

The Value of our Catholic Schools

I want to begin by thanking everyone who is involved in our Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Marquette. The work that all of us are engaged in through supporting and operating our Catholic Schools is a very important mission of the Church.

A primary mission of our Church is evangelization. To evangelize means helping people encounter Jesus by sharing the Gospel message so that they make a personal decision to follow Jesus in faith. For our young people and their families, our Catholic Schools are one of the best places where this evangelization takes place. We pray that our Catholic Schools be strong evangelizing communities, places where students graduate happy in their friendship with Jesus and his Church and with the desire and confidence to share their joyful friendship with Jesus with their friends and peers and with others.

Another strength of our Catholic Schools is that we promote the formation of the whole person. This means that we work to develop all the human faculties of our students, including a strong and deep intellectual formation that results in a young person who possesses the habits of a lifelong learner, the formation of the virtues, a religious education and growth in personal faith in Jesus Christ.

One way to think about this formation of the whole person is in light of our Catholic liberal arts curriculum, which I fully support. Our curriculum goes beyond standards and content to the formation of the character of the student. To begin with, a liberal arts curriculum teaches rich subject knowledge. However, a Catholic liberal arts curriculum goes beyond this knowledge to the level of personal formation. This kind of formation reaches into the being of a student and helps develop the student's character. I am speaking here of the formation of intellectual, moral and spiritual virtues.

For example, there is the intellectual virtue of *studiousness* that involves the whole interior discipline of what good study habits are. Intellectual virtue involves a sense of *wonder* about reality. It disposes us to know the truth. Thus, we approach learning with a sense of *wonder* and *reverence* before being. To penetrate the mystery of what is, and Who ultimately is the foundation



of all that is, leads us to our ultimate goal of coming to know that God is the source of all being and truth. These are not things that can be measured in standardized tests or other kinds of standards-based education. We do have rigorous academic content goals, but true education involves far more. Thus, we go beyond the standards to the formation of the whole person: humanly, intellectually, morally and spiritually.

I enjoy my annual visits to our Catholic Schools. These visits give me an opportunity to experience firsthand the excellent formation our students receive in our schools. This success is due to the effort that I know all of you put into real teamwork between our parishes and schools, our school leaders and their staffs, and between our parents and schools. I am also encouraged by the close cooperation between our diocesan Catholic Schools office and our principals and faculties. All of this teamwork demonstrates to our greater communities that we are acting as the Body of Christ.

Ultimately, we want the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his very Person to inspire and guide each of our Catholic Schools in every dimension of its life and activity – in its philosophy of education, in its curriculum, in its community life, in its selection of teachers, even in its physical environment.

I close by thanking in a special way our teachers and principals for the sacrifices they make as Catholic educators. Your daily examples of love for our children and their families make up the backbone of our schools and their Christian mission.

Father Marquette Catholic Academy

Education for Life. Faith for living.



News from our Principal Dr. Jessica Betz

Catholic education is not just about education. For those of you who have had experience with Catholic education, you will understand when I emphasize that community, culture, faith, teamwork, understanding, and love are just a few key elements that make this type of education special. I can tell you why Catholic school matters, but it is not until you experience the difference of why that you truly understand. Of course, it is the underlying and driving force of faith and the Holy Spirit that sets the foundation for everything else. Yes, we are an academy, and we are a private school, but above all else, we are a Catholic school. Let me tell you why that matters.

“Catholic school matters, because Catholic school is a community.”

It is a family. When you enter into the building, you are greeted by family, people who support the Catholic mission of the school. When a community can join together and understand one mission and when a community has a driving purpose, it creates a culture of positivity and understanding. It creates a loving and nurturing culture. When education is founded on these key elements, it allows students the opportunity to foster a different type of learning, a learning that is individualized and confident, a learning that is supported by a network. Through the strength of our school family and culture, the students are given the opportunity to engage in a community of learning that has an unshakeable foundation. At Father Marquette Catholic

Academy, we are given the opportunity to not only build a unique learning environment, but we are able to provide students with a curriculum that is specially designed for success. With the help of the diocese, our curriculum is not given to us, but is hand-crafted and selected by trained educational professionals. We are not given standards from which we must teach, but we teach from a curriculum that is so strong, it naturally embraces all subject-area standards and is crafted with not only student success in mind but also with the end in mind: where do we need our students to be and what do we need them to learn so that they are not just successful now, but are successful always?

Our students learn classically. They are not covering a vast amount of material at surface level, but they are covering important and relevant subjects in-depth. After all, learning is not just about getting through the materials, it is about covering the materials well and allowing students the opportunity to wonder about the good, the true and the beautiful. We are allowing our learners to be critical. We encourage them to ask questions and to think for themselves, and even further, to recognize the knowledge that they already possess. Students at FMCA have the opportunity to read classical literature and to explore science. They do not have to rush, but rather are able to watch the beauty unfold right before their eyes. Our teachers understand the importance of teaching classically, and they view their teaching through a completely different lens than most teachers.

When you see Catholic education in action, it is impossible to deny the power of faith. Our faith is woven into everything that we do and everything that we are. Our teachers exude faith by being mentors to our students.



They model what it means to be a faith-filled person and to trust in God. They model how to treat others and how to handle others with care. They help our students to understand that we are all called to be Holy disciples of Christ. The FMCA students are given opportunities to deepen their faith. They learn about Church History and Theology and are given the chance to go to confession and participate in the Mass. Our students are reminded of the calling to be disciples of Christ.

At FMCA, there is a recognizable balance between high standards and grace. All children participate in the faith-filled classroom life and are always challenged to grow spiritually and intellectually, as faith and academics are the cornerstones of our school. Our faith is the true driving force behind our mission and who we are. FMCA welcomes all people, all families, all denominations and non-denominations, because God calls us to love our neighbors and we are always excited to welcome new families to become members of the FMCA family. We provide a thoughtfully designed, faith-filled, family-based, mission-driven education, and that is why Catholic school matters.

*Only one thing
is necessary...*



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FMCA Feature Alumni, *Chef Nichole Durley-Rust, CEC*

By: Edward Sanderson



Nichole attended FMCA up until the eighth grade. She then resumed her education in the public school. After graduating High School, Nichole continued on to Northern Michigan University studying Political Science and Speech Communication. While attending NMU, Nichole worked in a restaurant. During her time employed at the restaurant, Nichole realized that maybe Political Science was not at the top of the list of things she desired in life. Much to her parent's dismay (as her father knew the long hours the hospitality industry required) Nichole decided that culinary school was what she wanted and moved to Chicago to attend The Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago, a Le Cordon Bleu school, followed with a short stint afterward in New Orleans at Commander's Palace to finish her externship. She then stayed in New Orleans and worked her way through some of the best restaurants in the city climbing the management ladder at each job to attain positions like Sous Chef and even Executive Sous Chef.

After moving back to Marquette in 2012 with her now husband Rob, Nichole earned the title, Certified Executive Chef, after completing the required written and practical exams through the American Culinary Federation in 2017. Nichole stated that this was one of the hardest accomplish-

ments she ever pushed herself to do, requiring approximately six months of preparation. Nichole became not only the first female Certified Executive Chef in the UP, but the only one. She is only one of seven in the state. There are only approximately 2000 Certified Executive Chef's in the entire US.

During the interview, Nichole referred to her time attending FMCA and how important it was. It helped establish some tools she uses in her everyday life, as in asking questions of things you do not understand, and to dive deeply into everything you are learning. Continual learning and a passion to gain as much knowledge in everything she pursues is a natural part of Nichole's everyday life. FMCA helped continually build her confidence and gave her time to be inquisitive, which gave her the foundation to really believe in herself. That and following her dad's motto of "You never stop learning".

We asked Nichole the following questions:

How did FMCA help you develop into who you are?

Her parents sent her to FMCA feeling she would receive a more quality education, better sense of community, and more personal attention than if she attended the public school. All of these became apparent while attending FMCA. Nichole remembered receiving a lot of one on one with the teachers. This gave her the opportunity to develop, discover who she was, and who she wanted to be. Nichole participated in Forensics which helped develop her love and passion for communication and public speaking. This is apparent in her present career as an Executive Chef enabling her to not only being an effective communicator but a successful leader in the kitchen.

Where are you at in your life today, and what do you do?

Professionally- I am the Chef de Cuisine at Lagniappe restaurant in downtown Marquette. I run the day to day operations in the back of house (kitchen) which includes both lunch and dinner. I am the creator behind the weekly small plate specials, and curator of the brunch featuring eggs benedict du jour. I am also the Vice President of our local American Culinary Federation Chapter and a sitting board member of the Marquette Downtown Develop Authority board.

Personally- Nichole has been married to her husband Rob, who is originally from New Orleans, for three and a half years. Rob works in the front of the house at Lagniappe and loves the UP since moving here in 2012. After completing her

Our Mission

Centered in the person of Jesus Christ, Father Marquette Catholic Academy is a mission of four Marquette parishes. Partnering with parents, we work to form students into disciples who will go forth to improve the world around them. We accomplish this by uniting the pursuits of both faith and reason. Through rigorous academics grounded upon our perennial Classical Curriculum, a commitment to personal attention of each student and their virtue formation, we are dedicated to the complete formation of our students, remembering that in the end, only one thing is necessary.



internship in New Orleans Nichole lived there before moving back to Marquette. During this time, she not only met Rob but worked at some eating establishments which were infamous for being James Beard award winners. Nichole is grateful for her time spent in New Orleans learning about the food culture and the experience of life she gained by just living there. Nichole made it very clear during the interview that although she works at the restaurant owned by her family, she was handed nothing; she was made to earn her way to the position she now holds as the Chef de Cuisine at Lagniappe Cajun Creole Eatery. She also stated that working for and with your family is actually harder sometimes because your standards have to be so high and you have to be extremely passionate everyday to be an inspirational leader to your employees.

What would you say to families considering FMCA?

Fostering a set of life skills happens at a young age, FMCA has the resources, faculty, and time to allow this to happen. Due to the small class size every question she ever had was answered, the teachers had time to focus on each student individually and made it a comfortable environment to not only ask every question you had but to also learn.

What is a motto that you live by?

"Believe in Yourself" You can have faith in your religion, but you need to believe in yourself also. This will help you persevere and get through many difficulties faced during your lifetime. You also never stop learning and the drive to keep learning is something that was established and nurtured as a student growing up at FMCA. Nichole is a continuous learner as a chef, as she is continuously reading books about culinary from all around the world but Rob doesn't mind because he gets to be the test kitchen, as she laughs. This helps her to create new dishes which she cultivates to fit her menu with a globally inspired southern rooted style.

The entire interview with Nichole was a very energetic and uplifting experience. She has a positive outlook on every subject we discussed, and her positive attitude runs over onto you as you speak with her. She attributes her motivation to learning and her positive drive due to the education at FMCA and the teachers bringing out the best in each student.