



The Legacy of Saint Pat's

Without question, one thing that comes to mind as we approach our 150th anniversary is the legacy that Saint Patrick School has left for the seacoast community. Thousands upon thousands of students have graduated from these doors....often times three or four generations within one family.

These numbers make sense when walking around Portsmouth with students in uniform. They are so often stopped by members of our community, of all ages, that tell them that they, too, went to Saint Pat's. We have families who schedule tours who have seen pictures of their mothers and grandmothers in the infamous green plaid uniform. The classrooms, the mural, the building, the stairwell, Austin Street and yes, even the parking lot are full of fond memories for so many.

This past week, when one of our kindergarten students, Bradley Guerin, was recognized in the newspaper for his extraordinary act of kindness, I had a flashback to his family's tour. It was extra special walking through the halls with his mom, Shaine Murphy, because she grew up as a daughter of a Saint Pat's teacher. Not just any Saint Patrick School teacher. What I have learned about Shaine's mother, Eileen Murphy, is that she was a **beloved teacher at Saint Pat's**. Eileen taught the junior high language arts program and was an 8th grade homeroom teacher. Shaine says, "She was so passionate about the mission of Saint Pat's and always did her part to enhance the programming. She started a Drama Club, a Speech Club and a Talent Night. She was creative, fun, and a bright light in the community." Tara Mikela, who taught with Mrs. Murphy remembers, "She was an amazing mentor teacher for me. She was a dream to work with. She was firm in her discipline but somehow her warmth shone through at the same time.....intelligent, thoughtful, warm, and above all, faithful. She meant the world to me." Eileen Murphy taught from 1988 until she retired in 1995 and later passed away on March 5, 2005.

Walking Bradley in these front doors on the first day of school had special meaning for Shaine. She knew that her mom, whom Bradley had never met, would be proud to see her grandson as a student at Saint Pat's where he would learn virtues such as

kindness, compassion, and thinking of others. Recently Bradley put the kindness discussed at school into action. He learned about a little girl his age in Oregon who had been badly burned in an accident. She was asking for cards from around the country to help teach her about every state while she was in the hospital. Bradley couldn't believe someone his age might be in the hospital for months and he jumped right into action. He was the first to send a card from New Hampshire and he ended up on the Oregon nightly news. Bradley said, "it felt really good to do that."

"I chose this school because my mom taught here and loved it," said Shaine, "and maybe by being here, Bradley could experience a piece of her. I have been impressed with what Saint Pat's offers and am so happy with this decision. I get that same warm feeling from the teachers here that I think my mom gave to her students. And the big kids here help and reach out to Bradley. They make him feel special, that doesn't happen at other schools. Here the big kids embrace the little kids and are kind and nice to them. They are such a good example."

Shaine said that her mom would've been so excited about the new building and all that is currently happening with Saint Patrick Academy. On her anniversary this year, Shaine's brother will be the Mystery Reader in kindergarten—because they don't see any better way of celebrating her on her anniversary than by spending time with Bradley in the school she loved. The class is also going to support Bradley's initiative and will be making cards to send to his new friend as well.

The Murphy family's legacy is our legacy—as it is for so many. So many stories and so many families make up our 149 year history and our special community at Saint Pat's. This is our foundation and what we will take with us to build upon as we move to our new campus and prepare for our grand opening this spring.

Here's the article about Bradley:

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20180216/5-year-old-portsmouth-boy-spreads-kindness>

and the news story:

<http://katu.com/news/local/oregon-girl-partially-burned-in-accident-hopes-for-letters-from-around-the-country-moira>