



Welcome to Angels Among Us

*Twenty-Five Years Supporting SSCHS a
Celebration of The Past, Present and Our
Dreams for The Future*

Schedule For the Evening

- 5:30 **Registration**
 Cocktail Party
 Music by R&R Music
 Silent Auction Mobile Bidding
- 6:45 **Take Your Seats**
- 7:00 **Principal Welcomes Guests**
 Essay Reading by SSCHS student
 Prayer by Father Dermot
- 7:20 **Dinner Served**
 Entertainment by Red House Duo
- 8:00 **Silent Auction Closes**
 Heads or Tails
 Raffle Drawing
- 8:15 **LIVE Auction**
- 8:40 **The Future of SSCHS**
- 9:00 **Gelato Served**
 Dance Dance Dance
- 10:45 **Last Call**



St Stephen Catholic School

St. Stephen Catholic School seeks to provide an environment where young people can grow in their faith by integrating the message of Jesus Christ into their daily lives through prayer, religious instruction, participation in liturgical celebrations, and service to others. Our mission began in the summer of 1999 when Fr. Pat Irwin commissioned a building committee to develop a plan to use 39 acres of land donated to the church, including the construction of a school. To help raise funds to purchase resources for the school, our first Angel's Among Us Gala took place in 2000, and construction was completed in May 2001.

In January 2001, Mary Liddy was selected to be the first principal. The school opened on Aug. 11, 2001, with 170 students in grades PK3 - 5th. A new grade was added each year until we became a PK-8 school. Over the next three years, Ms. Therese Jackson joined the school as Assistant Principal and grades six through eight were added. In 2004, Carol Nolan, Gina Robles, and I were tasked to create an exemplary middle school, and we graduated our first 8th-grade class. This was also the first year we integrated technology into the curriculum with a mobile computer lab of 25 laptops. In 2005, we had 295 students, began the process for our first accreditation, and Fr. Bill Swengros became the new pastor of St Stephen Catholic Parish. During this school year, we met with our first graduating class to see if they were successful in high school. We found they were enrolled in honors classes and earning As and felt St. Stephen prepared them well for high school. We continue to be regarded as a school of excellence by the Catholic and surrounding high schools.

The school continued to grow and saw leadership changes. Mrs. Liddy retired, Ms. Jackson became the new principal, and in March 2007, the school was accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference. The 2012 school year brought more changes. Sr. Carina Okeke joined us as the new principal, followed by Dr. Mark Majeski in 2014.

We have come so far from a school with one building and no fences, where we ate lunch in the Flex Room and had all-school masses on the playground, with every student carrying their chair to sit on. We've had horses and other pets on the property for blessings on St. Francis Day and a visit from the Stanley Cup. We rode the "Bowling Bus" to the old church for the Christmas concert practice and had polo shirts in a rainbow of colors. Today, we continue to live our mission as a faith-filled community and look forward to a bright future for the school and our students.

God Bless,

Linda Umoh
Principal

VERN BUCHANAN
DISTRICT 16, FLORIDA
FLORIDA DELEGATION
CO-CHAIR



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
TAX-WRITING COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE:
HEALTH
REPUBLICAN LEADER
TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916

February 15, 2025

St. Stephen Catholic School
Angles Among Us Gala and Fundraiser
Ms. Nicki Gallagher, Gala Chair
10424 St. Stephen Circle
Riverview, FL 33569

Dear Nicki,

I am writing to congratulate St. Stephens Catholic School on celebrating their 25th Anniversary and the work of the Angles Among Us foundation. As your Congressman, I am proud to represent those who so selflessly donate their time, money, and efforts to the betterment of your beautiful St. Stephens community. I want you to know that the community and those enrolled in the school appreciate all the unwavering support that has been have shown over the past twenty-five years.

The families and students that have been a part of the first twenty-five years of this premier Catholic School education should be very proud of this milestone. I always like to remind people that school age children make up 25% per cent of the population but are 100% of our future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance with any federal matter.

I wish you success and look forward to seeing what the future holds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vern Buchanan".

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

2110 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6015
FAX: (202) 226-0828

8433 Enterprise Circle
Suite 210
Bradenton, FL 34202
(941) 951-8643

510 Vonderburg Drive
Suite 303
Brandon, FL 33511
(813) 657-1013

www.buchanan.house.gov



DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG
Office of the Bishop

December 20, 2024

Mrs. Linda Umoh, Principal
St. Stephen Catholic School
10424 St. Stephen Circle
Riverview, FL 33569

Dear Mrs. Umoh,

I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to you and the members of St. Stephen Catholic School on the 25th Anniversary of the "Angels Among Us" initiative, which has generously helped to provide for the various needs of the school. Since its inception in 1999 and its opening in 2001, the school has been a shining light to the community, effectively providing for the academic and spiritual needs of hundreds of students and their families in the Riverview area and beyond and offering assistance to the needy through various school service projects.

Please be assured of my prayers that during the next 25 years, St. Stephen Catholic School will continue its mission to assist students in applying Catholic morals, beliefs, values, and practices in their everyday lives. May the Lord continue to pour out His blessings upon you, the faculty and staff, students, parents, and volunteers, all of whom have contributed to the success of St. Stephen Catholic School.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+

Most Reverend Gregory Parkes
Bishop of Saint Petersburg



The First Angels Among Us Gala was held prior to the first day that students officially entered the building. The proceeds of the gala were used to furnish the school with desks, blackboards and other essentials. The gala continued every year as the major fundraiser for the school offering support for improvement and growth. The families who have been part of the SSCS community will be forever appreciated for their participation in Angels Among Us and for their role in establishing and growing our safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning institution that we all consider HOME.



St. Stephen Catholic Church

invites you to attend the

Dedication Ceremony of

St. Stephen Catholic School and

Religious Education Center

August 5, 2001

*Mass will be celebrated at St. Stephen Catholic Church
by Bishop Robert Lynch at 11:30 a.m.*

*Following the service, families are welcome
to proceed to the facility located at
10424 Saint Stephen Circle
where an official dedication and blessing
will be performed.*

*Refreshments will be served following
the Dedication Ceremony.*

Our Humble Beginnings

*St. Stephen Catholic Church Community
Presents*



**Angels
Among Us**

Brian McKay

*Dinner and Auction
September 22, 2001*

Radisson Riverwalk Hotel Tampa

Our Humble Beginnings

2 • BRANDON • SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2001 • THE TAMPA TRIBUNE • TBO.COM

NEIGHBORS

Dinners Auctioned For School

By MARLENE BOGGS
Tribune correspondent

VALRICO — The Rev. Paul Pecchie, parochial vicar at St. Stephen's Catholic Church, will add a chef's hat to his clerical garb when he cooks up three homemade Italian dinners for the high bidders in an auction.

The auction was Sept. 22 at St. Stephen Catholic School's annual "Angels Among Us" dinner.

His culinary reputation raised \$7,500 for the school. "This is the second year his dinners were among the auction items," Jeanne Lewis, an event organizer, said. "They must have been really good because two of the families that bid highest last year also bid highest this year."

"This year's dinners went for \$2,500 each," Bridget Wray, another event organizer, said. "Some couples went in together."

Pecchie will cook one dinner for Pam and Joe Liguori and Bruce and

Carolyn Zakowski, one for Bonnie and Bob Rose, and one for Marsh and Doris Rainey, Jeff and Patty Reynolds, Sal and Karin Graziano, and Jim and Kim Thompson.

All reside in the greater Brandon area and all but the Thompsons are St. Stephen parishioners. The winners have a year to schedule the dinners.


Pecchie said he learned to cook "from his family. I do most of the cooking at the church rectory and just put the final touches on at the homes. That way I still have time to visit with the people."

The menu, he said, will probably include soup, an eggplant appetizer, salad, lasagna or some other main dish, and homemade cheesecake, a family recipe.

Pecchie said, "I enjoy cooking. It's sort of like relaxation for me. But the majority of time I'm only cooking for myself or the pastors."

Pecchie's dinners garnered more than 14 percent of the total \$53,000 raised at the event.

"We don't want him to ever leave the parish. We're going to write a petition to the bishop to keep him here. He's our angel," Lewis said.



The Rev. Paul Pecchie will cook three fancy Italian dinners that were auctioned and raised \$7,500 for St. Stephen Catholic School.

2001

TBO.com Keywords: brandon • October 16, 2002 • TAMPA TRIBUNE NEWS AND OPINION SHOPPER • 16

Auction Serves Up Fun and Funds

EVENT BENEFITS ST. STEPHEN SCHOOL

News Report

Some angels must have been watching over organizers of the third annual Angels Among Us Dinner Auction.

Not only did the St. Stephen Catholic School fundraiser make a smooth transition from the Radisson Riverwalk Hotel, last year's venue, to Higgins Hall at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, Tampa, but it raised a record \$64,000.

According to Michelle Greene, who co-chaired the auction with Roxanne Salsbarria and Cheri Pignataro, the event was a big success.


Merchants, business people and individuals donated everything from gift certificates for restaurants and theme to collectibles and sports memorabilia. The auction committee put together more than 300 themed baskets to be auctioned off in a silent auction. In addition to the baskets, auction goers had a chance to bid on artwork by the classes at the school as well as class projects.

Prior to a live auction, the more than 350 people attending dined on food prepared by Amici's Catered Cuisine, Sam Seltzer's Steakhouse donated some of the food and Della's Delectables of Brandon provided desserts.

Items sold in the live auction included tickets to see the Tampa Bay Lightning play the New Jersey Devils and a ride on the Zamboni ice-cleaning machine, an item that brought \$450.

Auction goers also purchased a suite at the St. Pete Times Forum for 14 friends to watch the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus for \$1,600.

The chance to replace St. Stephen Principal Mary Liddy as Principal for the Day went to first-grader Corey Cannon. His



Longtime St. Stephen Catholic Church parishioner Joe Liguori and the evening's mascot, Albert, greet those attending the Angels Among Us Dinner Auction.

Photo courtesy St. Stephen Catholic School

parents, Denise and Keith, paid \$500 for the opportunity. An NFL football signed by all three Grammatica brothers went for \$375 and a chance to try a Air Force pilot simulator went for \$300.

Some of the big-ticket items included a NFL playoff game party for eight prepared by the St. Stephen Men's Club. The club agreed to provide two parties with all the trimmings for \$1,500 each. And, once again, a gourmet dinner prepared by the Rev. Paul Pecchie, parochial vicar of St. Stephen Catholic Church, was the evening's record-breaker. Pecchie will provide two dinners at \$2,500 each.

"It was really a big success," said Greene. "A lot of people worked really hard on it, and the community gave us a lot of support. We want to thank them all."

The auction is the school's biggest fund-raiser. All money raised goes to support Christian education at St. Stephen Catholic School on Boyette Road.

Committee chairwomen for this year's auction included

Elizabeth O'Malley, Janet McCullum, Kathleen Kennedy-Hanson, Patty Zumpano, Joann Mammik, Jeanne Marie Treimanis, Mandy Fortier and D'Ann White.

Fast chairs are Jeanne Lewis and Bridget Wray.


Sponsors were Brandon Crossroads Bowl, Cornerstone Medical Care of Brandon, Apollo Pool Care, Irvin Steel Inc. and the Cannon family, Tampa Bay Lightning, Escalibur Financial Group, Bollenback Builders, Paul Albert, Jerold Meany and Fernan Chevrolet, James-Rivard Pontiac GMC, Fox Protective Services, Bishop Kaising, All-American Containers Inc. of Tampa and the Childers family.

Mike Grosvenor served as auctioneer, Tanya Enriquez entertained and Rich Zeller was master of ceremonies.

Committee members have already begun soliciting donations for next year's auction. Anyone wishing to be a sponsor or donate an item can contact the school at 741-9226.

2002

December 2002



By Mariah Greene
St. Stephen Catholic School Student

Auction Benefits School

My name is Mariah Greene. I am a member of St. Stephen Catholic Church and I am in second grade at St. Stephen Catholic School. I would like to tell you about an auction called "Angels Among Us".

This fundraiser makes money so we can be happy at our school. My mom and her friends worked very hard to make it perfect. They stayed up past nine o'clock at night.

The way the auction works is we asked people and businesses in our community to donate goods and services. Then the adults have a big dinner and buy the items that were donated to us. It was a fancy dinner. My mom and dad dressed up nicely. I got to play with my cousin Caitlin who was my babysitter.

It was fun to look in the car the next morning to see the cool stuff my mom and daddy bought. My brother got to have his birthday party at the Firemen's Training grounds and I got to see the "Lord of the Dance" show with my dad. This dinner and auction raised over \$54,000 for our school.

I want to thank everyone who donated to our auction. I wish they would let kids go next year.

2002

Reflections From Our Former Students

Benjamin Tagle, class of 2020

I am blessed and grateful to be part of St Stephen Catholic School. As an alumnus, I have enjoyed my time in the small, dedicated community of my Alma mater. SSCS honed and prepared me to become a Man for Others. It has not only educated me but also instilled in me the importance of my Faith. Now a freshman at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, I bring with me the tools to be successful and to reach my goals in life because of my comprehensive education and experience at St. Stephen Catholic School. I congratulate the school for its 25 years and pray for more years of continued success.

Jessica Gage, class of 2009

Reflecting on my time as a student, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the supportive environment that shaped me. From the very beginning, I felt the warmth of a community so willing to help me learn and grow. Despite my mother being a teacher at the school, I was never treated differently—a testament to the fairness and inclusivity of the school's culture.

Transitioning from public to private school, I quickly came to appreciate the personalized attention and close-knit atmosphere that private education provides. It's an experience that left a lasting impact on me, one I am now thrilled to share with my own son, who is currently thriving in the PK4 class.

Being both an alumnus and now a parent in this community is truly

special. It feels full circle, and I couldn't be more grateful for the foundation this school has provided for me—and now for my child.

Melody Hoffman, class of 2014

One of my favorite memories of attending St. Stephen's was when the school set up a little fall festival for the students. I remember it being such a perfect fall day and having so much fun taking photo booth pictures and playing games with all of my friends. I still have those pictures saved in my memory box.

Jacob Larson, class of 2019

St. Stephen taught me the value of good leadership. I'll never forget the values I learned through the athletic program.

Aaron Miguel Sumagang "Miggy", class of 2017

My most cherished memories at St. Stephen's were shaped by the profound integration of the Catholic faith into every aspect of my day. We had prayers in the morning show, prayers before classes, and even prayers before sports games, which were even attended by the opposing team. Additionally, we had the privilege of receiving the Eucharist in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass once a week, as well as retreats and confessions once a semester. By taking advantage of these opportunities to grow closer to Christ, I was equipped to incorporate Him into my life every day after graduation!

Our Amazing Students

Our school is blessed to be the home to over 300 amazing children. Each of our students is unique in their own way, representing limitless potential along with an authenticity that is personal and charming.

We recognize and celebrate each student and revel in all their achievements: praising a major accomplishment as well as complimenting a minor success.

Thank You to our school families for sharing their children with us each day and for the opportunity to participate in their academic and spiritual growth.

Today we recognize the following SCS students.

Please Join Us in Congratulating our 2025 Angels winners.

Mabel Rendleman – 7th grade
Angels Wings Art Contest Winner

Joseph Cordero – 8th grade
Angels Essay Scholarship Winner- First Place

Benjamin Basilicato – 8th grade
Angels Essay Scholarship Winner- Second Place

Love and Thank You

Angels Among Us is truly an act of love.

For years, our community has come together to offer their time and their talents to create an amazing event. Pure kindness and commitment to our school's mission is the driving force of all who work countless volunteer hours.

Everyone plays a part in Angels and together as a community; school parents, parishioners and friends enjoy a special evening of fellowship. With no hesitation, our gala guests and supporters graciously and generously champion our cause and help us reach our fundraising goal.

The Angels Legacy lives on with the continued support of many who were part of Angels when it was in its infancy.

We thank four Angels Families who are with us tonight and who have consistently contributed to the longevity and success of Angels Among Us.

Ken Hillyard
Cass Hughes
Maria Hoffman
Teresa Searls
Linda Umoh

Hugs to school parents and friends who shared their time and their unparalleled talent to ensure the 2025 Gala is memorable

Nadine Ayo

Nikki Boyle

Toni Ann Carapella

Jeff Daignault

Vylam Farfan

Jessica Gage

Jennifer Hentz

Denet and Aldon Hemmans

Amy Jessel

Roberto and Catherine Medina

Anahi Radke

Daniela Rendleman

Teresa Searls

Leyla Grazziani Vega

SSCS Room Moms and Parent Volunteer

Our Sincere Appreciation to Our 2025 Sponsors and Donors for Their Generosity

Mathew and Sara Ahrens
Tom Apostoleres and Carey Vernau
Anthony and Cindy Basilicato
Pam Beam
Richard and Toni Bergen
Bill and Julie Brown
Raymond and Toni Ann Carapella
John and Peggy Clarkson
Hendrick and Mary Cloete
SSCC Men's Club
SSCC Knights of Columbus
Alan and Jennifer Daoud
Tom and Nancy Davison
Diego and Vylam Farfan
Shaun and Kristy Gallagher

Rian Gorey and Elizabeth Pitcher-Gorey
Sam and Jacqueline Higginbottom
Andrew and Maritza Kenkel
Vincent and Allie Labrato
Frank and Amanda Lewis
Mark and Patricia Majeski
Peter and Jacquelyn Moretuzzo
Roy and Ellen Palomo
Cynthia Pritchett
John and Rachel Ross
Patrick and Michelle Shannon
John and Austin Simon
Bryan and Sue Thatcher
Tom and Kaitlyn Tokarczyk
SSCS PTCO
SSCC Ministries

**Thank you to every guest attending the gala and for
Supporting The Angels Message.
Angels Among Us is more than a fundraiser:
It is about a community working together for the future
of our children, building A Legacy of Character and Faith
The Angels Legacy Lives On Because Of Good Friends, both Old and New.**



2025



MISSION STATEMENT

St. Stephen Catholic School is devoted to inspiring students to achieve their full academic potential while demonstrating a desire to continue Jesus' mission by applying Catholic morals, beliefs, values, and practices in their everyday lives. We are committed to motivating students to sustain a lifelong love of learning.



Angels Outreach Assists Students with Kindness Projects



Angels Among Us
has expanded its outreach in
Celebration of 25 years supporting
St Stephen Catholic School

We are excited to announce the development of Angels Outreach with service work beginning in the 2024-2025 school year. The focus and work of Angels Outreach will impact the SSCS Community and beyond as students and their families make a difference in the lives of many.



Angels Outreach Mission Statement - Guide students to intentionally live their faith through their everyday actions. Students learn how to be a good friend, utilize their talents to their full potential, keep a positive attitude, express gratitude, and practice their faith daily.

For more information, contact: angelsoutreach@sscsfl.org