

Seton



MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Seton Home Study School, an international Catholic institution, is to ensure that all of its students thrive intellectually and spiritually using a Christ-centered, educational program that empowers them to live the Catholic Faith while embracing the academic and vocational challenges of the twenty-first century.

**LETTER FROM
THE EDITOR**

Dear Readers,

I often wish I had more space here to tell you how much I love each page of the issue, but of course, that would diminish your pleasure in discovering it for yourselves. Suffice it to say, this is a good one.

I met Debbie Cowden, the mom of our featured family, online a few months ago. I found her so impressive in her cheerful, enthusiastic embrace of homeschool life that I knew you would all love to hear her explain it in her own words while also looking at photos of her beautiful family. You can also see her on EWTN on The Catholic Sphere, and she has written a book!

Our Ask the Experts column has some amazing advice this month. I found myself nodding as I read, and many more seasoned moms would agree with their advice. Be sure to check it out.

Are you curious about how other people organize? I always am, and in this issue, we have some photos kindly shared by readers showing us their homeschool set-ups. I love this personal peek into how these organized moms do things.

Finally, this year's graduation was the largest in Seton history, and it would be hard for me to tell you just how joy-filled this day was. I think the pictures do a great job conveying our pride in our graduates, and we are just as proud of all our Seton grads all over the world who could not join us. You were there in our hearts all day, and all of you remain always in our prayers.

I hope that your school year is going well. Please let us know if you need assistance. The counselors stand at the ready to help you.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ellen Barrett".

Mary Ellen Barrett

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Pray for us!

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COVER PHOTO:
The Cowden Family

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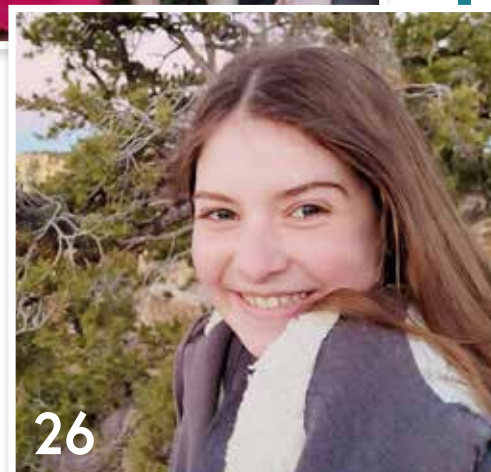
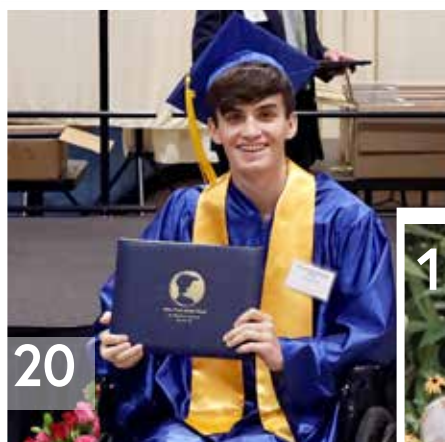
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your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

Would you share some tips on starting the school year well?

First, always begin your day with prayer. Incorporate brief prayer times throughout the day, and attend daily Mass if possible. Having “quiet times” in the house where everyone works quietly (as quietly as possible!) is also very helpful.

Second, make a plan to stay organized. Make central locations to store your school supplies: have bookshelves or book boxes specifically for your school books, and keep all school supplies in designated drawers, jars, or baskets.

Third, create a light and flexible daily schedule. Having a general plan is essential, but it also makes room for those days when you need a change or something unexpected arises.

Some students prefer to start their day with all their hard subjects and then move to the easier ones.

Other students like to alternate between hard and easy subjects. Some subjects don't need to be done daily but can be covered a few days a week. Talk with your students and make a plan that fits their needs.

Lastly, take breaks, have fun, bake cookies, spend time outside, visit family, and go on field trips! It's important to have fun and not only develop your student's academic skills but also form the whole person.

How can I do better in my High School studies this year?

1. Create a daily schedule and stay as organized as possible.

2. Look ahead in your course schedules and get an idea of what and when major assignments are coming up.

Plan enough time to do your work well and prioritize more important assignments over less important ones.

Remember that the major assignments graded by Seton are the ones that require your top attention – these determine your course grade.

3. If you submit work online, try submitting assignments as you complete them rather than all at the end of the year. Submitting assignments one at a time for each course will give you access to important grader feedback.

This feedback will allow you room to improve your grades as you go, rather than having to backtrack and re-do many assignments.



IT'S EASY TO MEET LOCAL SETON FAMILIES! 3,000 FAMILIES HAVE SIGNED UP!

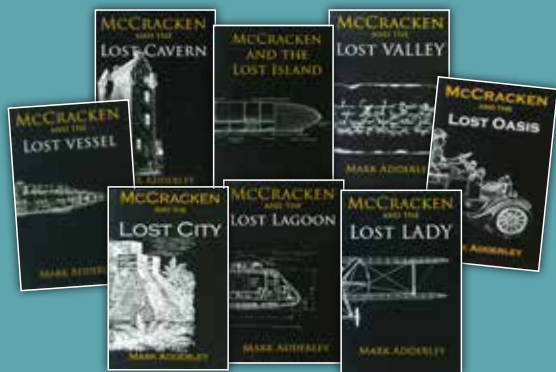
Families often ask us if there are other Seton families living in their area. With so many families using the Seton program, the likelihood is high.

You can learn more on your MySeton page. Click on the box on the right-hand side of the page “Want to Meet Seton Families in Your Area?” Fill out the form and we will do the rest!

We look forward to hearing from you today!

For More Information:
Counselors@setonhome.org

The McCracken Adventures



If you weren't aware of McCracken, you should know that he's been described as "Indiana Jones with a Rosary."

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4. If you are struggling, do not hesitate to ask our Counselors for help. They are very friendly, have expert advice, and look forward to helping you!

Asking for help early on is much better than waiting until the end of the year when you have little time to re-do assignments or re-learn material.

5. Don't forget to pray and ask God for help with your studies!

Amy Nutt, Academic Counselor

Why didn't I receive Phonics 5 in my curriculum this year?

We have officially discontinued the Phonics 5 course this year, so it is no longer used in the curriculum. Last year, we reworked the Phonics 4 course to include concepts taught in Phonics 5.

If your students completed Phonics 4 last year, they will have already learned the material formerly covered in Phonics 5 and will have all the Phonics skills they need to be successful readers.

Currently, Phonics 5 is still available as a supplemental option. If you want to purchase the book, it can be ordered through our Setonbooks.com website.

Christina Nutt, Academic Counselor

My student will soon write his first book report for this school year. What can I do to help him succeed with this task?

Writing Seton book reports is one of the most critical and challenging tasks your student will complete before entering high school.

A Seton book report is not a plot summary of the book but an analysis of the main character. Completing these book reports will help your student build the skills necessary for writing high school essays in the future.

The key to success when writing a Seton book report is to use the Book Report Handbook sent with your enrollment.

This handbook takes the student step-by-step through the book report writing process. Also, it is helpful if you read the book report book yourself. Reading the book yourself will allow you to discuss key aspects of the book with your student.

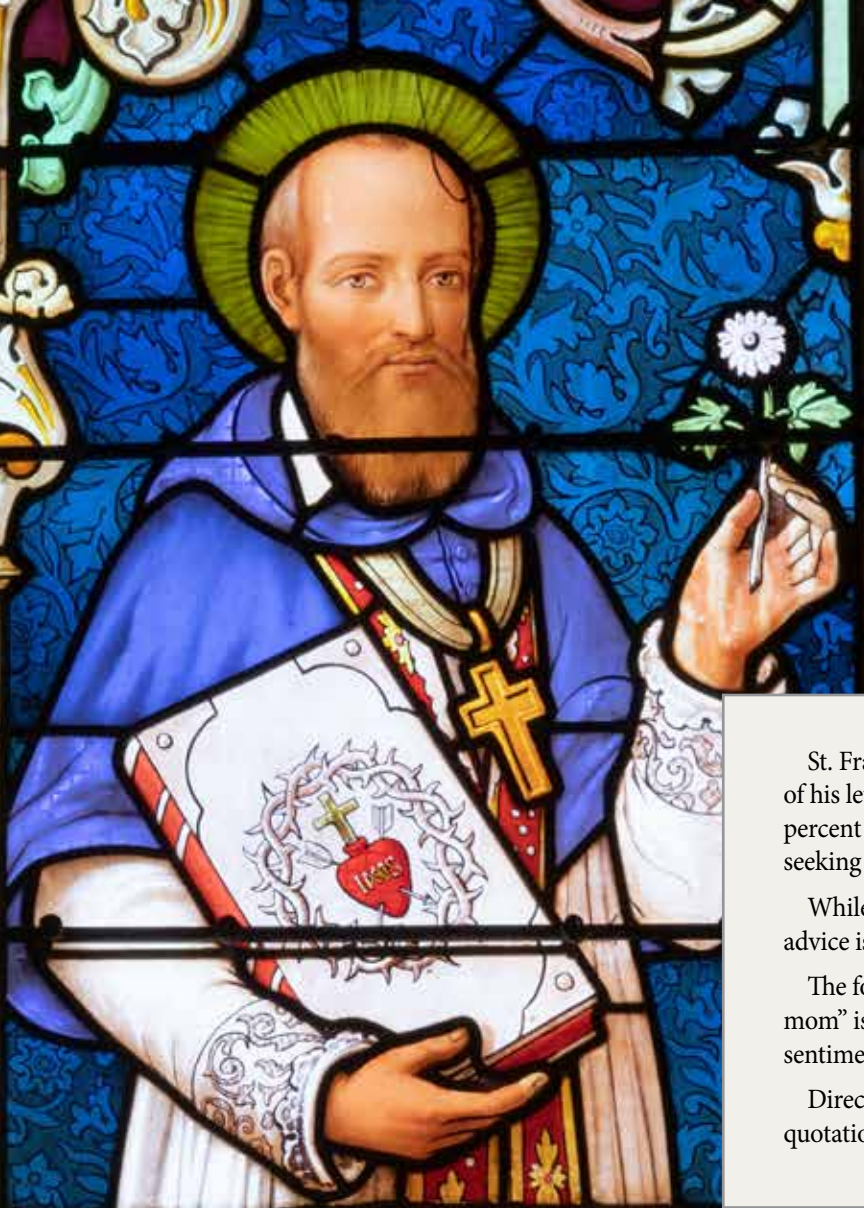
Finally, contact one of our Elementary Academic Counselors with any questions or concerns. We are always happy to help.
Laura Fusto, Academic Counselor



The Seton College Partner Program is a way to encourage students to continue their Catholic education by attending solidly Catholic colleges after high school.



setonhome.org/colleges



A Letter From St. Francis de Sales to a Homeschooling Mom

BY FATHER JOSEPH BERGIDA

St. Francis de Sales wrote letters prodigiously. Approximately 2,100 of his letters are extant. It is estimated these make up only about ten percent of those he penned. In these, we find spiritual gems for those seeking perfection. A number of his correspondents were mothers.

While none could perhaps be called homeschooling moms, his advice is still apropos.

The following “letter from Saint Francis to a homeschooling mom” is drawn from his letters to women; it is permeated with his sentiments and turns of phrase.

Direct quotes are *italicized* for a smoother flow rather than using quotation marks.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

I was so delighted that Father Bergida chose to weave St. Francis de Sales’ beautiful words with his own in this letter to homeschooling moms. In this letter, St. Francis and Father Bergida point out that we are called upon to take diligent care of our children, homes, and husbands.

He wisely adds that we should be gentle with ourselves while making the necessary changes in this most important work.

I want those who read this article to prayerfully consider the ideas presented and realize that God loves us all in whatever season of life we are in. He blesses even our most minor efforts to draw closer to Him. None of us are called to be superwomen but to do our best each day humbly.



Live Jesus!¹

Dearly Beloved Daughter,

You are wondering how to run a home, educate children, prepare for the birth of your next child, and tend to your husband, all the while not losing your peace of soul. Allotted time allows me only the briefest response. Yet, this may be more advantageous to you, given your duties.

You express concerns for the welfare of your family *and your desire to see your dear ones make progress in the service of God. I praise this desire of yours.*

Yet often, *a trace of self-love and self-will* presents itself in our longings for others. *By what you say and do you must sow seeds which might sway them to your views. Gradually plant holy inspirations and reflections in their minds.*²

In teaching virtues and life lessons to your children, similes from the realm of nature, literature, and even culinary art season and make more palpable what you seek to communicate.

For example, in my treatise, I used the pomegranate to describe our love for God.³ With young minds, the things they enjoy or are attracted to are often good ways to illustrate spiritual principles.

Be Gentle Towards Everyone

Be gentle towards everyone, including yourself. *Don't rely on your own efforts to succeed in your various undertakings, but only on God's help. Then rest in His care for you provided that you, for your part, work diligently but gently. A tense diligence is harmful both to our heart and to our task and is not diligence but rather overeagerness and anxiety.*⁴

Be gentle towards everyone, including yourself. Don't rely on your efforts to succeed in your various undertakings, but only on God's help.

You mention how a particular child tries your patience dearly. All the better! Patience is exercised and grows through being stretched, much like a leg or arm, which recovers vigor by being strengthened with resistance bands.

Know that patience is the one virtue which gives the greatest assurance of our reaching perfection, and while we must have patience with others, we must also have it with ourselves.

So, if you lose patience with a son or daughter, pick yourself up and begin again. *Those who aspire to the love of God need*

*to be more patient with themselves than with others. We have to endure our own imperfections in order to attain perfection; I say 'endure patiently' not 'love' or 'embrace': humility is nurtured through such endurance.*⁵

*Dear imperfections, they force us to acknowledge our misery, give us practice in humility, selflessness, patience, and watchfulness; yet, not withstanding, God looks at the preparation of our heart and sees that it is perfect.*⁶

Spiritual Direction

You opine that if only you had a spiritual director, you would know where to put your energies and how to balance the love of God with the love of neighbor, as though the two were opposed. Remember, good books also make good guides.

Where it is not possible to have a living director, one from the past may more than suffice. Consider consulting my *Philothea*⁷ or read some of my letters to directees.

My dearest daughter, since your pregnancy prevents you from making your usual long mental prayer, make your prayer short and fervent.

*Make up for the loss by frequently lifting your heart to God; often read from some good spiritual book, but only a little at a time; when you go for a walk, often turn your thoughts to God; pray often and briefly; offer your listlessness and weariness to our crucified Lord.*⁸

Take care to bring contentment to your husband. Do not sour him to the things of God by trying to control his actions or neglecting your household responsibilities.

Like a bee make not only *the honey of devotion* but also *the wax of your household affairs*. If honey is sweet to the taste of our Lord, wax also honors Him since it is used to make the candles that give light to those around us.⁹ This goes for your children as well.

*You must not only be devout and love devotion, but you must render it lovable to everyone. Now, you will make it lovable if you render it useful and pleasing.*¹⁰

*May God dwell in the center of your heart, my dear daughter, and may he set it aflame with his love.*¹¹

+Francis de Sales

Onetime Bishop of Geneva, Saint of the Heavenly Court



Fr. Joseph Bergida is a priest of the Arlington Diocese. He grew up in the Old Dominion, was homeschooled K-12, and attended Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH. He studied for two years at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia and five years in Rome, where he earned a Licentiate in Sacred Liturgy. Father is parochial vicar at St. Raymond of Peñafort Catholic Church, Springfield, VA. He will be helping run home school clubs at his parish this fall.

¹Motto of the Visitation of Holy Mary congregation founded by Saints Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal. This phrase is also found in his *Introduction and Treatise* and sprinkled throughout the corpus of his letters. See page nine of the "Introduction" in *Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal: Letters of Spiritual Direction*, Trans. Péronne Marie Thibert, V.H.M. Paulist Press, 1988.

You can find the letters and page numbers cited below can be found in this volume.

²Letter CCLXXVII, 110. I have omitted intervening portions of text without placing ellipses in this and other quotes.

³See *Treatise on the Love of God*, Trans. Dom Henry Benedict Mackey, O.S.B. Tan Books, 1997, 268-269.

⁴Letter CDLV, 159.

⁵Letter CXC, 96.

⁶Letter CXC, 98.

⁷Meaning "lover of God." St. Francis' *Introduction to the Devout Life* is also known by *Philothea*, to whom it is addressed.

⁸Letter CMX, 115.

⁹Letter MCDXLI, 167.

¹⁰Letter CCXVII, 104.

¹¹Letter CDLV, 160.



Ask the Experts: _____

If I Could Hit the Reset Button, What Would I Do Differently?

Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience

I Would Change My Attitude...



“Continue doing what you are doing; only change your attitude.” That advice, found in a favorite book, is precisely what I would do differently if I could return to the beginning of this homeschool journey.

Not infrequently, my attitude negatively affected the school day or at least caused unnecessary stress. Specifically, my belief that I needed to get everything done perfectly or risk complete failure led to countless tears, frustration, and outbursts of lost patience.

Or that I’m the only homeschooling parent who thought one bad grade could equate to a complete breakdown in a student’s education. Or who worried that a student’s struggles were all my fault.

Perhaps I’m the only one who shouldered such errors in belief. But I doubt it. With hindsight, now closer to 20/20, my attitude is the number one thing I would change.

I wouldn’t be distracted by the one bad grade or less-than-stellar day. I’d try to remain in the present moments, understanding that something worthwhile is always being accomplished in and for those who have faith in Divine Providence.

“*Homeschooling is about forming the whole person.*”

Looking back, I would relax and rest in the understanding that homeschooling is about forming the whole person, which means teaching students how to learn and live.

I would adjust my attitude to reflect better the reality that it doesn’t all depend on me or my student. Yes, we are responsible for our actions (following a schedule, completing our lessons), but even failures teach worthwhile lessons.

And ultimately, if we strive to know, love, and serve God in all our endeavors, we can be assured eternal success.

Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina

Our Mistakes Help Us Grow...



It is hard to say what I would do differently as a homeschooling family, for even our mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow.

I will not give trite advice like “Don’t sweat the small stuff.” Let’s be honest. When taking on the responsibility of your child’s education, especially in the faith, nothing feels “small.” So, take all of this as you will: number one, I would have put more art and music in the day. Sometimes, we get so focused on that test or that project I would skip the art and music.

Beautiful art and music lift our hearts and souls to God and remind us of what it is to be human. I wouldn’t force my kids to take up an instrument, but I wish we attended more orchestras and went to view fine art more often.

Number two, I wish I had sought help from the Seton counselors WAY sooner. They are knowledgeable and good and want these kids to succeed.

Number three, I wish I had had my kids evaluated for learning differences sooner. My son wasn’t diagnosed with autism until he was ten or eleven, and he went through hard times because of that.

It is also hard because, not being in the public school system, resources are not always readily available to homeschool students. One of my children is struggling this summer, and we are trying to get her evaluated for any anxiety/ADD. A special needs evaluation is nothing to fear; the sooner we know, the more we can help.

Kristin Brown, Virginia

Thriving on a Schedule...



What I would do differently is a difficult topic because it involves regret, which the devil can use to lead us to despair in our vocation.

So, with a good dose of wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit to answer the question, I would have gotten myself out of my comfort zone more often.

As a person who thrives on a schedule and has many kids to raise, I do things that fit our schedule. I made sure that mealtimes, prayer time, school time, naptime, etc., were kept as closely as possible.

“I do things that fit our schedule.”

Looking back, this discouraged us from doing things that could have benefited our kids in the long run. If I had gotten out of my comfort zone of schedule and my safe area of not doing things too difficult, I think the kids would have had more adventures and experiences and faced more real-life challenges that they are now getting to do as older kids and young adults.

I cannot change the past, so I look to see what I can still do today to help my kids become the people God intended.

Susan Brock, Virginia

THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



Homeschooling allows the kids to go at their own pace while at the same time nudging them forward.

We can take extra time in some subjects the kids like or even explore those interests in the real world by doing field trips or interacting with people.

We chose Seton because of its strong emphasis on Catholic formation, beautiful materials, and more organized and structured approach.

The Dagus Family, Quezon City, Philippines

in the **Schoolroom**

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

An Early School Year Staff Meeting



In any profession, staff meetings are deemed essential. It is an opportunity for everyone to get on the same page, review the organization's goals, and do a little team building.

The best companies provide lunch or dinner to provide social context and solidify employee relationships.

The companies have found that the chemistry between those working toward the business's success is integral to that success.

The same holds for homeschooling parents. It may seem a little out there to liken the marriage of homeschool parents to a business, but the premise can easily be applied and modified to your needs.

Each year, as things get going, but before we are too busy, my husband and I schedule some time out of the house to discuss our goals for our current students and any household issues that are pending and to flesh out the schedules and who is going to be where and when.

This kind of communication is essential for us since it is easy to let things slide in the busyness of our day-to-day lives. We need to be on the same page about so many things, and if those decisions are made in a pleasant and unhurried setting, it frees us to be mindful about connecting on a couple of levels rather than always being in parent mode.

The primary relationship in your home is your marriage. God is the author of marriage, and “the well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life” (CCC 2210).

Walking a Different Path

What if you are single, and all this falls squarely on you? That can be a lonely and overwhelming path to walk, and you probably need the time to contemplate and review more than couples do.

Is there a close friend, grandparent, cousin, or other adult you can ask to let you bounce some ideas off them? Ask them for their perspective and help. There is no failure in asking for help and no virtue in taking on a huge burden alone.

Being a single parent is a particular kind of heroic virtue, and you must seek support wherever you can find it.

We all need help, and God will provide what we need, but he sometimes needs us to be proactive, so take your best friend, sibling, or dad out for coffee and discuss your school day.

Ask if there are any responsibilities they can help you shoulder and then accept whatever help is offered. You will be a better parent for having a little breathing space occasionally. Being a single parent is a particular kind of heroic virtue, and you must seek support wherever you can find it.

“Wherever a family exists and love still moves through its members, grace is present. Nothing – not even divorce or death – can place limits upon God’s gracious love.” *Follow the Way of Love*, A Pastoral Message from the USCCB

After your staff meeting, because you make the time to get the “business” out of the way and those decisions made, you will be much freer to be present to your family lovingly, which is the building block of your whole family. Ensuring your relationships have time and space to flourish will benefit your entire family.



Mary Ellen Barrett is mother of seven children and two in heaven, wife to David and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books. She is editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.

Catholic College Scholarship Winners



Congratulations!

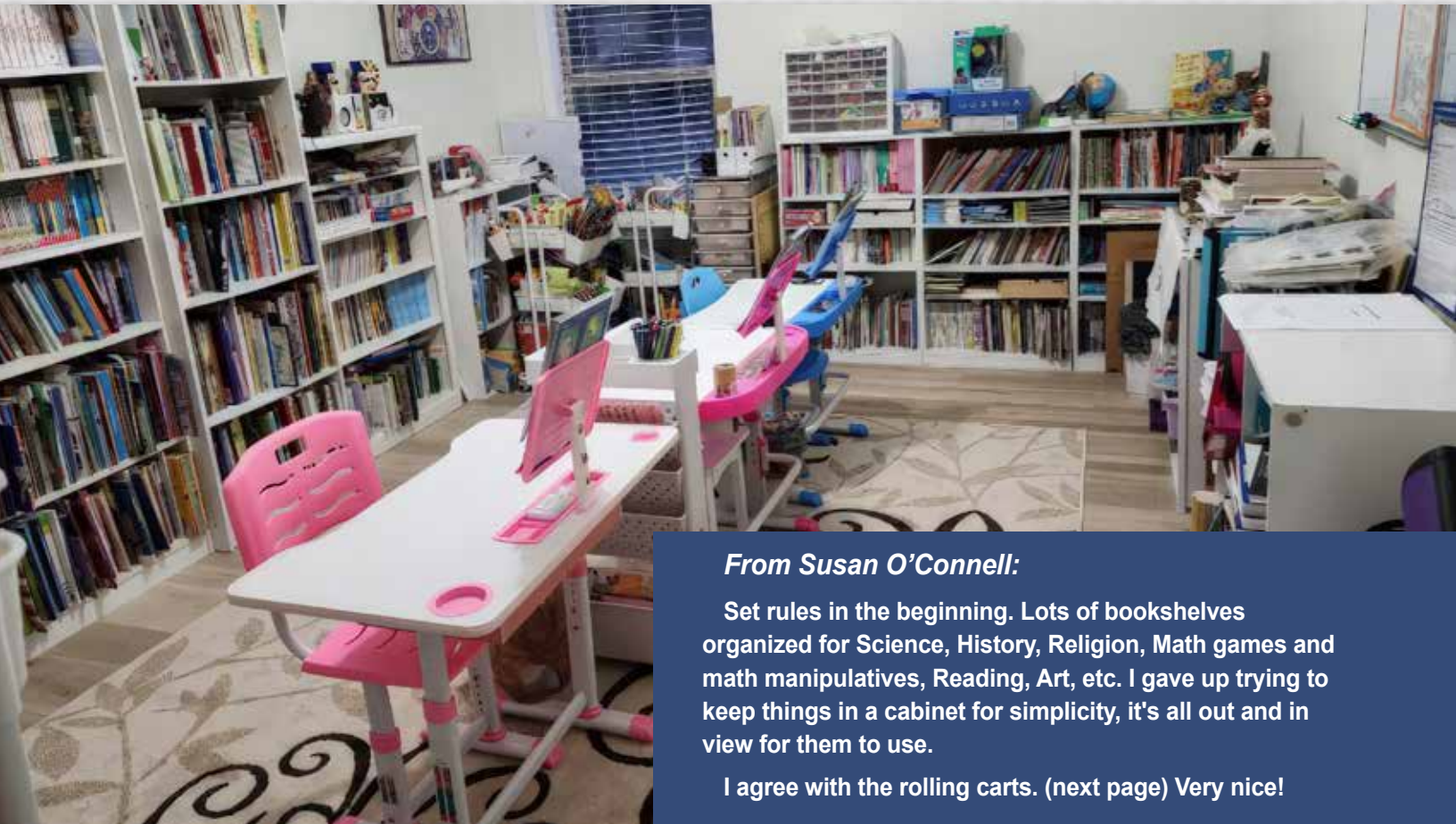
On August 16, 2023, Seton awarded ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton high school students graduating in 2023. Application for the drawing was open to Seton grads who will attend Newman Guide recommended colleges. Forty-four graduates entered the drawing, and the ten lucky winners were:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. John Miller | University of Mary |
| 2. Kevin Molino | Franciscan University |
| 3. Marie-Gabrielle Faa | University of Mary |
| 4. Logan MacDonald | Franciscan University |
| 5. John-Paul Shaw | Our Lady Seat of Wisdom |
| 6. Joseph Gontarz | University of Mary |
| 7. Thomas Schau | Christendom College |
| 8. Johanna Byers | Christendom College |
| 9. Hannah Martel | University of Mary |
| 10. Eva Andrews | Benedictine College |

The scholarship aims to help our graduates and encourage Seton graduates to continue their education at a faithful Catholic college.

Although it is not a requirement for the scholarship, all the institutions that this year’s scholarship recipients plan to attend are also Seton College Partner schools.

Seton Moms Make Suggestions About Getting Organized



From Susan O'Connell:

Set rules in the beginning. Lots of bookshelves organized for Science, History, Religion, Math games and math manipulatives, Reading, Art, etc. I gave up trying to keep things in a cabinet for simplicity, it's all out and in view for them to use.

I agree with the rolling carts. (next page) Very nice!

From Sarah Letendre Morin

Routine, schedule, writing things down/visual reminders, a timer (in addition to the clock), grace, frequent sacrament receiving, and a good cup of coffee.

We use post-its, work out a schedule for each subject (order and approximate time for each class), print and laminate the schedule, have it posted. Each child has a copy.

We try to coordinate supplies with colors so it's easier. Each child had a section of a bookcase until we moved, then we needed to change gears with a new house, so most of the children's supplies are in their backpacks.

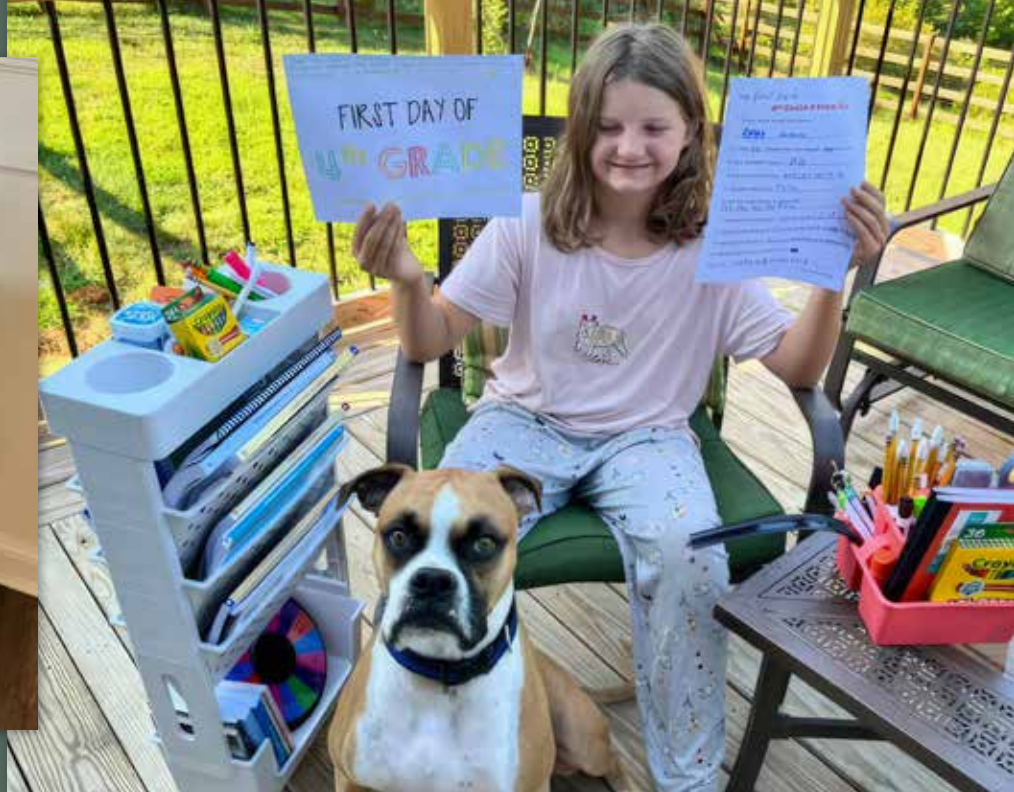
They have assigned seating and a uniform (so they know it's not home play time), we have a name for our school, and the kids start the year with writing expectations for themselves and for me, as teacher, to refer back to throughout the year (especially good for middle school kids who need to be reminded of their responsibilities).

We have a board to post our parish bulletin or any flyers to remind us for church activities, post recent artwork (themed for the month), wall calendar, and appointment cards. We also have a white board and chalk board for when those are needed/appropriate.

Continues at SetonMagazine.com



Photo From Elisa Armstrong



From Casey Jacob:

These rolling carts have been a game changer this year!

It's a rolling bookcase. You can search on Amazon for better prices or check Walmart.com for "Movable Bookshelf Multilayer Capacity For Office" They're available in white, green, orange, and pink.

Sylvia Alvarez Hibnes: Casey Jacob, do all of the textbooks fit on them? I have 3 who are enrolled and am looking for ways to organize our textbooks and everything. Struggling a bit.

Casey Jacob: Yes- I have a 4th grader and a 7th grader. All textbooks and planners fit.



From Sommer Kastl:

I lay out each week's lesson plans the week before. We work hard all week to make our Friday's light. We try to do something fun every Friday.

This past week, we got donuts and had a morning of art at Paint Yourself Silly to celebrate St. Clare and St. Philomena's feast day.

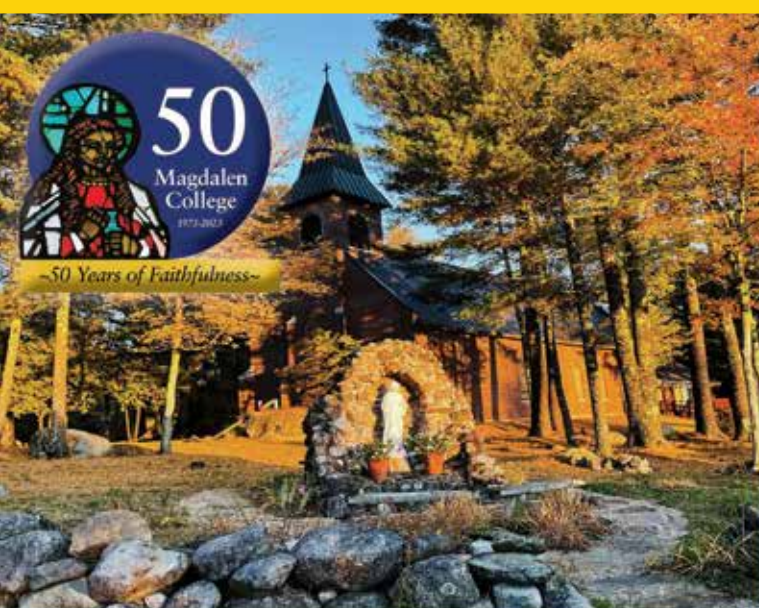
It's refreshing to get out of the house and change our normal scenery. Every week has something new to look forward to. We love homeschooling with Seton!





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BY DEBBIE COWDEN

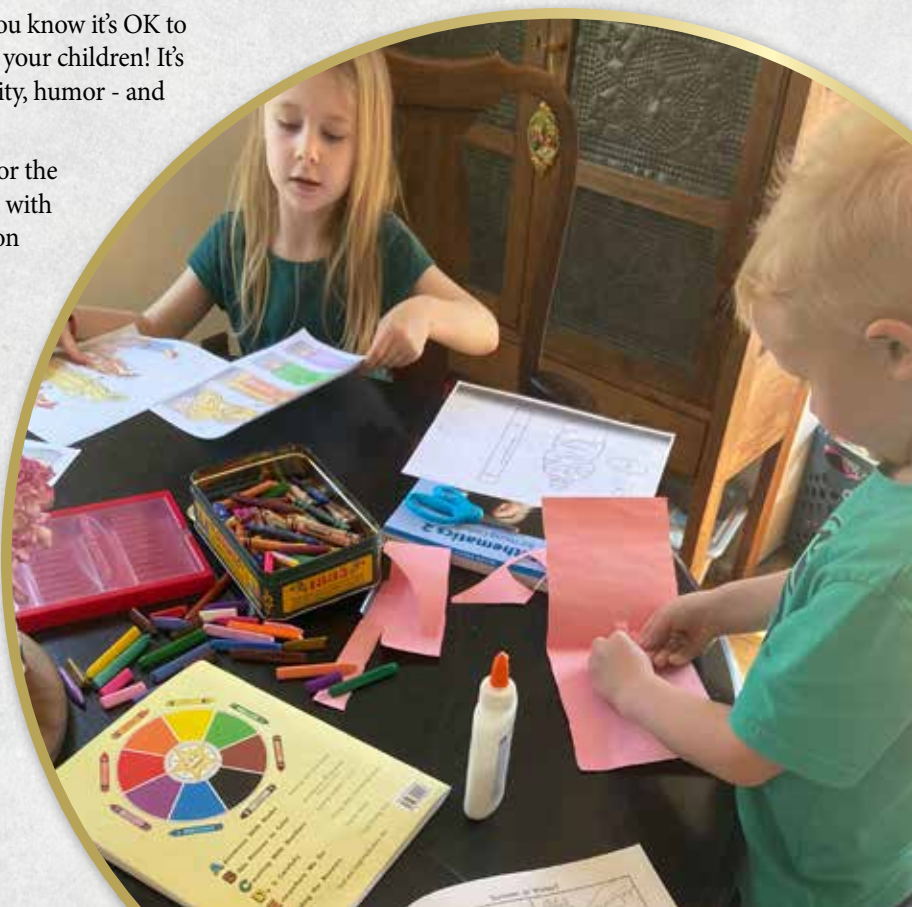
The Cowden Family Does Things a Little Differently

We are the Cowden Family - and we're here to let you know it's OK to do things a little differently when it comes to educating your children! It's been working for us, and with a bit of creativity, flexibility, humor - and Seton's help - it can work for you, too.

I have worked for EWTN Global Catholic Network for the past decade, and seven of those years have been remote with regular travel. My husband, Dave, works in healthcare on a non-traditional schedule. We're also small business owners and the authors of *The Prayer Book for Tired Parents: Practical Ways to Grow in Love of God and Get Your Family to Heaven*.

We've homeschooled with Seton for four years and currently have our seven-year-old daughter enrolled in 2nd grade and our four-year-old in preschool. Our three-year-old follows suit with coloring and Play-Doh, and Baby #4 is due any day!

Along the way, we realized not every family would follow "norms" for educating their children (and everyone has their idea of what is normal, but that is a discussion for another day!). Here are a few ways Seton has meshed wonderfully with our family's circumstances and goal to raise our children for heaven.





How Seton Helps Raise Children for Heaven

1. Abundantly Clear Lesson Plans.

Since Dave and I both work, it was important to have our kids enrolled in a program that took the “guesswork” out of schooling.

Thanks to Seton’s clear, organized lesson plans, we work together to educate our children. Seton presents a reasonable workload for each grade level, and we write notes and mark progress directly in the printed lesson plans.

For someone like me who originally envisioned creating my own elaborate lesson plans, I am humbled and see the value in having someone else do that for me.

2. Flexibility in Enrollment.

The more our family grows, the more we realize the pressure of homeschooling can increase - ESPECIALLY in Spring as the traditional school year comes to a close. Perhaps you’re chuckling while reading this because you know firsthand the reality of 4th Quarter burnout and the longing for summer break.

To mitigate this, we begin each child’s school year the day after their birthday, which staggers the start and end dates - our eldest begins in June, our middle in January, and our three-year-old will begin preschool next September after her fourth birthday.

With this setup, we will never have multiple children stressing to finish the school year at the same time, and I will never be tearing my hair out and praying for summer.

3. Incremental Learning.

As a full-time work-from-home mom for the past seven years, that is all my kids have known, and they are used to keeping themselves busy during the day.

This formula translates well to Seton, as lesson plans are set up for incremental learning. Once our children learn a new concept, they have ample opportunities to practice the skill before adding a new concept.

This method is particularly helpful with Math, English, and Handwriting for our eldest, who can work independently on certain subjects while I work my day job. And then, for the more involved content (Religion, History, Science/Health), she has our full attention when Dave is home or in the evening.

4. Lessons Not Learned in a Book.

Building off the previous point, Seton has facilitated the growth of many skills for our kids, which we see most in our eldest:

Time Management

Each week, we identify the lessons to complete. Our daughter chooses the order in which she completes the work, and once she finishes, she is free to do crafts and science experiments. Through trial and error, she has seen the benefit of focus and discipline early in the week.





Problem-solving and pushing through frustration

I don't know if it's genetic or endemic, but my daughter shares my distaste for math. However, she knows she has to do it. While pushing through groans, tears, and occasionally lost tempers, we've seen the arc of her persevering and completing the work, which we celebrate together as a family. We are a team, and Seton is part of that team!

Real-life Applications

It has been delightful to see how even the concepts taught in the younger elementary courses are relatable to real life. This was particularly evident this past year when we went on a two-week, 5,000 mile road trip out West, with additional trips to Florida, Alabama, and Kentucky.

The first-grade history and geography classes cover topography, reading maps, and American history, all of which our kids saw in action. The concepts in the Math, Science & Health, and Art courses have daily applications.

And, of course, the Religion courses are invaluable as we strive to take our kids to Daily Mass and Adoration and raise them surrounded by prayer and the intercession of the saints.

Curiosity and Love of Learning

Concepts learned in the Seton courses have fostered a love of learning in all areas of life as our children explore baking, cooking, gardening, wildlife observation, crafting, and discovering new books. This has even inspired Dave and me to try new things alongside our kids!

5. A 100% Catholic Curriculum.

We never doubted the choice to enroll in Seton. They have a reputation for orthodoxy, rigor, and comprehensive coursework. Even while starting our eldest in Seton's preschool curriculum four years ago, we saw clearly how the Catholic faith was woven seamlessly into all the courses.

It is a joy for us to see the Sacred Art (our kids love to guess the saints) and read the rhymes and stories about our rich Catholic heritage, and this is one of the top reasons we recommend Seton to friends.

While there is a temptation to cave to outside pressures to abide by certain school schedules, educational models, or developmental benchmarks, Seton reminds parents that WE are the primary educators of our children, and we have a fundamental right to do so in the way we see fit. We're grateful Seton has supported our family's journey and look forward to continuing for many years!

Family group photo courtesy of Mystical Rose Photography



Congratulations

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

Seton Graduates of 2023

Building the Kingdom of God



“

This graduation day is a labor of love for the employees who take to heart the education and formation of young people worldwide using

Seton Home Study School; we are very grateful to the 174 graduates and their families who journeyed from all over the world to be here today.

We are blessed to have students from 38 states and six graduates from Canada, one from Honduras, one from Colombia, and one from the Philippines.



Skyler & Shane Smith



Deirdre Holmes

Deirdre Holmes plans to attend the University of Dallas and is considering a degree in Biology. She has been a Seton student since she was three years old! Deirdre is a talented pianist and has played for her parish for years.

She is a second-degree black belt in martial arts, an avid writer who has published one book, and received recognition from the Scholastic Writing Awards. As a dual-enrollment student, she has written articles for Eastfield College's award-winning newspaper.



Virginia Lander

Student Commencement Speaker

Virginia Lander plans to attend Clemson University to pursue a degree in Animal Veterinary Science. She has been accepted into the Clemson Honors College and has qualified for the SC Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

She is a classical pianist, receiving a diploma from the National Piano Guild. She is an artist commissioned for the past five years for her paintings. She is a leader in her church Youth Ministry and a Choir and Chime group member. She loves golf and has enjoyed working with young golfers on the homeschooling golf team.



“ We have four Eagle Scouts, four high-ranking Civil Air Patrol members, one graduate accepted into the seminary, and a few other young men and women discerning vocations.

The graduates before you here are an extremely impressive group. Already they have worked hard to make the world a better place through political action, volunteer work, and helping those less fortunate. They have truly lived the corporal works of mercy.

St. John Paul II said, "For we are at our best, we are most fully alive and human, when we give away freely and sacrificially our very selves in love for another."



“

All of you

graduates here, and
those many that

could not be here, have benefited from the sacrifice and commitment of your parents, who took their mission to raise you so seriously in the faith that they chose homeschooling as an entire way of life. It is not just an academic education you've received but a formation that will set you on the path to eternal salvation.

You might feel too ordinary to be called to greatness by God, but there is no such thing.

You have each been made in His image and likeness, and as such created beings, you bring to the world a miraculous gift that only you can bring. Each of you has greatness within you and is called to use those gifts and talents to further God's kingdom.

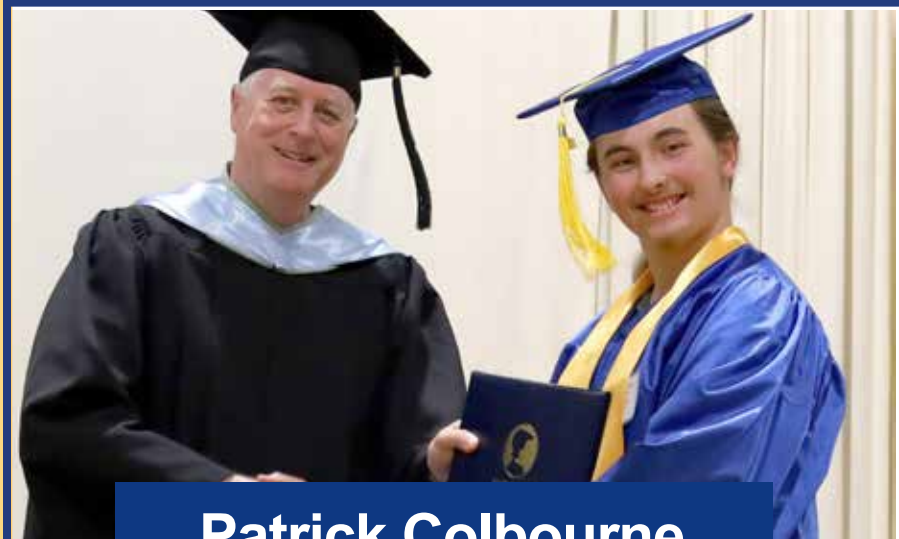


Abey Antony Paul

Abey Paul plans to attend George Mason University to pursue a degree in Computer Science. He has also been accepted into the Honors College.

He has won several art competitions, such as the Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest, which he has won for four consecutive years.

He is active in his parish, altar serving and training incoming altar servers. He is proud of helping and guiding students' education while working at a math and language arts center called Kumon, where he was once a student.



Patrick Colbourne

Patrick Colbourne has been a student at Seton for all his academic life. In that time, he earned the rank of Eagle Scout and continued as an assistant scoutmaster.

He learned more about the environment with his Venturing Crew and attended Sea Base. He is currently working with a transport company to become a diesel mechanic.

“ Remember

that many of our saints

and heroes started

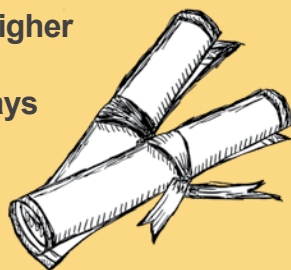
their lives as ordinary people, people

whom God called to a higher

purpose. You must always

be open to hearing

that call.



Maria Griswold

Maria Griswold plans to attend Franciscan University of Steubenville to pursue a degree in Communications. Having lived in North Carolina for most of her life, she is excited to get out of the state and see new things.

Homeschooling with Seton allowed her to grow spiritually and to delve into her interests, such as writing, creating artwork, reading books, and watching movies. She wishes to thank Seton for all it has put her through and for preparing her for college and the world.



Joseph Chester

Joseph Chester has been accepted as a seminarian for the Arlington Diocese. He will attend the John Paul II Seminary in DC and continue his academic studies at the Catholic University of America.

He was born in Pennsylvania but has lived most of his life in Warrenton, Virginia, where he is active with St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. At St. John's, he has been involved in the youth group and has been an altar server.

He has worked at the local Chick-fil-A in Warrenton, Virginia for the past three years.





The Gonzalez family with Commencement Speaker Dr. William Thierfelder, President of Belmont Abby College

Abigail Gonzalez

Abigail Gonzalez plans to attend Belmont Abbey College to pursue a degree in Healthcare Management. She was a member of the Diocesan Youth Council for the Diocese of Charlotte, NC, and part of the National Society of High School Scholars.

Abigail is active in her parish, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, where she has taught catechism classes for two years. She enjoys spending her days outside with her friends and family and loves painting and playing piano.



Next year will look different for each of you. Still, whether it is a NASCAR pit crew, a teacher's aid in France, a business administration program, or a marine biology degree, you leave your homeschool as confident disciples of Jesus Christ.

You have the great gift of knowing who you are, first and foremost, a child of God. Engineer, actress, writer, or accountant can all be taken away or change drastically - what cannot be taken away is that you are His, you are chosen, you belong.

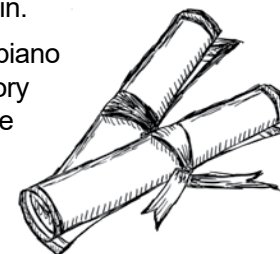


James Perrone

James Perrone plans to attend Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay, Ontario, Canada, to pursue a bachelor's degree in Catholic Studies with a concentration in Philosophy. James is an avid athlete, plays hockey as a goalie, and practices archery and shooting.

He has enjoyed his travels to Europe, the United States, and across Canada by train.

James completed his Level 10 piano studies with the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto and won multiple awards for his musicianship. He especially loves to play ragtime.



Mark Melendez

Mark Melendez plans to attend Montclair State University to pursue an MS in Business and Data Analytics. He is the second of eight children.

He has enjoyed learning classical guitar, coaching soccer, playing basketball, being active in the parish, and going on pilgrimages to Panama, Israel, and, this summer, Portugal for World Youth Day.

Before starting his college career, he will spend a year on a mission in the Domus Galilaeae in Israel.



“

God has planned for you to accomplish much, your parents have sacrificed in harmony with His plan, and we at Seton are immensely proud and grateful to have been part of that plan.

And now I ask you that when you leave here, you go forward to restore all things in Christ and build the kingdom of God.

God bless you all.

Mary Ellen Barrett

Mercy Pignataro

Student Commencement Speaker

Mercy Pignataro plans to attend Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, to pursue degrees in Political Science and International Relations (double major).

She hopes to complete this course of study in 3 years and, through Canisius College's 3+3 law program, to attend law school after completing her bachelor's degrees.

Mercy is a K-12 Seton student. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, school, political discussions, and helping others. She hopes to someday work as a JAG officer in the military, as a foreign diplomat, or in Congress.



Seton Alumna Profile: Tirzah Wise

I am a Seton Home Study School K-12 graduate, and I am so excited to share my journey.

My journey with Seton began in kindergarten when my family was looking for a Catholic homeschooling program so that I could train with club gymnastics during the daytime hours. I started training with my club in Washington State in their National TOPS program.

As I gained strength and skills, I was invited for USAG National TOPS testing at the USAG National Training Center and TOPS development camp (at that time, the Karoli Ranch in Texas) when I was ages 8, 9, and 10.

After aging out of that development program, my family and national team coach determined a move to Nevada for elite

coaching was the best option, so we moved from Washington State to Nevada in 2016.

I have trained with Salcianu Elite Academy of Gymnastics since 2016 and have gone to several Elite qualifiers and Level 10 National Championships from Region 1 for the last two years.

In 2023, I was the Nevada State Level 10 Champion and placed 3rd at the Region 1 regionals to secure my spot in the 2023 USAG Nationals this year.

Seton Support

Throughout my journey with gymnastics, my ability to have flexible deadlines and support with Seton Home Study School has been instrumental in my success as a student-athlete.



After my Seton journey this year, I was accepted to several universities but decided on the University of Arizona School of Engineering, where I plan to pursue a degree in aerospace engineering. I received a four-year academic scholarship totaling \$128,000 because of my 4.0 GPA.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

In addition, I have a full-ride athletic scholarship for gymnastics for my senior year of college and will compete in Division 1 Gymnastics for the Wildcats starting in the 2024 season. You can watch for me on TV on the Pac12 Network for Gymnastics in the coming years!

Homeschooling has made my dream of being a student-athlete a reality, and Seton has prepared me for my future. With my degree, I dream of working in the space industry on projects to explore Mars.

I also plan to homeschool my children as I have experienced the benefits of this type of education myself. Exploring topics of interest and having a flexible schedule makes learning enjoyable and dynamic, and this blessing is my hope for my family someday.

Thank You, Seton!

Seton Home Study School made the NCAA athletic amateurization process simple for my family.

The provided course descriptions, outlines, and textbooks were easily documented and accepted by the NCAA as my mother completed the core course worksheets. After the 16 core classes were complete in my junior year, all that was left was my final transcript from my senior year.

One of my favorite Bible verses is Philippians 4:13; "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse has seen me through many challenging times as a student and an athlete.

I have been blessed to find a homeschool program that has nurtured my Catholic faith and strengthened me as a person.

I am forever grateful for the Seton community, and I pray that God continues to bless this program and strengthen the resolve of families who choose this for their children.

Blessings!



Seton's List of Suggested School Supplies

Parents often ask if Seton has a list of suggested school supplies. We do, and you can find the list on your MySeton page.

Log into your MySeton. On the right side of the home page, you'll see Suggested School Supplies for Pre-K – 12.

- Daily Supplies are recommended.
- Supplemental Supplies are optional.

The Featured Items below are all from the Suggested School Supplies list.

Save 20%!

Magnetic Wooden Numbers



Magnetic Wooden Alphabet



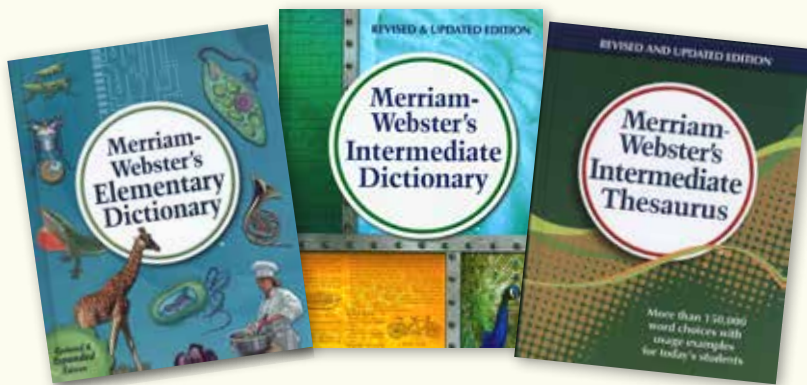
Pattern Blocks and Boards



Brother Francis 14 DVD Set

\$127.96
~~**\$159.95**~~
M-RLDV-70





Dictionaries & Thesauruses

\$12.76 - \$16.76

\$15.95 - \$20.95



ScrunchMap of the United States

\$9.56 ~~\$11.95~~

Save \$20%



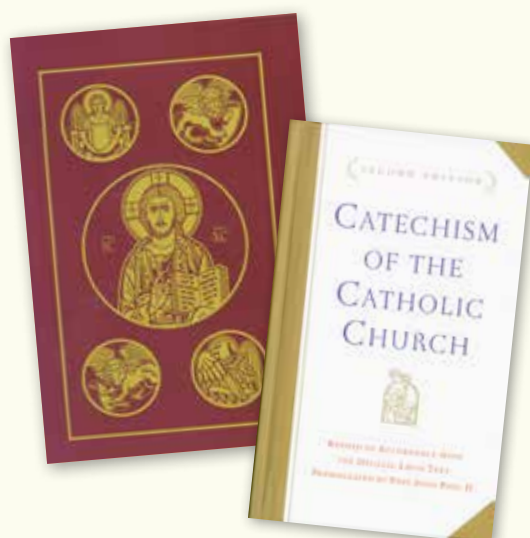
Biology Lab Kit

\$299.00

\$319.00

P-SCKT-60

Save \$20.00



Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd edition)

M-RLEC-20 **\$12.80** ~~\$16.00~~

Ignatius Bible (R.S.V. 2nd Ed.)

M-RLBK-49 **\$17.56** ~~\$21.95~~

STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those
who serve you!*



Rachel Garofalo - Desktop Publishing Technician

Meet Rachel Garofalo, a graphic designer working as a desktop publishing technician in Seton Home Study School's Curriculum Development Department.

Born in Virginia, Rachel moved to Jacksonville, Florida, when she was young. She has always enjoyed the arts, drawing, and painting.

In high school, she entered the Academy of Emerging Technology at Creekside High School in St. Johns, Florida, and she learned Adobe programs like Photoshop and InDesign (she uses these daily in her job today). She was accepted into the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and graduated in 2018 earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design and a minor in motion media.

In October 2021, she applied to Seton and was offered employment. After getting married in December 2021, she hit the ground running at Seton and began work in January 2022.

Helping Grads Leave Their Mark

The idea for the first "Seton graduation banner" originated from her experience in high school. Rachel explained, "At Creekside,

there is a tradition of every graduating senior class to gift something back to the school as a way for each student to 'leave their mark'.

Additionally, while I was in art class at Creekside, our teacher assigned us a project to paint murals on 2' x 6' pieces of wood, and two of the murals I completed are still hanging in the hallways of Creekside."

Rachel wondered how Seton could enhance the school's coming-together experience and allow graduates to "leave their marks" as a way of celebration and remembrance.

That is when the idea was born: Rachel wanted to create a unique graduation banner (for each graduating class) that Seton graduates could sign and see in the hallways of Seton. And they could come back to visit and see the banner again.

"It was wonderful to watch Seton's class of 2023 sign their banner back in June. It helps put all my Curriculum Development work into perspective when I see Seton graduates and families coming together to celebrate such a special day. I cannot wait until next year when the class of 2024 gets to sign their graduation banner!"





THE HOLY ARCHANGELS

FEAST DAY - SEPTEMBER 29

St. Michael

"Then war broke out in heaven, Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven."

—Revelation 12:7-8

PATRON OF SOLDIERS, DOCTORS,
MARINERS, POLICE, & FIREMEN



St. Gabriel

"In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, 'Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.'"

—Luke 1: 26-28

PATRON OF MESSENGERS, RADIO
BROADCASTERS, & POSTAL WORKERS



St. Raphael

"I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand and serve before the Glory of the Lord.' Greatly shaken the two of them [Tobit and Tobias] fell prostrate in fear. But Raphael said to them: 'Do not fear; peace be with you! Bless God now and forever.'"

—Tobit 12:15-17

PATRON OF TRAVELERS, NURSES,
PHYSICIANS, PHARMACISTS, & THE BLIND



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The Vital Nature of the Family

*“The family is a source of wealth for married couples, an irreplaceable good for children, an indispensable foundation of society and a vital community for the journey of the Church”
(Homily in Ancona, 11 September 2011).*

*By virtue of this the “family is the privileged place of human and Christian education and remains, for this end, as the closest ally of the priestly ministry.... No vocation is a private matter, and even less so is the vocation to marriage because its horizon is the entire Church”
(ibid.).*

Pope Benedict XVI
Address to the Pontifical Council for the Family
December 1, 2011

www.setonmagazine.com 866-280-1930