

# Ascension led her to give back to community

**A**scension strives to help all scholars understand that they are beloved children of God, and Madeline Hodapp definitely learned that. "I always felt supported and valued as a person in the community," she recalls. "Ascension for sure has shaped what I wanted to do. I always wanted to give back to the community and work with youth in some capacity."

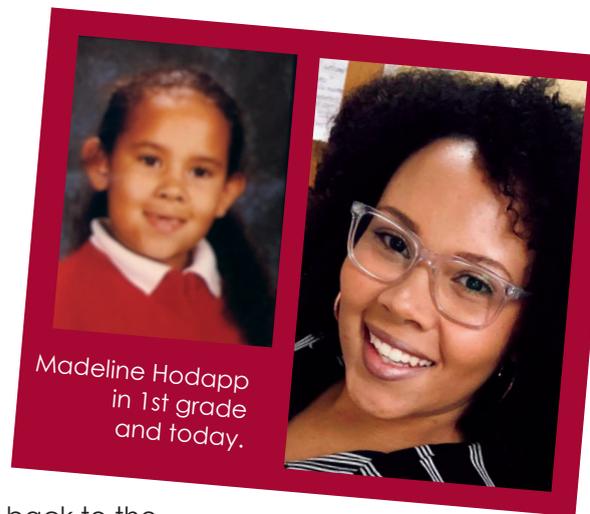
Madeline's mother, a white single mom with a mixed-race daughter, chose Ascension for its diversity. "She was a teacher at DeLaSalle High School. She wanted to teach me about my own identity and culture even though she was not black. She did a good job of hiding her hardships. My uncle paid for tuition."

Madeline graduated from Ascension in 2006, attended DeLaSalle and then the University of St. Thomas. Her degree is in Sociology and Women's Studies.

The diversity she experienced at Ascension helped prepare her for high school and college. "It helped me communicate with people from different walks of life. It opened my eyes to inclusiveness."

Today, Madeline works for the YMCA in programs that help young women. She is a life coach for Girls' Services, which provides one-to-one support for girls in the foster care system. She also is a facilitator of the Girls Circle Heart program, which serves young women who have been exploited, have experienced sexual violence, or are at risk for either.

"I have only positive things to say about Ascension," Madeline says. "I was a latchkey kid. I was there from the very beginning of the day to the very end. Ascension helped raise me."



Madeline Hodapp in 1st grade and today.

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## FOCUSED on the FUTURE

Fall 2018



**ASCENSIONSCHOOLMN.ORG**

Please visit our website to keep up with our latest news and learn more about how you can support our scholars by volunteering or making a gift.

Ascension Catholic School  
1723 Bryant Ave. N, Minneapolis, MN 55411 | 612.529.9684



**ASCENSION**  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY

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Catholic School

Dear Friends,

Our school year is off to a great start. Scholars and staff are working hard, we have wonderful new initiatives, and family involvement is growing.

We are thrilled to have 341 scholars in 2018-19 as our enrollment continues its upward trend of the past several years. Since 2015-16, our numbers have grown by 21%!

As we serve more children, we are working to ensure that each of them progresses academically and socially. One way we're doing this is through Blended Learning, a program introduced this year with the help of the University of Notre Dame.

Another strategy is our Learner Profiles, which give scholars a strong sense of responsibility for their learning. The Learner Profile brings together all of a scholar's data, including academic goals, in one place. This scholar "snapshot" helps us serve the whole child, alerting staff to any issues that may affect learning.

The Science From Scientists program is providing hands-on STEM learning for our scholars and professional development for our teachers.

SAFEMN, a new community partner for us, is matching our 7th and 8th grade boys with mentors.

It is difficult to capture the essence of Ascension in just a few words and photos. Come for a tour and experience the excitement for yourself.

My best to you,



Benito Matias, Principal



## FOCUSED on instructional skills through blended learning

We are thrilled to be one of five Minnesota schools chosen by The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame to implement its Higher Powered Learning program. ACE educators are working over the next three years with teachers in grades 2-4. Blended learning combines traditional classroom instruction with online work tailored to each scholar's individual learning goals. What makes blended learning different from just using iPads or computers in classrooms is that data is at the center. Data mined from assessments and from the online tools helps teachers bring every scholar forward in his or her learning. Next year, the trained teachers will help their colleagues adopt the program.

Expected outcomes: Scholars will achieve 125% of their projected growth in math and reading as measured by our fall, winter and spring NWEA Map assessments.

## FOCUSED on life skills

Our focus on social-emotional learning prepares our scholars to handle their emotions, make good decisions and have healthy relationships. These are skills they will use their entire lives. Using the Top 20 Training program, we are practicing these skills daily. We serve the whole child in other ways as well. Many of our scholars deal with emotional trauma, and at Ascension we work to build up self confidence and resiliency. At school, they can safely talk with caring adults, including our City Connects social worker, about what is going on in their lives. And, with faith at our core, our scholars come to understand that they are beloved children of God.



## FOCUSED on life after Ascension

Role models are essential to the growth of young people; they are living proof that a future full of hope — often talked about at Ascension — is real! SAFEMN, Saving Adolescents from Endangerment, is matching Ascension alumni with our 7th and 8th grade boys. The volunteer mentors meet regularly with the boys. They help prepare them mentally for high school and help their families with the paperwork and process of applying to Catholic high schools.



## FOCUSED on STEM

Science from Scientists is bringing interesting and challenging lab projects to our school. The 45-minute classes are being taught once or twice a month for grades 6 and 8 by real-life scientists. Topics include the spread of infectious disease, camouflage and mimicry, and engineering redesign with Legos. The organization also is providing two professional development days to help our teachers feel more comfortable preparing and leading hands-on science activities. Our staff will then team teach with the scientist. The program is made possible by a grant from the Minnesota Independent School Forum with support from 3M and the Schott Foundation.