



THE GOOD SEEDS

SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Christian School

-Established 1991-

62 Harvard Avenue, Allston, MA, 02134

“From this day, from this hour, from this moment, let us strive to love God and fulfill His Holy Will”

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Christmas Appeal

Glory be to God for all things, especially for the fruits of this year and the last 17 years at St. Herman's. We are writing to give you a report and summary of the educational ministry that you have supported through your prayers and financially. We are also asking that you keep up your support and help us usher in a New Year with this encouragement.

We have been blessed with the Little Ones that God has sent us, the wonderful families and you, our dear friends, supporters and co-strugglers. We are grateful also for the other Orthodox schools in our area and around the country: St. Michael's Orthodox School in Santa Rosa , St. Innocent's Academy in Kodiak Alaska , St. Nicholas School in Atlanta , the wonderful educational efforts at St. Paisius Women's Monastery, Theophany School in Needham MA , the Ohio Consortium of Orthodox Schools and many more. We do not stand alone. We honor all the God pleasing efforts to raise children in a Christian environment and life and we benefit from the labors of others.

We have been blessed with an incredibly dedicated staff from the beginning of St. Herman's School in 1991. David Newhouse started St. Herman's with me and with the enthusiastic help of all the parents who felt the keen sense of responsibility to pass on the Orthodox faith and Orthodox sense of the world to their children.

Popadia Ellen Robinson, our first Kindergarten teacher, brought her artistic touch to everything and her love for story telling. Julie Staneck worked so hard to establish a challenging K-3 curriculum.

Popadia Paula Tishel, Katherine Newhouse, Popadia Susan Kon and Lydia Hutchinski started the tradition of choir and music at the school to lighten the hearts of the children. The music curriculum is soaring now under the directorship of Mrs. Katya Grinberg, with the help of Mrs. Elizabeth Roussos and others. Mrs. Grinberg, Mrs. Roussos all offered classes during and after school hours in piano, voice and violin.

Anna Higgins has left an indelible impression on her students and inspired a flair for creative and lively writing. Teachers in High Schools have asked our students who taught them to write. The teachers over the years have been Maryann Shenoda, Kevin Kalish, Tina Pappas.

Our students while writing have also performed many plays. We are thankful to Mrs. Mira and Stephanie Kon , one of our alumni, who spent her senior high school internship at St. Herman's which led to a brilliant production of Shakespeare's "*A Midsummer Night's Dream.*"

Diane Mira amazes us all with her stamina and creativity. Diane, if you didn't know, is a master calligrapher and has a lot to do with the frequent awards that our children receive in state wide championships in penmanship.

Popadia Susan Kon spent 15 martyric years as teacher and administrator winning the hearts of the children and parents and creating order and beauty in her many endeavors.

Mr. Friar is also a legend at St. Herman's - with his prayer meter, bag of neat stuff, Latin classes and sharing his love for history. The children who knew him ask why class can't be like it was with Mr. Friar. How easily they forget their complaints when he was teaching them and making them tow the line!

Anna Osgood is retired and possibly continuing her studies in early childhood education. We are grateful for her wonderful touch and work with the children over these past years.

Elizabeth Roussos is a graduate of the University of Missouri in History and Violin Performance with a minor in Psychology. As a classical violinist, she has offered classes after school to St. Herman's children and children from Holy Cross/Hellenic College. Her planning, orderliness and attention to details has been a great help in shaping the Middle School's study habits. Two of the children from her class are ready to study Algebra 2 in their 8th grade class. Theo Anastasoaiie will be guiding the K1, 2, 1st grade class, coaching physical education and teaching the middle school New Testament Greek. He has shown his ability in helping to shape the personality of the young ones with his creative and clear ways. He brings to St. Herman many needed talents: his experience teaching in Romania, leading the choir in seminary, his beautiful voice and training in Byzantine chant, his language skills in English, Romanian, Greek, Latin and French. He is very well educated in the humanities, and has experience growing up in a real farming village which will be helpful in bringing to life the seasonal displays and classroom nature studies. He won't have to get the experience from books. Theo is finishing his master's in Theology at Holy Cross Seminary and has taught Dogmatics in Romanian Seminary.

The Middle School will also continue in Latin with Mrs. Anya Kruk who is a PhD Candidate studying at Boston University Old Testament and is proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Russian and English

Tudor, our administrator at St. Herman's, is also finishing his Master's degree in Theology. He has also had experience teaching in a public schools and High schools, and working for the administration of the Romanian Patriarchate. He brings to St. Herman's freshness and vision for expanding the ministry of our school.

Kamen Madjarov teaches economics, probability and statistics at St. Herman's. He is always a welcomed dynamic guest lecturer.

Fr. Patrick will continue to develop curriculum and lead the way into the future of the school. His own studies have been focused on Math and Science, Theology and Pastoral issues. He has been teaching at St. Herman's for 17 years, home schooled one of his own children and taught in his youth at public and private schools. Fr. Patrick oversees the entire curriculum.

His advisors in Math and Science are Professor Margarita Karovska, professor of Astrophysics at Harvard Smithsonian and her husband Clark Neilly, who teaches High School physics in a local High school.

Our goal is always to help the little children find their way to the Lord, the God-Man Jesus Christ. We feel blessed and the children and families are blessed.

As we wade into the future we also look at the finances of the school. The **Starr Foundation** Scholarship, an endowment given for scholarships, helps our families each year fund the very modest tuition when help is needed. We have just initiated another scholarship fund dedicated to the memory of **Veronica Alyse Handelih**, a dear friend and a beautiful young zealous follower of Christ, who at a young age accomplished much and departed to the Lord. Please make donations towards her fund to help with scholarships.

Our accomplishments can be seen in the children. Also we have beautiful letters of recognition from many visitors and professionals such as Dr. Koops, the past headmaster of Lexington Christian Academy where a number of our children attended, the author and professor,

Dr. William Kilpatrick who sent his grandchildren to St. Herman's, Dr. Charles Glenn, acting dean of the Graduate School of Education at Boston University (who also sent his daughter to St. Herman's). We have received awards from Hillsdale College for Teacher of the Year; our children have won contests in Poetry, Penmanship, Artist. The greatest reward is when we see the children as young men and women and hear how they have benefited from their education at St. Herman's. We are asking that you keep the goals of the school in your prayers. We also ask that if you have the desire and the financial ability, that you offer financial help in the form of a donation to St. Herman's. A donation form is included in this newsletter. Your support over all these years has been an encouragement.

Father Patrick Tishel

Saint Herman School - where faith meets education

Michael Tishel - senior student Gordon College

I received the call: "Mike, I need you to sub for me while I'm away in Chicago" "Ok, Tudor, I'd be happy to." And so it began—three days of walking down memory lane at St. Herman of Alaska Christian School. The time that was to follow proved to be a self-examination, asking why I felt like St. Herman's had such a profound impact on my life. If you'd permit me, I would like to share some of my reflections with you. I feel very grateful for my time at this school—a place where I labored, and played, for over nine good years. I vividly remember some things, and have forgotten much. But if one thing is clear, it is that the richness of my childhood education has deeply impacted me *now*. It has richly informed my secondary and higher education in ways that I still cannot understand. I think that I have begun to understand a few of them: I have many fond memories. Driving to the gym for P.E. at the West End House facility was certainly one of them. I also remember, going as far back as kindergarten, hearing stories read aloud by the teacher while we (the students) sat on pillows on the floor, but were not really in the room as our minds had floated off to France, Medieval England or some other exciting time and place. Even the times that made me squirm, have become delightfully implanted into

my memory, like when we got to dissect a cow's heart to see how it functioned and operated so beautifully. We were very creative as well; we even made a full-length movie of the famous story taken from Dicken's *Great Expectations*. And then there were the plays. I'm not sure I can count how many Shakespeare characters I have been, but I must say that *Twelfth Night's* Malvolio was probably the most entertaining and eccentric of all of them. One of my fondest and most recent memories was our Eighth Grade Trip to Washington D.C. These are all pockets of memories that ebb and flow in and out of my mind as life continues to move rapidly forward. Amongst the stressful weeks and months that feel like fleeting days, these memories act as oases for my, often, cluttered mind and soul. In these comforting moments I can sense something deeper than the presence of mere memories.

Putting aside all good memories, all information that was gained, and friends that were made, something almost tangible was transmitted, something eternal and necessary; it's truly a gem that is useful wherever I am and in whatever circumstance. Ultimately, it is something at the root of, what I would call now, a rightly-ordered education. It started with stories. I have loved stories since before I can remember. My mother and father would read them to me before I went to bed and would even tell my babysitters to read to me before sleep. The stories would often come from classic tales of knights, battles and chivalrous acts. Other tales would recount acts of heroism and extreme witness in the lives of the martyrs and saints of the Church. During my time at St. Herman's, I began to love telling stories of my own. I had two English and Writing teachers at school who continued where my parents left off by fanning the spark of my love for stories into a flame of excitement for writing.

This tradition of inspiration continued into my high school years where I was blessed to have another amazing English teacher three years in a row. I began to be more aware of my love for writing, but it was the continued love and guidance of my teachers that opened my eyes to the world of Literature and Writing.

Finally, I went to college. I began my freshman year as an English major, but I soon became aware of a new love that had emerged in my life; I was deeply moved by the words of various theologians and biblical scholars of ancient and modern times. As a result, my specific interest moved towards theology. But had it not been for the constant love of my English professors, in allowing me to explore the beauty of God's creation in Literature and Writing, I would not have been able to hear my inner longing to study theology.

I have learned a lot from this bumpy (and very brief) journey of mine. The world is filled with people of all professions and skill-sets. But *regardless of what we do*—of what we are trained to do—the most important thing, I have realized, is that in *everything* we “seek first the Kingdom of God.” Thus, in the 6 hours of our day, 30 hours in our week, 120 hours in our month, and 1440 hours in our year, and God-willing over 17000 hours that we spend (or spent) in school, this *greatly* influential and formative time in our lives should be rightly-ordered in seeking the first things first. I truly believe that in this right ordering of things, I was able to see *all* of my studies with an eye of greater discernment, value and responsibility. Instead of absorbing information from various disciplines and leaving them to sit disconnected and stagnant in my mind, I was able to begin to make sense of the connection between math and theology, between writing and history, and between all of the subjects and God. Granted, learning information in the right way, and with qualified people is important, but what an honor it was to be able to learn in an environment that recognized the natural fulfillment in *all* that I learned.

Otherwise, as the writer of Ecclesiastes so wisely notes:

“Vanity of vanities, all *is* vanity.”

What profit has a man from all his labor

In which he toils under the sun?

One generation passes away, and *another* generation comes;

Yet, it is clear that the answer lies in his conclusion:

Fear God and keep His commandments,

For this is man's all.

Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

Many have wondered why it is necessary to integrate faith with education. If a child goes to church and maybe even Sunday school, why does education need a spiritual foundation? I believe, from my own experience, it is the case that regardless of what school one attends a “spiritual foundation” (however unstable) will be built. The question to ask is not whether one will receive a religious education or not, the question is *which* foundation does one want to build an education upon. There is an ordering and philosophy to any passing-on of knowledge that exists in this world—any education. Will it be ordered according to that which is eternal—that which is important? Or to that which is, as is written, “Vanity.” St. Herman’s was for me an eternal formation—holistic, and all inclusive of the important academic endeavors—yet entirely structured on the foundation of eternity. I don’t know if a study has been conducted on this yet, but I would bet that a student who knew, not only *what* he/she was studying, but also *why* he/she was studying it, would be more apt to pursue education with a full and open heart, as opposed to a child who simply asked to learn various disciplines. God-willing others can receive this same gift as well!



