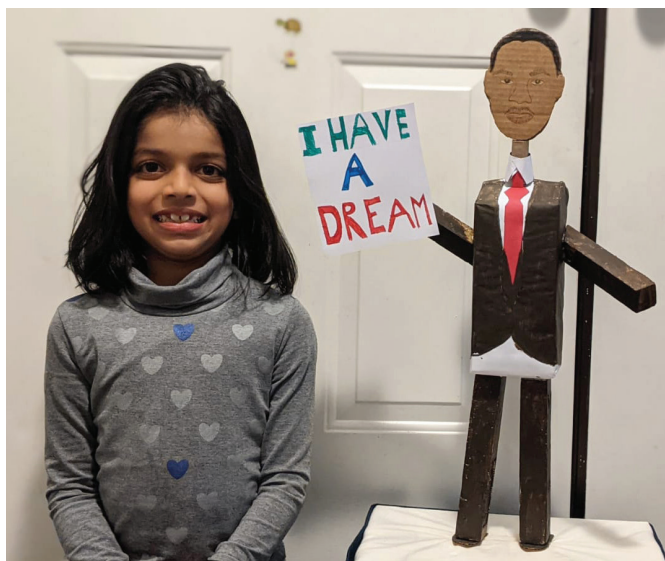
Resilience is not something you are born with. It is a trait that is built over time through life experiences. Our children had a lot to learn during the pandemic. Many had to learn to be still and accept that tomorrow is much different than the yesterday from a year ago and that the unknown has never been more uncertain. As a result of these experiences, they will reshape our future, defy all odds, and be reminded of what it was like not to have freedom to play freely and build friendships in-person. This past year has redefined our daily routines and taught us to never take what we have for granted, as yesterday is gone, tomorrow is not guaranteed and the present is the greatest gift. Our children learned to live in the present and embrace how the present will shape them for the future.

Our children were able to keep friendships and some even enabled much deeper connections. They were able to appreciate their teachers with a new level of gratitude. They were able to take a step back and

realize how blessed they have truly been, to be able to go places with limited restrictions and to hold, hug and kiss their loved ones without reservations. These children will grow up to better handle adversity and own mishaps that are bound to come their way. They will have the strength to rebuild their lives after loss, heartbreak and disappointment.

Children have never been as resilient as they are now after experiencing a once in a lifetime pandemic. They have defied virtual learning, distance friendships and even loneliness at times, but most importantly, they have conquered confidence and embraced challenges. From one parent to another, congratulations! You as a parent stood by these incredible children and sheltered them from the unknown, yet you enabled them to be resilient while allowing them to go through this journey by their side. You too are resilient and have learned to

parent in uncharted waters. You woke up every morning, and you showed up. Your children will forever remember this experience and though some days they may have felt they were at their lowest point in life, where everything was beyond uncertain, they had you right by their side, powered by the love of God and his strength. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13



Our New Learning Environment



For most of us, March 2020 feels like a lifetime ago! COVID-19 came abruptly into our lives and the St. Raymond community quickly jumped into action. What was thought to be a few weeks of distance learning extended into a year of new and innovative ways for St. Raymond staff, parents and students to teach and learn. Online learning was the new classroom and for many, homes became the new workplace. Despite all of the unique challenges we are facing, the St. Raymond community learned how to Shine in Place!

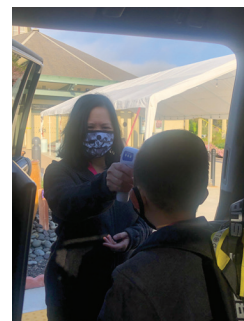
The St. Raymond COVID-19 Reopening Plan was published in October 2020. St. Raymond School executed a phased reopening of hybrid learning with our students in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade in compliance with state, local and Diocesan guidelines. Grades K-5 reopened in November, 2020 and Grades 6-8 joined in January, 2021. As of Jan. 25, 2021, St. Raymond School had students in Preschool through Eighth grade for in person learning. St. Raymond's continued to provide distance learning for students learning from home through the 2020-2021 school year.

Throughout the year, our children have had to relearn how to do activities we used to do together, in new, redesigned ways with the hope of achieving the same feeling of connectedness. At the start of the school year, students logged into their zooms, meeting their new teacher for the first time and seeing their friends after being apart for months since the pandemic started. It was a new way to learn a new normal we all would have to get used to for an undetermined amount of time.

What was once a daily, morning gathering has now become a weekly, online address. All of the same com-

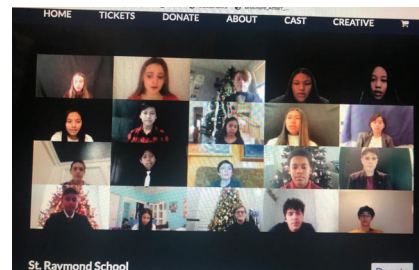
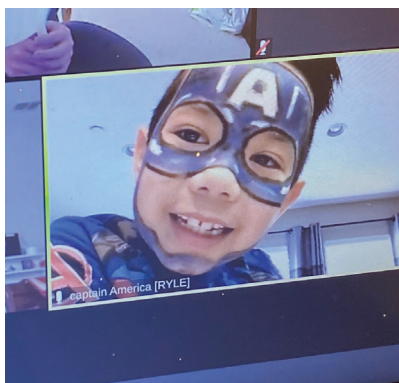
ponents are intact, now with a reinvented presentation. Attending Mass is still a sacred experience, yet now the priest is behind a computer screen, or wearing a mask.

Returning back to school in-person may have looked "different" but being together again with classmates and teachers never felt better! Students returning to school in person, were welcomed with screening questions and their temperature check before joining their friends in class for morning prayer. While students had to remain 6ft apart and with masks on, that still didn't overshadow the joy they have being able to play and run outside with their friends. When asked about what he likes about being back in school, Kindergartener Tyson Valdez says "Being with my friends instead of looking at them on the screen!"



Both the Roomies and the Zoomies are experiencing school in different, yet all new ways. Holiday parties were organized by the wonderful Room Parents whose only goal was to allow the children to celebrate with their classmates and forget, even just for a short amount of time, the state of the world. Breakout rooms became the new party station and the Kahoot! learning platform is an engaging way to share a game with remote players.

Mrs. Barbara Martin, the school's music teacher with support from the middle school elective class, Mrs. Brunett, Miss. Ongengco and Mr. Barnes put together a fantastic Christmas Performance. With black drapes and sheets set up as backdrops, students rehearsed and recorded from their homes dressed in their Christmas best. Conor Van Slambrook says "The Christmas program was fun. I liked that we still had one. I would rather be in person though. It's fun memorizing my lines and being on stage." In the spirit of this beloved Christmas tradition, families gathered around their computer screens to proudly watch their children joyfully sing and perform.



With all of the uncertainty in the world we needed a gentle reminder of how we as Catholics could respond, especially to our children. Miss Sara Farreyra and Debby McGuire gave us very simple messages in Mr. Peterson's weekly newsletter that carried great value. We were reminded to give extra moments of love and support, not only to our children, but ourselves, as well. Giving grace is something we often forget about, but is a powerful tool. As Debby wrote, "Our job as Grace Guides for our children is to Stay on the Beach." This means that if we jump into the turbulent waters of emotions being felt, we risk being swallowed up by the rough waters with them. Instead, "The call is to find our way to being grounded in grace as the waves are constantly coming our way." Once we started doing this, we began to understand the concept of us all being in this situation together. Developing confidence by communicating feelings, coming up with solutions and making plans for survival and success.

Let us all celebrate and remember the simple yet huge accomplishments of our students, teachers, parents and community for getting through this this past year!

Check out our amazing teachers and staff teaching in action!



St. Raymond was excited to welcome students to join learning in-person. In compliance with guidelines set by the CDC and Oakland Diocese, St. Raymond set desks and eating areas so that kids were at a minimum 4 feet apart.



For St. Patrick's Day, Miss Walterhouse invited her roomies and zoomies to an outdoor classroom at Emerald Glen Park. 2nd graders participated in a number of fun science and art activities and enjoyed being in the presence of their classmates!

Check them out 1 year later...!!



In April of 2020, Tobias Balland proudly answers his first grade classmates' questions during Zoom. The baby chicks his family is raising became the honorary "class pets" when they were 9 days old.



After being the class pets in the spring of 2020, the Balland Family chickens are all grown up. They now lay 3-4 eggs a day and enjoy wandering around the yard.



Growing in their Faith with Father Erick

Of the many things that excited Father Erick about joining St. Raymond, one of things he most looked forward to was teaching our children the Gospel of Christ and witnessing their spiritual growth. However, soon after Father Erick assumed the role of parochial administrator, the pandemic lockdown occurred, and Father Erick was tasked with the challenge of finding ways to help our students worship Christ and celebrate the sacraments, milestones, and other events necessary for spiritual growth, at a distance. During this difficult time, Father Erick found comfort in the “warmth, support and community spirit of St. Raymond Church and School. The school and parish leadership make St. Raymond such a vibrant and dynamic community.” The pandemic helped Father Erick appreciate the importance of being “grateful for the many, many blessings and the realization that we have to make the most of our relationships with each other and always be grateful.”

Now that St. Raymond has reopened and the students have begun to return to the classroom, Father Erick’s “heart is filled and overflowing with happiness to see the children full of joy and enthusiasm.” Father Erick reflects that, “it has been a year of being creative and responsive to the call of the times, but even this could not restrict us from celebrating the lasting impact on the faith of our kids.” These celebrations of faith have recently included our 2nd graders who just celebrated their First Holy Communion, our 8th graders who are preparing for the End-of-the-Year Graduation prayer services, our 3rd and 5th graders who were able to perform outdoor stations of the cross and a schoolwide Marian Mass honoring Mother Mary. We are very grateful for Father Erick’s leadership and guidance, and also for the faith, hope, and prayers of our St. Raymond families.



Faith In Action

Service is a tenet of our Catholic faith supporting its growth and maturity. St. Raymond encourages students to live by values in the Gospel and be active servants of God. We are proud to share the stories of these St. Raymond students who took action when called upon to serve others and their community.

Lending a Helping Hand to the St. Raymond Food Bank



First Grader, Joshua Santos, along with his parents have been volunteering with the St. Raymond Food bank since before the pandemic started. They help fill grocery bags with fresh food and help sort and organize the canned food donated to the Parish. The grocery bags and food boxes are distributed on the third Saturday of each month to individuals outside of Moran Hall or delivered to homebound Clients.

Joshua's parents are thankful for the opportunity to give back and help their community. They say "volunteering gave us a chance to talk to Joshua about how to help others that may not have enough food to eat." Joshua has now become accustomed to the food bank layout and can easily and quickly find where to place the items. Several older boys from the Church of Latter Day Saints volunteer each week. Joshua watches the older boys packing and lifting the big boxes, it inspires him to contribute as well.

A dedicated room and closet in Moran Hall have been allocated for the St. Raymond Food Bank who serves over 300 adults and children each month. The St. Raymond Food bank has many volunteer opportunities available that range from food sorting, filling grocery bags, picking-up food at local groceries and the County Food Bank in Oakland and delivering boxes to local homebound clients. Many St. Raymond students, including the Girl and Boy Scouts have also supported the Food Bank by providing holiday cards to bring good cheer to Food Bank clients. If you are interested in getting involved or are interested in making a donation please contact Maggie Ringle maggie@srcdublin.org.

"Many Hands Make Light Work"

Exposure to a life of service started early for 7th grader Anna Jarosz. When she was 6, she started volunteering through the many Girl Scout service projects for her troop. Serving others has given Anna, the opportunity to give back to the community she lives in, gain new life-long skills and has brought her closer to family and friends throughout the pandemic.

During the holidays, Anna found numerous organizations seeking volunteers to virtually brighten the lives of others in need with donations, cards to the elderly and emails to frontline workers. However, one organization truly stood out to Anna. During a family mass presided by Fr. Erick, Anna learned about a St. Raymond parishioner looking for help to make blankets for Project Linus. Project Linus is a non-profit organization that provides handmade blankets to children in need. Anna remembered making blankets for babies a couple years prior for Girl Scouts and knew she could utilize those same skills to help children who were hospitalized or seriously ill. "Making these no-sew blankets helped me realize there are many ways to share my talents without having to learn a difficult skill. Making these blankets for the children made me happy because I knew whatever child received it would also be happy and remind them that they are loved," reflects Anna.

While there are many organizations looking for volunteers, Anna has also found ways to help her family and friends at a time when seeing them in person wasn't possible. She set up Zoom sessions to read to younger cousins, and brought joy and cheer to loved ones in the form of written prayers and cards. With many sports and other activities on hold due to the pandemic, Anna used the extra time to complete yard work for her grandmother and at home for her parents. By gathering the leaves in her front yard, she was not only able to eliminate work for her dad, but she was able to contribute to Mr. Rodriguez's compost bin at school. The compost is returned to the school garden and landscaping and helps to enrich and retain moisture levels in the soil. She and Jordan Estimo also helped Mr. Peterson with weeding and cleaning-up the school garden last October.



Thank you Joshua, Anna and Jordan for sharing your time and efforts to help others!



Anchor's Away, Ryan Bean!

St. Raymond Alumni Highlight

Ryan Bean has always loved to travel. Growing up he spent many summers traveling and cruising the ocean with his family. Now as a Freshman at the California State University, Maritime Academy he is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Transportation along with his US Coast Guard 3rd Mate license. He hopes to one day become a cruise ship captain and travel the world.

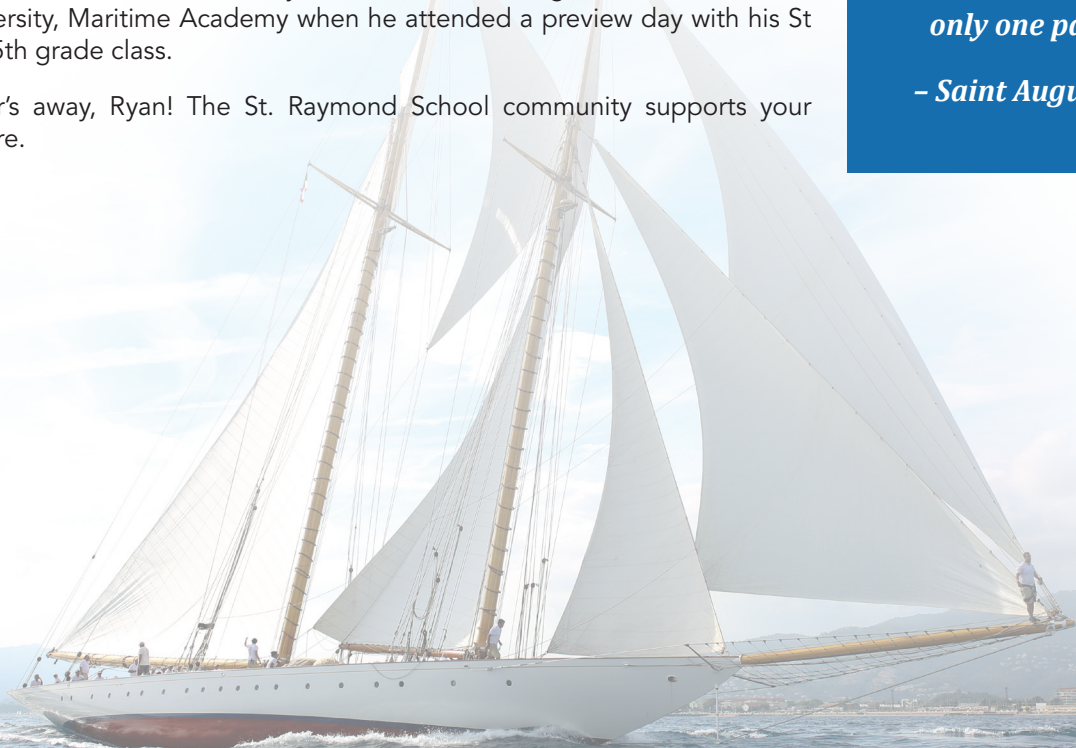
After graduating from St. Raymond School in 2016, Ryan went on to attend De La Salle High School in Concord, CA. He was in their graduating class of 2020. Like many seniors in the class of 2020, Ryan's senior year at De La Salle did not go as planned. In the middle of March 2020 the school was shut down for in person learning. Initially, students planned to go back to the classroom after Spring Break, but inevitably the school was closed for in person learning for the remainder of the school year. He completed his classwork and took his spring finals online. Rather than walking to Pomp and Circumstance in his cap and gown, Ryan and his family attended two graduation ceremonies. The first was a virtual ceremony, with speeches from faculty, the Valedictorian, and the presentation of various awards which was held on their planned graduation day in May. The second ceremony was an in-person drive through ceremony over the summer, where each graduate was separately invited onto a stage and handed their diploma. Ryan recalls, "It was really good to see everyone at graduation, and it was nice to be back on campus." As one chapter closed for Ryan, another one opened.

In August 2021 Ryan attended a freshman orientation at California State University, Maritime Academy and by August 13th he had moved into his dorm room on campus. Cal Maritime Academy is a fairly small school with only about 1,100 students enrolled in the University. Each student gets their own dorm room and although there are some social activities, overall the campus is pretty quiet. Ryan's experience at Cal Maritime has been really great. The curriculum is very hands on and attending in person classes has enhanced his college experience. Ryan is also a member of the Men's Golf Team and feels fortunate to travel to places like Arizona and San Diego for Golf Tournaments. This summer Ryan will participate in The Cal Maritime Academy Sea Time Summer Training program where he and his classmates will spend 45-days on a ship sailing to Hawaii and then to Catalina Island. "I'm really looking forward to the summer program," said Ryan, "I always wanted a job that allowed me to travel. I thought about being a pilot, but for me the idea of cruising around the world sounded much more fun." Ryan recalls first learning about the California State University, Maritime Academy when he attended a preview day with his St Raymond 5th grade class.

Anchor's away, Ryan! The St. Raymond School community supports your bright future.

"The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."

- Saint Augustine





St. Raymond Sports Field

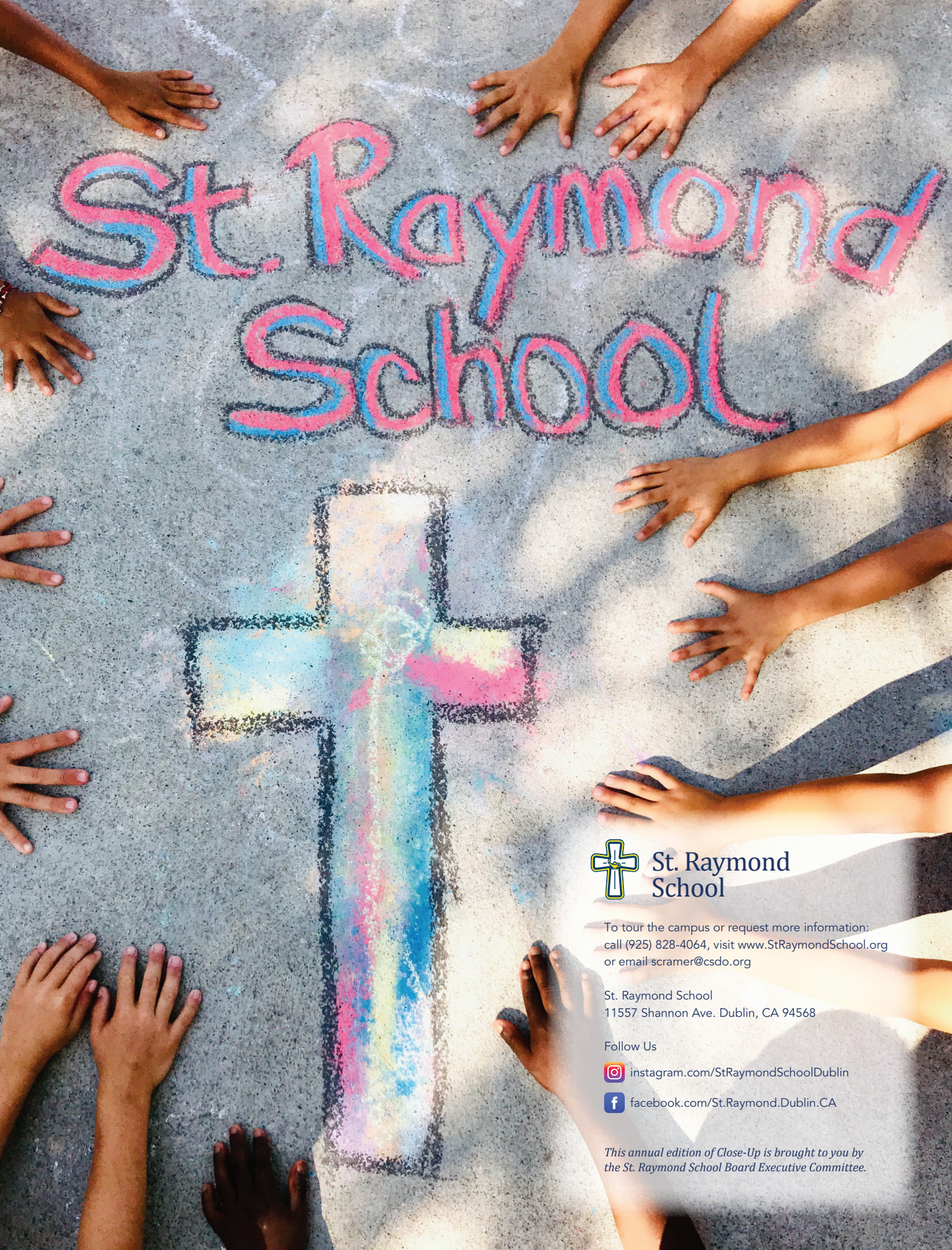
Plans are still underway for the St. Raymond Sports Field. Now more than ever, a new field is needed and will enable a safe place for our children to play and stay active. The Facilities department, St. Raymond Leadership and the School Board are currently evaluating vendors to support the redesign and rebuild of the campus field which will incorporate a running track. Thanks to the generous donations of school families and the St. Raymond community, work toward this strategic initiative can proceed with a target installation date of 2022. If you are interested in participating on the Field Committee or would like to contribute to the program fund, please contact John Salter, Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair.

Virtual Wine Tasting

St. Raymond School hosted its first ever virtual wine tasting event in April for over 50 families. Proceeds from the event benefited the School's Annual fund which provides essential support to many St. Raymond school programs. Grgich Hills Estate Winery from the California Napa Valley curated a beautiful flight of five estate wines: Fumé Blanc (Sauvignon Blanc), Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, which attendees enjoyed virtually as they listened to a senior sommelier teach them about the history and importance of Grgich Hills Estate to the Napa Valley and how this esteemed winery helped place California on the world map of winemaking.

Special thanks to Catalina Cristen, Annual Fund lead and the St. Raymond School Board for an excellent event!





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School



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To tour the campus or request more information:
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or email scramer@csdo.org

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