

OMC is a Gold Mine

By Amy Giddings and Paul Coomes

Growing up in the Midwest, you either went to your neighborhood public school or *the* Catholic school. There were no admission processes, school visits, etc. Needless to say, our parents thought we were crazy when we starting talking about finding the right school for our children and comparing academic reputations, test scores, extracurricular activities, sports, facilities, and tuition costs.

It took some time before we finally sat down and thought about what WE wanted in a school for our children. When we had this conversation, we were shocked by how far off our priorities were from what we were being told was important.

We wanted a school with a safe and loving environment, small class sizes, and a culture of family involvement.

We wanted a school with a safe and loving environment, small class sizes, and a culture of family involvement. Our goals for our children, regardless of age or grade level, are that 1) they are kind, honest, respectful, and compassionate people, 2) they enthusiastically work hard and understand the value of their efforts, and 3) they are able to discover their unique gifts and recognize the diverse gifts of others. We feel confident that in working towards these goals, our children will be successful academically, athletically, socially, and spiritually.

While we both have day jobs (an engineer and a professor), we are coaches at heart (having coached hundreds of high school rowers over the past 13 years).

The goals we defined are a culmination of our own values and our experiences working with these athletes. The athletes who are happiest and most successful in life are those that did not live in high pressure situations focused solely on academic success. We saw that exceptional people were those whose families were highly involved and present in their children's lives and more often than not were actively involved in their religious communities as well.

Additionally, as a college professor, I see on a daily basis that the most employable students are those that have met these goals – treating others with respect, communicating well, demonstrating a capacity to work hard, etc. These students get jobs well before a student with only a high GPA. But, then again, most students with those critical skills have high academic achievement as well.

We both knew this school was a gold mine!

Fast forward to our Fall visit to OMC last year. With our own Catholic school background, we knew we valued a faith-based education but we hadn't yet selected a school. So, with our goals in mind, we were anxious to hear what would be discussed. ***The school has an excellent academic record...*** this pleased all the other parents there, of course, and we were happy to note it, but it wasn't going to sell the school to us. ***Many students receive scholarships to some of the best high schools...*** ok, great, but still not our motivation. ***The teachers require a lot of the students and will do what it takes to make sure every student can succeed...*** now they were starting to talk our language. ***There is a code of courtesy for all of the students in the school and all of the kids really work hard to be awarded for their efforts in embodying this code...*** PERFECT! ***We are a small, parish school and have a culture of home/school/church working together to develop our students, lots of extracurricular opportunities for students to become involved, strong art and music programs, CYO sports....*** At some point during our tour, my husband and I both became very quiet. I think we both knew this school was a gold mine. We just weren't sure who was going to say it first!

Each day we find 10 more reasons why we love this wonderful place!

Our children started at OMC this Fall in Kindergarten and Pre-K and we could not be happier. They enjoy going to school each morning and each day we find 10 more reasons why we love this wonderful place!