



Featured Sponsored Ministry: IND

Prayer Intention: That IND may be faithful to its mission in growing as a culturally diverse community while empowering its young women to be reflective discerners, active leaders, and lifelong learners who use their gifts to make a difference in the world.

The Institute of Notre Dame Remains Cornerstone of the Community

Forty years after most schools have left Baltimore for the suburbs, the Institute of Notre Dame (IND) remains where Blessed Mother Theresa Gerhardinger, the School Sisters of Notre Dame's foundress, established it 167 years ago: in East Baltimore, two blocks from the world renowned Johns Hopkins medical institution.

Throughout the years, IND's commitment to the community has never wavered. During the Civil War, the catacombs beneath the school were used as an infirmary to hide and heal both Union and Confederate soldiers. IND was one of the stops on the Underground Railroad, where former slaves were hidden, then passed on to others in the North for safe passage. When much of the city burned during the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904, IND remained unscathed. In the late 1960s during the riots following Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, the neighborhood placed signs on the

school saying, "Soul sisters: do not touch," thus sparing it from the destruction that leveled much of the city, because IND was a friend to the African-American community.

Speak with IND alumnae and they will tell you: Class of 2013 graduate Taliyah Baker says, "We always help out those in need!" Alumna Emilee Flynn, Class of 2004, gives credit to IND for her desire to serve the disadvantaged. A graduate of Johns Hopkins Medical School, Ms. Flynn is now serving a pediatric residency at a Philadelphia hospital that focused on poor city children.

And Kathy Madera Lankford, '62, who recently went on a mission trip to Haiti, said, "This spirit of sharing with those less fortunate than ourselves was one of the building blocks we received at IND. Fifty years ago we were collecting canned goods and clothing for the poor of Baltimore City. The SSND sisters instilled in us this sense of giving."

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Today local groups of homeowners and residents meet at IND to discuss ways to improve safety and areas of mutual concern. During the holidays, Hildie’s Helpers, a student group that helps longtime IND Director of Hospitality Sister Hilda Marie Sutherland, SSND, collect and deliver boxes of food and turkeys to our economically disadvantaged neighbors. IND’s Peer Ministers make and deliver food throughout the year to shelters and places where the homeless can be found.

In 2013, IND celebrated milestones for two of its longest - running community outreach programs: TamarIND and Project K.IND. TamarIND (Take a Month Around IND) celebrated its 20 year. Dozens of elementary school girls visit IND every day for six weeks to enjoy programs focused on dance, drama, arts, crafts, health and fitness. TamarIND is run by IND students who act as counselors and full-time seasoned staffers who are IND graduates as well as Ms. Vanessa Williams, IND Youth Minister. The hands-on, one-on-one attention is what accounts for TamarIND’s success.

Project K.IND celebrated ten years of successful outreach in 2013. The program pairs IND girls and city elementary school girls in big-little sister supportive relationships that provide emotional and academic support. IND now has six partner schools — one public and five Catholic schools. Conceived by Ms. Vanessa Williams as an alternative to latch-key children, Project K.IND is entirely student led and managed: IND students write grant requests, give presentations, keep records and schedule activities. They also tutor and help the younger girls with homework to strengthen them academically, and develop arts, crafts, dance and drama activities to stimulate their creativity and build their self-esteem.

Mrs. Corinne Davidson, assistant principal at Cardinal Shehan School, sees the girls’ shared faith as an important commonality. “The girls share a genuine respect and faith, so the barriers that often get in the way just don’t matter,” she said. “The big sisters make such a



Sister Hilda Marie Sutherland, SSND



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On a recent day of service, IND students donated and made 300 lunches, then traveled by bus to shelters and underpasses to the homeless to deliver them.

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Project Lead the Way's Biomedical Science Program is extremely popular at IND, combining science and human health related topics.



IND introduced Pathway to Engineering last year, which adopts a real-world approach, allowing students to learn and apply the design process and acquire strong teamwork and communications skills.

difference in their little sisters' lives. They look up to and want to be like them ... and from the way the IND girls respond, I'd say the feelings are mutual."

The service experience for IND graduates is unique. We are an urban campus, and our community service projects have a dramatic and direct impact on the lives of people in our neighborhood.

STEM Programs Soar at IND

Who says girls don't like STEM, shorthand for science, technology, engineering and math? Can't prove it at the Institute of Notre Dame, where one-third of students are enrolled in either biomedical sciences or engineering programs.

STEM is an issue of great importance to our nation. Student proficiency and interest in these subjects have been diminishing where the U.S. once excelled, and women's and minority group participation are severely underrepresented.

After research, IND selected the most highly respected developers of STEM curriculum: Project Lead the Way® (PLTW). PLTW is developed and updated by subject matter experts — teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical professionals — and field-tested in classrooms across the country. The programs are aligned with relevant national standards, and they are certified by experts through visits and documentation to ensure that they meet PLTW's rigorous standards for student learning.

IND began by adding a Biomedical Science Program, which combines science and human health-related topics. Students role-play biomedical professionals, thinking through the challenges that face modern medicine and include physiology, genetics, microbiology and public health. They explore the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease, working together to investigate and design innovative solutions to the health challenges of the 21st century, such as fighting cancer with nanotechnology.

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“This program is designed for the curious student who has an interest in the sciences, particularly human biology, health and disease,” said science teacher and program chair Margaret Gessler M.D., who began the Biomedical Sciences Program. Under Dr. Gessler’s leadership, the program passed its first certification in spring 2012. The PLTW visiting team said of her: “Dr. Gessler is a natural teacher. She is caring and nurturing and holds her students to high expectations ... She is clearly the core of the program and a major draw for the students.”

In 2012, IND proudly added another PLTW program to its curriculum: Pathway to Engineering (PTE). The program adopts a real-world approach, allowing students to learn and apply the design process and acquire strong teamwork and communications skills.

According to PLTW, students use the same industry-leading 3D-design software used by Intel, Lockheed Martin and Pixar. Topics explored include aerodynamics, astronautics and space life sciences. Students apply biological and engineering concepts related to biomechanics. They design, test and actually construct circuits and devices such as smart phones and tablets, and work collaboratively on a capstone project.

Perhaps the most welcome and helpful additions to the curriculum are the frequent visits by women STEM scientists and engineers to IND classes. Dr. Gessler and Mr. Rolando Rodriguez, the engineering instructor, know that the shortage of women and minorities in the sciences creates a lack of role models.

Both have made it a point to solicit frequent guests to the classroom from local businesses and universities so that students can envision themselves being successful in STEM careers.

On a recent fall afternoon, Mr. Rodriguez invited his sister Berta speak to students and engage in an extensive Q&A. Ms. Rodriguez earned a B.S.E. in civil engineering from Cornell, a M.S. in civil engineering from Stanford and an M.B.A. from UCLA. It was good for the students to engage with a professional woman who came from a humble background, earned multiple degrees, worked and studied around the world, and whose engineering background helped her branch out to the business world.

Later that day, four female engineers from W. R. Grace & Co. visited another engineering class. They conducted two different activities with the students that provided them different perspectives on engineering is used to solve problems and the challenges encountered by computer engineers when programming robotic devices. First- and second -year students competed against one another to develop designs.

In addition to school visits, Dr. Gessler and Mr. Rodriguez ensure that their students have ample opportunity to engage in opportunities that further their STEM learning, such as attending programs at Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons’ Mini Med School Boot Camp and Lockheed Martin’s Engineering Challenge. ■