

# Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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## *Stay on Track*

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A Home Away from Home:  
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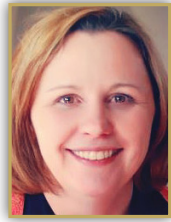




# MISSION STATEMENT

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,*

Over twenty years ago I attended an IHM homeschool conference in Virginia with a bunch of friends. I primarily sought information about homeschooling a child with profound special needs. God led me to the Seton table, where I met Dr. Mary Kay Clark. She spent over an hour with me, showing me books, introducing me to other moms in my situation, calling over a speaker with years of experience to talk to me, and giving me all the encouragement I needed.

A few years later, I began speaking at those conferences and eventually working for Seton. Through all of that, Dr. Clark has been both a friend and mentor, and I have watched her encourage, motivate, and bless the lives of many moms.

It has been over forty years since Dr. Clark took over the helm at Seton Home Study School, a period during which over 130,000 students have directly benefited from her unwavering dedication to Catholic education. This is not just a remarkable achievement, but a testament to her profound impact on the lives of countless individuals.

While she is still actively involved in Seton's day-to-day business, primarily in reviewing books and lesson plans, Dr. Clark has recently decided to step back a bit. As the Chairman of the Board of Seton, I met her decision with gratitude and a deep desire to keep her legacy going—keeping thoroughly Catholic education accessible to all parents.

The board has elected Dr. Clark as Director Emeritus by unanimous decision. Her wisdom and expertise will be a big part of Seton's future success, as they always have been.

Please see page 7 for more details and feel free to contact me at [mbarrett@seton.org](mailto:mbarrett@seton.org) if you have any questions.

Blessings,  
*Mary Ellen Barrett*  
Mary Ellen Barrett



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**COVER PHOTO:**

The Thomas Family

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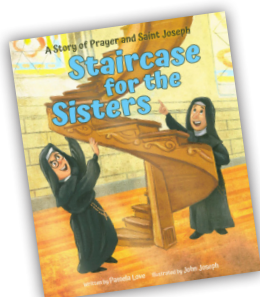
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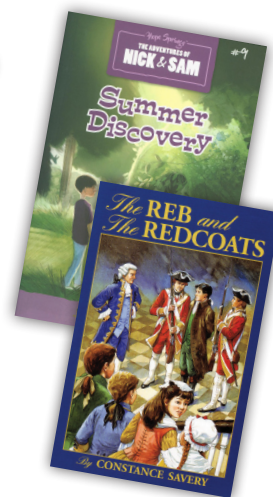
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# your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

## Can my high school student take a language that Seton doesn't currently offer? How can we go about it?

At Seton, we understand the importance of personalized education and each student's unique interests. Prior to taking the course, we encourage you to contact our academic advising team to discuss the best approach for your student's language learning goals. At Seton, we're committed to supporting the educational needs of our students. To accommodate this, we offer these options for students:

**1. Independent Study:** We support independent study courses for languages taught at co-ops, non-accredited schools, or at home. This option involves providing the course information from the program you intend to use or designing a custom curriculum yourself. Submit a proposal outlining your study plan, materials, and evaluation methods.

**2. Dual Enrollment:** Older students might have the opportunity for dual enrollment with local community colleges or universities that offer the desired language. This option not only introduces students to college-level courses but also allows them to earn both high school and college credits. Students may also enroll at another accredited high school for the desired language course. Once the course is finished, we will need the transcript by mail or email.

Whichever option you choose, fill out an Independent Study Request Form. This can be found under **Resources** on your **MySeton** account for approval from our counselors.

Find more information at:  
[setonhome.org/academics/independent-study](http://setonhome.org/academics/independent-study)

*Joseph Strickland, Admissions Consultant*

## Can junior high students take individual high school courses for credit?

Junior high students may take and receive credit for certain high school courses. This can be an excellent opportunity for students to get a head start on their high school education.

Any grades earned would contribute to their high school GPA with Seton. Adding a high school course would incur a high school fee due to the increase in services provided and the cost of materials. There is usually an extra textbook or software license fee for math or language courses.

Please note that some HS courses have prerequisites or are usually designated for specific grade levels. However, we are here to guide and support you in making the right choices.

High school course selections by junior high students are reviewed by an academic counselor. Typically, high school courses allowed for junior high students include Algebra I, Keyboarding (typing), World Geography, Physical Science, Earth Science, Fundamentals of Grammar (half-credit), and any foreign language course such as Spanish I or French I.

We welcome your questions: [counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)

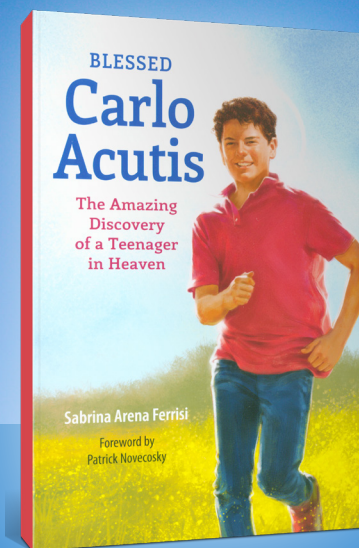
*Christina Nutt, Academic Counselor*

## What is Seton's Redo Policy for high school tests?

Students can redo multiple-choice questions with five answers; if the questions have only four answers, you may only redo the test if you fail it (below 70%).

True/false questions or questions with only two answers cannot be retaken. However, most fill-in-the-blank tests can be redone if the grade is below 85%. You may also redo written work and translation tests.

*Sean O'Connor, Academic Counselor*



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## DR. MARY KAY CLARK ASSUMES NEW ROLE

**M**ary Ellen Barrett, Chairman of the Board of Seton Home Study School, announced that as of April 20, 2024, Dr. Mary Kay Clark assumed the role of Director Emeritus of Seton.

Anne Carroll founded Seton Home Study School in 1982 as an extension of Seton School in Manassas, Virginia, with Thomas Vander Woude, Sr., as the initial part-time Director. It was soon decided that a full-time Director was needed, and Dr. Clark assumed that role in 1983. Dr. Clark has inspired and energized Seton Home Study School over the last forty years. Under her leadership, Seton has grown from fewer than 200 students to over 15,000 students today.

### Four Decades of Leadership

With an enrollment of more than 4,500 students in grades 9 through 12, Seton is currently the largest Catholic high school in the United States. Under Dr. Clark's direction, Seton Home Study School has become one of the nation's largest publishers of Catholic schoolbooks and a primary source for educational testing for both homeschool families and traditional schools.

Before becoming Director of Seton Home Study School, Dr. Clark was instrumental in founding the state homeschooling organizations of both Ohio and Virginia and has given scores of talks at homeschooling conferences around the United States.

Over the course of her tenure as Director, more than 130,000 students have been enrolled with Seton, and countless more students and families have benefited from the book publishing and testing services Seton offers. Having touched so many lives, Dr. Clark is one of the most influential American Catholic educators in the last half century.

### In Gratitude

Of Dr. Clark's change in status, Mrs. Barrett said, "On behalf of the entire Seton community, the Board wishes to express its gratitude for the good work Dr. Clark has done as Director over the last forty years; we look to continue to benefit from Dr. Clark's wisdom and experience as she assumes her new role as Director Emeritus."

Kenneth Clark, who has served at Dr. Clark's side as Seton's General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer since 1988 and has worked as co-director of Seton over the last five years, will assume the office of Director.



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



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[setonhome.org/colleges](https://setonhome.org/colleges)





# The Most Important Question For Parents

BY JOHN CLARK



**It's** fair to say that all the thousands of questions of Catholic theology come down to one essential question: Who is God? All the questions of Catholic homeschooling form an interesting parallel. For the past four decades, parents have called Seton with thousands of questions like: Which Algebra text should my daughter use? Should my son take the online American Government course or the print version? Can my daughter skip kindergarten and start in first grade?

All these questions from you heroic parents—and God love you, we hear it in your voices—come down to one foremost question: How do I raise my child to become a saint? (Actually, we've received that specific question many times.)

For all you parents who ever asked that wondrous question, a new book has come along that provides some profoundly beautiful answers. It is called *Parents of the Saints* by Patrick O'Hearn, and it should be considered required reading.

O'Hearn was inspired to write the book after asking the primary question discussed above. He recounts, "As a husband and father, I yearned to read stories on holy married couples and how they formed their children, but those books were scarce. What were their secrets to sanctity?"

Thus, he took it upon himself to spend three years researching this question and putting the answers into book form. He provides pithy but insightful biographies and colorful stories of over one hundred Catholic parents. Why so many? O'Hearn writes, "I never intended to write a lengthy book. But, as this book progressed, I felt more and more saints whisper to me in prayer, 'Tell my parents' story. The world needs to know about our unsung heroes, who laid the foundation for our spiritual lives.' " It's a pretty wonderful thing to know that the parents of the saints were also the heroes of the saints.

## The Seed of Future Saints

Clearly, one of the foremost ways for us parents to raise saints is to desperately desire to become holy ourselves; in that regard, O'Hearn illustrates in detail that these parents of saints lived sacramental lives. Using the examples of the Martin parents and Saint Monica, O'Hearn posits that "a father and mother's love for the Holy Eucharist is the seed of future saints."

These parents also fostered a love of the vocational sacraments—Matrimony and Holy Orders—for their children. O'Hearn writes, "Each sacrament is interdependent upon the others, specifically the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. Without the priesthood, there is no Eucharist. And without the Eucharist, there is no priesthood. The parents of the saints wanted their home to become the first seminary for their children by disposing them to God's will and by providing the Church with vocations."

Regarding Matrimony, speaking of Louis Martin's mother, O'Hearn notes, "Without Louis's mother praying for him and encouraging him to pursue Zélie, he might have remained a bachelor for the rest of his life. In effect, Louis's mother witnesses the powerful role parents have in nurturing their child's vocation, especially praying in a special way for their future son-in-law or daughter-in-law so that, like their own child, they might be holy

and without a blemish on their wedding day. Interestingly, the Church commemorates Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin's feast day on July 12, the eve of their nuptials."

## The Secret to Sanctity

Citing dozens of saints, O'Hearn also takes great care to illustrate the importance of surrendering to God's Holy Will, living sacrificial lives, and simplicity. Writing of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, who laid down his life for another man at Auschwitz, O'Hearn writes, "From a young age, Maximilian learned from his parents that a secret to sanctity is forgetting oneself." Regarding the role of suffering in our lives, he writes, "While Our Lord blazed and finished the trail that ends at Golgotha, He gave each of us the ability to share in His redemptive mission, i.e., to save souls by carrying our crosses and helping those around us carry theirs....Suffering was the path of the parents of the saints."

I'm happy that the author included a section about the importance of solitude in prayer—something I have come to appreciate as I grow older.

I'm also happy that O'Hearn discussed the role of grandparents in the lives of the saints. He writes, "Pierre and Marie-Anne Martin hold one of the greatest distinctions in the Church's history, achieved only by a select few couples, which is to be both the parents and grandparents of saints, in their son, Louis Martin, and their granddaughter, Thérèse of Lisieux." It's important to remember that grandparents can have a powerful influence on their children's children.

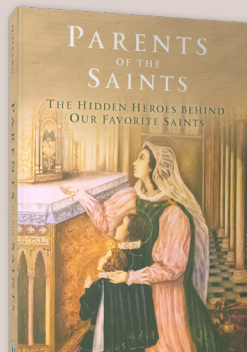
I don't use the term "required reading" often, and I can't remember the last time I used this column to endorse a new book, but O'Hearn's book is a treasure for us Catholic homeschooling parents. After all, how many books seek to answer the question: How do I raise my child to become a saint?



**John Clark** is a homeschooling father, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a frequent blogger for The National Catholic Register. His latest book, *Betrayed Without A Kiss*, is now available from TAN Books and all major online booksellers.

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## Parents of the Saints



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# End-of-Year Assessments and How They Help Plan the Future

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

**Spring** is here, and summer is coming up quickly. With that come thoughts of loose schedules and some time to relax. Before you don those swimsuits and dive into the pool, may I suggest that you spend some time reviewing the year and assessing some key indicators?

Nine states require year-end assessment: Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia (check with your local school district or HSLDA.org for specific information), but I suggest a more personal and specific assessment for each child.

If your district requires standardized tests, please call the Seton Testing Department and get the best information about which test will best suit your child and the circumstances. You can also check out the website at [www.setontesting.com](http://www.setontesting.com) for information.



**M**y real student assessment is the one I conduct by simply going back through my lesson planner and comparing it to:

1. The actual work done.
2. The grades that Seton sent.
3. The improvements or lack thereof of my student.

This assessment is more relevant to homeschooling objectives and takes less time than you imagine. I find it so helpful in planning the new year.

Some subjects, such as math, are very easy to review. There are finite answers, and you can quickly tell by the grades on tests whether your student has mastered the concepts and is ready to move on. Other subjects are more nuanced in assessing.

For example, if a student struggles in Earth Science, does that necessarily mean he will struggle in Biology? No, but it does merit the consideration of getting extra help or slowing the pace so that each concept can be mastered.

## Here's Your Focus

Diving into why they struggled is the key. These are items to focus on:

- Was it a matter of too much material being studied at once?
- Were the concepts hard to understand?
- Was not enough time spent on the material?

Your child might also need extra encouragement for assurance that he or she is not “bad in science” but had one of those tough years that crop up in every student's life.

## Here's Your Answer

My process for this time is to clear an afternoon after all the work has been submitted and take stock of how well each child did in each subject. Review how much time we spent on it and how frequently I scheduled the subject.

For example, in the younger years, we do history twice a week and science three times. Did those schedules work or do they need to be tweaked?

As students advance, their workload becomes more challenging and it is unrealistic for them to be done by lunchtime. Scheduling longer periods to complete each subject might solve a lot of problems.

I will also consider if we took advantage of all Seton has to offer when it comes to extra help. There are study guides and chapter notes on our **MySeton** page, and I need to ensure the child has access to all that. Very often we don't utilize all that is offered. Dig in and find out why.

## Meeting with the Principal

I make a few notes in my planning notebook and then schedule a meeting with my husband, the principal. Usually, it's over dinner somewhere outside of the house. I'll review our strengths and weaknesses over the past year and ask for his advice or concerns.

His insights are extremely helpful, and it is at these “meetings” that we can also solve any household issues, such as bumping up chores for some of the kids, outside activities, schedules, and things like that. These meetings are the backbone of our homeschool, and I strongly encourage you to schedule them regularly.

Once you have reviewed all of the successes and bumps in the road, you can plan the coming academic year with more peace of mind, knowing you are fully aware of where your weaknesses lie. You can adjust your course rather than flounder against the tide.

As always, the Seton counselors stand ready to help you in planning your next year. Your success is their primary concern.

## MY REAL ASSESSMENT

1. *Compare what was planned to what was done.*
2. *Ponder on the struggles:*
  - *was there too much work?*
  - *was it too hard?*
  - *not enough time?*
3. *What must we adjust?*
4. *Am I using all the help MySeton offers?*
5. *Meet with the Principal.*



**Mary Ellen Barrett** is mother to 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*.





[www.CatholicHarbor.com](http://www.CatholicHarbor.com)

**Since** the school year is ending for many families, we thought it would be fun to ask our Catholic Harbor students, “What is your favorite high school course and why?”

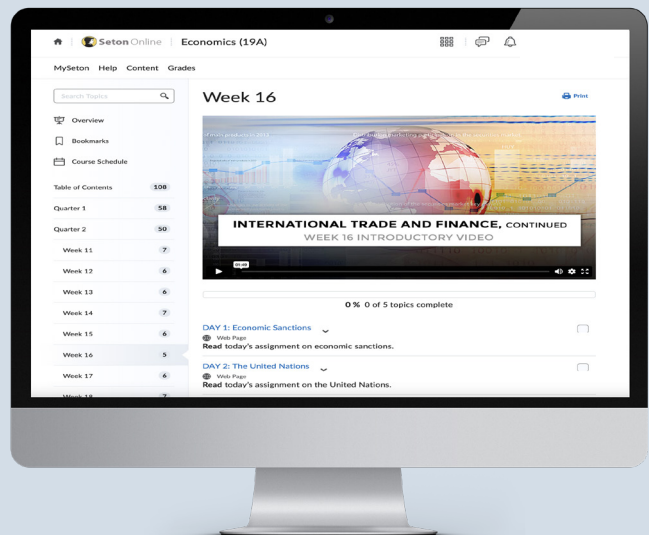
*Here is what they said:*

# Seton Course Favorites from Catholic Harbor Students

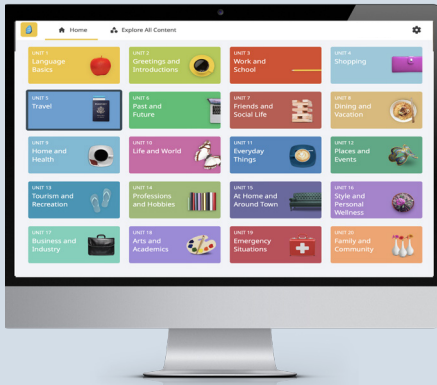
**One** of my favorite high school courses Seton offers is **Economics Online**.

I found it to be one of the most comprehensive and in-depth subjects they offer and, paradoxically, one of the most approachable. I found myself truly enjoying a subject that I had always expected would be tedious at best, but with Seton’s customary emphasis on the Faith and a touch of humor, it proved to be anything but that.

Including third-party videos and articles to complement and enhance Seton’s material was also extremely helpful, as were the frequent but small quizzes to reinforce one’s memory. The integrated tests and end-of-quarter essays were challenging but accurately reflected what was taught in the course. Despite Economics Online being one of Seton’s shorter courses (only eighteen weeks), it is certainly one of their best, and I highly recommend it! – **Sherlock Holmes**







Seton's **French** with Rosetta Stone is my favorite high school course. I really enjoy learning foreign languages, and I would love to travel to different countries someday.

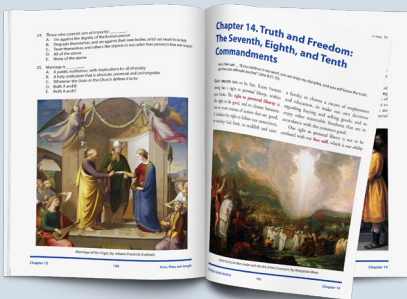
Seton's French course has helped deepen my conversational abilities, and I am confident that I would be able to speak French with a native speaker. In addition, the format for the French course is easy to follow and enjoyable. – **Julie**

“ My favorite high school course is decidedly Seton's **Catholic Doctrine**. As a Catholic young person in today's world, knowing the basics of the faith is unquestionably the most important part of education. I appreciated this class very much because of how clearly the material was explained. I am thankful for this course because I can now confidently explain Catholic beliefs to anyone! – **Varda**

“ My favorite high school courses have been **The Early Church and the Fathers** and **Biology for Life**! The former is a wonderful way to learn about Church history, expanding your knowledge of the Faith and infusing you with enthusiasm for it. The latter gives you a thorough guideline of biology, all from a Catholic, entertaining, and straightforward point of view! – **Bluebell**

My favorite school course is **Seton's Biology**. I have a lot of fun exploring how amazing God's creation is, and I love looking at all the in-depth pictures.

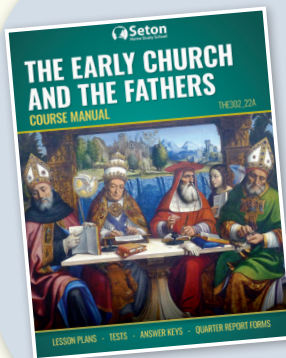
Seton's Biology course has really helped me, as a visual learner, to learn more about the world around me. In conclusion, I have learned much from Biology, which has given me a spark of longing to learn more. – **Coffee Cat**



My favorite high school course is Seton's **Moral Theology**. I love the way they explain theology in a very straightforward manner. Understanding Catholic morality is so important, especially in today's world. Because I have taken this course, I am confident in my skills to defend my beliefs. I believe furthering our knowledge of the Faith is the most important part of our education, and I am thrilled that Seton offers such a high-quality theology course! – **Isabelle**

“ My favorite high school course is probably Seton's **Literature and Composition II**. While it is challenging (and exhausting), it's taught me how to appreciate many classic works from famous authors. I've also learned valuable writing skills through writing a variety of different essays. I've gained a lot from rigorous Seton courses like these and skills that will help me when writing papers in college and beyond! – **Aqua Lily**

“ My favorite high school course is definitely **Literature and Composition**. I've learned a lot about character development, consistency, plot, and story devices, as well as how to write good research and book reports. I already love writing, and this class was very helpful in expanding my knowledge of what I do. The books were interesting, and none of the tests were hard. I look forward to Literature and Composition next year and the Creative Writing Class in Eleventh Grade. – **Satoko**



My favorite Seton course would be **The Early Church and the Fathers**! It was very interesting to learn about what our Catholic Faith looked like in the early days and to study the lives and writings of so many early Saints. The course kept my attention with descriptions of the personalities of those days, political and religious dynamics, and the ways in which Christianity shaped and breathed life into civilized culture for centuries. Additionally, the writings of the Church Fathers and early Saints provide much aged wisdom which, is as relevant as ever in our society today. – **Rina Maria**





# Seton Gives Us the Resources to *Stay on Track*

BY JANI THOMAS

In a world where educational choices often define the trajectory of a child's future, the Thomas family's story stands as a beacon of determination, faith, and success. Jani Thomas, a single mother driven by a desire for stability and a quality education for her children, recounts their remarkable journey with gratitude and conviction.

"I'm a convert and came into the Faith after a long journey. Although my parents were schoolteachers, I knew I didn't want to send my children to public school," says Jani Thomas, mother of Seton grads Cole and Joy and Seton tenth grader Judith.

Considering her options as her children entered their school years, Jani chose a private school using the Waldorf method for her children's early education. She explains, "With Waldorf, the same teacher stays with the class from Kindergarten through eighth grade."

Keeping the same teacher year after year seemed to give a level of stability to education that the traditional model of a new teacher each year could not achieve.

## We're Going to Homeschool!

"I was a single mom and in the process of joining the Church." Jani had an epiphany, realizing that as a homeschooling mom, she could be the teacher who stayed with her children through each grade level. "I decided that we were going to homeschool."

Isn't it funny how God opens doors and leads us when our hearts are open to his ways?

She created her curriculum with faith and courage, and they began their homeschool experience. All would not be easy. With the demands on her as a hospice nurse and going through a "disjointed time" in her life, Jani needed to put homeschooling on hold and enrolled the children in a private school for three of their early elementary years. But she always wanted to return to homeschooling.

Working full-time on-call as a hospice nurse on the weekends allowed Jani to homeschool during the week. "When I returned to homeschooling, I used some Seton materials. God sends certain things into your life, and your path widens. Through the encouragement of friends enrolled in Seton, I decided to enroll with Seton when Cole was in the tenth grade, and we realized this was really good. I should have done this years ago."





## Another Door Opens

About this time, daughter Joy decided she wanted to join the Army after high school. Providentially, another door was about to open for the Thomas family. Jani was in line getting her driver's license, and in a conversation with the man in front of her, an Army recruiter, he explained that there are six Senior Military Colleges in the U.S.

Think of them as a “mini–West Points.” The six colleges are the University of North Georgia, Norwich University in Vermont, Texas A&M, The Citadel in South Carolina, Virginia Military Institute (VMI), and Virginia Tech. All six colleges offer full-time Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) training for commissioned United States Armed Forces officers.

“Joy chose North Georgia for its generous scholarship program. After receiving the required nomination from our state legislator and going through multiple interviews, Joy was accepted into the Corps of Cadets on full scholarship.”

## Prepared to Succeed

Through the application process, Jani learned that the Senior Military Colleges “love homeschoolers.” They find homeschoolers are disciplined, get their work done, are independent, and their writing skills are “heads above” other applicants. Notably, they recognized that Seton's rigorous program created students who were prepared to succeed.

Joy graduated cum laude as a commissioned officer and in the top 5 of her logistics class at Fort Gregg-Adams. She graduated from Airborne School and was deployed during her second year of law school at the University of Detroit Mercy. She has recently returned and will be completing her third and final year of law school.

Son Cole attended the Catholic University of America as a violin performance and music education major. “We credit his Seton education for his generous academic and music scholarships, which covered his tuition. At CUA, he played at the Papal Mass for the canonization of St. Junipero Serra, an experience he considers the highest point of his music career. After CUA, Cole taught and played music, and, after the pandemic, he was inspired to follow a U.S. Armed Services track like Joy. He enlisted in the Navy, graduating second in his class and is currently stationed in Guam, serving as a sonic tech on a submarine. He recently was promoted to Petty Officer less than two years after joining.”

## Aim High

Currently enrolled in Seton's tenth grade, Judith has set her sights on entering the United States Air Force Academy. Gene McGuirk, Seton's Head of Academic Counseling, is always ready to assist Seton families in exploring military careers and Service Academies and offered his help. “Gene was so helpful and insightful.”

Judi aims to be a linguistics officer and has taken Russian and German with Seton. She has been active in the Civil Air Patrol and plays cello in a local homeschool orchestra. She is also a competitive fencer.



## A Solid Foundation

In reflecting on why they have been so blessed, Jani shared, “We have an active prayer life, beginning each day with prayer, because we're only as good as our foundation.”

She also vigorously credits Seton for supporting their accomplishments, adding that its accreditation “was huge” when applying for college. Seton's reputation and academic vigor marks an applicant as a good student.

Jani added, “Seton teaches us so much about the richness and beauty of what we believe and why. The material has everything we need with the flexibility of being the parent as the teacher. Seton gives me the resources I need to stay on track.”





# Guiding Families Interested in the Armed Forces

BY GENE MCGUIRK



## I'm Prepared to Help You

"Over the years, many Seton graduates have expressed an interest in attending military and service academies. I have visited West Point, the Coast Guard Academy, the Merchant Marine Academy, and the Naval Academy to better understand what these schools expect from applicants. I have also visited N.Y. Maritime College, the Naval Academy Prep School, and the Military Academy Prep School. I have met with representatives of the Air Force Academy and the Virginia Military Institute. The admissions representatives of all of these schools were very interested in the Seton program and offered advice and help.

Through these visits and interviews, I learned how their admissions policies work, which equipped me to better help you, our families, through the process."

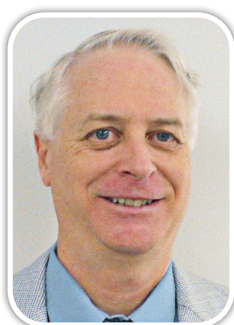
## If More is Required

In some cases, academies may require a high school graduate to complete a post-graduate high school year to bolster their academic readiness before admission. With its flexible and tailored approach to education, homeschooling can be an ideal option to meet these requirements.

Contact me with any questions at 540-635-4728 or [gmcguirk@setonhome.org](mailto:gmcguirk@setonhome.org).

“Seton has helped all of my children obtain an elite Catholic education, far better in quality than that available in public schools or Catholic schools. All four have gained admission to top quality colleges: the US Merchant Marine Academy, Villanova University, the US Military Academy, and Fordham University.

**Capt. William Adams**



Gene McGuirk, Seton's Director of Academic Counseling, is motivated to help students and families make good academic and career decisions. He is especially enthusiastic about providing guidance when the Armed Forces are involved.

Gene's reasoning is, "It is important to have leaders with good moral formation in the armed services. That's

why I'm driven to support high-quality Seton students who wish to pursue such service to our country."

He's also at the ready to help families when needed. As homeschooling mom Jani Thomas recently explained in Seton Magazine's *Seton Gives Us the Resources to Stay on Track*, Gene was always there to guide her as they explored military careers and Service Academies.

We sat down with Gene McGuirk to discuss how Seton has prepared and stands ready to help students gain admission to military and service academies. Here is what he had to say:







## Seton Grad at the Head of His Class at West Point

Seton students have been accepted, enrolled in, and graduated from all of the academies and colleges named. We are proud of them all but call out one for special recognition, Jonathan David Bate, who graduated at the head of his class from West Point in 2006.

Bate was the honor graduate; that is, he was first in his class. In his four years at the U.S. Military Academy, Bate received numerous awards. Among these were the Truman Scholarship for the study of International Affairs, the Gen. Pershing Memorial Award for the highest military rating in Military Science, the Gen. Wood Distinguished Cadet Award, and several others.

“Homeschooling helped me develop strong study skills and the self-discipline necessary to succeed in a rigorous academic and military environment.”

**Jonathan David Bate**

**Editor's Note:** Since his Academy graduation, the U.S. Army has sent Bate to Harvard for his Masters Degree and to Stanford University for his Ph.D.



### **Cadette Isabella Awarded Girl Scout Derby Champion**

Homeschooling lets Isabella be involved in activities such as Girl Scouts. She was named Girl Scout Cadette Derby Car Grand Champion.



### **Fulton Achieves President's List at Maritime Academy**

Class of 2023 Seton Home Study School grad excels at Massachusetts Maritime Academy, earning President's List honors.

Submit your photo, your achievement, and how homeschooling has helped you succeed!

[setonmagazine.com/students](https://setonmagazine.com/students)





## Ask the Experts:

# What are Your Housekeeping Routines and How do the Children Help?

*Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience*

### *A Cleaning Schedule Helps...*



I have a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly cleaning schedule. Here are the nuts and bolts of it:

1. Find a routine that works for you. For me, that means daily: kitchen cleaned, bathrooms given a quick wipe down, floor swept, etc. On Mondays, all beds are stripped and linens washed.

On Tuesdays, bathrooms are deep cleaned and mopped. On Wednesdays, we dust and vacuum. On Thursdays, the kitchen is deep cleaned, the fridge is cleaned out, and the windows are washed. Fridays are catch-up and grocery shopping.

2. Get your kids and husband involved. My husband and I agree that if you live here, you help with the upkeep.

From the time they learned colors, I had my littles help matching socks. Toddlers can be taught to put their toys away.

3. Lower (some) standards. As homeschooling moms, we have 3 to 6 full-time jobs: chauffeur, cook, teacher, housekeeper, appointment maker, etc. But everything can not be done every day. And that is ok. Remember the story of Mary and Martha. I can be “type A,” and it hit me hard many years ago when I realized my kids would not remember if the kitchen was clean, but they would remember mom screaming at them.

**“If you live here, you help with the upkeep.”**

4. Don't be afraid to outsource. There are some jobs I pay my kids to do, like folding the never-ending laundry. They get to earn money (and we teach them accounting, and they learn to save, spend, and donate, but that's another column). I have less work to do. Everyone wins!

*Kristin Brown, Virginia*



## ***Routine Makes Things Easier...***



Routine is key when it comes to keeping my household tidy and organized. Additionally, the adage “a place for everything and everything in its place” has long been a guiding principle.

First, in full disclosure, I enjoy cleaning. Seriously, I derive a sense of peace, pleasure, and well-being from wiping, scrubbing, vacuuming, and organizing.

If I were psychoanalyzing myself (or if Dr. Ray got involved), I'd find that peace comes from simple pleasures like being able to walk across the living room without being impaled on a Lego. I've learned that wiping, scrubbing, vacuuming, and organizing are required to enjoy those simple pleasures.

Since life is busy and I have had lots of children, following a routine has been a sanity-saver. For example, every single Thursday for decades now, I wash the bed sheets. It unfolds like clockwork. When we wake up on Thursdays, everyone strips their bed and deposits their sheets in the laundry room. On Thursday evening, they grab their clean sheets and make their beds. There's no arguing, begging, nagging, or negotiating. The routine has become second nature to everyone.

Once upon a time, I was the person stripping the sheets and remaking the clean beds for my little ones. However, as they grew, I kept up the routine and incorporated them into it. They began as helpers and progressed to assuming full responsibility.

**“A place for everything and everything in its place.”**

Having easy-to-access containers, like pretty baskets, plastic tubs, or organized shelves, helps facilitate keeping spaces tidy. My living room has a large basket to hold blankets and a few smaller cubes to house gaming equipment. Most everything has an assigned place, and putting it there cuts down on mess and confusion (“Hey, Mom, where's my...?”).

In combination, having a static routine (like sheets get washed on Thursdays) and a place for everything (blankets go in the basket) equates to clearly defined expectations and manageable ways to meet those expectations.

***Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina***

## ***Many Hands Make Light Work...***



Many hands make light work, and, in a large family, it is a blessing. There are more loads of laundry, more dishes, and more messes, but there are more people to help clean it up, too. I have always had the routine of doing my chores on certain days and at certain times to make the day run smoothly.

As the children were able to help, they acquired some of the household chores. I wash the laundry, but the kids fold their clothes after dinnertime. When we had a

dishwasher, each child was assigned a particular day of the week to load and empty it as their chore. I am currently handling the dishwashing because it is easier for me to do.

On Saturdays, particular children have the chores of vacuuming, mopping, and cleaning their bathroom and the powder room. Emptying the trash and outside chores are done by the boys as needed. There are always chores to do, and when each person knows their job, it is easier to ensure it gets done.

***Susan Brock, Virginia***



## **CONNECT WITH SETON FAMILIES**

**Want to Meet Seton Families  
in Your Area?**

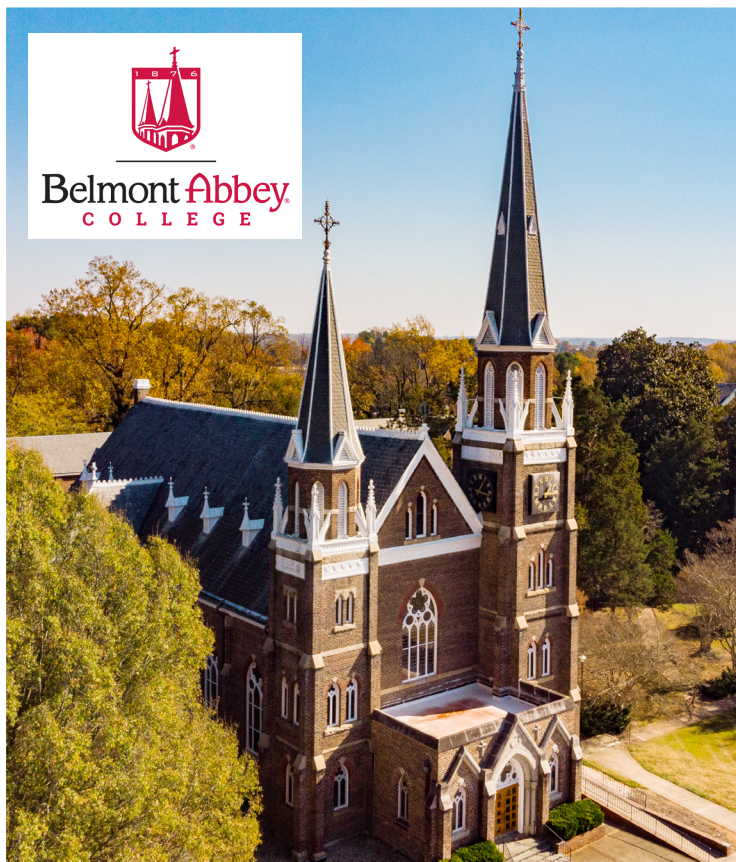
**Click This Ad on  
Your MySeton Page.**

**3,000 Families Have Joined!**





Belmont Abbey  
COLLEGE



# A Home Away from Home: *Belmont Abbey Honors College*

BY BELMONT ABBEY STAFF

**JUST** minutes away from Charlotte, NC, the Honors College at Belmont Abbey is unlike any other honors program. Drawing guidance from John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* or *Faith and Reason*, the Honors College is a four-year "great books" program designed to engage students who have demonstrated intellectual excellence and seriousness of mind in the pursuit of truth.

## A Great Books Curriculum

At the heart of the Abbey's Honors College is its distinctive Great Books curriculum, which serves as the cornerstone of intellectual inquiry. Drawing from the rich tapestry of Christian tradition, students delve into a diverse array of texts spanning ancient, modern, and Christian thought.

The Honors College provides a fulfilling Great Books program through 3 tracks for students:

### Great Books Intensive Major

This 120-credit curriculum will not only shape your understanding of history, philosophy, religion, and much more, it will also give you a unique perspective on how to thrive personally and professionally.

### Great Books Flexible Major

This 90-credit curriculum gives you room to explore 30 elective credits for a more customized academic program.

### Great Books Core with Choice of Major

Explore ancient, modern, and Christian thought with the 75-credit curriculum while devoting 45 credits to your major.

The Honors College emphasizes the fundamental questions of human and divine realities. The answers to these questions are then placed in the context of the students' lives, creating a solid basis for spiritual, professional, and personal happiness.

## The Close-Knit Community

The most enduring aspect of the Abbey's Honors College is its strong sense of community. Students are nurtured and strengthened throughout their studies through relationships with the program's #1 ranked faculty and like-minded students.







Here, students forge deep bonds with peers and faculty, creating a supportive and nurturing environment where growth is encouraged and celebrated. It is unsurprising that genuine and lasting friendships emerge in such an atmosphere and among young persons of excellent character.

Helen Behe, a 2023 graduate of the Honors College, remarks on the gift of this program: “Being in the Honors College means being a part of something bigger than yourself. It’s a community of students who, encouraged by their professors, approach each text with wonder and their unique way of seeking truth.”

Joined by a community of friends with shared aspirations and values, she is one of many students who have been transformed by this program, propelling them toward truth and goodness.

## Learning Beyond the Classroom

Through travel opportunities and immersive experiences, Honors students are encouraged to broaden their horizons and engage with the world around them. Whether attending a symphony or embarking on a journey to Ireland, these experiences instill in students the confidence to navigate the complexities of the modern world and the skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing landscape.

## Community and Cultural Events Include:

- Lectures and conferences
- Abbey By the Sea beach retreat
- Study abroad in Ireland
- Bonfires
- Academic retreats
- Dinners and parties
- Honors Ball

Rooted in the Catholic faith, the Honors College equips students with the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom conducive to a happy life of genuine flourishing. A life of leisure and learning amidst the natural grandeur of the Abbey ignites in its students a passion for knowledge and invites gratitude to God.



**Discover the life-giving joy and truth that awaits within the Honors College.**

**Learn more now:  
[www.bac.edu/honors](http://www.bac.edu/honors)**





# Alumna Profile

## Sophia Surina



Hello, my name is Sophia Surina. I am an accounting major with a minor in Great Books. I am the president of the Yarn and Thread Club, a member of the Accounting Technology and Data Honor Society, a member of the Honors College, and an active participant in a FOCUS-led Bible study. I expect to graduate from Belmont Abbey in 2027.

### Finding the Right Fit

As my sister entered her second year of college, my aunt told her about Belmont Abbey. After learning about the school, my sister was intrigued and decided to apply. Upon being accepted, she immediately transferred.

When my sister first entered the Abbey, I had no interest in going there. I had fallen into the trap of planning my life in almost every respect, including the college I would attend. Since I thought my plan was the best plan, I rejected any new prospects that interfered with it; thus, Belmont Abbey was off my radar.

However, as my sister began her semester, she often called and discussed the people, the atmosphere, and the faith community. Through her stories, I began to fall in love with the Abbey. I eventually realized that the Abbey would provide me with something that a normal state school could never: a lasting community that builds you up rather than breaks you down and a community of friends that seek a similar object, a life centered in Christ.

This was something I could not pass up. I soon realized that what I thought I wanted was not what I really wanted. In fact, this desire to plan everything nearly blinded me to something far greater.

### Falling in Love with the Abbey

My time at Belmont Abbey has been wonderful. Once I decided to join the Abbey, my sister told me about the Honors College, which piqued my interest. I have always wanted to learn more about the Great Books, and this was my opportunity to do so.

The Honors College provides a loving community that aims to help you succeed in this world and the next.

In addition to the incredible community, I love the Honors College's seminar-style classes. Instructors pose questions that allow us to think through each concept and have a stronger and fuller understanding of it. Each question challenges us, which, in turn, helps strengthen us. Through our discussions, we can grow in excellence and virtue.



### How Seton Prepared Me For College Life

Due to Seton's education, the transition into college was far smoother than I expected. Seton's rigorous reading and writing curriculum has helped pave the way for my literature journey at Belmont Abbey. I will forever be grateful to Seton and the strong foundation they have helped me establish and I look forward to my future studies here at Belmont Abbey.



# THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



What I love most about homeschooling is the closeness that homeschooling has allowed our family to foster each day.

My older boys help their younger sister and, in so doing, learn leadership and how to give solid direction.

Nothing is more important than their salvation, and Seton Home Study School helps me help my children take a virtuous path in all aspects of their lives.

The Besel Family, Harlem, GA

## Seton Home Study School 2024 Scholarship

### WHAT CAN YOU WIN?

On August 15, 2024, Seton is awarding ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton high school students graduating in 2024.

### WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

August 1, 2024 is the deadline for applications.

### WHICH COLLEGES QUALIFY?

Newman Guide Recommended Colleges or Universities including Seton College Partners featured on page 7.

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

You have completed or will have completed by August 1, 2024, Seton Home Study School for grades 9-12.

You plan to attend a Newman Guide Recommended College or University in the upcoming fall semester.

You have submitted your completed Seton Scholarship application with college letter of acceptance.

Details, applications, and a complete list of Newman Guide Recommended Colleges can be found at

[setonhome.org/scholarship](https://setonhome.org/scholarship)



in  
the

# Schoolroom

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

## Butterflies for Summer

**W**ould it even be summer without a cute little craft to welcome the season? I think not, so let's make some butterflies.

This is one of those crafts that takes longer to write out than it does to accomplish, so you might find yourself surrounded by yarn butterflies quickly, which is a good thing.

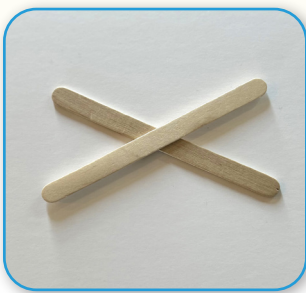
When finished, use some yarn as a hanger and hang your butterflies in a sunny window for a pretty summertime decoration.

### You will need:

- Craft sticks - two per butterfly
- Yarn in more than one color
- Pipe cleaners – one per butterfly
- Beads – three per butterfly, two small and one larger
- Small rubber band or a bread tie – one per butterfly
- White glue (optional)

### How to:

1.



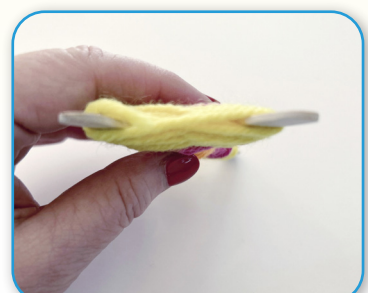
Place craft sticks in an uneven X shape and secure them in the middle with rubber bands or bread ties, not too tight.

2.



Wrap your first color of yarn to cover the tie in the middle. Begin the next color by tying the thread to the first color.

3.



As the gap between the sticks widens, start threading the yarn in and out and around the sticks in a figure eight.





4.



Add a color or continue with one. Three is a good number of colors you can use. Leave a little of the sticks bare.

5.



When you finish one end, snip your yarn, dip the end in a drop of white glue and tuck it in. Repeat on the other side.

6.



Fold your pipe cleaner in half. On the folded end, thread your two smaller beads. This end will be the butterfly tail.

7.



After the beads are threaded, open the ends and twist the middle of the pipe cleaners around the middle of your butterfly.

8.



Bring the two ends together, thread the big bead, to make the head. Curl the ends of the pipe cleaners for antennae. All done!



# STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those who serve you!*

## Betty Showers - Seton Registrar

I grew up surrounded by the floral industry. My parents owned two floral shops where I worked. I was also a licensed cosmetologist and worked part-time at Safeway, where I met my husband Steve, who was from Front Royal. That's how I came to Front Royal, home of Seton Home Study School.



When I was 37, I opened a flower shop in Front Royal and built that business for thirty years.

Steve and I have three grown children, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

When we decided to retire, we sold our floral shop and took a seven-week vacation, driving cross-country. We both love to travel, and I especially love the beach.

About eight months after retirement, my good friend Patty Graham, Director of Seton Testing Services, called with an invitation: Would I be interested in a seasonal job that spring and summer, Seton Testing's busy season?

I have always worked with the public and I jumped at the chance and joined Seton Testing in March 2022. Not long after that, I was invited to become Seton Home Study School's Registrar.



I love working with people. You can hear their relief and see their smiles over the phone when helping them solve



their issues. It is very rewarding to help our Seton families and gratifying to be part of the educational process.

### As Registrar, My Responsibilities Include:

- Reviewing and sending transcripts.
- Helping make decisions on accepting and awarding transfer credits.
- Granting student work permits.
- Providing grading verification for military and other government agencies.
- Preparing documents to be apostille for our international families.

When all is said and done, at the end of the day, it is a good feeling knowing that you helped enrich the lives of a family, furthering their child's education.





# *Saint Julia Maria Łedóchowska*

FEAST DAY: MAY 29

*“Christ earned  
everything for us by his  
passion and death on  
the cross... direct your  
eyes to the cross like a  
flower to the sun.”*

PATRON SAINT OF POLISH GIRLS,  
ORPHANS, AND EDUCATORS



Also known as  
Maria Ursula of Jesus





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## Summer Reading Club Is Now Open!



*A fun way to keep  
up reading skills  
over the Summer!*

**Details at [SetonBooks.com](http://SetonBooks.com)**



## *The First Heralds of the Gospel*

*By virtue of their ministry of educating, parents are, through the witness of their lives, the first heralds of the Gospel for their children.*

*Furthermore, by praying with their children, by reading the word of God with them and by introducing them deeply through Christian initiation into the Body of Christ—both the Eucharistic and the ecclesial Body—they become fully parents, in that they are begetters not only of bodily life but also of the life that through the Spirit's renewal flows from the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.*

**Familiaris Consortio**  
**On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World**  
**Pope St. John Paul II**  
**November 22, 1981**