

# GRADE BOOK

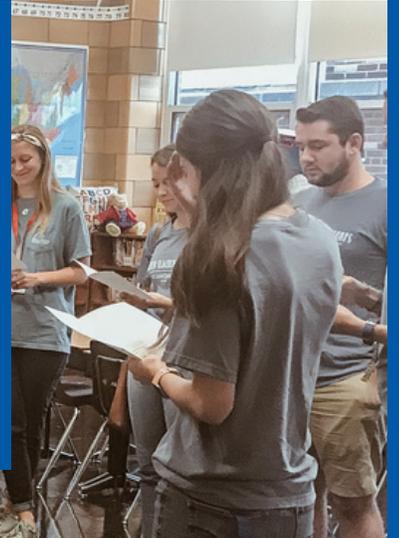
ISSUE 4 - SUMMER 2020



# Teach me.

BILLIKEN TEACHER CORPS

SAINT LOUIS  UNIVERSITY.



# EXCERPTS FROM A SPIRITUAL VISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATOR PREP IN A TIME OF DISRUPTION

By Fr. Ronny O'Dwyer S.J. and Angela Moret

Our faith invites us to practice Christian attitudes in small matters so that when more significant challenges present themselves we might respond in a Christ-like manner. About six months ago, members of the Billiken Teacher Corps (BTC) gathered for a fall retreat. Before celebrating the Eucharist on Saturday evening, the group read St. Luke's account of the Emmaus story and then paired up to walk and talk about how God had been present in unexpected events during the last weeks. What we could not realize in the moment was that this retreat activity would provide a spiritual template for how to accompany new Catholic educators in a time of disruption.

Seemingly overnight our novice teachers shifted from in-person instruction while living together in an intentional faith community to facilitating distance learning from their childhood homes. Our question was: How do we model for the teaching fellows what Catholic educators do—and have always done—during uncertain times such as these?

St. Ignatius described the experience of his companions as "communitas ad dispersionem," a community in dispersion. In the early days of COVID-19, an article on this topic by Matthew Carnes, S.J. circulated among Jesuit higher education circles. In it, Father Carnes reminds us:

In spite of the disruptions and separations ... [the first Jesuits] remained intimately connected through the technology of their day—letters, carefully crafted and shared—so that each continued to feel united with all the others. They read and re-read those letters, and they prayed for one another daily. Still one community, still one mission, still one life.

This insight liberated us. It reassured us that the vital aspect of community—which we teach our fellows is a hallmark of Catholic education—could be preserved in a new, physically distanced world. Indeed, if Catholic educators of previous generations had maintained a sense of community in dispersion then so could we.

As we look towards the fall and schools reopening in a new way, the flexibility we learned, practiced, and developed over the past months will continue to serve us all well. Again, we are entering new waters; class sizes and room set-ups will change, dress codes will include masks, and teachers will toggle between in-person and virtual learning. We continue to pray for the grace to receive this present moment and articulate a spiritual vision for a hope-filled future which prioritizes light over darkness.

Our Christian history offers us a treasury of stories, heroines, and prayers that can guide us on this path. We must harken back to where this project all began—the teaching ministry of Jesus. We must embrace Pope Francis' call to "row together" as we redouble our efforts to help one another deepen our familiarity with God during uncertain times and in so doing pattern our lives on the example of Christ the Teacher.



"Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other."

- Pope Francis

In 2019-20, the BTC placed **12** teachers in **11** different schools.

That included **3** high schools, **5** elementary schools, and **3** middle schools.

Over **850** students learned from our passionate, energetic, and faithful corps members.



# THANK YOU!

## To our Partner Schools

All Saints Academy - St. Rose Philippine Duchesne  
Bishop DuBourg High School  
Holy Cross Academy - Annunciation Campus  
Holy Cross Academy - St. Michael the Archangel Campus  
Loyola Academy of St. Louis  
Our Lady of Guadalupe School  
Rosati-Kain High School  
Sacred Heart Catholic School, Valley Park  
St. Cecelia School and Academy  
St. Frances Cabrini Academy  
St. Louis Catholic Academy  
St. Mary's High School  
Trinity Catholic High School

## To our Community Partners, Benefactors & Friends

Archdiocese of St. Louis Office of Education and Formation  
Cedar Creek Hotel and Event Center  
Emerson  
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
Saint Louis University School of Education Faculty and Staff  
Student Interns: Savannah Smith, Damen Alexander, Nick Bernard, Paul Gillam

"I am so thankful to the Billiken Teacher Corps for the unprecedented amount of support and encouragement they have given me. These 2 years have been the most formative time of my life thanks to my community and students. They have taught me more than I ever could have imagined, specifically how to continually build community through love and prayer." - Shannon McFall, Middle School Math and Science, Our Lady of Guadalupe School



# WELCOME COHORT 6!

Colleen



**Xavier University  
Our Lady of Guadalupe  
2nd Grade**

"I am looking forward to teaching and serving in St. Louis because this leap of faith will allow me to open my heart to God's love in a unique way and realize how much I can learn and grow with my students!"

Ali



**Regis University  
St. Mary's High School  
English - Grades 9, 11**

"I am thrilled to return home and start setting down permanent roots in the St. Louis Catholic educational community."

Ingrid



**Washington University in STL  
Our Lady of Guadalupe  
5th Grade**

"I am looking forward to teaching and serving in St. Louis because I can give back to and truly become a part of the city that I've lived in the last four years."

Ellie



**Rockhurst University  
Bishop DuBourg  
English - Grades 9-12**

"I am excited to return to my hometown and serve the St. Louis Catholic school system. I love St. Louis and I can't wait to be a part of the unique community its Catholic schools offer."

Thomas



**Saint Louis University  
Bishop DuBourg High School  
Theology & Campus Ministry**

"Teaching is something I have always felt drawn toward and I want to be for young people the same type of influence some of my teachers had on me."

Jake



**University of Alabama  
All Saints Academy St. Rose  
Middle School Social Studies**

"I am most excited about being able to give back to the Catholic school system. I went to Catholic schools for both my primary and secondary education, and they shaped me into the person I am today."

Zach



**Saint Louis University  
Rosati-Kain High School  
Algebra and Computer Literacy**

"I enjoy witnessing the growth in students and look forward to having a positive impact in their development. I love being part of a school community and can't wait to be involved."

# WELCOME BACK COHORT 5!

A  
N  
N  
A



**University of Tulsa**

**Sacred Heart Catholic School, Valley Park  
4th & 5th Grade Language Arts**

"At the BTC, community is a given. I have learned so many precious lessons from committing to this community that I will cherish for the rest of my life. As a teacher, building a safe and comfortable classroom community for my students is a necessary effort. When my students feel loved and valued in their community, their confidence exudes and they excel."

M  
A  
L  
L  
O  
R  
Y



**University of Tampa**

**Loyola Academy  
Religion & PE**

"Teaching means more to me than just helping my students understand content. Teaching is about making an impact. It's opening my heart up to allow my students to make an impact on me. It is doing my very best to love like Jesus and for my students to see and know that. When they know that they are loved, that's when they can learn and understand the content."

S  
T  
E  
P  
H



**Marquette University**

**Trinity Catholic High School  
Social Studies & Business**

"As a first year teacher, I've found that we must constantly step out of our comfort zones. From teaching brand new lessons, to holding your first ever parent-teacher conference, to being a powderpuff football referee! It is in these spaces of newness that we are able to grow, learn, and encourage our students to do the same"

A  
B  
B  
E  
Y



**Xavier University**

**St. Frances Cabrini Academy  
3rd Grade**

"To me, living a life of service means using my gifts and abilities for God's purposes. In the BTC, I have found that being in the classroom and working to become a good teacher for my students is where God needs me right now. Serving isn't always easy or comfortable but it pushes me to grow and to constantly be working to love my neighbor in the best way possible."

H  
E  
A  
T  
H  
E  
R



**Texas A&M University**

**Holy Cross Academy - Annunciation Campus  
Middle School Spanish, Social Studies, & Religion**

"The BTC has taught me to never stop learning. As a new teacher, there are so many things to learn and so many people to learn from!"

# LEARN

## A Reflection by Dr. Karen Tichy, Professor and Faculty Advisor

### What drew you to work with the BTC?

Early in his papacy, Pope Francis encouraged Catholics, especially Catholics in "church work" to "go to the margins, to the peripheries" – to serve the people with the greatest needs. That really resonated with me. Dr John James invited me to be part of a group planning the Billiken Teacher Corps to provide faith-filled young teachers primarily for underserved, urban Catholic Schools. I had to say "yes!" That led to a full-time faculty position in the Institute for Catholic Education. I started in August 2015 with BTC cohort 1.

### How does the high quality MAT for Catholic educators prepare novice teachers for a vocation in Catholic education?

Beginning teachers learn and develop the key elements of the teaching/learning process with support from course professors and from university supervisors, school mentors, and instructional coaches. The MAT for Catholic educators includes courses specifically on the unique aspects of Catholic education and on how to share the Catholic faith with students no matter what content area we teach.

### What have you learned about Catholic education from teaching and advising the BTC fellows?

The BTC graduates and current members have enabled me to see how Catholic education has both changed and remained the same since I became a Catholic school teacher 51 years ago. Their zeal for and commitment to the mission resonate with why I continue to choose Catholic education as my profession and vocation. The challenges they face as teachers today are much greater than when I was a teacher as society has become much more complex.

4,500

HOURS  
SPENT IN  
GRADUATE  
CLASS

10

DIFFERENT  
COURSES  
TAKEN PER  
YEAR

12

BTC  
MEMBERS

37 - 38

CREDIT  
HOURS PER  
DEGREE

8

PROFESSORS



Gaileen Hoenig, Ph.D.

John T. James, Ed.D.

Marsha Kellogg, M.S.Ed

Jessica A. Leonard, Ph.D

Joseph R. Nichols, Ph.D.

Kathryn Mitchell Pierce, Ph.D.

Karen L. Tichy, Ed.D.

Joy A. Voss, Ph.D.

# GROW

## A Reflection by Christy Connoyer, Head Softball Coach & BTC University Supervisor

### Can you talk about the growth you have seen in your BTC mentee?

It has been rewarding to observe Mallory and see her grow during her first year with the Billiken Teacher Corps. She accepted advice from all those offering help and put those suggestions into practice. She engaged her students and in return, her students responded with respect for her efforts. It is easy to see that she enjoys teaching and truly cares about her students. Her compassion for their lives as students and as people is quite remarkable, as she not only teaches skills, but focuses on sportsmanship and many other areas of character development.

### How do your past experiences as a teacher living in community and your experience as a SLU softball coach influence your work as a University Supervisor? Conversely, how does your experience as a teacher influence your work as a coach?

My experience in the inaugural ACE program at Notre Dame (Alliance for Catholic Education) gave me an opportunity to live in community with other teachers navigating our way through the first years of a program. That experience of facing the unknown and sharing numerous ideas is something I can pass to Mallory—she's not alone! It's ok to feel challenged and it's ok to feel like you're going through trying times—you're not in this by yourself. As a current collegiate coach, I still feel challenged everyday to bring out the best in my student-athletes. It doesn't change as I still teach today; however, my classroom setting is just a little different. I not only teach the sport specific skills and strategies, but life skills such as teamwork, accountability, communication, and organization.

### Do you have any final words of wisdom?

My favorite quote is: "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Teaching is a profession and more than just a job. It's a way of life that can truly impact children for the rest of theirs.

I am encouraged to see the excitement and support of the BTC from students, teachers, supervisors, and the many others lending a hand to develop qualified educators for today's young minds.

"Jump in with two feet! Don't be afraid to try something different, and when you do, go after it."

- Christy Connoyer

## THE BTC SUPPORT TEAM

12

## SCHOOL MENTORS



9

## UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS



2

## INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES



"Support each other! Remember you're not in this program by yourself and your fellow teachers can be a huge support system."

- Christy Connoyer

## A Reflection by Kristen Abbarno , BTC Cohort 4

### What does the motto "Teach Me" mean to you?

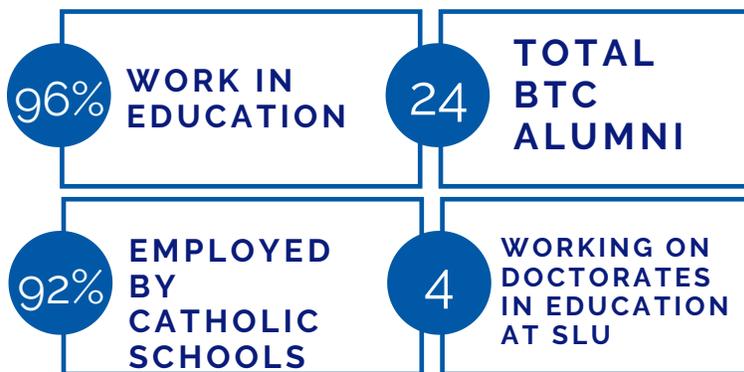
"Teach Me" is the perfect motto for the Billiken Teacher Corps, as it holds various meanings. "Teach me" can be heard in the unspoken words of each of our students to us as their teachers, yet it is also the phrase we repeat back to our students as well as to our own greatest teacher, Jesus the Teacher. For me personally, I find my heart whispering these two words quite often in the classroom as I ask Jesus to guide me in my own teaching of my students. But I also ask Jesus to "teach me" to see the world through the eyes of my students, to see as they see, to feel joy as they feel joy, and even to break my heart for what breaks theirs; we have so much to learn from the children of God, that Jesus himself even tells us that "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

### What does it mean to you to have found your vocation in Catholic education?

We travel through life in pursuit of our purpose, our vocation, to be all God calls us to be. Every step of my journey up to this point in my life has led me to exactly where I feel God desires me to be at this particular chapter in my life: teaching 2nd grade at St. Cecilia, surrounded by an amazing community of passionate educators. To have found my vocation as a teacher in Catholic education means to have uncovered a piece of myself, a peace of heart. I am blessed with the opportunity to continue my own passion for learning, to share that passion with my students and colleagues, and I get to praise the Lord each day while doing just that. I am exactly where I am meant to be.

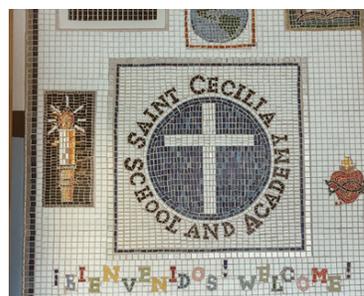
### What is one nugget of wisdom you would like to share with current and future BTC cohorts?

The Billiken Teacher Corps serves as a foundational stepping stone in each of its member's journeys. As Billiken Teachers, we are blessed with abundant opportunities to learn and grow, as our individual selves as well as members of a unique community. Father Ronny constantly reminds us that the BTC is intentionally a 2-year program. Throughout the 2 years, there will be challenging times at school and in the community, but there will also be an abundance of joyful moments. Cherish each experience and allow yourself to learn and to grow through each challenge as well as each triumph (no matter how big or small). And most of all, don't forget to enjoy the journey.



### COHORT 1

Jennifer Bruns  
Elise Earley  
Michelle Ehrhard-Owens  
Kelsey Kerr  
Mitch McCurren  
Sarah Staten



### COHORT 2

Owen Dabek  
Darrin DeChane  
Juliana Gates  
Catherine Gilmore  
Molly Goellner  
Kristi Walsh



### COHORT 3

Maria Ahern  
Juan Jose Barzallo  
Andrew Diemer  
Erin Emeric  
Kelsey Gordon  
Katharine Siemer



### COHORT 4

Kristen Abbarno  
Elizabeth Doherty  
Grace Hartenbach  
Shannon McFall  
Madison Miller  
Beth Moeller

### Follow us!

Instagram @billikenteachercorps

Facebook @billikenteachercorps

Website: [www.billikenteachercorps.org](http://www.billikenteachercorps.org)

## A Reflection by Madison Miller, BTC Cohort 4

To honor Mary, my first graders have been focusing on the Rosary in our religion classes. Together we have had discussions concerning how and why we use this tool for prayer as a class, at home with our families, and with a seminarian assigned to St. Michael's Parish, all leading up to our visit from Our Blessed Mother Rosary Program. Each of us made our own rosary to pray with when we visit the church or keep handy in the classroom for prayer.

As we were creating our rosaries with Our Blessed Mother Rosary Program and parent volunteers, among all of the commotion and excitement, I spotted a student who had already finished making her rosary. As part of our classroom management, when children finish something early they choose an independent activity from our "Early Finishers" poster. As I watched one by one pick a book off the shelf, pull out unfinished work, practice their sight words, and write in their journals, one student made the choice to find a quiet spot on the carpet, knelt down, and began praying her rosary. I watched her pray two decades of the rosary by herself, uninterrupted. Many of her classmates recognized me watching her and decided to follow her lead. That day, I added "Praying the Rosary" as a choice to our "Early Finishers" poster. Since this occasion, I now have half of my class choosing to independently pray the rosary after they finish their classroom work.

As a teacher, it is my personal goal to help foster each student's relationship with Jesus and the church. The time spent sharing my own experiences praying the rosary, witnessing each student's growing individual relationship with prayer, and successfully praying the rosary in Adoration weekly as a class (of 6 year olds) has been one of the most life giving experiences I've ever been blessed with. How lucky am I to witness God's love each day in the hearts and actions of the twenty two children that have such a strong desire to love and learn from Jesus?

33

COMMUNITY NIGHTS

26

SPIRITUALITY NIGHTS

12

COURSES THAT PREPARE BTC MEMBERS TO TEACH IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

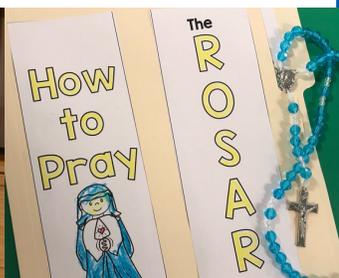
3

RETREATS

## CLASSROOM BLESSINGS

AUGUST 2019

To kick off the school year, **12** fellows and **2** program leaders, travelled in **3** vehicles to **11** schools to bless **12** classrooms



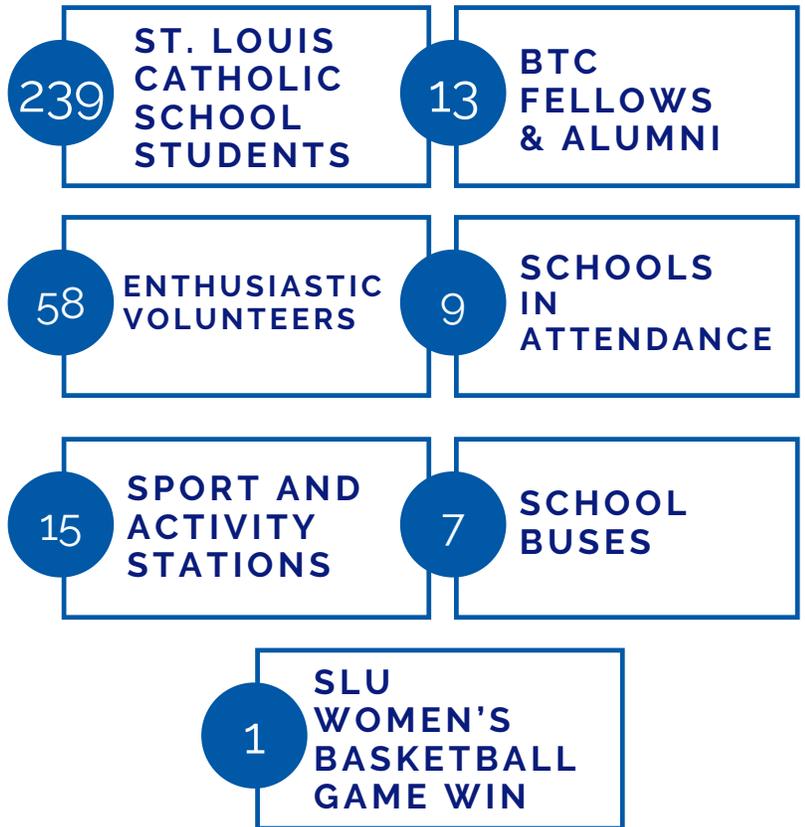
# 3RD ANNUAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL OLYMPICS

The Billiken Teacher Corps hosted its third annual Catholic School Olympics on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 in the Saint Louis University Simon Recreation Center.

The event serves as a celebration of Catholic education and introduces future first-generation college students in the St. Louis metro area to Saint Louis University.

More than 200 students from nine different Billiken Teacher Corps partner schools joined together in competition and fellowship as part of the event.

The Billiken, SLUnatics, SLU Cheerleaders, and student volunteers welcomed the elementary and middle school students to an opening ceremony, rotating game stations, closing ceremony, and led the students across campus to cheer on the home team at the Billikens' game against Fordham as part of Women's Basketball Education Day.



## SLU PARTNERS

- Beta Fraternity Volunteers
- Billiken Teacher Corps
- Billiken Teacher Corps Alumni Association
- Catholic Studies Program
- Institute for Catholic Education
- SLU Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon
- SLU School of Education
- SLU Cheerleaders
- SLUnatics



# HELP US RECRUIT!



Do you know a motivated, passionate, faithful college senior or recent graduate who would make a great teacher and community member?

Please refer them to our website [www.billikenteachercorps.org](http://www.billikenteachercorps.org) or have them email [angela.moret@slu.edu](mailto:angela.moret@slu.edu).

## TO TEACH AS JESUS DID

Fr. Ronny O'Dwyer, S.J. and a panel of BTC fellows, alumni, and staff reflected on Catholic education and the Billiken Teacher Corps at SLU's First Friday presentation on December 6, 2019.

To view the presentation, visit: [www.billikenteachercorps.org/reflections.html](http://www.billikenteachercorps.org/reflections.html)



## ROSARY FOR TEACHERS



Whether as a classroom teacher, parent, sibling, or friend, we all play important roles in continuing the teaching ministry of Jesus. Praying this rosary is one way to remember the intentions of Catholic Educators and the families they serve.

Order a rosary, booklet, and carrying pouch: [www.billikenteachercorps.org/rosary-for-teachers.html](http://www.billikenteachercorps.org/rosary-for-teachers.html)

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE!**

Support our mission: [www.billikenteachercorps.org](http://www.billikenteachercorps.org)

Billiken Teacher Corps  
Saint Louis University  
School of Education  
3500 Lindell Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63103



**THE INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
OFFERS THE FOLLOWING  
DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATORS:**

**MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING  
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:**

**[HTTPS://WWW.SLU.EDU/EDUCATION/INSTITUTES/INSTITUTE-CATHOLIC-EDUCATION.PHP](https://www.slu.edu/education/institutes/institute-catholic-education.php)**



**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY**  
—  
INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION