

School News

A peek behind our classroom doors



APRIL 21, 2019

Elizabeth Stanislav (bottom row, center) is surrounded by SRS and SRNS students wearing shirts bearing the picture she drew in 1976.

Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



Who Drew Raffi? She Did



Mission: Find the person who drew “Raffi,” the familiar children’s drawing in the logo for St. Raphael Nursery School. The quest begins in 2015, when the school Development Office publishes a “Who Drew Me?” item in School News of the parish bulletin. An unidentified caller leaves a voicemail, saying the drawing was made by the child of then SRNS Director Janet Brewer. The number is tracked to parishioner Sharon Discavage, who gets credit for the first great clue.

MJ Zafis-Garcia of the Development Office pores through parish directories and the internet in search of Janet Brewer. She uses other online tools to narrow down the possibilities by age and location, eventually zeroing in on a woman in Potomac whose profile seems to check all the boxes. Zafis-Garcia mails a letter and waits. Janet Brewer calls. *The Janet Brewer.* And her information is gold.

No, it wasn’t her child who drew Raffi, but she remembers who it was. It was a student named Elizabeth O’Connell. It was probably 1976, she estimates, back when St. Raphael Nursery School was a co-op run by parents. The school had the 4-year-olds draw pictures, and the parents chose the winning drawing. “We put it on T-shirts and tote bags,” Brewer says. “It’s *still* on T-shirts and tote bags!” Zafis-Garcia replies. Brewer even remembers the name of Elizabeth’s parents, Maureen and Dan.

The mission to find Raffi’s artist gets overtaken by more pressing needs, and the project is put on hold. When 2019 arrives—the year of SRNS’s 50th anniversary—Zafis-Garcia resumes her search. She finds three people who seem to be a match for Elizabeth, Maureen, and Dan O’Connell, and she mails more letters. Jackpot. Elizabeth O’Connell calls. *The Elizabeth O’Connell (now Elizabeth Stanislav).* “I actually did draw that,” she says giddily on a voicemail. “My mother will be so excited.”

Stanislav still lives in the area and turns 47 this month. She is a physical therapist for the Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program. The Stanislavs are parishioners at St. Patrick’s. Zafis-Garcia invites her to stop by SRNS to see the school. On her recent visit, she is surrounded by students of all ages, wearing SRNS T-shirts and sweatshirts in her honor. She is beaming as she comes upon the sea of kids wearing her drawing. She talks about the contest to draw the school logo. “I remember them making a big fuss of it and telling me how awesome it was,” she says. She mentions she has a hazy recollection of the picture being of her mother. So maybe Raffi is really Rafaela.

It is a happy visit, with hugs and smiles, backdropped by the ambient sounds of children playing—multiple generations woven together by a drawing made by a little girl 43 years ago.

Isn't it nifty? Raffi is {{50!}}



Send us your photos and join the party!



We're marking our golden anniversary and the biggest part of our 50th celebration is YOU. We're collecting photos, memorabilia, and stories about SRNS. Visit our anniversary webpage on the preschool website at www.srnsm.org, where you can share your memories, view the photo gallery, and more. We're looking forward to walking down Memory Lane with you!



SAVE THE DATE!

We're celebrating our golden anniversary with a party! Add **June 1** to your calendar. We'll meet at 5 p.m. Mass, followed by festivities in the Trumpet Room! All are welcome—St. Raphael Nursery School graduates, parents, teachers, staff, and friends! Visit the SRNS website at www.srnsm.org to let us know if you'll be there. Tell your SRNS friends!